

## **The Problem Of Multicultural Attitudes in Fourth Grade Students**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Multiculturalism is a response to the growing primary school population and demands for equal rights for all primary schools. Through this education, students are taught to avoid discrimination, understand tolerance, respect other people's views, build empathy, and create a culture of mutual respect. This research is motivated by awareness of the importance of multicultural attitudes that occur in elementary school students. The aim of this research is to find out what problems arise in the interactions of students who interact in a multicultural atmosphere at school. To explore the issue of multicultural attitudes in elementary schools, this research uses a case study method. Data was obtained through observation, interviews and documentation which was analyzed using tabulation and comparison techniques to obtain conclusions from the data. The subjects of this research were fourth grade teachers and 5 students. The results of the research concluded that the problem of multicultural attitudes still often occurs in elementary schools, especially in interactions between students. These problems include making jokes that offend beliefs/religions, offensive jokes can hurt the feelings of students whose religion is used as material for encouragement. This can cause low self-esteem, anxiety, and discomfort in the school environment. Another problem found was mocking parents' professions, which has the potential to make students feel embarrassed, low self-esteem, and have problems socializing because their parents' professions are used as material for socializing. The problem of dominant multicultural attitudes occurs when students interact outside of study hours.*

**Keywords:** *The Problem of Multicultural Attitudes, Elementary School*

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### **ABSTRAK**

Multikulturalisme adalah tanggapan terhadap bertambahnya keragaman populasi sekolah dasar dan tuntutan akan kesetaraan hak bagi semua sekolah dasar. Melalui pendidikan ini, peserta didik diajarkan untuk menghindari diskriminasi, memahami toleransi, menghargai pandangan orang lain, membangun empati, dan menciptakan budaya saling menghormati. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh kesadaran akan pentingnya sikap multikultural yang terjadi pada siswa sekolah dasar. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui masalah-masalah apa yang muncul dalam pergaulan siswa yang berinteraksi dalam suasana multikultural di sekolah. Untuk mendalami masalah sikap multikultural di sekolah dasar, penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi kasus. Data di peroleh melalui observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi yang di analisis dengan teknik tabulasi dan komparasi untuk memperoleh kesimpulan dari data tersebut. Subjek penelitian ini adalah guru kelas

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Iv dan 5 peserta didik Hasil penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa masalah sikap multikultural masih sering terjadi di sekolah dasar, terutama dalam pergaulan antar peserta didik. Masalah tersebut diantaranya membuat lelucon yang menyinggung keyakinan/agama, lelucon yang menyinggung bisa melukai perasaan peserta didik yang agamanya dijadikan bahan ejekan. Hal ini bisa menyebabkan rasa rendah diri, kecemasan, dan ketidaknyamanan dalam lingkungan sekolah. Temuan masalah lainnya adalah mengejek profesi orang tua, yang berpotensi membuat peserta didik tersebut merasa malu, rendah diri, dan terkendala bersosialisasi karena profesi orang tuanya dijadikan bahan ejekan. Masalah sikap multikultural dominan terjadi saat peserta didik berinteraksi di luar jam belajar.

**Kata Kunci:** Masalah Sikap Multikultural, Sekolah Dasar

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with a large population. Based on the population census conducted by the Central Statistics Agency in September 2020, Indonesia's population was recorded at 270.20 million people. With Indonesia's land area reaching 1.9 million km<sup>2</sup>, Indonesia's population density is 141 people per km<sup>2</sup>. Indonesia is an archipelagic country in Southeast Asia located along the equator. It consists of 17,504 large and small islands, around 6,000 of which are uninhabited. The islands are spread around the equator, creating a tropical climate in Indonesia. Indonesia is also known by another name, namely Nusantara (Dzurriyah Nur Azizah, dkk. 2019). Apart from its large population, Indonesia is also a very diverse country in terms of culture, language, religion, ethnicity, race, including professional and economic differences (Amalia Dwi Pertiwi & Dinie Anggraeni Dewi, 2021). In terms of ethnicity, records show that the islands of Indonesia are inhabited by various local tribes, such as Dayak, Tidung, Javanese, Betawi, Baduy, Minangkabau, Bugis, Toraja, Malay, Banten, Banjar, Balinese, Sasak, Makasar. , Cirebon , Arabic, Chinese, and others. There are two points of view in understanding the diversity of the Indonesian nation, namely vertically and horizontally (Riyanti & Novitasari, 2021). The Indonesian nation is famous for its diverse culture, the dynamics and dialectics of national life are reflected in the 1945 Constitution, Pancasila, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Yulianti, 2021). Because of this diversity, efforts to maintain mutual understanding and brotherhood are absolutely necessary, therefore the Indonesian government always strives to maintain love for the country and its people by forming community activities that bridge communication and contact across cultures, across tribes, across religions and across beliefs. As societies and cultures become more diverse, each individual has unique desires. People from various regions with different backgrounds, social structures and characters have diverse views and different approaches to dealing with life and its challenges (Ratna Dewi et al., 2020). It is hoped that these efforts can provide collective awareness that national interests are above individual interests which of course must be respected by all Indonesian people (Pala dkk., 2020). Multicultural education is very important at this time as an effort to learn to live with differences between students, build mutual trust in every interaction, foster and maintain mutual understanding, and uphold mutual respect among students (Suyitno & Suryarini, 2023). Multicultural education is also important in creating fortresses to defend a locality, a region, a tradition, ethnicity or nation from 'outside' influences and threats (Torres & Tarozzi, 2020).

The many differences between races make Indonesia a country with a pluralistic (diverse) culture. Therefore, the attitude of multiculturalism is important because it can maintain harmony and social cohesion in a pluralistic society. Regarding efforts to inherit and preserve

the attitude of multiculturalism, Indonesia must ensure that its people have multicultural literacy and competence to shape their personalities in everyday life and relationships. Multicultural education in elementary schools is essential for nurturing students' tolerance of cultural, religious, and ethnic differences. As student populations become more diverse worldwide, including in Indonesia, the importance of multicultural education is increasingly recognized. Its aim is to value, respect, and comprehend societal diversity, thereby fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students. This approach is especially vital at the primary school level, a key period for shaping students' social attitudes and values. Through multicultural education, students can learn to identify and appreciate individual differences, promoting inclusiveness and respect for the cultural diversity surrounding them (Lalita et al., 2024). However, recently there have been concerns about the fading of multicultural attitudes. For example, this emerged in a bullying case a few weeks ago in the Padang Pariaman area, West Sumatra to be precise, an elementary school child with the initials A (11 years old) was doused with pertalite by his friend while carrying out a rubbish burning activity. behind the school which caused the child to die and the next case in 2023 in the Central Sulawesi region was that three elementary school students were reported to have tested positive for drugs due to an unhealthy relationship. These cases seem to reflect that multicultural attitudes among students in elementary schools are still very minimal, even in crisis. These cases of violence certainly not only damage the image of education, which is considered by many people as a place where the humanization process takes place, but also give rise to various problems, making all parties more serious in dealing with them (Nirmalasari et al., 2021). This problem is a reflection of the phenomenon of discrimination between people. This problem cannot continue to occur, especially for students who still need mental and personality training. Recognizing individual differences and students' cultural backgrounds requires special attention. The Merdeka Curriculum can be said to be relevant to multicultural education. This can be seen from the existence of several Independent Curriculum indicators such as basic skills development, differentiated learning, Pancasila student profiles, and suitability to local content contexts (Wardani et al., 2024).

Conflict is an inevitable fact of life and can be creative. Conflicts can be resolved without violence and require the participation of all parties. Conflict is useful for building harmony, creating awareness of problems, encouraging necessary change, and encouraging socially sensitive solutions. Tolerance in social life is important to create harmony. Tolerance is an attitude of mutual respect for other people and not imposing one's will. People who consider themselves noble and kind, tend to have an anti-tolerance attitude, the dominant attitude that one culture is better than another becomes the start of debate. Multiculturalism as an effort to reduce conflicts that arise in society. The multicultural approach has the idea of understanding diversity for harmony, multiculturalism provides a forum or way to resolve conflict. Multicultural education is innovation in education to instill and reawaken students that Indonesia is rich in diversity. High heterogeneity Indonesian society, is the basis for the urgency of multicultural education implemented as early as possible (Sutisnawati et al., 2023). The idea of multiculturalism is an idea that can make someone think that differences are not conflicts but identities that arise naturally which instill multicultural values in society to prevent conflicts (Ramedlon, dkk.2021). This awareness will automatically give birth to a

tolerant personality in all students. If students absorb and internalize multicultural education from an early age, this country will give birth to the next generation with great character (Nurcahyanti et al., 2023).

Sometimes the implementation of multicultural education in schools receives little attention, especially among students. In fact, implementing multicultural education is very important for students and teachers. This is crucial for preventing and reducing conflict. Through multicultural education, students' thoughts and attitudes will become more open in appreciating and understanding differences (Karakter et al., 2023). The development of human abilities in recognizing and appreciating diversity and heterogeneity resulting from cultural, ethnic, social, religious, political and economic differences is known as multicultural education. Secular democracy, dialogue and reconstruction are ways to resolve social problems in society. As a country whose majority population is multicultural, Indonesia must be able to improve multicultural education to prevent common socio-cultural conflicts (Shabartini et al., 2023). Multicultural education taught and developed in schools is related to the Indonesian context which is known as the principle of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika". Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is Indonesia's national motto which means "diverse but still one". This phrase describes the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in Indonesia which remains united as one national unit (Sugeng, Naupal, 2023). This motto can reflect the investment of the Indonesian people in a proportional, normative and democratic manner. This shows that Indonesia is a nation consisting of various ethnicities and races, with different cultures, languages and local religions, but still within the framework of Indonesian unity. (Ratna Dewi et al., 2020).

This effort can arise as a response to potential problems in elementary schools which may arise due to a lack of understanding or prejudice towards differences and a lack of understanding and exposure to cultural diversity and often the curriculum does not emphasize the values of diversity. There is enough multiculturalism, so that students may not be aware and appreciate the differences between cultures and there are still some students who do not have an attitude of mutual respect and do not apply a multicultural attitude in the form of tolerance, especially in terms of ethnic and national differences (Sondopen et al., 2023). in interacting with fellow students.

This may lead to prejudice or discomfort when interacting with classmates who have different cultural backgrounds. By considering these issues, the researcher intends to conduct research that includes exploring the problem of students' multicultural attitudes in elementary schools.

## **METHODS**

### **Type and Design**

This research uses a case study approach, a qualitative method that objectively explains in detail based on the data collected. The qualitative method is a research approach that focuses on in-depth understanding of the context, interpretation and meaning of a phenomenon. Therefore, qualitative research as a whole is rooted in its nature. Carrying out research by relying on human participation as research subjects, using a qualitative approach,

analyzing data inductively, linking research objectives to theories that support it, and being descriptive.

Based on this, a case study approach was used in this research. This means research that involves in-depth analysis of a particular situation or event to understand the factors involved and their impact.

The steps in this research include (1) Pre-field stage, which involves preparing a research plan, (2) Field stage, which includes understanding the research background, (3) data analysis stage, where the researcher organizes the collected data systematically so that it can then be communicated clearly to the general public, and (4) the Reporting stage, where the researcher prepares a written report of the research results.

### **Data and Data Sources**

In qualitative research, words and actions are sources of data. Documents and other sources can help. The data source, according to Arikunto, "is the subject from which the data can be obtained" (Dwi Istiyani, dkk.2024). Therefore, data sources are information collected by researchers to answer research questions. Primary and secondary data are the data sources used in this research.

1. Main data

Main data is data collected directly from the source, such as the results of observations, interviews, or questionnaires created specifically for certain research.

2. Secondary data

Secondary data is data that previously existed and was collected by another party for another purpose, such as data from previous research, government reports, or scientific publications. In this research the secondary data source is elementary school data archives.

### **Data collection technique**

Researchers can collect data using various methods. Data collection techniques are approaches used to obtain the information needed in research. In this study, the researcher functions as an instrument and data collector. The procedures used include: (1) Observation, (2) Interviews, and (3) Documentation, which are explained as follows:

1. Observations

Observation is collecting data by directly observing the observed phenomena. In this case the researcher made direct observations related to the problem of multicultural attitudes, these observations were carried out in elementary schools. From here the researcher examines the problem of multicultural attitudes in elementary school students.

2. Interview

Interviews are a process of interaction between researchers and respondents to obtain the necessary information. Questions have been provided but answers are freely given by respondents, informants are:

- a. Principal, to obtain information regarding the role and duties of the principal regarding the problem of students' multicultural attitudes in elementary schools.

- b. Educators, to ask whether there are problems with the multicultural attitudes of elementary school students
  - c. Elementary School Students, Researchers can conduct face-to-face interviews with participants or sources, interviewing them in person in focus group interviews consisting of 5 participants.
3. Documentation  
Documentation involves collecting data from written documents or records, such as reports, notes, newspapers, or other publications. This can be an important source of information to support or complement data collected through observations and interviews. Documentation can provide the historical context or background necessary to understand the phenomenon under study.

### **Data analysis**

Data analysis is the process of organizing, interpreting, and exploring the meaning of data that has been collected in a data study using analysis components: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

1. Data reduction  
This research data was obtained through observation, interviews and documentation archived in written, audio and audio-visual formats. The data is reduced by filtering the data (data filter) into categories: 1). Multicultural Concept, 2). Forms of Implementing Multicultural Attitudes in Elementary Schools, and 3). Obstacles to Multicultural Implementation in Elementary Schools. Some data that is lacking or irrelevant is then separated into a separate category as less relevant data. Data that is less relevant is not immediately discarded, but is still archived.
2. Data Representation  
Data representation is made in the form of narratives and tabulations. Arranging a narrative in the form of cause and effect so that it is easier to understand by describing problems in multicultural attitudes related to data that may be needed in this research. The preparation of tabulations takes the form of a multicultural attitude matrix by comparing problems with multicultural attitudes.
3. Draw conclusions  
The conclusions in this research were drawn by comparing expected multicultural attitudes with students' daily behavior at school, which was then used to justify multicultural problems that occurred in elementary schools.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The data in this research was collected through observation, interviews and documentation from three sources of information, namely school principals, teachers and students. Interviews with school principals and teachers were conducted separately following a schedule adjusted to the availability of resource persons. Observations were carried out during learning hours and extracurricular activities of the paskibra. This research in elementary schools was carried out to identify the obstacles faced by students outside of study hours.

Based on the results of observations, problems with multicultural attitudes were found in the form of calling or mentioning friends' names in a pejorative manner regarding the beliefs

or religions held by other students in the form of asking students to practice a religion that is not in accordance with the religion they believe in. Explain the results of the analysis: "Pejorative (meaning derogatory) speech in a social setting has the potential to offend other people's feelings because this speech seems to discriminate (belittle), marginalize (marginalize), and subordinate (demean) the socio-cultural status of other people. In the context of religious beliefs, every human being can respect and understand different religious beliefs and practices. This is in line with the concept of multicultural education which emphasizes the importance of respecting various religious beliefs. Forcing students to practice another religion does not respect the individual's beliefs and shows a lack of appreciation for religious diversity. Furthermore, there were also cases of pejorative calling of parents' names and their professions, which had the potential to offend other students' feelings; with the sentence: "Your mother is a stall keeper." Furthermore, in the context of mentioning the names of parents and their profession, these pejorative utterances lead to marginalization and subordination of one's profession. It is known that every human being is responsible for their respective profession, and noble values will be predicated on humans who carry out their profession seriously, responsibly and consistently as long as the profession does not violate applicable norms, ethics and rules; not on the type of profession. This is in line with the concept of multicultural forms of education which focus on developing empathy by trying to understand the feelings and experiences of friends from different backgrounds and respecting the feelings of friends who may have different views or habits.

### **Multicultural Distinctions, Multiculturality and Multiculturalism**

Multicultural refers to the diversity of cultures, values, and traditions within a society or community. A multicultural approach increases awareness of respecting and accepting differences in ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural backgrounds in order to create harmony and cooperation in life together (Sativa, dkk. 2024). Furthermore, multiculturalism occurs when a society or community respects and recognizes the diversity of different cultures, values and backgrounds. Education based on multiculturalism is a necessity, and if it is not realized immediately, this could have fatal consequences. Multicultural education is a prerequisite that cannot be ignored (Dewi, 2020). This includes being open to differences, promoting tolerance, and creating space for loyalist groups to maintain their cultural identity and traditions. Finally, multiculturalism is a strategy or policy that encourages recognition, appreciation and coexistence of various cultural or ethnic groups in a society.

The goal is to create an inclusive environment, respect diversity, encourage intercultural conversation, and prevent discrimination against certain groups. So within the scope of education what is needed is the scope of multicultural education, not multiculturalism or multiculturalism. Why, because the students are Indonesian citizens, they have experienced differences in ethnicity, race, religion, culture since they were outside the home and finally met with cultural differences and students must be equipped with how to behave in a society where there is a diversity of cultures, values, , and traditions in a society or community.

Regarding multicultural differences, researchers observed learning activities where multicultural differences were not visible in learning because the teacher provided an effective influence. Multicultural parenting is very good for classroom learning. In PPKn classes, teachers emphasize the importance of a multicultural approach, with the symbol of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika which has various meanings but remains united, always related to the concept of

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika and why we were created by Allah, even though we have differences in ethnicity, nation and others. The teaching given by parents influences children's attitudes at school. Therefore, teachers must be sensitive to relationships with students. Relational principles greatly influence the development of multicultural cultural values. Therefore, in classroom learning activities, teachers need to emphasize material based on multicultural values so that students' thinking and understanding about diversity can be well formed. Learning methods and methods in the classroom are one way to guide students about the value of diversity (Teologi & Pendidikan, 2023). Differences in multicultural attitudes are visible outside of class hours, the application of multicultural education may not be as intensive as in the classroom. Students have more free time and the lack of supervision from teachers allows negative behavior such as making jokes that offend beliefs/religions to appear more frequently and cases of pejorative calling of parents' names and their professions are also found, thereby potentially offending other students' feelings.

### **Forms of Multicultural Education in Elementary Schools (SD)**

Multicultural education is a form of education that recognizes and respects diversity and treats every individual equally regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, social class or culture (Izzah, 2020). Through this education, students are taught to avoid discrimination, understand tolerance, respect other people's views, build empathy, and create a culture of mutual respect. This approach aims to promote equality and social justice in the school environment (Murzal.2019).

The application of multicultural attitudes to students in elementary schools has great significance in forming a generation that has tolerance and respect for diversity (Umi Nadhiroh & Anas Ahmadi.2024.). The following are several forms of multicultural attitudes that can be implemented by students in elementary schools: (1) Respect for differences, where students are taught to respect the differences in culture, religion, language and socio-economic background of their friends and get used to not mocking or looking down on their friends. different. (2) Diversity in Societies, Encouraging students to make friends with friends from various backgrounds and take part in group activities that involve students from various cultures and backgrounds. (3) Respect Traditions and Other Cultures. Students must be taught to appreciate and be interested in the traditions, festivals and culture of their friends and participate in and enjoy activities that celebrate cultural diversity at school. (4) Learning and Sharing, Students are encouraged to share knowledge about their own culture and learn about other cultures and bring food, stories, or traditional items from their culture to show friends. (5) Empathy and Understanding, Developing empathy by trying to understand the feelings and experiences of friends from different backgrounds and respecting the feelings of friends who may have different views or habits. By encouraging these attitudes, students can learn to live harmoniously in a diverse society and become more tolerant and inclusive individuals.

Several important aspects in implementing multicultural education include getting students used to interacting inclusively without discrimination, as well as understanding and respecting other people's opinions (Sopiansyah & Erihardiana, 2021). One of the important keys in a relationship is mutual respect, because without it, it is difficult for mutual love to develop. If there is no appreciation for each other, the relationship tends to be filled with condescension. An example of this respect can be seen in the ability to admire and understand each other (Sondopen et al., 2023).



The educational space is a dynamic arena where schools are a place for the exchange of ideas and views, avoiding discrimination, especially racism, and encouraging understanding beyond tolerance. We will strengthen a culture of mutual respect in accordance with local socio-cultural diversity, as well as develop empathy and sympathy. It will also promote equality and social justice by providing equal access and opportunities for all cultures, ethnicities, and religions, especially in school settings.

### **Barriers to Multiculturalism**

Bullying is an unpleasant act that causes discomfort, sadness and stress for someone, both in real life and online (Rozaliyani et al., 2019). The 2021 National Assessment shows the possibility that 24.4% of students will experience a bullying incident at school (Amin & Mei Wiji Amelia, 2023).

There are factors that cause bullying behavior: (1) Family factors. The family also plays an important role in forming the values, norms and social support of its members. Children rarely communicate with their parents because their parents are busy with work. This indicates that the socialization process between mother and child or child and family is not good. Internal issues within the family hinder the optimal family socialization process, which then disrupts the child's psychological development (Defan Zamathoriq.2019.). (2) Peer factors. Peers can influence understanding, tolerance and acceptance of diversity. Positive relationships between peers can also support inclusion and cooperation in a multicultural school environment. Children in the playgroup have naughty friends. For example, when ethnic or cultural groups tease each other or argue, children tend to imitate their friends' behavior. (3) Mass media factors. Mass media factors in elementary schools can influence children's perceptions, knowledge and attitudes towards diversity (Santi et al., 2021). Media is a means where bullying is often exposed, both through television and other electronic media, which has an impact on the behavior of preschool children. The habit of watching television is related to bullying behavior shown by children (Ummi Bunga Aditya, dkk.2021).

The focus of this research is multicultural barriers encountered in elementary schools. In elementary school, many students are teased by their parents, play physical games, and cause incidents. There are students who dare to report it to the teacher, but there are also those who remain silent and don't say anything. This may be due to threats from teasing friends, so that the person being teased does not dare to report it to the teacher. In interviews, we asked whether their experience of incidents at school made them feel safe. Some of them told researchers that they were afraid of school and did not feel safe or comfortable. When teased, some prefer to think calmly and cry during class. Based on interviews with six participants, the types of bullying that students commonly experience include teasing, threats, insults, harsh words, and physical actions such as hitting, slapping, pinching, and kicking.

One of the speakers shared his personal experience with religious ridicule. The interviewee firmly stated that they committed acts involving religion outside of class hours. When asked if he wanted to retaliate for this act. he firmly refused and realized how painful the experience was for himself, and therefore did not want to repeat it to anyone else.

Research conducted in elementary schools shows that students engage in behavior that includes insulting each other and physical play. This behavior is usually caused by unsupportive school environmental factors, and the high number of cases can be caused by interpersonal conflicts between students. Apart from that, the role of teachers in supervising

and accompanying students in their activities also needs to be considered, because this can influence the occurrence of bullying behavior as well. Enables school teachers to not only teach, but also act as advisors, mentors, and evaluators.

**Table 1. Elementary School Comparison Table**

<b>Ideal</b>	<b>Factual</b>	<b>Solution</b>
All students are open-minded	Not all students show mutual respect for each other's opinions, some are reluctant to accept input from others or even look down on their friends.	To help students become more open in thinking by taking an approach that encourages activity or creativity and providing positive support for each student's efforts to think openly
Students who respect each other	Some students do not appreciate the differences and opinions of other people, and there may be students who do not appreciate the efforts of their friends	Use the time to discuss the importance of mutual respect and how each individual can contribute to creating a positive environment
Students trust each other	Some students feel less trusting of their friends because they have experienced betrayal or lies.	Addressing the issue of mistrust among students requires an approach that focuses on relationship building, effective communication and a supportive environment
Students who have good communication skills	Students do not show polite attitudes and use less standard language when communicating with their friends.	Establish class rules that emphasize the importance of mutual respect and courtesy

## CONCLUSION

It is important for primary schools to prioritize a multicultural approach to education, which promotes respect for cultural differences and builds awareness of equal rights for all students. This will help create an inclusive learning environment and support the positive development of students in an increasingly multicultural society. Multicultural problems in elementary schools are broadly divided into 2 forms, (1) verbal form, (2) action form. In verbal form there are impolite words, degrading words and unsympathetic words, while in action form there are some students who make fun of each other, threaten, insult, harsh words and physical actions such as hitting, slapping, pinching, and kicking physical play such as hitting each other and fighting.

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