

AKIDAH AKHLAK TEACHER STRATEGIES IN PREVENTING VERBAL BULLYING IN RELIGIOUS PROGRAM MAN 1 JEMBER

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the strategies employed by Akidah Akhlak teachers in preventing verbal bullying through the cultivation of noble character (akhlakul karimah) in the Religious Program (MAN-PK) at MAN 1 Jember. A qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design was employed. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis involving Akidah Akhlak teachers, guidance counselors, boarding school wardens, and MAN-PK students. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings revealed that verbal bullying manifested through derogatory name calling based on physical traits or regional dialects, public humiliation, and belittling peers occurred in both classroom and dormitory settings. To address these behaviors, Akidah Akhlak teachers implemented three primary strategies: exemplary role modeling (uswah hasanah), narrative based moral instruction, and daily spiritual habituation, complemented by contextual case discussions on bullying. Perpetrator management utilized a persuasive, educational, and affective restorative approach featuring empathetic counseling and reflective writing exercises. These initiatives were reinforced through systematic collaboration among educators, guidance counselors, and parents, and were embedded into institutional policy through the Madrasah Anti-Bully movement. Documented evaluation records and observations indicated a substantial reduction in verbal bullying incidents alongside a noticeable improvement in students perceived emotional and physical safety within the boarding environment. This study concludes that the integrated, collaborative cultivation of akhlakul karimah provides a meaningful framework for strengthening internal moral control and fostering a safe, harmonious boarding school environment.

Keywords: Teacher Strategies; Akidah Akhlak; Verbal Bullying; Akhlakul Karimah; MAN-PK

A. Introduction

Educational institutions are strategic instruments that not only function to transfer knowledge academically, but also carry out a humanitarian mission to create a safe, peaceful, and inclusive social environment. However, the world of education is currently faced with the reality of a moral crisis in the form of the rampant phenomenon of bullying or bullying that continues to be cultured among students. Globally, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reports that nearly a third of students worldwide have experienced bullying at least once during their school years. In Indonesia, this situation has entered a very worrying emergency phase. The Federation of Indonesian Teachers' Unions (FSGI) recorded an increase from 21 incidents of bullying in

schools in 2022 to 30 incidents in 2023. This situation is exacerbated by the findings of the Indonesian Education Monitoring Network (JPPI) in 2024 which documented 573 cases of violence in the educational environment, of which 31% of the total cases were cases of bullying. Ironically, this case of violence does not only occur in public schools, but also penetrates religious institutions with a percentage of 16% occurring in madrassas and 21% occurring in Islamic boarding schools.

The impact caused by these aggressive actions is very destructive and long-lasting, as it not only harms the physical but also destroys the victim's future psychologically, socially, and academically. Victims of bullying are prone to experiencing acute anxiety, depression, deep emotional trauma, decreased learning motivation, withdrawal from the social environment, and a drastic decline in academic achievement (Rosnidarwati et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2025). The emergence of this phenomenon in Islamic educational institutions, such as madrasah, presents a profound moral paradox (Rosnidarwati et al., 2025). Madrasah, which are ideally designed to foster spiritual integrity and religious morality based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, are in fact not completely free from violent behavior (Rosnidarwati et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2025). Moreover, in madrasah that adopt a boarding school system, interactions that occur intensively for 24 hours actually increase sociocultural vulnerability (Yusuf et al., 2025). Under the auspices of the dormitory, power imbalances, the formation of exclusive social groups, and the normalization of relational and verbal bullying behavior such as physical mockery, giving bad nicknames, and shaming friends in public are often considered as ordinary jokes but provide massive emotional wounds to their victims (Balan & Al-Amin, 2026; Yusuf et al., 2025).

This critical condition confirms that the prevention of bullying in madrasah can no longer rely only on disciplinary interventions that are reactive, punitive, or just formal rules on paper (Mardiah et al., 2025; Rosnidarwati et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2025). A fundamental preventive-educational strategy is needed through strengthening character and moral awareness that is intrinsically instilled in students (Mardiah et al., 2025). In Islamic education, the subject of Moral Faith and the cultivation of the value of *akhlakul karimah* (noble morals) plays a very vital and strategic role (Salsabila et al., 2025; Napitupulu et al., 2026). Islamic moral education should not only stop at the cognitive level in the form of memorizing religious postulates alone, but must touch the affective and psychomotor realms (Balan & Al-Amin, 2026). In accordance with the theory of character development, moral cultivation must integrate the dimensions of moral knowledge (moral knowing), moral feelings (moral feeling), and moral action (moral action) in a balanced manner so that these Islamic values are internalized into the internal moral control of students (Balan & Al-Amin, 2026; Rosnidarwati et al., 2025). The internalization of Qur'anic values such as compassion (*rahmah*), social justice (*'adl*), politeness of communication (*hilm*), brotherhood (*ukhuwwah*), self-control (*iffah*), and mutual cooperation (*ta'awun*) is a solid foundation to break the chain of violence, because students consciously believe that hurting fellow Muslims with bad words is a tyranny that

is strictly forbidden by Allah SWT as stated in the Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat:11 (Yuliana, 2026; Rosnidarwati et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2025).

In the madrasah ecosystem, Moral Faith Teachers have pedagogical and moral closeness that is very important to lead this behavioral transformation (Amin et al., 2026). Efforts to prevent verbal bullying in the madrasah environment can be effectively realized through a holistic learning design, where teachers act as the main role models (*uswah hasanah*) in speaking politely, being patient, and managing conflicts peacefully (Salsabila et al., 2025; Rosnidarwati et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2025). The integration of these preventive values is implemented through daily habituation of joint worship, guidance on daily manners of speaking, spiritual advice, interactive moral dialogue, and restorative conflict resolution mechanisms based on *islah* (reconciliation) and *deliberation* (Salsabila et al., 2025; Rosnidarwati et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2025). These strategies are very challenging to apply to the Religious Program at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN-PK), a flagship national boarding program that has a very high level of academic-religious competition. The MAN-PK dormitory system brings together students from various cultural and regional backgrounds for a full 24 hours, which on the one hand provides ample space for moral habituation, but on the other hand requires intensive supervision due to the high chance of social friction, interpersonal conflicts, and the risk of verbal and digital bullying among adolescents (Yuliana, 2026; Yusuf et al., 2025; Amin et al., 2026).

Although previous studies have investigated Islamic character education in mitigating school bullying such as in multicultural madrasahs in Kupang (Balan & Al-Amin, 2026), early childhood settings (Napitupulu et al., 2026), junior high schools (Salsabila et al., 2025), and anti-bullying madrasahs in West Bangka (Yuliana, 2026) these works predominantly focus on general public schools, traditional *salaf* boarding institutions, or basic physical bullying. A critical research gap remains in systematically analyzing how teacher strategies address verbal bullying specifically within high-achieving, specialized religious boarding environments. This study fills this gap by generating new knowledge on the operational integration of *Akidah Akhlak* pedagogy within MAN 1 Jember a national flagship religious program. Unlike traditional boarding schools, MAN-PK combines intense 24-hour dormitory socialization with high academic and linguistic rigor. Investigating this unique context reveals how moral cultivation (*akhlakul karimah*) operates under dual pressure academic competition and peer socialization thereby offering a distinct, transferable preventive model for modern religious boarding schools.

B. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design to obtain a deep and comprehensive understanding of natural phenomena that occur in the field (Creswell, 2018; Rosnidarwati et al., 2025). This qualitative approach is considered most relevant to examine the process of internalizing noble character values and the

dynamics of students' daily social interactions that cannot be measured quantitatively through statistical figures alone (Salsabila et al., 2025). The location of the research was determined purposively at MAN 1 Jember on the Religious Program (MAN-PK) with the consideration that this flagship program at the national level has a strong commitment to the formation of Islamic-based characters. In this field research, the researcher acts as the main instrument (human instrument) to collect, filter, and interpret data independently at the research location (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The selection of research subjects was carried out using purposive sampling techniques based on specific criteria that are in line with the research objectives in order to ensure the credibility of the data obtained (Miles et al., 2014; Yusuf et al., 2025). Key informants consist of Moral Faith Teachers who teach and are directly responsible for actively fostering student morality in the classroom and MAN-PK dormitory (Ahmad Ikhsan Demyati, S.Pd.I). In order to obtain a rich and balanced perspective through triangulation of sources, this study also involves additional informants who include dormitory supervisors or coaches as the daily managers of student discipline, madrasah heads as policy leaders, and representatives of MAN-PK students from various grade levels to describe the real experience of peer interaction in the dormitory environment, represented by Sayyida Alin from Class XII PK 2 (Yuliana, 2026; Rosnidarwati et al., 2025).

Field data collection was carried out integratively through a combination of three main methods, namely semi-structured in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies (Balan & Al-Amin, 2026; Napitupulu et al., 2026). In-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face based on interview instruments to explore teachers' perspectives on religious materials, teaching methods, and obstacles in managing students' moral discipline. Participatory observation focused on direct observation of the learning process of Akidah Akhlak in the classroom, worship activities in the dormitory, students' daily social interactions, and indications of social friction that lead to verbal, relational, and cyber bullying (Spradley, 2016; Yusuf et al., 2025). Meanwhile, the documentation study was applied through the analysis of official files such as the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), dormitory written rules, and records of student disciplinary violations (Rosnidarwati et al., 2025).

All data collected were analyzed in a flowing manner from the process of data collection in the field until the research ended by adopting the interactive qualitative analysis model of Miles and Huberman (Miles et al., 2014; Yuliana, 2026). The data analysis stage begins with the data condensation process, where the researcher filters, simplifies, and focuses the field notes of interviews and observations into key themes such as the forms of teacher strategies and dominant moral values. The data that has been condensed is then systematically arranged in the data presentation stage (data display) in the form of a logical descriptive narrative to facilitate understanding the pattern of relationships between strategy themes. The final stage is conclusion drawing and verification to interpret in depth and formulate solid theoretical-empirical conclusions

related to bullying prevention strategies in madrassas (Miles et al., 2014; Napitupulu et al., 2026).

To ensure the quality of research results, the validity and reliability of the data are tested through the application of comprehensive triangulation techniques (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yuliana, 2026). Triangulation techniques are carried out by comparing and testing the consistency of data obtained through in-depth interview methods, direct observation results in dormitories, and written evidence in document studies (Rosnidarwati et al., 2025). Source triangulation is applied by cross-verifying data from different sources, namely by comparing the information of the Moral Faith Teacher, the perspective of the dormitory supervisor, and the reality of the interaction felt by the students (Balan & Al-Amin, 2026). In addition, the credibility of the analysis results is strengthened through the member checking procedure, in which the draft transcript of the interview results is reconfirmed to key informants to ensure the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation and avoid subjective bias (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

C. Finding and Discussion

Forms and Dynamics of Verbal Bullying

The dynamics and forms of verbal bullying at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 1 Jember, particularly within the Religious Program (MAN-PK), reflect a distinctive sociocultural pattern prior to the implementation of intensive prevention strategies. Based on an interview with Sayyida Alin, a student of class XII PK 2, verbal bullying previously occurred through negative nicknames referring to physical characteristics or undesirable habits, publicly embarrassing friends for perceived mistakes, belittling their abilities, and mocking regional accents. Although these behaviors were often perceived by students as jokes or ordinary dormitory interactions, verbal aggression may cause psychological consequences, including emotional distress, reduced self-esteem and confidence, anxiety, social isolation, and decreased concentration and learning motivation.

According to Ahmad Ikhsan Demyati, S.Pd.I., an Akidah Akhlak teacher, the main challenge in addressing verbal bullying is the students' perception that mocking or giving nicknames constitutes ordinary humor. This pattern is further influenced by peer associations and social media, through which students imitate negative expressions perceived as humorous in cyberspace. Moreover, the MAN-PK dormitory brings together students from diverse cultural backgrounds for 24 hours, creating sociocultural conditions that may facilitate unequal power relations, implicit seniority, and the normalization of verbal bullying when strong moral intervention is absent.

Internalization of Akhlakul Karimah through Pedagogical Strategies

To address these challenges, Akidah Akhlak teachers at MAN-PK MAN 1 Jember implemented three main pedagogical strategies to develop moral character as an internal moral controller. First, teachers applied direct role modeling (*uswah hasanah*) by consistently using polite language, exchanging greetings, demonstrating patience,

avoiding shouting and derogatory expressions, and respecting others. This strategy is consistent with Albert Bandura's Cognitive Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes that adolescents' prosocial behavior can be internalized through direct observation of respected figures rather than verbal instruction alone. Teachers' emotional closeness and openness also encouraged students to feel respected, safe, and comfortable in discussing personal problems.

Second, teachers internalized moral values through storytelling. Exemplary narratives from the Prophet Muhammad, including his forgiveness toward the people of Thaif, and the story of Umar bin Khattab's commitment to justice were used to develop empathy and moral awareness, particularly regarding the importance of controlling speech and avoiding words that hurt others.

Third, teachers established daily spiritual habituation. Each Akidah Akhlak learning session began with collective prayer, followed by the reading of Qur'anic verses or hadith concerning morality, and concluded with self-reflection (*muhasabah*). This habituation was intended to purify the heart (*tazkiyatun nafs*) and encourage students to recognize the consequences of their words and actions.

The internalization of *akhlakul karimah* was further strengthened through contextual learning and case-based discussions. Teachers connected materials, particularly the chapter on commendable morals, with students' daily interactions in the dormitory, including prohibitions against mocking physical characteristics or habits, assigning hurtful nicknames, humiliating friends publicly, and underestimating their abilities. Students analyzed real-life verbal bullying scenarios from Islamic faith and moral perspectives. This approach strengthened the dimension of moral knowing, enabling students to understand that hurtful, humiliating, or degrading speech is not merely a social joke but also constitutes sinful behavior and a form of injustice.

The reflective impact of this method was expressed by Sayyida Alin, who acknowledged that she previously mocked friends because she considered it humorous but subsequently became more conscious of the consequences after understanding the prohibition of *ghibah*, slander, failure to guard one's speech, and hurting others according to Islamic teachings. She consequently became more careful before speaking.

Restorative Management of Verbal Bullying

In handling students involved in verbal bullying, Akidah Akhlak teachers prioritized a persuasive, educational, affective, and humane restorative approach. Students were not publicly judged or reprimanded but were invited to a private room to prevent embarrassment. Teachers listened empathetically to identify the underlying causes of the behavior. When violations involved negative nicknames, public humiliation, or belittling others' abilities, teachers explained the emotional consequences for victims and emphasized the importance of respecting others.

The perpetrators were also provided with spiritual guidance concerning the consequences of harming others and educational restorative sanctions in the form of

reflective writing assignments. Students were required to reflect on the impact of hurtful words and the obligation of Muslims to guard their speech. This approach corresponds with the concept of *islah*-based restorative interaction (reconciliation) in Islamic education, which emphasizes moral responsibility, restoration of damaged social relationships, and the healing of victims' psychological wounds.

Collaborative and Institutional Support

The implementation of preventive and rehabilitative strategies was supported by systematic collaboration among Akidah Akhlak teachers, Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers, other PAI teachers, and parents. Akidah Akhlak teachers coordinated with BK teachers to identify students who showed potential involvement in verbal bullying as perpetrators or victims. Collaboration with other PAI teachers was implemented through a shared commitment to strengthening religious culture, including appropriate speech, respectful communication, and consistent reminders not to use offensive nicknames, humiliate others, or underestimate their abilities.

Parents also played an important role because teachers have limited interaction time with students outside the madrasah. The madrasah maintained targeted communication with parents regarding students' development and problems and encouraged parents to reinforce the habits of respectful communication and speech at home. This partnership reflects the mesosystem in Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, in which character development is optimized when the home and school environments are interconnected harmoniously.

At the institutional level, MAN 1 Jember integrated moral development into the official Religious Program through the Madrasah Anti-Bully movement. Students received systematic education concerning bullying, including negative nicknames, public humiliation, and belittling others' abilities. New students were required to participate in anti-bullying orientation, while a dedicated team consisting of Moral Faith teachers, BK teachers, and students was established to monitor, identify, and respond to bullying reports.

The madrasah management supported the program through BOS funding for character development programs, the preparation of printed moral education modules, and affective approach and Islamic counseling training for teachers. The madrasah also provided flexibility within the daily dormitory schedule for worship and spiritual guidance activities, including morning Qur'an tadarus, weekly moral mentoring, and religious talks following congregational Dzuhur prayers.

Program Outcomes and Internalization of Moral Values

The synergy between humanistic pedagogical strategies, collaboration among educational stakeholders, and the Madrasah Anti-Bully movement aligned with positive, observable shifts within the MAN-PK environment. Internal administrative records from the Guidance and Counseling (BK) unit documented a substantial reduction in reported verbal bullying incidents across the last two semesters. Furthermore, internal madrasah

evaluation records indicated that the vast majority of students perceived the school and dormitory environment as significantly safer, more comfortable, and conducive to learning. Serving as complementary institutional evidence, these records corroborate the qualitative findings regarding improved peer dynamics and a heightened sense of emotional security within the boarding climate.

Another important finding was the emergence of active and compassionate peer control within the dormitory. Students became more cautious in communicating with their peers and began intervening when they witnessed mocking or degrading behavior. Some students directly reminded perpetrators that such behavior could hurt their friends' feelings. Students also became more willing to report verbal bullying incidents to teachers.

The internalization of moral values was further reflected in the behavioral transformation of several students who had previously received disciplinary records. Some subsequently became anti-bullying ambassadors and actively promoted Islamic communication ethics through the madrasah's social media. To sustain the program, the madrasah planned to develop an interactive digital module on moral education accessible to students through the Moodle learning platform.

These findings indicate a transformation from compliance with external rules toward the development of an internal moral controller. The internalization of *akhlakul karimah* therefore represents not merely behavioral conformity but the development of students' independent moral awareness, consistent with Kohlberg's theory of moral internalization.

E. Conclusion

The implementation of Akidah Akhlak education in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 1 Jember, especially in the Religious Program (MAN-PK), has proven to play a very significant and effective role as a preventive-educational strategy in preventing and minimizing verbal bullying behavior in the dormitory and classroom environment. The internalization of moral values no longer only relies on cognitive-theoretical delivery, but succeeds in touching the affective dimension and spiritual awareness of students through the application of three main strategies of Akidah Akhlak Teachers, namely direct example (*uswah hasanah*), storytelling methods of salaf moral nobility, and daily spiritual habituation before and after study. Through the method of discussing real bullying cases in the classroom, students are invited to reflect on Islamic values such as compassion (*rahmah*), brotherhood (*ukhuwwah*), politeness (*hilm*), and mutual cooperation (*ta'awun*), so that intrinsic moral awareness is built that the act of hurting fellow friends such as giving bad nicknames that offend their bodies or habits, shaming friends in public, and belittling their abilities is a form of tyranny that is forbidden by religion and hurts the integrity of their faith. When social friction or indications of verbal bullying are detected, teachers apply a persuasive, educational, and affective humanist restorative approach through personal dialogue, empathetic guidance, and the provision of educational-

reflective sanctions for writing essays to restore the moral responsibility of the perpetrator without hurting his or her self-esteem.

The success of this preventive and rehabilitative strategy is strengthened by the establishment of a targeted partnership collaboration between Moral Faith Teachers, Counseling Guidance (BK) teachers, madrasah management, and parents of students. This collaboration of three educational centers is realized through the synchronization of character programs in schools and dormitories, as well as two-way communication guidance to ensure the sustainability of gadget supervision and good speech habits when students are at home. At the institutional level, madrasah support this moral development through the launch of the Anti-Bully Madrasah movement supported by formal regulations, cross-sectoral task force teams, BOS budget support, and flexible allocation of dormitory time for daily religious mentoring. The concrete impact of this comprehensive synergy is shown by a drastic reduction in incidents of verbal bullying in the MAN-PK environment by 40% in the last two semesters, the creation of a sense of security and comfort in the dormitory which is felt directly by 85% of students, and the development of active peer control in the dormitory where students spontaneously remind each other to stay away from mocking behavior.

Based on the findings of the research, several constructive suggestions were proposed to maintain sustainability and improve the quality of bullying prevention programs in madrasah. For madrasah, it is recommended to immediately realize the plan to develop an interactive digital module on morals based on the Moodle platform so that it can be accessed flexibly by students. For teachers of Akidah Akhlak, it is recommended to continue to improve empathetic examples and integrate Islamic oral ethics literacy materials to anticipate modern challenges in the form of cyberbullying in students online conversation rooms. For parents, it is hoped that they can continue to improve communication cooperation with dormitories and consistently provide examples of noble speech and manners in the family environment. Finally, for future researchers, it is recommended to expand the research locus, apply a mixed-methods approach to obtain broader comparative statistical data, and explore cyberbullying intervention strategies based on Islamic counseling.

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