Exploring Bullying Factors and the Positive Roles of Teachers and Students in *Pesantren*

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Abstract

The bullying phenomenon in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) has received serious attention, considering that Islamic boarding schools are educational institutions based on religious and moral values. This study aims to explore the factors causing bullying and understand the role of positive relationships between teachers and students in preventing and handling bullying cases in Islamic boarding schools. This study used a qualitative approach with an exploratory method at the An Najah Denanyar Islamic Boarding School in Jombang. Informants consisted of four teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, which were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The results showed that the factors causing bullying were divided into two categories: intimidation (lack of social awareness, peer influence, arrogance, etc.) and victimization (physical condition, low social skills, etc.). A positive teacher-student relationship was proven to have a preventive and curative role against bullying behavior. This relationship strategy includes teacher characteristics such as affection and role models, and implementing a supportive approach both inside and outside the classroom. This study recommends the importance of fostering healthy interpersonal relationships in Islamic boarding schools to create a safe learning atmosphere and support the moral development of students.

Keywords: Bullying; *Pesantren*; Teacher-Santri Relationship.

Abstrak

Fenomena bullying di lingkungan pesantren menjadi sorotan serius mengingat pesantren merupakan lembaga pendidikan berbasis nilai keagamaan dan moral. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi faktor-faktor penyebab terjadinya bullying serta memahami peran hubungan positif antara guru dan santri dalam mencegah dan menangani kasus bullying di pesantren. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode eksploratif di Pondok Pesantren An Najah Denanyar Jombang. Informan terdiri dari empat guru yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi, yang dianalisis dengan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa faktor penyebab bullying terbagi menjadi dua kategori: intimidasi (kurangnya kesadaran sosial, pengaruh teman sebaya, keangkuhan, dan lai-lain.) dan viktimisasi (kondisi fisik, kemampuan sosial rendah, dan lain-lain). Hubungan positif guru-santri terbukti memiliki peran preventif dan kuratif terhadap perilaku bullying. Strategi hubungan ini mencakup karakteristik guru seperti kasih sayang dan keteladanan, serta penerapan pendekatan yang suportif baik di dalam maupun di luar kelas. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pentingnya pembinaan relasi interpersonal yang sehat di lingkungan pesantren untuk menciptakan suasana belajar yang aman dan mendukung perkembangan moral santri.

Kata Kunci: *Bullying; Pesantren; Relasi Guru dan Murid.*

INTRODUCTION

Recently, educational institutions have been repeatedly shocked by the rise in reports of bullying cases within Islamic boarding schools. These include the murder of a student victim of abuse in Kediri,[1] a student tortured with an iron,[2] and a student burned to death by a senior.[3] The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reported that there were approximately 3,800 cases of bullying in Indonesia throughout 2023, half of which occurred within educational settings, including Islamic boarding schools.[4] The Central Java Provincial Women's and Children's Agency recorded 85 cases of bullying within Islamic boarding schools between 2021 and March 2025. These cases included various forms of physical and psychological abuse experienced by students.[5] Bullying is a social phenomenon that has attracted global attention, particularly in educational settings.

The phenomenon of bullying in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) is a particular concern. Bullying is still rampant in Islamic boarding schools, which are considered institutions for moral and religious formation. *Pesantren* are considered Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, reflecting religious values and compassion for all humanity.[6] The distinctive characteristics of *pesantren*, such as communal living, a hierarchy of seniority, and a 24-hour dormitory system, create a high potential for bullying. Verbal, physical, and psychological violence between students, especially between seniors and juniors (seniors), frequently occurs and is considered a regular part of mental development. That raises concerns that Islamic values are not always effective in preventing interpersonal violence in what should be a safe environment for adolescent growth and development.[7]

Several studies have shown that teachers play a crucial role in shaping the social climate in Islamic boarding schools. Teachers who establish positive, warm, and supportive relationships with their students have been shown to act as emotional and social protectors for them and play a role in preventing or stopping bullying.[8] From a developmental psychology perspective, a positive teacher-student relationship provides emotional security, allowing

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[1] Raja Eben Lumbanrau, "Kasus santri tewas di pondok pesantren Kediri: 'Aku takut, Mama tolong cepat jemput' - Mengapa kekerasan terulang lagi di pesantren?," *BBC News Indonesia*, February 29, 2024, https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/c0vjeq20d8po.

[2] Maya Citra Rosa, "Senior Setrika Dada Santri di Malang Punya Dendam Pribadi, Ditetapkan Tersangka Tapi Tidak Ditahan," *KOMPAS.com*, February 22, 2024, https://regional.kompas.com/read/2024/02/22/200853378/senior-setrika-dada-santri-di-malang-punya-dendam-pribadi-ditetapkan.

[3] Ani Nursalikah, "Kronologi Lengkap Santri Dibakar Seniornya di Pasuruan," *Republika Online*, January 21, 2023, https://republika.co.id/share/rotz8y366.

[4] Meilita Elaine, *KPAI Ungkap Sekitar 3.800 Kasus Perundungan Sepanjang 2023, Hampir Separuh Terjadi di Lembaga Pendidikan*, March 2, 2024, https://www.suarasurabaya.net/kelanakota/2024/kpai-ungkap-sekitar-3-800-kasus-perundungan-sepanjang-2023-hampir-separuh-terjadi-di-lembaga-pendidikan/.

[5] Titis Anis Fauziyah and Ferril Dennys, "Ada 85 Kasus Bullying di Pesantren Jawa Tengah," *KOMPAS.com*, March 25, 2025, https://regional.kompas.com/read/2025/03/25/170733378/ada-85-kasus-bullying-di-pesantren-jawa-tengah.

[6] R.A. Lukens-Bull, "Two Sides of the Same Coin: Modernity and Tradition in Islamic Education in Indonesia," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (2001): 350–72, Scopus, https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.2001.32.3.350.

[7] Philip C. Rodkin and Ernest V.E. Hodges, "Bullies and Victims in the Peer Ecology: Four Questions for Psychologists and School Professionals," *School Psychology Review* 32, no. 3 (2003): 384–400, https://doi.org/10.1080/02796015.2003.12086207.

[8] Angga Pria Utama and Hakimmudin Salim, "Strategi Muhammadiyah Boarding School Klaten Dalam Mengatasi Bullying Di Kalangan Santri," *Attadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 7, no. 2 (2024): 229–43, https://doi.org/10.54069/attadrib.v7i2.862.

students to feel valued and heard.[9] When teachers are open, empathetic, and able to bridge students' problems, the potential for social pressures such as bullying can be reduced.[10] That reinforces the importance of exploring interpersonal relationships in boarding-based educational environments like Islamic boarding schools.

Several Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) with a close and participatory mentoring system between teachers and students have reportedly had lower rates of bullying. One study showed that a dialogical approach and consistent emotional coaching by teachers could reduce violent behavior among students.[11] Similarly, optimizing the role of a foster guardian in Islamic boarding schools can help.[12] It indicates that the quality of teacher-student and social relationships is not only a supporting factor but also a key factor in creating a safe social climate. However, there is still a paucity of research exploring the factors contributing to bullying behavior. Most studies are quantitative and fail to narratively examine how students and teachers interpret their relationships within the complex social context of Islamic boarding schools. In this context, a qualitative approach is essential to capture the dynamics of relationships that are not always visible in statistics.

The existence of this research is also supported by the fact that Islamic boarding school students (*santri*) are a group of adolescents who are highly vulnerable to social influences and peer pressure. Without guidance and active involvement from teachers, students can form a subculture that fosters violent or intimidating practices. Therefore, exploring the role of positive relationships between teachers and students in handling bullying cases is crucial as a preventive and curative measure. Based on the above background, this study aims to explore the factors that contribute to bullying behavior, both from the behavior and the victims, and how positive teacher-student relationships play a role in preventing and handling bullying cases in Islamic boarding schools. This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to developing a more holistic student development system and serve as a reference for Islamic boarding schools in establishing healthy and constructive interpersonal relationships.

METHODS

This qualitative research uses an exploratory approach that explores in depth the experiences, perceptions, and views of teachers and students regarding interpersonal relationships and the dynamics of bullying in the Islamic boarding school environment.[13] This approach is considered appropriate because the research focuses not on testing hypotheses but on comprehensively understanding the meaning and social experiences formed in teacher-student interactions. The research was conducted in the natural context of the Islamic boarding school, without special treatment. Hence, the qualitative approach provides a vast space for the

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[9] Tian Qiu et al., "Predicting Risk of Bullying Victimization among Primary and Secondary School Students: Based on a Machine Learning Model," *Behavioral Sciences* 14, no. 1 (2024), https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14010073.

[10] Kathryn R. Wentzel, "Teacher-Student Relationships and Adolescent Competence at School," in *Interpersonal Relationships in Education: An Overview of Contemporary Research*, ed. Theo Wubbels et al. (Rotterdam: SensePublishers, 2012), 19–35, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6091-939-8_2.

[11] Eko Hardi Ansyah et al., "Teacher-Student Relationship Model in Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools' Teacher in Indonesia: The Mediating Role of Effortful Control," *MOJEM: Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Management* 12, no. 4 (October 2024): 62–77, https://doi.org/10.22452/mojem.vol12no4.4.

[12] Reza Ahmad Zahid, "Bullying Prevention Strategies through the Foster Guardian Program in Pesantren," *Intelektual: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Keislaman* 14, no. 2 (September 2024): 281–92, https://doi.org/10.33367/ji.v14i2.5923.

[13] Iskandar, *Metodologi Penelitian Pendidikan Dan Sosial (Kuantitatif Dan Kualitatif)* (Jakarta: GP Press, 2008).

meaning of the research participants. This research is located at the An Najah Denanyar Jombang Islamic Boarding School. The subjects in this study were four *mustahiq/mustahiqah* or homeroom teachers of several classes at the An Najah Islamic Boarding School. These four teachers were the researchers who made the informants in this study. These informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on specific considerations and objectives. Informants consist of teachers or caregivers with at least two years of experience assisting students. In qualitative research, the target is the depth of information, not the number of informants. Therefore, the four informants are seen as information-rich cases. These sources can provide clear insights, a variety of perspectives, and sufficient contextual understanding to answer the existing research questions.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques: interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were used to elicit personal information from teachers and students about their experiences building relationships, communication patterns, and perceptions of bullying. Observations were conducted directly within the Islamic boarding school environment, such as dormitories, classrooms, and daily activities, to capture real interactions and social phenomena that may not be revealed in interviews. Documentation included the collection of documents such as student regulations, violation reports, caretaker notebooks, and other relevant internal documents. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques with the interactive model by Miles and Huberman. Miles' analysis process was carried out in three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.[14] First, data reduction involves sorting and simplifying raw data into meaningful data; second, data presentation in descriptive narratives and direct quotations; and third, drawing conclusions or verification, which involves finding patterns and meanings of teacher-student relationships in the observed bullying cases. The entire process was carried out iteratively to ensure the accuracy and depth of the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results
Exploring Bullying Factors

Researchers divided bullying factors into intimidation and victimization based on the interview results. Intimidation factors are factors that influence someone to commit bullying. Victimization factors are factors that influence someone to become a victim of bullying. Based on the interview results, several factors influence students to commit intimidation or become perpetrators of bullying in Islamic boarding schools. The first factor is a lack of social awareness, where the perpetrator does not understand or respect the rights of others. Informant (NA) stated, "*Bullying occurs because their emotional level is unstable or they are unable to respect the rights of others... they have minimal knowledge about the consequences or impact*".[15] It shows that low social awareness plays a significant role in triggering bullying behavior.

The second factor is inadequate supervision. According to NA, weak follow-up on reported cases can open up opportunities for bullying. Another factor is previous experience as a victim. Informant RR revealed, "*He bullied because when he was bullied, he didn't retaliate. But if he*

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[14] Matthew B. Miles and Michael Huberman, *An Expanded Sourcebook Qualitative Data Analysis* (London: Sage Publications, 1994).

[15] Homeroom Teacher NA, "Interview at An Najah Denanyar Islamic Boarding School, Jombang," Mei 2024.

retaliated, he wouldn't do that again".[16] That indicates a cyclical pattern of violence in which victims transform into perpetrators when given the opportunity.

Furthermore, peer influence is also powerful. Based on information from RR, because his friends bullied him, the perpetrator also bullied his friend. This factor confirms that negative behavior can be contagious in an environment that is permissive towards bullying. The fifth factor is arrogance, namely the attitude of feeling better than others. BF explained, "*Feeling better than others... he ostracized several other students and only hung out with those on the same wavelength*".[17] This attitude fosters group exclusivity and triggers bullying against those perceived as different.

Finally, there is the misperception of seniors. RR stated that, "*Some seniors consider bullying to be normal, so they end up allowing it to happen".*[18] This view can reinforce a culture of violence in Islamic boarding schools because intimidation is considered part of tradition or mental development. These six factors, ranging from a lack of social awareness to misperceptions among seniors, are interconnected and create an environment conducive to bullying in Islamic boarding schools.

Based on the interview results, six main factors make a student more vulnerable to becoming a victim of bullying in Islamic boarding schools. The first factor is personal hygiene. Students who do not maintain hygiene are often the targets of bullying. BL explained, "*Usually the first factor is hygiene. Children like this have friends, but usually those who accompany them are also like that, which is a character trait; it is difficult to change*".[19] The second factor is poor social skills, especially in communicating politely. RR said, "*The victim's words are not good, but he doesn't realize it... the point is he is not polite to others*".[20] It shows that limited social skills can lead to distance from peers. The third factor is poor self-management, for example, hyperactivity behavior or difficulty controlling himself. NA said, "*The victim is hyperactive and can't keep still... he doesn't know what makes other people uncomfortable."*[21]

Next, the fourth factor is high idealism. Some students who are too obedient to the rules or exemplary arouse their peers' dislike. NA revealed, "*Some students are too exemplary, unwilling to compromise, or like to report their friends to the teacher.*"[22] The fifth factor is a physical condition that is different from most of their friends, for example, shorter height or darker skin color. NA said, "*It's because of their physical shortcomings... maybe shorter or black people.*"[23] This physical difference is often used as a reason for teasing. Finally, the sixth factor is the heterogeneity of the Islamic boarding school environment, where differences in regional background, age, and character require students to adapt quickly. NA explained, "*Children come from different regions, and their ages are also different, so they are vulnerable to becoming victims if they cannot adapt.*"[24] The following is a more detailed scheme of the factors that cause bullying.

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[16] Teacher RR, "Interview at An Najah Denanyar Islamic Boarding School, Jombang," Mei 2024.
[17] Teacher BF, "Interview at An Najah Denanyar Islamic Boarding School, Jombang," Mei 2024.
[18] Teacher RR, "Interview with RR," Mei 2024.
[19] Teacher BL, "Interview at An Najah Denanyar Islamic Boarding School, Jombang," Mei 2024.
[20] Teacher RR, "Interview with RR," Mei 2024.
[21] Homeroom Teacher NA, "Interview with NA," Mei 2024.
[22] Homeroom Teacher NA.
[23] Homeroom Teacher NA.
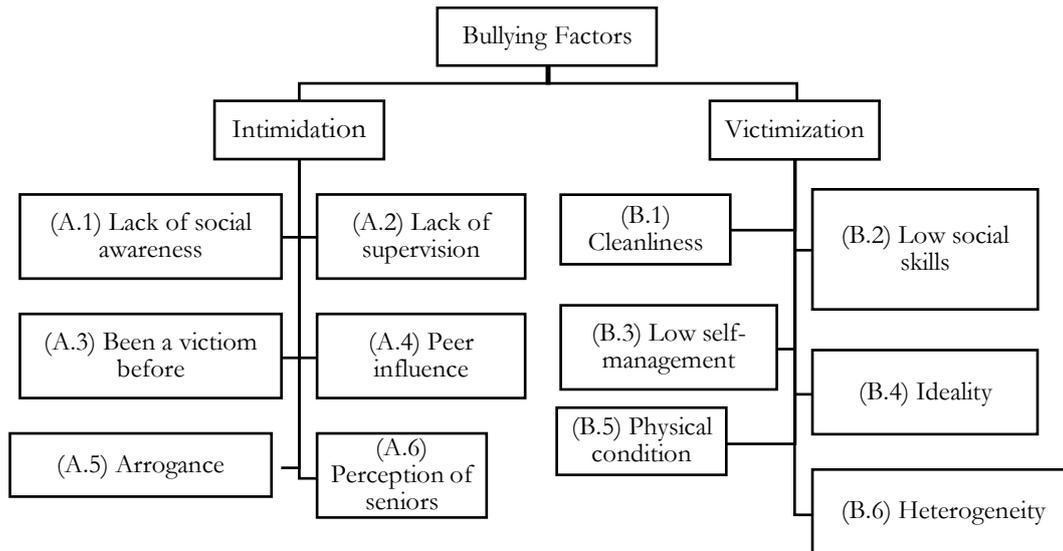[24] Homeroom Teacher NA.

Figure 1. Scheme of Bullying Factors

The Role of Positive Teacher-Student Relationships in Bullying Behavior

A teacher must build positive relationships with students. It can play a role in handling bullying cases. Before understanding this role, it's important to understand strategies for building positive relationships with students. Interviews regarding this discussion revealed at least three important subtopics regarding methods for improving the quality of relationships in Islamic boarding schools. The first concerns the general characteristics that Islamic boarding school teachers should possess; the second concerns strategies within the classroom; and the last concerns strategies outside the classroom.

First, general characteristics refer to competencies a teacher must possess to build positive relationships with their students. That encompasses five aspects: parental affection, teacher understanding of student character, role modeling, fairness, and self-evaluation. The first characteristic is parental affection. NA stated, "*I have two principles in building relationships with children. First, I can position myself as a teacher when I can position myself as a parent. If there is no interaction with the child, the child will feel wujuduhu ka'adamihi, as if they are not considered in the class.*"[25] This statement emphasizes that the role of a teacher is not only as an instructor, but also as a nurturing figure.

The second characteristic is the teacher's understanding of the students' character. RR stated, "*Teachers must be able to understand the students, not the students who must understand us. It's like the 17 students I foster know all their traits and characters.*" This understanding is gained through long-term interaction, allowing teachers to tailor their approach to each student. The third characteristic is role modeling. NA emphasized, "*The teacher's role model is the most important thing, because if children look at us and we cannot be role models, they will not trust us.*" That shows that teacher behavior serves as a direct reference for students.

The fourth characteristic is fairness. RR stated, "*There is no such thing as favoritism on the part of my teacher. Of the 17 students I teach, I call all of them equally; there is no one I never call.*"[26] Fairness prevents negative prejudice from students. Finally, the fifth characteristic is self-evaluation. BL

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[25] Homeroom Teacher NA.
[26] Teacher RR, "Interview with RR," Mei 2024.

emphasized the importance of introspection, "*We must metani awake dewe (evaluate ourselves), it is our fault, not the children. Maybe we have had bad prejudices against that child.*"[27] NA added, "If there are violations, we are not paying enough attention to the child".[28]

Second, strategies implemented in the classroom. The first strategy is discipline. RR said, "*In class, the first method I apply is to try to arrive on time. I also control the children's lalaran nadẓam (lagging off the teacher's nadẓam).*".[29] The teacher's punctual presence serves as a role model and a form of control over the regularity of learning. Next is material mastery. NA explained, "*How the teacher delivers the material also influences the child's confidence. If the teacher doesn't master the material, it will create doubts in the child*".[30] Material mastery is the key to academic authority in the eyes of students. The following strategy is for building an interactive and enjoyable classroom. RR said, "*I require students to ask questions. Everyone must ask; if they haven't asked today, they will be required to ask tomorrow*".[31] This strategy encourages active student participation.

The fourth strategy in the classroom is ethics education. RR said, "*Often during tahaji lessons, I use the words of Father Kyai or Bu Nyai about etiquette towards teachers and vice versa, so that the children know and understand*".[32] Next, pay attention to the emotional and academic development of students. RR stated, "*Occasionally I ask whether there are problems in their learning progress, so they feel that the teacher is paying attention to them*".[33] BL added, "*I ask about them, their daily lives, and their feelings too, so that relationships are built gradually*".[34] Finally, the application of proportional rewards and punishments. NA explained, "*I don't apply a single punishment. I adjust it to the child's character and determine whether the punishment will change them. If I give the wrong punishment, the child will be afraid and distance himself*".[35]

Third, strategies outside the classroom. As found in interviews, strategies that can be implemented outside the classroom include monitoring other students. RR explained, "*I usually ask a close friend to see if there's a story like this... if there is, I write it down*".[36] This approach helps teachers access information that might not be directly conveyed by the student in question. Next, collaboration with other homeroom teachers. NA explained, "*I often discuss if a student from another teacher violates in front of me. I tell that teacher so I don't get ahead of myself*".[37] This collaboration ensures that problem-solving remains coordinated.

Third, building effective communication. BF said, "*Teachers must initiate conversation. If someone is feeling down, they ask why, meaning the teacher must take the initiative*".[38] RR added, "*I usually engage in conversation during quiet times, around 11 p.m. or later, to create a more intense atmosphere*".[39] BL also mentioned the importance of simple greetings as a form of attention. Fourth, spiritual effort. NA said, "*We need to recite wirid (recitations) such as prayers or dalail (recitations). That is a motivator when children cannot accept what we convey, but with the blessing of the teacher's asceticism, children can*

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[27] Teacher BL, "Interview with BL," Mei 2024.
[28] Homeroom Teacher NA, "Interview with NA," Mei 2024.
[29] Teacher RR, "Interview with RR," Mei 2024.
[30] Homeroom Teacher NA, "Interview with NA," Mei 2024.
[31] Teacher RR, "Interview with RR," Mei 2024.
[32] Teacher RR.
[33] Teacher RR.
[34] Teacher BL, "Interview with BL," Mei 2024.
[35] Homeroom Teacher NA, "Interview with NA," Mei 2024.
[36] Teacher RR, "Interview with RR," Mei 2024.
[37] Homeroom Teacher NA, "Interview with NA," Mei 2024.
[38] Teacher BF, "Interview with BF," Mei 2024.
[39] Teacher RR, "Interview with RR," Mei 2024.

understand at another time and place".[40] More clearly, the three subtopics above can be seen in the diagram below:
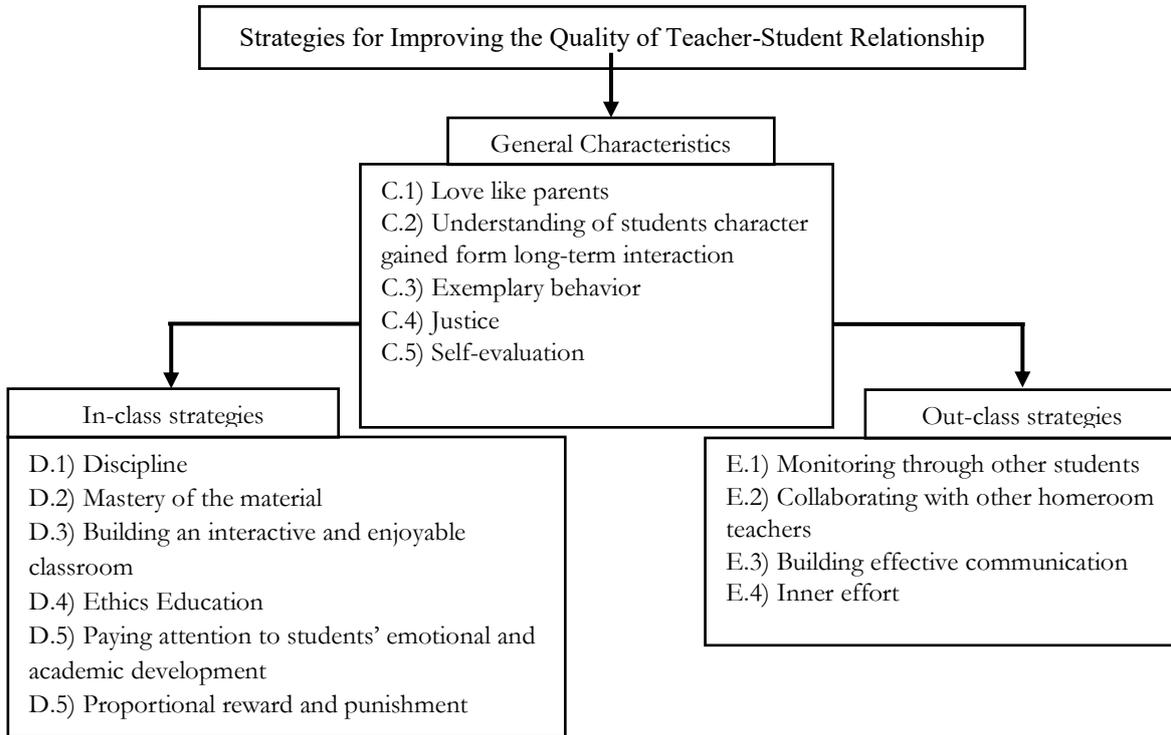

Figure 2. Scheme of Strategy for Improving the Quality of Teacher-Student Relationship

Discussion

The research results show that before developing a strategy to improve this aspect, there are several characteristics a teacher must possess as initial capital to support efforts for good interactions. These characteristics can then give rise to strategies to be implemented. The first is providing affection like a parent. That is as conveyed by Imam Ghazali in his book *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, which states that one of the basic competencies a teacher must possess is showing affection to their students like a parent to their child.[41] He further explained that teachers should minimize aggressive actions whenever students encounter violations. Anger displayed directly toward students can inherit negative traits of arbitrariness and conflict.[42] This character can be developed by paying attention to emotional and academic problems. That aligns with previous studies that state that this aspect is a key indicator of the quality of teacher-student relationships.[43] Therefore, teachers are expected to be friendly educators because aggression by teachers can lead to low empathy in students.

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[40] Homeroom Teacher NaA, "Interview with NA."

[41] Al Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulumuddin* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 2008); M. Hadi Suwarno and Hayyan Ahmad Ulul Albab, "Knowledge and Scholarly Authority in Al-Ghazali's Philosophy: A Study of Fatihatul 'Ulum," *Journal of Pesantren and Diniyah Studies* 1, no. 2 (December 2024): 185–98, https://doi.org/10.63245/jpds.v1i2.29.

[42] Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulumuddin.*

[43] Arabiye Artola Bonanno, Amy M Briesch, and Karin Lifter, *Measuring Teacher-Student Relationships in Adolescence : A Systematic , Cross-Cultural Review Adolescents ' Environments Must Have Sufficient Structure and Predictability While Also Allowing for Opportunities for Growth and Independence (Eccles et Al .,* 2024, 1–13; Erik A Ruzek et al., "How Teacher Emotional Support Motivates Students: The Mediating Roles of Perceived Peer Relatedness, Autonomy Support, and Competence.," *Learning and Instruction* (England) 42 (April 2016): 95–103,

The second strategy is understanding each student's character. Understanding each student's character is essential for effective classroom management strategies and providing proportionate treatment. Empirical studies have proven that teachers need to understand and pay attention to their students' initial characteristics to manage everything related to learning easily.[44] Student characteristics that need to be considered are divided into three: first, physiological characteristics, such as gender, physical condition, age, and so on. Second, psychological characteristics include motivation, learning style, student emotions, intelligence, etc. Third, environmental characteristics, such as socioeconomic conditions, culture, etc.[45] Teachers can provide proportionate rewards and punishments when they understand their students' characteristics. Rewards and punishments must be given proportionally, without losing the purpose of both.

Several studies have also shown that rewards can improve student motivation and learning outcomes.[46] However, excessive rewards can have adverse effects, such as arrogance.[47] This strategy is important because further regression results found that uncontrolled self-awareness can increase social victimization. Furthermore, this study also found that teachers' understanding of their students' character is ideally achieved through long-term interactions. Previous research has demonstrated that long-term interactions can increase positive student perceptions of their relationships with teachers.[48] Therefore, institutions are expected to design sustainable homeroom systems. The third strategy is role modeling. This aspect is crucial because ample literature shows that role-modeling education has a more substantial effect than mere words.[49] It aligns with Bandura's social cognitive theory, which states that individuals tend to observe those around them.[50] This assumption suggests that children involved in bullying may be adopting the behavior of their teachers, who interact poorly with others. Therefore, Lickona states that teachers can be role models who demonstrate compassion for others.[51]

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[44] https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2016.01.004; Jenna Whitehead et al., "Development and Validation of a Measure to Assess Early Adolescents' Perceptions of Caring Student-Teacher Relationships," *Frontiers in Education* 6, no. July (2021): 1–18, https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.695298.

[44] Fathurrahman Fathurrahman, Winarto Eka Wahyudi, and Sahal Mahfud, "Building Religious Values in Students: The Role of Extracurricular Programs at Islamic Middle School," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies (IJIES)* 7, no. 1 (June 2024): 21–37, https://doi.org/10.33367/ijies.v7i1.4434.

[45] Aan Withi Estari, "Pentingnya Memahami Karakteristik Peserta Didik Dalam Proses Pembelajaran," *Social, Humanities, and Educational Studies (SHES): Conference Series* 3, no. 3 (November 2020): 1439–44, https://doi.org/10.20961/shes.v3i3.56953.

[46] Muhammad Muhlisin and Edi Nurhidin, "Konstruksi Kedisiplinan Melalui Habituasi Kegiatan Keagamaan: Studi Kasus Di SMP Al-Ikhlas Tarokan Kediri," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies (IJIES)* 3, no. 2 (2020): 236–51, https://doi.org/10.33367/ijies.v3i2.1395.

[47] Firdaus Firdaus, "Esensi Reward Dan Punishment Dalam Diskursus Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah* 5, no. 1 (2020): 19–29, https://doi.org/10.25299/al-thariqah.2020.vol5(1).4882.

[48] Maureen E Brinkworth et al., "Teacher-Student Relationships : The Positives and Negatives of Assessing Both Perspectives," *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, no. August (2017): 1–15, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2017.09.002.

[49] Muchamad Rifki et al., "Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Karakter Melalui Metode Keteladanan Guru Di Sekolah," *Jurnal Basicedu* 7, no. 1 (2023): 89–98, https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v7i1.4274; A. Sukmawati, H.M. Basri, and Muhammad Akhir, "Pembentukan Karakter Berbasis Keteladanan Guru Dan Pembiasaan Murid Sit Al Biruni Jipang Kota Makassar," *Education and Human Development Journal* 5, no. 1 (2020): 91–99, https://doi.org/10.33086/ehdj.v5i1.1453.

[50] Alwisol, *Psikologi Kepribadian*, E.12 (Malang: UMM Press, 2014).

[51] Thomas Lickona, *Pendidikan Karakter: Panduan Lengkap Mendidik Siswa Menjadi Pintar Dan Baik*, trans. Lita S (Bandung: Nusa Media, 2013).

The fourth strategy is ethics education, meaning that teachers must not only impart knowledge (transfer of knowledge) to students, but also provide moral and ethical education.[52] That is intended to enable students to have good manners daily. Ethics education is indeed crucial for students because ethics can determine whether someone uses the proper method according to the environment and obeys the laws and rules of the group or not in achieving their desires.[53] The implication is that perhaps the perception of bullying is normal, caused by a lack of ethics education. Therefore, this research can be used as material for teachers in Islamic boarding schools to intensify ethics education continuously. *The fifth strategy is monitoring. Monitoring is a form of teacher attention and supervision of their students.*[54] Teachers must constantly monitor student development. That can include emotional issues, academic issues, and violations. Monitoring is the first step for teachers to be able to address their students' problems. Attention is one factor that supports the quality of teacher-student relationships.

Furthermore, previous research has shown that school supervision can be a contextual factor that prevents individuals from engaging in bullying.[55] Interview results also found that monitoring can be carried out by asking peers. Practically, this strategy can overcome the obstacle in handling bullying, namely, victims' unwillingness to report it. The sixth strategy is building effective communication. It aligns with research that found that indicators of effective communication, such as greetings,[56] engaging in meaningful conversations, open communication, and initiative in initiating conversations, can significantly improve the quality of teacher-student relationships. That is intended to enhance students' social skills, as research has shown that social skills can reduce bullying. These six strategies enrich the research results based on a literature review from 2013 to 2023 based on international and reputable international databases, revealing that bullying prevention strategies in *pesantrens* include regular socialization and training on the dangers of bullying, cyberbullying, and legal education for bullies, and implementing an anti-bullying curriculum.[57]

While this systematic literature review (SLR) offers a thorough overview of established knowledge and trends, qualitative field research complements these findings by providing deeper insights rooted in real social contexts. Qualitative research is essential for uncovering individuals' lived experiences and perceptions within *pesantrens*, allowing for a nuanced understanding of cultural dynamics and the contextual factors influencing bullying behaviors. By engaging directly with the community, qualitative studies can reveal unique challenges and innovative solutions that may not be captured in existing literature. This symbiotic relationship between SLRs and qualitative research enriches the discourse on bullying prevention, fostering

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[52] Yanzhi Zhao, Mingsi Zhao, and Fengyu Shi, "Integrating Moral Education and Educational Information Technology: A Strategic Approach to Enhance Rural Teacher Training in Universities," *Journal of the Knowledge Economy* 15, no. 3 (September 2024): 15053–93, https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-023-01693-z.

[53] Mutiani Mutiani et al., "Pembinaan Etika Peserta Didik Melalui Pembelajaran Tematik-Integratif Di Sekolah Dasar," *EDUKATIF: JURNAL ILMU PENDIDIKAN* 3, no. 3 (April 2021): 704–9, https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v3i3.397.

[54] Lickona, *Pendidikan Karakter: Panduan Lengkap Mendidik Siswa Menjadi Pintar Dan Baik.*

[55] Izabela Zych et al., *Protecting Children Against Bullying and Its Consequences* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-53028-4.

[56] Saideh Sadat Mortazavi et al., "Factors Affecting Teacher-Student Relationship from the Perspective of Students in School of Rehabilitation, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences," *Journal of Medical Education Development* 12, no. 34 (August 2019): 41–48, https://doi.org/10.29252/edcj.12.34.41.

[57] Muhamad Arif, Mohd Kasturi Nor Abd Aziz, and Yuldashev Azim Abdurakhmonovich, "Trend Strategy to Prevent Bullying in Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 12, no. 2 (May 2024): 639–70, https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v12i2.1087.

a more comprehensive understanding of its complexities. Ultimately, this integrated approach leads to developing more effective and contextually relevant prevention strategies tailored to the specific needs of pesantren communities.

CONCLUSION

This study found that bullying behavior in Islamic boarding schools is influenced by two main categories of factors: intimidation and victimization. Intimidation factors include a lack of social awareness, weak supervision, previous victimization, peer influence, arrogance, and the misperception of seniors who consider bullying normal. Meanwhile, victimization factors include personal hygiene, low social skills, poor self-management, excessive idealism, different physical conditions, and the heterogeneity of the Islamic boarding school's social environment. A positive relationship between teachers and students has been proven to be a key factor in preventing and handling bullying cases, which can be realized through the character of teachers who are compassionate, fair, role models, understand the character of students, and conduct self-evaluation, accompanied by coaching strategies implemented inside and outside the classroom, such as discipline, ethical education, effective communication, and continuous monitoring.

These findings imply the importance of interpersonal skills training for Islamic boarding school teachers to build healthy, supportive, and inclusive relationships with their students. Islamic boarding schools need to integrate policies that emphasize active supervision, ethics education, and violence prevention based on a positive Islamic boarding school culture. Furthermore, the results of this study can serve as a reference for policymakers, educators, and dormitory administrators in designing character-building programs that prioritize not only academic aspects but also strengthen moral values, empathy, and social skills, thereby creating a safe, harmonious learning environment that aligns with the goals of Islamic education.

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