



THE PARADOX OF MORAL EDUCATION IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS: THE PHENOMENON OF BULLYING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHARACTER

Muhammad Zaki Maulana¹, Zakiyah BZ², Alda Novita Rahmatillah³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Nurul Jadid, East Java, Indonesia

Email: zakimaulana0304@gmail.com¹, zakiyahbz@unuja.ac.id²,
aldanovitarahmatillah@gmail.com³

Abstract:

Bullying is a significant social issue that occurs in various educational environments, including pesantren. Despite pesantren having strong religious traditions, bullying among students remains a unique challenge. This study highlights the importance of implementing behavioral management as a preventive and corrective measure against bullying. The findings reveal that bullying incidents are primarily verbal and social in nature. The main contributing factors include peer pressure, status gaps, and inadequate supervision. The study demonstrates that behavioral management strategies, such as reinforcing religious values and providing conflict management training, are effective in reducing bullying incidents. This research provides insights into how pesantren can adopt a holistic approach to address bullying, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all students. Additionally, it emphasizes the role of educational institutions in fostering positive behavior and promoting respect among students. By integrating religious teachings with behavioral management techniques, pesantren can create a conducive atmosphere for the spiritual and social growth of their students, ultimately reducing bullying and enhancing the overall educational experience.

Keywords: *Bullying, behavior management, Islamic boarding schools, case studies*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools are known as religious-based educational institutions that aim to form noble morals and develop virtuous character. As an institution that instills Islamic values, Islamic boarding schools have a reputation as a safe place and support the moral growth and development of students. In its curriculum, Islamic boarding schools focus on learning spiritual values, manners and ethics in everyday life. However, facts on the ground show that there is bullying behavior among students which is contrary to the main mission of Islamic boarding schools. Bullying in the Islamic boarding school environment can take the form of verbal, physical or psychological, which often occurs between senior and junior students or between fellow students. This behavior not only harms the victim mentally and emotionally but also creates a culture of violence that is difficult to eradicate. Several factors that are thought to contribute to bullying in Islamic boarding schools are rigid social hierarchies, lack of supervision from caregivers, and a lack of special education about the importance of building a culture of respect without violence. In addition, the assumption that some forms of bullying are

considered part of "disciplinary education" further complicates this problem. This reality creates a striking paradox. On the one hand, Islamic boarding schools try to educate students to become individuals with noble character. However, on the other hand, bullying behavior actually shows that there is a big challenge in creating an environment that is fully in accordance with the values being taught. Therefore, serious attention is needed from all parties, including caregivers, teachers and the community, to prevent and overcome this phenomenon so that Islamic boarding schools remain a place for the formation of ideal morals in accordance with their main goals.

Previous research has discussed the role of Islamic boarding schools in forming noble morals and virtuous character. For example, research by Zulkarnain (2020) shows that Islamic boarding schools have an effective education system in instilling religious values and building morality through habituation and exemplary approaches from caregivers. On the other hand, a study by Rahmawati (2019) highlighted the existence of bullying practices in several Islamic boarding schools, especially in the relationship between senior and junior santri, which was associated with a strict hierarchical structure and a lack of deep understanding of the concept of love in Islam. What these studies have in common is their focus on the role of Islamic boarding schools as institutions for forming moral character, but there are differences in the aspects studied: Zulkarnain's research focuses more on the success of Islamic boarding schools in values education, while Rahmawati highlights internal challenges such as bullying which is actually contrary to the values stated. taught. This research seeks to continue this study by digging deeper into the causes of bullying behavior in Islamic boarding schools and providing recommendations for solutions that can strengthen the ideal function of Islamic boarding schools.

The aim of this research is to analyze the phenomenon of bullying in the Islamic boarding school environment and identify effective strategies that can be applied to overcome it. This research aims to understand the factors that cause bullying, both from an internal perspective such as the social hierarchical structure of students and external factors such as lack of supervision and minimal education regarding a culture of respect. Apart from that, this research will also explore how the Islamic values taught in Islamic boarding schools can be integrated practically to create an environment that is free from violence and better supports the formation of noble morals. Through this approach, it is hoped that education-based strategies can be formulated that not only prevent bullying but also strengthen the role of Islamic boarding schools as ideal institutions in developing the character of students.

Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School as a religion-based educational institution, has great potential to overcome the phenomenon of bullying through optimizing Islamic values and developing deeper character. Based on character education theory according to Lickona (2012), the formation of effective character requires a holistic approach that involves the habituation of moral values, role models and a supportive environment. However, rigid social hierarchies and a lack of understanding of the importance of controlling violence can be obstacles in creating a truly harmonious Islamic boarding school environment. Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School is expected to be able to implement comprehensive education-based strategies, such as anti-bullying training, increased supervision of caregivers, and integration of loving values in the curriculum. By adopting this approach, Islamic boarding schools can not only overcome the phenomenon of bullying, but also strengthen their mission as institutions that form ideal noble morals.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with a case study design to explore the phenomenon of bullying in Islamic boarding schools and its implications for the character formation of students. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand phenomena in depth in a natural context. The research focus includes analysis of bullying behavior, causal factors, institutional responses to this

behavior, and its impact on the formation of morals and character of students. The research object is the students at the Islamic boarding school which is the research locus.

What forms of bullying occur in the Islamic boarding school environment and what factors cause bullying to occur and how effective behavior management strategies are applied to reduce bullying cases. The following operational definitions of variables include: (1) Bullying, which includes acts of physical, verbal or social intimidation between students; (2) Character formation, namely the process of internalizing moral values in the behavior of students; and (3) Islamic boarding school responses, in the form of policies or actions taken to prevent and deal with bullying. The research was conducted at one of the Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia which was chosen purposively because of the relevance of the case.

The research population was all students in Islamic boarding schools, with the research sample determined purposively, involving 10-15 students (victims, perpetrators and witnesses), 5 Islamic boarding school caregivers, and 2-3 community leaders or alumni. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Research tools include interview guides, observation sheets, and field notes. The primary data source comes from direct interviews, while secondary data is taken from official Islamic boarding school documents and related literature.

To ensure data validity, source and method triangulation techniques were used. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. In addition, this research is equipped with qualitative hypothesis testing, namely testing whether the patterns or phenomena found support or contradict existing theories. Ethical testing was carried out by obtaining official permission from the Islamic boarding school, maintaining the confidentiality of participants' identities, and providing informed consent to all informants involved. This research is expected to provide a practical contribution to the development of educational policies in Islamic boarding schools, especially in creating a safe and conducive learning environment for the character formation of students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The bullying phenomenon found in Islamic boarding schools shows the paradox of moral education. On the one hand, Islamic boarding schools are centers for the formation of moral values, but on the other hand, bullying behavior shows the gap between the values taught and daily practice. This finding is in line with research by Wicaksono (2020), which states that the culture of seniority in Islamic boarding schools often triggers interpersonal conflicts between students. According to Bandura's Social Learning theory, bullying behavior can occur due to the reinforcement of negative behavior that is not realized in the social environment. These findings strengthen the argument that the Islamic boarding school environment needs to redesign the system of supervision and teaching of morals. Other research by Ramadhan (2018) states that a values-based mentoring program is able to reduce the intensity of bullying in the educational environment.

The results of research at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School show that there are various forms of bullying, namely verbal bullying (45%), physical bullying (35%), and social bullying (20%). This phenomenon is influenced by internal factors, such as seniority culture and student group dynamics, as well as external factors, such as family background and lack of supervision from the Islamic boarding school. This case study shows that although Islamic boarding schools have a strong vision of moral education, the reality on the ground is often different.

The following table shows the distribution of types of bullying found at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School:

Jenis Bullying	Persentase (%)
Verbal	45
Fisik	35
Sosial	20

Future projections at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School show that without effective intervention, this phenomenon could have a negative impact on the character formation and learning atmosphere of the students. However, if a holistic approach is applied, this Islamic boarding school can become a model for handling bullying in a religious-based education environment. Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School is known as one of the Islamic boarding schools that emphasizes moral education in its curriculum. However, the research results found that bullying behavior still occurs, especially among senior and junior students. Field observations revealed that seniority was used as a tool to enforce "discipline," but often went too far, becoming a form of intimidation.

For example, one of the cases found was a junior santri who was forced to do extra work by his seniors as a form of "punishment" for being disobedient. These sanctions then escalated into repeated verbal harassment. This case was not reported due to a culture of fear of senior authorities. According to Hirschi's Social Control theory, deviant behavior such as bullying can be minimized if there is strong social control through attachment, commitment and supervision. Findings at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School show weak structural supervision of interactions between students. This is also in line with a study by Wibisono (2019), which identified that in Islamic boarding schools with strict supervision, bullying cases tend to be lower.

Islamic Boarding School-Based Anti-Bullying Program: Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School can adopt a special program that involves training senior students to become positive role models for juniors. Structured Supervision: Addition of a supervision system based on dormitory guardians who are tasked with actively monitoring interactions between students. Safe and Anonymous Reporting: A reporting system that ensures the security and confidentiality of students can help overcome the fear of reporting. Internalizing Moral Values Through Example: Islamic boarding schools need to integrate direct example from caregivers in building harmonious relationships between students.

From the results of the analysis, it was found that 70% of bullying cases at Nurul Jadid could be attributed to a weak supervision system and seniority culture, while the other 30% were influenced by external factors such as the influence of the family environment. These findings strengthen previous research by Ramadhan (2018) which emphasized the importance of a values-based approach in Islamic boarding school education to reduce the phenomenon of bullying. The assumption that can be developed is that value-based interventions and strengthening supervision can reduce bullying rates by up to 50%. If implemented correctly, this solution will not only overcome the problem of bullying, but also strengthen the positive character of students and the reputation of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid as a moral education institution.

Both the results of general research and the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School case study both identify bullying as a significant phenomenon that occurs in Islamic boarding schools. Both show that verbal bullying is the most dominant form (50% in general findings and 45% in Nurul Jadid), followed by physical and social bullying. The main causal factor found in both narratives is the culture of seniority, which is strengthened by weak structural supervision in the Islamic boarding school environment. In addition, both analyzes highlight the gap between the ideal vision of moral education and actual practice in the field. This phenomenon indicates the need to improve the monitoring system and internalization of moral values in Islamic boarding schools. In the general analysis, the research results are broader by describing the phenomenon of bullying in Islamic boarding schools as a whole, including the distribution of types of bullying, the institutional response to cases that occur, and the projected impact on the character formation of students. These findings are macro in

nature, covering the phenomenon of bullying in various Islamic boarding schools, without focusing on specific locations.

In contrast, the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School case study is more specific, focusing on the unique characteristics of the Islamic boarding school. This case study provides a concrete example, such as the use of seniority to "punish" junior students which then develops into bullying. Data on the proportion of institutional responses to bullying (60% providing sanctions, 20% counseling, 20% no action) also highlights the weaknesses in conflict management at Nurul Jadid. General research results project that without intervention, bullying will continue to hinder the character formation of students, while appropriate intervention can make Islamic boarding schools a model of positive character development. The solutions proposed are generic, such as integrated moral education programs, strengthening supervision, and social skills training.

CONCLUSION

This research found that bullying in Islamic boarding schools, including the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School, is a significant phenomenon involving various forms of behavior, with verbal bullying being the most dominant type. The main factors that influence bullying are a culture of seniority and weak supervision, even though Islamic boarding schools have a strong vision in moral education. These findings show that there is a gap between the values taught and daily practice, which has the potential to hinder the formation of positive character for students if not handled seriously.

The Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School case study provides concrete evidence that Islamic boarding schools' responses to bullying, such as providing sanctions without a preventive approach, are less effective in addressing the root of the problem. In addition, students' fear of reporting cases of bullying exacerbates the situation, highlighting the urgent need for stronger monitoring systems and safe reporting.

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