



Building a Safe Islamic Boarding School Environment from Bullying: The Role of Islamic Education in Supervision and Internalization of Values

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Received: 23-03-2025

Revised: 11-08-2025

Accepted: 10-02-2026

Abstract

This study examines how Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School in Semarang Regency handles bullying through Islamic teachings, focusing on supervision and the internalization of values. The researchers collected data using a qualitative case study design through in-depth observations, interviews, and documentation. They analyzed the data based on Creswell's qualitative data analysis model. The study identifies two forms of bullying: verbal and social bullying. Verbal bullying typically involves demeaning remarks, such as teasing or assigning negative nicknames. Students often trigger this behavior through careless actions or rule violations. Verbal bullying also includes body shaming, such as calling someone bald. Meanwhile, social bullying generally occurs when students perceive certain actions as harmful to individuals or groups. In response, students may exclude others socially or limit interactions as a form of informal social sanction within group dynamics. Promotive, preventive, and rehabilitative strategies play a crucial role in creating a bullying-free environment. Promotive activities aim to instill moral values in students by emphasizing that bullying is wrong and highlighting the importance of compassion. Educators implement this strategy through initiatives such as banner displays, seminars, and lectures. Preventive measures use technology, such as CCTV, to enhance security, and rely on human supervision through coaching and mentoring systems. Curative measures focus on guiding perpetrators of bullying and preventing the recurrence of negative behavior.

Keywords: internalization of values, bullying, Islamic boarding schools, Islamic education.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana Pondok Pesantren Al-Irsyad di Kabupaten Semarang menangani perundungan melalui ajaran Islam, dengan fokus pada pengawasan dan internalisasi nilai. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif, yang melibatkan observasi mendalam, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Data dianalisis berdasarkan model analisis data kualitatif Creswell). Temuan penelitian ini mengidentifikasi dua bentuk perundungan: perundungan verbal dan perundungan sosial. Perundungan verbal umumnya muncul dalam bentuk ucapan yang merendahkan, seperti ejekan atau pemberian julukan negatif. Bentuk ini sering kali dipicu oleh tindakan santri yang dianggap ceroboh atau melanggar aturan. Perundungan verbal juga dapat berupa body shaming, seperti dipanggil botak. Sementara itu, perundungan sosial umumnya dipicu oleh tindakan yang dianggap merugikan kelompok atau individu tertentu. Respons yang muncul adalah pengucilan sosial atau pembatasan interaksi sosial sebagai bentuk sanksi sosial informal dalam dinamika kelompok santri. Strategi promotif, preventif, dan rehabilitatif sangat penting untuk menciptakan lingkungan yang bebas dari perundungan. Kegiatan promotif bertujuan menanamkan nilai-nilai moral kepada santri, dengan menekankan bahwa perundungan adalah tindakan yang salah serta pentingnya sikap kasih sayang. Hal ini

diimplementasikan melalui berbagai inisiatif edukatif seperti pemasangan banner, seminar, dan ceramah. Langkah-langkah preventif memanfaatkan teknologi, seperti penggunaan CCTV untuk meningkatkan keamanan, serta pengawasan manusia melalui sistem pembinaan dan pendampingan. Adapun tindakan kuratif ditujukan kepada pelaku perundungan untuk memberikan pembinaan serta mencegah terulangnya perilaku negatif.

Kata Kunci: *internalisasi nilai, perundungan, sekolah berasrama Islam, pendidikan Islam*

INTRODUCTION

Bullying continues to be a serious threat to adolescents and children in Indonesia. In 2020, UNICEF Indonesia reported that nearly 40% of suicides in Indonesia were caused by bullying (Armitage, 2021). This sad fact is compounded by the finding that 2 out of 3 children aged 13–17 in Indonesia have experienced violence in their lives. A U-Report survey of 2,777 Indonesian youth aged 14–24 showed that 45% had experienced online bullying, while the remainder had experienced it face-to-face (Andayani et al., 2023). The most common types of online bullying included harassment via chat apps (45%), unauthorized sharing of private photos/videos (41%), and other forms of harassment (14%) (Bozic & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, 2023). The rate of bullying among boys was slightly higher than among girls, at 49% compared to 41%. The importance of concrete steps and awareness of this issue is key to addressing bullying in Indonesia (Arif et al., 2024; González Contreras et al., 2021; Utama & Salim, 2024).

The study of bullying has attracted the interest of researchers in various global contexts. Levchenko et al., (2020) examined the role of physical education in addressing bullying in Los Angeles high schools, while M.O. Badenhorst & Botha, (2022) focused on workplace bullying in higher education institutions in South Africa. Cheshire, (2022) examined linguistic classification methods for verbal bullying expressions in Kenyan high schools, and Rana et al., (2020) investigated the prevalence and factors associated with bullying victimization among school youth in Chandigarh, North India. Although this literature is abundant in geographical and institutional contexts, a theoretical gap arises concerning how faith-based educational institutions (especially Islamic boarding schools) critically approach bullying beyond their construction as normativities and the tension surrounding the moral-religious assumption that intra-familial and peer violence is not to happen if Islamic values are adhered to versus social realities where bullying still occurs even among settings regarded as: “pure” or “moral.”

Another point not addressed sufficiently is the dominant assumption in many previous studies, that religious environments are inherently protective against bullying behavior (Arhuis-Inca et al., 2021). However, where bullying persists in Islamic boarding schools, this presents an analytical paradox (Pusvitasari & Zarkasyi, 2024; Shobihah, 2025): how do practices that are contrary to Islamic moral values thrive within institutions designed to teach those very values? This paradox implies that the emulation of religious values does not necessarily lead to behavior consistent with these values, nor do non-religious structural, relational and cultural factors in such as seniority hierarchies, authoritative discipline or group norms prevail over the impact of religious morality for everyday action.

Thus, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are a theoretically important case not only because they are the pre-eminent Islam-based institutions of learning in Indonesia but also because they have an empirically grounded question regarding the relationship between values and practices. This research takes aim to discover about the anti-bullying education management in Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School Semarang Regency. This research does not only ask about the persecution that occurred but also how the internal dynamics of Islamic

boarding school facilitating tension between Islamic ideals and social reality and how educational management responds to this.

To this end, in this study three questions are essential: (1) what is the potential for bullying that appears at Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School? (2) Internal And External Factors Seeking Potency On Bullying In This Islamic Boarding School Environment. (3) What educational management strategies are developed and used to isolate the problem of bullying? In answering these questions, this study attempts to go beyond the assumption that religious values automatically prevent negative behavior and instead looks into social, pedagogical and institutional mechanisms surrounding the religious context that can confirm or deny whether these are acted on as barriers or align with power practices allowing for bullying to happen undisturbed.

METHOD

This research is qualitative research with a case study approach which is used to determine the management of anti-bullying education at the Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School, Semarang Regency. This option is grounded on the dual premise of being able to represent the complexity of the local context, but also an epistemological strategy that facilitates how knowledge is formed about anti-bullying education practices led as a participatory and contextual construct based on meanings, values and social dynamics (Njie & Asimiran, 2014). This subjectivity reflects in data-interpretation as well which is why methodological reflexivity in this approach is constantly maintained through research journals and critical dialogue with peers to reduce interpretational bias and build epistemological transparency (Baskarada, 2014). The informants have provided verbal approval to publish their data. However, they do not wish to have their names used and have requested that they be identified by other initials. Data collection was carried out through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies.

Interviews were conducted with nine key informants (three Islamic boarding school administrators, two ustadz/ustadzah, and four students), each coded P1 to P9, with an average duration of 15 minutes per session (a total of 135 minutes). Although the interviews lasted only about 15 minutes, this duration was deemed adequate because the focus of the research was not on lengthy narratives, but rather on identifying the participants' core experiences and reflections on the process of internalizing values, which could be captured efficiently through directed, open-ended questions. Observations were conducted during the field visit period to capture daily interactions between students and caregivers and the actual implementation of the anti-bullying policy. Official documents such as Islamic boarding school regulations, violation reports, and moral development modules were also analyzed as sources of triangulation.

Table 1: Informant Profile

No	Initials	Position	Gender
1	P1	Director	Man
2	P2	Caregiver	Man
3	P3	Caregiver	Man
4	P4	Caregiver	Man
5	P5	Student	Man
6	P6	Students	Man
7	P7	Students	Man
8	P8	Students	Man
9	P9	Students	Man

The data was analyzed thematically (Forman et al., 2008): first transcribing it, reading holistically, initial themes identification (like anti-bullying policies; Islamic values-based disintegration approaches; institutional reaction mechanisms), then refining into categories of analysis for example: what types of bullying emerged; promotive-preventive-curative preventative strategies and their effect on student character formation. Analytical data validation was done through triangulation of sources and methods in which interview findings were verified with observational findings and institutional documents. Additionally we engaged in member checking by providing summaries of our findings to key informants to verify that the meaning and intent was accurately represented. Involving participants in verifying interpretations not only also enhanced the credibility of the data, but further underpinned the ethical dimension of research. Ultimately, the validated data which were compiled into narrative with a descriptive-analytical approach illustrate how Islamic values are incorporated in anti-bullying management and how peasant discrete respond to social problems on contemporary (Baskarada, 2014; Lub, 2015).

RESULTS

Characteristics of potential bullying that occurs at Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School

The findings of this study identified two main characteristics that trigger bullying at the Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School in Semarang. First, verbal bullying, which occurs when students use harsh words, taunts, or insults toward other students. This is often triggered by differences in social status, academic ability, or physical characteristics between students. Second, social bullying, which involves exclusion or isolation from peer groups, leaves victims feeling isolated in the social life of the Islamic boarding school. This type of bullying is more difficult to detect because it often occurs in subtle forms such as whispers or secret conspiracies between groups of students. These three forms of bullying arise from an imbalance in social dynamics, where students who feel they have power or influence tend to oppress those who are less powerful. Ignorance or a lack of understanding of Islamic values, which actually teach compassion and tolerance, also plays a role in the emergence of this bullying behavior. Therefore, it is important for teachers and Islamic boarding school administrators to increase their vigilance and take proactive steps to prevent bullying, in order to create a safe and compassionate environment for all students.

As part of the fieldwork period, the results of observations on July 23, 2024 in the Islamic boarding school learning class revealed several social dynamics that have the potential to trigger verbal bullying. Interactions between students during learning activities are often colored by jokes that, although started with light intentions, can hurt the feelings of friends. P6 explains that takes the form of making fun of students' physical attributes through nicknames. Examples include the nicknames "*kotak*," which designates a student with a square face, "*botak*," which designates a student who is bald, and "*pretom*," which is an acronym of *preman tompe*, which roughly translates to "*a tough-looking student with a mole*." Students who were the subject of such comments had different reactions. These remarks occasionally resulted in little disputes that were quickly resolved since some saw them as innocent jokes, while others saw them as mockery. Bullying typically affected students who were physically vulnerable or different. The predominance of masculinity or power among students, exposure to violent content via information technology, and victim actions that were often presented as errors and used as an excuse for bullying were all factors that contributed to bullying. P7 explains that "a student who was nicknamed 'pretom' (*preman tompe*) did not perceive the label as an insult or a form of bullying, but rather regarded it as a casual joke within everyday interactions with his peers."

In the context of physical abuse, the dormitory environment and sports area are the places with the greatest potential for violence. The P8 informant revealed, *"In the dormitory, sometimes there are physical games where the original purpose is just a joke, such as a panko fight, but over time it turns into violence, especially from those who feel defeated and humiliated."* This shows how activities that are meant as entertainment can quickly turn violent when there is shame or injustice. P5 added, "Every year, several competitions are organized within the dormitory setting between cohorts, such as the I'dād Lughawī (IL) and Mutawassiṭah (MTW) classes, as well as between dormitories, including Tabuk, Hunain, and Makkah Dormitories. These competitions include soccer, tug-of-war, and other ball games. Although these activities are intended to foster entertainment and camaraderie, in practice, they often trigger group emotions. When a group loses, the resulting disappointment may lead to emotional outbursts among students and cause temporary social tension." However, such emotional outbursts cannot be classified as bullying, as bullying requires repeated negative behavior directed toward specific victims.

According to P6, *"students who report their peers' infractions to the caregivers sometimes become targets of social bullying."* He clarified that this kind of bullying frequently manifests as social exclusion, being disregarded, or not receiving a greeting from peers for a predetermined amount of time. *"I myself once felt abandoned by the friends whom I had reported,"* P6 added, sharing his own experience. He claimed that there was a clear shift in the opinions of his classmates. *"To be honest, such treatment made me feel uncomfortable,"* he continued. This experience suggests that reporting infractions might have an impact on students' social ties, even though it is meant to uphold discipline.

P8 went on to say, *"Students can also suffer from bullying when they violate boarding school rules due to carelessness or being perceived as lacking awareness; for an instance, there was a student who intentionally entered the boarding school while carrying a mobile phone, which resulted in him receiving a sanction for violating the rules. The student was bullied and given the moniker "telo" (telat loading), which is frequently used to characterize someone who is thought to be less bright or slow to think, rather than being sympathized by his peers. This labeling is an example of verbal bullying that results from personal errors and causes kids to be socially stigmatized."*

One of the kids, P9, claims that *"one of the factors that causes a student to be bullied is because their behavior is considered annoying."* According to this perspective, bullying is frequently justified by subjective judgments rather than actual conduct. Another kid, P5, supports this viewpoint by saying that *"a person may be bullied because they make mistakes."* These claims suggest that common mistakes or annoying actions can be used as social excuses for bullying. These results show that peer interpretations of behavior, which frame irritation and errors as acceptable justifications for unfavorable treatment, often legitimize bullying. As a result, bullying is sometimes accepted as a socially acceptable response among students rather than being acknowledged as a kind of abuse.

The lack of understanding of Islamic values among new students often increases the likelihood of bullying in Islamic boarding schools. P4 emphasizes that, *"They sometimes carry their original attitudes from their place of origin, where things that actually have the potential to be bullying are considered normal in their village."* This shows that new students often do not fully adapt to Islamic values that emphasize compassion and respect for others. P6 also highlights, *"There is a view among students that as long as their actions do not involve visible physical violence, then they are not doing anything wrong, although bullying can also be verbal or ostracized."*

Factors that give rise to potential bullying

By analyzing the characteristics of potential bullying, this study succeeded in identifying four main factors that trigger potential bullying behavior at Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School, Semarang Regency. First, the difference in mental strength and academic ability between students, where students with lower social status or academic ability are often the target of ridicule and insult from students who are considered superior. Second, an unsupervised pesantren environment allows bullying to occur without intervention or preventive action from pesantren management. Third, the formation of an exclusive social hierarchy among students creates a non-inclusive group, thus creating a sense of superiority among some students which can ultimately lead to bullying behavior towards other members of the group. Fourth, the lack of a deep understanding of Islamic values among new students who have not achieved the teaching of compassion, tolerance, and mutual respect contributes to the inability of students to deal with conflicts constructively. These four factors are interconnected and worsen social conditions in Islamic boarding schools, demonstrating the need for a more holistic approach to bullying prevention, including strengthening supervision, education of Islamic values, and developing students' social skills.

As of August 21, 2024, observations showed that there was a significant potential for bullying due to differences in mental strength and academic ability between students. Those with weaker mental strength tend to be the target of ridicule, especially when they face academic difficulties. Observations reveal that they are often dubbed with derogatory terms. P2 adds, "Students who face challenges with low academic scores sometimes get bad treatment, such as being ridiculed as 'useless', this has the potential to undermine their confidence." Meanwhile, P3 stated, "*sometimes I find that students who have difficulty taking lessons are made a joke by their peers.*" These findings highlight differences in mental strength and academic ability in triggering bullying behaviors, and underscore the importance of attention to emotional well-being and academic support to prevent the emergence of bullying behavior. Effective prevention efforts require a sensitive approach to individual differences and a collective effort to create an inclusive and supportive environment for all students.

In the context of Al-Irsyad Islamic boarding schools, the social hierarchy factor that is exclusive to tururt is a potential trigger for bullying actions. The P1 informant explained, "*The strict social hierarchy in the pesantren creates a distance between senior and junior students, this can lead to bullying.*" Similar to the expression of Informant P4, "*If implemented, an exclusive social structure has the potential to worsen feelings of inferiority among new students, thus becoming a target for bullying behavior because they are considered inexperienced.*" The P3 informant also highlighted, "*When more senior students feel superior, they sometimes feel entitled to bully more junior students, this is very dangerous.*" Meanwhile, the P5 informant observed, "*The social hierarchy in the Islamic boarding school, with the difference in status between senior and junior students, is used as an excuse to oppress.*" This suggests that social hierarchical factors that are exclusive to Islamic boarding schools not only create inequality, but also have the potential to exacerbate bullying behaviors that can affect the overall well-being of students.

Bullying among students is more likely in a pesantren setting when social dynamics are out of balance. "*In the pesantren, there are exclusive peer groups formed based on shared hobbies, interests, talents, and organizational involvement,*" according to P9. "*The existence of these groups often causes students who are not part of them to feel isolated and less involved in daily social interactions,*" according to P9. This condition shows that there are distinct social borders between pupils who belong to dominating groups and those who do not. Covert types of social bullying could emerge from such social exclusion. According to P3, "students who are physically weaker tend to be more vulnerable to unpleasant treatment." "*Physical weakness is often used as a reason to demean or treat students unfairly,*" P3 added. P2's statement that "*students who are perceived as having good-looking faces*

but weak physical strength, or who display traits considered feminine, are usually more vulnerable to ridicule" supports this conclusion. Therefore, an atmosphere that is vulnerable to bullying behaviors is created by social relational imbalances resulting from exclusive peer groups, views of masculinity, and personal physical traits.

In addition to the above, the lack of a deep understanding of Islamic values for new students is also a contributing factor to triggering bullying behavior. P3 notes,

"The lack of understanding of the doctrine of mutual respect causes some students to take actions such as belittling or ridiculing other students who have different opinions, creating an atmosphere that is not conducive."

This case illustrates how a lack of knowledge of Islamic values affects interactions between students and demonstrates the need for greater emphasis on the education of religious values to create a more harmonious and supportive environment in Islamic boarding schools.

Limited social interaction in Islamic boarding schools plays an important role in influencing bullying behavior. P4 reveals, "Students who only associate with peer groups tend to exhibit discriminatory attitudes toward students from other groups, such as refusing to get along or help when there is a problem." This creates a clear separation between groups, which often leads to feelings of isolation and discomfort among students from different backgrounds. P6 also notes, "*Limited interaction between groups often leads to the emergence of negative stereotypes and discomfort that leads to bullying, such as when students from other groups are deliberately avoided in social activities.*" When interactions between groups do not occur naturally, the emergence of negative stereotypes becomes more likely, and this discomfort often continues in acts of bullying.

At the end of the discussion session, the informants agreed that the problem of bullying should be a serious concern for Islamic boarding schools because of its profound impact on the welfare and development of students. This research reveals that bullying not only affects the mental health of victims, but can also undermine a healthy learning environment. The P1 informant revealed, "*Bullying in Islamic boarding schools can cause long-term trauma for students, which has an impact on their academic achievement and social relationships.*" This statement points to the importance of effective interventions to address this problem. The P2 informant added, "*If the pesantren does not take decisive action, children will feel insecure and less motivated to learn, which will jeopardize the educational process as a whole.*" This emphasizes the need for proactive and systematic bullying handling. Solving this problem not only involves implementing clear policies and training for educators, but also creating a school culture that supports and engages all parties in identifying and addressing bullying behavior.

Effective management of Al-Irsyad Semarang Islamic Boarding School in preventing bullying

Based on several factors that support the potential for bullying, this study found that the management of anti-bullying education management at Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School Semarang involves promotive, preventive, and curative approaches. The promotive approach is carried out through the installation of banners and posters that introduce indicators of bullying, the prohibition of bullying, the urgency of brotherhood, and refer to Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection. In addition, a credit point system is enforced, where violations of pesantren rules can affect moral values in the report card of I'dad Mu'allimin. Syiar ukhuwah through seminars and lectures is also actively carried out to strengthen the sense of brotherhood between students. In preventive efforts, strict supervision is carried out by caregivers, accompanied by the installation of CCTV and spatial arrangement so that there

are no isolated areas, reducing the possibility of bullying. From the curative side, if an act of bullying occurs, the perpetrator will be called by the dormitory caregiver and counseling guidance teacher to be taken care of. The pesantren also has strict regulations, which include sanctions such as shaving or even expulsion from the pesantren. This management strives to create a safe and conducive environment for students, prioritizing education and law enforcement with the aim of preventing and overcoming bullying as a whole.

The implementation of promotive management at Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School Semarang refers to primary prevention in education, which focuses on efforts to educate and increase students' awareness of moral and social values before negative actions occur. In this context, the installation of educational banners and posters is a management step to internalize moral messages. As revealed by P1, "We put up posters in every corner of the pesantren that read 'Fellow Muslim Brotherhood' and 'Urgency of the Muslim Brotherhood', so that students are more aware of the importance of relationships between others." Education through visual media, such as a banner about Law No. 35 of 2014 on child protection, as mentioned by P2, "We also put up a banner about Law No. 35 of 2014, so that students understand the importance of child protection," providing a clear and easy-to-understand message. In addition, P3 highlights the importance of recognizing bullying indicators, "Posters that introduce bullying indicators are very helpful for students to recognize bullying behaviors that they may not have been aware of before." This management shows how visual messages can influence student behavior to prevent bullying, as emphasized by P4, "Pesantren tries to prevent bullying by introducing bullying bans through various visual media that students can easily see."



Figure 1: Anti-bullying education campaign poster at Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School, Semarang Regency

In addition, the credit point system is a preventive measure to prevent bullying among students, with a supervisory and behavioral evaluation approach. This system is designed so that every offense committed by students is recorded and has an impact on their academic and moral evaluations. P5 states, "Every student who commits a violation will get negative credit points that will affect his academic grades on the I'dad Mu'allimin report card." Furthermore, P6 mentions that "This credit system helps us in monitoring student behavior and providing a deterrent effect," emphasizing the supervisory function which is a key component in this model. P7 adds, "With this system, students are more cautious in their actions, as they know that credit points will have an impact on the final evaluation," which shows the role of sanctions in creating internal discipline. In addition, P8 emphasized that "Violations of pesantren rules, including bullying, will be clearly recorded through this

credit system," strengthening students' awareness of the direct consequences of their actions. This system not only encourages students to obey the rules, but also serves as a learning mechanism about social responsibility.

Table 3: classification of types of violations and points related to bullying

Dia	Categories	Types of Violations	End
1	Violations of Ethics, Morality and Fights	Uttering profanity, whether spoken or written, or making indecent images	25-50
		Not Calling 3rd grade IM with "Rais"	10
		Calling other students with inappropriate calls	25
		Being the cause of fights with friends both inside and outside the pesantren or other institutions	25-100
		Planned fights	150
		Unplanned fights (Spontaneous Emotions)	75
2	Vandalism and Crime Violations	Witness beating of the perpetrator	Determined by the Deliberative Assembly for Handling Problematic Students
		Committing acts of extortion against others	55-Removed
		Wounding with a blow or sharp weapon	Determined by the Deliberative Assembly for Handling Problematic Students
		Involvement in a crime handled by the police	

Syiar ukhuwah is one of the effective promotive management at Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School to instill the value of brotherhood among students. P9 explained, "*Syiar ukhuwah is a song spoken by students to instill brotherhood.*" The cry of *ukhuwah*, as mentioned by P8, "*recited in the mosque after a big prayer once a week by one of the students followed by the students,*" provides a concrete example of how simple rituals can strengthen a sense of community. Repetition also plays an important role, as P3 explained, "*syiar ukhuwah is repeated until it is finally memorized by itself.*" This is in line with behavioristic learning theory that emphasizes the importance of repetition to reinforce positive memories and behaviors. P2 adds, "*Activities like this are very effective, because they are done in a fun and immersive setting,*" which underscores the importance of positive emotions in the learning process, in line with Fredrickson's theory of positive emotions which states that positive experiences can expand thinking and acting abilities.

As a preventive measure in preventing bullying, the Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School holds seminars and lectures that are consistent with Albert Bandura's theory of Social Learning, which states that individual behavior is obtained through observation and social interaction. Anti-bullying socialization in Islamic boarding schools is carried out through lectures and seminars to internalize the values of empathy and justice in students. P4 revealed, "*Socialization of bullying prevention is carried out through posters, lectures, studies,*" while P5 added, "*Seminars on socialization of anti-bullying education are organized by Islamic boarding schools by bringing in*

resource persons from the Landmark sector police." The presence of external sources such as the police provides an important legal perspective and social responsibility.

Lectures from experts, as conveyed by P6, "*Lectures from experts make students better understand the perspective of the victim, so they are more empathetic,*" play a big role in building empathy among students. The routine advice from the caretaker of the pesantren, stated by P1, "*Lectures by ustadz once a week in the mosque also allude to the prohibition of bullying,*" also serve as an important reminder. In addition, strict supervision carried out by pesantren caregivers is an additional preventive treatment. P8 explains, "*Caregivers always monitor student activities, both in the dorm and outside the classroom, to ensure that no one is bullied.*" P9 states that, "*This strict supervision makes students think twice before committing actions that violate the rules,*" while P2 adds, "*Caregivers also play a role in providing advice and reprimands if they notice suspicious behavior.*" These steps strengthen Bandura's social learning theory through models and reinforcement.

As another preventive measure, Islamic boarding schools have installed CCTV in various management corners to increase supervision and prevent bullying. P3 explained, "*With CCTV, we can monitor student activities in more detail and immediately follow up if there is an act of bullying.*" P4 added, "*CCTV makes students more aware that they are always being watched, so they are more disciplined in their actions.*" P5 commented, "*The installation of CCTV in areas prone to bullying is very effective in preventing such acts from happening.*" In addition, P6 said, "*We also use CCTV footage as evidence if there are reports related to bullying cases.*" To complement these efforts, the pesantren ensures that there are no isolated areas, which can minimize the possibility of bullying. P7 explained, "*We make sure that all areas in the pesantren are well monitored, so that there is no place for students to bully unnoticed.*" P8 added, "*Areas that were previously considered vulnerable to bullying, such as bathrooms or dorm corners, are now constantly monitored.*" P9 argues, "*By preventing isolated areas, students feel safer.*" P1 said, "*Santri are also more comfortable because there is no place that can be used for intimidation.*" Through these steps, the pesantren is committed to creating a safe and conducive environment for all students.

Curative steps in dealing with bullying in Islamic boarding schools, as described by P2, P3, P4, and P5, involve summoning and coaching by dormitory caregivers and counseling guidance teachers (BK). P2 explained, "*Students who are involved in bullying will be called by the caregiver and BK teacher to be guided and advised.*" P3 added, "*We listen to the students' reasons and try to provide the best solution so that this problem does not happen again.*" According to P4, "*This coaching is very important so that students can learn from their mistakes and improve themselves.*" In addition, P5 stated, "*Summons by BK teachers also has a deterrent effect for students who commit bullying.*"

In addition, the Al-Irsyad Islamic boarding school applies the punishment of shaving the perpetrators of bullying as a curative measure, in line with the prevention and intervention approach. P6 explains, "*If any student is found to be bullying, they can be punished by shaving as a form of sanction,*" suggesting that this punishment is designed to create a deterrent effect through embarrassing appearances. P7 adds, "*This punishment is effective in providing a shame effect, so that students think twice before repeating the action,*" emphasizing the role of the psychological effects of punishment in changing behavior. P8 states, "*In addition to shaving, if the case is severe, we do not hesitate to involve the authorities,*" indicating that additional law enforcement is used to deal with more serious cases. P9 commented, "*We comply with the rules of the pesantren that have been set, including involving the police if the violation is very serious,*" emphasizing that these measures are taken to ensure the safety and comfort of all students. In cases of very severe bullying, the perpetrator can be expelled from the pesantren. P1 explained, "*If the bullying is very detrimental, we can decide to expel the student from the pesantren,*" while.

Discussion

The main findings in this study can be summarized that on an individual level, there is potential for bullying at the Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School in Semarang, which is a manifestation of social dynamics, structures and values are still not fully internalized. Three types of potential bullying (verbal, physical and social) occur from an imbalance of power between students caused by four factors, namely: differences in terms of academic ranking and social level, less supervision done in strategic areas, establishment of an exclusive hierarchy among students as well as lack of understanding about depth understanding Islamic values that concern mercy, tolerance and justice. This study also finds that the Islamic boarding school had formed a holistic anti-bullying management system from the result of dispositions promotive (socialization values of brotherhood and children's rights), preventive (ship supervision intensively, CCTV, spatial planning) and curative (guidance perpetrators to sanctions). Its strategic innovations are in alignment with Islamic teachings and a moral-based discipline system that views the prevention of bullying as not just a security issue, but also as an integral part of student character education (Miftahuddin et al., 2024; Mufrihah et al., 2025; Sahri & Saufi, 2025; Syaifuddin & Ahwan, 2024). These findings support that Islamic educational institutions are able to serve as proactive safe spaces, contingent upon the operationalizability of spiritual values in mundane managerial practices.

In the view of social ecology theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner, the findings of this study manage to offer valuable perspective. Bronfenbrenner's Social Ecology Theory emphasizes the importance of interactions between individuals and their environment in shaping behavior. In the context of this study, the characteristics of verbal, physical, and social bullying can be seen as the result of complex interactions between students and various layers of their environment, including family, peers, and the pesantren environment itself (Salsabila, 2018). The imbalance of mental and academic power between students, as well as the lack of supervision, reflects the ecological dynamics that influence bullying behavior. These findings support the research of Qiu, (2021) who states that different environmental factors contribute to the emergence of bullying behaviors and emphasize the need for interventions at different levels of the system. However, the results of this study refute the argument of Mc Guckin & Minton, (2014) who stated that bullying is a structured and planned activity; Instead, the findings suggest that bullying can also occur due to trivial inadvertents such as jokes that lead to serious problems. In addition, these findings show that seniority in pesantren allows the emergence of an exclusive social hierarchy, contrary to the view of Masita et al., (2024) who state that seniority provides positive guidance to the younger generation, both from an ecological and managerial perspective.

Meanwhile, in the view of crisis management theory, William Crutchfield provides important insights into crisis prevention and management management with a systematic and planned approach. Krech & Crutchfield, (1948) emphasized that crisis management requires a comprehensive plan to deal effectively with emergency situations. The findings of this study reflect these principles with the application of promotive, preventive, and curative management in dealing with bullying in Islamic boarding schools. The installation of banners and posters serves as a promotional measure to raise awareness, while strict surveillance using CCTV is a precautionary measure to prevent incidents of bullying. Counseling for bullies is a curative approach that aims to solve problems and prevent recurrence. The implementation of these management practices reflects a structured approach that focuses on crisis mitigation and resolution in accordance with the principles of (Crutchfield, 2017). Thus, Crutchfield & Pontecorvo, (1962) crisis management theory and ecological approach to dealing with bullying in Islamic boarding schools complement each other, offering an effective framework for understanding and addressing this problem. Crutchfield's principles in crisis management

emphasize the importance of thorough preparation and rapid response, which is in line with the need for comprehensive management and preventive handling in the context of bullying.

This study offers fresh and different findings compared to the study. First, if the study Nielsen et al., (2024) more highlighting personal factors such as temperament as the main cause of bullying, this study actually found that the root of the problem is structural, for example informal social hierarchy among students and lack of strict institutional supervision. Second, in contrast to the findings Prasetyo et al., (2023) who consider that religiosity automatically prevents bullying, this study shows that a superficial understanding of religion can actually be a loophole for bullying behavior. It can be seen from the new students who have the potential to become perpetrators or victims, an interesting reversal of assumptions. Third, while Rismayani, (2024) Relying only on disciplinary sanctions as a response, this study introduces an integrated approach that combines promotive aspects (socialization of ukhuwah values and children's rights), preventive (strict supervision, spatial planning, CCTV), and curative (coaching to strict sanctions). Fourth, it is different from global models such as Hikmat et al., (2024) which is spiritually neutral, the approach here is explicitly rooted in Islamic values such as *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* and brotherhood. Finally, if Wen et al., (2024) Considering dormitories as safe spaces, this study actually reveals that dormitories are the main place where physical and social bullying occurs. By combining socio-structural analysis, reinterpretation of the role of religion, and contextual prevention models, the study offers original contributions not found in the previous literature.

This study offers novelty through three original contributions that explicitly address criticisms that previous studies lack conceptual innovation, theoretical reconstruction, or a transferable analytical model. First, in terms of conceptual innovation, this study shifts the focus from individualistic explanations of bullying to a social-structural analysis, demonstrating that power dynamics at Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School, such as exclusive seniority-based hierarchies, academic-social gaps, and weak institutional oversight, are not merely background but systemic roots of bullying practices. Second, in terms of theoretical reconstruction, this study challenges the dominant assumption that religiosity is automatically protective; instead, it reveals that a religious understanding that is not deeply internalized (without an emphasis on the values of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, tolerance, and justice) can create space for bullying behavior. These findings expand the interpretation of Bronfenbrenner's social ecology theory and Crutchfield's crisis management theory by positioning the spiritual dimension as an active variable in the configuration of the social environment and institutional responses (McVee et al., 2018). Third, this research produces a transferable, applied analytical model: an anti-bullying management framework based on Islamic values that integrates promotive (socialization of brotherhood and children's rights), preventive (spatial design, CCTV, supervision), and curative (guidance and sanctions). This model is not only contextual but also operational and has the potential to be adapted to other faith-based educational institutions, thus strengthening the research's claim of novelty.

Policy recommendations that can be provided include the application of a theory-based approach to Social Ecology and Crisis Management. Based on the Social Ecological Theory by Bronfenbrenner, (1994), policies must consider dynamic interactions between students and various environments that affect their behavior, that is, it is necessary to conduct a thorough evaluation of the internal environment of the pesantren, including the interaction between students, families, and the pesantren community. Policy recommendations include increased psychosocial monitoring and support, as well as educational programs for students and staff on the impact and prevention of bullying. In addition, based on the Crisis Management Theory by William Crutchfield (1962), pesantren must develop and implement a structured and systematic crisis management plan. This includes preventive management such

as the installation of education and training banners for students and staff, as well as curative management such as the provision of counseling services and support for victims and perpetrators of bullying (Muhlis et al., 2025; Sintasari et al., 2026). This policy should be supported by monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of the interventions implemented and make adjustments as needed. By integrating ecological and managerial perspectives, pesantren can create a safer and more supportive environment for all students, while reducing the prevalence and impact of bullying.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that bullying at the Al-Irsyad Islamic Boarding School in Semarang is not merely individual deviant behavior, but rather a social phenomenon rooted in the tension between the ideals of Islamic teachings (particularly the values of *rahmatan lil 'ālamīn*, compassion, and brotherhood) and the reality of relational practices influenced by social hierarchy, academic inequality, and the minimal internalization of the ethics of care in everyday life. The two forms of bullying identified (verbal and social) demonstrate the complexity of modes of domination that operate through language, the body, and social networks, each with varying degrees of visibility and psychological impact. These findings broaden the discourse in contemporary Islamic education studies by challenging the assumption that religious institutions automatically become safe spaces from violence. Instead, this study emphasizes that without structural and pedagogical mechanisms that actively translate theological values into relational governance, the potential for symbolic violence can continue to grow. Managerial responses through promotive, preventive, and curative approaches are not merely technical but represent an effort to reconstruct the moral ecosystem of Islamic boarding schools. This strategy aligns with the paradigm of values-based transformative leadership and paves the way for the development of a "moral climate theory in Islamic education," which emphasizes the importance of integrating religious ethics with social design that is just, inclusive, and responsive to students' psychosocial vulnerabilities.

The limitations of this study need to be understood not only as methodological weaknesses but as reflective entry points into the epistemological limits of qualitative case studies in the context of closed institutions. Focusing on a single Islamic boarding school (pesantren) allows for depth of analysis, but inherently limits the representation of the diversity of cultures, structures, and practices across various Islamic boarding school typologies in Indonesia. Similarly, the reliance on nine informants, despite validation through triangulation and member checking, has the potential to overlook marginalized voices, such as passive victims or social minorities who are reluctant to speak out. Furthermore, the qualitative approach used, while superior in capturing subjective meanings, is less capable of uncovering systemic patterns and structural distributions of power. This raises a theoretical question: how can bullying in Islamic boarding schools be read not simply as an interpersonal act, but as a product of disciplinary architectures, group norms, and symbolic hierarchies that are not always explicit? Therefore, future research should adopt a multi-site, mixed-method design that combines ethnographic insights with quantitative data, and expand the analytical framework through theories of social ecology, moral disengagement, or Islamic ethics of care. In this way, this research will not only identify problems but also contribute to an epistemological reorientation in Islamic education toward a more humanistic, protective, and just paradigm.

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