The Role of Moral Education in Preventing Bullying in Islamic Boarding Schools A Case Study

by Zainal Arifin

The Role of Moral Education in Preventing Bullying in Islamic Boarding Schools: A Case Study

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Keywords

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Abstract

Bullying among students is a serious issue that can affect their moral and social development. Moral education in Islamic boarding schools is expected to serve as a moral fortress to prevent bullying behavior. This study aims to examine the role of moral education in preventing bullying at Pondok Pesantren Al Ikhlash Sedayulawas, Brondong, Lamongan. Using a case study method, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. The results indicate that moral education integrated into the daily activities of the boarding school can reduce the potential for bullying by instilling values of politeness, concern, and social responsibility. However, challenges in the implementation of discipline and exemplary behavior still pose obstacles that need to be addressed. This research provides insights into the importance of strong moral education as a solution to prevent bullying in the boarding school environment.

Introduction

Bullying is a repeated and intentional aggressive act aimed at harming others, either physically or psychologically, and can take the form of assault, insults, threats, or rumor-spreading. (Pajri, 2024) This behavior occurs in unbalanced social relationships, where the

perpetrator exploits power to oppress the victim, potentially leading to serious emotional impacts such as anxiety, depression, and social issues. (Zakiyah et al., 2017)

Bullying occurs not only in public schools but also in religious-based educational institutions like Islamic boarding schools, where students are supposed to receive moral guidance. This becomes a paradox, as pesantrens are established to educate the younger generation according to Islamic values that emphasize noble character and mutual respect. (Ernawati, 2018)

Moral education is a crucial aspect of teaching in Islamic boarding schools, focusing on the development of good morals, ethics, and behavior. (Idhar, 2019) Its goal is to instill noble values so that students become responsible, honest, and caring individuals. In Islam, moral education encompasses relationships between people and with God, teaching attitudes of tolerance, empathy, honesty, and social awareness to build a harmonious society. (Asih, 2024)

Although moral education is a primary focus in Islamic boarding schools, bullying remains an issue that needs to be addressed. The intense interactions and seniority system in these schools are often misused, with senior students oppressing juniors, highlighting a gap between the theory and practice of moral education, where the values taught are not always applied in daily life. (Lingga & Nurjannah, 2023)

The main challenge in moral education in Islamic boarding schools is creating a safe environment for all students, as victims of bullying often experience emotional stress that can affect their mental health. (Nuris Yuhbaba, 2019) It is essential for boarding school administrators to be aware of the negative impacts of bullying and to develop prevention programs, including training to recognize signs of bullying and providing appropriate guidance for students.

An inclusive approach to moral education is needed, where all students are actively encouraged to participate in creating a positive atmosphere. Activities that promote cooperation, mutual respect, and open communication should be enhanced, enabling students to support each other and foster empathy to reduce the likelihood of bullying. (Larassati, 2020)

At Al Ikhlash Islamic Boarding School, moral education plays a crucial role in shaping students' character, implemented through religious activities, formal learning, and social interactions. Through congregational prayers, religious study sessions, and discussions on moral values, students are expected to internalize moral principles to guide their daily lives.

The boarding school environment should be a safe place for students to learn and grow, emphasizing values of togetherness, mutual respect, compassion, empathy, and tolerance to reduce bullying. Through learning and the exemplary behavior of caregivers and teachers, students are taught to appreciate differences and build healthy relationships with others. (Lingga & Nurjannah, 2023)

Although moral education is implemented, bullying remains an issue in some boarding schools, including Al Ikhlash Islamic Boarding School, highlighting a gap between taught values and real practices. Bullying can take the form of oppression, mockery, or intimidation, often resulting in serious emotional impacts for the victims. (Febritanti, S & Muawanah, 2023)

Many factors trigger bullying in boarding schools, such as intense interactions among students, dormitory life, and the hierarchy between senior and junior students. Senior students, who are supposed to be role models, sometimes misuse their positions to oppress or intimidate juniors, creating an uncomfortable atmosphere that contradicts the goals of moral education. (Rahman et al., 2023)

A joint effort is needed to address bullying in boarding schools, with proactive administrators creating a safe and supportive environment. Moral education must be strengthened with concrete actions, such as monitoring student interactions and conducting awareness campaigns about the impacts of bullying. Students also need to be involved in creating a positive atmosphere, supporting one another, and reminding each other not to hurt one another. (Ernawati, 2018)

Continuous evaluation and improvement in moral education and the social environment at Al Ikhlash Islamic Boarding School are expected to create a harmonious atmosphere, reduce bullying, and enable students to learn and grow in accordance with Islamic values.

This study aims to explore the role of moral education at Al Ikhlash Islamic Boarding School in preventing bullying and the application of moral education approaches in the daily lives of students. The focus is on assessing the effectiveness of programs in internalizing moral and ethical values, as well as their implementation in students' social interactions.

In addition, this study aims to identify the methods and strategies of moral education at Al Ikhlash Islamic Boarding School, such as formal teaching, spiritual guidance, and social activities, as well as to evaluate the role of caregivers and teachers in mentoring students. By understanding these approaches, this study seeks to uncover the relationship between the implementation of moral education and the reduction of bullying cases in the boarding school.

This study will also examine students' perceptions of the moral education they receive and its impact on their behavior in interactions with peers, thereby involving the voices and experiences of students in the process of moral learning.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the implementation of moral education at Al Ikhlash Islamic Boarding School in Sedayulawas, Brondong, Lamongan. The research objectives to understand the impact of moral education on students' behavior and its role in preventing bullying. The interview instrument consists of open-ended questions designed to explore key themes, methods of implementation, challenges

faced, and perceptions of its effectiveness. These questions are adapted for different rspondent groups, namely caregivers, teachers, and students. Data is collected through in depth-interview, direct observation and document analysis. In-depth interviews with caregivers, teachers, and students to gain insights into the understanding, application, and challenges of moral education. Direct observation is conducted to observe student interactions in daily activities, while document analysis, including the curriculum and discipline rules, provides a comprehensive overview of the moral education policies. The collected data is analyzed using thematic analysis. This involves coding interview transcripts, observation notes, and document content to identify recurring patterns and themes. The analysis aims to link the findings to the research objectives and provide a coherent narrative on the implementation and effectiveness of moral education.

Results and Discussion

The role of moral education in preventing bullying within Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) is a critical area of study, particularly given the unique educational and cultural context of these institutions. Previous research highlights the multifaceted approaches that Islamic boarding schools employ to instill moral values in students, which can significantly contribute to reducing instances of bullying. One of the foundational aspects of moral education in Islamic boarding schools is the integration of religious teachings with character development. For instance, Muliawan et al. emphasize the management of moral learning as a systematic approach to enhance students' moral behavior, which is essential in creating a respectful and supportive school environment (Muliawan et al., 2022). This structured moral education is further supported by the teachings derived from traditional texts, such as the "yellow book," which Nur discusses as instrumental in shaping students' moral frameworks (Nur, 2022). The emphasis on these texts not only provides students with a rich source of ethical guidance but also fosters a sense of community and shared values, which can deter bullying behaviors.

Moreover, the influence of teachers and the overall school climate plays a significant role in moral education. Ruslan et al. identify the critical impact of teachers' personality competence and the school's atmosphere on students' moral development (Ruslan et al., 2023). A positive school climate, characterized by mutual respect and support, can significantly mitigate bullying by promoting an environment where students feel safe and valued. This aligns with findings from Musyafaah et al., who assert that moral education directly influences individual behavior, suggesting that when students are taught to emulate positive moral examples, they are less likely to engage in bullying (Musyafaah et al., 2023).

Additionally, the proactive measures taken by Islamic boarding schools to address moral degradation are noteworthy. Badrudin discusses the responsibility of these institutions in combating moral decline, which includes implementing character education as a preventive strategy against negative behaviors such as bullying (Badrudin, 2022). This proactive stance is

echoed by Muhdi, who highlights the urgency of character education in the contemporary era, particularly in light of globalization's challenges to traditional values (Muhdi, 2023). By fostering a strong moral foundation, these schools can effectively counteract the influences that may lead to bullying. Extracurricular activities also play a vital role in moral education. Rozi and Hasanah illustrate how scouting activities within Islamic boarding schools help instill character values that are crucial for personal development and social interaction (Rozi & Hasanah, 2021). Such activities not only provide students with opportunities to practice moral values in real-life situations but also enhance their social skills, making them less likely to engage in bullying.

Based on the research findings, moral education at Al Ikhlash Islamic Boarding School has been integrated into every aspect of life, supporting the character development of students. In addition to formal teaching such as religious study sessions, moral values are also instilled through daily activities, such as communal meals and congregational prayers, which emphasize respect, helping one another, and forgiveness.(Candrawati & Zikry Septoyadi, 2022)

Moral education in the boarding school involves discussion methods, hands-on practice, and exemplary behavior from caregivers and teachers. Daily interactions help students internalize moral values, shape positive attitudes, and develop character in line with Islamic teachings, enabling them to become responsible, empathetic, and respectful individuals.(Permana et al., 2023)

Although moral education is well implemented, there are still cases of bullying in the boarding school, primarily due to a lack of supervision in student interactions. Senior students sometimes misuse their positions to oppress juniors, creating an uncomfortable atmosphere that contradicts the goals of moral education.(Lingga & Nurjannah, 2023) This condition indicates a gap between the theoretical moral education taught and the actual practices occurring on the ground. Therefore, there is a need for evaluation and improvement in the supervision and support systems for students, so that the moral values taught can truly be internalized and applied in daily life, as well as to reduce the likelihood of bullying.(Hayati, 2020)

The caregivers and teachers play a crucial role in moral education at Al Ikhlash Islamic Boarding School, serving as educators and mentors who provide advice, motivation, and guidance, while also being role models for students in both spiritual and moral aspects.

The caregivers and teachers actively guide students in understanding and practicing moral values, using educational and persuasive approaches to raise awareness of the importance of good behavior. The advice and guidance they provide are based on Islamic teachings that emphasize noble character, mutual respect, and empathy towards others.(Triyanto et al., 2022)

One of the challenges in the implementation of moral education in boarding schools is the consistency of exemplary behavior from caregivers, teachers, and senior students.(Ariudin, 2020) Sometimes, there is a discrepancy between the teachings and the behaviors

demonstrated, which can confuse junior students and diminish the effectiveness of moral education.

Consistency in discipline and the application of moral values is crucial for creating a harmonious environment in boarding schools.(Prasetyo et al., 2022) Without good exemplars from caregivers and teachers, students may struggle to internalize and apply these values in their daily lives. Therefore, collaboration and support among caregivers and teachers are necessary to create a positive environment that reflects the moral principles being taught.(Ariudin, 2020)

By enhancing consistency in exemplary behavior and discipline, the process of moral education in boarding schools is expected to be more effective, thereby reducing cases of bullying and other negative behaviors.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study indicates that moral education at Al Ikhlash Islamic Boarding School plays a significant role in preventing bullying among students. Through the integration of moral values in every aspect of boarding school life, such as religious activities and social interactions, students are taught to internalize moral principles that foster mutual respect and concern for others. However, challenges in the consistency of exemplary behavior from caregivers, teachers, and senior students remain a significant barrier. The ongoing cases of bullying highlight a gap between the theory and practice of moral education. Therefore, there is a need for evaluation and improvement in the supervision and support systems for students to ensure that the values taught can be practically applied in daily life. This study emphasizes the importance of a collaborative approach in creating a safe and harmonious environment in boarding schools, so that moral education can be more effective and reduce negative behaviors among students.
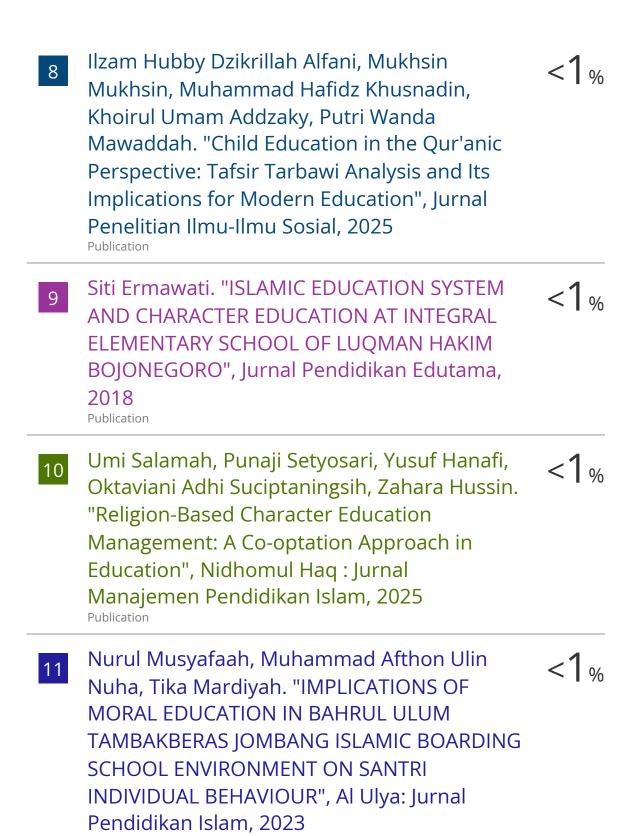
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