



Islamic Religious Education Innovation for Preventing Bullying in Higher Education

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Bullying in higher education is a problem that often goes unnoticed, even though it has a serious impact on students' mental health and academic climate. Islamic Religious Education has great potential in shaping character and preventing deviant behavior, but its role in the context of bullying prevention has not been studied in depth. Therefore, this study aims to describe the role of Islamic Religious Education in preventing bullying in higher education. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this research explores students' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes towards learning Islamic Religious Education as an effort to build religious and social character. The research informants amounted to 15 Islamic Religious Education lecturers, and 97 students from three faculties at Muhammadiyah Mataram University, selected through purposive sampling technique to represent the diversity of academic backgrounds. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and review of current scientific literature (2018-2024). Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman interactive model, through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that Islamic Religious Education learning that integrates Islamic values, religious moderation approach, and participatory methods are able to raise students' awareness of the importance of tolerance, empathy, and justice. The internalization of these values plays a significant role in shaping inclusive social behavior and reducing the potential for bullying. Data validity is strengthened through source triangulation, while reliability is maintained with a systematic audit trail. The findings recommend strengthening the Islamic Religious Education curriculum based on anti-bullying values as part of the student character building strategy in higher education.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education is a strategic instrument in shaping the character and morals of students through the internalization of Islamic values such as compassion, justice, and respect for others. These values play an important role in shaping positive social behavior and preventing negative actions such as bullying. Bullying in the university environment can occur in verbal, physical, and psychological forms, which have an impact on the mental health and academic performance of the victim. In an Islamic perspective, bullying behavior is contrary to the principles of noble morals taught in the Qur'an and Hadith. Surah Al-Hujurat verse 11, for example, prohibits Muslims from demeaning and reproaching each other (Aldiansyah and Wahyudi 2024). Thus, Islamic Religious Education has great potential in preventing bullying through the cultivation of Islamic moral and ethical values.

The results of Tyas' research show that Islamic Religious Education teachers play an active role in tackling bullying with the "Guru Sahabat Anak" approach, where teachers open themselves to students, are ready to listen to complaints, and become advisors and help solve student problems (Ervin Yuniarti Ning Tyas 2023). This strategy creates a closer relationship between teachers and students, thus facilitating early detection of bullying behavior. In addition, research by Fauziyah emphasized the important role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in dealing with bullying through giving advice, educational punishment, and parental involvement (Hanifatul Fauziyah, Arsam 2023). This approach shows that Islamic Religious Education teachers are not only teachers, but also educators who shape students' characters. Inayah also asserted that Islamic Religious Education teachers have a strategic role in preventing and overcoming bullying behavior through religious approaches and character building (Inayah, Azhari, and Nurfadillah 2024).

A study by Mappanyompa showed that Islamic Religious Education and ethics learning had a positive and significant influence on bullying among students (Mappanyompa 2020). This learning shapes students' personalities which are reflected in their daily behavior and mindset. Meanwhile, Nisun highlighted the implementation of Islamic Religious Education learning in preventing bullying behavior through religious activities such as reading the Qur'an before lessons, praying in congregation, and instilling faith and piety (Nisun 2024). This approach is effective in shaping noble character in students. Research by (Aldiansyah and Wahyudi 2024) also emphasizes the importance of Islamic education in instilling ethics and morals as a solution to overcome bullying in the educational environment.

Their study showed that Islamic education counseling can significantly reduce bullying cases through a value-based approach, social skills training, and parental involvement in the counseling process (Zahro and Fikri 2024). Counseling programs integrated with Islamic-based character education have proven effective in creating a safer and more harmonious school environment. This research confirms that Islamic educational counseling has an important role in preventing and overcoming bullying in schools.

Munawir and friends in their literature study examined the phenomenon of bullying in the perspective of Islamic education (Munawir, Fitriyah, and Khairunnisa 2024). They found that Islam strictly prohibits all acts of violence including bullying, as found in Q.S Al-Hujurat: 11. This study also identified the types of bullying such as physical, non-physical, relational, and cyberbullying, as well as its impact on victims and perpetrators. Efforts to overcome bullying from an Islamic perspective are divided into two classifications, namely for victims and for perpetrators, with an approach that emphasizes moral ethics, compassion, justice, and respect between students (Zahro and Fikri 2024).

From the various studies above, it appears that Islamic Religious Education has an important role in preventing and overcoming bullying through learning approaches, the role of teachers, and counseling based on Islamic values. However, most of these studies focus on the primary and secondary education levels, while studies on the role of PAI in preventing bullying in higher education are still limited. This gap indicates the need for further research to understand how the implementation of PAI can prevent bullying in a college environment that has different social and psychological dynamics. The approach used has not been widely explored in the context of higher education, so this study aims to fill the gap by examining the role of Islamic Religious Education in preventing bullying in higher education, so that it can contribute to creating a safe and conducive academic environment for students.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of describing and deeply understanding the role of Islamic Religious Education in preventing bullying in the college environment. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research does not focus on measuring numbers, but rather on the meaning of students' experiences in the context of the religious values they receive during the Islamic Religious Education learning process. This method allows researchers to explore perceptions, attitudes, and experiences contextually and subjectively (Creswell 2019).

The data sources in this study were students of Muhammadiyah Mataram University, totaling 15 lecturers of Islamic Religious Education, and 97 students, taken from three different faculties to ensure diversity of perspectives. From the Faculty of Engineering, including Civil Engineering, Information Technology Systems (STI), and Mining Engineering study programs. From the Faculty of Islamic Studies, including the Arabic Language Education (PBA), Islamic Communication and

Broadcasting (KPI), and Madrasah Ibtidai'iyah Teacher Education (PGMI) study programs. From the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP), the History Education, PGSD, and PKN study programs were taken. The sample selection was done by purposive sampling, considering students' involvement with Islamic Religious Education courses and the diversity of disciplines.

Data collection in this study was conducted through three main approaches, namely in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lecturers, students, and campus parties who have a strategic role in managing religious values in the university environment. This interview aims to explore the understanding, experience, and strategies applied in Islamic Education learning to prevent bullying behavior. Observation was conducted to observe social interactions, communication patterns, and the implementation of Islamic values in daily life on campus, especially in lecture activities and student organizations. This observation records verbal and non-verbal aspects that show tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect. Documentation was used to complement the data, in the form of campus policy archives, lecture documents, academic guidebooks, photos of student activities, and other administrative evidence. These three techniques were used triangulatively to ensure data validity. With this approach, researchers obtained a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the contribution of PAI in shaping an academic culture free from bullying.

In the process of collecting literature data, researchers used online databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, and Garuda to search for relevant articles containing issues related to bullying, Islamic education, and character values. The literature searched was limited to publications within the period 2018-2024 to ensure the relevance and actuality of the data. The literature selection procedure was conducted in two stages:

first, screening based on title and abstract, then selection based on content criteria relevant to the research variables. Articles that were irrelevant, not available in full, or came from non-credible sources were excluded from the analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing methods, as described by Miles (Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman 2014). Data validity was obtained through source triangulation, namely by comparing student interview results with literature data and Islamic Religious Education class observations. Meanwhile, reliability was maintained by tracing audit trails and consistent use of semi-structured interview guide instruments. The results of this analysis are expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which Islamic Religious Education learning is able to become a preventive instrument for bullying among students.

In the context of this research, the mindmap is used to map the main dimensions of the research variables, both the independent variable (Islamic Religious Education) and the dependent variable (Bullying Behavior), as well as the intermediate variables such as religious values, learning approaches, socio-cultural context, and student character. In addition, the mindmap also helps clarify the direction of the analysis and ensures that all important aspects of the research problem have been accommodated. With this approach, the research becomes more structured and has a strong conceptual basis to examine in depth the strategic role of Islamic Religious Education in shaping character and preventing deviant behavior such as bullying.

[Figure 1. about here]

The development of research variables from 2015 to 2024 shows a shift in focus from improving teacher competencies in a conventional way to integrating values, technology and responding to global social dynamics. In 2015-2016, research was

still heavily focused on pedagogical and professional competencies and strengthening teacher performance through supervision and evaluation. However, in 2017-2018, the urgency of developing teachers through managerial approaches, especially through principal leadership and quality-based policies, began to emerge.

From 2019 to 2022, there is an accentuation on the transformation of the learning system characterized by the strengthening of ESD (Continuing Professional Development), technology adoption, and response to pandemic conditions. Meanwhile, in 2023-2024, research variables transcend to value issues such as religious moderation, multiculturalism, and transformational leadership. This shows that the direction of education policy is not just about technical learning, but also involves character building and responding to cultural diversity and complex social dynamics. Your mindmap can illustrate the development of this research as an evolution from technical competence to value integration and innovation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Internalization of Islamic Religious Education Values in Shaping Student Character

Internalization of Islamic values in higher education is a critical undertaking for shaping students' character. This process not only involves teaching students the ethical and moral principles found within Islamic teachings but also requires the integration of various effective educational strategies that facilitate the transformation of these values into tangible character traits.

One prominent approach is through a well-designed curriculum that incorporates Islamic values into character education. Kasmawati et al. highlighted the significance of an integrated curriculum in Islamic elementary schools, emphasizing that character education infused

with these values results in a profound understanding of ethical principles among students. Bahri's research underscores the importance of character education in reinforcing Islamic values among students, indicating that a curriculum infused with Islamic character elements significantly contributes to the internalization of these values, fostering a deeper understanding of ethical and moral principles (Kasmawati et al. 2023). This approach is not limited to primary education; it can be effectively adapted to higher education contexts where character development is equally regarded as crucial.

In the specific context of Islamic higher education, Syahputra et al. point out that facilitating the affective development of students is often overlooked when focusing solely on cognitive aspects of learning (Syahputra, Shittu, and Ain 2024). Therefore, emphasizing Islamic moderation in teaching strategies, as discussed by Kadi, can bridge this gap. Kadi's exploration of policy implementation within Indonesian universities reveals the necessity of integrating Islamic moderation into the pedagogical process, hence enriching the educational experience and promoting character development (Kadi 2022).

Moreover, the role of Islamic educational institutions, such as pesantren, cannot be understated. Syafe'i notes that pesantren are fundamentally concerned with character formation and understanding religious teachings, making them excellent partners with formal educational institutions in fostering character development through religious education (Syafe'i 2017). This collaborative dynamic helps establish a holistic educational experience, particularly in regions with strong Islamic cultural ties.

Additionally, the importance of cultivating an environment conducive to character education, as stated by Nasihatun, underlines the diverse components involved, including knowledge acquisition, attitude adjustment, and behavioral modification that align with the teachings of the Quran and Hadith (Siti Nasihatun 2019). This holistic perspective on education links moral teachings directly to character formation, reinforcing how education

directly influences students' ethical outlooks and behaviors.

The embedding of local cultural values within Islamic education has also been proposed as a fruitful approach to enhance character development. Through integrating local wisdom, Fernando and Yusnan argue that Islamic education can harmonize with regional cultures, enriching the character education process and ensuring its relevance to students (Fernando and Yusnan 2022). This approach adheres to the principles set forth in studies indicating that localized values can complement Islamic teachings without compromising their foundational tenets.

[Table 1. about here]

The findings of this study indicate that the internalization of Islamic values in higher education has a significant influence in shaping student character holistically. This is in line with the findings of (Nurani and Rosyada 2017) who emphasized the importance of value-based Islamic Religious Education learning to form a personality with integrity in the campus environment. Similarly, (Bali and Susilowati 2019) argued that religious values internalized through Islamic Religious Education learning can encourage the formation of moderate, empathic, and tolerant behaviors among students.

However, different from previous studies that tend to emphasize cognitive aspects, this study places special emphasis on the importance of affective aspects and a holistic approach, as highlighted by (Islam, Karakter, and Mulia 2024). The integrated approach in question is a collaboration between an integrative curriculum, affective strengthening, involvement of pesantren institutions, and adaptation to the local cultural context, which is the main differentiation compared to previous studies. Thus, this result enriches the literature by showing how the character dimension can be

contextually and strategically grown in Islamic higher education.

2. The Effect of Religious Academic Environment on Bullying Prevention

The religious academic environment plays a crucial role in preventing bullying among students. The cultivation of religious values and positive character traits in the educational environment can influence students' attitudes and behaviors, and build awareness of the importance of empathy and care for others. Research shows that the religious aspect of education can help strengthen students' character, which is necessary to prevent bullying behavior. For example, research by (Akhlak 2024) shows that education in madrasahs that focuses on religious values can shape students' religious character, impacting on the development of positive attitudes that keep them away from violent acts. In addition (Nurhayati et al. 2023) showed that media, such as animated films that instill religious values to children, are able to have a positive impact in the formation of children's character, thus reducing the likelihood of them engaging in acts of bullying.

A positive and supportive campus environment, where religious values are developed, becomes an optimal place to teach empathy and good behavior. Arda emphasized the importance of an environment that promotes prosocial behavior, where students are taught to overcome bullying problems through religious values applied in everyday life (Arda Fadilla and Nurul Khasanah 2024). This is in line with Munira's findings which show that a good learning environment can have a significant influence on social interaction and bullying reduction (Munira et al. 2024). When students are in a positive environment, they tend to have better social relationships, which ultimately prevents bullying behavior.

Parenting also plays an important role in bullying prevention. Research by Nurlaela shows that good parenting can help build better student character and behavior (Nurlaela, Pratomo, and Araniri 2020). Students who are taught moral and religious values at home are less likely to

engage in negative behaviors, including bullying. In addition, research by Wardani et al. Wardani showed that democratic parenting is more influential in shaping religious character, which leads to better social behavior in the school environment (Wardani, Oktaviani, and Roysa 2023). Thus, strengthening religious education at home and at school is very important to create a generation that respects and cares about each other, and is free from bullying.

Based on these studies, it is clear that a positive religious academic environment contributes significantly to the prevention of bullying. By teaching religious values and building character, both in the family and in the school environment, we can create an atmosphere conducive to students' social and emotional development. This effort must be done in an integrated manner between parents, educators and the community to ensure that positive values are well internalized in children.

[Table 2. about here]

The findings of this study strengthen the argument that religious values-based education can be an effective tool in preventing bullying among students. A religious academic environment plays a strategic role in shaping students' positive character through the cultivation of empathy, mutual respect, and concern for others. This finding is in line with the results of a study by Udeozor who stated that strong character education based on moral and spiritual values can form non-violent and pro-social personalities among students (Udeozor 2022). In addition, a study by Nandagire showed that the integration of faith-based character education has a positive correlation to student behavior in terms of social compliance and reduction of aggressive actions (Nandagire et al. 2023).

The striking similarity between this study and the previous one lies in the emphasis on religious values as the core in character building. However, the approach in this study appears to be more contextual and holistic because it does not only look from the side of

educational institutions, but also involves the family as the main agent in character education. This is different from some previous studies that only focus on the role of schools.

3. Students' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education in Counteracting Bullying Behavior

Islamic Religious Education has an important role in shaping the character and morals of students, as well as in counteracting bullying behavior that is increasingly prevalent among adolescents and students. Students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education are strongly influenced by the teaching approaches and methods used, as well as by their social and cultural contexts. Research shows that religious education implemented in higher education can serve as a medium for internalizing moral values that can prevent negative behaviors such as bullying, especially through strengthening religious character and tolerance (Muhja, Kamila, and Shahnaz 2022; Oktamia Anggraini Putri 2022; Taufikurrahman et al. 2024).

Students tend to have a positive perception of Islamic Religious Education if the program is able to address complex social challenges, such as the phenomenon of bullying. For example, measures involving discussions on Pancasila values and religious moderation in the context of character education proved effective in facilitating students' understanding of the importance of social harmony (Sahrona 2024). In addition, active and participatory learning methods, such as sociodrama and reflection, strengthen students' understanding of the impact of bullying behavior and encourage them to find solutions (Ru'iyah and Riyadi 2023).

From a teaching perspective, there is recognition that Islamic Religious Education is not only about cognitive aspects, but also affective, where students' attitudes and behaviors are strongly influenced by their learning experiences (Elismarwati 2020). This allows students to develop deeper social awareness and shape the values of tolerance and justice in a heterogeneous society. For example, research

that integrates religious moderation into Islamic Religious Education curriculum can help students to better understand differences and accept diversity while building anti-bullying attitudes (Muhja, Kamila, and Shahnaz 2022; Setiani et al. 2024).

Finally, the support of the family and social environment also plays a role in shaping students' perceptions of Islamic Religious Education and its impact on their behavior. Families that provide encouragement to understand and value religious education can increase students' interest in applying these values in their daily lives (Mustaqim 2023). In this case, the contribution of lecturers as educators is crucial, where they can facilitate discussions rich in religious values and character traits needed to counter bullying behavior on campus (Rasyid et al. 2023).

[Table 3. about here]

The findings of this study confirm the importance of Islamic Religious Education in shaping students' religious character and preventing bullying behavior in the campus environment. Islamic Religious Education that is designed actively and contextually has proven to be able to facilitate the internalization of the values of tolerance, justice, and empathy through approaches such as discussions of Pancasila values, sociodrama, and reflection. This is in line with research by Sood which emphasizes the importance of caring-based teaching in moral education as a basis for building healthy social relationships and avoiding deviant behavior such as bullying (Sood, Hua, and Hamid 2020).

The main similarity with previous research lies in the affective approach in teaching religious education. The study by Iqbal states that a holistic approach that touches the emotional dimension of students is very effective in building character and moral values (Iqbal 2023). This study also emphasizes that the success of religious education does not only depend on the content of the material, but also on the way of delivery and contextualization with the social reality of students.

The difference lies in the emphasis on the role of students as active subjects in the learning process and the importance of the involvement of external environments such as family. This research highlights that a supportive family plays an important role in reinforcing the values taught in higher education. This reinforces Bronfenbrenner's concept of ecological systems theory, which states that individual behavior is influenced by interactions between various social systems, including family and education (Fahrudi 2022).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in preventing bullying in higher education through the process of internalizing religious values, strengthening character, and pedagogical approaches that touch the cognitive and affective aspects of students. Islamic Religious Education that is packaged integratively, involving active learning methods, strengthening religious moderation, and collaborating with family and campus environments, has proven to be able to shape students' moral and social awareness so that they are more sensitive to the values of tolerance, empathy, and justice in campus life.

Future research needs to highlight the effectiveness of the integration of religious moderation curriculum in Islamic Religious Education on changes in anti-bullying attitudes and behaviors of students across study programs. In addition, a longitudinal study on the impact of a religious academic environment on reducing bullying cases in higher education is also very important to do.

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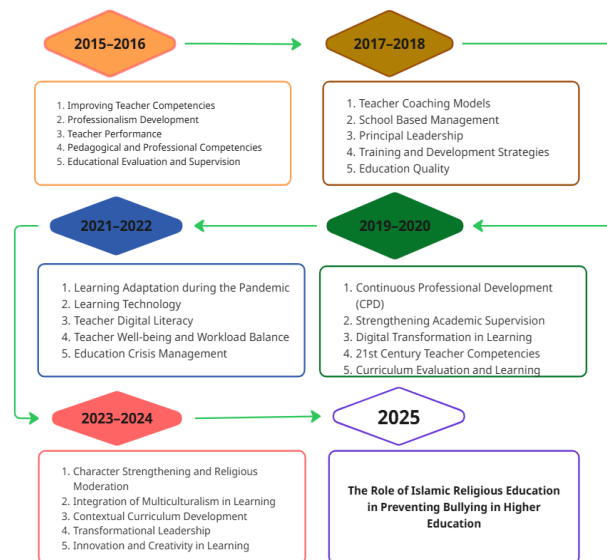


Figure 1 / Mindmap of Research Variable Development

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Table 1 / Internalization of Islamic Religious Education Values in Character Building

Character	Integration
Internalization of Islamic values	The process of instilling Islamic ethical and moral values in learning.
Character education	Efforts to build student character through Islamic value-based education.
Integrated curriculum	The incorporation of Islamic values in the educational curriculum structure.
Islamic moderation	A balanced and tolerant approach to religious practice.
Local wisdom	Local cultural values integrated in Islamic education.
Higher education in Islamic religion	Islamic values-based advanced education institutions.
Bullying prevention	Strategies to prevent violence or bullying in the campus environment.

Table 2 /Academic Environment on Bullying Prevention

Lingkungan Akademik	Bullying Prevention
Religious academic environment	A campus atmosphere that instills religious values in daily life.
Religious values	Moral and spiritual teachings instilled through religious education.
Positive character	Attitudes such as empathy, tolerance, and responsibility that are formed in education.
Religious education	Educational processes that are oriented towards developing students' spirituality.
Empathy and care	Social values taught through a religious approach in education.
Religious-based educational media	Learning media such as animated films that insert religious values.
Positive learning environment	A conducive learning atmosphere that supports healthy social interaction.

Table 3 / Students' Perception of Bullying Prevention

Student perception	Bullying Prevention
Islamic Religious Education	Courses that shape the character and morals of students based on religious values.
Religious character	Spiritual and moral values instilled through religious education.
Anti-bullying	Efforts to prevent violent behavior in the student's social environment.
Religious moderation	Tolerant approach to diversity of beliefs.
Character education	Learning process to shape students' personality, ethics, and morals.
Pancasila values	The ideological foundation of the nation that is instilled in character education.
Family and social environment	External factors that influence student behavior and values.