

BULLYING PREVENTION STRATEGIES THROUGH SCHOOL CAPACITY BUILDING (SCB) IN INTEGRATED ISLAMIC SCHOOLS TO SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

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ABSTRACT

Bullying in educational institutions is a critical issue that affects students' well-being and academic performance, necessitating effective prevention strategies. This study develops a bullying prevention strategy through school capacity building (SCB) in Integrated Islamic Schools to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A qualitative approach with a case study method was employed to explore the underlying causes of bullying and to formulate effective prevention strategies through SCB. The findings revealed three key themes, the role of school policies in preventing bullying; leadership models for preventing bullying; and the involvement of teachers and parents in fostering a bullying-free environment. The research highlights that a comprehensive approach, integrating structured school policies, strong leadership, and active participation from teachers and parents, is essential for effective bullying prevention. The study emphasizes that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace, and peace cannot be sustained without the development of quality education. This research contributes to the improvement of Islamic education by promoting a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment, which is essential for fostering future leaders and ensuring the advancement of global peace.

Keywords: Bullying Prevention, Educational Leadership, Integrated Islamic Schools, School Capacity Building, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

INTRODUCTION

Bullying in educational institutions is a critical global issue that impacts students' well-being and academic outcomes, undermining the creation of safe and supportive learning environments. Research indicates that bullying negatively affects not only the victim's emotional and psychological health but also the overall school climate, which hinders academic and personal growth (Smith & Olweus, 2017). Despite global efforts to reduce bullying, many schools still struggle to implement effective prevention strategies that guarantee a safe, inclusive, and non-discriminatory environment for all students (Rahmawati et al., 2023; Fauziah et al., 2023). In this context, the role of School Capacity Building (SCB) has emerged as an essential approach to strengthening school management systems and enhancing the capacity of institutions to prevent bullying while promoting quality education for all (Frank & Taylor, 2024).

In Indonesia, the prevalence of bullying in schools remains a significant concern despite various initiatives aimed at addressing the issue. According to recent studies, bullying continues to occur in both public and private educational institutions, affecting students' emotional well-being and academic performance (Bariyah & Yuliana, 2022). Furthermore, the educational system often faces challenges related to the implementation of child protection policies, insufficient leadership in preventing bullying, and a lack of collaboration among teachers, parents, and school management (Arif et al., 2024). The need for a holistic approach, integrating

leadership, policies, and community involvement, has become increasingly apparent as the nation works towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all.

Numerous studies have explored School Capacity Building (SCB) in the context of improving educational quality and fostering safe environments. Previous research emphasizes the role of leadership, organizational structure, and teacher competency in enhancing school capacity (Bashori, 2020; Purwaningrum et al., 2023; Pearce et al., 2022; Bourke et al., 2024). These studies show that leadership is a critical factor in increasing school capacity and implementing effective school policies (Satori et al., 2017; Soth et al., 2020; Ongori & Kipkoech, 2022). An important element in SCB is increasing the competence of school principals and teachers (Suherman, et al., 2023a). Meanwhile, in relation to strategies for preventing bullying cases, developing child-friendly school management is one strategy that can be implemented (Suherman, et al., 2023b). However, few studies have specifically examined the integration of bullying prevention strategies within the SCB framework, particularly in Islamic educational contexts. The novelty of this study lies in the development of a School Capacity Building (SCB) model that specifically addresses bullying prevention while aligning with the SDGs agenda. This study also offers a comprehensive approach by integrating school leadership, teacher training, and parental involvement to create a safe school environment, focusing on integrated Islamic schools.

This study develops a strategic framework for preventing bullying in integrated Islamic schools by enhancing school capacity. The novelties of the research are to assess the current state of bullying prevention in Islamic schools, identify key factors that contribute to a bullying-free environment, propose an SCB model tailored to integrated Islamic schools that can be used to prevent bullying, and explore the alignment of this model with the SDGs, especially in terms of promoting quality education and peace. By addressing these objectives, the study provides a scalable model that can be adopted by schools worldwide to foster safe and inclusive learning environments.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study method (Bennett, 2024; Heale & Twycross, 2018; Milner et al., 2019) to explore the underlying causes of bullying in educational institutions and develop strategies for preventing bullying through School Capacity Building (SCB) (Madani, 2019; Gunadi & Suherman, 2021). The study followed several stages: identifying the problem, formulating the research problem, preparing research instruments, collecting data, analyzing data, and drawing conclusions. Participants consisted of 88 school principals and teachers with permanent status from 14 schools in urban areas and integrated Islamic schools across Bogor, Depok, Bekasi, Jakarta, and Bandung. These participants were selected based on their experience with bullying prevention in educational institutions, and a purposive sampling technique was employed to distribute online questionnaires via Google Forms. The sample included 14 school principals (15.9%) and 74 teachers (84.1%) with varying gender, age, educational qualifications, and work experience.

Data collection occurred in two stages. The first stage involved distributing a questionnaire to gather initial responses regarding bullying prevention strategies, while the second stage included in-depth interviews with 20 teachers and seven school principals. These interviews aimed to deepen and confirm the responses obtained from the questionnaires. Data collection took place between July and September 2024, and participants were selected based on the relevance and detail of their responses. The study utilized an interview guide with eight open-ended questions, four for principals and four for teachers. The data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model (Braun & Clarke, 2012) and was assisted by NVIVO version 12

software (Woods et al., 2016). The Delphi technique was used to validate the credibility of the SCB concept by seeking expert feedback through multiple rounds until a consensus was achieved (Linstone & Turoff, 2002; Skulmoski et al., 2007; Heiko, 2012; Skinner et al., 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis revealed three main themes: 1) the form of school policy in preventing bullying, 2) leadership models to prevent bullying, and 3) the role of teachers and parents in preventing bullying.

School Policies for Bullying Prevention

Regarding school policies, Figure 1 illustrates the results of the research on the measures schools have implemented to prevent bullying. These policies include inclusive practices, mentoring systems, anti-bullying declarations, and prevention programs such as anti-bullying education, counselling, and childcare services. The policies are designed to be comprehensive, involving all school elements—students, teachers, staff, and parents—with the goal of creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students. This collaborative approach is aimed at minimizing the risk of bullying and ensuring effective handling of any cases that arise.

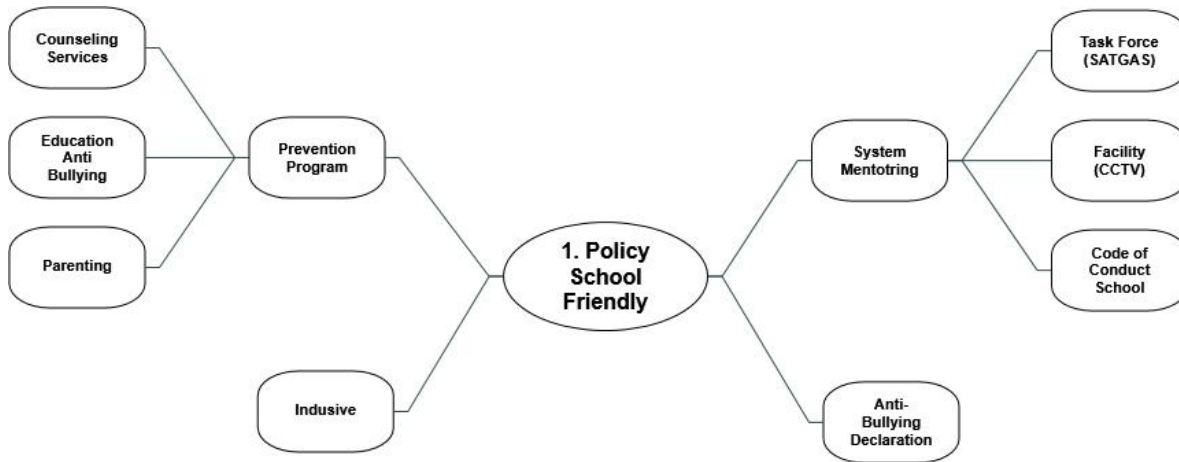


Figure 1. Form of bullying prevention policy in schools

Inclusive policies are crucial for establishing a safe school environment by fostering an inclusive culture (Rahim & Suyitno, 2024). A key component of these policies is the presence of a task force (*SATGAS*), which is tasked with monitoring and overseeing bullying cases. Studies indicate that *SATGAS* functions as a supervisor specifically responsible for both preventing and addressing bullying (Siswati & Saputra, 2023). Additionally, the implementation of a school anti-bullying declaration involves the active participation of all school stakeholders, including the principal, teachers, staff, and students. Research suggests that such declarations act as a persuasive communication strategy, successfully encouraging positive changes among students (Trimardhani et al., 2021). Furthermore, bullying prevention programs within schools are essential as part of the institution’s commitment to guaranteeing students’ rights and ensuring their safety. These programs have been shown to reduce bullying cases by 19-20% (Marhaely et al., 2024; Gaffney et al., 2021; Evianah, 2023; Chairiyah et al., 2021).

Leadership Models for Addressing Bullying

Leadership plays a critical role in preventing bullying in educational institutions, as bullying is a serious social issue that requires attention and intervention from school leaders. Effective leadership models can influence the school environment and promote a culture of respect, safety, and inclusivity. Figure 2 illustrates the leadership models identified in the research that contribute to bullying prevention in schools, which include servant leadership, *uswah* leadership, charismatic leadership, and distributed leadership. These models highlight the diverse approaches school leaders can adopt to foster positive relationships and minimize bullying behaviours within the school community.



Figure 2. Leadership model to prevent bullying at school

As shown in Figure 2, each leadership model brings a unique approach to addressing bullying. Servant leadership, which emphasizes service to others, can promote servant friendships and ensure long-term success in creating a bullying-free environment (Khan et al., 2022; Meuser & Smallfield, 2023). *Uswah* leadership, based on leading by example, encourages subordinates to follow the leader's positive actions. Charismatic leadership is characterized by a respected and admired leader, fostering trust and respect within the school community (Brown et al., 2020). The role of leadership in Islamic schools in preventing bullying is to innovate by holding seminars for teachers, seminars for students, briefings for students, and several other innovations. This is done by the principal with the aim of creating a safe and comfortable environment to avoid negative things such as bullying kicks or commonly called bullying (Napisah et al., 2024). Finally, distributed leadership, which involves delegating authority, empowers all members of the school community to participate in bullying prevention efforts (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2004; Barraies et al., 2021). Together, these leadership models can play an integral role in creating a safe and supportive school environment that reduces bullying incidents.

The Role of Teachers and Parents in Bullying Prevention

The role of teachers in preventing bullying is essential in establishing a safe and supportive school environment. Teachers are not only responsible for academic development but also play a significant role in shaping students' behaviour and attitudes toward one another. Figure 3 illustrates the findings from the research regarding the key responsibilities of teachers in bullying prevention. These include building good communication with students, being role models, offering guidance and counselling, providing direct supervision, and preventing bullying as early as possible. Other studies have highlighted additional strategies, such as planning bullying prevention policies, identifying root causes, enforcing sanctions, and fostering a child-friendly school environment (Yamada & Setyowati, 2022).

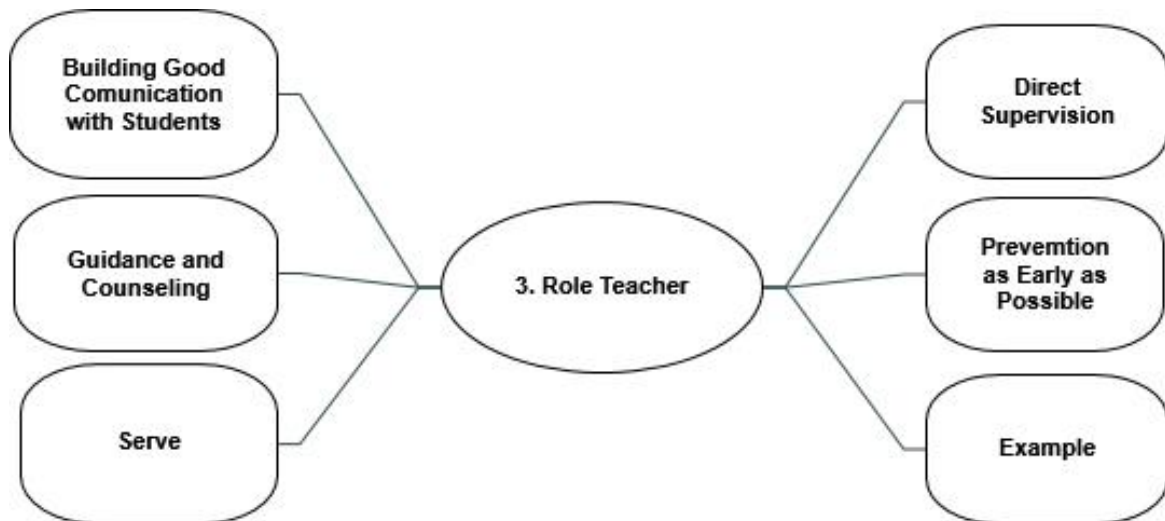


Figure 3. The role of teachers in preventing bullying at school

As shown in Figure 3, the findings emphasize several key roles that teachers play in preventing bullying. Building good communication with students allows teachers to offer guidance and advice, helping students understand the prohibition and negative effects of bullying (Adiyono et al., 2022; Amanda et al., 2020). Teachers also serve as role models, influencing students' behaviour by demonstrating positive actions, which is crucial in preventing bullying (Firmansyah, 2021; Bete & Arifin, 2023). Teachers as role models also act as mentors, meaning they can guide students in their behavior and have authority in the classroom (Widiatmoko & Dirgantoro, 2022). Direct supervision is another critical role, as studies indicate that a lack of teacher oversight often contributes to bullying (Misfala et al., 2023; Rambe et al., 2024). Additionally, teachers provide guidance and counselling services, assisting students involved in or affected by bullying, thus promoting conflict resolution and awareness of the importance of a safe school environment (Hidayat, 2022). Implementing a "Child-Friendly School" policy and offering rewards for positive behaviour further contribute to a supportive and bullying-free school culture (Yosada & Kurniati, 2019; Safitri & Nugroho, 2023). These findings underscore the importance of a holistic approach to bullying prevention involving communication, supervision, and collaboration among all school members.

Parents play a critical role in preventing bullying by supporting school programs, collaborating with educators, caring for the family environment, and supervising children's interactions. Figure 4 illustrates the key findings from the research on how parents contribute to bullying prevention. The involvement of parents in preventing bullying encompasses establishing good communication with both the school and their children, as well as fostering positive relationships within the family (Sigalingging & Gultom, 2023). Parenting patterns are crucial, as children tend to imitate the behaviours they observe in their families, and conflict-ridden family dynamics can lead to children adopting similar aggressive behaviours in school or society (Handayani et al., 2020).

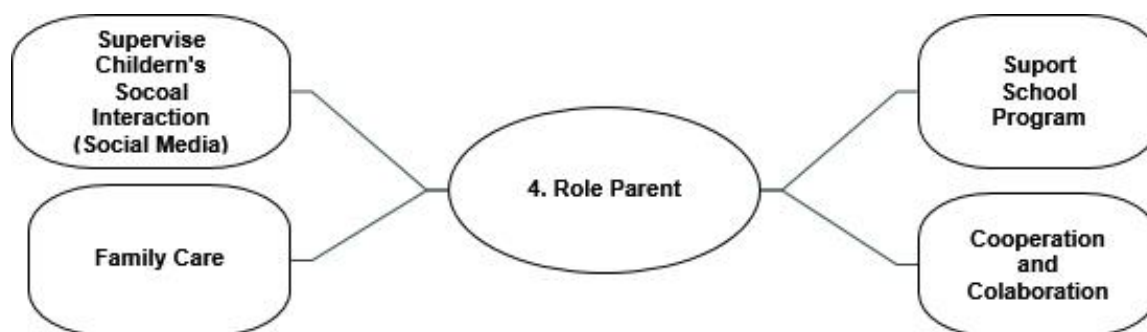


Figure 4. The role of parents in preventing bullying at school

As shown in Figure 4, the results underscore the significant influence of positive parenting on preventing bullying. A nurturing family environment characterized by attention, affection, and healthy communication helps develop empathetic children who can establish healthy social relationships. Conversely, less harmonious family dynamics may increase the risk of children becoming either perpetrators or victims of bullying. Research also indicates that parental involvement in developing children's social skills can protect against bullying behaviours. Children who receive guidance in emotional management, understanding others' perspectives, and communication tend to navigate social relationships more effectively, reducing aggressive tendencies (Hardiyanti et al., 2021). Moreover, parents who actively engage in school activities, such as attending parent meetings and parenting seminars, contribute to a more supportive and proactive school environment for bullying prevention (Ni'mah, 2024). This collaboration enhances communication between parents, teachers, and students, enabling the early identification of bullying signs and the implementation of timely interventions (Mahyani & Hasibuan, 2024).

The Alignment of Anti-Bullying Initiatives with the Sustainable Development Goals

The development of safe and comfortable schools, as part of anti-bullying initiatives, aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, particularly the goals related to peace and quality education (Rulandari, 2021; Ferrer-Estévez & Chalmata, 2021). A child's learning experience at school significantly impacts their mental development and behaviour as adults. Children who grow up in a safe, loving environment are more likely to become compassionate adults, whereas those raised in unsafe environments filled with discrimination and oppression are more likely to adopt similar behaviours in adulthood (Muhyani et al., 2023). Therefore, creating a safe and comfortable school environment is essential for realizing the SDGs goals of peace and quality education, which are interconnected and crucial for shaping future generations.

The SDGs agenda on peace advocates for a global commitment to building a peaceful, just, and inclusive society free from fear and violence (Luckham, 2018). Sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace, and peace cannot exist without sustainable development. As microcosms of society, schools play a vital role in fostering a peaceful environment that ultimately contributes to global peace. Education shapes future leaders and influential figures, and a safe, inclusive school environment is the foundation for achieving world peace (Printy & Liu, 2021; Berraies et al., 2021). A safe and inclusive school not only reflects quality education but also becomes the basis for a harmonious society (Nurcholis et al., 2021). Such environments promote optimal student development, both academically and socio-emotionally, and emphasize the importance of educators, school policies, and a culture of peace, justice, and inclusivity (Istianah et al., 2023). Thus, fostering a school culture that values

diversity, encourages dialogue, and nurtures empathy is key to supporting the SDGs and achieving sustainable education.

The research findings align closely with the School Capacity Building (SCB) framework, which emphasizes strengthening a school's internal capacity to effectively address bullying. The study's results on school policies for bullying prevention demonstrate the importance of comprehensive, collaborative approaches, such as inclusive practices, mentoring systems, anti-bullying declarations, and prevention programs. These strategies, involving all stakeholders—students, teachers, staff, and parents—are essential to creating a safe and supportive school environment (Bashori, 2020; Marhaely et al., 2024). The task force (*SATGAS*) that monitors bullying cases, along with anti-bullying education and counselling programs, ensures a systematic approach to addressing bullying. This integrated approach not only enhances the school's capacity to prevent bullying but also cultivates an environment where bullying is less likely to occur (Gaffney et al., 2021).

In addition to policies, leadership models are crucial in preventing bullying and reflect the SCB framework's emphasis on the role of leadership in school improvement. The study identified various leadership models—servant leadership, *uswah* leadership, charismatic leadership, and distributed leadership—that contribute to creating a culture of respect and safety within schools (Khan et al., 2022; Berraies et al., 2021). These leadership styles empower school leaders to foster positive relationships and set clear expectations for behaviour, encouraging active participation from the entire school community in bullying prevention. Furthermore, the roles of teachers and parents in bullying prevention reinforce the SCB framework's focus on collaboration. Teachers build good communication with students, act as role models, and provide direct supervision, while parents support school programs and help develop their children's social skills (Adiyono et al., 2022; Sigalingging & Gultom, 2023). This collective effort strengthens the school's capacity to prevent bullying and ensures a nurturing environment for all students, creating a comprehensive approach to tackling this issue.

The study highlighted how anti-bullying initiatives align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG Goal 4 (Quality Education) and SDG Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). By fostering a safe and inclusive school environment, schools contribute to the broader goals of peace and justice, helping develop students who are likely to promote these values in society (Ferrer-Estévez & Chalmeta, 2021; Rulandari, 2021). This alignment with the SDGs underscores the importance of building schools that not only provide quality education but also contribute to the creation of a more peaceful and just world. Therefore, the research emphasizes that bullying prevention is essential for students' well-being and for achieving sustainable development and global peace (Printy & Liu, 2021; Wahyudin, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, three key strategies for preventing bullying in educational institutions were identified: the establishment of school policies focused on bullying prevention, the implementation of leadership models that actively address bullying, and the collaborative roles of teachers and parents in fostering a bully-free environment. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without ensuring a peaceful environment, and this begins at the school level. As schools are microcosms of the global community, creating safe and supportive educational settings contributes to broader global peace. Education shapes future leaders and influential individuals, making schools critical in fostering a culture of peace. Thus, a reciprocal relationship exists between ensuring a safe, bullying-free school environment and the promotion of world peace.

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