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Middle School Teacher's Perspectives Regarding School Ethical Climate

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Abstract— This study aims to explore the teacher's perception of the ethical climate in their respective schools. The method used in this research is mixed methods sequential explanatory design. The population of this study were teachers who had worked in the four schools for two years. In the first stage, conventional sampling was applied to select four schools in Gamping District, Sleman Regency. In the second phase of the study, Focuss Group Discussion and interviews were involving 24 participants. The results of the study found that teachers perceived positively toward their school ethical climate. In terms of each indicator, the highest score was at “teachers are role models for students”, while the lowest score was at “without cheating, students share ideas, class notes, and other materials with their classmates”. It was found that schools had made efforts to build ethical climate through implementing school conduct, personal approach and involving stakeholders. The results of this study suggest to strengthening the consistency of positive behavior of students both inside and outside the classroom, facilitating communication channels to allow students provide feedback to teachers to be followed up and the emerging needs of improving teacher skills in differentiated learning.

Keywords— *school climate, school ethical climate, organizational behavior*

INTRODUCTION

Records of violence involving youth outside of school hours in the Special Province of Yogyakarta, Indonesia show an increase, especially in the form of “Klitih”. The term “klitih” is attached to a form of street crime around the Special Region of Yogyakarta, including Sleman Regency, which is generally carried out at night in the form of injuring innocent victims. This juvenile delinquency behavior is carried out by going around using a vehicle carried out by a group of students with the intention of looking for other school students who are

considered enemies [1]. Based on the records of the Yogyakarta Regional Police, in 2021 there were 58 cases of klitih with the majority of perpetrators namely 80 people still having student status [2]. Klitih's perpetrators are teenagers between the ages of 15 and 18 [3], in other studies it was revealed that the age range of the perpetrators was 14 to 22 years or junior and senior high school students [4]. Among them are still studying and some are junior high school graduates who do not continue high school. Based on research, one of the drivers for the emergence of this crime is due to the environment of the perpetrators who have certain groups (gangs) and have enemies.

Based on previous research, “klitih” begins with a school environment in which there are gangs. Junior students are provoked by their seniors to take certain actions [5]. One of the recommendations of previous research related to “Klitih” is the need for outreach to students in junior high schools [1]. Schools are also expected to care more about the behavior of students.

The context of the situation above raises the urgency of school attention to school climate. Recent research has found that the school climate affects the aggressiveness of students [6]. On the other hand, there are still schools that do not want to recognize the important role of the teacher in dealing with violence among students [7].

Moral deviance occurs when someone does something by neglecting moral considerations, so this behavior results from cognitive processes [8]. Student character can be formed from habituation in class, workplace and society [9]. Research has found that students who perceive their school as having a very positive ethical climate tend not to show unethical behavior [10]. Although the ethical climate does not have a direct effect on the formation of student behavior [9], the ethical climate acts as a moderator variable in relation to mal-ethical behavior.

The ethical climate of the school is a sub of the school climate. Ethics in a community is inseparable from the existence of a conducive atmosphere, which is also called an ethical climate. Ethical climate is a shared perception of which behavior is considered ethical and how ethical issues are handled jointly [11]. Organizational ethical climate is also defined as the perception of the organization's routine practices and procedures that contain ethical content [12]. The ethical climate results from organizational policies, practices, leadership and the influence of decision-making on organizational members and their impact on their work attitudes and behavior [12].

The existence of a positive school ethical climate has the opportunity to reduce the rate of violence and disrespectful behavior among school members [13]. The results of the study found a positive ethical climate in schools was able to strengthen honest behavior in students and interactions between individuals in schools including between teachers [14]. Schools that show an agreement on the values of justice, obedience to rules, mutual respect, cooperation and compassion will motivate teachers and students to become positive communities [15]. An organization needs to make rules and norms which become the official reference for its members in behaving, because from the work environment as well as the social environment a person will learn and show behavior according to the demands of his surroundings [16].

The role of the teacher in shaping the ethical climate of the school is very important. Research has found a positive relationship between ethical climate and the quality of teacher work life [17]. This paper aims to describe how far the level of school ethical climate perceived by teachers and how teachers respond to the ethical climate conditions in their schools.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is mixed methods, with an explanatory sequential design. The population of this study were teachers from public and private junior high or middle schools in Gamping District, Sleman Regency. Using convenient sampling, 2 public and 2 private junior high schools were selected out of 13 middle schools.

Data collection in the first stage of the study used the adapted questionnaire which was developed in a credible research [13]. The questionnaire was given to teachers who had worked for at least two years at the school

where this research was conducted. From a total of 89 identified respondents, there were 72 respondents who returned the questionnaire.

Table 1 Distribution of Responndent

	N
Junior High School A	16
Junior High School B	23
Junior High School C	26
Junior High School D	7
Total	72

The internal consistency of questionnaire is 0.927, which is > 0.06 , thus the questionnaire is reliable. However, from 50 questions there are 6 items dropped because the validity value were $< r$ table (0.2353).

The second stage of data collection was carried out through FGDs and interviews. There were 20 teachers involved in FGD whom randomly selected and 2 counseling teachers and 2 school principals were interviewed determined based on snowball sampling.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative data on the climate of school ethics in the four schools from the teacher's perspective shows that the overall mean value obtained is 3.328 from maximum of 4, with a Standard Deviation of 0.347. The average gain per standard is shown in table 2.

Table 2 Mean Score In Each Aspect Of School Ethical Climate

Aspect	Mean
Student to teacher	3.281
Student to student	3.201
Teacher to student	3.410

The detailed results for each aspect are as depicted in table 3.

Table 3 School Ethical Climate Mean Score Per Indicator

Aspect	School Ethical Climate Indicator	Mean	SD
Student to teacher	Students' work shows effort	3.167	0.531
	Students follow teachers' directions	3.292	0.542
	Students are respectful to teachers	3.417	0.542
	Students actively participate in class discussions.	3.389	0.881
	Students pay attention during class	3.319	0.552
	Students accept responsibility for getting help when they need it	3.389	0.681
	Students let their teachers know when commitments cannot be met.	3.167	0.531
	Teachers can trust students to behave appropriately in unsupervised situations	3.056	0.579
	Student to student	Students feel free to discuss their ideas with their classmates	3.236
Students are considerate of their classmates' feelings		3.042	0.458
Students make new students feel welcome at this school		3.264	0.444
Students go out of their way to help their classmates		3.292	0.488
Students encourage their classmates when appropriate		3.278	0.510
Without cheating, students share ideas, class notes, and other materials with their classmates		3.000	0.557
When working in a group with their classmates, students do their fair share of the work.		3.264	0.503
Students treat their classmates with respect.		3.236	0.459
Students defend classmates who are being picked on by others.		3.139	0.484
Students respect classmates' personal belongings		3.222	0.419
Honor roll students are accepted by their classmates		3.264	0.475
Students feel it is O.K. to walk away from a fight		3.181	0.454
Teacher to student		Teachers are available to students outside of class time	3.417
	Teachers praise students for excellent work	3.556	0.500

Aspect	School Ethical Climate Indicator	Mean	SD
	Teachers help students improve their study habits	3.444	0.500
	Teachers present more than one point of view.	3.389	0.545
	Teachers treat all students with respect	3.542	0.502
	Teachers encourage students to ask questions if they are appropriate	3.472	0.556
	Teachers give students the opportunity to practice what they learn.	3.472	0.530
	Teachers are well-prepared for their classes	3.458	0.529
	Teachers are positive role models for students	3.569	0.552
	Students and teachers cooperate with each other	3.486	0.531
	Teachers respect the cultures of all students	3.444	0.603
	Teachers are available to all students on an equal basis.	3.458	0.502
	Teachers help students with special needs.	3.431	0.499
	Teachers provide students with praise when appropriate. 16.	3.431	0.499
	Teachers return assignments in a reasonable amount of time. 17.	3.319	0.470
	Students who have questions about grades feel free to talk to their teachers	3.319	0.470
	Students feel comfortable seeking help from teachers outside of class time. 19.	3.306	0.547
	When school-related problems arise, students feel free to talk with teachers	3.375	0.542
	Students can trust teachers with personal information	3.347	0.508
	Teachers promote cooperation among students	3.528	0.503
	Teachers follow through on reasonable feedback from students	3.097	0.695
	Teachers allow students to choose topics for course projects or papers	3.111	0.640
	Teachers are attentive to students during meetings	3.458	0.502
	Teachers allow students to express their opinions even if	3.389	0.519

Aspect	School Ethical Climate Indicator	Mean	SD
	they are different from the teachers'		

Based on table 3, the top five score was teachers are positive role models for students (3,569), the teachers praise students for excellent work (3,556), teachers treat all students with respect (3,542), Teachers promote cooperation among students r (3,528), and students and teachers cooperate with each other (3.486). On the other hand, the bottom five scores are without cheating, students share ideas, class notes, and other materials with their classmates (3.00), students are considerate of their classmates' feelings s (3.042), teachers can trust students to behave appropriately in unsupervised situations (3.056), teachers follow through on reasonable feedback from students (3.097) and teachers allow students to choose topics for course projects or papers (3.111).

To explore the lowest score finding, the research team conducted FGD and interviews with school principals and teachers.

A. Cheating Behavior in Students

According to Teacher A from School D, the reason for the cheating behavior itself was that the students perceived the difficulty level of the questions was high, so students were not confident. The teacher admits, sometimes the exam questions are outside the material taught by the teacher. This is due to the existence of exam questions given by the Education Office with material that is not always exactly the same as what is conveyed by the teacher in learning. Another cause of cheating behavior according to teachers is pressure from parents. However, the most basic problem is the inability to master the material. This was worse by the fear and feel embarrassed to ask teacher for help. As a result, students can not do their best at test or assignment and prefer cheating.

Cheating behavior is caused by multiple factors [18]. The latest research in 2022 shows that there are gaps and inconsistencies between beliefs/knowledge and regulations. Schools need to penalize dishonest behavior. Cheating behavior thrives when situational factors originating from peers and risk and contextual factors originating from the class, teacher, parents and school meet individual factors. Therefore schools do not only need to improve students' mastery of the material but also learning models and other external factors such as the learning climate and the consistency of punishment.

B. Behavior Considering Friends' Feelings

Regarding students' consideration of their friends' feelings, both the principal and the teacher stated that there was still bullying and extortion by students towards other students even though the frequency decreased.

It is recognized that economic disparities also influence the extortion behavior. Teachers from School A said the perpetrator came from a lower middle class family background. Attention from parents is also mentioned as one of the causes of this negative behavior. Regarding economic disparities, there are interesting findings from private School C. The school program in the form of specialization classes in the form of regular and special classes has an impact on student interactions between the two types of classes which are less fluid. A special class called the Tahfidz class (a class whose students are targeted to be able to memorize the Qur'an), is predominantly filled by students from the upper middle class, while the regular class student most come from various social-economic background.

These findings indicate that the negative behavior that students still carry out is quite diverse, ranging from verbal bullying to intimidation to forcefully ask friends for money or snacks. Male students are dominantly involved in violent behavior as shown in previous studies in Indonesia [19]. Research in other areas in Indonesia found that bullying behavior is usually carried out by more than one person and the more often the victim meets the perpetrator, the more opportunities for aggression to occur [20]. From the same study, it was found that bullying occurs during breaks or learning breaks. Based on the research results, there is a positive relationship between school climate and aggression [21].

C. Student Behavior Outside School Hours (unsupervised situation)

The results of the FGD showed that there was a similar situation between two public Schools in Gamping Sub-District who admitted that they had been stigmatized as a result of the delinquency committed by their students. However, in the past two years, schools have benefited from the Covid-19 pandemic because they have minimized the opportunity for students to meet face-to-face with alumni who have a track record of bad behavior.

The decrease in the incidence of brawls has also occurred at school B. According to school B teachers, apart from the pandemic, it has reduced the intensity of student meetings with alumni, which has had a bad influence. The teacher with the initial R from school B said that the stigma experienced by his school is now firmly eroded by a school policy that strictly prohibits students from using gang symbols and other symbols that have negative associations, including the alias name of the school that used to be popular. In addition, every year the school cooperates with noncommissioned law enforcement officer of Indonesia National Army whose office is located nearby school. Another school effort is to build a fence to make it higher than before. School B is the only one of the four schools located on the edge of the national highway. School B is in a position of being relatively vulnerable to attacks such as the boulder that students from other schools have made against it.

At school C, the behavior that significantly decreased was vandalism. The existence of gangs and alumni who have a bad influence was also highlighted by School C. Teacher A from School C felt that his school is now being recognized by the community in a positive way because of the achievements made and also published by the school. The school which is under the auspices of this Islamic organization has a superior class, namely the Tafidz class with 30 Jus memorized and with certain methods and good tartil. Graduation processions are often a place for schools to show their achievements so that they are increasingly recognized by the local community.

Unlike the three schools above, School D students have never been involved in a fight. According to the Principal, Ibu RE, the behavior of the students at School D is relatively calm, never facing challenges in brawls or similar actions because the school often calls them out. This cannot be separated from the presence of students at School D who are also students at Islamic boarding schools. Compared to other schools, the number of students at School D is much smaller. One class consists of around 25 students and the total number of study groups is only 6 classes with students under 150. On the other hand, schools A and B have a total of 18 classes and school C has 15 classes with each number of student roughly 30- 32.

In terms of the consistency of student behavior inside and outside the classroom/school, teachers consider that character building is something that cannot be separated from learning. The negative behavior of students outside

the school environment greatly influences the image of the school. The most frequent appeals made by teachers are related to the prevention of negative behavior, especially in the form of childish juvenile delinquency, bullying, including blackmailing underclassmen.

From the findings above, the cause of Klitih criminal acts originating from the school environment is the existence of gangs initiated and fostered by alumni. Previous research confirms the existence of the alumni doctrine which influences student behavior so that they engage in brawls or klitih [22]. In addition, the large number of students has an effect on youth violence [23]. This implies that prevention of violence among students needs to be done by increasing the quality of personal closeness with students.

D. Follow-up of student's feedback by teachers

The four schools do not yet have special facilities to enable students to provide input to teachers. Even so, the closeness between the teacher and the students made some students feel that the teacher did not hesitate to give input to the teacher.

In the FGD it was revealed that the interaction between teachers and students recently was much warmer than it was in the past. Many students call teachers by their favorite names, such as "Mommy" to the teacher as conveyed by Teacher A from School B. However, one teacher from School D said that however there is a limit to intimacy between teachers and students, especially in Islamic school environment.

The teacher explains that students' input is considered good to be accommodated and followed up. It's just that the teacher finds it difficult to be able to accommodate all of them because of the very diverse opinions of students. In a learning contract, the teacher offers students an agreement, with the hope that students will be consistent with the agreement made together.

The teachers provide contact numbers that students and parents can contact, as well as join the class Whatsapp (WA) group. However, the teacher also admitted that he was not always able to answer questions via WA. Apart from being busy taking care of household chores, teachers feel more able to answer questions comprehensively when meeting students face to face. The teachers also do not deny that there are still many students who are reluctant to ask questions directly to the teacher and prefer to ask the class leader or their peers. Para guru juga mengakui mereka menyimak

sungguh-sungguh arahan kepala sekolah dan otoritas terkait.

For example, the recent socialization of an appeal from the Sleman District Education Office is for teachers not to give corporal punishment and harsh reprimands to students who commit violations. Although almost all of the teachers in the FGD complained about this, on the other hand they were also looking for ways to be able to coach students even though they were almost without punishment.

The School Principal of School C and D directed teachers to avoid punishment and encourage them to do personal approach. Both school principals who are female said that this was not easy and it is a challenge for teachers today.

Providing feedback to teachers by students is necessary for improving teaching quality [24]. The gap in perceptions between teachers and students regarding quality learning can be bridged by providing opportunities for students to provide feedback to teachers. Students will also feel appreciated because their opinions are heard. Schools need to facilitate the provision of student feedback to teachers so that there is a deeper dialogue to equalize perceptions between teachers and students. Feedback from students will have an impact on the teacher's professional development [25]. In order for feedback for teachers to be used optimally, it is necessary to provide communication channels and tools such as quality measurement instruments or comparisons between expectations and reality that can be used according to the characteristics of Middle school students. Furthermore, schools can take advantage of feedback to provide certain recommendations to teachers so that the quality of learning is better [26].

E. The Opportunity to choose topic or assignment

Recent research recommends that the way of teaching teachers shift from standard methods to differentiated learning which is characterized by involving students in the learning process and enriching the curriculum with differentiated learning [27]. Differentiated learning is defined as the teacher's efforts to plan and carry out learning with a variety of content, processes and products in order to address differences in readiness, interests and learning needs [28]. Differentiated learning is also carried out as a solution to the diversity of student backgrounds, both in knowledge and language. Selection

of topics and forms of assignments is one part of differentiated learning.

With regard to the opportunity for students to choose a topic or form of assignment, the teachers identified this as part of differentiated learning. So far, one form of differentiated learning that has been done is in the form of a process. For example, the teacher develops a variety of learning activities, including lectures, presentations, LKS-based projects and homework and observations. Students also do not only work individually but also in groups, with the hope that students are trained to work together and deal with differences of opinion. Teachers in the four schools also sometimes give choices to students in order to challenge them so that they are more motivated when doing assignments.

Generally, teachers have attempted to develop lesson plans by taking into account the context of student needs. However, the teacher also revealed that there were difficulties in giving choices of topics or assignments to students because this resulted in a higher teacher workload. The teacher tries to pay attention to students who have difficulty understanding the material. A female math teacher for example, she build warm interaction with student in order to avoid stress in math, for example she has a nickname "Mami" among students.

The involvement of students in learning can shape students' perceptions of ethical behavior [29]. With teachers respecting their diversity, students learn firsthand about how to respect others. Differentiated learning provides benefits, especially for students with low learning achievement [30].

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research generally reveals the following:

1. The teacher perceived positively toward their school ethical climate. It is indicate by the mean value of 3,328 out of 4, or reaching 83.2%.

2. The top five school ethical climate indicator scores are (1) the teachers are role model for students, (2) the teacher praises students for good work, (3) the teacher treats students with respect, (4) the teacher encourages students to work together, and (5) the teacher and students work well together in class. While the bottom five scores are (1) students helping their friends without cheating, (2) students behave by considering the feelings of their friends, (3) students behave well even though the

teacher is not in class, (4) the teacher follows up feedback from students and (5) the teacher gives opportunities to students to choose topic or task

3. The findings of a qualitative study show that the schools's most issue concern is juvenile delinquency in the form of klithih and bullying. The root of the problem is strongly influenced by the relationship between students and school alumni. The existence of these school gangs has recently receded due to the emergence of the pandemic since 2020. However, the school continues to monitor student interaction with alumni. Another interesting finding is the barriers of interaction among student with various socioeconomic background. In terms of forming an ethical climate, the four schools took a similar approach, including habituation through learning materials and methods, monitoring student behavior and communication outside of class hours.

Based on the findings, the recommendations of this study are as follows:

1. School needs to improve character habituation so that students are more consistent in good behavior. Schools should cultivate honesty by reducing the number of cheating and develop sistematic program to stop bullying and extortion among students.

2. Teacher should enhance student engagement in the learning process and receiving and follow up on feedback from students. Moreover, schools can create communication channels for delivering student feedback to teachers.

3. Teachers need to upskill in differentiated learning, in terms of content, process and learning products.

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