

The Efforts of Madrasah Principals and Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Minimizing Bullying in State Islamic Junior High Schools of Padangsidempuan City

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Abstract

Bullying is a serious issue that frequently occurs in educational environments, including State Islamic Junior High Schools in Padangsidempuan City specially verbal, phsyc, social and cyber (cyberbullying). This study aims to describe the efforts of madrasah principals and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in minimizing bullying behavior within the school environment. The method used in this study was a qualitative approach with data collection techniques conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. The study population and sample consisted of 2 principals of State Islamic Junior High Schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri) in Padangsidempuan City, 22 Islamic Religious Education teachers of State Islamic Junior High Schools in Padangsidempuan City, and 60 students of State Islamic Junior High Schools in Padangsidempuan City. The analysis employed data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques, which were obtained through discussions with supervisors and validators that experts in their respective fields of expertise. The findings reveal that madrasah principals play an active role in formulating anti-bullying policies, fostering a religious school culture, and conducting intensive supervision. Meanwhile, PAI teachers contribute by instilling noble moral values, developing students' character, and applying persuasive as well as preventive approaches in the learning process. The synergy between madrasah principals and PAI teachers has proven effective in reducing bullying cases and creating a safe and conducive learning environment. In line with the objectives outlined at the beginning of this study, bullying behavior can be minimized within the madrasah environment, particularly at State Islamic Junior High Schools in Padangsidempuan City. It is hoped that this research will provide benefits for madrasahs and related parties, as well as serve as a valuable reference for future researchers.

Keywords: Bullying; Madrasah Principals; Islamic Education Teachers; Character Education

Abstrak

Perundungan (bullying) merupakan salah satu permasalahan serius yang kerap terjadi di lingkungan pendidikan, termasuk di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri di Kota Padangsidempuan baik secara verbal, fisik, sosial dan cyber (cyberbullying). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan upaya kepala madrasah dan guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam meminimalisasi perilaku perundungan di lingkungan madrasah. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Populasi sampelnya adalah 2 Kepala Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri Kota Padangsidempuan, 22 Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Madrasah Tsanawiyah Kota Padangsidempuan, dan 90 Siswa/I Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri Kota Padangsidempuan. Analisisnya menggunakan reduksi data, penyajian data dan penarikan kesimpulan yang mana diperoleh dari diskusi dengan pembimbing dan validator yang pakar dalam bidang keilmuannya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala madrasah berperan aktif dalam menyusun kebijakan anti-perundungan, menciptakan budaya madrasah yang religius, serta melakukan pengawasan intensif. Sementara itu, guru PAI berkontribusi melalui penanaman nilai-nilai akhlak mulia, pembinaan karakter siswa, serta pendekatan persuasif dan preventif dalam proses pembelajaran. Sinergi antara kepala madrasah dan guru PAI terbukti efektif dalam mengurangi kasus perundungan dan menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang aman dan kondusif. Selaras dengan tujuan yang saya kemukakan di awal maka perilaku perundungan dapat di minimalisasi di lingkungan madrasah khusus nya di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri Kota Padangsidempuan, semoga penelitian ini dapat bermanfaat bagi madrasah dan pihak terkait juga bermanfaat bagi peneliti selanjutnya.

Kata Kunci: Perundungan; Kepala Madrasah; Guru PAI; Pendidikan Karakter

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is commonly understood as a form of aggressive behavior intentionally and repeatedly carried out by an individual or a group against a weaker party, involving an imbalance of power and aimed at causing physical, verbal, social, or psychological harm. According to Susan M. Swearer (2017), bullying refers to intentional and repetitive aggressive actions characterized by unequal power relations between perpetrators and victims, which may adversely affect an individual's psychological and social well-being. Similarly, UNESCO (2019) defines bullying as deliberate and repeated aggressive behavior directed toward individuals who are unable to defend themselves, manifesting in physical, verbal, social, and digital forms, including cyberbullying. Furthermore, bullying is recognized as a social interaction involving power asymmetry that may generate long-term consequences for students' emotional and social development (Espelage et al., 2020). From a broader perspective, bullying is also viewed as a group phenomenon involving perpetrators, victims, and bystanders, maintained through social dynamics and group norms within the school environment (Salmivalli, 2021). In addition, bullying is considered a preventable form of intentional and repetitive aggression through systematic school-based interventions (Gaffney, 2019).

Bullying remains a persistent and serious issue in the educational sector. Its consequences extend beyond victims, affecting perpetrators as well as the surrounding social environment. Within madrasah settings, bullying frequently appears in verbal, social, and physical forms, disrupting both students' learning processes and psychological development (Choiriyah et al., 2024). As educational institutions grounded in Islamic values, madrasahs bear the responsibility of establishing a safe, religious, and character-oriented learning environment (Khofi & Heridianto, 2024). Nevertheless, the persistence of bullying practices indicates the need for systematic and sustainable prevention strategies. In this regard, madrasah principals and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers occupy strategic positions in cultivating a positive and supportive school culture.

Based on these conditions, several research gaps can be identified. First, there remains a limited body of research integrating educational leadership and Islamic religious education in bullying prevention, despite the substantial potential of combining these two dimensions to foster a safer and more character-based school environment. Second, existing studies rarely examine the collaborative roles of madrasah principals and PAI teachers in a simultaneous and integrated manner. Direct collaboration refers to the active involvement of both parties in jointly designing programs, mentoring students, and addressing bullying incidents rather than working independently. Meanwhile, an integrated approach emphasizes coordinated and interconnected efforts, in which school leadership policies and PAI instructional practices function in alignment, reinforce one another, and pursue shared objectives. Third, insufficient attention has been given to the exploration of religious approaches as systematic preventive strategies within madrasah contexts. Religious approaches have often been implemented in general or spontaneous ways, such as through advice or religious lectures, yet have not been widely developed into structured, sustainable, and policy-integrated school programs.

Accordingly, this study aims to: (a) identify the forms of bullying occurring in State Islamic Junior High Schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri) in Padangsidempuan City; (b) conduct an in-depth analysis of the efforts undertaken by madrasah principals and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in minimizing bullying practices; (c) examine the roles of madrasah principals and PAI teachers in bullying prevention; and (d) evaluate the effectiveness of their collaboration in creating a safe, supportive, and conducive educational environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is broadly understood as an approach that emphasizes an in-depth understanding of the meaning, processes, and contextual dimensions of social phenomena (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Rather than measuring variables or statistically testing relationships, this

approach seeks to explore how individuals or groups interpret and make sense of their social realities. In line with this perspective, qualitative research is also defined as a method used to investigate the experiences, perspectives, and meanings attributed by individuals or groups to a particular phenomenon (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Accordingly, the emphasis of qualitative inquiry lies in obtaining depth of understanding rather than relying on numerical measurements or statistical generalizations.

Furthermore, qualitative research is frequently employed to provide a comprehensive description of social phenomena and human experiences using non-numerical forms of data, including interviews, observations, and documentary sources. This approach prioritizes the interpretation of participants' perspectives in order to generate rich descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Through this qualitative framework, the researchers sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and efforts of madrasah principals and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in minimizing bullying practices within the madrasah environment.

Data collection in this study was conducted through three primary techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. In descriptive qualitative research, data are commonly gathered from multiple sources, including in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documents relevant to the phenomenon being studied. The use of these complementary techniques enabled the researchers to obtain rich and comprehensive data, thereby providing a holistic understanding of the issue under investigation. Subsequently, the collected data were analyzed using content analysis and thematic analysis approaches to identify patterns, meanings, and key themes emerging from the findings (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Bullying in State Islamic Junior High Schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri) of Padangsidempuan City

In general, the findings of this study indicate that bullying continues to occur within the educational environment of Madrasah Tsanawiyah, including State Islamic Junior High Schools in Padangsidempuan City. The study revealed that bullying is not limited to a single form; rather, it manifests in several types, namely verbal, social, and physical bullying. These forms of bullying commonly arise in students' daily interactions, both inside the classroom, in school yards, and within peer relationships outside formal learning activities. This phenomenon suggests that bullying has become part of the social dynamics among students and therefore requires serious attention from all members of the school community.

The occurrence of bullying behavior appears to be influenced by several factors, including peer influence, insufficient supervision from schools and families, limited self-control among students, and a lack of awareness regarding the harmful consequences of bullying. In some instances, students engage in bullying to gain recognition within peer groups, assert dominance, or simply imitate behaviors considered common in their social circles. Furthermore, many students perceive teasing or mocking as harmless jokes, without realizing that such actions may constitute bullying and can negatively affect the psychological well-being of victims.

Based on the findings in State Islamic Junior High Schools in Padangsidempuan City, bullying was identified in three primary forms: verbal, social, and physical. First, verbal bullying emerged as the most prevalent type. This form includes mocking, assigning negative nicknames, insulting physical appearance, family background, or academic ability, as well as making degrading remarks toward peers. Such behavior often takes place during casual interactions among students, whether in classrooms, during break times, or outside formal learning settings. Perpetrators frequently perceive these actions as jokes or

expressions of friendship. However, for victims, verbal bullying may lead to psychological consequences such as reduced self-confidence, feelings of embarrassment, anxiety, discomfort in the school environment, and even declining academic motivation.

Second, social bullying was observed through acts of exclusion, the formation of exclusive friendship groups, ignoring certain students, and spreading rumors or false information. Unlike physical bullying, this type is often difficult to identify because it does not always involve direct confrontation or visible aggression. Nevertheless, its emotional impact can be substantial. Students who experience social exclusion often feel isolated, struggle to build healthy peer relationships, and lose their sense of belonging within the school environment. Over time, such experiences may negatively affect students' emotional and social development, including reduced enthusiasm for participating in learning activities and school programs.

Third, although less dominant than verbal bullying, physical bullying was still found in several forms, including pushing, forcefully pulling classmates, physical pranks, hiding personal belongings, and minor fights among students. Such incidents generally stem from unresolved conflicts, misunderstandings, or inadequate emotional regulation among students. Although physical bullying occurs less frequently than verbal bullying, its consequences can be more severe, as it may result in physical injuries as well as psychological trauma for victims. Therefore, cases of physical bullying require prompt and firm intervention from school authorities.

In addition to these three forms, the findings also indicate that most bullying incidents tend to occur during periods when teacher supervision is relatively limited, such as recess, transitions between lessons, or activities outside classrooms. This highlights the importance of strengthening supervision systems and character-building initiatives within the madrasah environment so that

students develop awareness of the importance of mutual respect, appreciation of differences, and the practice of noble moral values.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that verbal, social, and physical bullying continue to exist in State Islamic Junior High Schools in Padangsidempuan City. This situation indicates that educational environments have not yet become entirely free from student-to-student violence and harmful behavior. Therefore, preventive, educational, and corrective measures are necessary through strengthening character education, reinforcing religious values, increasing supervision, providing counseling services, and fostering collaboration with parents. Such efforts are essential to creating a safe, supportive, and bullying-free learning environment for students.

B. The Efforts of Madrasah Principals in Minimizing Bullying in State Islamic Junior High Schools of Padangsidempuan City

Based on the findings of this study, madrasah principals have implemented various strategic measures to prevent and address bullying within State Islamic Junior High Schools in Padangsidempuan City. These initiatives are carried out systematically through policy development, character-building programs, supervision, and collaboration with multiple stakeholders to establish a safe, supportive, and conducive educational environment for students' development. As institutional leaders, madrasah principals play a central role in fostering a positive school culture and ensuring that the school environment remains free from deviant behaviors, including bullying.

One of the primary efforts undertaken by madrasah principals is the formulation and implementation of anti-bullying policies that serve as guidelines for school regulations and student discipline. These policies are reflected in school rules that explicitly prohibit all forms of violence among students, including verbal, social, and physical bullying. In addition, principals provide guidance to teachers and educational staff, encouraging them to respond firmly and consistently to behaviors that may lead to bullying. Such policies are intended to

establish clear behavioral boundaries for students while also increasing awareness of the consequences associated with inappropriate conduct.

Beyond policy implementation, madrasah principals also promote a religious school culture as a preventive strategy for reducing bullying. This religious environment is nurtured through the habitual practice of Islamic values in daily school activities, including congregational prayers, recitation of prayers before and after lessons, short religious talks (kultum), greeting practices, respectful behavior, and the promotion of Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah). Through this faith-based approach, students are encouraged to develop noble character, respect others, strengthen empathy, and avoid actions that may harm their peers. Madrasah principals believe that character formation grounded in religious values represents an effective strategy for preventing aggressive behavior among students.

Another important effort involves strengthening supervision over students' activities both inside and outside the classroom. Monitoring is conducted through the involvement of duty teachers, homeroom teachers, counseling staff, and all educators, who are encouraged to pay closer attention to student interactions, particularly during periods that are more vulnerable to bullying incidents, such as recess, transitions between classes, or outdoor activities. Principals also directly observe the school environment to ensure that students feel secure and comfortable. This intensive supervision aims to identify potential conflicts at an early stage and prevent bullying behaviors from escalating into more serious problems.

In addition to supervision, madrasah principals regularly organize awareness campaigns and educational activities regarding the dangers of bullying for the entire school community, including students, teachers, and parents. These initiatives are conducted through morning assemblies, student guidance sessions, parent meetings, counseling programs, religious activities, and character education programs. The topics covered include the definition and forms of bullying, its

harmful effects on both victims and perpetrators, and the importance of maintaining healthy social relationships within the school environment. These educational efforts are intended to foster collective awareness that bullying is not merely harmless teasing but rather a serious issue that may negatively affect students' psychological, social, and academic development.

Furthermore, madrasah principals apply persuasive and developmental approaches when dealing with students involved in bullying incidents. In many cases, students who engage in inappropriate behavior are not immediately subjected to severe punishment. Instead, they are first provided with counseling, character development guidance, parental involvement, and personal mentoring to help them understand the consequences of their actions. This approach seeks to cultivate students' self-awareness and gradually encourage behavioral improvement. However, when bullying behaviors are repeated or result in serious consequences, the school still imposes educational sanctions in accordance with established regulations.

Madrasah principals also establish partnerships with parents as part of broader bullying prevention efforts. Parents are encouraged to monitor their children's behavior at home, participate in character development, and maintain close communication with the school if signs of problematic behavior emerge. This cooperation between school and family is considered essential, as character education cannot rely solely on educational institutions but also requires active support from the home environment.

Overall, the findings indicate that the leadership of madrasah principals plays a crucial role in creating an educational atmosphere that is safe, comfortable, supportive, and free from bullying. Through firm policies, the reinforcement of religious values, increased supervision, anti-bullying education, student guidance, and strong collaboration with parents, madrasah principals actively contribute to minimizing bullying while simultaneously promoting the holistic character development of students.

C. The Efforts of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers in Minimizing Bullying in State Madrasahs of Padangsidempuan City

Based on the findings of this study, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play a highly significant role in preventing and minimizing bullying within State Islamic Junior High Schools in Padangsidempuan City. Their role extends beyond classroom instruction and includes character development, exemplary behavior, counseling, and the implementation of religious approaches aimed at shaping students into individuals with strong moral character. PAI teachers are regarded as educators who carry moral responsibility in guiding students to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings.

One of the key efforts undertaken by PAI teachers is the cultivation of moral, ethical, and character values throughout the learning process. These values are instilled through religious instruction that emphasizes mutual respect, appreciation for others, the importance of maintaining brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), avoiding harmful behavior, and fostering empathy among peers. PAI teachers seek to help students understand that every individual deserves to be respected and treated fairly, free from discrimination or violence. Through this moral foundation, students are expected to develop awareness that bullying is inconsistent with religious teachings, social norms, and humanitarian values.

In addition to delivering moral understanding through formal lessons, PAI teachers also serve as role models (*uswah hasanah*) in students' daily lives. This exemplary role is reflected in polite manners, respectful communication, positive interactions with others, and the ability to resolve problems peacefully and wisely. PAI teachers recognize that students often imitate the behavior of respected adults; therefore, teachers' attitudes and conduct become meaningful examples in shaping students' character. As a result, PAI teachers not only teach moral values theoretically but also strive to demonstrate them in everyday interactions within the school environment.

During the learning process, PAI teachers also integrate anti-bullying messages into Islamic teachings. This integration is carried out by linking classroom material to Islamic moral principles, including the prohibition against insulting, mocking, slandering, humiliating, or harming others, as emphasized in the Qur'an and Hadith. PAI teachers explain that bullying contradicts Islamic teachings because it causes harm and suffering to fellow human beings. Through this approach, students are encouraged to understand that maintaining respectful and healthy relationships with others represents an important part of practicing religious values in daily life. This religious understanding serves as a strong foundation for building students' awareness to avoid bullying behavior.

Furthermore, PAI teachers apply persuasive and preventive approaches when addressing the potential for bullying within the school environment. The persuasive approach involves providing advice, encouragement, and personal guidance to students who display aggressive tendencies or show signs of engaging in bullying behavior. PAI teachers also strive to establish open communication with students, allowing them to feel comfortable discussing problems they may face, whether as victims or perpetrators of bullying. Meanwhile, preventive efforts are carried out by consistently educating students about the harmful consequences of bullying for victims, perpetrators, and the broader school community. These efforts are intended to prevent bullying from emerging or escalating into more serious problems.

PAI teachers also contribute to conflict resolution among students through religious and family-oriented approaches. When disagreements or bullying-related incidents arise, teachers often act as mediators by offering guidance, encouraging forgiveness, and promoting peaceful solutions. Such measures are intended to prevent conflicts from developing into more serious forms of violence and to preserve healthy social relationships among students.

Moreover, PAI teachers collaborate closely with homeroom teachers, school counselors, madrasah principals, and parents in monitoring students'

behavioral development. This cooperation ensures that character-building efforts are carried out consistently, both at school and at home. PAI teachers recognize that minimizing bullying cannot be achieved through individual efforts alone but requires collective involvement and continuous support from all parties to maximize positive outcomes.

Overall, the religious approach implemented by PAI teachers has demonstrated a positive contribution to students' character development. Through moral education, role modeling, the integration of anti-bullying values into classroom instruction, persuasive and preventive approaches, and ongoing guidance, PAI teachers strive to create a school environment that is safer, more comfortable, harmonious, and free from bullying behavior. Therefore, PAI teachers hold a highly strategic position in fostering a madrasah culture that upholds humanitarian values and Islamic principles.

D. The Effectiveness of Collaboration Between Madrasah Principals and PAI Teachers in Minimizing Bullying in State Islamic Junior High Schools of Padangsidempuan City

The collaboration between madrasah principals and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers was implemented through various well-planned and mutually reinforcing programs aimed at minimizing bullying in Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri of Padangsidempuan City. This collaboration was reflected in the implementation of joint anti-bullying initiatives designed to establish a school environment that is safe and free from violence. In addition, continuous character-building programs were carried out to strengthen moral values, discipline, and mutual respect among students. This collaborative effort was further reinforced through religious activities, including worship habituation, religious lectures, and spiritual programs intended to instill Islamic values in students' daily lives.

The synergy between madrasah principals and PAI teachers generated positive impacts on the overall school environment. One significant outcome was the reduction in bullying cases among students, including verbal, social, and

physical forms of bullying. Furthermore, students demonstrated greater awareness of the importance of maintaining respectful attitudes and appropriate behavior in their interactions with others.

More importantly, this collaborative effort contributed to the establishment of a more conducive, secure, and comfortable learning environment, allowing educational activities to be conducted more effectively in accordance with the objectives of madrasah education.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that bullying continues to occur in State Islamic Junior High Schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri) in Padangsidempuan City in various forms, including verbal, social, and physical bullying, with verbal bullying emerging as the most dominant type among students. Verbal bullying commonly takes the form of teasing, assigning negative nicknames, insulting remarks, and degrading comments directed toward peers, which are often perceived by perpetrators as harmless jokes. Meanwhile, social bullying manifests through exclusion, the formation of exclusive peer groups, and the spread of rumors or misleading information that negatively affects other students. Physical bullying, although less frequent, is still present in the form of pushing, forceful physical interactions, and minor conflicts among students. These findings indicate that bullying remains an issue requiring serious attention, as it may significantly affect students' psychological well-being, social relationships, and learning experiences within the madrasah environment.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that madrasah principals play a crucial role in preventing and minimizing bullying through policy development, strengthened supervision systems, and the cultivation of a school culture grounded in religious values and discipline. Madrasah principals strive to create a safe and conducive educational environment by implementing school regulations, increasing supervision of student interactions, conducting character-building activities, and providing education regarding the harmful consequences of bullying. In addition, the promotion

of religious practices, moral values, and mutual respect forms an essential part of the preventive strategies adopted by school leadership. Therefore, the leadership of madrasah principals has proven to contribute significantly to fostering a more orderly, secure, and character-oriented learning environment.

On the other hand, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers also make a meaningful contribution to minimizing bullying through character education, the cultivation of moral values, and the application of religious approaches in both classroom instruction and student interactions. PAI teachers serve not only as providers of academic knowledge but also as moral guides and role models in students' daily lives. By integrating Islamic values into the teaching process, PAI teachers help students understand that bullying contradicts Islamic teachings, which emphasize compassion, brotherhood, respect for others, and the prohibition of causing harm to fellow human beings. Additionally, PAI teachers employ persuasive and preventive approaches through counseling, guidance, and mentorship to encourage students to develop moral awareness and avoid harmful behavior toward others.

Moreover, this study found that collaboration between madrasah principals and PAI teachers has proven effective in reducing bullying within the school environment. This synergy is reflected in the implementation of school policies, continuous character development, ongoing supervision, and the reinforcement of religious values in daily educational activities. Such cooperation creates a more comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, as it focuses not only on disciplinary measures but also on prevention, self-awareness development, and sustainable character formation among students. Through the collaboration between madrasah principals and PAI teachers, the madrasah environment becomes safer, more comfortable, conducive, and supportive of students' positive character development.

Overall, this study emphasizes that efforts to minimize bullying in State Islamic Junior High Schools in Padangsidempuan City require the active involvement of all educational stakeholders, particularly madrasah principals and Islamic Religious Education teachers. Bullying prevention cannot rely solely on the enforcement of

regulations but also requires strengthening character education, reinforcing religious values, enhancing students' moral awareness, and fostering collaboration among schools, teachers, and parents. Through an integrated approach, madrasahs are expected to become safe, humane, and supportive educational environments that promote students' holistic development.

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