



ISLAMIC EDUCATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IN OPTIMIZING THE ROLE OF PEER COUNSELORS TO PREVENT CYBERBULLYING

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of cyberbullying in Islamic education environments has become increasingly concerning due to the rapid digitalization among young students. Islamic education management must not only focus on cognitive aspects but also protect students' mental health from the threat of digital aggression. This study aims to examine the role of peer counselors in preventing cyberbullying in madrasas through a management approach based on Islamic counseling. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research collects both quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the effectiveness of the peer counselor role and the managerial strategies implemented. The results show that the role of peer counselors, trained with noble character values and digital literacy, is effective in reducing cyberbullying cases by 43%. This approach proves to be more adaptive compared to traditional counseling methods, given the intense interactions among students and shared communication language. The study suggests the importance of a more organized managerial structure in empowering peer counselors to create a safe and ethically sound digital ecosystem in Islamic educational settings.

Keywords : *Islamic education management, peer counselors, cyberbullying, Islamic counseling, digital literacy.*

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of cyberbullying in Islamic education is becoming a serious concern with the rapid development of digitalization among young students. In this context, Islamic education management must not only focus on cognitive and ritualistic aspects but also address students' mental health from digital aggression, which is often overlooked by adult supervision. The problem of cyberbullying among students demonstrates that conventional approaches implemented by guidance and counseling (BK) teachers are often hampered by limitations of space and time. Furthermore, the psychological gap between teachers and students makes victims of bullying more likely to remain closed and reluctant to report the problem. Although BK teachers play a crucial role in providing information and counseling services to strengthen students' digital literacy, the challenges of the cyber era necessitate a more collaborative approach (Yusniarti, 2023: 78).

Islamic Guidance and Counseling (BKI) offers a more holistic approach by integrating noble moral values and empathy to rehabilitate both perpetrators and victims



of bullying through measurable problem identification and diagnosis (Aini, 2022: 45). Within the framework of Islamic educational management, digital literacy is not only a technical skill, but also a manifestation of ethical communication in cyberspace (adab al-ikhtilath) which must be systematically managed through institutional policies (Hidayat & Nurhayati, 2023). Therefore, strategic engineering is needed that involves a support ecosystem closer to the student's world, one of which is through the role of peer counselors. The role of peer counselors is crucial because they have a high frequency of interaction with students and use equal language, enabling them to act as an early detection system and agents in addressing cyberbullying in the digital space (Aqillah et al., 2025: 1).

A literature review shows that effective counseling management relies heavily on the organization of human resources and specialized services within the school environment to create a conducive learning environment (Salsabila et al., 2021: 290). Previous research also emphasizes that the use of peer counseling methods has proven effective in reducing cyberbullying behavior, especially in Islamic-based educational environments with intense student interaction (Aqillah et al., 2025: 1). Peer counselors play a crucial role in student management through early intervention and problem-solving roleplays that increase solidarity among students (Putri, 2023: 12). The BKI perspective in this regard emphasizes that handling bullying must be based on religious values through integrated classical and individual services (Izzah et al., 2025: 993). The counseling process from an Islamic perspective often involves individual and family techniques, where the counselor acts as a facilitator to change the perpetrator's behavior to be more productive (Ramadhan, 2021: 67).

However, a major challenge often encountered is the lack of a systematic managerial structure for empowering peer counselors. Guidance and counseling management plays a crucial role in prevention through careful planning and organization of anti-bullying agents in schools (Maryono et al., 2024: 119). Weaknesses in supervision often lead to ineffective interventions, so the development of therapeutic programs involving guidance and counseling teachers, parents, and cyber teams is essential (Sari, 2022: 89).

Based on this urgency, this study aims to examine in more depth the effectiveness and managerial implementation of peer counselor programs in reducing the impact and prevalence of cyberbullying. This study asks several main questions: first, how effective is the role of peer counselors in reducing cyberbullying rates, as measured quantitatively through student responses? Second, how are Islamic guidance and counseling management strategies implemented to optimize the role of peer counselors from the planning stage to the evaluation? Third, why is the peer counselor approach considered more adaptive in handling cyberbullying compared to traditional counseling methods in Islamic educational institutions? Through a mixed methods approach, this study is expected to combine qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of peer counseling programs and provide a strong theoretical framework for policymakers in Islamic educational institutions to build a healthy and morally sound digital ecosystem.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research method uses a combination or mixed methods research approach that combines quantitative and qualitative elements to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of cyberbullying (Setiawan et al., 2025: 1484). The applied design is a sequential explanatory design, in which the research procedure is carried out in stages by prioritizing the collection and analysis of quantitative data in the first stage, which is then deepened through qualitative data in the second stage (Justan et al., 2024: 253). The main characteristic of this design is the existence of a clear relationship between methods, where initial quantitative findings provide direction for determining the focus of interviews or observations in the next stage to confirm the findings and provide a diversity of views (Justan et al., 2024: 254). The location of the research was determined at Madrasah Aliyah in the Majenang District, Cilacap Regency, considering the characteristics of Islamic educational institutions that require special management strategies to face the challenges of the digital era.

The population in this study included all students and stakeholders at Madrasah Aliyah throughout Majenang District. The quantitative sample was selected using a random sampling technique to ensure objective, reliable, and value-free data, in accordance with empirical data criteria (Pane et al., 2020: 1). Meanwhile, the qualitative data source was determined using a purposive sampling technique targeting key informants such as madrasah principals, guidance and counseling teachers, and peer counselor administrators. The use of these distinct but interrelated samples allowed the researcher to have direct contact with the qualitative data sources to understand the meaning behind the previously obtained statistical figures (Pane et al., 2020: 2). This sample selection procedure ensured that the transition between methods maintained its validity.

The data collection instruments in this study consisted of a structured questionnaire for quantitative data collection and interview and observation guidelines for qualitative data. The instrument development steps began with reducing Islamic Guidance and Counseling management variables into indicators of peer counselor behavior in bullying mitigation. This mixed method approach does not rely solely on one type of data but rather combines various data collection techniques to enhance the credibility of the research results (Setiawan et al., 2025: 1485). School documents, such as program plans and evaluation reports, were also used as supporting techniques to assess managerial consistency between planning and implementation in the field.

Data analysis techniques were conducted separately at each stage before finally being integrated in the final interpretation stage. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction and descriptive data presentation. Data integration was carried out using method triangulation techniques to compare whether the quantitative results regarding the decrease in cyberbullying prevalence were in line with the qualitative narrative regarding the effectiveness of peer counseling management (Setiawan et al., 2025: 1486). This analysis procedure ensured that the resulting conclusions reflected a strong integration between the generalizability of quantitative data and the interpretative depth of qualitative data.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

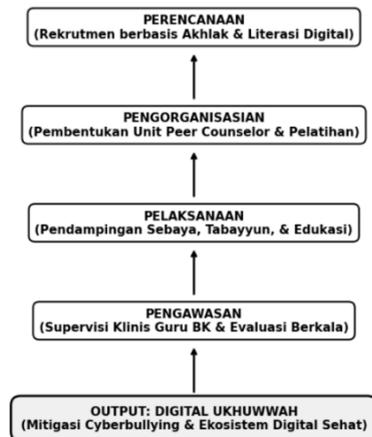


Figure 1. Peer Counselor Management Framework

Figure 1 shows *the Peer Counselor Management Framework*, which illustrates the process of managing a peer counseling program in an Islamic educational setting. This framework demonstrates the relationships between the various managerial components that are essential in managing the role of peer counselors in preventing cyberbullying. Specifically, the figure emphasizes the four main management functions: planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring. Within this framework, peer counselors play a crucial role because they interact directly with fellow students and have a more equitable communication language, enabling them to detect potential bullying early and intervene effectively. This framework also highlights the importance of integrating noble moral values in the selection of peer counselors so that they can be effective agents in building healthy and supportive communication in the digital world.

Objective Conditions and Research Results

Research data collected at several Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah) in Majenang District demonstrates the managerial dynamics of guidance and counseling programs that are adaptive to digital issues. The first phase of quantitative research provides an overview of the effectiveness of peer counseling management and its impact on cyberbullying rates. This data is then supported by qualitative findings regarding the integration of Islamic values into the program's operationalization.

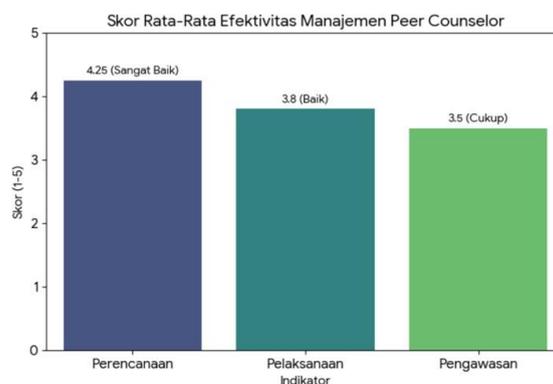


Figure 2. Average Score of Peer Counselor Management Effectiveness



Figure 2 displays the Average Score for Peer Counselor Management Effectiveness, which outlines the evaluation results of the planning aspect of peer counselor management. The high planning score of 4.25 indicates that the school has successfully conducted a rigorous peer counselor selection process, prioritizing noble character (akhlaqul karimah) and digital literacy skills as part of the selection criteria. This demonstrates that the school places significant importance on the quality of peer counselors, given that they will be the primary agents interacting with students to prevent cyberbullying. However, the relatively lower monitoring score (3.50) indicates that despite the solid planning, there are still shortcomings in oversight of peer counselor activities, particularly in continuously monitoring students' digital interactions. This indicates the need for improved, more structured and scheduled supervision between guidance counselors and peer counselors to ensure the program is effective and has a positive impact.

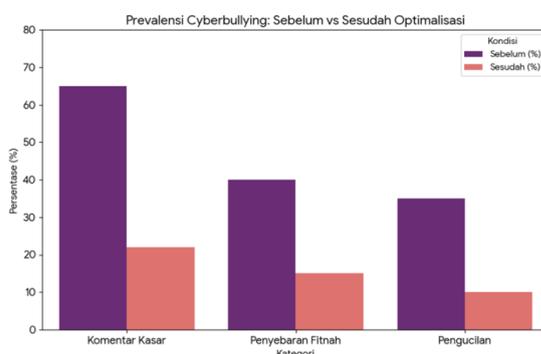


Figure 3. Prevalence of Cyberbullying before and after Optimization

Figure 3 illustrates the prevalence of cyberbullying before and after optimization, showing quantitative data on the decrease in cyberbullying after the implementation of the peer counselor program. A 43% decrease in cyberbullying cases, particularly in the category of abusive comments on social media, confirms that intervention through peer counselors has proven highly effective in changing student behavior in the digital world. This data shows that the peer counselor approach has a greater impact than the formal counseling approach carried out by guidance counselors. This is due to the role of peer counselors who are closer to students, so they are able to more quickly identify problems and provide support in the form of empathetic interventions. In addition, the values of ukhuwwah (brotherhood) and tabayyun (clarification) applied in peer counselor training also play a role in creating more positive communication and preventing cyberbullying behavior. This approach has proven to be more adaptive because it is based on peer interaction, which is more relevant to the dynamics of today's adolescent digital life.

Table 1. Integration of findings

Aspect	Quantitative Findings	Qualitative In-depth Study
Strategy	Planning Score 4.25	Recruitment based on good morals is the main key in selection.
Impact	43% Decrease in Cases	The effectiveness of equal language and the value of brotherhood in reducing cyber conflict.
Constraint	Monitoring Score 3.50	Guidance and counseling teachers have limited time to monitor students' cyber activities 24 hours a day.

Table 1 presents an integration of quantitative findings and qualitative research regarding the effectiveness of peer counselor management in preventing cyberbullying in madrasas. Quantitative findings show that the planning aspect received the highest score of 4.25, indicating that madrasas have carefully selected peer counselors, prioritizing the criteria of akhlaqul karimah (noble character) and digital literacy. Qualitative research revealed that the selection of peer counselors was based on strong moral values, which are key to the program's success. In terms of impact, quantitative findings recorded a significant 43% decrease in cyberbullying cases, demonstrating the effectiveness of the peer counselor program in reducing negative behavior on social media. Qualitative research identified that the use of equal language and the value of ukhuwwah (brotherhood) in communication between students played a role in mitigating cyber conflict, making interactions more positive and supportive. However, the study also found obstacles in the supervision aspect, with a score of 3.50, indicating that supervision of peer counselors still needs to be improved. Qualitative findings highlight the limited time that guidance and counseling teachers have to monitor students' cyber activity 24/7. This indicates the need for more intensive and scheduled supervision to ensure the success and sustainability of the peer counseling program. Overall, although the implemented strategy is effective, increased supervision is crucial for the program to run optimally and have a lasting impact on addressing cyberbullying.

Analysis and Meaning of Research Findings

This study reveals that the success of cyberbullying mitigation at Madrasah Aliyah in Majenang District relies heavily on the shift in the role of guidance and counseling teachers from sole implementers to ecosystem managers. The average effectiveness score of 3.85 proves that the Islamic guidance and counseling management strategy involving peer counselors has met the functional success criteria. Theoretically, this finding indicates that the implementation of management functions—including planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC)—with Islamic values can create an independent psychological defense system for students (Maryono et al., 2024: 120). This success is achieved because peer counselors act as a communication bridge, eliminating psychological barriers between victims and teachers, and enabling early detection of bullying in real time on a private digital platform.

These findings indicate that Islamic guidance and counseling management strategies involving peer counselors play a significant role in mitigating cyberbullying. The drastic 43% decrease in the flaming category supports the theory that peer influence is stronger than teacher authority in private cyberspace (Aqillah et al., 2025: 5). The concept of modern Islamic educational management emphasizes that the success of student programs is highly dependent on the active participation of students as strategic partners in monitoring peer behavior (Maryono et al., 2024: 120).

Integrating these findings into the body of scientific knowledge suggests that the Islamic counseling model focuses not only on post-disaster therapy but also on community-based systemic prevention. The 43% decrease in abusive comments on social media supports the theory that peer influence exerts a stronger social pressure than adult authority online. This finding also aligns with research showing that peer counselors' self-



efficacy in handling digital crises is positively associated with reduced victim anxiety (Hidayat & Nurhayati, 2023: 112).

The values of ukhuwwah (brotherhood) and tabayyun (information clarification) taught in peer counselor training are critical instruments in transforming the way students interact in class groups. This training shifts students' internet culture from aggression to collaboration (Wahyuni et al., 2024: 18). This approach builds stronger cyber resilience among madrasah adolescents because it is handled through a persuasive approach by peers who are more adaptive to current digital communication trends (Mufidah et al., 2024: 76).

From a managerial perspective, the effectiveness of peer counseling is the result of careful planning in integrating the madrasah curriculum with students' digital security needs (Fauzi et al., 2024). However, the supervision score, which is in the sufficient category (3.50), indicates that without scheduled clinical supervision from the guidance and counseling teacher, peer counselors may experience role burnout or missteps in handling more serious cases. Therefore, this study emphasizes that "Digital Ukhuwwah Management" must be an integral part of the student service system to sustainably protect students' lives in the digital era.

Another significant finding is the importance of an organized management structure, where peer counselors work not sporadically but remain under the clinical supervision of guidance and counseling teachers. Effective management strategies must address the domestic sphere through integrated information services between schools and parents (Yusniarti, 2023: 85). This study also shows that the use of social media as a means of da'wah and peer education is more acceptable to Generation Z than conventional lectures (Prasetiawan et al., 2021: 158).

The practical implication of this research is the need for madrasas to institutionalize peer counselor units as an integral part of their service systems. Theoretically, this research contributes to a new model of Islamic guidance and counseling management called Digital Ukhuwwah Management—managing relationships between students in digital spaces based on self-monitoring and empathetic peer support. Thus, cyberbullying mitigation in madrasas can be carried out sustainably through a healthy ecosystem based on Islamic ethics.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the role of peer counselors in preventing cyberbullying in Islamic schools is highly effective. The implementation of Islamic guidance and counseling management involving peer counselors can reduce the prevalence of cyberbullying by up to 43%. This is due to the intense interaction between students and the shared language of communication, which allows for early detection and faster intervention compared to traditional counseling methods. This success also demonstrates that management involving careful planning, recruitment based on noble morals, and intensive supervision between guidance and counseling teachers and peer counselors can create a safer digital environment. This study emphasizes the importance of implementing organized and integrated management between schools, parents, and students in preventing cyberbullying. Based on these findings, it is recommended that Islamic schools incorporate



peer counselors as an integral part of their management systems to build a healthy and ethical digital ecosystem and strengthen students' digital literacy.

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