THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN MANAGING DISRUPTIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR DURING LEARNING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Disruptive student behavior remains a persistent issue in elementary school classrooms as it can negatively affect the learning climate, instructional effectiveness, and the achievement of educational objectives. This study aimed to analyze the role of teachers in managing disruptive student behavior during the learning process in elementary schools. The study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. It was conducted at State Elementary School 0608417 Medan, with classroom teachers and elementary school students serving as research participants. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews with teachers, and documentation studies. Data analysis was carried out using an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data credibility was ensured through technique and source triangulation. The findings revealed that disruptive behaviors manifested in various forms, including talking outside the learning context, lack of attention to teacher explanations, and violations of classroom rules. Teachers played a strategic role in managing these behaviors by consistently implementing classroom rules, providing positive reinforcement, applying personal approaches to students, and creating an adaptive and supportive classroom environment. Furthermore, teachers' communication skills and their ability to establish positive emotional relationships with students were found to contribute significantly to reducing disruptive behavior. This study concluded that the role of teachers extended beyond behavioral control to include functioning as facilitators and mentors who foster a safe, orderly, and supportive learning environment that promotes students' character development.

ABSTRAK

Perilaku disruptif siswa masih menjadi permasalahan nyata dalam pembelajaran di sekolah dasar karena berpotensi mengganggu iklim kelas, efektivitas pembelajaran,

dan pencapaian tujuan pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran guru dalam mengelola perilaku disruptif siswa selama proses pembelajaran di sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Penelitian dilaksanakan di Sekolah Dasar Negeri 0608417 Medan dengan subjek penelitian terdiri atas guru kelas dan siswa sekolah dasar. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi pembelajaran, wawancara mendalam dengan guru, serta studi dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan secara interaktif melalui tahap reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan simpulan. Keabsahan data dijamin melalui triangulasi teknik dan sumber.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perilaku disruptif siswa muncul dalam berbagai bentuk, seperti berbicara di luar konteks pembelajaran, kurangnya perhatian terhadap penjelasan guru, dan pelanggaran aturan kelas. Guru berperan secara strategis dalam mengelola perilaku tersebut melalui penerapan aturan kelas yang konsisten, pemberian penguatan positif, pendekatan personal kepada siswa, serta pengelolaan kelas yang adaptif dan kondusif. Selain itu, keterampilan komunikasi guru dan kemampuan membangun hubungan emosional yang positif terbukti berkontribusi dalam menekan munculnya perilaku disruptif. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa peran guru tidak hanya terbatas pada pengendalian perilaku, tetapi juga sebagai fasilitator dan pembimbing yang menciptakan iklim pembelajaran yang aman, tertib, dan mendukung perkembangan karakter siswa.

Kata kunci: Guru, Disruptif, Manajemen, Kelas, Sekolah Dasar

INTRODUCTION

Elementary education is a fundamental stage in the development of students' academic, social, and behavioral regulation skills. At this stage, children are still developing their ability to regulate attention, emotions, and behavior, and these abilities are strongly influenced by the learning environment and pedagogical interactions they experience in the classroom (Santrock, 2021). Therefore, the quality of elementary education is determined not only by instructional strategies but also by teachers' ability to manage student behavior so that learning can take place effectively and in a supportive environment.

In elementary school classrooms, one issue that frequently arises is student behavior that disrupts the learning process. In contemporary educational and

psychological literature, such behavior is referred to as disruptive behavior, namely actions that interfere with instruction, distract teachers and other students, and reduce the quality of classroom learning interactions (Lewis, Romi, Qui, & Katz, 2022). Common forms of disruptive behavior among elementary school students range from mild to moderate and include failing to pay attention to the teacher, talking about topics unrelated to the lesson, disturbing classmates, disregarding classroom rules, and displaying a lack of discipline during learning activities.

Recent studies indicate that disruptive behavior among elementary school students should not be understood solely as an individual student problem. Rather, it is a pedagogical phenomenon closely related to children's developmental characteristics, classroom climate, and the instructional management strategies used by teachers (Emmer & Sabornie, 2021). At the elementary level, students' self-regulation skills still require consistent external support through classroom structures, clear rules, and pedagogical approaches that respond to their needs (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2021). When disruptive behavior is not managed effectively, it may hinder the achievement of learning objectives, reduce instructional effectiveness, and create an unfavorable classroom climate.

In the Indonesian educational context, teachers' role in managing student behavior has become increasingly important with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes student-centered learning, active participation, and the development of social competencies and character. Learning activities that encourage student participation require teachers to manage increasingly complex classroom dynamics, including various forms of disruptive behavior that may arise during instruction (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022). Without appropriate behavior management, the curriculum's goals of promoting student independence and active engagement may not be achieved optimally.

Several recent studies have examined student disruptive behavior and classroom management strategies in elementary schools. However, much of this research has focused on identifying student behaviors or examining the effectiveness of particular strategies separately, rather than comprehensively investigating how teachers manage disruptive behavior in the actual context of ongoing classroom instruction (Lewis et al., 2022; Emmer & Sabornie, 2021). In addition, empirical studies specifically examining teachers' roles in managing disruptive behavior in Indonesian elementary school

classrooms remain relatively limited, particularly studies that explore teachers' everyday classroom practices.

In response to these conditions, this study examined in depth the role of teachers in managing disruptive student behavior during elementary school learning. Specifically, it aimed to identify the forms of disruptive behavior that occur during lessons, analyze teachers' roles in managing such behavior, and examine the pedagogical strategies used to create a conducive learning environment. The study's contribution lies in its contextual examination of teachers' roles in managing disruptive behavior during instruction, rather than viewing teachers merely as implementers of disciplinary techniques or general classroom management strategies. It explores how teachers respond to classroom dynamics, students' developmental characteristics, and the student-centered learning demands of the Merdeka Curriculum. The findings are expected to contribute empirical insight to research on student behavior management and provide a reference for teachers and education stakeholders seeking to improve learning quality and classroom climate in Indonesian elementary schools.

Dengan demikian, penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi empiris baru terhadap pengembangan kajian manajemen perilaku siswa di sekolah dasar serta menjadi rujukan bagi guru dan pemangku kepentingan pendidikan dalam meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran dan iklim kelas di sekolah dasar Indonesia.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. A qualitative approach was selected to develop an in-depth understanding of the pedagogical phenomenon of teachers' roles in managing disruptive student behavior during elementary school learning, which cannot be adequately explained through quantitative measurement alone. The case study design enabled an exploration of teachers' actual practices in authentic learning contexts and provided a comprehensive account of classroom dynamics, teacher–student interactions, and behavior management strategies used during instruction.

The study was conducted at State Elementary School 0608417 Medan. The school was selected because it is a public elementary school implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and has heterogeneous classroom characteristics, making it relevant to the investigation of disruptive behavior management during learning. The participants

primarily consisted of classroom teachers, while elementary school students served as supporting subjects whose behavior was observed during lessons. Teachers were selected through purposive sampling based on their experience in managing classrooms and responding to disruptive student behavior. Students were not interviewed; they were observed to identify forms of disruptive behavior occurring in the classroom.

The study focused on three main aspects: (1) forms of disruptive student behavior that occur during classroom learning; (2) teachers' roles in managing disruptive behavior while instruction is taking place; and (3) pedagogical strategies used by teachers to create a conducive learning environment. These aspects were established to maintain consistency among the research questions, objectives, and discussion of the findings.

Data were collected through classroom observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Direct, non-participant observations were conducted to identify disruptive student behavior and examine how teachers managed it. Observations were repeated to obtain detailed data and capture classroom conditions in their natural setting. In-depth interviews were conducted with classroom teachers using a semi-structured interview guide developed around the research focus. The interviews explored teachers' understanding of disruptive student behavior, the roles they performed, and the strategies they used to manage behavior during instruction. Document analysis involved reviewing lesson plans, classroom rules, and other relevant supporting documents to corroborate the observation and interview data.

The data were analyzed qualitatively using an interactive analysis model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involved selecting and focusing the information relevant to the research objectives. Data were displayed through descriptive narratives and thematic categories to clarify emerging patterns. Conclusions were then drawn progressively and continuously verified throughout the research process to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the findings.

Data trustworthiness was maintained through methodological triangulation by comparing information obtained from observations, interviews, and documents, as well as member checking by confirming the findings with the participating teachers. Trustworthiness was further strengthened through referential adequacy by relating the findings to relevant theories and previous studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Forms of Disruptive Student Behavior During the Learning Process

Classroom observations at State Elementary School 0608417 Medan showed that disruptive student behavior appeared in several forms and recurred across learning sessions. These behaviors were generally mild to moderate and occurred during classroom activities. The most frequent forms included inattention to teachers' explanations, conversations with classmates unrelated to the lesson, moving from assigned seats without permission, disturbing seatmates, and delayed responses to teachers' instructions.

These behaviors did not occur randomly. They tended to arise during activities that required students to concentrate for relatively long periods or when learning activities provided limited opportunities for active participation. Although the observed behaviors were neither aggressive nor dangerous, they disrupted the continuity of instruction and affected other students' concentration.

These findings indicate that disruptive behavior among elementary school students is a pedagogical phenomenon closely associated with children's developmental characteristics. At this age, students' self-control and behavioral regulation skills are still developing and are influenced by the learning environment and classroom interaction patterns. This finding is consistent with Santrock's (2021) view that elementary school children still need external structures and consistent guidance to manage their attention and behavior during learning. Thus, disruptive behavior should not be viewed merely as a disciplinary violation but also as an indication that certain pedagogical needs may not yet have been fully addressed.

2. Teachers' Roles in Managing Disruptive Student Behavior

The interview and observation findings showed that teachers performed complex and interconnected roles in managing disruptive student behavior during instruction. These roles extended beyond enforcing classroom rules and included preventive, corrective, and facilitative efforts implemented simultaneously. Preventively, teachers established classroom rules and learning agreements at the beginning of lessons and consistently reminded students of these expectations. These efforts aimed to establish a clear classroom structure and provide students with a sense of security during learning.

When disruptive behavior occurred, teachers applied corrective approaches that were persuasive and educational. They generally gave proportionate verbal reminders, approached students individually, and redirected their attention to learning activities. These approaches avoided repressive punishment and were intended to prevent student resistance or fear.

These teacher roles demonstrate that disruptive behavior management was implemented contextually, taking into account the learning situation and students' characteristics. This finding is consistent with Emmer and Sabornie (2021), who emphasize that effective behavior management focuses not only on disciplinary control but also on developing positive teacher–student relationships. In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers' roles are increasingly important because learning requires student activity and independence. Teachers therefore need adaptive classroom management skills to maintain a conducive learning environment.

3. Teachers' Pedagogical Strategies for Creating a Conducive Learning Climate

The findings showed that teachers implemented various pedagogical strategies to manage disruptive student behavior. These strategies included varying instructional methods, organizing activities that encouraged active student participation, and providing positive reinforcement for behavior consistent with classroom rules. Teachers used group discussions, interactive question-and-answer sessions, and collaborative assignments to increase student engagement in learning.

These strategies helped redirect students' attention from disruptive behavior and encouraged more active participation in learning. Positive reinforcement, such as verbal praise and simple forms of appreciation, also contributed to a more positive and supportive classroom climate.

This finding is consistent with learning theory perspectives that emphasize the importance of reinforcement in shaping student behavior (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2021). It also supports the view that disruptive behavior management cannot be separated from instructional design. Effective pedagogical strategies therefore serve not only to deliver learning content but also to guide student behavior and create a conducive learning environment.

Overall, the findings and discussion indicate that disruptive behavior among elementary school students is contextual and closely related to classroom dynamics. Teachers' roles in managing such behavior are not merely reactive; they are also proactive and integrated into everyday pedagogical practices. Teachers act as learning managers by establishing classroom structures, building positive relationships with students, and implementing instructional strategies that respond to students' needs.

These findings reinforce the study's contribution by showing that disruptive behavior management in elementary schools cannot be understood separately from the learning context. The study provides empirical insight into teachers' actual practices in managing disruptive student behavior during instruction in Indonesian elementary schools, an area that remains relatively underexplored in contemporary elementary education research.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that disruptive behavior among elementary school students is a pedagogical phenomenon associated with children's developmental characteristics and classroom dynamics. The behaviors observed were generally mild to moderate, including inattention, off-task conversations, disturbing classmates, and failure to follow classroom rules, but they could interfere with learning when not managed appropriately. Teachers played strategic roles through preventive, corrective, and facilitative approaches, including establishing clear classroom expectations, communicating positively with students, responding to behavior persuasively, varying instructional activities, encouraging active participation, and providing positive reinforcement. These practices helped create a safer, more orderly, and supportive learning environment. The findings highlight that managing disruptive behavior is an integral part of effective, student-centered instruction and that teachers' pedagogical roles extend beyond maintaining discipline to supporting students' behavioral and character development.

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