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Student Well-Being-Based Character Education Strategy through the Implementation of Religious Values in Bullying Prevention at School: A Case Study at SMP Negeri 1 Japah

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Abstract:
Bullying prevention requires attention not only to disciplinary rules but also to students' everyday experiences of safety, dignity, and belonging. This qualitative case study examines how religious values inform a student well-being-based character education strategy at SMP Negeri 1 Japah. Interview accounts from school teachers, Islamic Religious Education teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers, homeroom teachers, and students were examined alongside observations covering 15 indicators in five aspects. Thematic analysis identified four connected dimensions: religious habituation, relational ethics, preventive protection, and educational responses. Sekolah Sisan Ngaji, Qur'an recitation, congregational prayer, charity, handshaking, classroom agreements, anti-bullying orientation, and teacher guidance provide opportunities to practice respect and care. However, accounts of teasing using parents' names show that religious routines do not consistently translate into respectful peer interaction. The study contributes a student well-being lens for evaluating character education through perceived safety, acceptance, and responses to harmful speech rather than the frequency of religious activities alone. As a single-site study using summarized interview accounts and time-limited observation, the findings describe perceived practices and risks; they do not establish causal effects or demonstrate a measurable reduction in bullying.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

School is a social space where students not only acquire academic knowledge but also learn how they are accepted, valued, and treated by others. Therefore, the quality of education cannot be separated from the quality of the socio-emotional experiences formed in the school environment. The student well-being perspective shifts attention from merely the absence of problems to the presence of conditions that enable students to feel safe, have supportive

relationships, participate, and develop psychologically and socially. A critical review indicates that school climate, including safety, social relationships, support, and the quality of the learning environment, is closely related to adolescents' emotional well-being. Thus, character education that focuses only on knowledge of values without attending to students' daily experiences risks losing the context in which character is formed and tested (Bosacki et al., 2023).

The urgency of this approach becomes even clearer when bullying is understood as an attack on students' sense of safety and self-worth. A cross-national study of 317,869 adolescents aged 12-17 years across 83 countries found that 30.5% had experienced bullying victimization on one or more days during the previous 30 days. The scale of this prevalence reinforces that bullying prevention is inadequate when it is represented only by prohibitions, posters, or sanctions after an incident occurs. Schools need approaches that shape interaction norms, build care, reduce tolerance for humiliation, and ensure that students know whom they can turn to for help when boundaries of respect are violated (Biswas et al., 2020).

The link between school safety and student well-being is also evident in PISA 2022. On average across OECD countries, students who feel safe and are not exposed to bullying or safety risks at school report a stronger sense of school belonging and higher life satisfaction. This finding is important because school belonging is not merely a feeling of liking school, but the experience of being a legitimate and valued member of the educational community. A recent systematic review shows that school belonging is shaped by interacting individual and environmental predictors across multiple levels of students' social ecology. In the context of bullying prevention, a sense of belonging can function as a protective resource because students are more likely to seek help, sustain prosocial relationships, and resist the normalization of demeaning treatment (OECD, 2023; Štremfel et al., 2024).

Student well-being therefore cannot be positioned as an additional agenda outside character education. Student well-being instead provides a measure for assessing whether the values being taught are genuinely transformed into safe and humane social experiences. Reviews of strategies to improve school well-being emphasize the importance of teacher-student relationships, school climate, psychological support, and integrated prevention of problematic behavior. At the same time, character education in Indonesia still faces challenges when moral values remain at the level of normative narratives and do not consistently transform social behavior. Studies on character education and bullying indicate that character strengthening needs to be present as an actual school culture, not merely as a formal message. Student well-being can therefore function as an evaluative lens for assessing whether character practices produce safety, respect, connectedness, and the ability to treat others with dignity (Limone & Toto, 2022; Aswat et al., 2022).

In the context of Islamic Religious Education, religious values provide a relevant moral foundation for building relational ethics. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is not only concerned with religious knowledge, but also with the formation of discipline, responsibility, courtesy, compassion, care, and respect for others. Studies on the role of PAI teachers in character education show that value internalization becomes stronger when classroom learning is connected with concrete habituation, role modeling, and consistent religious activities. Other studies on compassion education in the religious curriculum emphasize that the values of love and compassion are normatively present, but the main challenge lies in actualizing them in everyday behavior. These findings provide a basis for reading religious habituation not from the number of activities conducted, but from its capacity to shape how students speak, joke, resolve conflict, and respond to the vulnerability of their peers (Nasrullah et al., 2023; Sukiman et al., 2021).

The local context sharpens the distinction between programmed values and lived behavior. Blora Regency introduced Sekolah Sisan Ngaji (SSN) to strengthen students' religious understanding and moral character. SMP Negeri 1 Japah implements this program alongside Qur'an recitation, congregational prayers, charity, and other daily routines. Yet the interview

accounts also mention teasing that uses parents' names and is sometimes normalized as joking. This combination makes the school an instructive case for examining whether institutionalized religious practices are reflected in students' everyday treatment of peers, rather than assuming that participation itself prevents bullying (Pemerintah Kabupaten Blora, 2024).

The relationship between religious habituation and bullying prevention is not automatic. Students may participate in worship and memorize moral messages while still using language that embarrasses their peers. The key analytical issue is therefore the translation of religious teaching into relational ethics: how teachers model respect, how students recognize another person's discomfort, and how school personnel respond to harmful interaction. Research on character education similarly argues that moral formation depends on repeated social practice and consistent role modeling rather than the transmission of doctrine alone (Fathoni et al., 2024; Hasanah et al., 2023).

The literature on school connectedness strengthens the need to view these mechanisms ecologically. School connectedness includes the quality of relationships with teachers, peers, learning, and the school environment. A systematic review shows that school connectedness may function as a protective factor against adolescent mental health problems, while bullying victimization can weaken belonging and academic engagement. This means that anti-bullying strategies that only aim to stop negative behavior are insufficient; schools also need to cultivate positive conditions that allow students to feel that they have a place, receive support, and have the courage to ask for help. This approach allows character education to be understood as a process of building a social ecology that makes positive behavior easier to emerge and sustain (Raniti et al., 2022; Li et al., 2020).

At the time the field data were collected, national policy had also moved toward a more comprehensive school-culture approach. Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Regulation No. 6 of 2026 on Safe and Comfortable School Culture places spiritual needs, physical protection, psychological well-being and sociocultural safety, as well as civility and digital safety, within a single framework. This policy direction is relevant to the study because it links religiosity, well-being, safety, and the protection of student dignity as inseparable elements. Accordingly, the case study at SMP Negeri 1 Japah can be read not merely as an inventory of character activities, but as an effort to understand how religious culture and school social relations work together to build a sense of safety and prevent bullying (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Republik Indonesia, 2026).

This study therefore investigates how religious habituation, everyday relationships, classroom rules, counseling support, and bullying-prevention practices intersect with students' sense of well-being at SMP Negeri 1 Japah. Its specific contribution is to use student well-being as an evaluative lens connecting religious character education to the lived experience of safety, acceptance, and respect. The central tension is whether a visible culture of religious routines is accompanied by consistent protection against demeaning peer interaction. The analysis maps practices and perceived mechanisms within one school; it does not test whether the programs cause a reduction in bullying.

Method (منهج)

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This design was selected because the study focuses on a student well-being-based character education strategy through the implementation of religious values in bullying prevention within a single school context, namely SMP Negeri 1 Japah. Case study methodology allows a phenomenon to be examined contextually by considering the interrelationships among school programs, religious habituation, social relations, character education practices, and bullying prevention efforts in the school's

natural setting (Priya, 2021). The unit of analysis is the school's strategy as reflected in practices, relationships, and cross-role responses, rather than the personal character of each informant.

Research Location and Data Sources

The study took place at SMP Negeri 1 Japah, Blora Regency, using field materials dated 19 September 2026. The interview materials represent five role-based groups: school teachers, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers, homeroom teachers, and students. These groups provide perspectives on program implementation, classroom interactions, counseling, and student experience. Selection is identifiable at the level of relevant roles, but the retained documents do not specify the recruitment sequence, eligibility criteria, or verified number of individual interviewees in each group. Consequently, no participant count, sampling procedure, or representativeness claim is inferred from the available documentation.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection combined role-specific, guideline-based interviews with direct observation on the documented field date. Interview prompts addressed safety and comfort; religious practices; classroom agreements; peer teasing; the contribution of PAI and BK teachers; and preventive or responsive school measures. School-teacher and student accounts were compared with those from PAI, BK, and homeroom teachers. Observation used a structured sheet to record whether 15 indicators across five aspects were visible during the observation period. The retained interview material consists of summarized responses rather than full transcripts and does not record interview duration, recording procedures, or the exact recruitment approach. Accordingly, the data support thematic comparison but not estimates of how frequently a view or behavior occurred.

Table 1. Data Sources and Data Collection Focus

No.	Data Source	Focus of Data Collected
1	School teachers	Strategies for creating a safe and comfortable school environment; development of discipline and responsibility; the SSN program; religious habituation; handshaking culture; positive peer relationships; supervision and management of teasing behavior.
2	PAI teachers	Implementation of religious values and moral conduct; Qur'an recitation; Asmaul Husna; congregational Dhuha and Dhuhr prayers; Friday charity; mutual respect, compassion, care, and tolerance; anti-bullying posters; the contribution of PAI learning to bullying prevention.
3	BK teachers	Students' social and emotional conditions; anti-bullying orientation from MPLS; the role of the team/task force; supervision; and BK collaboration with PAI teachers, homeroom teachers, and school personnel.
4	Homeroom teachers	Creating a safe and comfortable classroom atmosphere; classroom agreements; appreciation of differences; development of positive interactions; and prevention and management of teasing behavior, including teasing using parents' names.
5	Students	Experiences of feeling safe, comfortable, valued, and accepted at school; experiences of participating in religious activities; calmness after religious activities; and experiences of school efforts to prevent bullying.
6	Observation	Conditions of student well-being, character education, religious value habituation, bullying prevention, and the school environment through 15 observation indicators.

Research Instruments

The instruments comprised interview guides differentiated by participant role and an observation sheet. School-teacher questions addressed safety, discipline, and character programs; PAI-teacher questions covered religious habituation and moral conduct; BK-teacher questions addressed socio-emotional concerns and bullying responses; homeroom-teacher questions focused on classroom agreements and peer interaction; and student questions elicited experiences

of acceptance, religious participation, and school support. The observation sheet contained 15 indicators across five aspects: student well-being, character education, religious values, bullying prevention, and the school environment. In reporting student-related accounts, excerpts are attributed to roles instead of named individuals, and no identifiable student incident is reconstructed. The underlying materials do not document formal ethics approval or consent arrangements; these cannot be claimed on the basis of the available record.

Table 2. Aspects and Indicators of Research Observation

Aspect	Main Indicators Observed	Number of Indicators
Student well-being	Sense of safety and comfort; openness in student-teacher interaction; mutual respect and acceptance of differences.	3
Character education	Role modeling and habituation of positive character; discipline, responsibility, and courtesy; guidance regarding inappropriate behavior.	3
Religious values	Presence of religious habituation; orderly participation in religious activities; visible moral conduct, respect, compassion, and care in interactions.	3
Bullying prevention	Visible teasing, exclusion, or demeaning behavior; supervision of peer interactions; school efforts or rules related to bullying prevention.	3
School environment	An orderly, safe, and conducive environment; positive peer relationships; friendliness and care from teachers or other school members toward students.	3
Total		15

Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analytical process followed six stages adapted from Braun and Clarke (2021): familiarizing with the entire dataset through repeated reading, generating initial codes, grouping codes into candidate themes, reviewing relationships among themes, defining and naming themes, and developing interpretations of the findings. Coding was directed at the meaning and function of each practice rather than the frequency of word occurrence. Data from each source category were compared to identify consistent patterns, variations in perspective, and relationships among religious habituation, character, student well-being, and bullying prevention. Observation results were used as supporting data to examine whether practices reported in interviews were also visible during observation.

Data Trustworthiness

Credibility was examined through triangulation of perspectives across school teachers, PAI teachers, BK teachers, homeroom teachers, and students, and by comparing interview accounts with observed activities. Agreement between sources was treated as corroboration of the visibility of practices, not proof of program effectiveness. Differences were retained analytically, particularly the reports of teasing despite an observation sheet showing no such behavior during the visit. Because interviews were available as summarized accounts and observation was limited to one documented field period, interpretations were restricted to plausible patterns rather than claims about prevalence, individual trajectories, or causal change.

Result (نتائج)

Relational Safety as the Core of Student Well-Being

The data show that student well-being at SMP Negeri 1 Japah is primarily experienced relationally: feeling safe, comfortable, valued, accepted, and able to interact positively. Students stated that the school environment was perceived positively because of support from peers, teachers, and other members of the school community. Observation also showed that students appeared safe and comfortable, interacted openly and positively with teachers, and respected one another and accepted differences. The school environment was observed to be orderly, safe, and

conducive, while teachers and other school members demonstrated friendliness and care toward students. This pattern positions well-being not as an internal condition separated from school, but as an experience continuously produced through the quality of everyday relationships.

> *'Students feel safe, comfortable, valued, and accepted at school because the school has a positive environment supported by friends, teachers, and other members of the school community' (Student, interview, 19 September 2026).*

The practices supporting these experiences are small-scale but repetitive. Teachers welcome students at the school gate and habituate handshaking, homeroom teachers establish shared agreements before lessons begin, and teachers provide guidance on appropriate classroom behavior. School teachers also mentioned the cultivation of discipline and responsibility, the application of deep learning, and efforts to build positive peer relationships. The available materials do not explain the technical form of deep learning used, so this aspect is not analyzed as a separate intervention. What is clearly visible instead is the relational function of school routines: setting behavioral boundaries, signaling the presence of adults, and building social predictability for students.

> *'Teachers create a classroom atmosphere by establishing agreements together with students before learning begins. Homeroom teachers also provide explanations and guidance so that students understand appropriate behavior in the classroom. These efforts are made to keep the classroom orderly and comfortable for students' (Homeroom teacher, interview, 19 September 2026).*

The emotional dimension appears explicitly in students' responses regarding religious activities. Tadarus, reciting Asmaul Husna, Qur'anic study, and congregational prayer were described as making the heart feel calmer. This finding is important because it connects religious activities with subjective experiences relevant to well-being without turning them into causal claims. At the level of field data, this sense of calm coexists with safety, comfort, and social acceptance. Thus, student well-being in this case is not formed by a single specific 'student well-being' program, but by the accumulation of religious practices, classroom norms, teacher-student relationships, and the school's social climate.

> *'Religious activities carried out by students, such as tadarus, reciting Asmaul Husna, Qur'anic study, and congregational prayer, are related to the emotional aspect of student well-being. Students feel calmer after participating in these activities' (Student, interview, 19 September 2026).*

The findings also show that a sense of safety is shaped by orderliness. Students follow established school rules and activities; teachers provide guidance when needed; and learning activities take place in an orderly atmosphere. This orderliness is not identical to strict control, but provides a predictable social framework. In adolescence, predictability is important because students need to know what behavior is considered acceptable, who will respond when problems arise, and how the boundaries of interaction are defined. The field data show that rules, positive relationships, and teacher care appear together, so orderliness does not stand merely as administrative discipline.

Religious Habituation as Socio-Moral Infrastructure

The implementation of religious values appears through recurring activities distributed across the rhythm of school life. School teachers mentioned Sekolah Sisan Ngaji, Qur'an recitation (tadarus), the recitation of Asmaul Husna before lessons, and a handshaking culture at the school gate. PAI teachers added congregational Dhuha and Dhuhr prayers, Islamic holy day commemorations such as Maulid Nabi and Isra Mi'raj, and regular Friday charity (infaq). Observation confirmed Qur'an recitation, the recitation of Asmaul Husna, and congregational Dhuha and Dhuhr prayers. This variety shows that religiosity is present not only in formal PAI learning, but also in the rhythm of time, worship practices, social activities, and interpersonal habits.

'SMP Negeri 1 Japah has various forms of Islamic religious habituation, such as rotating Qur'an recitation in the morning, congregational Dhuha and Dhuhr prayers, Islamic holy day commemorations such as Maulid Nabi and Isra Mi'raj, and regular Friday charity. These activities directly involve students in religious habituation at school' (PAI teacher, interview, 19 September 2026).

Teachers' accounts locate the intended values in daily conduct: PAI teachers emphasize mutual respect, compassion, care, and tolerance; homeroom teachers encourage appreciation of differences; and school teachers describe discipline and responsibility. Observation also recorded orderly participation in religious activities and visible instances of respectful teacher-student and peer interaction. These are convergent indications that moral messages are enacted in some observable practices. They do not establish that every participant has internalized the values or that the practices consistently prevent harm. Reports of teasing involving parents' names show why the relation between ritual participation, teacher modeling, and spontaneous peer language must be examined rather than presumed.

Anti-bullying posters created by students are one form of translating values into visible social messages. This activity brings together character education and public communication in the school environment: respect is not only explained, but made into a symbol of shared norms. However, the same data show that formal symbols have not completely closed the gap with informal practices. Teasing involving parents' names was still reported and was sometimes treated as a joke. The tension between stated norms and normalized humor is therefore an important point for understanding how far religious values have been transformed into relational ethics.

When mapped by function, religious activities at school form at least four types of experience. Tadarus and Asmaul Husna provide a spiritual rhythm at the beginning of activities; congregational prayer combines time discipline and togetherness; Friday charity introduces a dimension of care; while handshaking connects respect with everyday social contact. This mapping is analytical, not a claim that each activity automatically produces a particular character trait. Its importance lies in showing that religious programs provide multiple points of contact through which schools can connect worship practices with concrete social consequences.

Table 3. Matrix of Field Findings and Analytical Meanings

Dimension	Field Evidence	Analytical Meaning
Relational safety	Students feel safe, comfortable, valued, and accepted; teacher-student relationships were observed to be positive.	Everyday interactions are an observable context for reported well-being.
Religiosity and character	SSN, tadarus, Asmaul Husna, congregational prayer, infaq, handshaking, and moral guidance.	Habituation becomes an infrastructure of values when translated into relational ethics.
Prevention	MPLS anti-bullying education, posters, supervision, team/task force, warnings, and guidance.	Prevention operates in layers, before and after risky behavior appears.
Latent risk	Teasing using parents' names was reported in interviews but was not observed during observation.	Risk can be situational and may not always be visible to observers.
Cross-role governance	PAI, BK, homeroom teachers, other teachers, and school personnel are involved in guidance.	Shared roles exist; coordination and response consistency require verification.

Prevention Architecture and the Hidden Boundary between Joking and Bullying

Bullying prevention at SMP Negeri 1 Japah operates through a combination of preventive and responsive measures. BK teachers explained that anti-bullying education is provided from the beginning of MPLS so that students understand the importance of maintaining appropriate behavior and respecting peers. The school was also reported to have a team or task force related to bullying prevention. In everyday practice, teachers supervise student interactions, provide

warnings and guidance when inappropriate behavior appears, and instill mutual respect. Homeroom teachers contribute through guidance on classroom behavior, while PAI teachers connect prevention with moral conduct and respect for others.

> *'BK efforts to prevent bullying begin from the start of MPLS by providing students with anti-bullying education. Through this orientation, students are given an understanding of the importance of maintaining appropriate behavior and respecting their peers. In addition, the school also has a task force related to bullying prevention' (BK teacher, interview, 19 September 2026).*

A tension emerged between routine school observations and accounts of informal peer behavior. School teachers and homeroom teachers described teasing using parents' names that sometimes passes as joking. In contrast, the relevant observation item was marked as showing no visible teasing, exclusion, or demeaning treatment during the visit. This does not show that interviewees were mistaken: the observation covered a particular period, whereas the accounts referred to situations beyond it. Together, the sources identify a possible gap between explicit school norms and less-visible verbal exchanges. The finding is evidence of a prevention concern, not an observed rate of bullying or proof that a particular student experienced sustained victimization.

> *'A challenge that is still found at school is that some students still tease their peers using their parents' names, which is sometimes used as a joke. To address this, teachers increase supervision of student interactions, provide warnings or guidance, and instill religious values and mutual respect' (School teacher, interview, 19 September 2026).*

This evidence requires careful classification. An isolated, mutually welcomed joke is not equivalent to bullying, whereas teasing may become harmful when it is unwanted, humiliating, persistent, or difficult for the targeted student to stop. Whether an incident constitutes bullying also requires attention to repetition, a power imbalance, and the affected student's experience. The records do not provide those case-level details for teasing using parents' names, so the study describes it as a risk of demeaning behavior rather than assigning a bullying diagnosis. For prevention, the practical threshold is earlier than formal classification: teachers can acknowledge discomfort, ask the interaction to stop, and provide support before a harmful pattern is repeated.

Students' perspectives reinforce that the anti-bullying policy is sufficiently visible at the level of experience. Students stated that the school provides anti-bullying education, conducts supervision, and instills mutual respect through character education and religious activities. However, the materials do not contain information on confidential reporting mechanisms, case follow-up procedures, or the experiences of students who have been victims. The absence of such information does not mean that these mechanisms do not exist; it only marks the limits of the data and, at the same time, an area that needs to be ensured when strengthening the prevention system.

Cross-Role Character Governance: From Separate Programs to an Ecosystem

The interviews indicate a division of educational contributions rather than a fully documented integrated protocol. School teachers cultivate discipline and respectful interaction; PAI teachers connect worship activities to moral conduct; BK teachers introduce anti-bullying messages from MPLS; homeroom teachers establish classroom agreements; and students participate in these school routines. BK accounts also mention collaboration with PAI teachers, homeroom teachers, and other personnel. This convergence supports the existence of complementary roles, but the evidence does not establish that cases are consistently referred, documented, or followed up through a standard operating procedure. Cross-role coherence remains both an identified opportunity and a matter requiring institutional verification.

'BK collaborates with PAI teachers, homeroom teachers, and school personnel in developing character and supporting student well-being through guidance and the cultivation of positive values in the school environment, such as the habituation of school rules and character education activities carried out at school' (BK teacher, interview, 19 September 2026).

The recapitulation of the observation sheet reinforces this picture. Each of the five aspects contained three indicators and all were marked as observed: student well-being 3/3, character education 3/3, religious values 3/3, bullying prevention 3/3, and the school environment 3/3. These figures do not represent the percentage of students or an effectiveness score, but rather the scope of evidence visible during observation. The uniform coverage instead indicates that relevant practices are distributed across multiple school dimensions, not only within PAI lessons or religious activities.

Across interview groups, the values of respect, safety, comfort, and care appear repeatedly, creating a shared normative language. Nevertheless, agreement in vocabulary should not be mistaken for uniform practice. The materials do not show whether teachers employ the same criteria for harmful joking, whether student disclosures reach BK staff, or how subsequent actions are coordinated. A whole-school approach would require a common decision pathway, confidential communication, role clarity, and follow-up, especially when an incident occurs away from the direct observation of adults. These are recommendations derived from the evidence gap, not documented procedures already operating at the school.

Table 4. Recapitulation of Observed Indicators

Aspect	Indicators Observed
Student well-being	3/3
Character education	3/3
Religious values	3/3
Bullying prevention	3/3
School environment	3/3

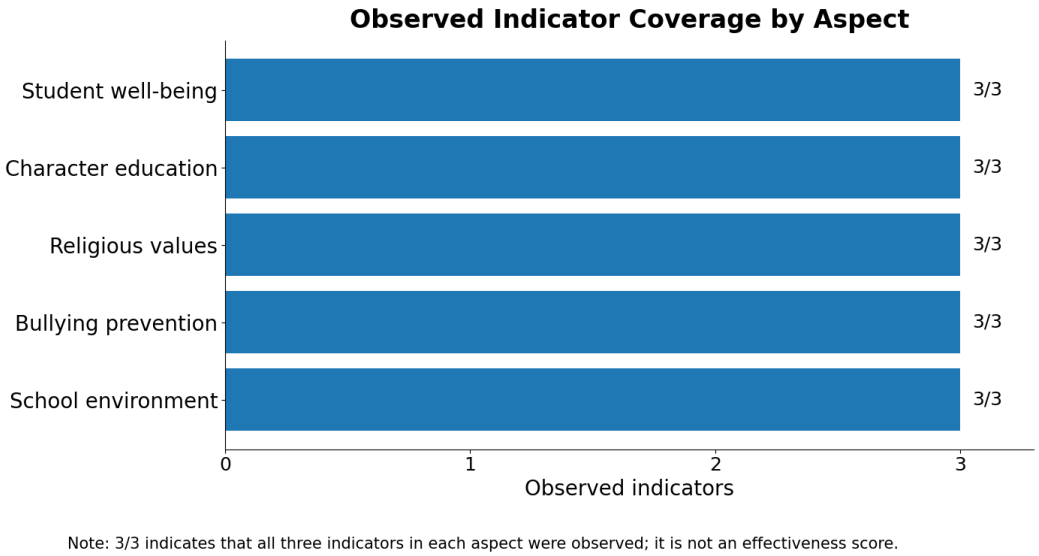


Figure 1. Observed indicator coverage by aspect

Discussion (مناقشة)

From Ritual Compliance to Relational Ethics

Religious habituation offers a recurring setting in which values can be introduced, rehearsed, and modeled, but the observable presence of routines is not a direct measure of moral change. At SMP Negeri 1 Japah, tadarus, Asmaul Husna, congregational prayer, infaq, and handshaking provide opportunities for discipline, togetherness, care, and respect. Their relevance to bullying prevention depends on how explicitly teachers connect these activities to speech, empathy, and responses when a peer is humiliated. The reported persistence of joking with parents' names suggests that transferring values from supervised rituals to informal interaction cannot be taken for granted (Susilowati et al., 2023).

The accounts of teasing therefore serve as a critical counterpoint to the favorable observation of organized religious activities. The point is not that religious education has failed, but that visible compliance and everyday relational ethics are different outcomes. An activity may be completed collectively even while students retain assumptions that joking about a peer's family is harmless. Such behavior becomes a test of whether character values are recognized when social approval among friends competes with respect for another student. Reflective discussion of actual dilemmas, rather than only reinforcement of rules, may help close this gap between the curriculum of values and the informal norms of peer groups (Hasanah et al., 2023).

The practical priority is thus to deepen the connection between religious routines and real decisions rather than merely expand the number of activities. Brief reflections after tadarus or PAI lessons could ask students to assess a scenario involving unwanted nicknames, family-related jokes, silence among bystanders, or an apology after harm. Teachers could model language for objecting respectfully and for checking whether a peer feels safe. Such suggestions are not interventions evaluated in this case; they are practice-oriented implications of the observed gap, consistent with approaches that translate compassion from curricular ideals into social actions (Sukiman et al., 2021).

Studies on the role of PAI in character education also emphasize that moral formation becomes stronger when teachers combine instruction, role modeling, and everyday practice. This is relevant to the finding that teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Japah do not only provide explanations, but also welcome, supervise, and guide students. Thus, the educational force of religious values lies in the consistency between what is said and what students experience. When teachers demonstrate respect in the way they give warnings, when classes agree on boundaries of interaction, and when shared worship does not disconnect from social care, students obtain concrete models of how moral conduct works in relationships (Nasrullah et al., 2023).

Viewing Bullying Prevention as Well-Being Governance

The school's strategy shows a movement from behavioral control toward relational protection, although this shift needs to be made more explicit. A meta-analysis of anti-bullying programs shows that school-based programs can reduce bullying perpetration and victimization, although their effects vary according to context and program components. These findings support the importance of a layered approach: school norms, learning, supervision, teacher responses, peer involvement, and case follow-up cannot operate independently. Practices at SMP Negeri 1 Japah already include several of these layers through MPLS, supervision, the task force, posters, teacher guidance, warnings, and counseling. The challenge is to ensure that each layer works as a consistent system that students can actually experience (Gaffney et al., 2021).

Reviews of bullying-prevention programs and the promotion of prosocial behavior also show that strong interventions not only reduce negative behavior, but can strengthen school climate, emotional well-being, and mental health. This perspective is important because prevention should not turn schools into spaces of repressive surveillance. Instead, supervision needs to coexist with support, positive relationships, and opportunities for students to practice prosocial behavior. The culture of handshaking, greetings at the school gate, classroom agreements, and

habituation of mutual respect can be understood as 'soft infrastructure' that provides a social context for anti-bullying rules (González Moreno & Molero Jurado, 2024).

Teacher responses are particularly important because the same remark can be perceived differently by the speaker, the recipient, and bystanders. Research on teachers' self-efficacy in addressing bullying underscores the need for confidence in recognizing and intervening in problematic behavior (Fischer et al., 2021). A defensible response begins by checking how the targeted student experienced the remark, whether it continued after objection, whether a power imbalance exists, and whether there is a pattern of repetition. A brief warning may suffice for a first insensitive comment, while recurring intimidation or disclosed distress calls for documentation, counseling support, and proportionate safeguarding. The current data do not establish that teachers at this school already apply a shared set of criteria.

This approach can also be strengthened through social and emotional learning. A bioecological perspective on bullying prevention emphasizes that social-emotional skills need to be integrated with school climate and systems rather than delivered as a separate lesson. In the context of the findings, compassion, care, tolerance, discipline, and responsibility can be operationalized through assertive communication practice, perspective taking, bystander responses, and restoration of relationships after conflict. In this way, religiously based character education gains behavioral forms that can be practiced and assessed in students' social lives (Divecha & Brackett, 2020).

A whole-school framework helps interpret the reported presence of an anti-bullying team or task force. Organizational existence alone does not verify the accessibility or consistency of response. A proposed pathway is for the first adult receiving a concern to interrupt the behavior and listen privately, for the homeroom teacher to establish the immediate classroom context, for BK staff to assess support needs and recurrence, and for school leaders to coordinate appropriate protective action and follow-up. PAI teachers can reinforce the moral meaning of non-humiliation without replacing confidential case handling. The pathway should allow a student to seek help without public exposure or automatic labeling, while ensuring that repeated harm is not dismissed as harmless joking. This is an implication, not an observed formal workflow.

Student Well-Being as an Evaluative Bridge between Values and School Culture

The distinctive contribution of this study is the use of student well-being as a bridge between religious character programs and lived school culture. Counting religious activities or observing orderly participation establishes that an educational routine exists; it does not establish that students feel secure in all peer settings. A more informative evaluative question is whether students perceive respect, trust teachers to respond, and can object to humiliating treatment without fear. Interview accounts at SMP Negeri 1 Japah associate religious activities with calmness and describe a generally supportive environment, while reports of teasing show where the social transfer of values remains uncertain. This combined reading avoids attributing causal change to unmeasured outcomes and frames well-being as a criterion for investigating relational quality.

The finding that students feel calmer after religious activities provides an example of how experiential indicators can emerge naturally from the data. This experience should not be overstated as evidence of a psychological effect, but it can serve as an entry point for evaluating the emotional function of school activities. Research on bullying victimization and subjective well-being shows that school belonging, self-efficacy, and meaning in life can function as mechanisms explaining the relationship between negative social experiences and adolescent well-being. The implication is that bullying prevention can be evaluated not only by the number of incidents, but also by whether students feel supported, are willing to seek help, and view school as a fair and safe place (Seon & Smith-Adcock, 2021).

Perceptions of school fairness are also important because responses to humiliation serve as institutional signals. Research on bias-based bullying shows that victimization is associated with

school belonging and perceptions of school fairness. Although the form of teasing at SMP Negeri 1 Japah is not identical to bias-based bullying, the lesson is relevant: when students see demeaning treatment as normal or ignored, confidence in school protection can weaken. Conversely, clear, proportionate, and educational responses can strengthen the message that every student's dignity has equal value (Burgess et al., 2023).

Student self-efficacy also needs to be positioned within the prevention design. A meta-analysis shows an association between involvement in bullying and self-efficacy among adolescents. This has practical implications: students need skills to reject hurtful jokes, ask for help, support peers, and report repeated behavior. Character education therefore does not merely instill the message 'do not bully,' but builds the capacity to act when norms are violated. From a student well-being perspective, this capacity strengthens student agency and reduces dependence on adult supervision alone (Liu et al., 2023).

A well-being lens guards against equating program density with character formation and against interpreting few reported incidents as conclusive evidence of school safety. Students may experience strong support while particular forms of subtle humiliation remain underreported. The study has no incident series or pre-post measurement to establish that bullying declined. Future evaluation should therefore consider students' confidence in seeking help, perceived fairness of teacher responses, experiences of unwanted jokes, and accessibility of confidential support together with records of program activities. Such indicators would address the gap between visible participation and experiences that occur outside direct adult supervision.

Religious-Relational Model, Strengthening Implications, and Study Limitations

The synthesis of findings produces a religious-relational model with four layers. The first layer is value habituation through SSN, tadarus, Asmaul Husna, congregational prayer, infaq, and religious activities. The second layer is relational ethics through role modeling, handshaking, classroom agreements, and the teaching of respect and care. The third layer is preventive protection through MPLS, posters, supervision, and the presence of a team or task force. The fourth layer is educational response through warnings, guidance, PAI-BK-homeroom collaboration, and the strengthening of social responsibility. These four layers interact to produce experiences of feeling safe, calm, accepted, and valued. This model is consistent with the direction of the Safe and Comfortable School Culture policy, which integrates spiritual needs, physical protection, psychological well-being, and sociocultural safety.

The model's practical implication is coordination across layers rather than program expansion. Schools could examine whether students know where to report discomfort, whether teachers can identify when joking crosses a boundary, and whether counseling follows up when harm recurs. Brief student feedback, anonymous experience checks, and discussions of everyday speech may complement activity monitoring. These suggestions respond to the limited visibility of informal exchanges in the present case; they are not presented as procedures already tested or as evidence of an intervention's effectiveness.

Coherent action would connect four professional contributions without making students repeat sensitive disclosures unnecessarily. PAI teachers can translate religious values into concrete examples of dignity and care; homeroom teachers can observe classroom dynamics and intervene promptly; BK teachers can assess the student's needs and coordinate confidential support; and other personnel and school leaders can maintain consistent rules and protective follow-up. For ambiguous teasing, the recipient's perception and context should be established before labeling the behavior; for repeated, unequal, or intimidating acts, escalation and monitoring are warranted. Interview data indicate participation by these groups but do not document a shared referral protocol. The proposed sequence is therefore a recommendation for strengthening institutional consistency.

The analysis is limited by the form and extent of the retained field documentation. Interview material was available as summarized accounts rather than complete transcripts; individual

informant counts, recruitment steps, interview duration, recording procedures, and formal consent or ethics-review documentation were not available for verification. Observation was confined to a documented field period and used binary observed/not-observed indicators without detailed case-level notes. These constraints preclude estimates of bullying prevalence, comparisons among student groups, assessments of long-term behavioral change, or causal claims about religious activities. The study instead offers a context-specific interpretive model supported by triangulation across reported perspectives and visible practices. Further work should document recruitment and ethics procedures prospectively and incorporate confidential student interviews, observations across situations, and longitudinal indicators of safety and school belonging.

This direction of strengthening is consistent with research showing that character education requires repeated practice, role modeling, and supportive environments. In this case, strengthening does not need to take the form of a large new program. Integration can be carried out through micro-practices: a two-minute reflection after religious activities, short scenarios about jokes that cross boundaries, safe response statements for bystanders, and reminders about how to seek help. These micro-practices maintain continuity among values, behavior, and well-being without adding an excessive activity burden.

Table 5. Directions for Strengthening the Strategy Based on the Findings

Layer	Available Evidence	Direction for Strengthening
Value habituation	SSN, tadarus, Asmaul Husna, congregational prayer, infaq.	Link each ritual to respectful speech, empathy, and short case-based reflection.
Relational ethics	Handshaking, role modeling, classroom agreements, mutual-respect values.	Practice ways to recognize unwanted jokes, respect objections, and assist peers.
Preventive protection	MPLS anti-bullying education, posters, supervision, team/task force.	Explain accessible, confidential reporting routes and monitor less-visible settings.
Educational response	Warnings, guidance, PAI-BK-homeroom collaboration.	Agree on criteria, private referral to BK, proportionate action, and follow-up.

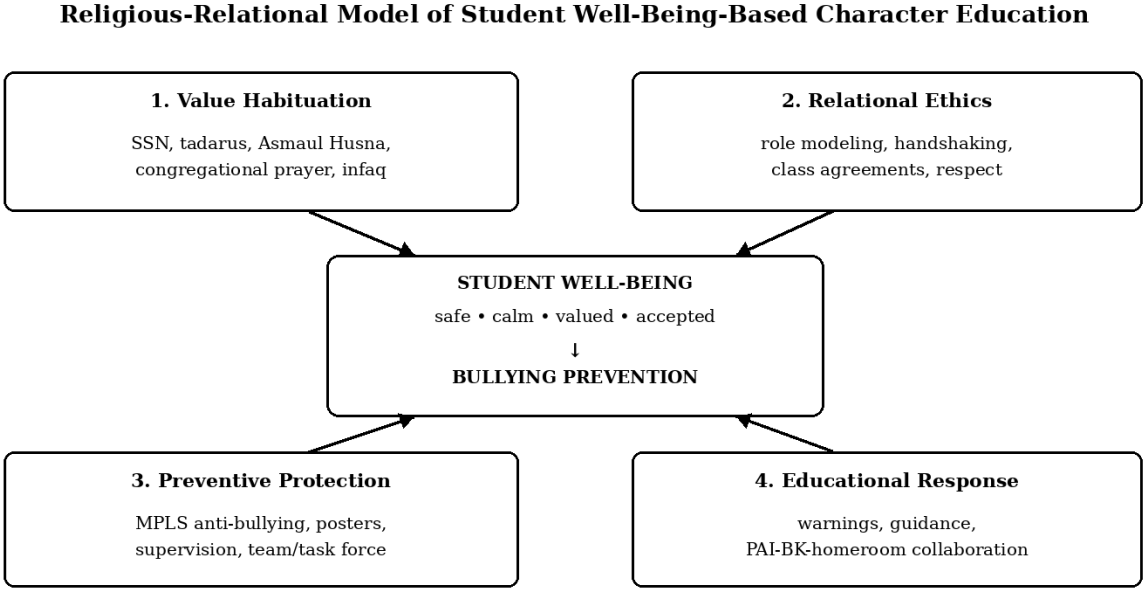


Figure 2. Religious-relational model of student well-being-based character education synthesized from field data

Conclusion (خاتمة)

At SMP Negeri 1 Japah, the documented character education strategy encompasses religious habituation, relational ethics, preventive measures, and educational responses. Sekolah Sisan

Ngaji, tadarus, Asmaul Husna, congregational prayers, infaq, handshaking, classroom agreements, MPLS anti-bullying messages, supervision, warnings, and guidance form a visible network of school practices. The 15 observation indicators across five aspects were marked as observed during the field visit, while interview accounts described safety, acceptance, and calmness. These findings describe the school's practices and students' reported experiences; they cannot establish a causal effect on well-being or a measurable reduction in bullying.

A central qualification concerns the boundary between religious norms and informal peer interaction. Reports of teasing using parents' names, sometimes treated as joking, coexisted with observation records that noted no visible teasing during the field period. Without evidence on repetition, power imbalance, and the recipient's experience, the behavior cannot be classified automatically as bullying. It nonetheless identifies a need for shared criteria, prompt listening, confidential student support, and consistent coordination among teachers and BK personnel. More than additional rituals, the implication is to translate the values practiced in school into everyday speech and relational protection.

The study's contribution is a religious-relational interpretation of student well-being that treats safety, dignity, and belonging as criteria for evaluating character education. Its scope is limited to one qualitative case with summarized interview materials and time-bound observation, so the proposed model should be examined through fuller ethical and methodological documentation and further student-centered research before claims of effectiveness are made.

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