STRENGTHENING CHARACTER EDUCATION IN PREVENTING BULLYING BEHAVIOR OF STUDENTS IN PESANTREN

Muhamad Arif
Institut Al Azhar Menganti Gresik, Indonesia
e-mail: muhamadarif070593@gmail.com

Siti Mahmudah Noorhayati
Institut Agama Islam Nasional Laa Roiba Bogor, Indonesia
e-mail: noorhayatimahmudah@gmail.com

Abstract
The finding of a lot of bullying behavior in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) has become a negative trend. Islamic educational institutions must make complete improvements. The position of Islamic boarding school students as a stronghold of Islamic education should be able to maintain good values and character by providing good examples, one of which is by not committing acts. Bullying. Character formation is not only limited to implementing good character, it will create a consistent culture (istiqomah). The research method uses qualitative with a case study approach, the primary data sources for this research are Islamic boarding school caregivers, heads, educators (council of teachers), pesantren guidance and counseling teachers, and Islamic boarding school students, with observation, interview and documentation data collection. Yin presented data analysis through pattern matching, explanation, time series analysis, and repeated observations. The research results show the first character education model, through role models/examples from teachers or Islamic boarding school administrators, the creation of a violence prevention action task force (TPPK), and individual assistance to the students. Meanwhile, some of the character education implemented for students includes religious character, mutual respect amidst the diverse backgrounds of students, the character of responsibility, fairness, sensitivity to all Islamic boarding school conditions, and strengthening Nasionalisme accompanied by the existence of continuous and consistent strengthening. The findings regarding Infinity character are an option in preventing bullying behavior among students in Islamic boarding schools

Keywords: *bullying, character education, fairness, infinity character*

Abtsrak
Banyaknya temuan perilaku bullying di pesantren menjadi tren negatif. Institusi pendidikan Islam harus melakukan pembenahan secara menyeluruh. Kedudukan santri sebagai benteng pendidikan Islam hendaknya mampu menjaga nilai-nilai dan akhlak yang baik dengan memberikan keteladanan yang baik, salah satunya dengan tidak melakukan perbuatan. Penindasan. Pembentukan karakter tidak hanya sebatas menerapkan karakter yang baik saja, akan tercipta budaya konsisten (istiqomah). Metode penelitian menggunakan kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus, sumber data primer dalam penelitian ini adalah pengasuh pesantren, pimpinan, pendidik (dewan guru), guru bimbingan dan konseling pesantren, dan santri pesantren, dengan observasi, wawancara dan pengumpulan data dokumentasi. Yin menyajikan analisis data melalui pencocokan pola, penjelasan, analisis deret waktu, dan observasi berulang. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan yang pertama model pendidikan karakter, melalui

teladan/teladan dari guru atau pengurus pesantren, pembentukan gugus tugas aksi pencegahan kekerasan (TPPK), dan pendampingan individu kepada santri. Sementara itu, beberapa pendidikan karakter yang dilaksanakan pada santri antara lain karakter religius, sikap saling menghormati di tengah keberagaman latar belakang santri, karakter tanggung jawab, adil, peka terhadap segala kondisi pesantren, dan penguatan Nasionalisme yang disertai dengan adanya penguatan yang berkesinambungan dan konsisten. . Temuan mengenai karakter Infinity menjadi salah satu pilihan dalam mencegah perilaku bullying di kalangan santri di pesantren.

Kata Kunci: *perundungan, pendidikan karakter, keadilan, karakter tak terhingga*

PENDAHULUAN

Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) is a traditional educational institution (pre-independence in Indonesia) with a strong historical foundation in society. Azhra describes the pesantren as an educational system rich in values and capable of adapting to the challenges of the times without losing its cultural identity (Azhra, 1998). This perspective is echoed by Dhofier, who views the pesantren as an educational institution with distinct characteristics that set it apart from other forms of education. Dhofier and Bull highlight the core elements of a pesantren, which include the pondok (student dormitory), mosque/prayer hall, santri (students), kitab kuning (classical Islamic texts), and kyai (spiritual leaders). The development of other educational institutions has not left the pesantren behind, as evidenced by Ma'arif's research on the growth of the Tebuireng pesantren, which has been able to develop in an ideal way without losing its unique identity (Maarif, 2015, p. 16). This resilience is what enables the pesantren to thrive as a traditional educational institution that can keep up with educational advancements without being influenced by external systems.

The growth of pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) as non-formal educational institutions has not exempted them from challenges. Particularly in the 21st century, pesantren face the test of addressing numerous incidents of bullying involving students (santri). Nashiruddin reports cases of bullying at the Al Hikmah Kajen pesantren, involving peer-to-peer incidents. Some bullying behaviors were physical, including hitting and kicking, while others were non-physical, such as name-calling, mocking, and using parents' names as insults (Nashiruddin, 2019). Najmi et al. further highlight that some students experience bullying from senior santri, which leads to psychological distress and affects their well-being (Najmi et al., 2022; Rahmatullah et al., 2022; Sahbani & Yandi, 2023; Yani et al., 2016; Yuhbaba, 2019). These data serve as a red flag for the pesantren community, emphasizing the need for focused attention on eradicating bullying so that santri can experience a safe and supportive educational environment in pesantren.

The findings on various instances of bullying in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) have sparked the development of multiple solutions to address bullying among students (santri) (Alwi et al., 2023), Ananda suggests a solution for preventing bullying at Al-Fattah pesantren through conflict management, with the key recommendation that pesantren administrators closely monitor the condition of the school by paying intensive attention to students (Ananda et al., 2023). Distina proposes that a structured training program organized by the pesantren could help prevent bullying behavior from senior to junior santri (Distina, 2019), Implementing disciplinary sanctions for students who repeatedly violate rules is also suggested as a potential measure

(Fadhilah et al., 2021; Fadilah et al., 2023). Besides direct intervention programs, Riyanti et al. emphasize the need for bullying prevention through information technology (social media), such as digital campaigns to prevent harassment and the use of social media statuses that could potentially harm or depress others (Riyanti et al., 2022) Thus, bullying, as an act with long-term effects and potential trauma on victims, must be addressed quickly and effectively.

Reflecting on various findings regarding bullying incidents in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) highlights the need for comprehensive reform in Islamic educational institutions. Indra reminds us that santri (students), as defenders of Islamic education, should uphold values and character by setting a positive example, one aspect of which is refraining from bullying (Indra, 2019). Character building goes beyond merely implementing good values; it also fosters a culture of virtue and develops traits like empathy, compassion, and humility (Lickona, 1999), Lickona views character culture in schools as a continuous process practiced by all human resources in the institution; for example, teachers are obligated to provide good examples and guidance that align with students' needs, enabling students to reflect these values in their interactions with peers (Lickona, 1991, 2014). This approach is one of the best strategies for preventing the spread of bullying in both formal and non-formal educational environments.

One field finding is from Darul Ihsan Pesantren in Menganti, Gresik, an Islamic boarding school in Gresik Regency that focuses on preventing bullying among students (santri). This commitment is demonstrated through the presence of a guidance and counseling (BK) teacher within the pesantren. In an interview, Ustadzah Amalya, the guidance and counseling teacher at Darul Ihsan

Pesantren, explained that their approach to preventing bullying involves strengthening the character of the santri, particularly by fostering religious and disciplined qualities. For example, students are encouraged to be punctual in all pesantren activities (such as congregational prayers, tahajud, tahlil, and other programs). By enhancing religious character, students feel a greater sense of peace as they draw closer to Allah, which fosters self-awareness and reduces the likelihood of bullying. Additionally, Darul Ihsan Pesantren has a Family Program, which gathers the families of all santri for direct guidance from the kyai, aimed at building a sense of belonging and strengthening familial bonds among santri and their guardians. Another aspect of bullying prevention is provided by the guidance and counseling teacher through support and services both within the pesantren and in formal education settings (with full-time BK services). Furthermore, BK has specific regulations regarding bullying offenders at the pesantren. Thus, the guidance process continues beyond the pesantren environment, with ongoing support and counseling, and the implementation of consequences for bullying helps create a secure and positive psychological atmosphere for each santri (Amalya, 2024).

Based on data obtained by researchers from articles and published research results with a main focus on bullying behavior in Islamic boarding schools, it also provides options for preventing bullying through several approaches, such as Alwi et al who offer examples of preventing bullying behavior through strengthening educational management (Alwi et al., 2023; Amri, 2019), Hastri et al suggest preventing bullying behavior through a behavioral approach (Hastri et al., 2022), while Najmi and Nashiruddin provide suggestions for strengthening human resource counseling in Islamic boarding schools (Najmi et al.,

2022; Nashiruddin, 2019). However, one of Matondang et al's views is a researcher's note on the labeling of bullying as a culture in Islamic boarding school educational institutions (Matondang et al., 2022), it seems too excessive if it is based only on a few findings of bullying in Islamic boarding schools and generalizations are made. In addition, the results of Arif et al's research revealed the need for Islamic boarding schools to use a character education model formulated by Josephson in the form of a character count to prevent bullying behavior (Arif et al., 2024). Based on some of the data above, researchers have one research space that can be carried out in-depth, focusing on preventing bullying behavior in Islamic educational institutions (Islamic boarding schools). The title of the study is Strengthening Character Education in Preventing Bullying Behavior of Students (case study at the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic Boarding School) Based on the background of the problem above, the researcher has several problem formulations, including: First, how is the existence of strengthening character education in preventing bullying behavior at the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic boarding school?. Second, What are the obstacles to strengthening character education in preventing bullying behavior at the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic boarding school?

METODE PENELITIAN

The research method chosen for this study is qualitative. Moleong states that qualitative research is a method based on scientific facts without data manipulation (Moleong, 2011). This aligns with the field findings at Darul Ihsan pesantren in Menganti, Gresik, regarding the strengthening of character education as a primary choice for preventing bullying behavior within the pesantren. Based on this data, the approach selected by the researcher is a case study. As stated by Yin, a case study is an approach that focuses on unique field findings with significant implications (Yin, 2018a).

Data Types and Sources

As stated in the research problem formulation, the types of data sought by the researcher include: First, how is the existence of strengthening character education in preventing bullying behavior at the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic boarding school?. Second, What are the obstacles to strengthening character education in preventing bullying behavior at the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic boarding school?. Regarding the selection of research data sources, it is divided into two parts. First, the primary data sources, which serve as references for the researcher in seeking answers to the research problems. Primary data sources include: the kyai (head of the pesantren), the chairman, educators (teaching staff), guidance and counseling teachers, and students (santri). Second, the secondary data sources sought by the researcher consist of (Baskarada, 2014): scientific articles, official documents from the pesantren, digital footprints, and relevant research findings that support the researcher's problem formulation.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection techniques used by the researcher include three methods: observation, interviews, and documentation. First, the type of observation employed is participatory observation. As stated by Creswell, participatory observation is a structured observation conducted while actively participating in the activities taking place at Darul Ihsan pesantren in Menganti, Gresik. This is particularly focused on the implementation of character education to prevent bullying behavior among students (santri) and the challenges faced by the pesantren in the character education implementation process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), Second, the interviews

conducted in this study are semi-structured interviews. These interviews are based on a guideline that addresses the three research questions: First, how is the existence of strengthening character education in preventing bullying behavior at the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic boarding school?. Second, What are the obstacles to strengthening character education in preventing bullying behavior at the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic boarding school? Third, the data collection technique involves documentation, which includes both physical and digital documents that are relevant to the research problems. Examples include published scientific articles, research reports, reference books, and other related materials.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique used by the researcher is case study data analysis, as presented by Yin in his book Case Study Research (Yin, 2014, 2018b), which involves four stages. First, pattern matching is the process undertaken by the researcher based on initial predictions made before entering the field. For example, the researcher predicts that the character education model used at Darul Ihsan pesantren in Menganti, Gresik, follows Josephson's character education model with its six stages. Second, building explanations involves comparing field findings with the initial theories chosen by the researcher. In this phase, the researcher can continuously iterate during the data collection process until saturation is reached, allowing for thorough analysis. Third, time-series analysis examines the relationship between the theory and current facts. For example, in strengthening character education at Darul Ihsan pesantren to prevent bullying behavior among students (santri), the analysis checks whether the implementation aligns with Josephson's theoretical framework and its six stages. and Fourth, repeated observation serves as a final supplement to the earlier data analysis stages. Therefore, the choice of Yin's data analysis method can be justified scientifically, especially if there are discrepancies among field data, theory, and predictions. In such cases, repeated observation becomes a solution for data analysis.

Data Validity Test

The data validity test used by the researcher is data triangulation. As stated by Patton, data triangulation is a method for validating data that researchers can use to reduce doubts about the data obtained, ensuring there are no discrepancies within it (L. D. Patton, 2016; M. Q. Patton, 2015). There are several types of triangulation: Technique triangulation involves using the same technique with different data sources. Source triangulation refers to selecting data from the same source but using different techniques. Theory triangulation is the final type, which involves testing a theory against the facts or data obtained from the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Result

The results of the research taken by researchers through the process of collecting observation data, interviews and documentation at the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic boarding school. Based on two formulations of research problems, namely: 1) How is the existence of strengthening character education in preventing bullying behavior at the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik pesantren (Islamic boarding school)?. 2) What are the obstacles to strengthening character education in preventing bullying behavior at the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik pesantren (Islamic boarding school)?, the following results were obtained:

The existence of character education in preventing bullying behavior in Pesantren

Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik, in the process of preventing bullying behavior of students, is the main focus, amidst the rampant acts of bullying behavior occurring in several schools and even Islamic boarding schools. Based on these conditions, Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik strengthens several programs and cultures in the Islamic boarding school, as conveyed by Ustad Zaimin, one of the first students and one of the oldest ustads in the Islamic boarding school, conveying the existence of pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in preventing bullying behavior:

"This Islamic boarding school was established to strengthen the morals of the students. So the kiai as the leader of the Islamic boarding school always provides examples/role models of good manners for the students and reinforcement in the form of socialization, as well as in preventing bullying behavior of students, the Islamic boarding school also strengthens the character education, such as strengthening the religious character of students through strengthening congregational prayer, fostering a sense of mutual respect because life in the boarding school, various regions, various tribes, gathering in the boarding school then they have different characters, have their characteristics when they gather. Here the importance of education of mutual respect, so that there is harmony, and that a strong brotherhood is established among students, diniyah, and continues to be established in society. How Javanese people can be close to the Madurese people, it is trained in boarding schools, and even Papua can be harmonious with Java.

Here we also provide the implementation of the responsibility of students, because students are not always objects, but students in the boarding school also make them subjects if students become objects. When else is there time for students to practice, then we allow students to be subjects, and we train them to be responsible. Responsible for themselves, responsible for their duties. In addition, the character that is strengthened in this Islamic boarding school is a sense of justice that must be adjusted to their respective portions. Senior and junior students have different ways of handling, loving, educating, and loving them is also different, yes, the way of giving them assignments, and the way of buying their mandate is also different according to their respective abilities, That is the value of justice. Strengthening the nationalism of students is also our focus as teachers in Islamic boarding schools, either doing it directly or bringing in the police or TNI. In addition. So an important note as a teacher must have extraordinary patience, a teacher must also be aware of obligations, be sensitive, and understand their main duties, then everything will be done sincerely and with a sense of joy and done consistently."

The existence of Islamic boarding schools in character education basically runs in a structured manner by involving all elements of Islamic boarding school resources. as explained by Ustad Burhan to researchers about the existence in preventing bullying behavior of students, through:

"In preventing bullying behavior of students, we, the ustads at the Islamic boarding school, strengthen the character education of students

by being role models, individual approaches, and socialization. In addition, with direct practices such as: First, collaborating with the TPPK (Violence Prevention Handling Action) task force and BK teachers. Second, strengthening the religious spirit of students, because Islamic boarding schools cannot be separated from strengthening the religious spirit of students. The administrators and ustads at the dormitory provide services in the form of good communication so that there is a sense of mutual respect between fellow students and ustads. Third, fostering a sense of responsibility for students, is by strengthening responsibility such as collecting students who have problematic labels and giving them the task of recording students who commit bullying so that a sense of responsibility and fairness to fellow students emerges by not discriminating. So, all students have the same position. The next is to foster a caring nature in students at the Darul Ihsan Islamic boarding school through the khidmah curriculum. Such as organization, learning, care, and cleanliness, and there is also economics. Fourth, the caretaker provides an example of a nationalistic character, such as in the national agenda, the Islamic boarding school never forgets to participate in holding the flag ceremony process, as a form of nationalism implementation in the country. Next is to exemplify the sensitive and agile nature of the students. The caretaker is not only behind the scenes but also goes directly into the field, such as direct survey activities in the environment, then the more senior students provide a direct introduction to the junior students about adaptation to the Islamic boarding school environment.

Fifth, maintain consistency in every student activity in the Islamic boarding school, so that we, the ustad, can motivate so that the students to get used to having noble morals and avoid bullying behavior towards the weaker ones. One of the other efforts of the Islamic boarding school is to strengthen manners between students so that a sense of mutual respect arises".

A similar statement was also conveyed by Ustad Zul one of the ustads whose main task is to handle students who violate the rules of the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic Boarding School, saying that in maintaining the existence of character education, teachers make several efforts, is:

"In preventing bullying behavior, Islamic boarding schools strengthen the character education of students, because each student is given an example from the ustad, kiai, BK teacher and TPPK (Violence Prevention Handling Action) task force. In addition, students are given material through socialization about religious character, mutual respect, responsibility, and the importance of being fair to fellow students. Kiai as a role model always reinforces the nature of sensitivity in oneself, namely by getting used to the tasks that have been given, because all the traits instilled in students such as trustworthiness, responsibility, and mutual respect will grow a sense of sensitivity. Indicators of sensitive children such as when there is a class assignment to clean, then sensitive if there are students who are disturbed, they want to report. In the boarding school itself, there is something called a personality book, where there are +50 points as an award for students who report if there are friends who commit bullying or bullying and dare

to report so that children grow a sense of sensitivity. In addition, to love the country of Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools always reinforce with national seminars, as proof of the growth of sustainable bright nationalism. Several ongoing efforts by collaborating between the dormitory ustad, students, and guidance and counseling teachers in strengthening the character of the students (a sense of family among the residents of the Islamic boarding school) to be able to prevent bullying behavior."

Ustadzah Nucke, one of the guidance and counseling (BK) teachers at the pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik, also gave her opinion about the existence that has been carried out by Islamic boarding schools in overcoming bullying behavior of students, especially the bullying phenomenon which is currently a phenomenon that occurs frequently in several Islamic boarding schools, so some of the things that have been done are:

"The existence of Islamic boarding schools to prevent bullying behavior is by strengthening the role model of us teachers, personal mentoring and Islamic boarding schools forming special BK teachers for Islamic boarding schools and TPPK (Violence Prevention Handling Action) task forces. In developing the character of students who can be trusted, Islamic boarding schools strengthen religious lessons and socialization, the importance of mutual trust between students. Another characteristic that is developed in students is respect through socialization in the form of reinforcement and advice. Then children are invited to reason with questions or questions about a case, they are asked to answer the actions that will be taken if there is a case (positioning the actions that will be taken if there is a case). In addition, developing students are taught a sense of responsibility by inviting children to reflect on themselves or reflect on the intention (purpose) of being at the boarding school, what are their responsibilities when they are at the boarding school, when students leave for the boarding school, then they have a responsibility to their parents. If it is like that, when they act badly, students are invited to reflect, on whether their responsibility to their parents has been fulfilled or not. From here, students will indirectly grow a fair nature without discrimination against other students. Another reinforcement is the growth of sensitivity with students through sharing with senior ustad, then on Fridays sharing with the homeroom teacher. Sharing how life is in the boarding school, and how to embrace fellow friends. Growing a sense of brotherhood is important in students. In addition, the boarding school also always provides examples of the importance of love for the country of Indonesia, through national seminars that collaborate with government agencies directly. We carry out several of the above processes continuously by strengthening the material and practice of manners among students. Because we are a boarding school, good manners will overcome bullying behavior among students.

The above view is in line with that conveyed by another guidance and counseling (BK) teacher, namely Ustadzah Amaliya, who explained in detail about several efforts of Islamic boarding schools in maintaining their existence to prevent bullying behavior of students at the

Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik, through:

"The existence of character education in preventing bullying behavior in students in Islamic boarding schools is by strengthening good examples/role models for students. Prevention is also carried out by strengthening human resources and socialization in Islamic boarding schools in the form of religious characters, starting from students, ustad, BK teachers, Task Force, and student organizations. In addition, BK teachers have the task of providing material to students about the need to become responsible individuals, such as female students guarding the canteen, guarding the inner courtyard, cleaning the office, accompanying the room, tutoring the Koran, etc. And those who carry out these tasks are not just any students, because they must be selected students who get such responsibilities. When they feel trusted, that responsibility is there. Another characteristic is mutual respect, especially in the Darul Ihsan Islamic boarding school, the students come from various regions and even outside the island. So the multicultural conditions of children can no longer be avoided. So that they learn cross-culturally also in the boarding school. Starting from waking up to going to bed in the same environment and the same people, so it is more adaptable (self-adjustment). Another characteristic is justice and sensitivity in every condition, for example in the boarding school environment, such as the rights of students to get food, seen how students who are entrusted with distributing food can provide food according to the rights of each student. The character of love for the homeland is also a priority for the boarding school because the Nasionalism is the fortress of the boarding school, in terms of implementation, the boarding school often holds national seminars that are directly attended by the police and the Indonesian military (TNI). However, it should be noted that all processes cannot run optimally if they are not reinforced with consistent control, because in this way habits (positive culture) will be formed optimally. "

In her interview, Ustadzah Maryam also provided information regarding the existence of pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in preventing bullying behavior among students, namely with several programs as follows:

'Pesantren Darul Ihsan in preventing bullying behavior by strengthening character education existentially. This condition is also strengthened by the caretaker of the Islamic boarding school about the importance of teachers/ustad in providing an implementative example for students and reinforced with an understanding of the material (training, workshops, etc.), and taking a personal approach. Such as exemplary religious character (praying in congregation, praying at night), and fostering a character of mutual respect such as senior students must have a sense of affection for senior students, this condition is also often advised to BK teachers that students must have responsibility, foster a character of responsibility, be fair to fellow friends and be sensitive to the surrounding conditions. In addition, Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School has a sharing program for senior teachers of students and homeroom teachers so that it can foster a sense of brotherhood among students, from here the students also learn about the importance of love for the country of Indonesia. Some of the processes above can be strengthened by strengthening continuously and consistently. Because, no

matter how good the character education program initiated by the Islamic boarding school is, if it is not carried out consistently, it will only be a program."

Based on several results of interviews, observations, and documentation conducted by researchers. So, it can be summarized in general about the existence of character education in preventing bullying behavior at the pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik, through several stages, namely: teachers/ustad strengthen by providing examples/roles to students, the boarding school forms several organizations to overcome bullying such as the existence of special BK teachers for boarding schools and a task force for violence prevention actions (TPPK) by strengthening socialization and implementing practices of character education implemented to students including: religious character, mutual respect amidst the diversity of student backgrounds, responsible character, fair, sensitive to all conditions of the boarding school, strengthening love for the homeland accompanied by existence in strengthening sustainably and consistently.

Obstacles to Character Education in Preventing Bullying Behavior in Pesantren

Every process of the Islamic boarding school program will not be free from obstacles that must be responded to quickly in finding the best solution, as is also the case at the Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik, related to obstacles in implementing character education in preventing bullying behavior of students, Ustad Zaimin as a senior ustad provided the following notes on obstacles:

"Teachers are aware that as humans we can only try, as humans we can only make efforts. And Allah has the right to determine. If there is something not good from the students, and the teacher has tried, we return it to Allah, maybe there is

no guidance. As a faithful human being, stay happy, and realize that this is a test from Allah SWT, the most important thing is to remain steadfast, and continue to guide the students. If measured by human standards, there are already rules and regulations but still violate them, that is an obstacle. However, if seen from another side, this is a test of preaching. This preaching is amar ma'ruf nahi munkar, which is inviting to goodness, but if it is good, don't let it become bad."

A similar statement was also conveyed by Ustad Burhan that the obstacle is the need to increase the implementation of theories that are already widely understood, especially about how to overcome the bullying behavior of students, as conveyed:

"The obstacle is that there are still students who violate the rules in the Islamic boarding school. For example, there are still students who are late for congregational prayers and there are still students who go home from the Islamic boarding school without permission. And there is still a need for gradual practice of theories of mentoring children. In addition, as ustads, if we find other obstacles, we immediately coordinate starting from the Islamic boarding school administrators, dormitories, BK teachers, and the TPPK (Violence Prevention Handling) task force. "

Ustad Zul also made a similar statement that the obstacles to character education in preventing bullying behavior at the Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik include:

"For the obstacles that we still often feel is practicing the theories that we have learned so far. However, we teachers continue to upgrade the best way to provide maximum guidance and service to the students, such as

in the role model and socialization program as the main motto in this pesantren (Islamic boarding school)."

Basically, the occurrence of all obstacles is a normal condition that occurs in the education process. Ustadzah Nucke as a guidance and counseling teacher also explained the obstacles faced, namely:

"There are still students who violate the normal rules, so we as ustads try to provide the best guidance possible so that the students do not commit any more violations. In addition, there are still students who are introverts so the task of the BK teacher is to approach them personally so that the students still feel comfortable in the Islamic boarding school. Well... here we BK teachers sometimes experience obstacles in practicing the theories we learn."

Ustadzah Amalia, as a guidance and counseling teacher at the Islamic boarding school, also provided views on the obstacles to character education in preventing bullying behavior among students at pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) as follows:

"The obstacles we face are more technical so we always coordinate with the team. Such as the obstacle of finding the need for students to receive special assistance. So, the BK teacher will directly call the student and find out the obstacles faced by the student. In addition, other obstacles are more about practicing the knowledge known related to student management, God willing if this is just a matter of time it will be resolved."

Another obstacle was also conveyed by Ustadzah Maryam, regarding the fact that deviant students are still being found but are still under control, so an individual approach is needed, as explained in full as follows:

"There are still one or two people who sometimes deviate, like being naughty, although they can still be controlled, but God willing, the children already understand what can be done together and what can't. What can be done to other friends and what can't."

Based on several findings resulting from interviews, observations, and documentation on the obstacles to character education in preventing bullying behavior of students can be classified as follows: first, the obstacle for teachers is the difficulty of practicing theoretical knowledge that has been obtained in Islamic boarding school life. However, gradually the teachers continue to upgrade. Second, there are students who still violate Islamic boarding school rules, so the ustad must provide an individual approach so that violations can be minimized.

Discussion

Character education, as a solution to strengthen the existence of pesantren in preventing bullying behavior among students at Pondok Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik, can operate effectively. This is supported by data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation, which is reinforced by an in-depth analysis through pattern matching, explanation, time-series analysis, and repeated observations (Yin, 2018b, p. 98, 2018a, p. 56). The analysis yields two subtopics corresponding to the research questions, including:

The existence of character education in preventing bullying behavior in Pesantren

The existence of character education in preventing bullying behavior at the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic Boarding School is a need that must be carried out by every individual. Damri et al revealed some data on the factors causing bullying behavior (Damri et al., 2020; Retnowuni, 2019) are physical differences (senior and

junior), lack of students in the level of emotional regulation, as data (Nocentini et al., 2019; Oktaviani, 2020) recorded that there is a significant influence of bullying behavior in Islamic boarding schools due to emotional factors.

Seeing the conditions above, strengthening character education is a solution that can be implemented in preventing bullying behavior of students in Islamic boarding schools, Wisudayanti et al noted that character education is a need that must be given to children (Wisudayanti & Dewi, 2023), such as; the importance of individuals having a tolerant character (mutual respect) can prevent bullying in educational institutions (Purwanto, 2021; Puspitarini, 2023; Putro, 2019). in line with what Freeman et al expressed that one of the initial foundations that must be given to children is strengthening character education (Freeman, 2014) through fun learning media, and teachers who provide examples (Harmita et al., 2022), because a good character will be able to prevent bullying behavior (Yang, 2020) maximally. Fadilah et al also emphasized that bullying victims will have an impact in the future, starting from difficulty in communication (Fadilah et al., 2023; Nurlelah, 2019; Yuhbaba, 2019), decreased self-esteem, and ongoing intimidation.

The existence of the Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik, in preventing bullying behavior of students through strengthening character education, which is reinforced with several models. First, teachers/ustad in Islamic boarding schools provide good examples/roles to students (Fauzi, 2012). Sanderse et al also provide reinforcement that teachers are role models in every practice carried out by students, so teachers must be able to exemplify admirable character education traits (Sanderse, 2013). Because teachers are individuals who develop professional identities (Timmerman, 2009) and contribute significantly.

Garavelli and Jessica et al also reinforce that the position of teachers in learning is not only to carry out the "transfer of knowledge" (Garavelli et al., 2002). However, teachers have the task of carrying out a "transfer of positive practice" so that students can practice and run sustainably as a good culture (To & Carless, 2016). The role of the principal, school climate, and school culture can strengthen teachers as leaders in providing examples/roles (Rhodes et al., 2011) to students. A condition where the existence of character education must start with teachers with the main goal of being emulated by students (Lukman et al., 2021).

Second, Pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) create a task force for violence prevention measures (TPPK) (Sriyanti et al., 2024), in Islamic boarding schools to prevent bullying behavior among students and guidance and counseling teachers (BK) specifically for students (strengthening socialization) (Pertiwi et al., 2022). Loama et al also noted that guidance and counseling teachers in Islamic boarding schools have an important role in providing guidance (Loama & Basuki, 2024), services, and supervision (Huda & Luailik, 2023) to students in full to be able to prevent bullying behavior among students.

Third, individual mentoring for students, this condition can provide a sense of security and can minimize the bullying behavior of students at the Darul Uihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic boarding school. Azuine and Singh et al reinforce the results of their research, that students who are given maximum mentoring by the school environment (teachers and administrators) will be able to reduce student involvement in bullying behavior (Azuine & Singh, 2019). In line with Holt, Whitted, and Dupper that intensive mentoring can prevent and reduce bullying
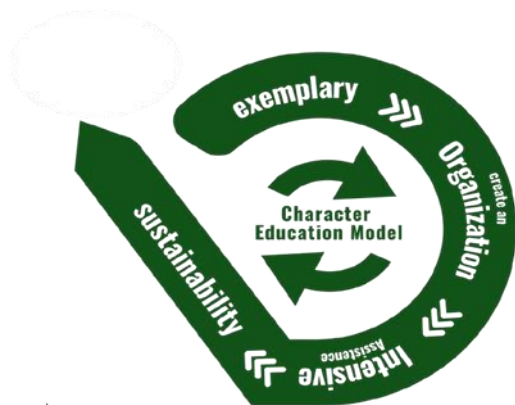
in schools (Holt et al., 2013; Whitted & Dupper, 2005).

Figure 1. Character education implementation model at Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti, Gresik

The three models of character education implementation above are one of the notes for the Darul Ihsan Islamic boarding school to maintain its existence, especially in preventing bullying behavior of students, because bullying that is carried out continuously will have an impact on excessive anxiety, negative tendencies, depression, and even suicide (Sahbani & Yandi, 2023). In addition, Fadilah et al noted that repeated conditions will make students less confident and decrease academic achievement (Fadilah et al., 2023).

In addition to the three character education models above, several existences carried out by the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic boarding school to prevent bullying behavior of students, as follows: first, religious character (Firdaus & Aisyah, 2020), strengthening the physical and spiritual of each individual, through several Islamic boarding school activities, such as the obligation to pray in congregation, dhikr so that it can prevent excessive emotions and the growth of a calm and patient attitude from each individual (Suryadi et al., 2023). In line with what Putra, Falah, and Mulyadi expressed religious character is a character that is definitely implemented in Islamic boarding school education, as exemplified by the kai,

ustad, and the Islamic boarding school environment that was born to instill spiritual peace in each individual (Falah, 2022; Mulyadi, 2018; Putro, 2019).

Second, the character implemented in the Darul Ihsan Islamic boarding school is mutual respect, one of the characteristics that cannot be separated between traditional Islamic educational institutions (Islamic boarding schools) and the diversity of student backgrounds. Anggara et al also noted that Islamic boarding schools are educational institutions that are very consistent in fostering a culture of mutual respect (Anggara et al., 2023), as the values of wasathiyah in Islamic boarding schools (tawazun, tawassuth, and tasamuh) (Ridwan & Mahmudi, 2023) are the basic foundations that must be applied.

Third, the character of responsibility in the Darul Ihsan Islamic boarding school, students are given the habit of carrying out responsibilities, starting with several practices such as student service to guard the canteen, abdi ndalem, cleaning the office, accompanying the room, and tutoring the Koran. Existence in the implementation of the character of responsibility is a positive value that must be instilled in each individual, because of the relationship between individuals and other individuals, the environment, and the surrounding community (Ramadhani et al., 2024). So that students who are accustomed to having a responsible character will not carry out bullying/oppression as proof that the responsibility of fellow human beings (Zakira & Sagita, 2024), is to love each other, not to hurt each other.

Fourth, a fair character that continues to be implemented in students, such as the position of teachers in the process of assisting students between seniors and juniors must not be different in how to handle, love, educate them, love them according to the abilities and needs of each student (Muafiah, 2022; Rahman et al.,

2023). Anderson confirmed that in educational institutions, a fair character must be implemented, especially in every learning process without discrimination (Anderson, 2007) even though they are of different races or skin colors. Fifth, a sensitive/caring character, in the process of developing the character of administrators and ustad in the dormitory, they provide an example by providing services in the form of good communication. Aulia et al emphasized that in developing a caring character, problems can be solved permasalahan (Aulia & Wuryandani, 2019), especially in realizing differences and diversity in the world of education.

Sixth, the character of love for the homeland (nationalism) of the Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik, implements implementations such as national seminars (Suherman et al., 2019; Sulistyaningsih, 2022), which were directly attended by the police and the Indonesian military (TNI). Seeing the importance of strengthening the character of love for the homeland in educational institutions, the learning process should be able to run in an integrative and sustainable manner between the competencies of graduates in each learning and the growth of the spirit (character) of nationalism (Timmerman, 2009; Wahyuni, 2023). Based on the data above, the process of the existence of character education can be seen in Figure 2. Below

Figure 2. the existence of character education (Infinity Character) can prevent bullying behavior in Pesantren (Islamic boarding schools)

In Figure 2 above, it appears that a process cannot run partially, because the character education process will be able to run optimally if supported by a consistent process, this view is also conveyed by Josephson in the theory of character education through 6 pillars (character count), namely: trust, mutual respect, responsibility, justice, sensitivity and nationalism (Josephson, 2002), consistency is needed in every implementation process.

Infinity character (findings in figure 2) is a new option in preventing bullying behavior of students in Islamic boarding schools, as noted in the main findings of this study, namely combining a continuous character education model and mapping the implementation of character in a measurable and clear manner along with maximum consistency (istiqomah). Harger noted that the loss of respect, mutual respect, and the growth of negative culture are the main factors in bullying between students (Harger, 2016),, so educational institutions (school communities) must equip students with good character programs and cultures so that they can

prevent bullying between teachers and students and students to students (Santos, 2014).

Obstacles to Character Education in Preventing Bullying Behavior in Pesantren

The existence of character education carried out by the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic Boarding School does not always run well. However, findings related to obstacles in each implementation are inevitable and must be solved (Ocupa-Cabrera, 2023). As found at the Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik, several obstacles to character education in preventing bullying behavior of students can be classified as follows: first, the obstacle for teachers is the difficulty in practicing theoretical knowledge that has been obtained in Islamic boarding school life. James provides the view that the implementation process based on theoretical knowledge will experience a reduction or addition (innovation) accompanied by the potential for failure and success (James, 2007, p. 13), so that the presence of conditions for teachers who have difficulty practicing theory in implementation is expected to gradually continue to upgrade (Erdyneeva et al., 2016) (knowledge and practice).

Second, the obstacle to character education in preventing bullying behavior at the Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik Islamic Boarding School is that there are students who still violate the rules of the Islamic boarding school, such as not attending congregational prayers at the Islamic boarding school (Hasmayni et al., 2019), as an obligation for students. Wakhid et al., said that the findings of students who violated the rules of the Islamic boarding school were due to the low understanding of students and lack of self-control (each individual) (Burga, 2019; Wakhid et al., 2020), so the solution is for the ustad to provide an individual approach so that violations can be minimized. In addition, an individual approach carried out intensively on students will (Islam & Aziz, 2020; Widayanti, 2020) foster good character and positive culture.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the existence of character education strengthening at Pondok Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik occurs through several stages: first, the model of character education is implemented via role modeling by teachers or pengurus (administrators) of the pesantren, the establishment of a Violence Prevention Task Force (TPPK), and individual mentoring for the students. The character education imparted to the students includes: religious character, mutual respect amid the diverse backgrounds of the students, responsibility, fairness, sensitivity to all conditions within the pesantren, and the strengthening of love for the homeland, all supported by ongoing and consistent reinforcement. Furthermore, findings indicate that the Infinity Character model is chosen to prevent bullying behavior among students at the pesantren. The obstacles to strengthening character education include: First, for the teachers, the challenge lies in effectively applying the theoretical knowledge they have acquired to the realities of life at the pesantren. However, gradually, the teachers continue to upgrade their skills. Second, there are still students who violate the pesantren's regulations, which requires the teachers to provide individual approaches to minimize these violations.

Based on the conclusions above, the theoretical implication of this research is the Infinity Character model, which serves as an effective character education framework to prevent bullying behavior among students at Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik. However, this study has limitations regarding its two research objectives: the existence of character

education strengthening in preventing bullying behavior among students at Pondok Pesantren Darul Ihsan Menganti Gresik, and the obstacles encountered in strengthening character education for this purpose. Therefore, future research should focus on developing the influence and effectiveness of the implementation of the Infinity Character model in preventing bullying behavior among students in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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