

## Bullying in an islamic perspective: a thematic review of islamic value integration in guidance and counseling services

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### ABSTRACT

Background: Bullying in educational settings constitutes a serious psychosocial risk, with Indonesia reporting a rapid escalation in documented cases. Despite the availability of psychological intervention frameworks, secular counseling approaches have demonstrated limited cultural resonance in majority-Muslim contexts. Objective: This study systematically reviews the literature on bullying from an Islamic perspective, with the aim of synthesizing scholarly evidence on how Islamic values can be integrated into guidance and counseling services as a framework for bullying prevention. Method: A thematic literature review was conducted using Google Scholar, DOAJ, Dimensions, and Crossref, with search strings combining ('bullying' OR 'school bullying' OR 'cyberbullying') AND ('Islam' OR 'Islamic values' OR 'Islamic counseling' OR 'maqasid sharia'). Seventy-one sources published between 2017 and 2024 were screened; 22 met the inclusion criteria. Thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework yielded five major themes. Results: Findings indicate that Islamic jurisprudence provides a comprehensive normative prohibition against bullying through Qur'anic injunctions (QS Al-Hujurat 49:11; QS Al-Humazah 104:1; QS Al-Ahzab 33:58) and prophetic traditions. The maqasid al-shari'ah framework identifies bullying as a direct threat to five protected interests: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. The values of rahmah (compassion), 'adl (justice), ukhuwah (brotherhood), tazkiyah (purification), and karamah (human dignity) map coherently onto established psychological constructs of empathy, fair treatment, social connectedness, self-regulation, and respect all demonstrated to reduce bullying propensity. Conclusion: The integration of Islamic values in school counseling is not merely a normative proposition; it offers a culturally grounded and empirically plausible framework that complements social-psychological theories. Schools in Muslim-majority contexts are encouraged to adopt integrative counseling models that embed these values into preventive and restorative interventions.



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## Introduction

Bullying is one of the most persistently documented threats to student wellbeing in educational settings worldwide. Defined broadly as repeated, intentional harm directed at individuals who cannot easily defend themselves (Olweus, 1993), bullying encompasses physical violence, verbal degradation, relational exclusion, and increasingly digital harassment commonly termed cyberbullying. Globally, the World Health Organization estimates that one in three students aged 11–15 experiences peer bullying (WHO, 2020), while UNESCO's analysis of 144 countries found that nearly one in three students reported being bullied at school at least once a

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month (UNESCO, 2019). These figures represent not only a public health burden but a fundamental disruption of students' rights to education in a safe environment.

In the Indonesian context, the situation carries particular urgency. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) documented a sharp rise from 53 reported bullying cases in 2021 to 226 in 2022 a more than fourfold increase in twelve months. More troubling still, KPAI recorded 46 cases of children ending their lives due to bullying in 2023 and 43 in 2024, placing Indonesia first among Southeast Asian nations in this statistic. The commission's chairperson, Margaret Aliyatul, has described the country as being in a "state of emergency for children," characterizing bullying as the most dominant proximate cause, followed by family dynamics, economic pressures, online gaming, and romantic conflicts. Alongside traditional forms of peer violence, cyberbullying now affects an estimated 48 percent of Indonesian children (KPAI, 2024), representing a new dimension of harm that intersects digital media access with pre-existing patterns of social aggression.

The predominant theoretical frameworks used to understand bullying including Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and the General Aggression Model (Anderson & Bushman, 2002) have collectively advanced knowledge about how aggressive behavior is modeled, contextually reinforced, and cognitively maintained. School counseling programs drawing on these frameworks have demonstrated moderate effectiveness in Western settings; however, their application in culturally and religiously distinct contexts such as Indonesia remains underexplored. Most empirical research on Islamic-context counseling is either normative in nature drawing prescriptions from religious texts or confined to small-scale case studies in individual pesantren or madrasah. A synthesized, cross-study analysis of what Islamic values can contribute to bullying prevention within formal guidance and counseling services is notably absent from the literature.

This gap is consequential. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, with approximately 87 percent of its population identifying as Muslim (Pew Research Center, 2023). School counseling curricula and student character formation programs in Indonesia regularly draw on Islamic moral frameworks, yet the research base that could inform these practices remains fragmented. Studies by Maisah (2020), Syam and Mayasari (2023), and Halim et al. (2022, 2023) have each addressed facets of the relationship between Islamic teachings and bullying, but they have not been synthesized into a coherent framework that translates normative religious principles into empirically grounded counseling practice.

This article addresses that gap through a thematic literature review that synthesizes scholarly evidence on: (a) how Islamic jurisprudence and theology conceptualize bullying behavior; (b) the psychological and spiritual impact of bullying on Muslim youth; (c) the effectiveness of Islamic-integrated counseling approaches; and (d) a proposed conceptual model for operationalizing Islamic values within school guidance and counseling services. The study does not argue for the superiority of Islamic approaches over psychological models. Rather, it demonstrates that core Islamic values rahmah (compassion), 'adl (justice), ukhuwah (brotherhood), tazkiyah (spiritual self-purification), and karamah (human dignity) map coherently onto established psychological constructs proven to reduce bullying propensity, suggesting their integration into existing frameworks could meaningfully strengthen culturally grounded interventions.

## Method

### Research Design

This study employed a thematic literature review design with a qualitative interpretive approach. Unlike systematic reviews, which prioritize exhaustive retrieval of all available studies, thematic reviews organize and synthesize existing scholarship around conceptual themes to develop theoretical insights (Snyder, 2019). Given that the intersection of Islamic values and bullying prevention remains emergent as a formal field of inquiry, a thematic approach was considered appropriate for mapping the intellectual terrain and identifying patterns across heterogeneous sources.

### Search Strategy and Databases

Four academic databases were searched: Google Scholar, DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), Dimensions, and Crossref. Search strings were constructed to capture both the behavioral phenomenon and its Islamic-perspective framing. The primary search string was: ("bullying" OR "school bullying" OR "cyberbullying" OR "peer aggression") AND ("Islam" OR "Islamic values" OR "Islamic counseling" OR "maqasid sharia" OR "guidance and counseling" OR "tarbiyah")

Searches were conducted in English and Indonesian (using terms such as *bimbingan konseling*, *perundungan*, *nilai Islam*, and *perspektif Islam*). The publication window was set at 2017–2024 to capture a relevant span of recent scholarship while acknowledging foundational references beyond this range where necessary.

### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Articles were included if they: (1) were published between 2017 and 2024; (2) were available in open access; (3) addressed bullying behavior from an Islamic, Qur'anic, or Islamic counseling perspective; (4) were peer-reviewed journal articles, theses with documented supervision, or book chapters in academic volumes; and (5) were written in English or Indonesian. Articles were excluded if they: (1) addressed bullying prevention exclusively through secular psychological frameworks without any reference to Islamic context; (2) were opinion pieces or editorials without empirical or textual analysis; (3) could not be retrieved in full text; or (4) fell outside the specified publication window without providing foundational theoretical content unavailable elsewhere.

### 2.4 Study Selection Process

Figure 1 presents the article selection process following the PRISMA framework (Page et al., 2021). Initial database searches yielded 71 records. After deduplication ( $n = 58$ ) and title/abstract screening ( $n = 34$  retained), full texts of 34 articles were assessed for eligibility. Twelve were excluded for the reasons described above, yielding a final sample of 22 studies included in the thematic synthesis.

**Table 1. PRISMA Article Selection Flow**

<b>IDENTIFICATION</b>	
Records identified from Google Scholar	34
Records identified from DOAJ	17
Records identified from Dimensions	12
Records identified from Crossref	8
Total records identified	71
<b>SCREENING</b>	
Records after duplicate removal	58
Records excluded (title/abstract screening)	24
Records retained for full-text review	34
<b>ELIGIBILITY</b>	
Full-text articles assessed	34
Excluded: outside 2017–2024 publication range	4
Excluded: not peer-reviewed or not open access	5
Excluded: not relevant to Islamic perspective on bullying	3
<b>INCLUSION</b>	
Studies included in final synthesis	22

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## Data Analysis

Thematic analysis followed the six-phase protocol established by Braun and Clarke (2006): (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading; (2) initial coding of conceptual units; (3) generation of candidate themes; (4) review and refinement of themes; (5) definition and naming of themes; and (6) production of the analytic narrative. Coding was conducted manually, with each article assigned primary codes related to its conceptual contribution (e.g., "maqasid framework," "cyberbullying–Islamic law," "tarbiyah prevention model"). These codes were subsequently organized into clusters that formed the five themes reported in Section 3.

## Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was addressed through three measures. First, an audit trail was maintained documenting all search queries, inclusion/exclusion decisions, and coding revisions. Second, peer checking was performed by having an independent researcher review a random sample of 20 percent of coded materials to assess coding consistency. Third, theoretical triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing Islamic textual analysis with findings from studies grounded in psychological frameworks, ensuring that thematic interpretations were not overly dependent on any single disciplinary lens.

## Results and Discussions

### Theme 1: Bullying as a Multidimensional Threat to Psychosocial Wellbeing

Across the reviewed literature, there is consistent evidence that bullying produces multilayered harm that extends well beyond the immediate incident. Fauziah and Mulkiyah (2023) documented four harm categories affecting victims: depression, anxiety disorders, disrupted sleep, and declining academic performance. Zakiyah, Fedryansyah, and Gutama (2017) followed adolescent victims longitudinally and found that bullying-related psychological disruption frequently persists into adulthood, affecting social functioning, occupational adjustment, and intimate relationships. These findings converge with WHO's broader conclusion that peer victimization is among the most consistent predictors of adolescent mental health disorders globally (WHO, 2020).

The rise of cyberbullying adds particular complexity. Aksin and Aini (2022) identified seven distinct cyberbullying typologies flaming, harassment, cyberstalking, denigration, impersonation, outing, and online exclusion each with differing psychological profiles and legal implications. Unlike traditional school-based bullying, cyberbullying extends the site of victimization beyond school hours and physical boundaries, removing the temporal respite that once accompanied leaving school grounds. Hamid, Hassan, and Salleh (2021) further observed that cyberbullying in digital media contexts generates compound harm: the persistent and sharable nature of online content means that humiliation can be repeatedly re-encountered by the victim, amplifying traumatic exposure.

From the perspective of Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), bullying is not a dyadic event occurring in isolation but an outcome of interacting microsystem (peer group, classroom), mesosystem (school-family relations), exosystem (community norms, media), and macrosystem (cultural values) factors. Several studies in the review explicitly noted that the Indonesian macrosystemic context characterized by patriarchal norms, hierarchical social relationships, and uneven enforcement of anti-bullying policies creates conditions that can normalize peer aggression (Zakiyah et al., 2017; Maisah, 2020). Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) complements this view: bullying behavior is frequently modeled in media content, family dynamics, and peer group culture before being reinforced through social rewards such as status and dominance.

Taken together, these findings establish bullying as a phenomenon that warrants theoretical frameworks capable of addressing its ecological, cognitive, and sociocultural dimensions simultaneously. This is precisely where the integration of Islamic values finds its strongest rationale.

### Theme 2: The Islamic Normative Framework Qur'anic and Prophetic Foundations

The reviewed literature converges on a clear and coherent Islamic normative stance: bullying behavior in any of its recognized forms is prohibited under Islamic law and ethics. This prohibition is not incidental or peripheral to Islamic teaching; it flows directly from core theological commitments regarding human dignity, social justice, and the moral obligations of the Muslim community.

Three Qur'anic passages receive sustained attention across the studies. QS Al-Hujurat (49:11) prohibits believers from mocking, ridiculing, or addressing one another with degrading nicknames, grounding this

prohibition in the theological possibility that those being mocked may be superior in God's estimation. Anggraeni, Halimi, and Inten (2021) analyzed the educational implications of this verse and demonstrated that it establishes a foundational ethic of social respect with direct applicability to school settings, particularly regarding verbal and relational bullying. QS Al-Humazah (104:1) condemns the character type of the habitual fault-finder and detractor a behavioral profile closely matching what psychological research describes as the "persistent bully" personality. QS Al-Ahzab (33:58) extends the moral framework by categorizing the deliberate harm of believers without just cause as a major sin, bringing physical bullying unambiguously within the scope of divine prohibition.

Syam and Mayasari (2023) provided perhaps the most systematic legal analysis in the reviewed corpus, examining bullying through the *maqasid al-shari'ah* (objectives of Islamic law) framework. Their findings show that bullying constitutes a direct violation of all five protected interests: *hifz al-din* (religion), because it fosters communal hostility; *hifz al-nafs* (life), because it causes psychological and physical harm; *hifz al-'aql* (intellect), because it is an act of ignorance contrary to reasoned ethics; *hifz al-nasl* (lineage/progeny), because habitual bullying behavior can be intergenerationally transmitted; and *hifz al-mal* (property), through cases involving extortion or destruction of victims' belongings. The authors further classified bullying subtypes under *fiqh jinayah*: physical bullying with serious injury as *qisas*-eligible; property-related bullying as potentially subject to *hudud*; and verbal and cyber-forms as discretionary *ta'zir* offenses.

Beyond formal legal classification, Maisah (2020) drew on prophetic hadith to emphasize that the mission of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him summarized as the perfection of moral character is fundamentally antithetical to bullying. The Hadith reported in Sunan Ibn Majah, which states that "it is sufficient evil for a person to belittle his Muslim brother," is particularly direct in its application. These textual foundations collectively show that Islamic scholarship provides not merely a cautionary note but a coherent legal-ethical system addressing bullying at the levels of prohibition, categorization, and sanction.

### **Theme 3: Cyberbullying Through an Islamic Lens Bridging Classical Concepts and Digital Realities**

The literature's treatment of cyberbullying as a distinctly Islamic concern reveals the adaptive capacity of classical Islamic concepts. Hamid, Hassan, and Salleh (2021) developed the most explicit framework here, arguing that cyberbullying constitutes digital *ghibah* (gossip and defamation conducted online) and electronic *tajassus* (the digital surveillance and exposure of others' private failings), both of which are explicitly prohibited in QS Al-Hujurat (49:12). The hadith of the Prophet that a Muslim is someone "from whose tongue and hand other Muslims are safe" (reported by Bukhari and Muslim) is reinterpreted by these authors to encompass fingertips on keyboards and touchscreens the contemporary instruments of harm.

Aksin and Aini (2022) added important nuance by distinguishing among cyberbullying typologies and their corresponding Islamic legal treatments. Online impersonation, for instance, involves both deception (prohibited as it contains elements of lying and fraud) and potential harm to reputation, making it more serious than simple flaming. Their analysis suggests that Islamic legal resources are sufficiently differentiated to respond to the variety of cyber-harm forms, not merely to offer a blanket condemnation.

The principle of *sadd al-dzari'ah* (blocking pathways to harm), well established in *usul al-fiqh*, offers a particularly useful lens for preventive policy. The Indonesian government's 2024 initiative to restrict social media access for children under sixteen years old can be read, as several reviewed authors suggest, as a structural application of this principle closing channels of harm before the harm occurs. From a school counseling standpoint, *sadd al-dzari'ah* implies that digital literacy education with an explicit ethical component is not merely a contemporary add-on but an Islamic obligation. The principle of *al-darar yuzal* (harm shall be eliminated) similarly mandates that counselors take active preventive measures rather than limiting their role to reactive intervention.

### **Theme 4: Effectiveness of Islamic-Integrated Counseling Approaches**

Evidence for the effectiveness of Islamic-integrated counseling in addressing bullying and aggressive behavior draws primarily from two bodies of work: studies of the Islamic *tarbiyah* (education and formation) system, and studies of specific Islamic counseling techniques applied in school and *pesantren* settings.

Halim et al. (2023) conducted a structured review of *tarbiyah*-based approaches to bullying and concluded that the nine-dimensional framework derived from Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's educational philosophy encompassing *tarbiyah imaniyah* (faith formation), *ruhiyah* (spiritual cultivation), *fikriyah* (intellectual development), *'athifiyah* (emotional education), *khuluqiyah* (moral character), *ijtimaiyah* (social formation), *iradiyah* (will and purpose), *badaniyah* (physical health), and *jinsiyah* (appropriate sexual development) addresses bullying at its roots rather than its surface manifestations. The holistic character of this system aligns closely with the biopsychosocial model widely recognized in contemporary adolescent health

literature. Khalid (2023) reached a broadly consistent conclusion in a separate literature review, finding that the integration of Islamic principles into guidance and counseling reduces not only bullying behaviors but also constructs a more broadly supportive peer environment.

Mohd Nor, Abdullah, and Rahman (2019) examined the Islamic counseling approach developed by educator Abdullah Nasih Ulwan, identifying four pillars relevant to aggression prevention: *tarbiyah imaniyah* (faith-based education), *tarbiyah fikriyah* (critical-thinking formation), self-awareness cultivation, and *tazkiyatun nafs* (soul purification). Their preliminary findings from school-based implementation showed reductions in self-reported aggression and a decrease in disciplinary cases. While the study's sample size precluded firm causal inference, the directionality and magnitude of change were consistent across measurement points.

These findings connect meaningfully to established psychological theories. The self-regulatory function of *tazkiyah* maps onto the emotional regulation literature (Gross, 2002), where interventions targeting appraisal processes and expressive suppression consistently reduce reactive aggression. The social bonding function of *ukhuwah* resonates with findings from the Positive Youth Development framework (Lerner et al., 2005), in which strong prosocial relationships serve as a protective buffer against peer victimization. Notably, multiple reviewed studies emphasized that the effectiveness of Islamic-integrated approaches is contextually bound: they are most appropriate where religious identity is salient and positively valued by students, which is characteristic of most Indonesian school settings (Maisarah, Wijaya, & Daulai, 2023).

### Theme 5: Toward a Conceptual Model Islamic Values as Counseling Framework

The fifth and most synthesizing theme to emerge from the literature concerns the translation of Islamic values into actionable counseling components. The reviewed studies, taken together, support a conceptual framework which this article terms the Islamic Value Integration for Bullying Prevention (IVIBP) model comprising five Islamic value-construct pairings, each corresponding to an established mechanism of bullying reduction.

**Table 2. Islamic Value Integration for Bullying Prevention (IVIBP) Conceptual Model**

Islamic Value	Psychological Construct	Anti-Bullying Mechanism	Relevant Theory
Rahmah (Compassion)	Empathy	Reduces aggressive intent toward peers	Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977)
'Adl (Justice)	Fair Treatment / Equity	Challenges power imbalance in bullying dynamics	General Aggression Model (Anderson & Bushman, 2002)
Ukhuwah (Brotherhood)	Social Connectedness	Builds prosocial peer bonds; reduces bystander passivity	Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)
Tazkiyah (Soul Purification)	Emotional Self-Regulation	Reduces reactive aggression; builds impulse control	Positive Youth Development (Lerner et al., 2005)
Karamah (Human Dignity)	Respect for Personhood	Reinforces victim-centered norms; moral disengagement deterrence	School Climate Theory (Freiberg, 1999)

As Table 2 illustrates, each Islamic value is not a free-standing religious obligation but a dispositional construct that operates through identifiable psychological pathways. *Rahmah* (compassion), grounded in the understanding that divine mercy (*al-Rahman, al-Rahim*) is to be reflected in human conduct, functions as an analogue to empathy the single most consistent psychological predictor of non-bullying behavior in the social learning literature (Bandura, 1977). *'Adl* (justice) challenges the power asymmetry at the heart of all bullying interactions; its counseling application involves equipping both bystanders and potential perpetrators with the capacity to recognize and reject inequitable treatment. *Ukhuwah* (brotherhood) builds the social connectedness that Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem framework identifies as a protective factor: students embedded in genuine peer bonds are less likely to bully and more likely to intervene when witnessing victimization.

*Tazkiyah* (soul purification) operates most directly at the level of intrapersonal self-regulation. It addresses what the General Aggression Model (Anderson & Bushman, 2002) identifies as the affective route to aggression situations in which negative affect and hostile attribution biases combine to produce aggressive behavior. The *tazkiyah* tradition provides specific practices *istighfar* (seeking forgiveness), *muraqabah* (self-monitoring), and

muhasabah (self-accounting) that function analogously to cognitive-behavioral techniques for anger management. Karamah (human dignity), finally, operates at the level of moral norms. By establishing the inherent worth of every human being as a creation of Allah, karamah erects a normative barrier against moral disengagement the process through which perpetrators neutralize the harm of their actions through dehumanization of the victim (Bandura, 2002).

The IVIBP model does not propose replacing existing psychological frameworks but rather enriching them with a value base that is already culturally embedded in the target population. Maisarah, Wijaya, and Daulai (2023) found empirically that students who had internalized Islamic values showed significantly lower tendencies toward bullying behavior, independent of other psychosocial factors. This suggests that value internalization, not merely rule compliance, is the mechanism of change a finding consistent with Self-Determination Theory's emphasis on intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Implementation of the IVIBP model in school counseling services can proceed at three levels. At the preventive level, Islamic values can be embedded in the school's normative culture through integration of relevant Qur'anic verses and prophetic narrations into existing information service materials, the establishment of Islamic classroom rituals (greetings, shared prayer, ethical commitment before sessions), and cross-disciplinary collaboration with Islamic Religious Education teachers to reinforce that bullying carries both psychological and spiritual consequences. At the interventive level, victim support can draw on Qur'anic resources around patience (sabr), trust in divine justice (tawakkul), and appropriate self-defense, while perpetrator intervention can employ al-mauidzah al-hasanah (wise, compassionate counsel) rather than punitive exclusion. At the restorative level, the Islamic concept of *islah* (reconciliation and reform) offers a framework for reintegrating bullying perpetrators into the community without either minimizing the harm caused or foreclosing the possibility of genuine behavioral change.

## Conclusions

This thematic review synthesizes evidence from 22 peer-reviewed studies and demonstrates that Islamic teachings provide a comprehensive and multidimensional framework for preventing and addressing bullying through theological, legal, psychological, spiritual, and educational approaches. The findings indicate that bullying constitutes a serious violation of the fundamental objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shari'ah*) because it threatens human dignity, well-being, social harmony, and moral development. Furthermore, the *tarbiyah*-based educational approach offers a holistic foundation for cultivating character and preventing bullying by addressing its underlying motivations rather than merely its outward manifestations. The review also develops the Islamic Values Integration for Bullying Prevention (IVIBP) model, which integrates key Islamic values with established psychological principles and demonstrates their potential relevance for preventive, interventive, and restorative counseling practices in schools. As a theoretical contribution, this study bridges classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary social-psychological perspectives to provide a culturally relevant framework for guidance and counseling services, particularly within Muslim educational settings. Although the available evidence remains largely qualitative and concentrated in the Indonesian context, the findings highlight the promise of value-based counseling approaches that align with both psychological effectiveness and religious-cultural sensitivity. Future research should focus on strengthening the empirical foundation of the IVIBP model through experimental and longitudinal studies, cross-cultural comparisons across Muslim societies, and the development of validated instruments capable of measuring Islamic value internalization and its influence on bullying-related attitudes and behaviors.

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