

CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY IN AMBON

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ABSTRACT

Child-Friendly School management is essential for ensuring that students learn in safe, inclusive, participatory, and violence-free environments. This study analyzes the management of Child-Friendly Schools at SD Xaverius A1 Ambon, SMP Negeri 20 Ambon, and SMK Negeri 6 Ambon through a qualitative multiple case study. Data were collected through interviews, observation, document analysis, and supporting questionnaires involving principals, teachers, guidance and counseling teachers, school committees, parents, and students. The data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana interactive model through within-case and cross-case analysis. The findings show that all three schools have implemented Child-Friendly School management, but with different levels of institutional maturity. SD Xaverius A1 Ambon demonstrated the strongest formalization through an official decree and structured programs; SMK Negeri 6 Ambon showed strong coordination, character development, and protection in vocational learning; while SMP Negeri 20 Ambon still needed stronger monitoring, documentation, behavioral guidance, and parental involvement. The novelty of this study lies in its cross-level comparison, which shows that Child-Friendly School management must be both participatory and adaptive to students' developmental stages and school contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right of every child and requires schools to provide learning environments that are safe, inclusive, non-discriminatory, and supportive of children's dignity. The Child-Friendly School program, known in Indonesia as Sekolah Ramah Anak (SRA), is one policy instrument for translating the principles of child protection, participation, non-discrimination, and the best interests of the child into school governance (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak Republik Indonesia, 2015; UNICEF Indonesia, 2021; United Nations, 1989). In this framework, schools are not only places for academic instruction but also social institutions responsible for preventing violence, bullying, intimidation, neglect, and discriminatory treatment.

Previous studies have shown that Child-Friendly Schools are associated with safer learning climates, positive discipline, teacher commitment, anti-violence behavior, and student character development (Azizah et al., 2024;

Fauzan et al., 2024; Konita & Setyowati, 2025; Murhum & Cetta, 2023; Nofitasari et al., 2023). Other studies emphasize the importance of teacher roles, school leadership, parental participation, and the organization of child-friendly programs (Hamidaturrohman et al., 2020; Sari & Wulandari, 2021; Sugiyati & Siswanto, 2023; Wuryandani et al., 2020). However, many of these studies still focus on single schools, one educational level, or normative descriptions of policy implementation. Consequently, there is still limited evidence on how Child-Friendly School management differs across elementary, junior secondary, and vocational school contexts within the same local setting.

This gap is important because the management of Child-Friendly Schools cannot be reduced to the existence of formal policy documents. From an educational management perspective, the program requires planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and evaluation that are consistently embedded in daily school culture (Terry, 2019). It also requires sensitivity to students' developmental stages. Elementary students need emotional security and habit formation, junior secondary students need stronger guidance in peer interaction and adolescent behavior, while vocational students require protection not only in classrooms but also in practical learning spaces. Therefore, a cross-level analysis is needed to clarify why some schools are more effective than others in translating child-friendly principles into institutional practice.

This study focuses on three schools in Ambon City: SD Xaverius A1 Ambon, SMP Negeri 20 Ambon, and SMK Negeri 6 Ambon. The three cases represent different educational levels and management challenges. SD Xaverius A1 Ambon reflects a more formally recognized Child-Friendly School with structured programs. SMP Negeri 20 Ambon represents the complexity of junior secondary education, where student behavior guidance, bullying prevention, and parental involvement are central concerns. SMK Negeri 6 Ambon represents vocational education, where child protection must be integrated with character development, counseling services, and safety in practical learning activities.

The novelty of this study lies in its multiple case comparison across school levels in one city context. Rather than treating Child-Friendly School implementation as a uniform program, this study examines how planning, organizing, implementation strategies, supervision, evaluation, and contextual constraints vary according to institutional readiness and student characteristics. The objectives of this study are to describe and analyze Child-Friendly School management at SD Xaverius A1 Ambon, SMP Negeri 20 Ambon, and SMK Negeri 6 Ambon, and to formulate a cross-case understanding of participatory and adaptive child protection management in schools.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a multiple case study design. The qualitative approach was selected because the research aimed to understand Child-Friendly School management in natural school contexts, including formal policies, daily interactions, organizational routines, student guidance, and the experiences of school members. The multiple case design was used to compare three schools with different educational levels and implementation characteristics (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

The research sites were selected purposively. SD Xaverius A1 Ambon was selected because it had more advanced formal recognition and structured Child-Friendly School programs. SMP Negeri 20 Ambon was selected because it had implemented several child-friendly policies and activities but still required strengthening in supervision, student guidance, and parental involvement. SMK Negeri 6 Ambon was selected because it represents vocational education, where child-friendly management must address character development, counseling, and safety in practical learning environments.

The participants consisted of six categories: principals, teachers, guidance and counseling teachers, school committee members, parents, and students. Principals were included because they hold strategic responsibility for school policy, planning, coordination, and evaluation. Teachers and guidance counselors were involved because they directly implement child-friendly learning, student discipline, counseling, and behavior monitoring. School committees and parents were included to examine family-school collaboration, while students were included as the main beneficiaries of the program. Participant selection used purposive sampling and was continued until the data became repetitive and no major new theme emerged in each case.

Data were collected during the 2026 fieldwork period through in-depth interviews, observation, document analysis, and supporting questionnaires. Interviews were semi-structured and designed to last approximately 30-60 minutes, depending on participant availability and the depth of information provided. Observation focused on school environment, student-teacher interaction, discipline practices, student activities, safety facilities, and child-friendly routines. Document analysis covered Child-Friendly School decrees, school programs, meeting notes, anti-bullying campaigns, student guidance records, activity documentation, and school rules. The supporting questionnaire was not used for statistical generalization; it functioned as a complementary instrument to check the consistency of perceptions among school stakeholders and to support qualitative interpretation.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. The analysis was conducted in two stages. First, within-case analysis was used to understand the management pattern of each school. Second, cross-case analysis was used to identify similarities, differences, and contextual meanings across the three school levels. The main analytical categories were planning, organizing, implementation strategy, supervision and evaluation, supporting factors, and inhibiting factors.

Data credibility was strengthened through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking with selected participants. Interview data were compared with observation notes, school documents, and questionnaire responses. Ethical considerations were applied by explaining the purpose of the research to participants, obtaining voluntary consent, protecting the identities of students and school members, and using the data only for academic purposes. For student participants, the research emphasized non-coercive participation, confidentiality, and respect for children's comfort during the data collection process.

Table 1. Research sites, participants, and data sources

Aspect	SD Xaverius A1 Ambon	SMP Negeri 20 Ambon	SMK Negeri 6 Ambon	Analytical role
Educational level	Elementary school	Junior secondary school	Vocational secondary school	Comparing child-friendly management across developmental stages.
Main participants	Principal, teachers, committee, parents, students	Principal, teachers, guidance counselor, committee, parents, students	Principal, teachers, guidance counselor, committee, parents, students	Capturing perspectives from policy makers, implementers, families, and beneficiaries.
Key documents	SRA decree, school program, activity documentation	School rules, anti-bullying activities, guidance records	Character-building program, counseling records, practical learning safety notes	Validating interview and observation findings.
Main focus	Formalization, school culture, habit formation	Behavior guidance, bullying prevention, parental involvement	Counseling, coordination, character development, practical safety	Explaining differences in implementation maturity.

Aspect	SD Xaverius A1 Ambon	SMP Negeri 20 Ambon	SMK Negeri 6 Ambon	Analytical role
Validation strategy	Triangulation of interviews, documents, observations, and supporting questionnaires	Triangulation of interviews, documents, observations, and supporting questionnaires	Triangulation of interviews, documents, observations, and supporting questionnaires	Strengthening credibility of within-case and cross-case interpretation.

Source: *Field data and cross-case design, 2026.*

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Planning of Child-Friendly School management

The findings show that planning for Child-Friendly School management had been carried out in all three schools, but the level of maturity differed. SD Xaverius A1 Ambon showed the strongest planning because the school had an official Child-Friendly School decree, structured programs, and clearer institutional commitment to creating a safe, comfortable, and inclusive learning environment. The decree functioned not merely as an administrative document but as a formal basis for socialization, school routines, program coordination, and the integration of child-friendly values into daily school culture.

At SMP Negeri 20 Ambon, planning had moved toward Child-Friendly School implementation through school rules, guidance activities, anti-bullying campaigns, and literacy programs. However, the planning process still required stronger documentation, clearer follow-up mechanisms, and more systematic parental involvement. This indicates that the school had already developed awareness and program direction, but its institutionalization was not yet as strong as the elementary case.

SMK Negeri 6 Ambon showed strong planning in relation to student protection, character development, discipline, and vocational learning. As a vocational school, planning was more complex because it needed to consider not only classroom interaction but also student safety in workshops, practical rooms, and extracurricular activities. The empirical evidence from school programs and observation notes indicates that planning at the vocational level must integrate child protection with practical learning risk management.

These findings are consistent with the view that Child-Friendly School implementation depends on management capacity, not only on policy availability (Murhum & Cetta, 2023; Wuryandani et al., 2020). Formal policy strengthens direction, but it becomes effective only when translated into program design, stakeholder roles, and daily routines. The cross-case evidence shows that planning is strongest when it combines formal regulation, participatory involvement, and contextual sensitivity to students' age and school type.

Organizing Child-Friendly School implementation

Organizing refers to the distribution of roles and responsibilities in implementing Child-Friendly School programs. At SD Xaverius A1 Ambon, organizing was supported by a clearer school structure, principal commitment, and teacher participation. The school community built daily routines such as greeting students, maintaining cleanliness, conducting socialization, and applying positive discipline. The existence of formal recognition also strengthened the legitimacy of the organizing process.

At SMP Negeri 20 Ambon, organizing was visible through teacher involvement, guidance counseling, anti-bullying activities, and literacy programs. Nevertheless, coordination among teachers, parents, and school committees still needed improvement. The junior secondary context makes guidance counselors and homeroom teachers particularly important because students are in a transitional adolescent stage that is vulnerable to peer pressure, conflict, and bullying. Without clear coordination, child-friendly programs may become fragmented activities rather than an integrated protection system.

At SMK Negeri 6 Ambon, organizing involved cooperation among the principal, teachers, guidance counselors, committee, and parents. The vocational setting required coordination across classrooms, workshops, practice rooms, and extracurricular spaces. This broader scope shows that child-friendly management at vocational schools must protect students both psychologically and physically. Organizing therefore depends on role clarity, communication, and the capacity of school units to respond quickly when student problems occur.

The cross-case finding indicates that role clarity is a decisive factor in Child-Friendly School management. Schools with clearer teams, communication channels, and stakeholder participation showed stronger implementation. Conversely, when parental involvement, documentation, or monitoring roles were unclear, the program became less optimal. This supports previous research showing that school leadership and teacher collaboration are central to the sustainability of child-friendly programs (Fauzan et al., 2024; Sari & Wulandari, 2021).

Implementation strategies of Child-Friendly Schools

The implementation of Child-Friendly School programs appeared through different strategies in the three schools. SD Xaverius A1 Ambon implemented child-friendly values through school culture, socialization, character development, parent communication, and safe routines. Observation evidence showed that the school environment was managed to be clean, orderly, and supportive of students' comfort. Habits such as greeting, smiling, and building warm interaction contributed to a more humanistic school climate.

SMP Negeri 20 Ambon implemented child-friendly values through guidance activities, anti-bullying campaigns, morning welcoming activities, and literacy programs. These activities indicate that the school was not passive in responding to child protection issues. However, the school still needed more intensive monitoring during breaks, stronger supervision of peer interaction, and more consistent parent-school communication. At this level, bullying prevention and adolescent behavior guidance become central because students begin to negotiate identity, peer influence, and emotional control more intensively.

SMK Negeri 6 Ambon implemented Child-Friendly School management through character coaching, teacher coordination, counseling services, and protection-oriented strategies. Document and observation evidence showed that guidance counselors and teachers played an important role in monitoring discipline, resolving conflict, and communicating with parents. This indicates that the school had developed a responsive culture, although limitations remained in counseling facilities and in controlling peer and social media influence outside school.

The implementation strategies in the three cases show that Child-Friendly Schools must be adapted to developmental stages. Elementary schools emphasize habit formation and emotional safety. Junior secondary schools require stronger behavior guidance, anti-bullying prevention, and adolescent discipline. Vocational schools need to integrate counseling, character education, peer interaction management, and physical safety in practical learning spaces. This finding extends earlier research by showing that the same policy label, Child-Friendly School, produces different managerial demands across school levels (Azizah et al., 2024; Konita & Setyowati, 2025; UNESCO, 2019).

Table 2. Empirical evidence of Child-Friendly School management across cases

Management dimension	SD Xaverius A1 Ambon	SMP Negeri 20 Ambon	SMK Negeri 6 Ambon	Meaning of evidence
Planning	SRA decree, structured program, routine socialization	School rules, anti-bullying activities, literacy program	Character-building plan and safety-oriented vocational activities	Formalization and program design influence implementation maturity.
Organizing	Principal and teachers coordinate child-friendly routines	Guidance counselor and homeroom teacher roles need strengthening	Coordination among teachers, counselors, committee, and parents	Role clarity determines whether the program

Management dimension	SD Xaverius A1 Ambon	SMP Negeri 20 Ambon	SMK Negeri 6 Ambon	Meaning of evidence
				becomes systematic or fragmented.
Implementation	Positive school culture, clean environment, safe routines	Guidance, anti-bullying campaign, student monitoring	Counseling, conflict resolution, discipline, practical learning safety	Strategies differ according to age, school type, and risk profile.
Supervision	Teacher observation and communication with parents	Monitoring exists but follow-up and documentation need strengthening	Active monitoring through teachers and guidance counselors	Supervision is effective when connected to measurable improvement.
Main limitation	Inclusive facilities and documentation need improvement	Student behavior, parental involvement, and break-time monitoring	Counseling facilities and external peer/social media influence	Child-friendly governance must address internal and external risk factors.

Source: Interview, observation, document analysis, and supporting questionnaire synthesis, 2026.

Supervision and evaluation

Supervision and evaluation were conducted in all schools, but the level of consistency differed. SD Xaverius A1 Ambon had stronger program orientation because it already had formal recognition and more structured implementation. Evaluation was conducted through school activities, teacher observation, and communication with parents. However, the school still needed to strengthen program documentation, training records, and inclusive facility improvement so that the program would be sustainable and auditable.

At SMP Negeri 20 Ambon, supervision and evaluation had been implemented but required stronger consistency and follow-up. The school had activities related to anti-bullying and student guidance, but monitoring of particular school areas and student behavior during informal times still needed improvement. In this context, supervision should not only be administrative; it must also focus on student safety, peer interaction, early detection of risky behavior, and communication with families.

At SMK Negeri 6 Ambon, supervision was carried out by the principal, teachers, guidance counselors, and homeroom teachers through monitoring student behavior, discipline, and social interaction. The vocational context requires supervision in classroom and practical learning spaces. The findings indicate that counseling services and teacher coordination helped the school respond to conflict and student problems, but more adequate counseling facilities and stronger monitoring of external influences remained necessary.

Cross-case analysis shows that evaluation becomes meaningful when connected to program improvement. The weakness found in the three schools is not the absence of evaluation, but the need to make evaluation more systematic, documented, and followed by measurable action plans. Evaluation should include indicators of school safety, student participation, bullying prevention, parent involvement, counseling services, inclusive facilities, and follow-up mechanisms.

Supporting and inhibiting factors

The main supporting factor in the implementation of Child-Friendly Schools across the three schools was cooperation among principals, teachers, guidance counselors, school committees, parents, and students. At SD

Xaverius A1 Ambon, support was visible in the good relationship between teachers and students and in parental support for school activities. At SMP Negeri 20 Ambon, support came from teacher cooperation and guidance counseling services. At SMK Negeri 6 Ambon, support was reinforced by relatively adequate facilities, structured programs, and coordination among school members.

Another supporting factor was the development of positive school culture. Repeated routines such as greeting students, conducting socialization, campaigning against bullying, providing counseling, and building respectful communication helped create a sense of safety and belonging. These practices indicate that Child-Friendly School management is not built only through written policy but also through daily behavior that gradually shapes the school climate (Hamidaturrohman et al., 2020; UNICEF Indonesia, 2021).

The inhibiting factors were also shared across the three schools. The most common obstacles were peer influence outside school, diverse student characteristics, limited facilities, uneven parental participation, and weak documentation in some program areas. In SMK Negeri 6 Ambon, social environment and social media influenced student behavior outside school. At SMP Negeri 20 Ambon, adolescent behavior made supervision more complex. At SD Xaverius A1 Ambon, inclusive facilities and documentation still needed strengthening.

These findings imply that Child-Friendly School management should connect internal school programs with external family and community environments. If the school environment is safe but the external environment remains risky, child protection efforts will not be complete. Cooperation with parents, community leaders, health institutions, child protection agencies, and local government is therefore needed to make Child-Friendly School implementation more sustainable.

Discussion: From formal policy to participatory and adaptive child protection management

The findings show that the success of Child-Friendly School management is not determined only by the existence of formal policy documents. Formal recognition is important because it provides legal legitimacy and institutional direction, as seen at SD Xaverius A1 Ambon. However, implementation also requires the active participation of teachers, students, parents, and school committees. SMK Negeri 6 Ambon demonstrates that strong coordination and character-building strategies can produce effective implementation even when formal recognition continues to develop toward a higher level.

The comparison among the three schools also shows that Child-Friendly School management is sensitive to educational level. Elementary school management focuses on emotional safety, habit formation, and basic discipline. Junior secondary school management requires stronger behavioral guidance because students are entering a more complex adolescent phase. Vocational school management requires integration between child protection, counseling, discipline, and safety in practical learning. This means that a single uniform model of Child-Friendly School implementation is insufficient for all school levels.

The theoretical contribution of this study is the formulation of a participatory-adaptive management understanding of Child-Friendly Schools. Participatory management ensures that principals, teachers, parents, students, and committees become part of the protection system. Adaptive management ensures that programs respond to the characteristics of each level of education and to the specific risks faced by students. The integration of these two principles strengthens the argument that child-friendly school governance is a contextual management process, not merely a compliance checklist.

Table 3. Cross-case synthesis of Child-Friendly School management

Dimension	SD Xaverius A1 Ambon	SMP Negeri 20 Ambon	SMK Negeri 6 Ambon	Cross-case meaning
Planning	Most structured; official decree and clearer program direction.	Good, but needs stronger documentation and parental involvement.	Very good; aligned with character development and vocational safety.	Formal policy strengthens implementation, but planning must fit each school level.

Dimension	SD Xaverius A1 Ambon	SMP Negeri 20 Ambon	SMK Negeri 6 Ambon	Cross-case meaning
Organizing	Clearer school commitment and stakeholder participation.	Teacher and guidance counselor roles exist but need stronger coordination.	Strong coordination among teachers, guidance counselors, committee, and parents.	Role clarity determines program effectiveness.
Implementation	Positive school culture, socialization, and safe routines.	Anti-bullying campaign, literacy, and student guidance activities.	Character coaching, counseling, and protection-oriented school strategies.	Implementation differs according to student age and school type.
Supervision and evaluation	Good but needs stronger documentation and inclusive facility records.	Needs stronger monitoring, documentation, and follow-up.	Active monitoring through teachers and guidance counselors.	Evaluation should produce measurable action plans.
Main limitation	Inclusive facilities and documentation.	Student behavior, monitoring, and parental involvement.	Counseling facilities and external peer/social media influence.	Child-friendly management requires contextual adaptation and external support.

Source: Cross-case analysis of research findings, 2026.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Child-Friendly School management at SD Xaverius A1 Ambon, SMP Negeri 20 Ambon, and SMK Negeri 6 Ambon has generally been implemented well, although the degree of optimization differs across educational levels. SD Xaverius A1 Ambon demonstrated the strongest formalization through an official decree and structured programs. SMK Negeri 6 Ambon showed strong implementation through character development, counseling, stakeholder coordination, and protection in vocational learning. SMP Negeri 20 Ambon had fulfilled most Child-Friendly School indicators but still needed stronger supervision, behavioral guidance, documentation, and parental involvement.

The main implication is that schools and local education authorities should not treat Child-Friendly School implementation as a one-time administrative requirement. The program needs participatory planning, clear role distribution, daily child-friendly routines, systematic monitoring, documented evaluation, and collaboration with families and community actors. Schools should also adjust strategies to student developmental stages: habit formation for elementary students, peer interaction and bullying prevention for junior secondary students, and counseling plus practical learning safety for vocational students.

The limitation of this study is that it focuses on three schools in one city, so the findings cannot be generalized statistically to all schools. Future research should involve more schools, compare urban and rural contexts, and combine qualitative findings with broader quantitative measurement of school safety, student participation, and child protection outcomes.

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