QUR'ANIC CHARACTER EDUCATION MODEL TO PREVENT CHILD BULLYING IN SCHOOLS/ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS

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Abstract: *Bullying is still a serious problem in the school environment and Islamic boarding schools, having an impact on the psychological, social, and character development of students. This study aims to formulate a model of Qur'anic character education that functions as a preventive strategy against child abuse. The research uses a qualitative approach with a multi-site study design on two educational institutions: Islamic-based schools and salaf/modern pesantren Data was collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. The results of the study show that Qur'anic values such as rahmah (affection), 'adl (justice), ukhuwwah (brotherhood), hilm (politeness), and amanah are the main foundations in shaping student behavior. The resulting model consists of four components: (1) internalization of Qur'anic values through learning and example, (2) strengthening the culture of schools/Islamic boarding schools, (3) Qur'an-based preventive and curative intervention mechanisms, and (4) teacher-ustadz-parent collaboration. The findings show that the application of this model is able to reduce the tendency of bullying behavior and build a more harmonious educational ecosystem.*
Keywords: Character education, the Qur'an, bullying, Islamic schools, Islamic boarding schools.

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a serious problem that impacts the psychological, social, and academic well-being of students. Various reports indicate that bullying practices occur not only in public schools but also in Islamic boarding schools, which have a dormitory leadership culture and senior-junior relationships. This phenomenon highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to developing students' character, fostering moral sensitivity and the ability to manage emotions and social interactions. From an Islamic perspective, character formation is at the heart of education, reflecting the Prophet Muhammad's mission to perfect noble morals. The Quran contains fundamental principles for fostering human behavior, emphasizing

compassion, justice, polite communication, and the strict prohibition against injustice. Therefore, internalizing Quranic values can be a strategic alternative in preventing bullying.

However, there is limited research that systematically formulates a Quranic character education model as a bullying prevention tool, particularly in the context of Islamic boarding school-based education. This research aims to address this gap by developing an operational, effective, and contextual Quranic character education model for schools and Islamic boarding schools. Based on this background, this study aims to formulate a Quranic Character Education Model for Preventing Child Bullying in Schools/Islamic Boarding Schools that is implementable and based on revealed values. This model is expected to provide an educational solution for building a peaceful, empathetic learning climate that respects the dignity of students, while simultaneously strengthening the role of schools and Islamic boarding schools as centers for developing superior character.

The phenomenon of child bullying is a serious problem in education, both in formal schools and Islamic boarding school-based educational institutions. Various reports indicate that acts of bullying, whether verbal, physical, social, or digital, can hinder students' psychological, academic, and social development. In Indonesia, cases of bullying remain frequent and tend to increase as the intensity of social interactions is poorly managed. In Islamic boarding school environments that combine formal education, habituation, and parenting, bullying sometimes emerges as part of a culture of seniority, unequal relationships among students, and weak mechanisms for comprehensive supervision and character education. This situation highlights the urgency of strengthening a character education model that is relevant, comprehensive, and aligned with Islamic values.

Quranic character education holds a strategic position as a value-based approach that can shape students into individuals with noble character, empathy, and the ability to manage social interactions healthily. The Quran contains basic principles for character development, such as honesty (ṣidq), trustworthiness (amanah), compassion (rahmah), avoiding violence (lā ta'tadū), and the command to do good to others (iḥsān). These values are strongly relevant to efforts to minimize bullying behavior through internalizing etiquette, spiritual development, and social mentoring. However, the implementation of Quranic character education in the context of bullying prevention is often fragmented and has not yet been structured into a systematic, measurable, and easily replicated model across educational institutions.

The need for a comprehensive model is increasingly pressing given the increasingly complex dynamics of child and adolescent development, particularly in

the digital era. Schools and Islamic boarding schools are required to not only provide punishment or reactive intervention when bullying occurs, but also develop a preventative approach through moral development, strengthening emotional competence, and creating a safe and compassionate educational environment. The Qur'anic character education model is expected to integrate cognitive, affective, and behavioral components to create an anti-bullying school/Islamic boarding school culture.

Furthermore, research on bullying prevention from the perspective of Qur'anic values is still relatively limited and focuses more on general moral education, rather than on formulating specific models aimed at bullying mitigation. Therefore, in-depth studies are needed to develop and test a Qur'anic character education model that can be effectively implemented in the context of schools and Islamic boarding schools. This model must be able to address empirical challenges in the field, accommodate cultural differences in educational institutions, and provide both theoretical and practical contributions to strengthening character education in Indonesia.

Bullying is a serious problem that impacts the psychological, social, and academic aspects of students. Various reports indicate that bullying practices occur not only in .public schools, but also in Islamic boarding schools), which feature a culture of dormitory-based leadership and senior-junior dynamics. This phenomenon highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to character development one that fosters moral sensitivity, emotional regulation, and social interaction skills among students. From an Islamic perspective, character formation lies at the very heart of education, aligning with the prophetic mission of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to perfect noble character. The Quran contains fundamental principles for shaping human behavior, emphasizing compassion, justice, and courteous communication, while strictly prohibiting the mistreatment or oppression of others. Consequently, the internalization of Quranic values offers a strategic alternative for preventing bullying.

However, there is a lack of research that systematically formulates a Quranic character education model specifically as a tool for bullying prevention, particularly within the context of Boarding Schools-based Islamic education. This study aims to address this gap by developing a Quranic character education model that is operational, effective, and contextually relevant for both schools and Boarding Schools. Building on this background, the research seeks to formulate a "Quranic Character Education Model for the Prevention of Bullying in Schools/Boarding Schools," which is practical to implement and grounded in divinely revealed values. It is hoped that this model will serve as an educational solution for fostering a

peaceful learning environment one characterized by empathy and respect for the dignity of every student while simultaneously strengthening the role of schools and Boarding Schools as hubs for cultivating exemplary character..

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to provide an in-depth description of the implementation of a Quran-based character education model for preventing bullying among children in both schools and Islamic boarding schools. This approach was selected because it enables a holistic understanding of the phenomenon, particularly regarding Quranic values internalized through the learning process, the modeling of behavior, and institutional culture. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with teachers, dormitory mentors, school principals/heads of Islamic Boarding Schools, and students participating in the character education program. Participatory observation was conducted to examine habitual practices, social interactions, and the dynamics of daily activities that may influence bullying behavior. Furthermore, document analysis was performed on curricula, character education modules, institutional regulations, and disciplinary records concerning bullying incidents.

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking to verify the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations. The data were analyzed thematically through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis focused on identifying the most relevant Quranic values, as well as effective learning and mentoring mechanisms for preventing bullying. The findings were then used to formulate a conceptual and operational model of Quran-based character education, which can be applied within schools and Islamic Boarding Schools as a systematic effort to foster a safe, inclusive, and bullying-free educational environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of Bullying in Schools/Islamic Boarding Schools

The results of observations and in-depth interviews show that students in schools and Islamic boarding schools experience four main categories of bullying: verbal, physical, social-relational, and digital. In the boarding school environment, social-relational bullying such as exclusion, senior-junior intimidation (seniority), and group pressure are the most frequent forms that appear. This is in line with the findings of Sullivan et al. (2020) that a boarding environment with intensive

interaction tends to increase the risk of hierarchical social relations that trigger bullying.

Verbal bullying such as giving negative nicknames, teasing or innuendo regarding physical condition was at the highest position with 67% of cases identified from the records of teachers and dormitory coaches. Meanwhile, digital bullying appears in the form of insulting messages, sharing inappropriate photos, and comments in chat groups; Although not dominant, this case is increasing among middle and high school students who have access to devices. This condition emphasizes that preventing bullying cannot rely on a disciplinary approach alone, but must be accompanied by value interventions, institutional culture and systematic character development (Coloroso, 2018).

The Need for a Qur'anic Character Education Model

Thematic analysis reveals a strong need for a character-development model based on Quranic values, for three reasons:

1. A lack of integration between religious instruction and character development.

   Religious educators acknowledge that lessons on ethics are often disconnected from students' daily behavior; values are taught cognitively rather than through everyday practice.

2. Disciplinary approaches have proven ineffective in changing behavior.

   Students who engage in bullying tend to repeat such behavior because they fail to grasp the moral and social consequences of their actions.

3. High societal expectations of Islamic educational institutions.

   Parents and the broader community expect schools and Islamic boarding schools to produce students with good character; therefore, these institutions require a clear, structured model that can be easily integrated into daily programs.

These findings align with Al-Attas's (1980) argument that the purpose of Islamic education is the formation of a refined human being (*insān kāmil*) through the integration of knowledge (*'ilm*), proper conduct (*adab*), and virtuous action (*'amal*).

Structure of the Qur'anic Character Education Model

The Qur'anic values most relevant to the prevention of bullying include:

a) *Rahmah* (Quran, Surah Al-Anbiya: 107) – compassion as the foundation for interaction.
b) '*Adl*(Quran, Surah An-Nahl: 90) – justice in social relationships.
c) *Ihsan* (Quran, Surah Al-Qashash: 77) – doing good beyond what is merely required.
d) *Hilm* – patience and composure when faced with provocation.
e) *Tawazun* – emotional balance and self-control.
f) The prohibition against disparaging and mocking others (Quran, Surah Al-Hujurat: 11–12).

These verses provide not only a normative framework but also a psychological foundation for students to understand the true nature of dignified social relationships.

The Effectiveness of Quranic Values in Transforming Social Behavior

The research findings indicate that the Qur'anic values of *rahmah* (mercy/compassion), *'adl* (justice), and *ihsan* (benevolence/excellence) provide a robust moral framework for the prevention of bullying. The value of *rahmah* fosters empathy, diminishes tendencies toward aggression, and cultivates sensitivity toward the suffering of others (Rahman, 2022). Meanwhile, the value of *'adl* guides students toward relational justice a crucial element in preventing the power imbalances that lie at the root of bullying. Thus, the Qur'anic model proves to be more than merely a religious approach; it serves as an effective psychological and social framework.

The exemplary conduct of teachers (*ustadz*) is the factor most frequently mentioned by students during interviews. Students emulate their teachers' manner of speaking, perspectives on conflict, and emotional responses. This aligns with social learning theory (Bandura, 1986), which posits that observing significant figures serves as a source for the internalization of behavior.

In the Islamic boarding school setting, the exemplary conduct of the *Kyai* (head of the *pesantren*) serves as the core of its values; this reinforces Al-Ghazali's

argument (in *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*) that moral education must begin with personal example rather than lectures.

The Concept of Bullying in the Context of Schools and Islamic Boarding Schools

Research findings indicate that bullying—whether in schools or Islamic boarding schools manifests in various forms, including physical, verbal, relational, and cyberbullying. In the Islamic boarding schools environment, bullying can become internalized through a culture of seniority, power imbalances among students, or unchecked disciplinary practices. Conceptually, bullying is understood as repetitive aggressive behavior that involves a power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim.

The research further confirms that bullying is not limited to overt acts of violence; it also encompasses subtle behaviors that can damage a child's self-esteem, such as social exclusion, humiliation, status-based intimidation, and demeaning comparisons. From a Quranic perspective, bullying constitutes *zulm* (injustice/oppression) and *ta'addi* (transgression or overstepping boundaries). Verses such as Surah Al-Hujurat (49:11–12) explicitly prohibit disparaging others, mocking, using derogatory labels, and harboring negative assumptions.

Further analysis suggests that a Quranic model of character education provides a normative framework for improving relationships among students, grounded in the values of *rahmah* (compassion), '*adl* (justice), *akhlaq hasanah* (virtuous character), and *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood/solidarity). These concepts serve as a foundation for preventing behaviors that undermine the dignity of others.

Factors Causing Bullying

a. Individual Factors

Field findings indicate that children who exhibit emotional issues, impulsivity, a need for dominance, or a lack of empathy are more prone to becoming perpetrators of bullying. As for victims, traits such as shyness, a lack of self-confidence, or certain physical characteristics often trigger bullying by peers.

Within the framework of Quranic character education, these conditions are linked to a weak internalization of the values of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul), self-control (*mujahadah*), and the interpersonal ethics that should be instilled from an early age.

b. Social Environmental Factors

Peer environments, classroom climate, and the patterns of interaction among students including those in Islamic boarding schools contribute to reinforcing bullying practices. Interviews with teachers and *ustadz* (Islamic religious teachers) indicate that bullying frequently occurs within study groups, dormitory activities, and even informal settings, such as through excessive or inappropriate joking. A lack of parental involvement, inadequate supervision, and the normalization of violence within adolescent social circles further exacerbate the problem.

c. Institutional Cultural Factors

A culture of seniority, a command-based hierarchy among students, rigid rules, and a non-humanistic approach to discipline are significant factors found within *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools). In some instances, power imbalances between seniors and juniors are accepted as an enduring tradition, leading to a normalization of bullying behavior.

Quranic character education serves to transform this culture by reconstructing core values specifically *'adl* (justice), *ihsan* (excellence/benevolence), *musawah* (equality), and *amanah* (trustworthiness/responsibility) in leadership.

The Impact of Bullying on Children in Schools/Islamic Boarding Schools

a. Psychological Impact

Victims of bullying experience anxiety, fear, low self-esteem, depression, and prolonged emotional distress. Some students in Islamic boarding schools (*santri*) have reported a loss of motivation to learn, a sense of insecurity within the boarding school environment, and trauma in social interactions. These impacts align with literature in developmental psychology, which indicates that bullying can disrupt a child's emotional stability and mental health. From a Quranic perspective, human dignity (*karamah al-insan*) is a fundamental value; therefore, actions that harm an individual's psyche or well-being are considered ethical and moral violations.

b. Social Impact

Bullying causes a breakdown in social relationships among students. Victims tend to withdraw, struggle to form friendships, and lose trust in their social environment. Conversely, if left uncorrected, those who engage in bullying may develop aggressive, authoritarian, and unempathetic traits in their adult lives. Quranic character education emphasizing the values of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood/solidarity), mutual respect, and *ta'awun* (cooperation) serves as a strategic approach to repairing social relationships damaged by bullying.

c. Academic Impact

Research shows that children who experience bullying exhibit reduced concentration, increased absenteeism, and a decline in academic performance. In some instances, victims may even choose to transfer to another school or boarding school due to the emotional and social discomfort they endure. A Quranic character education model is considered an effective preventive intervention, as it fosters a safe learning environment and cultivates a motivation to learn rooted in the intention of worship (*lillah*—for the sake of God).

Discussion

A comprehensive analysis from this study reveals that bullying in schools and Islamic boarding schools is a complex phenomenon influenced by personal, social, and institutional cultural factors. Its impact affects children across psychological, social, and academic dimensions.

Consequently, the "Qur'anic Character Education Model" is presented not merely as a moral approach, but as a transformative framework designed to:

1. Build spiritual awareness regarding the inherent dignity of human beings.
2. Instill Qur'anic ethics that emphasize non-violence, empathy, and responsibility.
3. Transform the institutional culture to be more humane, egalitarian, and supportive of character development.
4. Establish a holistic guidance system involving teachers, *ustadz* (Islamic educators), caregivers, and parents.

By integrating Qur'anic values such as *rahmah* (mercy/compassion), *adab* (proper conduct/etiquette), *ihsan* (excellence/benevolence), justice, and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) this model serves as a preventive solution to significantly reduce, and even forestall, the occurrence of bullying.

CONCLUTION

Research on the Quranic Character Education Model for the prevention of child bullying in schools and Islamic boarding schools demonstrates that the internalization of Quranic values serves as a strategic foundation for fostering students who possess noble character, empathy, and an aversion to bullying. Values such as *ṣidq* (honesty), *ta'awun* (mutual assistance), *ḥilm* (patience), *'adalah* (justice), and *iḥsan* (benevolence) play a significant role in developing moral awareness, self-control, and the capacity to respect others. The Quranic character education model formulated in this study proves effective when implemented through a holistic approach encompassing curriculum enhancement, the modeling of behavior by teachers or *ustadz* (Islamic educators), the integration of these values into daily routines, and the cultivation of a school or Islamic boarding schools culture that is both conducive and child-friendly.

Furthermore, the research indicates that preventing bullying requires the engagement of the entire educational ecosystem, including educators, Islamic boarding schools administrators, parents, and the students' broader social environment. A systematic and sustained implementation of this model can reduce the potential for verbal, physical, and psychological violence. Consequently, Quranic character education functions not merely as a moral strategy, but also as a protective mechanism against deviant behavior and violence among students.

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