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Building Spiritual Defences: Islamic Teachers' Anti-Bullying Strategies at Minhajut Thalibin High School

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Abstract: Safe spaces in education are mandatory. Safe spaces are needed for conduciveness in the implementation of education. Of course, with a safe space, students can engage more effectively in the learning process. Unfortunately, there are still records in the world of education regarding discriminatory behavior, especially bullying behavior. Based on previous research, spiritual intelligence can influence a person's social competence, moral values, and ethics. However, previous studies have not conducted many studies on how Islamic Religious Education teachers' strategies in developing spiritual intelligence to deal with bullying behavior. This study aims to identify strategies carried out by Islamic Religious Education teachers in developing spiritual intelligence to prevent bullying behavior. This study uses a qualitative approach with case studies. The results of this study show that Islamic Religious Education teachers have an important role with their strategies through role models, habituation, and approaching religious values. in strengthening spiritual intelligence to prevent student bullying behavior.

Keywords: bullying behavior; Islamic Religious Education; spiritual intelligence; teaching strategy

Introduction

The concept of a safe space in an educational environment is understood as a foundation that ensures the continuity of a quality learning process. Within the framework of contemporary educational practices, the existence of a space that provides protection for all students is seen as a fundamental, non-negotiable need. Every student has the full right to experience a protected space during their involvement in educational activities. This space is characterized by conditions free from all forms of violence, pressure, or discrimination, and fosters an atmosphere of participation and respect among educational subjects. Understanding the characteristics of a safe space is closely related to the creation of an inclusive and effective environment, a condition that greatly determines the quality of learning (Jatin, 2025). Such inclusivity and effectiveness play a crucial role in helping students navigate the learning process optimally and achieve expected learning outcomes, especially in the context of modern educational developments that demand openness and support for all students.

Education that upholds the principle of inclusivity holds great potential to strengthen the holistic development of students. Learning environments that accommodate diversity can simultaneously encourage academic, social, and emotional growth, providing a solid foundation for a child's holistic development (Budianto, 2023). Inclusive education enables students to experience a learning process that is oriented not only toward absorbing material but also toward strengthening social relationships, developing self-identity, and managing healthy emotional dynamics. However, in practice, it is still

common to see educational institutions that have not fully established safe spaces for all students. This situation highlights the unpreparedness of some schools to address various forms of social pressure that impact learning comfort. When schools are unable to guarantee students' psychological safety, the quality of their participation in the learning process declines, which is evident in various aspects of learning development.

The phenomenon of insecurity in school environments often manifests as discrimination experienced by some students. This discrimination often manifests in subtle or overt ways, and directly impacts individual learning experiences. In many cases, students who experience discriminatory treatment exhibit decreased motivation, loss of self-confidence, and difficulty maintaining focus on learning. This situation demonstrates how social pressures in the school environment can disrupt the continuity of academic development. Recent research findings indicate that discrimination in schools has a serious impact on children's mental health, leading to psychological distress, anxiety, and even depressive symptoms that disrupt their daily lives (Suganda et al., 2024). The mental disorders resulting from experiences of discrimination then resonate with academic performance, making it difficult for students to maintain stable learning outcomes and engage in formal learning processes.

The primary source of discrimination in schools often stems from interactions between students, particularly within peer relationships. In many cases, this form of discrimination manifests as repeated acts of bullying that focus on individuals perceived as weaker. Bullying, as defined in academic studies, is an aggressive act that emerges through a repeated pattern of behavior and is carried out against those in vulnerable positions (Mardhiah et al., 2023). The intensity of these acts not only causes physical harm but also opens up significant emotional vulnerabilities in students. This situation demonstrates that unhealthy social relationships among students can develop into threats to their well-being. When bullying becomes part of the daily dynamics of school life, the safe space that is a prerequisite for healthy learning is damaged, affecting the overall educational atmosphere.

The detrimental effects of bullying have been widely discussed in various studies examining student development. This aggressive behavior causes wounds that extend far beyond the physical realm. Students who experience bullying often exhibit psychological symptoms that disrupt concentration, interpersonal skills, and emotional balance. Research indicates that the mental impact of bullying affects aspects of self-identity, such as feelings of low self-esteem, feelings of being unappreciated, and difficulty building trust in social settings (Amnda et al., 2020). These emotional states ultimately create obstacles in the learning process, making students less courageous in expressing themselves, and decreasing participation in classroom activities. When these experiences persist over the long term, these patterns impact students' development broadly, both in terms of social relationships and academic achievement. A fragile emotional state is an indicator that bullying is not simply misconduct but also a threat that undermines the learning structure.

The psychological effects of bullying create a series of negative experiences that burden students' daily lives. The resulting emotional distress leaves them in a state of prolonged stress, a loss of security, and sadness that erodes their motivation to learn. In various studies, students who are victims of bullying exhibit withdrawal from school activities, feelings of inferiority, and difficulty regulating their emotions when interacting with their social environment (Rohmad et al., 2022). Fear of returning to school often arises as a natural reaction to mounting negative experiences. When schools fail to provide adequate protection, these feelings of threat develop into barriers that further impede students' development. This illustrates the urgency of safe spaces in education, not merely as an abstract concept, but as a prerequisite for supporting students' growth into psychologically healthy and productive learners.

Table 1. Types of Bullying and the Proportion of 15-Year-Old Students Who Experienced It (UNICEF, 2020)

Types of Bullying	Total	Boy	Girl
I was hit or forced around by other students	18%	12,8%	23,1%
Other students took or destroyed my belongings	22%	18,7%	25,2%
I was threatened by another student	14%	10%	18,2%

I was teased by other students	22%	19,4%	25,6%
Other students intentionally excluded me	19%	16,7%	21,4%
Other students spread bad rumors about me	20%	16,4%	24,2%

The table above shows data on the types of bullying in Indonesia and the proportion of 15-year-old students who experience them. Furthermore, according to the 2018 PISA (Public Works and Assessment Program), 41% of Indonesian students experience at least some bullying in a month (OECD, 2019). The JPPI report lists West Java as one of the three provinces with the highest number of cases of violence. In this report, bullying cases accounted for 29% (Mashabi & Prastiwi, 2024). Subang Regency is also a region with a worrying risk of bullying in school environments. Some time ago, a third-grade elementary school student in a sub-district in Subang died after being treated for bullying by a senior (detikJabar, 2024). The bullying cases mentioned above are only known figures. Of course, there are likely many other cases that remain unknown.

Bullying is unjustifiable from any perspective, whether constitutional or religious. This is because it concerns human rights, threatening the victim's dignity and safety. Law Number 35 (concerning Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection), Article 76C states:

"Everyone is prohibited from placing, allowing, committing, ordering, or participating in violence against children."

Article 76C of the Law explicitly prohibits behavior that leads to violence against children, including bullying. Furthermore, bullying is completely unacceptable in Islam. This is as stated in the following verse:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ اَمَنُوْا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰٓ اَنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَآءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَآءٍ عَسَىٰٓ اَنْ يَّكُنَّ

خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوْا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوْا بِالْاَلْقَابِۖ بِئْسَ الِاسْمُ الْفُسُوْقُ بَعْدَ الْاِيْمَانِۚ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَاُولَٰٓئِكَ

هُمُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ⑪

Meaning: "O you who believe, let not a people mock another people (because) perhaps they (who are mocked) are better than them (who mock) and let not women (mockery) other women (because) perhaps women (who are mocked) are better than women (who mock). Do not reproach one another and call one another by bad nicknames. The worst nicknames are (the names) of the wicked after they have believed. And whoever does not repent, those are the wrongdoers." (Q.S. Al-Hujarat, 49:11)

Bullying behavior is usually influenced by both external and internal factors. External factors typically include a supportive social environment. Internal factors can include emotional control, empathy, and spiritual values. This finding aligns with the opinion of (Theodore & Sudarji, 2020), which states that bullying among students is influenced by parenting styles, the school environment, self-esteem, and group norms.

Bullying behavior can negatively impact student development. Bullying can lead to physical and psychological health problems. It can also reduce learning motivation and concentration, leading to anxiety and depression (Lestari & Kowi, 2024). The impact of bullying on victims can also cause trauma, both physical and psychological (Riskinanti & Buntaran, 2017). Given the significant negative impact of bullying on students, this situation demands preventive measures. These measures can include strengthening students' spirituality.

Islamic Religious Education plays a crucial role in character formation, aligning with Islamic values and teachings. One aspect that needs to be developed through PAI is spiritual intelligence, a form of intelligence that encompasses the meaning of life and God's presence in everyday life. Spiritual intelligence can foster self-awareness, empathy, and mutual respect. Therefore, this is relevant for preventing bullying behavior in students.

Previous researchers have frequently examined spiritual intelligence and bullying behavior. Some relevant studies that can serve as a basis for this study include:

1) The Effect of Spiritual Intelligence, Emotion, and Social Competence to the Leadership Competence (Siswanti et al., 2018). The results of this study indicate that spiritual intelligence has a direct influence on social competence.
2) Enhancing Religious Education through Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence (Andrei, 2023). This research highlights the relationship between spiritual and emotional intelligence, which can shape moral and ethical values in students.
3) Identifikasi Perilaku Bullying di Sekolah (Sebuah Upaya Preventif) (Nur et al., 2022). This study highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention. These prevention efforts are implemented through various strategies, such as parental involvement, outreach, poster creation, educational film screenings, and the role of guidance and counseling teachers.

Based on previous research, spiritual intelligence can influence an individual's social competence, moral values, and ethics. This can lead to improved tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect. However, few previous studies have examined Islamic Religious Education teachers' strategies for developing spiritual intelligence to address bullying.

Therefore, this study aims to identify strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education teachers in developing spiritual intelligence to prevent bullying. This research is expected to fill a gap in previous research, particularly in exploring preventive measures against bullying. This study is novel in identifying preventive measures against bullying using Islamic Religious Education teachers' strategies through the development of spiritual intelligence.

Method

This research is based on a qualitative approach grounded in the philosophy of postpositivism, a framework that views social reality as a complex, dynamic, and contextual entity. This approach positions the researcher as the central instrument, establishing closeness with natural objects, allowing understanding to be gained through direct engagement. The data collection technique employed relies on triangulation, which assesses information from various sources and techniques to obtain data that is robust in terms of validity. Data analysis proceeds inductively, flowing from field findings to patterns of meaning constructed by the researcher. The results of qualitative research are not intended for statistical generalization, but rather to capture the potential, problems, and uniqueness of the objects studied. This framework enables researchers to construct meaning from events, examine social interactions, maintain data validity, and explore hypotheses that arise from observed phenomena in depth (Sugiyono, 2017).

The postpositivist approach in this research emphasizes the importance of understanding reality not as a singular entity, but as a construct shaped by the subject's experiences and social context. This framework allows researchers to explore emerging phenomena in the field without rigid categorical boundaries. Researchers move along the dynamics of empirical facts that emerge during the research process, while maintaining reflexivity to protect interpretations from personal bias. In qualitative research, the researcher's presence is not merely as an observer but also as a process manager, regulating the rhythm of interactions, determining the focus of in-depth research, and ensuring the connection between data and meaning. The natural character of the research object allows for the capture of participants' natural expressions, so that each data obtained is not shaped by situational pressures but rather flows through naturally established relationships. Thus, the basic framework of this research illustrates a process that merges understanding, interaction, and interpretation.

The researcher's position as the primary instrument demonstrates how personal involvement is inherent in qualitative research. In this process, the researcher not only collects data but also experiences the social context in which it develops. The concept of the human instrument allows the researcher to read the implicit meanings of conversations, capture nonverbal expressions, and understand the emotional dynamics of participants. The researcher's adaptive capacity also determines the quality of the data obtained, as closeness to the participants influences the extent to which authentic information can be conveyed. An open attitude, thorough observation, and sensitivity to social nuances are crucial elements in maintaining the validity of the process. By positioning the researcher as an instrument, this research combines interaction, reflection, and interpretation, so that the resulting data is not merely descriptive, but rich in meaning and able to depict the real lives of participants in the fullness of their experiences.

Data collection was conducted using triangulation techniques, which ensure that information from the field is not dependent on a single source. Triangulation helps increase credibility by checking the consistency of data through observation, interviews, and documentation. Each technique fills in gaps in understanding that the others cannot. Observation provides a picture of actual behavior in its natural context, interviews explore subjective experiences, and documentation provides written evidence that strengthens emerging findings. Through triangulation, relationships between data can be identified, thus strengthening the construction of meaning and avoiding potential perceptual bias. This approach aligns with the characteristics of qualitative research, which emphasizes caution in obtaining findings, especially when research focuses on value-laden educational practices and social interactions. Ultimately, triangulation strengthens the research's position by providing methodologically sound evidence.

This research chose a case study approach, a form of in-depth research that focuses on a single context, unit, or phenomenon in detail. Case studies allow researchers to understand phenomena holistically, including the internal dynamics, interactions, and behavioral patterns that emerge within a specific context. The selection of the case study was based on its suitability for the research objective, which was to explore the concrete practices of Islamic Religious Education teachers' strategies for developing spiritual intelligence as a means of preventing bullying. Each teacher's actions are understood within the interwoven context of the school, students' social relationships, and the institutional culture surrounding the practice. This approach allows for detailed depictions that are difficult to achieve with other methods. Case studies not only document events but also map the processes that occur, providing an opportunity to capture the hidden meanings in everyday interactions.

The data sources for this study were Islamic Religious Education teachers at Minhajut Thalibin Junior High School (SMPS) as the primary participants, along with supporting documents relevant to the research objectives. Islamic Religious Education teachers were chosen as the primary sources because they occupy a strategic position in guiding students' spiritual development and are closely connected to the dynamics of student behavior. Their presence in the classroom and daily interactions are crucial for understanding how spiritual value strengthening strategies are implemented. Supporting documents such as school records, activity archives, and internal policy records enrich the data with contextual information that cannot be obtained through direct interaction. The combination of these two data sources provides a comprehensive perspective on the phenomenon under study, allowing for a deeper understanding of teacher strategies and their impact on bullying prevention.

Data collection was conducted through three techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Through observation, researchers directly witnessed interactions within the school environment, including how teachers manage classes, provide guidance, and foster an atmosphere conducive to spiritual development. Interviews were conducted to capture teachers' experiences, perspectives, and reflections on their teaching practices. Documentation served as supplementary material, providing supporting evidence for the observations and interviews. These three techniques flowed in a complementary manner, providing space to identify alignments and discrepancies in information, allowing for a solid foundation in understanding the phenomenon. Through this series of techniques, the collected data contained rich detail and comprehensively captured the educators' experiences.

Data analysis was conducted using a model (M.B. & Huberman, 1994) consisting of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involves selecting, rearranging, and focusing information to align with the research objectives. This process helps clarify patterns emerging from the field data. Data presentation is then carried out by organizing the findings into a structure that allows for systematic interpretation of meaning. This presentation places the data within a specific theme or context to clearly demonstrate the relationships between the findings. Conclusion drawing is an interpretive process that summarizes the meaning of the entire data set, providing an overview of the phenomenon being studied while simultaneously opening up space for the formation of hypotheses derived from the findings.

The analysis process in Miles & Huberman's model occurs continuously throughout the research, not waiting until all data is collected. Each stage is interconnected, forming a continuous cycle from the beginning to the end of the study. Data reduction can occur repeatedly as researchers discover new focuses, while data presentation provides a space for rereading the information that has been generated. Conclusions are also tentative, evolving as data accumulates. This process demonstrates that qualitative analysis is not a linear process, but rather a reflective process integrated with data

collection activities. This approach provides flexibility and analytical depth, allowing for careful and unhurried discovery of the meaning of the phenomena being studied.

Through this series of methods, this study seeks to capture a concrete portrait of Islamic Religious Education teachers' strategies for strengthening spiritual intelligence as a basis for preventing bullying behavior. The combination of observation, interviews, documentation, and gradual analysis makes this study rich in empirical detail and contextual meaning. The qualitative nature of the study, which allows for in-depth interpretation, helps to provide a descriptive and analytical understanding of school dynamics. The research findings are expected to contribute to the development of educational practices that are more sensitive to spiritual values and the role of teachers in creating a safe learning environment. In this way, the research goes beyond describing phenomena to demonstrating how meaning is constructed through vibrant social interactions within educational spaces.

This research is structured based on a theoretical framework composed of three layers: grand theory, middle theory, and applied theory. These three frameworks are used complementary to explain the relationship between Islamic Religious Education teacher strategies, strengthening spiritual intelligence, and preventing bullying behavior. The first layer is at the grand theory level, referring to the theory of moral development (Kohlberg, 1981). In his thinking, moral development is not limited to compliance with external rules, but is rooted in an individual's ability to weigh actions based on universal ethical principles. Morality develops when a person is able to use internal reasoning to understand the values of goodness, justice, and empathy. This framework is closely related to the concept of spiritual intelligence in the research because it shows how internal moral values influence self-control and students' ability to understand the impact of social behavior on others. A mature moral orientation is expected to be the foundation that motivates students to refrain from bullying and to form more humane social relationships.

At the middle theoretical level, this study utilizes the theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1979), which positions adolescence as a crucial phase in identity formation. Erikson explains that adolescents are in a dynamic search for values, beliefs, life goals, and self-orientation. This phase is known as identity versus role confusion, a period when individuals confront fundamental questions about who they are and how they position themselves within the social sphere. A healthily formed identity will foster fidelity, a commitment to values and the ability to build positive relationships. Conversely, failure to find one's identity leads to role confusion and opens the door to deviant behavior, including aggression toward peers. This framework makes spiritual intelligence relevant, as the ability for self-reflection, value orientation, and a deep sense of meaning in life are essential foundations for the development of a stable and healthy identity.

The applied theory level in this study utilizes Muhaimin & Mujib's (1993) theory on Islamic education strategies and (Zohar, 2012). theory of spiritual intelligence. Muhaimin and Mujib view learning strategies in Islamic education as a systematic effort that includes direct instruction, role modeling, habituation, and the creation of a learning environment that fosters moral values. This strategy provides practical direction for Islamic Religious Education teachers in strengthening students' spiritual values through daily interactions and classroom management. Meanwhile, Zohar and Marshall suggest that spiritual intelligence is reflected through nine indicators: flexibility, high awareness, the ability to interpret suffering, the ability to transcend pain, inspiration of values and vision, reluctance to hurt, the tendency to see connections between phenomena, a deep curiosity about meaning, and the ability to think independently. All of these indicators are important instruments for understanding student behavior when faced with social pressure, conflict, or situations that have the potential to give rise to bullying. Spiritual intelligence offers a framework for comprehensively understanding students' motives, emotions, and orientations within an educational context.

The integration of these three theories builds a solid conceptual foundation for this research. Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral development provides a basis for the process of ethical reasoning formation within individuals. Erikson's (1994) theory of psychosocial development explains how identity is formed and regulates students' social behavior. The theories of Muhaimin & Mujib (1993) and Zohar & Marshall (2000) provide an operational overview of how Islamic education strategies and spiritual intelligence work in learning practices. This unified theoretical framework demonstrates that strengthening spiritual intelligence through Islamic Religious Education teacher strategies has strong relevance as an approach to preventing bullying behavior, as all of them pivot on the formation of values, moral integrity, and a healthy self-identity as the basis for humane social relationships.

Results and Discussion

Understanding Spiritual Intelligence
The Islamic Religious Education teacher's interpretation of spiritual intelligence is rooted in the understanding that this ability is part of the process of recognizing one's complete presence, understanding the direction of life, and reading the hidden meaning behind everyday experiences. Islamic Religious Education teachers view this intelligence as an inner power that helps a person recognize the deepest structure of their feelings, motivations, and life goals. This interpretation suggests that spiritual intelligence is not merely an abstract concept, but rather a potential that resides within and directs a person toward reflective sensitivity. In the perspective of Islamic Religious Education teachers, spiritual intelligence is related to an individual's ability to place personal experiences within a broader narrative flow, which includes relationships with values, fellow human beings, and the order of reality that is believed to provide ethical and moral direction for life.

This understanding aligns with Khoiri's (2022) definition of spiritual intelligence, which describes it as a natural intelligence present from birth. This intelligence is considered an inner resource that enables a person to navigate life with a full awareness of meaning, while simultaneously opening up space for a more sensitive listening to the voice of conscience. According to this view, spiritual intelligence enables a person to navigate life's events without losing their sense of self-worth. The presence of this intelligence provides a sense of direction that prevents individuals from becoming trapped in a sense of emptiness, as they understand that life has a foundation of values that guide every step. Thus, spiritual intelligence functions as an inner light that maintains the continuity of meaning in the human journey (Khoiri, 2022).

Zohar and Marshall, as presented in Ramadhani and Khusnul Khotimah (2023), provide an explanation that positions spiritual intelligence as the ability to address issues related to the values and meaning of life. This concept views spiritual intelligence as an internal tool that helps a person place their behavior, decisions, and life dynamics within a broader framework of understanding. This ability not only guides a person to weigh their actions but also provides an assessment of the extent to which their lifestyle has a deeper meaning compared to other choices they might make. This approach makes spiritual intelligence a foundation that helps individuals connect themselves to a larger value structure, enabling them to understand their position and responsibilities within a moral and social context (Ramadhani & Khotimah, 2023).

Zohar and Marshall's emphasis demonstrates that spiritual intelligence is closely related to a person's ability to build a connection with the highest meaning, which is considered a guide for life. In this understanding, spiritual intelligence directs individuals to view life not merely as a series of mechanical activities, but as a process containing profound values. This ability enables humans to formulate a life orientation that is inseparable from ongoing self-reflection. By connecting actions with values, a person finds a more stable structure of goals. Spiritual intelligence, in this context, becomes an inner navigation system that enables individuals to be more mature, wiser, and calmer in facing various life issues, including existential questions about the direction and purpose of their existence.

Meanwhile, Aini et al. (2023) explain that spiritual intelligence is a person's ability to display behavior full of wisdom, compassion, and inner calm in various situations. This definition shows that spiritual intelligence is not only understood as a theoretical concept, but also manifested through behavioral qualities. Individuals who possess spiritual intelligence tend to express both outer and inner calm, which is reflected in their ability to respond to situations with attitudes that align with human values. This perspective emphasizes the behavioral dimension, indicating that spiritual intelligence is not merely a cognitive or emotional ability, but rather a harmony between thoughts, feelings, and actions guided by moral awareness and a gentle heart (Aini et al., 2023).

The explanation provided by Aini et al. opens up the understanding that spiritual intelligence functions as a foundation that maintains human integrity in the face of change and life's pressures. In any situation, individuals with spiritual intelligence strive to maintain inner peace, so they are not easily shaken. This inner stability does not come suddenly; it develops through a process of reflection, experience, and internalizing believed values. Spiritual intelligence shapes a character that is not emotionally reactive, but rather wisely responsive. This makes spiritual intelligence a crucial asset for developing a broad perspective and relevant actions when facing complex social dynamics, particularly in today's educational and social environments.

In the context of teaching, Islamic Religious Education teachers use this understanding of spiritual intelligence as a foundation to help students realize that the meaning of life is inseparable from personal development. By placing spiritual intelligence within the educational space, Islamic Religious Education teachers strive to facilitate the process of affirming students' identity through reflective activities tied to universal values. Teachers strive to present learning that emphasizes not only cognitive knowledge but also provides opportunities for students to develop relationships with inner experiences that encourage the growth of meaningful attitudes. This process demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education learning not only shapes religious understanding but also touches on the deepest dimensions that influence human ethics and behavior in everyday life.

The application of the concept of spiritual intelligence in learning also provides space for students to see themselves as subjects with the internal ability to understand and organize life experiences. Islamic Religious Education teachers position this intelligence as a gateway to mature self-awareness, enabling students to build harmonious relationships with themselves and their environment. Spiritual intelligence is not interpreted as a dogmatic ability, but rather as a reflective potential that makes humans more sensitive to moral messages in their lives. In this way, religious learning becomes a space that not only provides textual knowledge but also helps students develop a more personal and meaningful framework of values in social life.

The meaning of spiritual intelligence is also evident in how Islamic Religious Education teachers understand that human life always moves within a circle of wisdom. This intelligence is interpreted as a person's ability to interpret life experiences with rational and emotional depth. From this perspective, humans are seen not only as creatures requiring answers to logical questions, but also as entities longing for inner wholeness. Islamic Religious Education teachers view the spiritual journey as a foundation that enables one to connect the moral, intellectual, and affective dimensions. This process fosters a humane attitude that can be relied upon in various situations, especially when someone is faced with value dilemmas that require mature thought and a gentle heart.

This overall interpretation demonstrates that spiritual intelligence for Islamic Religious Education teachers is not a separate concept from life, but rather a foundation that animates the process of human character formation. The definitions from Khoiri (2022), Zohar & Marshall in Ramadhani & Khusnul Khotimah (2023), and Aini et al. (2023) complement and enrich the understanding that spiritual intelligence touches the realms of meaning, values, behavior, and inner peace. It encompasses the awareness to listen to one's conscience, the ability to understand the structure of meaning, and the skills to maintain one's integrity. In an educational context, this understanding helps Islamic Religious Education teachers create learning spaces that foster individuals capable of celebrating meaning, maintaining wisdom, and facing life with a stable and profound soul.

Islamic Religious Education Learning Activities

Islamic Religious Education learning activities generally begin with the recitation of the Qur'an, or tadarus, as an opening to the learning atmosphere. This practice is understood as a way to bring inner peace and establish an initial connection between students and the religious values that underlie learning. This initial momentum is used by teachers to set the classroom atmosphere so that all attention is focused on the meaningful learning process. The recitation of holy verses is not merely intended as a ceremonial activity, but as a recurring pattern for forming a spiritual habitus, so that students are accustomed to entering the learning space with a more focused mental readiness. This context demonstrates that tadarus activities are an integral part of the Islamic Religious Education pedagogical structure, connecting ritual aspects with intellectual processes, so that students understand that religious learning does not stand alone but rather exists as a total experience that touches reason, feeling, and inner awareness.

Following the tadarus (recitation of the Quran), the material is delivered using an approach that emphasizes exemplary stories. Islamic Religious Education teachers insert narratives about prophets or figures of integrity to provide concrete illustrations of the values being studied. This strategy helps students grasp the meaning of the teachings through events close to human experience. These stories create an imaginative space that makes it easier for students to connect moral messages to real-life situations, so the material doesn't remain abstract concepts. Thus, learning takes place more communicatively, as exemplary narratives influence both emotional and cognitive reasoning processes. This approach demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education teachers not only convey

material verbally but also weave stories into pedagogical tools that deepen understanding and build stable moral sensitivity in students.

At the closing of the activity, teachers typically invite students to engage in self-reflection. This reflective practice provides a space for students to evaluate their behavior and attitudes during the learning process and in their daily lives. Muhasabah serves as a process of calming themselves after a series of material presentations, while also strengthening personal awareness of the values they have learned. This activity guides students to understand that religious learning is not merely theoretical but directly related to how they view themselves and their surroundings. Through muhasabah, students are invited to become aware of inner dimensions that have previously been overlooked. This reflective approach demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education teachers create space for gentle and profound spiritual experiences, allowing Islamic Religious Education values to penetrate an internal consciousness that is not always accessible through concept-based teaching alone. (Fadhillah & Alfurqan, 2024) emphasized that Islamic Religious Education teachers hold the position of educators tasked with consistently instilling Islamic values. This role includes serving as advisors and role models in efforts to address bullying in schools. Islamic Religious Education teachers are seen as possessing moral capacity that significantly influences the formation of student attitudes, particularly in situations requiring ethical guidance. In this context, teachers not only provide instructions but also demonstrate attitudes that students can emulate in dealing with conflict. The study highlighted that the presence of teachers as role models significantly determines the classroom atmosphere, as students see the connection between religious values and concrete actions through their teachers' behavior. This role serves as a bridge connecting theory and practice, thus resulting in character transformation. (Marwa & Wahyuni, 2024) also stated that Islamic Religious Education teachers are at the forefront of shaping students' character and positive behavior towards others. This perspective positions Islamic Religious Education teachers not merely as transmitters of subject matter but as moral guides directly related to students' social development. In this view, Islamic Religious Education teachers operate as central figures guiding students in understanding how religious values should be embodied in interpersonal relationships. This role requires teachers to develop social sensitivity while simultaneously modeling polite and responsible interactions. Through daily practice, Islamic Religious Education teachers demonstrate relevant behaviors for students who are developing their moral identities. Their presence provides clear direction in fostering positive behaviors that can be embedded in the long term.

Reinforcing Islamic Religious Education values through teacher role models contributes to a more conducive classroom atmosphere. Students become more responsive to the values of politeness, order, and empathy because they see a direct connection between Islamic Religious Education teachings and everyday practice. This condition arises not only from the material presented, but also from the consistency of teacher interaction patterns. A stable classroom atmosphere enables students to feel safe and learn without pressure. This atmosphere opens up broader opportunities for them to process spiritual and social experiences in a healthy manner. This stability creates an environment that encourages mutual respect, allowing learning to proceed with a more structured flow and fostering emotional comfort for all participants.

The effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education learning activities is reflected in the increased enthusiasm of students throughout the learning process. They tend to be more enthusiastic about participating in religious recitation (tadarus), listening to exemplary stories, and engaging in self-reflection sessions, which foster stronger self-awareness. This enthusiasm demonstrates that integratively designed religious learning has a positive influence on students' intrinsic motivation. The classroom atmosphere created by Islamic Religious Education teachers provides a sense of psychological safety, allowing students to express their thoughts and feelings without inhibition. This experience demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education plays a role in strengthening students' emotional resilience, particularly when they face social pressures or classroom dynamics that are not always easy to handle.

The sense of calm that emerges during learning is an indicator that the Islamic Religious Education approach has a therapeutic dimension. The recitation of the Quran opens the door for students to experience inner peace, while exemplary stories provide clear moral guidance. *Muhasabah* (reflection) transforms these experiences into a more mature personal awareness. This entire series creates a stable emotional structure in students. They not only understand religious values but also experience them as an inner experience that helps organize their feelings and thoughts. This condition affects the overall

class dynamic, as individual calmness leads to gentler social interactions. The resulting atmosphere makes the learning process a mutually supportive experience, not simply an academic obligation.

Conducive learning results in tangible changes in students' social attitudes. Politeness and empathy become more evident in the way they communicate and interact. These changes indicate that Islamic Religious Education values are not only cognitively accepted but also beginning to be internalized. Students develop sensitivity to the feelings of others and understand the importance of maintaining harmonious social relationships. Instilling values through learning enables them to see the impact of their actions on their peers, strengthening their ability to live ethically together. This transformation occurs through a slow but steady process, supported by the consistency of Islamic Religious Education teachers in presenting values concretely.

Through this series of activities, conflicts between students have been shown to decrease. Strengthening religious values, teacher role models, and cultivating self-reflection encourage students to understand the limits of acceptable behavior. They learn to recognize the consequences of actions inconsistent with Islamic Religious Education values. This awareness leads to calmer classroom dynamics and easier dialogue in resolving differences of opinion. The reduction in conflict demonstrates that comprehensive Islamic Religious Education learning has a significant social impact. Islamic Religious Education teachers play a crucial role not only in transmitting religious knowledge but also in fostering a healthy social environment for students. This process demonstrates how Islamic Religious Education creates a space that sustainably restores, educates, and refines students' character.

Efforts to Prevent Bullying Behavior Through Spiritual Intelligence

The school designed an anti-bullying program in response to bullying cases that had previously occurred within the educational environment. This program was intended as a systematic effort to reduce the potential for aggressive behavior between students. This step was supported by the provision of a consultation room that students could use when experiencing emotional difficulties or social pressure. Subject teachers collaborated with guidance and counseling teachers to conduct behavior mapping and ensure each student received adequate attention. Regular monitoring was conducted to assess psychosocial dynamics in the classroom and minimize opportunities for behavior that could lead to bullying. Synergy among school personnel was part of a collective effort to provide a safe space for students, including through early intervention aimed at behaviors deemed risky to the school's social climate.

The implementation of the anti-bullying program is also integrated with an approach that emphasizes strengthening spiritual intelligence as a foundation for prevention. Internalization of spiritual values is positioned as a process of instilling moral principles that can be embedded in students' inner consciousness. This process encourages students to recognize actions that bring goodness and behaviors that cause social harm. Teachers guide students in understanding the values of courtesy, empathy, and how to treat others with respect. This approach involves not only reading religious texts but also cultivating behaviors aligned with spiritual values. Through this iterative learning process, students are given space to develop moral sensitivity and draw meaning from every action they take, both in classroom interactions and in broader social relationships.

The concept of internalizing these values also involves encouraging students to avoid behaviors that could potentially trigger conflict between students. Teachers provide an understanding that actions that offend peers can escalate into tensions that disrupt the classroom atmosphere. This effort relies on character building, which not only teaches what is considered good and bad but also provides an understanding of the emotional consequences of each action. Students are encouraged to review their daily interaction patterns, enabling them to recognize how small behaviors can have a significant impact on social relationships. This process helps students develop their reflective abilities regarding friendship dynamics and guides them in utilising spiritual intelligence to foster harmonious relationships.

The views made by (Ramadhani & Khotimah, 2023) emphasizes that spiritual intelligence, from an Islamic perspective, is intertwined with the concept of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar. This explanation highlights the importance of maintaining a balanced relationship between humans and their God, as well as between humans and their fellow humans. Understanding this concept opens up opportunities for students to recognise that strengthening spiritual intelligence is not only related to aspects of worship but also extends into the realm of social ethics. Amar ma'ruf serves as the foundation for actions that bring benefit, while nahi munkar encourages refraining from behavior that could harm others. The integration of these concepts into learning provides a sustainable moral direction and guides students in

understanding the values of social civility.

The explanation by (Elfiky, 2019) explains that Islamic spiritual intelligence serves as a guide for individuals to act justly and avoid any actions that could harm others. This understanding reinforces the role of spiritual intelligence as a self-control mechanism that operates in the affective domain. The value of justice developed through spiritual intelligence provides students with an internal tool to weigh each action before taking it. This spiritual drive fosters a habit of cautious thinking about the possibility of aggressive or intimidating behavior. With this understanding, students can see that actions that harm others not only impact social relationships but also disrupt the inner harmony that is part of the spiritual values they are learning.

In the context of education, spiritual intelligence is understood as an aspect that forms the foundation for the formation of moral identity. Strengthening these values not only leads to the ability to cognitively understand the concepts of good and bad, but also to the process of cultivating inner qualities that underlie behavior. Traits such as honesty, sincerity, and empathy are considered essential elements in encouraging students to view others as fellow human beings who deserve respect. Spiritual intelligence helps students recognize the presence of a softer side within themselves and develop sensitivity to the suffering or discomfort of others. From these experiences, an awareness grows that every action carries a moral dimension that deserves deep consideration.

The process of learning about spiritual intelligence also lays the groundwork for developing a strong inner spirit in students. This spirit emerges when students understand that spiritual values serve not only as rules but as guidelines that provide direction in life. When students understand these values as growing from an inner consciousness, they have a more stable motivation to maintain their behavior. This kind of learning experience instills a sense of personal responsibility that helps them make the best decisions in social interactions. The formation of this spirit is fostered through intense and consistent learning, thus becoming part of the process of developing a deep moral identity.

The moral identity that continues to be developed through spiritual intelligence is also closely related to the formation of empathy. Empathy is a crucial indicator that helps students understand the circumstances of others, thereby reducing the likelihood of demeaning or intimidating behavior. Spiritual intelligence enables students to understand and empathise with the emotional experiences of others, as well as navigate social situations more effectively. This ability helps strengthen healthy social relationships and minimize the risk of tension. Within this framework, empathy is viewed not simply as an emotional reaction, but as a moral skill rooted in spiritual awareness. This is what makes it an effective tool for preventing bullying.

Strengthening spiritual intelligence through learning and practice impacts various aspects of students' lives, including developing interaction patterns that do not offend or demean others. When students understand that spirituality drives people toward just action, they better understand the limits of behavior that can negatively impact others. This learning is not merely verbal but is reinforced through direct experience, both through observing teacher behavior and through interactions between students. Student involvement in this process creates a space that allows spiritual values to become part of everyday life.

Throughout this entire process, spiritual intelligence makes a significant contribution to preventing bullying behavior in schools. School-run anti-bullying programs are more effective when students possess a moral understanding formed within themselves. Spiritual intelligence serves as a foundation that strengthens the internal drive to treat others with respect and avoid harmful actions. In this way, learning focuses not only on providing rules but also on developing an inner awareness that influences students' long-term social behavior. This perspective demonstrates that bullying prevention requires an approach that touches the inner structure of students, so that every action they take is born from a mature moral understanding and rooted in spiritual values.

Challenges and Strategies in Suppressing Bullying Through Strengthening Spiritual Intelligence
Discussions on efforts to suppress bullying behavior in educational settings consistently confront complex dynamics. This phenomenon not only reflects interpersonal relationships but also demonstrates how the educational process continues to grapple with various psychological and social aspects of students. These challenges emerge in the form of low interest among some students in fully participating in learning, including participating in anti-bullying activities planned by the school. Unfavorable social environments and various environmental distractions also weaken the effectiveness

of the programs. Many students experience peer pressure or exposure to negative values, which weakens behavioral regulation. At the same time, the relatively limited learning time in schools forces teachers to employ more creative strategies to instill spiritual values and social ethics.

Islamic Religious Education teachers play a strategic role in strengthening students' spiritual intelligence as a foundation for behavioral control. This strengthening is realized through the implementation of strategies centered on role models, the instilling of values, and an approach that places divinity as the primary orientation. Modeling becomes a crucial instrument when teachers present daily behaviors that can serve as moral references for students. This pattern does not occur solely verbally, but rather through consistent attitudes that can be directly observed by students. Habituation is achieved by instilling positive routines, both in social interactions and in worship, so that students have the space to gradually internalize values. Each learning step is directed toward developing a spiritual awareness that links social behavior with a transcendental relationship with God, so that students view every action as part of their moral responsibility.

The spiritual approach implemented by teachers also provides space for students to develop reflective habits in viewing themselves and their environment. This strategy is not simply a moral instillation, but a process that invites students to understand the meaning of actions through the perspective of faith. Teachers develop interaction patterns that simultaneously address affective, cognitive, and spiritual aspects, allowing students to see the connection between social behavior and the principles of their beliefs. Teachers direct learning toward mental readiness to face various situations that have the potential to give rise to conflict. The instillation of these values strengthens students' capacity to manage emotions, build empathy, and develop a self-identity aligned with Islamic values. At this point, spiritual intelligence is not merely an abstract concept, but a foundation that encourages the formation of wiser behavior amidst social pressures.

The primary strength of the spiritual intelligence strengthening strategy is seen in the teacher's ability to instill moral sensitivity connected to religious teachings. By presenting concrete examples and structured practices, students are guided to recognize the meaning of goodness as something that grows from spiritual awareness, not simply adherence to formal rules. The values of worship, respect for others, and self-control are positioned as part of a moral identity that needs to be practiced daily. Thus, students not only understand spiritual concepts theoretically but also experience a process of internalizing values that gradually shape their character. This strategy strengthens students' ability to assess social situations more maturely and avoid harmful behavior, including bullying, which often occurs in adolescent social interactions.

Efforts to build an educational environment free from bullying require the support of a positive school culture. A healthy ecosystem at the classroom and institutional level helps reinforce the values taught through spiritual learning. The presence of a school culture that supports harmonious interactions creates a sense of psychological safety for students, which enhances the meaningfulness of learning. (Rosen et al., 2017) emphasize that creating a positive school climate requires collaboration between all stakeholders involved in educational activities. This collaboration includes teachers, administrative staff, counselors, and school management, given that bullying prevention is a collective effort. The positive culture that is built provides space for students to recognize that social good is not merely discourse, but part of the identity of the learning community.

Collaboration between stakeholders is a crucial and integral component in addressing bullying. (Mardhiah et al., 2023) explain that addressing bullying requires the involvement of families, schools, and health workers as a complementary unit. In the context of strengthening spiritual intelligence, the role of the family is the initial foundation that supports the values instilled in schools. A family environment that consistently provides role models will strengthen the internalization of values in the classroom. Health workers play a role in providing psychological perspectives and monitoring the mental state of students who may experience stress due to social interactions. These three elements form a circle of support that helps students develop personal and spiritual capacities to face various social challenges, including negative peer pressure.

Synergy between stakeholders provides a strong foundation for students to develop behaviors aligned with spiritual intelligence. Values instilled through school learning strategies are strengthened when supported by a conducive family and environmental context. Consistently fostering spiritual empowerment creates space for students to develop empathy, self-awareness, and moral sensitivity, which are key pillars in preventing bullying. Thus, efforts to suppress bullying extend beyond the

technical aspects of school programs to a more fundamental level, namely the development of a stable spiritual character. This empowerment process serves as a bridge connecting religious values, social experiences, and adolescent developmental needs, enabling students to grow in a safer, more respectful, and spiritually nuanced environment that strengthens their moral journey.

Conclusion

The overall discussion on preventing bullying behavior through strengthening spiritual intelligence demonstrates that this process requires comprehensive attention to students' spiritual development, social habits, and learning environment. Challenges such as low motivation, unhealthy social dynamics, and limited time at school often hinder the development of a more mature moral awareness. In this context, Islamic Religious Education teachers emerge as key figures who not only deliver teaching materials but also drive change through real-life role models, foster positive behavior, and instill religious values that can serve as a moral compass for students in understanding the meaning of social interaction.

The approach taken by Islamic Religious Education teachers demonstrates that spiritual intelligence is not formed through theoretical explanations alone, but through emotional experiences, reflective practice, and an awareness of connecting daily behavior to broader ethical values. These efforts are reinforced by the creation of a positive school climate. A safe, supportive environment that values the diversity of students' experiences fosters empathy and mutual respect. Building this climate requires the involvement of all school elements, including teachers, educational staff, and parental support.

From the overall description, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education teachers play a crucial role in developing students' spiritual intelligence, which serves as a key foundation for bullying prevention. Role modelling, habituation, and the integration of religious values serve as tools to strengthen moral awareness, enabling students to control their behavior, understand others' feelings, and foster more humane interactions. This approach makes bullying prevention not just a program, but part of an ongoing character education process.

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