



CONFLICT IN SCHOOLS: HOW EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION CAN ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF BULLYING IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the factors influencing communication among stakeholders and to explore communication strategies that can be implemented to address bullying issues at Nurul Jadid Junior High School. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study method, data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews with students, teachers, and parents, as well as documentation of school policies and bullying incident reports. Data analysis was conducted descriptively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that bullying at Nurul Jadid Junior High School is predominantly verbal (45%), followed by physical bullying (35%) and social bullying (20%). A culture of seniority and weak supervision are the primary contributing factors to bullying behavior. This study highlights the need for value-based anti-bullying programs grounded in Islamic principles, the strengthening of supervision systems, and the implementation of secure and anonymous reporting mechanisms to encourage students to report bullying cases without fear. By applying effective communication strategies, the school can create a safer and more harmonious learning environment while supporting the positive character development of students.

History Articles

Received
27/9/2024

Revised
9/10/2024

Accepted
19/11/2024

Keywords:

Bullying, Effective communication, Character education, Nurul Jadid Junior High School

How to Cite:

Mannan, A. F., Shulhani, R., & Baharun, H. (2024). Conflict in Schools: How Effective Communication Can Address Bullying Problems in Educational Institutions. *Transformation of Islamic Management and Education*, 1(2), 52-59.

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.65663/timejournal.v1i2.21>

INTRODUCTION

Bullying in schools is a serious problem that can negatively impact students' psychological and social development. For instance, a student who is constantly ridiculed by peers due to their physical appearance may experience a decline in self-esteem, which can lead to withdrawal from social interactions and a lack of concentration in class. Bullying incidents not only affect the victim but also create a poor learning environment. According to Chang, (2021), bullying is defined as a repetitive aggressive act aimed at harming another person physically or psychologically. This phenomenon can occur due to various factors, including the lack of effective communication between stakeholders in the school environment.

Effective communication plays an important role in preventing and overcoming bullying in schools. Through open and supportive communication, teachers, students, and parents can create a safe and harmonious environment. Research by Aini and Rini (2023) shows that a communication approach based on empathy and active participation can significantly reduce the incidence of bullying. In addition, school policies that support open dialogue between all parties can also minimize conflicts that trigger bullying.

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To address this problem, effective communication is key and must be developed at both the individual and group levels. Good communication must create mutual understanding between students, teachers, and parents and produce constructive

solutions to any bullying problems that arise. Effective communication can foster productive dialogue, give victims the opportunity to speak, and make perpetrators aware of the impact of their actions. Research on bullying in schools and the role of effective communication in overcoming bullying has been conducted in both international and local contexts. (Argadinata et al., 2023) Research on effective communication in education shows that open communication between teachers and students can reduce bullying and create a safe learning environment. On the other hand (Meithiana & Ansory, 2019) In her research on conflict management in schools, she emphasized the importance of the role of teachers in mediating conflicts, including bullying, through appropriate communication approaches.

However, this study is different from the research conducted at Nurul Jadid Junior High School because this research focuses on the impact of effective communication between students, teachers, and parents in overcoming bullying. In addition, this study focuses on the specific dynamics that occur in Nurul Jadid Junior High School, which may have unique characteristics and challenges in overcoming these problems. Previous research has provided a theoretical and practical foundation for effective communication in an educational setting, but this study aims to improve secondary school education by involving all stakeholders in communication to address bullying. We are adding a new perspective to the field. However, the challenge of practicing effective communication in schools is not easy. Often the main obstacles include a lack of understanding of teachers' assertive communication methods, a lack of parental involvement, and a culture of silence that still exists.

Therefore, a strategic approach is needed to improve communication skills between teachers and students and build a strong support system in the school environment. Therefore, this study aims to overcome the problem of 'Bullying in Nurul Jadid Junior High School' by identifying the factors that affect communication between stakeholders and how communication strategies can be applied to build a school environment that can be a solution to overcome the problem. Safer and more harmonious.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research was conducted at Nurul Jadid Junior High School, an Islamic boarding school located in Probolinggo Regency, East Java Province. This school was chosen because it has a strong commitment to developing the character of its students, even though it still faces problems related to bullying among its students(Munkar, 2023). The unique school environment, a combination of formal education and pesantren values, provides an interesting context for exploring the application of effective communication in managing conflict in schools. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute to the development of appropriate communication strategies for educational institutions based on religious values.

This study uses a qualitative approach using a case study methodology to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of effective communication in overcoming bullying problems at Nurul Jadid Junior High School. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore stakeholder experiences, views, and interactions in specific social and cultural contexts. (Hennink et al., 2020) Data was collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews with students, teachers, and parents, as well as documentation of school policies and reports of bullying incidents. Data analysis was carried out descriptively with steps of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing detailed conclusions.

The main sources of information for this study include students who experience or witness bullying, teachers who are directly involved in mediating conflicts, and parents 53 of students. Data were collected using in-depth interviews, participant observations, and documentation.

Data collection in this study was carried out using three primary methods: in depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the experiences, perceptions, and views of the informants regarding bullying and the application of effective communication (Iltiqoiyah et al., 2023). The main informants included students who experienced or witnessed bullying, teachers directly involved in conflict mediation, and parents who provided insights into the dynamics of communication between the school and families. These interviews were semi-structured to allow flexibility in exploring relevant issues within the research context.

Direct observation was conducted in the school environment to monitor

interactions among students, teachers, and the broader school community in various situations, both inside and outside the classroom (Walid, et al., 2024). The researcher observed communication patterns, interpersonal dynamics, and conflict situations that arose, as well as how communication was utilized to resolve those conflicts. This observation provided rich contextual data that could not be fully captured through interviews or documentation alone.

Additional supporting data was obtained through documentation, which included analyzing reports of bullying incidents, school policies on bullying prevention and management, and communication records between relevant parties such as teachers, students, and parents. These documents offered a formal perspective on how the school addressed and responded to bullying issues and how pesantren values were implemented in daily practices.

Data analysis followed qualitative analysis stages, which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Walid & Malik, 2023). During the data reduction phase, the information collected was sorted and summarized to highlight data relevant to the research focus. Irrelevant or repetitive information was filtered out to facilitate further analysis. The reduced data were then presented in the form of tables or descriptive narratives, allowing clear identification of key patterns and themes.

The final stage of analysis involved data validation through source triangulation. The researchers compared information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure consistency and accuracy of the findings. Additionally, discussions were conducted with key informants to confirm the interpretation of the data (Walid, et al., 2024). This process not only enhanced the validity of the research results but also ensured that the findings reflected the realities of the Nurul Jadid school environment. With this systematic analytical approach and rigorous validation, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of effective communication in addressing bullying issues in this pesantren-based school.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The bullying phenomenon found at Nurul Jadid Junior High School shows the paradox of moral education. On the one hand, educational institutions are central to the formation of moral values, but on the other hand, bullying behavior indicates a gap between the values taught and daily practice. This finding is in line with (Suncaka, 2023) research, which states that the culture of seniority in Islamic boarding schools and educational institutions often triggers interpersonal conflicts between students.

According to Bandura's Social Learning theory, bullying behavior can occur due to the reinforcement of unconscious negative behavior in the social environment (Alwi et al., 2023; Jandhyala & Kumar, 2024; Olotu & Beyers, 2024). These findings reinforce the argument that school environments need to redesign the system of supervision and moral instruction. Other studies by (Meidinata et al., 2024) stated that value-based mentoring programs can reduce the intensity of bullying in educational environments.

The results of the research at Nurul Jadid Junior High School showed various forms of bullying, namely verbal bullying (45%), physical bullying (35%), and social bullying (20%). This phenomenon is influenced by internal factors, such as the culture of seniority and the dynamics of student groups, as well as external factors, such as family background and lack of supervision from institutions (Akella & Eid, 2021; Huong, 2020). This case study shows that although the institution has a strong vision of moral education, the reality on the ground is often different.

Table 1. Shows The Distribution Of Types Of Bullying Found At Nurul Jadid Junior High School

Types of Bullying	Percentage (%)
Verbal	45
Physical	35
Social	20

Future projections at Nurul Jadid Junior High School show that without effective intervention, this phenomenon can have a negative impact on the formation of students' character and learning environment. However, if effective communication is implemented, this institution can become a model in handling bullying in a religion-based educational environment.

Nurul Jadid Junior High School is known as one of the institutions under the auspices of Islamic boarding schools that emphasizes moral education in its curriculum.

However, the results of the study found that bullying behavior still occurs, especially among senior and junior students. Field observations reveal that seniority is used as a tool to enforce *discipline*, but it often goes beyond boundaries, becoming a form of intimidation.

For example, one of the cases found was a junior student who was forced to do extra work by his seniors as a form of *punishment* for disobedience. This sanction then developed into repeated verbal abuse. The case was not reported because of a culture of fear of senior authorities (Djohari & White, 2022; Mulvihill, 2022; Webb et al., 2020).

According to Hirschi's theory of Social Control, deviant behaviors such as bullying can be minimized if there is strong social control through attachment, commitment, and supervision. The findings at Nurul Jadid Junior High School show a weak structural supervision of interactions between students. This is also in line with Wibisono's research, which identified that in institutions with strict supervision, bullying cases tend to be lower (Jameaba et al., 2022; Siddiqui & Schultze-Krumbholz, 2023).

Case-Based Solutions

1. Institution-Based Anti-Bullying Program in Islamic Boarding Schools: Nurul Jadid Junior High School can adopt a special program that involves training senior students to become positive role models for juniors.
2. Structured Supervision: Addition of a homeroom teacher-based supervision system that is tasked with actively monitoring interactions between students.
3. Secure and Anonymous Reporting: A reporting system that ensures student safety and confidentiality can help overcome the fear of reporting.
4. Internalization of Moral Values Through Role Modeling: institutions need to integrate direct role models from teachers in building harmonious relationships between students.

From the results of the analysis, it was found that 70% of bullying cases at Nurul Jadid Junior High School can be attributed to a weak supervision system and a culture of seniority, while the other 30% are influenced by external factors such as the influence of the family environment. These findings reinforce previous research by Ramadhan which emphasized the importance of a value-based approach in pesantren education to reduce the phenomenon of bullying.

The assumption that can be developed is that value-based intervention and maintaining effective communication can reduce bullying cases by up to 50%. If implemented correctly, this solution will not only overcome the problem of bullying, but also strengthen the positive character of students and the reputation of Nurul Jadid Junior High School as a moral education institution.

The findings from the study at Nurul Jadid Junior High School carry significant implications for both the school's management and the broader educational community. The dominance of verbal bullying, accounting for 45% of cases, reflects a behavioral pattern deeply ingrained in the social interactions of students. Verbal bullying tends to be more prevalent because it is less visible than physical bullying and can occur spontaneously in various settings (Ayasreh & Hayajneh, 2021; Bjärehed et al., 2021; Muluk, 2023; Rahman & Wassalwa, 2019). This form of bullying often manifests through insults, name-calling, ridicule, and spreading rumors, making it challenging to detect and address effectively. The lack of immediate physical evidence makes it easier for perpetrators to avoid consequences, while victims may find it harder to report due to the subtler nature of the abuse.

Several factors contribute to the occurrence of bullying at Nurul Jadid Junior High School. Internally, the culture of seniority plays a significant role. The hierarchical structure, common in many pesantren-based institutions, often results in seniors exercising authority over juniors. While this hierarchy is intended to instill discipline and respect, it frequently crosses the line into abuse of power. For instance, seniors imposing tasks or punishments on juniors, ostensibly as a form of discipline, can escalate into forms of verbal and social bullying. The normalization of such behavior perpetuates a cycle where juniors who are bullied may adopt similar behaviors when they become seniors.

Another internal factor is the dynamics within student groups. Peer pressure and group loyalty often compel students to conform to bullying behavior to maintain their social standing or avoid becoming targets themselves. This dynamic reinforces a hostile environment where bullying becomes a tool for social dominance (Carmona-Rojas et al., 2023; Pan et al., 2020; Volk et al., 2022).

Externally, family background plays a critical role in shaping student behavior. Students from families with a lack of supervision, poor communication, or exposure to

aggressive behavior may be more likely to exhibit bullying tendencies. Conversely, students from supportive and communicative families are often better equipped to handle conflicts constructively and resist engaging in bullying.

Additionally, institutional factors contribute significantly to the problem. Weak structural supervision and inconsistent enforcement of rules create an environment where bullying can thrive. Teachers and administrators may lack the resources or training to identify and address bullying effectively, leading to insufficient intervention (Fischer et al., 2021; Le Menestrel, 2020; Van Verseveld et al., 2021). The study highlighted that 70% of bullying cases could be attributed to inadequate supervision and the entrenched culture of seniority, while 30% were influenced by external factors like family environment and societal norms.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. Without effective intervention, bullying at Nurul Jadid Junior High School could undermine the institution's moral education objectives, eroding the trust and safety that are fundamental to a positive learning environment. Students who experience or witness bullying may suffer from anxiety, depression, and a diminished capacity to engage in their studies, ultimately affecting their academic performance and personal development (Hameurlaine & Gasmi, 2023; Mbah, 2020; Samara et al., 2021).

However, the findings also provide a pathway for improvement. By addressing the root causes of bullying—such as reforming the culture of seniority, strengthening supervision, and promoting value-based interventions—Nurul Jadid Junior High School has the potential to transform into a model for managing bullying in religion-based educational environments. Emphasizing verbal communication skills and conflict resolution strategies can empower students to express themselves constructively, reducing the reliance on verbal aggression as a means of exerting influence or resolving disputes.

Furthermore, implementing secure and anonymous reporting mechanisms, along with role-modeling by teachers and senior students, can help build a culture of respect and accountability. These measures would not only address the immediate problem of bullying but also reinforce the school's vision of nurturing students with strong moral character, thereby aligning its ideals with everyday practice.

CONCLUSION

This study found that bullying in educational institutions, including Nurul Jadid Junior High School, is a significant phenomenon involving various forms of behavior, with verbal bullying being the most dominant type. The main factors that affect bullying are a culture of seniority and weak supervision, even though the institution has a strong vision in moral education. These findings suggest that there is a gap between the values taught and daily practice, which has the potential to hinder the formation of positive character in students if not taken seriously.

The case study of Nurul Jadid Junior High School provides clear evidence that institutional responses to bullying, such as imposing sanctions without a preventive approach, lack effective communication in addressing the root of the problem. Additionally, students' fear of reporting bullying cases exacerbated the situation, highlighting the urgent need for stronger monitoring systems and secure reporting.

Recommendations

1. Improvement of the Supervision System: institutions need to strengthen supervision through the active role of homeroom teachers and mentor systems that support harmonious relationships between students.
2. Islamic Values-Based Anti-Bullying Program: The implementation of the program is integrated with formal and informal moral education, involving all components of the institution, including senior students as role models.
3. Secure and Anonymous Reporting System: Provision of reporting mechanisms that guarantee confidentiality to encourage students to report cases without fear of social pressure.
4. Further Research: An in-depth study of the effectiveness of Islamic values-based anti-bullying programs in various institutions is needed to produce a holistic and replicable approach.

This conclusion emphasizes the importance of collective efforts in overcoming the phenomenon of bullying in institutions in order to maintain the main mission of the

institution as a moral education institution and the formation of effective communication.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to thank all parties who have provided support in completing this research. Thank you to Al-Maimunah for the permission and facilities provided to carry out data collection as well as to the teachers and staff who volunteered their time to conduct interviews and observations. Special appreciation is also given to this research supervisor for his guidance and valuable input during the research process. Finally, we would like to thank our family and friends who always provided moral support during the preparation of this research.

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