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Spiritualizing Adversity Quotient through Islamic Values: A Phenomenological Study of Bullying Mitigation in Muhammadiyah Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

In the context of the dominance of secular paradigms, this study reconstructs the Adversity Quotient (AQ) by integrating Islamic spiritual anchors *Sabar*, *Tawakkal*, and *Ukhwah* as a spiritual foundation shaping students' responses to adversity. Using a phenomenological perspective, the research examines how faith-based values are experienced and interpreted in *Muhammadiyah* secondary schools in relation to bullying. This research used a qualitative approach by synergizing Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) with the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (MHS) framework. IPA was used because of its idiographic depth to capture the double hermeneutic of students' spiritual resilience, while the MHS framework upheld procedural sharpness through data condensation and systematic pattern verification. Data were collected from nine purposive informants at SMA *Muhammadiyah* Imogiri, Yogyakarta, through in-depth interviews and observations, ensuring a balanced synthesis between individual life experiences and structured thematic findings. The findings indicate that the internalization of Islamic character values and adversity quotient functions as an existential anchor, enabling students to reinterpret challenges as opportunities for spiritual growth. This meaning-making process strengthens students' AQ and supports restrained responses to bullying by framing conflict as spiritual testing (*ibadah*). However, students with disabilities continued to experience vulnerabilities in school social relations, reflecting differing horizons of meaning among student groups. By foregrounding subjective meaning and lived experience, this study contributes to Islamic education discourse through a value-oriented interpretive framework. The findings are limited to Islamic school contexts and do not fully represent experiences in general schools or those of students with disabilities. This study bridges Islamic spiritual values with AQ dimensions, positioning faith-based practices as interpretive resources supporting students' resilience in responding to bullying.

Keywords : *adversity quotient, bullying mitigation, Islamic values, phenomenological study*

INTRODUCTION

Global bullying mitigation remains Western-centric, often clashing with the socio-spiritual identity of Islamic schools. A critical gap in the argument exists regarding how Islamic character values, specifically *Sabar* and *Tawakkal*, function as internal defence mechanisms (Bermejo et al., 2022). This study argues that persistent bullying, particularly toward students with disabilities, stems from a failure to integrate these values into a functional Adversity Quotient (AQ). By exploring this "lived integration," the research challenges existing secular models and offers a cultural one. responsive framework.

Bullying behaviour in Indonesia has become increasingly prevalent and has had significant impacts, particularly on victims who experience psychological and physical disturbances (Kurniawan et al., 2022). Victimized students often face declines in academic performance and reduced perseverance (Samara et al., 2021). At Islamic High School in Indonesia, the incidence of bullying is notably high, with some students experiencing trauma and fear when interacting with peers (Tozzo et al., 2022). These cases require serious attention from the school, not only to prevent bullying but also to address the psychological effects suffered by the victims. Decreased learning motivation and weakened character among affected students call into question a more holistic approach to resolving this psychological and social phenomenon (Iotti et al., 2020). Various literature sources have examined the effects of bullying on students' psychological development based on these phenomena. However, previous studies have predominantly focused on the consequences of bullying without offering holistic strategic solutions for mitigation and character-building in students (Halliday et al., 2021; Houchins et al., 2016).

The concept of Islamic values, specifically *Sabar* (patience), *Tawakkal* (reliance), *Ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *Akhlak* (morality), and *Iktihar* (effort), constitutes the core foundation of this study. These values are integrated into the Muhammadiyah educational paradigm through a holistic-integrative approach that coherently synergises spiritual, cognitive, and social dimensions (Hamami & Nuryana, 2022). Through a phenomenological lens, this framework positions *Sabar* and *Tawakkal* as spiritual anchors that fundamentally fortify the control and endurance dimensions of students' Adversity Quotient (AQ) in the face of bullying.

The theoretical architecture of this study is guided by phenomenology and the adversity quotient (AQ) as the primary lenses for exploring the internalisation of Islamic character values. First, to evaluate school intervention strategies and categorise student aggression, this study used mitigation theory and bullying behaviour theory as additional frameworks that support the core analysis (Asio, 2019; Nickerson, 2019). By establishing this theoretical hierarchy, the study ensured its focus went beyond mere descriptions of behaviour and instead anchored its analysis on spiritual transformations in students' lived experiences. Second, this structural approach prevents the study from becoming a simple descriptive account, prioritising deep existential shifts over surface patterns (Houbre et al., 2006). Third, the adversity quotient theory highlights students' capacity to endure, adapt, and recover from stress and social pressure, thus enabling the development of psychological resilience (Backmann et al., 2019; Lu et al., 2022). Fourth, Islamic character education theory offers a value-based framework rooted in *Qur'anic* principles and prophetic ethics, which emphasises character formation through tauhid, akhlaq, ibadah, and uswah hasanah (Abdalla, 2025; Kistoro et al., 2023; Mariyono, 2024).

Finally, the participatory education model reinforces collaborative engagement among students, teachers, counsellors, and school leaders in creating inclusive, psychologically safe school environments (Lu et al., 2022; O'Brien & Doyle, 2023). These interlinked frameworks serve as the analytical foundation for interpreting how Islamic schools implement bullying mitigation strategies that integrate psychological, moral, and spiritual dimensions.

Some theories suggest that bullying affects the victims' psychological well-being (Bermejo et al., 2022), but few integrate spiritual approaches and adversity values into mitigation strategies. This study offers a novel approach by integrating adversity values into bullying mitigation, not only reducing negative impacts but also fostering students' resilience. Its distinctiveness lies in linking religious activities with anti-bullying efforts, an area seldom explored in current literature. Thus, the study addresses a critical gap and offers contextual solutions for today's school environments.

This research focuses on bullying mitigation efforts in Islamic schools in Indonesia and on how these efforts can strengthen students' resilience values. In this context, the adversity intelligence theory provides an important framework for understanding how students develop positive attitudes in the face of bullying at school (Sutarman et al., 2017). This study investigates the

use of participatory, values-based strategies rooted in educational psychology and Islamic spirituality to prevent bullying in Islamic secondary schools in Indonesia. It also examines how these strategies help build students' character and resilience.

The research addresses two main questions: (1) How do students perceive and internalise Islamic character values (*Sabar*, *Tawakkal*, and *Ukhuwah*) in their lived experiences as agents of bullying mitigation? (2) How does the integration of these spiritual values empower students' Adversity Quotient (AQ), transforming them from survivors into "Climbers" who lead bullying mitigation efforts?

The importance of this research is based on the fact that bullying behaviour not only negatively impacts victims but also creates more profound issues, such as diminished student resilience (Holt et al., 2015). Bullying severely affects students' mental health, causing fear, low self-confidence, and withdrawal in the face of challenges. These impacts limit their adaptability, social functioning, and academic achievement. Although anti-bullying efforts exist, many overlook the need to strengthen internal resilience. This study addresses that gap by highlighting the development of adversity values, students' ability to endure and grow through hardship, as a key strategy for reducing bullying and fostering inclusive school environments.

Recent academic discourse within this journal has highlighted the dynamic shifts in character education and institutional governance across the Indonesian educational landscape. Fathoni et al. contend that the current framework necessitates a "new direction" through *Prophetic Parenting* to mitigate bullying and moral decadence effectively (Fathoni et al., 2024). Complementing this, Darwanto et al. underscore the imperative for structural transformation in boarding school management to harmonise educational quality with the spiritual identity of the *pesantren* (Darwanto et al., 2024).

While these studies offer comprehensive macro-level insights into institutional policies, a conspicuous gap remains regarding the micro-level psychological mechanisms of students as proactive agents. This research addresses that lacuna by moving beyond the normative promotion of Islamic values; instead, it provides a theoretical reconstruction of the Adversity Quotient (AQ) through the lens of Islamic spiritual anchors. The novelty of this study lies in its theoretical synthesis, where Islamic values, specifically *sabar* (patience), *tawakkal* (reliance), and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), are not merely treated as moral virtues but are operationalised as the spiritual engine (Internal Defence Mechanism), which is based on religious values. This spiritual engine powers the CORE dimensions of student resilience (Control, Ownership, Reach, and Endurance). Unlike previous studies that focus on administrative mitigation or general character building, this research offers a new theoretical framework, "Faith-Based Spiritual Resilience." This model demonstrates that the transformation from 'quitters' to 'climbers' is not a purely psychological shift but is profoundly mediated by spiritual internalisation, providing a robust, non-secularised construct for bullying mitigation in Islamic educational settings.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative phenomenological approach to capture the essence of students', teachers', and school counsellors' experiences and responses to bullying in an Islamic secondary school. Phenomenology was chosen for its ability to reveal the personal meanings, emotional responses, and faith-based values that participants associate with bullying, as well as the development of resilience and moral character (Creswell, 2015). This approach provided a profound understanding of how bullying is perceived, experienced, and addressed within Islamic educational practices, grounded in students' lived experience and culturally and spiritually informed.

This research was carried out over a structured period of four months, precisely from November 26, 2024, to March 2025, during the active academic semester at SMA Muhammadiyah

Imogiri, Yogyakarta. To avoid a rigid, linear scheme of physical presence, the field investigation was strategically deployed into intensive, periodic, thematic blocks along this timeline.

This inquiry focused on SMA *Muhammadiyah* Imogiri, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, as the primary research locus, given its strategic position as a critical case rather than merely an exemplary institution. This school served as a distinctive socio-spiritual laboratory, systematically integrating *Muhammadiyah's* progressive Islamic tenets into efforts to mitigate bullying. To ensure analytical rigour, this investigation deliberately avoided collecting data from a homogeneous cohort. Instead, a structural matrix framework was applied to unite three interlocking institutional pillars: (1) students with direct empirical experience in encountering, witnessing, or mitigating bullying; (2) the teacher of Islamic religious education and counsellor; and (3) school authorities steering anti-bullying policy formulations. Based on these layered criteria, a purposive screening of nine key informants, coded systematically from I-1 to I-9 to safeguard strict anonymity, was deliberately executed to yield a robust multi-centric triangulation (see Table 1). This rigorous operational design successfully transcended the statistical constraints imposed by a small sample, yielding the profound idiographic depth and thick descriptions required to fully unravel the shifting dynamics of existential meaning within the Islamic educational climate.

Table 1 : Research Informants of the Islamic Senior High School

Informant Code	Gender	Age	Position
I-1	Male	50	Principal (Head of School)
I-2	Female	16	Student
I-3	Female	23	Teacher of Islamic Religious Education
I-4	Male	16	Student
I-5	Male	40	Teacher of Islamic Religious Education and Counselor
I-6	Male	16	Student
I-7	Male	17	Student
I-8	Female	17	Student
I-9	Female	48	Vice Principal for Curriculum
Total Number of Informants		9	

The school stakeholders provided institutional perspectives on the design and implementation of bullying mitigation strategies. At the same time, student informants shared their reflections, emotional responses, and experiences of character development in relation to bullying.

Data collection in the research followed strict qualitative phenomenological procedures to ensure depth and authenticity. To investigate the crucial life worlds of participants, the authors used semi-structured, in-depth interviews as their primary heuristic bridge. This approach allows for a smooth exchange in one dedicated session per individual, each lasting approximately 45 minutes with in-depth dialogue. Recognising the subtle nature of intimidation, this meeting was held in a quiet, private room at SMA Muhammadiyah Imogiri, Yogyakarta. This intended setting is critical to maintaining a climate of psychological safety and deep trust by prioritising participants' sense of comfort, revealing the realities of their lives, and sharing the most nuanced experiences without hesitation. Dialogue is conducted in Indonesian to capture a range of emotional expressions related to experiences of oppression.

Next, non-participant observations were systematically deployed into intensive, periodic thematic blocks from November 26, 2024, to March 2025, during the active academic semester at SMA *Muhammadiyah* Imogiri, Yogyakarta. This iterative, non-linear field design circumvented the limitations of a rigid physical presence while actively capturing shifting student interactions during recess, daily classroom dynamics, and the operationalisation of Islamic religious culture. To complement these insights, a documentary analysis was conducted of school policy records, student discipline logs, and the *Al Islam-Kemuhammadiyahan*-based character curriculum. Rather than

producing isolated datasets, this rigorous triangulation of interviews, fieldwork snapshots, and institutional records contextualised and cross-verified the informants' inner narratives. This integrated approach ensured a holistic, embedded understanding of how spiritual anchors were practically manifested within the school ecosystem, directly undergirding the empirical depth of the subsequent findings (Miles et al., 2014). Rather than simply reducing data, this approach condenses field notes and transcripts into a manageable form while preserving their narrative richness. The coding process employed a two-cycle approach:

Data Condensation, the researcher employed data condensation, a refined iteration of the earlier data reduction concept, aimed at sharpening, focusing, and organising data without compromising its contextual richness (Miles et al., 2014). This process involves four critical steps: (a) Selecting: Filtering the most significant data segments pertinent to the phenomena of bullying mitigation and Islamic values. (b) Simplifying: Transforming complex field data into more accessible and coherent narratives. (c) Abstracting: Distilling the essence of students' lived experiences captured within the interview transcripts. (d) Transforming: Converting raw field notes into structured analytical units ready for systematic coding.

Thematic Coding, the coding process was executed through two systematic cycles to construct thematic frameworks: (a) First-Cycle Coding: Assigning initial labels to discrete data units using *descriptive coding* for topical identification to preserve the participants' authentic voices (e.g., codes such as Fear or *Tawakkal*). (b) Second Cycle (Pattern Coding): Aggregating initial codes into *pattern codes* to identify emergent themes and inter-variable relationships. For instance, individual codes like "fear" and "isolation" were synthesised into a broader thematic construct: 'The Psychological Impact of Bullying' (Miles et al., 2014).

This study offers a meaningful contribution to educational psychology and character education by proposing a faith-based participatory model to mitigate bullying in Islamic secondary schools. Departing from punitive or policy-driven strategies, the model combines spiritual mentoring, communal religious practices, and structured school programs grounded in Islamic values. It highlights the active role of students, teachers, and school leaders in building resilience and moral character. Additionally, the study enriches phenomenological research by revealing how school communities navigate adversity through culturally and spiritually rooted experiences, an area that remains underdeveloped in global academic discourse.

Final interpretations were drawn through inductive reasoning, emphasising how adversity values such as perseverance, self-control, and spiritual awareness were fostered through school-based activities. Triangulation was employed by cross-verifying insights from interviews, observations, and institutional documents to ensure credibility, reliability, and contextual depth (Rofiah & Bungin, 2021).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

1. Internalising Islamic Values: A Spiritual Perspective

The classification of Islamic values in this inquiry into three primary anchors, Sabar (patience), *Tawakkal* (sacred reliance), and *Ukhuwah* (brotherhood), is derived from the thematic mapping of students' lived experiences onto the CORE dimensions of Adversity Quotient (Stoltz, 1997). Crucially, these phenomenological themes did not emerge solely from interview transcripts; they were structurally triangulated and grounded in empirical data from periodic non-participant observations and institutional documentary analysis.

While school policy records and curriculum blueprints verified the systemic implementation of these values, fieldwork observations captured their spontaneous operationalisation during student daily interactions. Together, these sources confirm that these

spiritual anchors function as an internal mechanism aligning with the holistic education framework (Sutarman et al., 2017) and the progressive holistic-integrative paradigm of the *Muhammadiyah* school system (Hamami & Nuryana, 2022), providing the psychological framework necessary for students to process external pressure. While Sabar and Tawakkal fortify individual resilience, *Ukhuwah* extends this strength into collective responsibility, creating a transformative spiritual engine for bullying mitigation. The following integrated narrative data explores how these specific Islamic values operate within the students' consciousness and manifest in the everyday school climate:

(1) Sabar (Patience) as a Construct of Control.

Participants perceive *sabar* not as a form of submission or defeat but as a high-level self-regulatory mechanism to de-escalate the cycle of violence. This spiritual anchor empowers students to maintain psychological agency under pressure:

“Previously, when I was mocked, I felt an intense impulse to react physically. However, my teacher taught me that sabar is about maintaining “*hablum minannas*” (harmonious human relations). I began to view their insults as a test of my endurance. When I remained non-reactive, they eventually lost interest. In that moment, I felt a sense of triumph not over them, but over my own impulsive, aggressive impulses” (Informant I-2, Student, 2024).

To substantiate this student perspective, a female teacher of Islamic religious education reinforced that patience is systematically cultivated as an active defence mechanism rather than passive resignation:

“I explicitly instructed students that sabar is not synonymous with helplessness or letting oneself be victimised. In our Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah (AIK) classes, we framed sabar as the ultimate mastery over one's chaotic impulses. We trained them to utilise deep breathing and silent reflection to break the immediate psychological cycle of bullying retaliation, transforming patience into a strategic emotional shield” (Informant I-3, Teacher of Islamic Religious Education, 2025).

(2) Tawakkal (Reliance on God) as the Engine of Endurance.

Tawakkal serves as a transcendent energy source, enabling students to persevere within toxic environments without succumbing to hopelessness. This value transforms their psychological endurance from a finite resource into a spiritually sustained commitment:

“Truthfully, being part of the mitigation team is exhausting, especially when others label us as ‘self-righteous.’ But I practice Tawakkal. I am convinced that if my intention is ‘*lillah*’ (sincerely for Allah) to improve our school, a way will be provided. This conviction is what prevents me from giving up (endurance), even when I was ostracised by my former social circle” (Informant I-8, Student, Mitigation Team Member & Survivor, 2024).

This spiritual stamina was structurally guided by the school's counselling framework, as confirmed by a male teacher who integrated Islamic principles directly into psychosocial interventions:

“When tracking student mediators or victims who experienced emotional burnout or social ostracisation, we anchored their coping strategies on the concept of *lillah*. As a counsellor, I guided them to realign their peer mitigation efforts not for social validation, but as a form of sacred reliance. When students anchored their exhaustion onto Tawakkal, their psychological resilience shifted from a fragile human resource into an inexhaustible spiritual dedication” (Informant I-5, Teacher of Islamic Religious Education and Counselor, 2025).

(3) Ukhuwah (Brotherhood) as the Catalyst for Ownership.

The Islamic principle of brotherhood instils in students a profound sense of responsibility to actively intervene and protect victims of bullying. This collective identity shifts the student's role from a passive bystander to a proactive guardian.

“Witnessing a student with a disability being bullied was deeply painful for me. We are brothers, bound by the same faith. I could no longer remain a 'camper' (passive bystander). I felt a religious obligation (ownership) to defend him, as our faith commands mutual assistance. If we do not uphold *ukhuvah* in this school, who else will?” (Informant I-7, Student, 2024). Furthermore, to understand the research results comprehensively, see Table 2. The following is a table format designed to show the depth of analysis phenomenologically:

Table 2 : Phenomenological Themes of Spiritual Fortification in Bullying Mitigation

No	Core Theme (Phenomenological Construct)	Conceptual Essence (Meaning-making)	Illustrative Narrative (Voices of Informants)
1	<i>Sabar</i> (Patience) as a Construct of Control	<i>Sabar</i> is resignified as a high-level self-regulatory mechanism. It is an active exercise of psychological agency that de-escalates violence by neutralizing impulsive reactivity.	"Previously, I felt an intense impulse to react physically... [Now] I view insults as a test of my endurance. I felt a sense of triumph not over them, but over my own impulsive desires" (Informant I-2, Student, 2024). “I explicitly instructed students that <i>sabar</i> is not synonymous with helplessness; we framed <i>sabar</i> as the ultimate mastery over one's chaotic impulses [via] deep breathing and silent reflection." (Informant I-3, Teacher of Islamic Religious Education, 2025).
2	<i>Tawakkal</i> (Sacred Reliance) as the Engine of Endurance	<i>Tawakkal</i> serves as a transcendent energy source. It transforms finite psychological endurance into a spiritually sustained commitment (<i>Lillah</i>), preventing burnout amidst social ostracization.	"Being part of the mitigation team is exhausting... But I practice <i>Tawakkal</i> . This conviction is what prevents me from giving up, even when I was ostracized by my former social circle" (Informant I-8, Student, Mitigation Team Member & Survivor, 2024). “As a counselor, I guided them to realign their peer mitigation efforts not for social validation but as a form of sacred reliance; their psychological resilience shifted into an inexhaustible spiritual dedication.” (Informant I-5, Teacher of Islamic Religious Education and Counselor, 2025).
3	<i>Ukhuvah</i> (Brotherhood) as the Catalyst for Ownership	<i>Ukhuvah</i> functions as a proactive guardian identity. It shifts the student from a passive bystander to an ethical intervenor, driven by a sense of religious obligation and communal empathy.	"We are brothers, bound by the same faith. I could no longer remain a passive bystander. I felt a religious obligation to defend him... if we do not uphold <i>ukhuvah</i> , who else will?" (Informant I-7, Student, 2024).

The research results illustrated in Table 2 show that student resilience in facing bullying in Islamic schools is a process of deep cognitive and existential meaning. Students do not simply respond to social pressure; they reconstruct reality by internalising spiritual values. In this context, patience functions as self-regulation to stabilise emotions and control impulsivity. *Tawakkal* acts as a resilience energy that transforms environmental stress into a means of maturation through *Lillah*'s intentions. Meanwhile, the principle of *Ukhuvah* encourages students to shift from passive spectators to proactive protectors, as empathy is positioned as a religious obligation. Collectively,

these character values are the main mediators linking external challenges to students' psychological well-being.

2. Spiritualizing Adversity Quotient: Transforming Survivors into Climbers

A profound metamorphic process, rather than mere institutional policing, defines the mitigation of school-based aggression in this Islamic context. The Adversity Quotient (AQ) of students undergoes a radical structural reconfiguration when *Sabar* (deliberate patience), *Tawakkal* (theocentric reliance), and *Ukhuwah* (organic solidarity) are woven into the educational fabric. This spiritual alchemy triggers a vital departure: the passive endurance typical of the Survivor archetype is abandoned, giving rise to Climbers students who assume proactive moral stewardship over the school's social climate.

(1) Active Agency Fueled by Moral Mandates.

Far from being mere liturgical formalities, faith-centric initiatives such as *Usrah* circles and *Pesantren Ramadhan* serve as existential workshops. Here, the ethos of *Amr Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar* is internalised not as a set of rules but as a personal moral compass, as evidenced by the testimonies of the vice principal of curriculum and a student informant (2024). The crystallisation of climber leadership is visible when a student chooses direct intervention over avoidance. In this framework, bullying is stripped of its status as a localised nuisance and reframed as a divine ethical test that demands decisive, faith-driven action.

(2) Sabar and Tawakkal as Dynamic Psychological Fortifiers

Central to the "Climber" evolution is a sophisticated reinterpretation of *Sabar*. Moving beyond the fallacy of fatalistic resignation, students enact *Sabar* as a dynamic self-regulatory valve, neutralising retaliatory impulses while maintaining internal equilibrium. *Tawakkal* further reinforces this psychological defence by anchoring resilience in the concept of *Lillah*. This spiritual grounding ensures that the "climbing" effort remains resilient against social fatigue, transforming hostile environments from sites of trauma into arenas for spiritual maturation (Informant I-4, Students, 2024).

(3) The Architecture of Collective Guardianship via Ukhuwah

The "passive bystander" phenomenon effectively dissolves within the school's participatory ecosystem, which is significantly bolstered by *Hizbul Wathan* scouting. Institutionalised support channels provide agency even for reticent students. Through the prism of *Ukhuwah*, the protection of vulnerable peers is elevated to a sacrosanct duty rather than a social choice. This communal identity constructs a "spiritual bulwark," ensuring that resilience is not a solitary burden but a shared strength that enables the entire student body to climb in unison (Informant I-6, Students, 2024).

(4) Synthesis: Resilience as a Metaphysical Engine

Ultimately, this study validates that a spiritually anchored adversity quotient (AQ) model offers a robust, sustainable alternative to secular frameworks. The institution does not merely "manage" aggression; it transcends the underlying logic of bullying by transmuting the "Survivor" instinct into "Climber" leadership. This shift confirms that Islamic values operate as a functional engine, providing students with the ethical stamina and unyielding confidence necessary to navigate contemporary psychosocial complexities (Informant I-2, Student, 2024). A comprehensive synthesis of these findings, illustrating the transformation from survivor to climber leadership, is detailed in Table 3.

Table 3 : Phenomenological Mapping: Spiritual Value Integration and AQ Transformation

No	Core Theme	Conceptual Lens (Islamic Values)	Adversity Quotient (AQ) Dimension & Shift	Representative Informant Narrative (Significant Statement)	Phenomenological Essence (Meaning-Making)
1	Active Moral Agency	<i>Amr Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar</i>	Control: From Avoidance to Intervention	"I choose to confront the situation directly. Talking to perpetrators is my duty to ensure justice" (Informant I-7, Student, 2024).	Bullying is reframed from a social nuisance into a divine ethical test requiring decisive action.
2	Dynamic Self-Regulation	<i>Sabar</i> (Strategic Patience)	Reach: From Impulsivity to Stability	"Sabar is not about giving up; it's my valve to control anger and stop the cycle of revenge." (Informant I-4, Student, 2024).	<i>Sabar</i> operates as a self-regulatory valve that prevents the spread of trauma/aggression.
3	Transcendent Resilience	<i>Tawakkul & Lillah</i>	Endurance: From Fragility to Spiritual Stamina	"When I anchor my strength in Lillah (God), social pressure doesn't drain me. I grow through the test" (Informant I-8, Student, 2024).	Spiritual grounding acts as an existential anchor, preventing social fatigue and psychological burnout.
4	Collective Guardianship	<i>Ukhuwah</i> (Solidarity)	Ownership: From Bystander to Guardian	"Protecting my peers is not a choice; it is a sacrosanct duty because we are one body in faith" (Informant I-2, Student, 2024).	A "spiritual bulwark" of communal responsibility dissolves the "passive bystander" effect.
5	Institutional Synergy	<i>Uswah Hasana</i> (Leadership)	AQ Level: From Survivor to Climber	"Our <i>Usrah</i> and scouting (<i>Hizbul Wathan</i>) transform us into leaders who maintain a safe school culture." (Informant I-9, Vice Principal, & Informant I-5, Teacher, 2024).	A metamorphic shift where students become moral stewards who transcend the underlying logic of bullying.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that bullying mitigation in the Islamic Secondary School of Imogiri, Yogyakarta, transcends mere administrative compliance; it represents a socio-spiritual

reconfiguration of school safety. Gaffney et al. emphasise evidence-based, whole-school strategies as the global gold standard; this study uncovers a deeper layer: the moral-theocentric anchor (Gaffney et al., 2021). The dedicated Bullying and Sexual Violence Prevention Team does not merely execute an SOP. Still, it acts as a guardian of the school's spiritual climate, transforming "restorative justice" into a mechanism of *Islah* (reform).

1. The Divergence: Spiritual Mentorship vs. Behavioural Compliance

A critical dialogue emerges when comparing this model to Western-centric social-emotional learning (SEL). While Espelage et al. focus on interpersonal skills for behavioural compliance, our data show that Islamic character education prioritises inner reform (*Tazkiyatun Nafs*). The integration of *Muraqabah* (self-awareness) and *Niyyah* (intention) shifts the locus of control from external surveillance to internal spiritual consciousness (Espelage et al., 2015). As argued by Wahidi & Syahidin, the teacher is not merely a behaviour manager but an *Uswah Hasanah* (moral archetype) (Wahidi & Syahidin, 2024). This role significantly intensifies the efficacy of relational interventions compared to the multi-tiered supports proposed by Robinson et al., which notably lack ethical-spiritual dimensions (Robinson et al., 2023).

2. Adversity Quotient (AQ) and the Climber Transformation

This study advances the discourse on resilience by demonstrating how structured spiritual experiences, such as congregational prayers and *Usrah* sessions, cultivate a specific type of Adversity Quotient (AQ). In alignment with Nurizah & Amrullah (2024) and Afandi (2023), these practices provide the "spiritual scaffolding" necessary for victims to transition from passive survivors to proactive climbers. However, a critical tension exists: our data reveals that students with disabilities remain vulnerable despite these spiritual safeguards. This aligns with Houchins et al., who criticised Western interventions for neglecting the internal moral development of vulnerable populations (Houchins et al., 2016). We argue that for a participatory model to be truly inclusive, the *Ukhuwah* (brotherhood) framework must be operationalised as an active protective agency rather than merely a theological sentiment.

3. Islamic Restorative Justice vs. Secular Punitive Models

In this context, the role of school counsellors redefines the boundaries of school discipline. Unlike the fragmented implementation often found in Indonesian state schools (Nordin et al., 2023; Tsani et al., 2024), the model at Imogiri integrates counselling within a rehabilitative-tarbiyah framework. Reflective discipline replaces punitive actions, mirroring the *Islah* (reform) and *Tarbiyah* (nurturing) concepts discussed by Rahman & Smith and Harahap et al. This contradicts the procedural and often punitive nature of many secular systems (Harahap et al., 2024; Rahman & Smith, 2024). The implication is profound: when character education is conceptually grounded and contextually embedded (Kistoro et al., 2023), it avoids the superficial exercise syndrome that plagues many pluralistic educational settings (Hosaini et al., 2024).

4. Limitations and Global Implications

Despite its strengths, the study acknowledges the ritualistic trap and the risk that students may view spiritual programs as mere routine rather than meaningful growth opportunities (Tsani et al., 2024). This suggests that for Islamic schools to maintain their "distinctive pathway," they must move toward participatory-resonant pedagogy that connects *Tauhid* and *Akhlak* to the lived realities of modern psychosocial aggression (Yusuf et al., 2024).

Theoretically, this study challenges the global hegemony of secular Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) models by offering a culturally responsive, participatory model. It shows that in faith-based settings, reducing bullying is a byproduct of metaphysical transformation, not just policy enforcement. Future research should investigate the scalability of this spiritual fortification

model in secular or rural settings where institutional resources may be limited, but cultural-religious capital remains high.

Constructing an integrated conceptual framework, this study demonstrates that Islamic spiritual anchors, specifically *sabr* (persistence), *tawakkal* (theocentric reliance), and *ukhuwah* (transcendental brotherhood), function as an internal spiritual engine that reconstructs students' Adversity Quotient (AQ). Through this phenomenological lens, bullying is no longer perceived merely as a social threat but is strategically re-envisioned as a meaningful moral and spiritual trial. This reconstruction facilitates a sustainable transformation from passive resilience to active moral agency, empowering students as climbers who lead faith-based mitigation efforts within the educational ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that bullying mitigation in Islamic schools represents an ontological reconfiguration rather than a mere administrative procedure. The primary findings indicate that integrating *Sabar* (patience), *Tawakkal* (theocentric reliance), and *Ukhuwah* (organic solidarity) functions as a psycho-spiritual mechanism that recalibrates students' internal capacities. Through phenomenological internalisation, students reconstruct bullying from a social threat into a divine test (*ibadah*), effectively transforming passive survivors into proactive climbers with robust moral agency.

The proposed Faith-Based Spiritual Resilience framework bridges theological depth with the psychological dimensions of the Adversity Quotient (AQ). Unlike secular models, spiritual values are operationalised as high-level self-regulatory mechanisms. In practice, these findings suggest a hybrid mitigation architecture based on Spiritual Mentorship Laboratories and moral archetypes (*Uswah Hasanah*). The institutionalisation of *Usrah* (mentoring) and *Hizbul Wathan* (scouting) is crucial for engineering a climber mindset and fostering student-led interventions.

Theoretically, this study introduces Spiritual Fortification as a vital variable in school safety, challenging the hegemony of secular social-emotional models. While acknowledging limitations regarding systemic inclusivity for students with disabilities and the risk of ritualistic traps, this research paves the way for broader scalability studies. Future research should pursue comparative inquiries to test the efficacy of this theocentric framework in pluralistic environments with limited religious infrastructure.

DECLARATIONS

Author contribution statement

Sutarman: Conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, writing original draft, project administration, and corresponding author. Muhammad Ragil Kurniawan: Investigation, data curation, and resources (primary field data collection). Parjiman: Validation, writing review & editing (theoretical framework reconstruction and revision). Sutrisno: Formal analysis (Islamic education perspective), writing review & editing, and supervision. Ahmad Luqman Hakim: Writing reviews & editing, formal analysis, and international literature synthesis.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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