



The Implementation of Gratitude-Based Strategies to Mitigate Envy in Senior High School Students

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Abstract:

This article aims to analyze the process of internalizing gratitude and its role in minimizing envy among tenth-grade students at Miftahul Huda Ngreco Islamic Senior High School. The study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving five students and one Akidah Akhlak teacher. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, supported by triangulation and member checking to ensure validity. The findings show that envy among students appears in three forms, namely envy toward physical appearance and material possessions, academic achievement and intellectual ability, and spiritual quality. The emergence of envy is influenced by social comparison, low self-acceptance, social media exposure, and peer environment. The madrasah internalizes gratitude through instructional integration, reflective learning, habituation, and teacher modeling. The internalization process occurs across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, leading to changes in students' mindset, emotional stability, and actions. The results indicate that gratitude effectively reduces envy by decreasing social comparison, increasing self-acceptance, and fostering positive social relationships. This article implies that gratitude can function as both a religious value and a psychological strategy in character education to minimize negative emotions among students.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional phase characterized by the process of identity formation and self-exploration in various aspects of life (Azizah, 2021). During this stage, social dynamics in the school environment become highly intense and significantly influence students' emotional development. This condition makes adolescents vulnerable to experiencing negative emotions, one of which is envy. This phenomenon is not merely abstract but is evident in students' daily lives, such as feeling envious of higher academic achievements, better facilities, or other non-academic accomplishments. Conceptually, envy is defined as a feeling of displeasure when others possess something one desires, accompanied by feelings of inferiority, low self-esteem, and potential hostility (Hakim et al., 2024). If not properly managed, envy may trigger emotional distress, reduce self-satisfaction,

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and damage social relationships among adolescents (Tara'u et al., 2024). In the long term, this condition may also hinder personal development and weaken individual self-confidence.

The emergence of envy is closely related to the culture of social comparison among adolescents. Festinger (in Noza et al., 2024) explains that individuals are naturally driven to evaluate themselves by comparing with others. In this context, Faturachman (2006) identifies three main aspects of envy such as social comparison, the desire to possess what others have, and feelings of inferiority resulting from unfavorable comparisons. The school environment and peer groups serve as primary settings where this process occurs, as adolescents continuously compare achievements, possessions, and even physical appearance (Azizah, 2021). When adolescents engage in upward comparison, comparing themselves to those perceived as superior, feelings of dissatisfaction and inferiority tend to arise, forming the core of envy (Kwan, 2024). This condition becomes more complex because adolescents' emotional regulation skills are not yet fully developed, making them more susceptible to recurring negative thought patterns.

Despite its prevalence, efforts to address envy in school settings are often not optimal. Educational approaches tend to emphasize the cognitive dimension by introducing moral values theoretically. Students may understand the concepts of right and wrong, including teachings on gratitude, yet such understanding has not been fully internalized into their daily attitudes and behaviors. From the perspective of Imam al-Ghazali, moral values should not remain at the level of knowledge alone but must reach the inner dimension and be manifested in action (Wulandari, 2022). This imbalance between knowledge and practice indicates a gap that requires serious attention in character education.

In this regard, the concept of gratitude offers a relevant and promising solution. In Islam, gratitude consists of three forms: gratitude of the heart (*syukr bi al-qalb*), gratitude expressed verbally (*syukr bi al-lisān*), and gratitude through actions (*syukr bi al-jawāriḥ*). Gratitude is not merely verbal appreciation but involves a deep awareness that all blessings come from Allah SWT, accompanied by the use of these blessings for good deeds and obedience (Wantini & Yakup, 2023). Furthermore, Imam al-Ghazali elaborates gratitude into three hierarchical levels, such as *'ilmu* (knowledge of blessings and their Giver), *ḥāl* (a spiritual state that generates love and inner peace), and *'amal* (good deeds as the manifestation of gratitude), representing a process from understanding to internalization and action (Hakim et al., 2024).

The perspective of positive psychology reinforces this concept by referring to gratitude as a positive emotional state. Emmons & McCullough define gratitude as a psychological condition reflecting feelings of appreciation and thankfulness toward life, including relationships with others, nature, and God (Afandi et al., 2021). Gratitude functions as a moral barometer, moral motivator, and moral reinforcer that encourages positive behavior. Conceptually, gratitude stands in contrast to envy. Gratitude fosters self-acceptance, a sense of sufficiency (*qanā'ah*), and humility (*tawāḍu'*), whereas envy arises from dissatisfaction and negative social comparison. Therefore, the internalization of gratitude has strong potential to reduce envy by promoting positive thinking, emotional stability, and mental resilience, which prevent students from engaging in excessive comparison

and feelings of jealousy (Wantini & Yakup, 2023).

Previous studies have examined gratitude and envy separately. Kwan (2024) found differences in levels of envy between male and female employees, confirming that envy is a common emotion across various contexts, including competitive environments. Mahin (2024) further distinguishes envy into two types: benign envy, which motivates self-improvement, and malicious envy, which leads to the desire to bring others down. Meanwhile, Wantini & Yakup (2023) identified gratitude in the Qur'an and Hadith as a psychological construct encompassing the heart, speech, and actions. Hakim et al. (2024) also demonstrated that gratitude, based on al-Ghazali's framework, can prevent feelings of insecurity, which are among the root causes of envy. However, these studies have not specifically explored how the internalization of gratitude can function as a strategy to minimize envy, particularly within the context of Islamic education. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the process of internalizing gratitude in minimizing envy among tenth-grade students at Miftahul Huda Ngreco Islamic Senior High School.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of internalizing gratitude in minimizing envy among tenth-grade students at Miftahul Huda Ngreco Islamic Senior High School. The participants were selected purposely, consisting of five tenth-grade students who had studied the concept of gratitude in the Akidah Akhlak subject, while the Akidah Akhlak teacher served as a supporting informant. Data were collected through three techniques: in-depth interviews to explore the experiences of students and the teacher, direct observation in the school environment, particularly in the classroom, and documentation in the form of activity photographs. The collected data were analyzed through several stages, namely data reduction by categorizing data based on the themes of gratitude and envy, data display in the form of narrative descriptions, and conclusion drawing that was continuously verified using the theoretical frameworks of al-Ghazali's concept of gratitude, Emmons' gratitude theory, and Festinger's social comparison theory to obtain contextual findings.

The trustworthiness of the data was ensured through four strategies. First, source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from students, the teacher, and documents. Second, technique triangulation was applied by examining the consistency of findings across interviews, observations, and documentation. Third, member checking was carried out by confirming the researcher's interpretations with the informants. Fourth, prolonged engagement was implemented to obtain more consistent and in-depth data (Sahir, 2021). Through these procedures, the process of internalizing gratitude and its role in minimizing envy can be explained in a valid and reliable manner.

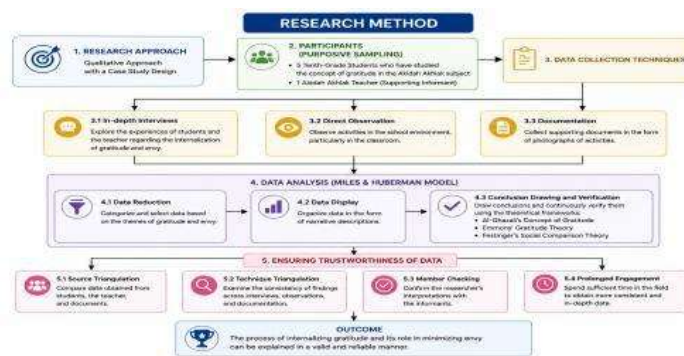


Figure 1. Research Method

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Forms and Factors of Envy Among Tenth-Grade Students at Miftahul Huda Ngreco Islamic Senior High School

Based on in-depth interviews with several students, envy was found to be a real phenomenon within the daily social dynamics at Miftahul Huda Ngreco Islamic Senior High School. Conceptually, envy is understood as a feeling of discomfort and distress when seeing others possess something one desires, which may lead to feelings of inferiority and potential hostility (Faturachman, 2006). This phenomenon does not appear in a single form but varies depending on the object being compared by students in their social lives. Therefore, the forms of envy identified in this article can be classified into three main categories, namely envy toward physical appearance and material possessions, envy toward academic achievement and intellectual ability, and envy toward spiritual quality.

Forms of Envy AMONG Students

Envy Toward Physical Appearance and Material Possessions

The most dominant form of envy among students is related to physical appearance and material possessions. This finding indicates that students engage in social comparison with individuals perceived as superior. From the perspective of Faturachman (2006), this condition falls under upward comparison, which refers to the tendency to compare oneself with those considered better.

One informant, S, expressed her experience, "I used to feel jealous when I saw my friends who were prettier than me and had a more impressive appearance." (S, personal interview, April 22, 2026). This statement shows that others' physical attractiveness becomes a trigger for dissatisfaction with oneself. This condition does not stop at the emotional level but also encourages actions to compete, such as purchasing better skincare products or improving appearance. This indicates that envy is not only emotional but also influences behavior.

This phenomenon is closely related to the concept of body image among adolescents. Research by Susanto & Ferdian (2025) shows that negative body image can trigger feelings of dissatisfaction and inferiority. Conversely, gratitude plays a role in increasing acceptance of one's physical condition, thereby reducing envy. Thus, comparison related to appearance not only generates envy but also reflects low self-acceptance.

In addition to appearance, material possession is also a significant source

of envy. Informant I stated, "I used to be jealous when I saw my friend had a new motorbike" (I, personal interview, April 22, 2026). In this context, material ownership is not only seen as a necessity but also as a symbol of social status. Envy arises when students perceive themselves as being in a lower position compared to others.

This condition is further reinforced by exposure to social media. I explained that the feeling of envy increased after viewing content related to motorcycles. This finding indicates that social media expands the space for social comparison. Azizah (2021) confirms that the intensity of social media use is associated with increased envy among adolescents. Kaseger & Sahrani (2024) also found that social media can intensify social pressure, while gratitude functions as a protective factor against negative emotions arising from such exposure.

Envy Toward Academic Achievement and Intellectual Ability

Besides physical and material aspects, envy also emerges in the academic domain. In the school context, achievement becomes a primary indicator used by students to evaluate themselves and others. This aligns with Festinger's social comparison theory, which states that individuals have a natural drive to evaluate their abilities by comparing themselves with others (Fakhri, 2017).

Informant A stated, *"I used to envy children who were called to the office regarding their achievements. Actually, it's not just about achievements, but when friends are called to the office for school matters, I also sometimes feel jealous."* (A, personal interview, April 22, 2026). This statement shows that envy is not only related to academic outcomes but also to social recognition given by teachers. In other words, students do not only desire achievement but also the status and trust associated with it.

Similarly, AV stated, *"I envy my friends who are smarter, because I'm really ambitious when it comes to grades."* (AV, personal interview, April 22, 2026). This indicates that envy toward intellectual ability has dual implications. On one hand, it may lead to feelings of inferiority. On the other hand, it can serve as motivation for self-improvement. In psychological literature, this condition is known as benign envy, which motivates improvement, as opposed to malicious envy, which tends to be destructive (Mahin, 2024).

Envy Toward Spiritual Quality and Religious Practice

An interesting finding in this article is the emergence of envy in the religious domain. This indicates that the object of envy is not limited to worldly aspects but also includes spiritual dimensions. Informant F stated, *"I myself have never been jealous, for example, when a friend buys a new cellphone or something else, but I am jealous when I see a friend who is consistent in his worship."* (F, personal interview, April 22, 2026). This statement shows that students begin to use spiritual quality as a standard for self-evaluation.

Unlike other forms of envy, envy in the spiritual domain tends to lead to positive motivation. F further stated, *"Yes, I must always be grateful for every potential that I have, if we can only do this, why should we do that?"* (F, personal interview, April 22, 2026). This indicates an awareness not to use others as absolute standards. This finding suggests that envy in the spiritual context can transform into motivation for self-improvement, thus holding constructive

potential. Overall, these three forms of envy indicate that envy among students is rooted in the tendency to compare oneself with others. This comparison then generates dissatisfaction and feelings of inferiority, which form the core of envy.

Factors Triggering the Emergence of Envy

After identifying the forms of envy, the analysis moves to the underlying factors contributing to its emergence. Based on the findings, at least four interrelated factors can be identified;

First, the tendency to engage in social comparison. Almost all forms of envy identified originate from students comparing themselves with others. Festinger explains that social comparison is a natural mechanism for self-evaluation (Fakhri, 2017). However, when this comparison is upward, it leads to feelings of inferiority, which form the basis of envy (Faturachman, 2006). *Second*, low self-acceptance. Students who are unable to accept themselves tend to be more prone to envy. Ashari (2024) found that gratitude significantly reduces feelings of inferiority among adolescents. This is supported by Hardjasasmita et al. (2023), who found that gratitude functions as a protective factor against negative emotions, including feelings of worthlessness. *Third*, the influence of social media. Social media expands the scope of social comparison beyond immediate environments. Students compare themselves not only with peers at school but also with idealized representations of life on social media. This condition increases the risk of envy when not balanced with adequate self-regulation. *Fourth*, peer environment. Intense interactions within the school environment create a competitive atmosphere in academic, physical, and social recognition aspects. This environment indirectly encourages students to continuously evaluate themselves through comparison with peers.

These four factors do not operate independently but interact in shaping students' emotional experiences. The combination of internal conditions and external social pressures strengthens the emergence of envy in various situations. Based on the above explanation, envy among students is not merely an individual issue but is also influenced by cognitive patterns and social environments. This indicates that addressing envy cannot rely solely on cognitive approaches.

Envy is closely related to affective aspects and how individuals interpret their life experiences. Therefore, an approach that touches inner awareness and develops a more stable mental attitude is required. In this context, the internalization of gratitude becomes relevant. Gratitude does not only function as a normative value but also as a psychological mechanism that shifts individual orientation from focusing on deficiencies to appreciating what one has. Research shows that gratitude contributes to psychological well-being and reduces negative emotions among adolescents (Reza et al., 2024).

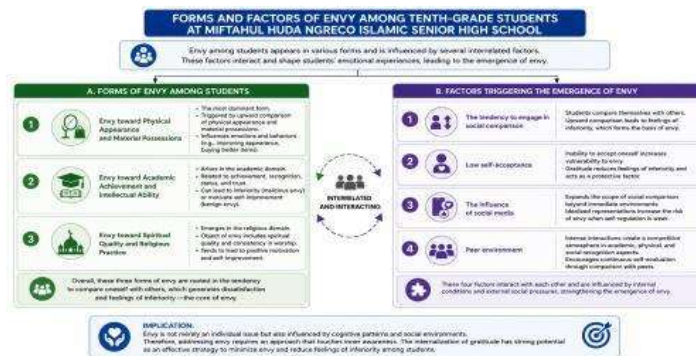


Figure 2. Forms and Factors of Envy among Tenth-Grade Students at Miftahul Huda Ngreco Islamic Senior High School

Figure 2 illustrates that envy among students appears in three main forms, namely envy toward physical appearance and material possessions, academic achievement and intellectual ability, as well as spiritual quality and religious practice. The figure also shows that the emergence of envy is influenced by several interconnected factors, including social comparison, low self-acceptance, social media influence, and peer environment. These findings indicate that envy is shaped not only by individual psychological conditions but also by social interactions and environmental pressures experienced by students.

Thus, the internalization of gratitude has strong potential as an effective strategy to minimize envy. In addition, gratitude has been proven to reduce feelings of inferiority, which are the root of envy (Ashari, 2023). Therefore, the next section will examine how the process of internalizing gratitude is implemented and how it impacts the reduction of envy among students.

DISCUSSION

The Role of the Madrasah in Internalizing Gratitude and Its Impact on Envy Strategies of the Madrasah in Instilling Gratitude

The cultivation of gratitude at Miftahul Huda Ngreco Islamic Senior High School is implemented through the integration of instructional processes and religious habituation. This strategy does not merely emphasize conceptual understanding but is directed toward the continuous formation of students' attitudes and behaviors. Based on an interview with Mrs. Ida as the Akidah Akhlak teacher on April 22, 2026, she stated:

The instillation of an attitude of gratitude applied here is through the subject of Akidah Akhlak, namely through a chapter that discusses commendable behavior in which the concept of gratitude is explained, usually during the Ramadan Islamic boarding school, a book is also taught that discusses gratitude (Mrs. Ida, personal interview, (April 22, 2026).

This statement indicates that gratitude is instilled through two main channels, namely formal classroom instruction and religious activities outside the classroom. This strategy strengthens gratitude as a value that is not only understood theoretically but also practiced within the educational setting. This approach is consistent with Al-Ghazali's concept of gratitude, which emphasizes the integration of knowledge and practice (Hakim et al., 2024).

In the instructional process, the teacher employs methods that facilitate

students' concrete understanding of gratitude. Mrs. Ida explained, "*One of the activities I do to deepen children's understanding of the concept of gratitude is through exemplary stories.*" (Mrs. Ida, personal interview, April 22, 2026).

The use of exemplary stories indicates that learning is not only conceptual but also contextual. Students are encouraged to understand gratitude through real-life examples that are easier to internalize. This approach strengthens both cognitive and affective dimensions, enabling students not only to understand gratitude but also to begin experiencing it.

Furthermore, the teacher connects the material to students' personal experiences to enhance relevance. Mrs. Ida stated, "*Usually, before explaining the concept of gratitude in more detail, I usually ask about experiences they have had, for example, when someone buys something new, what is the first thing they do?*" (Mrs. Ida, personal interview, April 22, 2026).

This finding shows that reflective experience is used as a strategy to build students' awareness of the blessings they receive. In the perspective of positive psychology, this process is closely related to gratitude as a psychological state involving appreciation and thankfulness (Afandi et al., 2021). Fabio et al. (2017) further emphasize that gratitude in educational settings enhances positive relationships and reduces negative emotions. Thus, reflection serves as a bridge between cognitive understanding and emotional awareness. The next stage involves habituating gratitude in students' daily lives within the school environment. Mrs. Ida explained:

Students are trained to apply gratitude in their daily lives, for example verbally by saying hamdalah, then with forms of gratitude in the form of behavior, for example by continuing to do good and avoiding bad language when complaining, and if students commit violations, they will be punished by writing verses from the Qur'an in a book provided by Guidance and Counseling (BK) (Mrs. Ida, personal interview, April 22, 2026).

This statement shows that gratitude is habituated through both verbal expressions and behavioral practices. Such habituation reinforces learned values so that they become embedded in students' daily conduct. Widyaningsih et al. (2022) demonstrate that the habituation of religious values in schools contributes significantly to character formation. Thus, habituation functions as a crucial stage linking knowledge to real actions.

In addition to instructional strategies and habituation, teacher modeling also plays an important role. Based on observations conducted on April 22, 2026, teachers demonstrate gratitude by beginning lessons with expressions of thankfulness for health and the opportunity to learn, and by closing lessons with the recitation of *hamdalah*.



Figure 3. Learning Process of Gratitude Internalization in the Akidah Akhlak Class at Miftahul Huda Ngreco Islamic Senior High School

Figure 3 illustrates the process of gratitude internalization carried out through learning activities in the Akidah Akhlak class at Miftahul Huda Ngreco Islamic Senior High School. Through direct interaction between teachers and students, the values of gratitude are introduced not only conceptually but also through reflection, habituation, and exemplary practices. This finding indicates that teachers act as role models in instilling gratitude. Such modeling strengthens the internalization process because students not only receive theoretical explanations but also directly observe the practice of gratitude in daily interactions. Therefore, the cultivation of gratitude is implemented comprehensively through instruction, reflection, habituation, and role modeling, thereby forming a holistic learning experience for students.

The Process of Internalizing Gratitude among Students

The internalization of gratitude among students occurs gradually and encompasses three main dimensions, namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral. These dimensions indicate that gratitude is not only understood but also felt and expressed through concrete actions. At the cognitive stage, students begin to understand that gratitude is not merely a verbal expression but an awareness that all blessings come from Allah SWT. S stated, "*Instead of being jealous, I should still be grateful for what I have.*" (S, personal interview, April 22, 2026).

This statement indicates a shift in students' mindset from focusing on deficiencies to recognizing what they possess. Gulliford & Morgan (2021) explain that gratitude involves a cognitive process of acknowledging the goodness received. Thus, understanding gratitude encourages students to perceive reality more positively and avoid being trapped in social comparison.

This cognitive change then develops into the affective dimension. Students begin to experience emotional impacts such as increased calmness and reduced envy. Informant I stated, "*When my feelings arise, I will see people whose motorbikes may be less suitable below me and that is how I can be grateful.*" (I, personal interview, April 22, 2026).

This statement shows that students begin to regulate their emotions by redirecting their focus toward aspects that deserve appreciation. Rahmah et al. (2022) found that adolescents with a strong sense of gratitude tend to experience more positive emotions. This aligns with the concept of gratitude as a moral motivator that encourages individuals to respond to life more positively (Afandi et

al., 2021). Thus, gratitude not only influences cognition but also fosters emotional stability.

Changes are also evident in the behavioral dimension. Students begin to express gratitude through concrete actions. Informant A stated:

"Yes, we are grateful. We must also be self-aware of our abilities, because everyone has their own. Rather than being envious, it's better to divert ourselves to other, more positive activities, such as studying hard to achieve success." (A, personal interview, April 22, 2026).

This statement shows that gratitude encourages constructive behavioral changes. Rahmah et al. (2022) assert that gratitude can be expressed through positive actions, such as self-improvement efforts and prosocial behavior. Thus, the internalization of gratitude reaches the stage of practical implementation in students' lives.

These changes also influence how students perceive themselves and others. Informant AV stated, "lebih baik fokus saja terhadap tujuan diri sendiri dan menjadikannya sebagai motivasi" (AV, personal interview, April 22, 2026).

This indicates that students begin shifting their focus from social comparison to self-development. This shift represents a critical point in reducing the tendency toward envy.

The Impact of Gratitude Internalization on Envy

The primary impact of gratitude internalization is the reduction of envy among students. This change is reflected in several interconnected aspects.

First, the decrease in social comparison tendencies. Informant S stated that "sikap Envy yang selama ini muncul ketika melihat orang lain yang lebih 'wah' atau pun cantik dapat teratasi dengan pengurangan dari yang awalnya sikap envy dengan point 10 menjadi 3 point saja" (S, personal interview, April 22, 2026).

This indicates that gratitude significantly reduces the intensity of envy. Festinger explains that social comparison is a natural mechanism for self-evaluation, but when it takes the form of upward comparison, it can trigger feelings of inferiority (Faturochman, 2006). Through gratitude, students begin to reduce this tendency.

Second, increased self-acceptance. Informant A stated, "*We are grateful, we must also be aware of our abilities, because everyone has their own abilities*" (A, personal interview, April 22, 2026).

This statement shows that students begin to accept themselves more realistically. Ashari (2024) found that gratitude reduces feelings of inferiority. This is supported by Hardjasmita et al. (2023), who argue that gratitude serves as a protective factor against negative emotions. As self-acceptance increases, the tendency toward envy decreases.

Third, the development of more positive social relationships. Informant F stated, "*I must always be grateful for every potential that I have, if we can only do this, why should we do that?*" (F, personal interview, April 22, 2026).

This indicates that students no longer use others as absolute standards. Damayanti & Saifuddin (2022) found that gratitude is associated with self-acceptance and a reduction in social comparison. As a result, social relationships become healthier, as students are able to appreciate both themselves and others.

In addition, gratitude does not eliminate motivation but redirects it in a more

constructive direction. Informant AV stated that after practicing gratitude, *"the attitude of envy will decrease and you will be motivated to achieve the desired goals"* (AV, personal interview, April 22, 2026). This indicates that envy can be transformed into a constructive drive when balanced with gratitude. In this context, envy is no longer destructive but becomes a motivation for self-improvement.

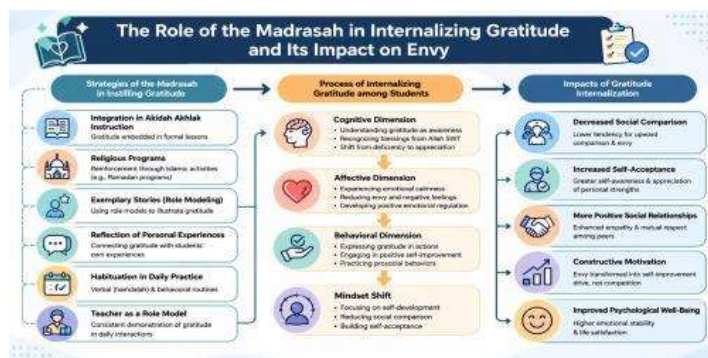


Figure 4. The Role of the Madrasah in Internalizing Gratitude and Its Impact on Envy

Figure 4 illustrates that the internalization of gratitude at Miftahul Huda Ngreco Islamic Senior High School is carried out through various strategies, including instructional integration, religious programs, reflection, habituation, and teacher role modeling. These strategies contribute to the gradual internalization of gratitude through cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, which eventually lead students toward self-development and self-acceptance. As shown in the figure, the internalization of gratitude also has several positive impacts, such as reducing social comparison, increasing self-acceptance, strengthening positive social relationships, and improving students' psychological well-being. These findings support the view that gratitude functions not only as a religious value but also as a psychological mechanism capable of minimizing envy among adolescents (Reza et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This article demonstrates that envy among tenth-grade students at Miftahul Huda Ngreco Islamic Senior High School emerges in diverse forms, including aspects of physical appearance and material possessions, academic achievement and intellectual ability, as well as spiritual quality. These forms are closely related to students' tendency to engage in social comparison, which is further strengthened by low self-acceptance, exposure to social media, and the influence of peer environments. Envy, therefore, is not merely an individual emotional issue but is shaped by cognitive patterns and social contexts within the school setting.

The findings also reveal that the internalization of gratitude plays a significant role in minimizing envy. The madrasah implements this process through integrated instructional strategies, reflective learning, habituation practices, and teacher modeling. This internalization occurs across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, leading students to shift their perspective from focusing on deficiencies to appreciating what they possess. As a result, students experience improved emotional regulation, increased self-acceptance,

and more positive social interactions.

Furthermore, gratitude not only reduces the intensity of envy but also transforms it into a constructive motivation for self-improvement. This indicates that gratitude functions both as a religious value and as a psychological mechanism that supports students' well-being. Based on these findings, future research is recommended to explore the application of gratitude-based interventions in broader educational contexts and to examine their long-term impact on students' emotional and character development.

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