

Strategies of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Addressing Bullying Behavior Among Students

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ABSTRACT

Bullying is a negative behavior that frequently occurs in school environments and affects students' psychological, social, and academic development. In faith-based schools such as MIM Kebondalem, the internalization of Islamic values is expected to prevent such behavior. This study aims to analyze the strategies of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in addressing bullying. The research employs a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data sources include the principal, PAI teachers, students, and parents, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The analysis is conducted descriptively through data reduction, data display, and verification. The findings reveal that PAI teachers implement holistic strategies grounded in religious values, such as habituating noble character, providing exemplary behavior, offering moral advice, and applying educational sanctions in preventive, curative, and persuasive ways. These strategies are supported by school programs and parental involvement. In conclusion, these strategies are effective in shaping Islamic character and can serve as a model for addressing bullying in faith-based schools.

Keywords: Bullying, Islamic Religious Education, Teacher Strategies, Case Study, Student Character.

I. Introduction

Education plays a strategic role in shaping students' character, morals, and personality. It is not only aimed at transmitting knowledge but also at instilling fundamental moral and social values essential for societal life. In this context, schools function as social laboratories where ethical values and character are tested and practiced. However, in reality, not all values taught are fully accepted or internalized by students. One of the social phenomena that poses a significant challenge in education today is bullying, defined as aggressive behavior carried out intentionally and repeatedly by individuals or groups against others perceived as weaker, whether physically, verbally, or socially. Bullying can negatively affect students' psychological, social, and academic development, including decreased self-confidence, emotional disturbances, and declining academic performance. The phenomenon of bullying occurs not only in public schools but also in religious-based educational institutions such as Islamic elementary schools (madrasah ibtidaiyah). This indicates that religious instruction alone is insufficient to build strong character; systematic, value-based teacher strategies are required to guide students. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers bear moral and pedagogical responsibilities to cultivate noble character through a holistic approach that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Islamic values such as noble character (*akhlakul karimah*), mutual respect (*tasamuh*), and the prohibition of injustice serve as philosophical foundations for addressing bullying behavior.

Previous studies reinforce the urgency of PAI teachers' strategies in handling bullying. For instance, Sari (2021) found that the implementation of Islamic character-based learning can reduce aggressive behavior among elementary school students. Similarly, Putri (2020) demonstrated that habituation of moral values in PAI learning is effective in preventing social conflicts among students. Furthermore, Ahmad et al. (2019) emphasized that the teacher's role as a role model and mentor has a positive correlation with controlling negative behavior in school environments. These findings indicate that PAI teachers' strategies are not merely instructional methods but also represent the practical implementation of religious values in students' social lives. Within the philosophical framework of Islamic education, teachers serve not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as moral and spiritual guides who shape students' character in alignment with universal values and religious teachings. Strategies employed by PAI teachers to address bullying may include preventive approaches through the habituation of moral values; curative approaches through case handling, guidance, and counseling; repressive approaches through educational sanctions; and persuasive approaches through role modeling and moral advice. The integration of these strategies is expected to create a safe, comfortable, and conducive school environment for character development.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach, combining Islamic value-based bullying intervention strategies with a dialectical analysis of multiple data sources (teachers, students, principals, and parents) into a comprehensive framework. Unlike previous studies that tend to focus partially on instructional or value-habituation aspects, this research highlights the integration of preventive, curative, repressive, and persuasive strategies implemented systematically within a religious school context. Additionally, this study emphasizes the collaborative role between school and family as a key factor in successfully addressing bullying. The rationale for conducting this research stems from the continued occurrence of bullying cases in madrasah environments, which are ideally spaces for internalizing Islamic values. Therefore, a more contextual, applicable, and sustainable strategic model is needed to foster students' character development. Based on the above description, the research question is: "How do Islamic Religious Education teachers implement strategies to address bullying behavior among students at MIM Kebondalem?"

II. Literature Review

Bullying is an aggressive behavior carried out repeatedly with the intention of harming individuals perceived as weaker, whether physically, verbally, or socially. According to Dan Olweus, bullying has three main characteristics: the intention to harm, repetition, and an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. In modern educational contexts, bullying affects not only the victims but also the overall school climate, including reduced feelings of safety and the quality of learning (Smith & Berkun, 2020). Recent studies show that victims of bullying are more likely to experience emotional disturbances, anxiety, and decreased academic performance (Hymel & Swearer, 2019). From the perspective of Islamic education, character building (*akhlaq*) is the primary goal of the educational process. Values such as *akhlaqul karimah*, *tasamuh* (tolerance), and the prohibition of injustice form the basis for harmonious social interactions. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play a strategic role in instilling these values through learning processes that encompass not only cognitive but also affective and psychomotor domains (Rahman, 2018). This aligns with the concept of character education, which emphasizes the internalization of values through role modeling and habituation in daily life (Lickona, 2015).

Strategies for addressing bullying in schools are generally categorized into preventive, curative, and repressive approaches. Preventive strategies involve the habituation of positive values and the creation of a conducive school culture. Curative strategies include counseling and guidance for both perpetrators and victims, while repressive strategies involve the application of educational sanctions (Wiyani, 2017). In the context of madrasah, these strategies need to be integrated with Islamic values to provide stronger moral and spiritual foundations. Several previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of religion-based strategies in reducing bullying behavior. Sari (2021) found that integrating Islamic character education into learning can reduce aggressive behavior among elementary school students. Putri (2020) also stated that

habituating noble character through religious activities can create a more harmonious school environment. Moreover, Ahmad et al. (2019) emphasized that teacher role modeling significantly influences student behavior and reduces bullying. Thus, it can be concluded that holistic, value-based PAI teacher strategies play an important role in preventing and addressing bullying in school environments.

III. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative method with a case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of Islamic Religious Education teachers' strategies in addressing bullying behavior among students at MIM Kebondalem. The case study approach is chosen because it enables researchers to explore real-life phenomena within their context comprehensively and to obtain a holistic understanding of PAI teachers' strategic practices. The data sources in this study include the school principal, Islamic Religious Education teachers, students, and parents/guardians. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and school documentation. Interviews were conducted to explore the experiences, perspectives, and efforts of PAI teachers, while observations were carried out to directly examine teacher-student interactions and bullying intervention practices in the school. Documentation included activity records, school programs, and archives related to student behavior. The data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative techniques through stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. This approach allows the researcher to present a systematic and comprehensive depiction of teacher strategies and to understand the factors influencing the success of efforts to address bullying in the school environment.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

This study reveals that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at MIM Kebondalem implement various strategies to address bullying behavior among students. Based on interviews with PAI teachers, it is evident that the primary approach employed is the habituation of Islamic moral values, such as mutual respect, cooperation, and self-restraint from aggressive behavior. Teachers emphasize that these strategies are not only delivered theoretically in the classroom but are also integrated into daily activities, thereby becoming part of the school culture. Interviews with the school principal support these findings. The principal stated that PAI teachers play a central role in shaping students' character and supervising their interactions at school. Furthermore, the principal highlighted that teachers' strategies are supported by structured school programs, such as group guidance activities, rewards for positive behavior, and regular monitoring of students with a history of aggressive conduct.

Data from parents and guardians underscore the importance of communication between school and home in addressing bullying. Parents reported that their involvement in guiding their children significantly supports teachers in implementing strategies, for instance through regular reports and advice aligned with the religious values taught at school. This indicates that PAI teachers' strategies do not stand alone but are part of a collaborative effort between school and family. Classroom and extracurricular observations reveal that PAI teachers actively monitor student interactions. Teachers directly address inappropriate behavior and provide students with opportunities to correct their mistakes. Observations also show that teachers apply persuasive approaches, such as offering moral advice and demonstrating exemplary behavior, to guide students in internalizing Islamic values in their daily conduct.

Findings from school documentation further strengthen the interview and observational data. Records of activities, student guidance reports, and character-building programs demonstrate a systematic approach, ranging from the "Model Student" program to regular group counseling sessions. These documents

indicate that PAI teachers' strategies are not incidental but are carefully planned and consistently implemented to foster positive student behavior.

The dialectical analysis of multiple data sources indicates the integration of teacher strategies, school programs, and parental support. For example, educational sanctions administered by teachers are documented in school programs, and their impact on student behavior is directly observed. This suggests that PAI teachers' strategies are more effective when implemented within a collaborative and value-based framework. Moreover, the findings show that PAI teachers' strategies are holistic, encompassing preventive, curative, and persuasive efforts. Preventive approaches are carried out through early habituation of noble character; curative approaches through handling bullying cases; and persuasive approaches through role modeling and moral guidance. These combined approaches demonstrate how Islamic educational values are practically implemented in students' daily lives. Thus, the results confirm that the success of PAI teachers in addressing bullying behavior at MIM Kebondalem depends not only on individual teacher competence but also on the integration of pedagogical strategies, school program support, and parental involvement. A consistent, value-based approach contributes to the creation of a safe, comfortable, and conducive environment for students' character development.

4.2. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at MIM Kebondalem implement a comprehensive and value-based approach to addressing bullying behavior among students. One of the primary strategies identified is the habituation of Islamic moral values such as mutual respect, cooperation, empathy, and self-restraint. This approach is closely aligned with character education theory, which emphasizes that moral values are not merely taught cognitively but must be internalized through consistent practice and repetition in daily life (Lickona, 2015). In this context, habituation (*ta'dib*) becomes a central mechanism in shaping students' behavior, as repeated exposure to positive values fosters moral awareness and self-regulation. Furthermore, within the framework of Islamic education, the cultivation of *akhlaqul karimah* (noble character) is considered a fundamental objective, reinforcing the idea that education is inherently moral and transformative (Al-Attas, 2018).

The central role of PAI teachers, as highlighted in the findings, underscores their function not only as educators but also as moral and spiritual guides. This is consistent with the concept of the teacher in Islamic pedagogy, where teachers are regarded as *murabbi* (nurturers) and *mu'allim* (instructors) who are responsible for the holistic development of students (Rahman, 2018). Their responsibilities extend beyond the transmission of knowledge to include the supervision of student interactions, the cultivation of ethical behavior, and the modeling of exemplary conduct. This aligns with Bandura's social learning theory, which posits that individuals learn behaviors through observation and imitation of role models (Bandura, 2016). In this regard, the exemplary behavior (*uswah hasanah*) demonstrated by teachers becomes a powerful instrument in preventing and addressing bullying, as students are more likely to emulate positive conduct exhibited by authority figures.

In addition, the presence of structured school programs significantly enhances the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies. These programs provide a systematic and institutionalized framework for character education, ensuring that moral values are consistently reinforced across various school activities. According to Berkowitz and Bier (2014), effective character education requires a comprehensive approach that integrates curriculum, school culture, and policy. The findings of this study support this view, as the integration of formal programs such as religious activities, character-building sessions, and behavioral monitoring creates a cohesive environment that discourages bullying behavior. This institutional commitment demonstrates that sustainable character development cannot rely solely on individual teacher efforts but must be supported by school-wide initiatives.

Parental involvement also emerges as a crucial factor in addressing bullying behavior. The study findings indicate that effective communication and collaboration between schools and families contribute to

consistent value transmission and behavioral guidance. This supports Epstein's framework of school-family-community partnerships, which emphasizes that student development is most effective when there is alignment between home and school environments (Epstein, 2018). In the context of Islamic education, the family is considered the first and primary institution of moral development, making parental involvement essential in reinforcing the values taught at school. When parents actively participate in guiding and monitoring their children's behavior, the likelihood of behavioral inconsistencies, including bullying, can be significantly reduced.

Observational findings further reveal that teachers actively monitor student interactions and intervene when necessary. The use of persuasive approaches, such as providing moral advice (*nasihat*) and demonstrating positive behavior, reflects the principles of Islamic pedagogy. Persuasion in this context is not merely corrective but also educative, aiming to develop students' moral reasoning and self-awareness. This approach is consistent with Kohlberg's theory of moral development, which suggests that individuals progress through stages of moral reasoning when guided by ethical reflection and dialogue (Kohlberg, 2017). By allowing students to reflect on their actions and correct their mistakes, teachers facilitate the development of internal moral control rather than relying solely on external punishment.

Moreover, the study highlights the use of educational sanctions as part of a balanced strategy in addressing bullying. These sanctions are not punitive in nature but are designed to promote learning and behavioral improvement. This approach aligns with restorative discipline practices, which focus on repairing harm and fostering accountability rather than imposing strict punishment (Morrison, 2016). In the Islamic educational perspective, this method resonates with the concept of *tarbiyah*, which emphasizes guidance, correction, and moral growth. By combining persuasive and corrective measures, teachers are able to address bullying in a way that is both firm and compassionate. The documentation data further demonstrate that bullying intervention strategies at MIM Kebondalem are systematically implemented through structured and well-documented programs. This finding reinforces the importance of institutional support in sustaining character education initiatives. According to Nucci and Narvaez (2014), effective moral education requires consistency, continuity, and integration across all aspects of the educational system. The existence of clear policies, programs, and documentation ensures that anti-bullying efforts are not incidental but are embedded within the school's culture and operational framework. This systematic approach enhances the sustainability and scalability of the strategies.

The integration of multiple data sources in this study highlights the effectiveness of a collaborative and holistic approach in addressing bullying. The alignment between teacher practices, school policies, and parental involvement creates a comprehensive ecosystem that supports students' moral development. This finding is consistent with previous studies that emphasize the importance of a whole-school approach in managing student behavior (Smith & Berkun, 2020). Such an approach recognizes that bullying is a complex social phenomenon that requires coordinated efforts from multiple stakeholders. Furthermore, the study confirms that the strategies employed by PAI teachers are holistic in nature, encompassing preventive, curative, and persuasive dimensions. Preventive strategies focus on instilling moral values and creating a positive school climate that discourages bullying from occurring. Curative strategies involve addressing existing cases through counseling, guidance, and conflict resolution. Persuasive strategies emphasize moral education through advice, role modeling, and reflective practices. This integrated approach reflects the practical application of Islamic educational values in real-life contexts, where moral development is viewed as a continuous and dynamic process (Al-Attas, 2018). In conclusion, the findings of this study demonstrate that the effectiveness of PAI teachers' strategies in addressing bullying is determined by the synergy between pedagogical approaches, institutional support, and family involvement. A consistent, collaborative, and value-based approach not only reduces bullying behavior but also fosters a safe, supportive, and morally grounded school environment. This environment is conducive to the holistic development of students, enabling them to grow into individuals who embody ethical values and social responsibility. The study thus reinforces the significance of integrating Islamic moral principles with contemporary educational strategies in addressing behavioral challenges in schools.

V. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education teachers at MIM Kebondalem implement holistic and value-based strategies in addressing bullying behavior among students. These strategies include the habituation of noble character, role modeling, moral guidance, and the application of educational sanctions, carried out through preventive, curative, and persuasive approaches. The success of these strategies depends not only on teachers' individual competence but also on the integration of school programs, parental support, and student interactions. This consistent and collaborative approach creates a safe, comfortable, and conducive environment for students' character development. PAI teachers' strategies reflect the principles of Islamic education, particularly in fostering moral development through the integration of heart, intellect, and behavior. Teachers act as moral educators who guide students to align their conduct with Islamic values and social norms. This study affirms that the implementation of value-based educational strategies is an effective solution for addressing bullying while also highlighting the importance of collaboration between teachers, schools, and families in shaping positive student behavior.

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