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Islamic Ethical Pedagogy for Bullying Prevention: Integrating Gender Education in Digital Learning Communities

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Abstract: Despite the growing implementation of anti-bullying programs in schools, existing approaches frequently remain behaviorally oriented and insufficiently address the structural dimensions of gender inequality, symbolic violence, and ethical awareness within educational environments. This study aims to examine bullying prevention through the integration of gender education within Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) grounded in Islamic ethical values and implemented through digital learning communities. Employing a qualitative case study design, this research was conducted within the Eudaimonia digital community in Probolinggo, Indonesia. Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation studies, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that bullying operates as a form of symbolic violence reproduced through hegemonic gender constructions and unequal social relations among students. The integration of Islamic ethical values, including *musāwah* (equality), *'adl* (justice), *raḥmah* (compassion), and *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity), contributed significantly to the development of students' critical awareness, empathy, and prosocial behavior. Furthermore, the Eudaimonia digital community functioned as a transformative pedagogical space facilitating reflective dialogue, collaborative learning, and continuous ethical internalization. This study proposes an integrative framework conceptualized as *Islamic Ethical Digital Pedagogy*, which combines Islamic ethical traditions, gender-responsive education, and participatory digital learning within a holistic anti-bullying strategy. The study contributes theoretically to contemporary Islamic education discourse by repositioning digital learning communities as critical-transformative pedagogical spaces for fostering inclusive, just, and anti-violent educational cultures in the digital era.

***Abstrak**: Meningkatnya praktik bullying di lingkungan sekolah menunjukkan bahwa berbagai program pencegahan yang telah diterapkan masih cenderung berorientasi pada perilaku dan belum secara memadai menyentuh dimensi struktural ketimpangan gender, kekerasan simbolik, dan kesadaran etis dalam kultur pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pencegahan bullying melalui integrasi pendidikan gender dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) berbasis nilai etika Islam yang diimplementasikan melalui komunitas pembelajaran digital. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus pada komunitas digital Eudaimonia di Probolinggo, Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan studi dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan thematic analysis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bullying merupakan bentuk kekerasan simbolik yang direproduksi melalui konstruksi gender hegemonik dan relasi sosial yang timpang di kalangan siswa. Integrasi nilai-nilai etika Islam seperti musāwah (kesetaraan), 'adl (keadilan), raḥmah (kasih sayang), dan karāmah insāniyyah (martabat kemanusiaan) terbukti mampu meningkatkan kesadaran kritis, empati sosial, dan perilaku prososial siswa. Selain itu, komunitas digital Eudaimonia berfungsi sebagai ruang pedagogis transformatif yang memfasilitasi dialog reflektif, pembelajaran kolaboratif, dan*

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internalisasi nilai secara berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini menawarkan kerangka integratif yang dikonsepsikan sebagai Islamic Ethical Digital Pedagogy, yaitu pendekatan pedagogis yang mengintegrasikan tradisi etika Islam, pendidikan responsif gender, dan pembelajaran digital partisipatif dalam strategi pencegahan bullying yang holistik. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini berkontribusi terhadap pengembangan diskursus pendidikan Islam kontemporer dengan menempatkan komunitas pembelajaran digital sebagai ruang pedagogis kritis-transformatif untuk membangun budaya pendidikan yang inklusif, adil, dan anti-kekerasan di era digital.

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of bullying in contemporary educational environments has become an increasingly complex and alarming global issue, particularly in societies undergoing rapid socio-cultural and digital transformation (Assylbekova et al., 2024; Ayhan et al., 2025). In the Indonesian educational context, bullying practices continue to occur across various educational levels, ranging from verbal humiliation and social exclusion to physical violence and cyberbullying (Astuti et.al., 2025; Saleh & Hanum, 2025). This condition indicates that schools have not yet fully functioned as safe, inclusive, and humane educational spaces for students (Izadi & Hart, 2024; O'Higgins Norman et al., 2022). In Probolinggo Regency, several bullying cases involving junior and elementary school students throughout 2025 demonstrate that violence among students is not merely incidental but reflects deeper structural and cultural problems within educational environments (Layli, 2025). Bullying, therefore, should not be understood solely as deviant individual behavior, but rather as a social phenomenon rooted in unequal power relations, social domination, and the normalization of symbolic violence within student interactions. Theoretically, bullying refers to repeated aggressive behavior involving an imbalance of power, whether physical, psychological, social, or symbolic, that systematically marginalizes vulnerable individuals (Andrews et al., 2023; Siu, 2025; Wafi et al., 2025). The urgency of this issue lies in its multidimensional consequences, including psychological trauma, anxiety, depression, declining academic performance, and the deterioration of students' social well-being (Balqis et al., 2026; Ling et al., 2022). Consequently, bullying represents not only an educational problem but also a moral, cultural, and social justice issue that requires comprehensive academic investigation.

Within contemporary educational discourse, recent studies increasingly emphasize that bullying cannot be separated from broader structures of gender inequality and hegemonic social constructions (Lee et al., 2025; Upadhyay et al., 2023). Critical gender theorists argue that educational spaces often reproduce unequal social relations through dominant constructions of masculinity and femininity that legitimize domination and marginalization (Papadelos et al., 2023; Krivoshchekov et al., 2025). Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity explains that social norms frequently position aggressiveness, dominance, and emotional control as ideal masculine traits, while behaviors perceived as weak, emotional, or feminine are subordinated and stigmatized (Gorisha et al., 2025; Ritchie, 2022).

Such constructions become embedded within school culture and manifest in various forms of symbolic violence, including labeling, ridicule, exclusion, and verbal humiliation directed toward students who fail to conform to dominant gender expectations. In this regard, bullying operates not merely through overt physical aggression but also through subtle mechanisms of symbolic domination reproduced through language, peer interactions, and institutional culture. This condition demonstrates that bullying is fundamentally linked to the reproduction of unequal power relations within educational environments. Therefore, addressing bullying requires approaches that move beyond punitive interventions toward transformative educational strategies capable of deconstructing discriminatory social norms and promoting inclusive social relations.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the persistence of bullying practices reveals a significant contradiction between the normative ideals of Islamic moral teachings and the realities of social interaction within schools (Ghamra-Oui, 2022; Kisbiyanto, 2025). Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI*) fundamentally aims to cultivate ethical awareness, compassion, justice, and respect for human dignity (Mulyana, 2023; Zul et al., 2026). However, in practice, PAI learning often remains normative, textual, and heavily oriented toward moral transmission rather than critical social transformation (Asnawi & Zuhdi, 2025). Consequently, Islamic ethical values are frequently taught as abstract theological concepts detached from students' lived social realities. Values such as *musāwah* (equality), *'adl* (justice), *raḥmah* (compassion), and *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity) possess substantial transformative potential for fostering inclusive educational cultures, yet these principles are rarely contextualized within discussions of gender justice, social inequality, and symbolic violence in schools (Azizah et al., 2026; Kurniawan & Rahmadani, 2025). This pedagogical limitation contributes to the persistence of discriminatory attitudes and bullying practices despite the formal teaching of moral and religious values. In this context, Islamic education requires epistemological and pedagogical reconstruction so that it can function not merely as moral instruction but also as a critical-transformative framework capable of responding to contemporary social challenges.

At the global level, anti-bullying interventions have been widely implemented through psychological counseling, character education, restorative discipline, and school-based policy reforms. Nevertheless, many existing approaches remain behaviorally oriented and insufficiently address the structural dimensions of bullying, including gender hierarchy, symbolic domination, and cultural normalization of violence. Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of gender-responsive education in reducing school violence and improving students' prosocial behavior. Smith et al. (2021), for instance, found that integrating gender equality into school curricula significantly reduced bullying in European secondary schools. Similarly, Park and Kim (2022) argued that empathy-based and social justice-oriented education contributes substantially to the development of students' social sensitivity and anti-violent behavior. In the Indonesian context, Rahmawati et al. (2023) further demonstrated that gender-based digital literacy enhances students' awareness of symbolic violence in online interactions. However, despite these important contributions, most previous studies remain fragmented in at least three significant ways. First, existing studies tend to separate gender education

from religious and ethical pedagogical frameworks. Second, research on Islamic education frequently remains normative-theological and rarely engages critically with gender justice and power relations. Third, studies concerning digital pedagogy often focus primarily on technological utilization without examining the transformative ethical dimensions of digital learning communities. As a result, previous approaches have not yet produced an integrative educational model capable of addressing bullying through the intersection of Islamic ethics, gender-responsive pedagogy, and digital learning ecology.

This condition reveals an important theoretical, empirical, and contextual research gap. Theoretically, there remains limited scholarly discussion integrating Islamic ethical pedagogy with critical gender perspectives and digital pedagogy within anti-bullying discourse. Existing scholarship on Islamic education predominantly emphasizes moral instruction without sufficiently engaging with critical theories concerning symbolic violence, social inequality, and hegemonic gender constructions (Hossain & Islam, 2024; Mercan Küçükakın & Engin-Demir, 2022; Yetiş, 2026). Empirically, previous anti-bullying studies often focus on formal classroom interventions and rarely explore participatory digital communities as transformative pedagogical spaces capable of shaping students' ethical consciousness (Culcasi et al., 2025; Vičič Krabonja et al., 2024). Contextually, the increasing influence of digital culture on youth social interaction patterns necessitates educational approaches that are adaptive to contemporary technological realities while remaining grounded in ethical and religious values (Papakostas, 2025; Rochim & Khayati, 2022). Without such integration, anti-bullying initiatives risk remaining partial, reactive, and unsustainable (Khofi & Herdianto, 2024; Siddiqui, 2025). Therefore, there is a pressing need to develop a holistic educational framework capable of bridging Islamic ethical values, gender-responsive pedagogy, and digital learning communities within a unified anti-bullying strategy.

In response to these limitations, this study offers a significant conceptual and pedagogical contribution through the development of an integrative model of bullying prevention grounded in Islamic ethical pedagogy and gender education within digital learning communities. Unlike previous studies that tend to separate religious education, gender discourse, and digital technology, this research positions these three dimensions within a single transformative pedagogical framework. The Eudaimonia digital community serves not merely as a technological communication platform but as an alternative pedagogical space that facilitates participatory dialogue, collective reflection, ethical internalization, and the reconstruction of inclusive social identities. Through reflective interaction and collaborative learning processes, students are encouraged to critically examine discriminatory social norms, develop empathy toward others, and cultivate moral courage in confronting bullying practices. In this regard, digital communities function as counter-hegemonic spaces capable of transforming students from passive recipients of moral instruction into active agents of ethical and social change (Dania & Bloomfield, 2026; Farhah & Sauri, 2024). This approach reflects a broader reconstruction of Islamic education discourse by integrating Islamic ethical traditions with critical pedagogy and contemporary digital learning ecology.

Based on the overall discussion above, this study aims to examine how the integration of gender education within Islamic Religious Education grounded in Islamic ethical values can be implemented through digital learning communities as a strategy for bullying prevention. More specifically, this study seeks to analyze the relationship between gender-based symbolic violence, the internalization of Islamic ethical values, and the transformative role of digital communities in shaping students' social awareness and prosocial behavior. In addition, this study aims to formulate a contextual and transformative pedagogical model that contributes theoretically to contemporary Islamic education discourse and practically to the creation of safe, inclusive, and socially just educational environments. Therefore, this research is expected not only to enrich scholarly discussions on Islamic education, gender pedagogy, and digital learning but also to provide practical insights for educators, policymakers, and educational institutions in developing sustainable anti-bullying educational strategies in the digital era.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using a critical case study approach to obtain an in-depth understanding of how gender education integrated within Islamic Religious Education functions as a transformative strategy for bullying prevention through digital learning communities (Riaz et al., 2023; Zakiyullah & Sofa, 2025). The study was grounded within a critical-constructivist paradigm, which views social reality as being socially constructed through interaction, discourse, power relations, and cultural practices. This paradigm was considered appropriate because bullying was conceptualized not merely as individual deviant behavior but as a socially reproduced phenomenon embedded within gender hierarchy, symbolic violence, and educational culture. The qualitative case study approach enabled the researchers to explore deeply the dynamics of students' experiences, ethical value internalization, and participatory interactions occurring within a specific digital learning environment.

The research was conducted within the Eudaimonia digital community located in Probolinggo Regency, East Java Province, Indonesia, particularly in educational networks connected to Kotaanyar and Gading Districts. Administratively, the research site was situated in Probolinggo Regency, East Java 67293, Indonesia. The Eudaimonia community was selected purposively because it actively facilitates digital anti-bullying literacy programs integrating Islamic ethical values, gender awareness, and reflective online discussions among junior high school students. In this context, the digital community functioned not only as a communication platform but also as an alternative pedagogical space that enabled participatory learning, collective reflection, and ethical dialogue among participants.

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling based on participants' involvement, experience, and active participation in anti-bullying educational activities within the Eudaimonia digital community. A total of nine informants participated in this study, consisting of one Islamic Religious Education teacher and eight junior high school students aged between 13 and 15 years old. The student participants included both male and female students who had participated in the digital literacy and anti-bullying program for at least six months.

The inclusion criteria were designed to ensure that participants possessed sufficient experience and interaction within the digital community to provide rich and relevant data related to the study focus.

Data collection was conducted from January to March 2025 through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation studies. Participant observation was carried out both synchronously and asynchronously within the Eudaimonia digital community through online discussion forums, digital campaigns, collaborative learning activities, and reflective interactions among participants. The observation process focused on interaction dynamics, patterns of communication, expressions of gender perceptions, responses to bullying issues, and students' engagement with Islamic ethical values emphasizing equality, compassion, and human dignity.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with all participants to explore their understanding of bullying, experiences of social interaction within the digital community, perceptions of gender relations, and the process of internalizing Islamic ethical values in daily life. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted in Indonesian through face-to-face meetings and online video communication platforms. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure analytical accuracy. The semi-structured interview model enabled flexibility in exploring emerging issues while maintaining alignment with the study objectives.

In addition, documentation studies were conducted to strengthen empirical findings obtained from observations and interviews. Documentation data included digital learning modules, anti-bullying campaign materials, reflective discussion archives, screenshots of online interactions, infographics, students' reflective posts, and community activity reports. These documents were analyzed to identify recurring discourses, symbolic representations, and ethical narratives related to bullying prevention, gender awareness, and Islamic educational values within the digital community.

The data analysis process employed thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which aims to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns of meaning systematically and critically within qualitative data (Byrne, 2022). The analysis process was conducted through several stages: (1) data familiarization through repeated reading of interview transcripts, observation notes, and digital documents; (2) initial open coding to identify meaningful units related to bullying, gender relations, ethical values, and digital interaction; (3) categorization and axial coding to connect related codes into broader thematic patterns; (4) theme construction and interpretation to generate conceptual understanding; and (5) drawing inductive conclusions and developing analytical interpretations. The analytical process focused specifically on three central dimensions: (a) students' understanding and experiences of bullying, (b) the internalization of Islamic ethical values in students' social relations, and (c) the role of digital learning communities as transformative pedagogical spaces in preventing bullying.

To enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, this study applied several validation strategies. Source triangulation and method triangulation were conducted by comparing data obtained from teachers, students, community

administrators, observations, interviews, and documentation materials to ensure consistency and depth of interpretation (Bellido-García et al., 2022; Schlunegger et al., 2024). In addition, member checking was conducted by allowing participants to review interview summaries and preliminary interpretations to confirm the accuracy of the findings. Peer debriefing with fellow qualitative researchers was also employed to minimize interpretive bias and strengthen analytical rigor. Furthermore, the researchers maintained reflexive notes throughout the research process to critically examine personal assumptions, positionality, and potential subjectivities influencing data interpretation.

Ethically, this study adhered to research ethics principles concerning confidentiality, voluntary participation, and participant protection. All participants provided informed consent prior to data collection, while parental consent was obtained for underage student participants. Participants' identities were anonymized using pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality and privacy throughout the research process. Moreover, the study ensured that all online observations and digital document analyses were conducted with the awareness and approval of the community administrators and participants involved.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this study were generated through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis conducted within the Eudaimonia digital community. The results reveal that bullying among students operates not only as interpersonal aggression but also as a socially reproduced form of symbolic violence closely connected to gender constructions, unequal power relations, and the absence of critical ethical awareness within educational practices. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that the integration of gender education within Islamic Religious Education, strengthened through participatory digital learning communities, contributes significantly to the transformation of students' social awareness, empathy, and prosocial behavior. To enhance analytical depth, the findings are presented thematically according to the dominant patterns emerging from the data analysis process.

Gendered Symbolic Violence in Students' Social Interactions

The findings indicate that bullying practices among students predominantly occur through subtle forms of symbolic violence embedded within everyday social interactions. Participant observations revealed that verbal jokes, labeling practices, ridicule, and exclusionary humor were frequently normalized within peer communication patterns, particularly those associated with gender identity and masculinity. Male students who were perceived as emotionally expressive, quiet, physically weak, or insufficiently masculine often became targets of verbal humiliation and social marginalization.

One participant explained: "*If there is a boy who is too quiet, he is usually immediately called like a girl by his friends*." (Student Participant 3, Interview, 2025)

Similarly, another participant stated: "*Sometimes friends joke by calling someone weak or feminine, and people just laugh because they think it is normal*." (Student Participant 5, Interview, 2025)

These statements demonstrate that bullying was frequently legitimized as ordinary humor rather than recognized as violence. Such interactions reveal how symbolic violence operates subtly through language, stereotypes, and peer normalization processes. In this context, hegemonic constructions of masculinity functioned as social standards regulating acceptable student behavior, while students who deviated from dominant gender expectations experienced stigmatization and symbolic exclusion. The findings further suggest that bullying practices were collectively reproduced through peer interactions rather than emerging solely from individual aggressive tendencies.

Documentation analysis also reinforced these findings. Screenshots of online discussions and group conversations within the digital community revealed repeated use of degrading expressions associated with femininity, weakness, and emotional sensitivity. Although participants often framed such expressions as humor, reflective discussions later revealed that several students felt emotionally uncomfortable and socially pressured by these interactions. Thus, bullying in this context functioned not merely as explicit aggression but as a socially normalized mechanism for enforcing conformity to dominant gender norms.

Reproduction of Gender Bias in Educational and Social Contexts

The findings further reveal that gender bias remained deeply embedded within students' cognitive and social understandings. Classroom observations showed that students frequently associated specific personality traits, behaviors, and social roles with rigid gender categories. Masculinity was commonly linked to courage, emotional toughness, dominance, and leadership, whereas femininity was associated with softness, passivity, and emotional vulnerability.

One participant explicitly stated: "*Boys have to be brave, not weak; if they are weak, they will be called like girls*." (Student Participant 2, Interview, 2025)

Another student added: "*Sometimes boys are embarrassed to express sadness because they are afraid of being mocked by their friends*." (Student Participant 7, Interview, 2025)

These findings demonstrate that dichotomous gender constructions significantly shaped students' perceptions of themselves and others. Such constructions contributed to the legitimation of bullying behaviors by positioning non-conforming students as socially deviant. In this regard, gender stereotypes functioned as mechanisms of social control that reinforced unequal power relations among students.

Furthermore, documentation analysis of PAI teaching materials indicated that discussions concerning justice, morality, and compassion remained largely normative and insufficiently connected to issues of gender equality and social discrimination. Although ethical values were formally introduced within learning materials, they were rarely contextualized within students' everyday social realities, particularly concerning bullying and symbolic violence. Consequently, students often understood Islamic ethical teachings as abstract moral obligations rather than

as critical ethical frameworks applicable to real social interactions. These findings suggest that the absence of gender-sensitive and critical pedagogical approaches contributed to the reproduction of symbolic inequality within educational culture.

Internalization of Islamic Ethical Values and the Transformation of Social Awareness

One of the most significant findings of this study concerns the transformation of students' ethical awareness following their participation in the Eudaimonia digital learning community. The integration of Islamic ethical values such as *musāwah* (equality), *'adl* (justice), *raḥmah* (compassion), and *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity) gradually influenced how students interpreted bullying, social relationships, and interpersonal responsibility.

Several participants described substantial changes in how they interacted with peers after engaging in reflective discussions within the digital community.

One student explained: "*Now I think more before joking because I realize words can hurt others*." (Student Participant 1, Interview, 2025)

Another participant stated: "*I used to think bullying was normal among friends, but after the discussions, I realized everyone deserves respect*." (Student Participant 6, Interview, 2025)

These statements indicate a shift from superficial moral understanding toward deeper critical-reflective awareness. Students increasingly recognized bullying not merely as inappropriate behavior but as a violation of human dignity and social justice. The findings suggest that the internalization of Islamic ethical values operated not only at the cognitive level but also at the affective and behavioral levels, influencing students' empathy, moral sensitivity, and interpersonal responsibility.

Observational data further demonstrated that students began showing stronger empathy toward peers who experienced humiliation or exclusion. In several observed interactions, students actively intervened when witnessing verbal mockery and encouraged more respectful communication patterns. Reflective discussions within the digital community also revealed increased awareness regarding the importance of respecting differences, maintaining social equality, and rejecting degrading humor. Therefore, the integration of Islamic ethical pedagogy contributed significantly to the transformation of students' moral consciousness and social interaction patterns.

Digital Learning Community as a Reflective and Transformative Pedagogical Space

Another important finding concerns the role of the Eudaimonia digital community as an alternative pedagogical space facilitating participatory and reflective learning processes. Unlike formal classroom settings that were often perceived as hierarchical and teacher-centered, the digital community enabled more open, dialogical, and collaborative interactions among participants. Observations indicated that students actively shared personal experiences, discussed bullying cases, reflected on social relationships, and collectively negotiated ethical understandings concerning equality and respect.

One participant explained: "*In the group, we can share stories and discuss, so we understand better that bullying is not acceptable and can hurt others*." (Student Participant 4, Interview, 2025)

Another student stated: "*It feels easier to speak honestly in the online discussions because everyone can share their opinions without being judged*." (Student Participant 8, Interview, 2025)

These findings indicate that the digital community functioned as a reflective pedagogical environment encouraging experiential learning, collective meaning-making, and ethical dialogue. Rather than functioning merely as a technological communication platform, the digital community operated as a community of practice that facilitated students' critical engagement with social realities and ethical issues.

Documentation analysis revealed various forms of participatory educational content, including anti-bullying campaigns, digital posters, reflective videos, discussion forums, and collaborative storytelling activities emphasizing equality, empathy, and human dignity. Continuous interaction within the community strengthened students' engagement with anti-bullying values and encouraged the emergence of more inclusive social norms. These findings suggest that digital learning communities possess substantial transformative potential in supporting ethical and socially responsive educational practices.

Emergence of Prosocial Agency and Behavioral Transformation

The findings also demonstrate that participation in the digital anti-bullying program contributed significantly to students' behavioral transformation and the emergence of prosocial agency. Interviews and observations revealed that students increasingly developed moral courage to challenge bullying practices and support peers experiencing discrimination or humiliation.

One participant stated: "*Now if someone is being mocked, I dare to say stop because it can hurt them*." (Student Participant 2, Interview, 2025)

Another participant added: "*I started trying to help friends who are isolated because I realized everyone should feel accepted*." (Student Participant 5, Interview, 2025)

These findings indicate that the educational intervention did not merely increase students' conceptual understanding of bullying but also encouraged concrete behavioral changes and ethical action (Afrina & Afrahamiryano, 2024). Students demonstrated stronger prosocial behaviors, including emotional support, respectful communication, peer protection, and greater sensitivity toward the emotional experiences of others.

Observation data further showed a reduction in degrading language use and increased participation in anti-bullying campaigns organized within the digital community. Several students also emerged as active facilitators of reflective discussions, encouraging peers to critically evaluate harmful interaction patterns. This demonstrates that the integration of gender education, Islamic ethical values, and digital participatory pedagogy contributed not only to awareness transformation but also to the formation of student agency capable of promoting more inclusive social environments.

Table 1. Thematic Summary of Research Findings

Main Theme	Empirical Indicators	Analytical Interpretation
Gendered Symbolic Violence	Verbal mockery, labeling, degrading humor	Normalization of symbolic violence through hegemonic masculinity
Reproduction of Gender Bias	Masculinity/femininity stereotypes	Legitimation of unequal social relations
Internalization of Islamic Ethical Values	Empathy, reflective awareness, ethical sensitivity	Transformation of moral consciousness
Digital Community Pedagogy	Collective dialogue, reflective participation	Alternative transformative pedagogical space
Emergence of Prosocial Agency	Intervention against bullying, supportive behavior	Development of ethical and social responsibility

Overall, the findings demonstrate that bullying prevention becomes more effective when educational interventions move beyond normative moral instruction toward integrative pedagogical approaches combining gender education, Islamic ethical values, and participatory digital learning communities. The Eudaimonia digital community functioned as a transformative learning ecology that strengthened students' critical awareness, empathy, and prosocial behavior in sustainable and contextual ways.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that bullying among students cannot be understood merely as isolated individual misconduct but must instead be interpreted as a socially reproduced phenomenon embedded within unequal power relations, gender hierarchy, and symbolic domination. The normalization of verbal humiliation, labeling, and gender-based ridicule identified in this study indicates that bullying functions as a mechanism through which dominant social norms are reproduced and maintained within educational environments. In this context, symbolic violence operates subtly through language, peer interaction, and everyday communication patterns, making discriminatory behavior appear natural and socially acceptable. The recurring mockery directed toward male students perceived as "weak," emotionally expressive, or insufficiently masculine illustrates how hegemonic constructions of masculinity regulate students' identities and social positions. Such findings reinforce critical perspectives arguing that bullying is fundamentally connected to broader systems of social control rather than merely reflecting individual aggression (Donoghue, & Pascoe, 2023; Dang et al., 2025; Harvey, 2022).

This interpretation strongly resonates with the concept of symbolic violence, which explains how domination is reproduced through the internalization of cultural norms, values, and social expectations. In the present study, students who deviated from dominant gender expectations became vulnerable to stigmatization and symbolic exclusion, indicating that bullying served as a mechanism for enforcing conformity to hegemonic norms. This finding aligns with Moody & Stahel (2025) and Stahel et al (2025), who argue that bullying is often sustained by

implicit peer group norms that pressure students to conform in order to maintain social acceptance. Similarly, Warin (2023) and Gómez et al (2025) emphasize that peer-group power dynamics significantly influence aggressive behavior among adolescents. The present study extends these arguments by demonstrating that gender-based symbolic domination operates not only within offline school interactions but also within digitally mediated social environments. Therefore, bullying should be conceptualized not solely as behavioral misconduct but as a manifestation of socially structured inequality reproduced through educational culture and peer interaction systems.

More importantly, the findings reveal that gender bias within educational practices contributes substantially to the reproduction of symbolic violence among students. The persistence of dichotomous assumptions associating masculinity with strength and femininity with weakness demonstrates that gender stereotypes remain deeply embedded within students' social consciousness. This condition indicates that educational institutions may inadvertently reinforce discriminatory social norms when pedagogical practices fail to critically engage with issues of gender justice and social equality. In the context of Islamic Religious Education, the findings suggest that moral instruction often remains normative and text-oriented, emphasizing ethical concepts without contextualizing them within students' lived social realities. Consequently, students may formally learn values such as justice and compassion while simultaneously reproducing exclusionary and discriminatory behaviors in everyday interaction. This finding supports Bermúdez Figueroa et al (2023) argument that educational practices lacking critical gender perspectives risk reproducing social inequality rather than transforming it. Islam et al (2026) argues that gender-insensitive curricula frequently reinforce dominant norms by failing to interrogate the structural roots of discrimination.

The findings further demonstrate that gender stereotypes influence not only students' perceptions of others but also their self-construction and emotional expression. Male students frequently reported feeling pressured to embody dominant masculine ideals, including emotional toughness, social dominance, and physical strength, while emotional vulnerability was stigmatized as feminine and socially inferior. This supports Sulla et al (2025), who argue that internalized gender stereotypes significantly shape children's long-term social behavior and contribute to the normalization of aggression and exclusion. In the present study, students who failed to conform to dominant masculinity norms were positioned as legitimate targets for ridicule and humiliation, reflecting how gender constructions become mechanisms of social regulation. Thus, the study highlights that bullying prevention requires not only behavioral intervention but also epistemological transformation capable of critically challenging gender hierarchy and symbolic domination within educational culture (Nassem, 2025; Khrebtan-Hörhager et al., 2026).

One of the most significant contributions of this study lies in demonstrating the transformative potential of Islamic ethical pedagogy in reconstructing students' social awareness and interpersonal behavior. The integration of Islamic ethical values such as *musāwah* (equality), *'adl* (justice), *raḥmah* (compassion), and *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity) functioned not merely as normative moral instruction but as a critical ethical framework through which students reinterpreted

bullying, social relations, and human dignity. The findings indicate that students gradually shifted from perceiving bullying as harmless joking toward recognizing it as a violation of ethical responsibility and social justice. This transformation demonstrates that Islamic ethical values possess substantial emancipatory potential when contextualized within students' social experiences and integrated into participatory pedagogical practices.

This finding aligns with Rifai & Uctufia (2024), who argue that contextualized religious education can strengthen empathy and reduce aggressive behavior among students. However, the present study extends previous scholarship by demonstrating that Islamic ethics become more transformative when integrated with critical gender pedagogy and reflective digital learning environments. In contrast to conventional moral instruction approaches that primarily emphasize obedience and behavioral compliance, the pedagogical approach identified in this study encouraged students to critically reflect on power relations, discrimination, and the ethical consequences of their actions. This process enabled students not only to cognitively understand bullying as morally wrong but also to develop affective sensitivity toward the suffering and marginalization experienced by others. Such findings support Purwaningsih (2024), who emphasize that effective character education must involve moral reasoning and emotional engagement rather than solely behavioral regulation. Similarly, the findings reinforce Chailani, et al. (2023), who argue that Islamic educational values can function as a preventive framework against bullying when implemented contextually and reflectively.

Beyond the reconstruction of ethical awareness, this study also reveals the strategic role of digital learning communities as transformative pedagogical spaces. The Eudaimonia digital community functioned not merely as a technological communication platform but as a participatory learning ecology facilitating ethical dialogue, collaborative reflection, and critical engagement with social realities. Unlike formal classroom settings that often remain hierarchical and teacher-centered, the digital community enabled more dialogical and inclusive interaction patterns in which students actively shared experiences, reflected collectively on bullying cases, and negotiated ethical understandings regarding equality and respect. These findings are consistent with Marolla-Gajardo & Lozano Mas (2025), who conceptualize digital spaces as learning ecologies capable of extending the boundaries of formal education and supporting socially situated learning processes.

Furthermore, the findings support Lejealle et al (2022) argument that online communities can function as communities of practice that facilitate collaborative and experiential learning. In the present study, students were not positioned as passive recipients of information but as active participants engaged in collective meaning-making processes. Through continuous interaction, reflective discussions, and participatory digital campaigns, students gradually developed stronger empathy, ethical awareness, and prosocial agency. This indicates that digital communities possess transformative pedagogical potential capable of reshaping students' interactional culture and ethical orientation (Miliarto & Rahmawati, 2025). At the same time, the findings extend Zheng et al (2024) discussion concerning digital character education by showing that digital participation can contribute not only to individual moral development but also to the reconstruction of inclusive social norms within peer communities. Thus, digital technology should

not be viewed merely as an educational tool but as a socially and ethically significant pedagogical environment capable of influencing identity formation, social relations, and ethical consciousness.

From a broader analytical perspective, the findings of this study suggest that bullying prevention requires a multidimensional and integrative educational approach addressing structural, cultural, ethical, and technological dimensions simultaneously. The integration of gender education, Islamic ethical values, and digital participatory pedagogy produced significant transformations in students' cognitive, affective, and social dimensions. Students not only acquired conceptual knowledge concerning bullying and equality but also developed emotional sensitivity, moral courage, and active responsibility in confronting discriminatory behavior. This finding aligns with the social-ecological framework proposed by Pei & Li (2026), which emphasizes that behavioral transformation emerges through interactions across multiple social environments, including peer groups, educational institutions, and broader cultural systems. In this context, digital learning communities functioned as alternative social ecologies capable of reshaping students' ethical norms and interactional practices (Mekheimer, 2025; Pantazidis & Tsismalidou, 2026).

Compared with previous studies, the present research offers a more comprehensive conceptual contribution by integrating three dimensions that are often treated separately within existing scholarship: Islamic ethical pedagogy, gender-responsive education, and digital participatory learning. Most previous anti-bullying studies tend to focus either on behavioral intervention, psychological counseling, religious moral instruction, or technological learning innovation independently. In contrast, this study demonstrates that combining these dimensions within a unified framework can generate more transformative and sustainable educational outcomes. In this regard, the study proposes what can be conceptualized as an "Islamic Ethical Digital Pedagogy" framework, namely a pedagogical approach integrating Islamic ethical traditions, critical gender awareness, and participatory digital learning to foster inclusive, reflective, and anti-violent educational cultures. This framework represents the primary theoretical novelty of the study because it reconstructs Islamic Religious Education not merely as normative moral instruction but as a critical-transformative educational practice responsive to contemporary social and digital realities.

Overall, the findings of this study highlight that bullying prevention cannot rely solely on punitive discipline, behavioral control, or conventional moral instruction. Instead, effective anti-bullying intervention requires the transformation of educational culture, social relations, and ethical consciousness through participatory, reflective, and justice-oriented pedagogical approaches. The integration of gender education within Islamic Religious Education, strengthened through digital learning communities, offers a transformative model capable of addressing the structural roots of bullying while simultaneously fostering empathy, inclusivity, and prosocial agency among students. Consequently, this study contributes not only to the development of anti-bullying discourse but also to the broader reconstruction of contemporary Islamic educational thought in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that bullying within school environments is not merely an individual behavioral problem but a socially and culturally reproduced phenomenon rooted in unequal power relations, gender hierarchy, and symbolic domination embedded within educational practices. The findings demonstrate that hegemonic constructions of masculinity significantly contribute to the normalization of symbolic violence through verbal humiliation, labeling, ridicule, and discriminatory interaction patterns among students. In this context, bullying operates not only through overt aggression but also through subtle symbolic mechanisms that regulate students' social identities and reinforce exclusionary norms. Consequently, anti-bullying interventions that focus solely on behavioral control or punitive discipline are insufficient because they fail to address the structural and cultural dimensions sustaining bullying practices.

The study further reveals that the integration of gender education within Islamic Religious Education, grounded in Islamic ethical values such as *musāwah* (equality), *'adl* (justice), *raḥmah* (compassion), and *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity), possesses substantial transformative potential in fostering students' critical awareness, empathy, and prosocial behavior. More importantly, this approach demonstrates that Islamic ethical values can function not only as normative moral teachings but also as critical pedagogical frameworks capable of deconstructing discriminatory social norms and promoting inclusive educational cultures. Through reflective engagement with ethical values, students gradually developed moral sensitivity, emotional awareness, and ethical responsibility in responding to bullying and social inequality.

Another important conclusion of this study concerns the strategic role of digital learning communities as transformative pedagogical spaces. The Eudaimonia digital community functioned as a participatory and reflective learning ecology enabling students to engage in collective dialogue, ethical reflection, and collaborative meaning-making processes concerning bullying, equality, and human dignity. Unlike conventional classroom approaches that often remain hierarchical and teacher-centered, the digital community encouraged dialogical interaction, critical participation, and experiential learning. As a result, students were not positioned merely as passive recipients of moral instruction but as active agents capable of critically evaluating discriminatory practices and promoting more inclusive social relations. This finding highlights the growing importance of digital pedagogy in contemporary Islamic education, particularly in addressing social issues shaped by rapidly evolving digital interaction patterns.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the reconstruction of contemporary Islamic educational discourse by proposing an integrative framework conceptualized as *Islamic Ethical Digital Pedagogy*. This framework integrates Islamic ethical traditions, gender-responsive pedagogy, and participatory digital learning within a unified anti-bullying educational model. The novelty of this study lies in its ability to bridge dimensions that are frequently separated within previous scholarship, namely religious education, gender justice, and digital pedagogy. Thus, the study extends existing anti-bullying discourse beyond psychological and behavioral perspectives toward a more critical, ethical, and transformative educational approach responsive to contemporary social realities.

Practically, the findings imply that educational institutions should move beyond moralistic and reactive anti-bullying strategies toward preventive and transformative pedagogical models grounded in social justice, ethical awareness, and participatory learning. Islamic Religious Education curricula should systematically integrate gender-sensitive ethical discussions and contextualized social reflection concerning equality, dignity, and symbolic violence. In addition, educators require stronger capacities in critical and gender-responsive pedagogy to facilitate reflective learning processes capable of transforming students' social consciousness. The utilization of digital learning communities should also be optimized as sustainable pedagogical environments that support inclusive interaction, ethical dialogue, and collaborative learning among students.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the case study design and limited number of participants make the findings context-specific and not broadly generalizable. Second, the focus on a single digital community within one regional context limits the diversity of socio-cultural perspectives represented in the study. Third, the qualitative approach employed does not allow for statistical measurement of the intervention's effectiveness. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to employ mixed-methods or longitudinal research designs involving broader educational contexts and more diverse participant groups in order to examine the wider applicability and effectiveness of the proposed pedagogical framework.

Overall, this study affirms that bullying prevention in contemporary educational settings requires a multidimensional approach integrating ethical transformation, gender justice, critical pedagogy, and digital participation. By combining Islamic ethical values, gender-responsive education, and participatory digital learning communities, this study offers an alternative framework for developing more inclusive, humane, and socially transformative educational environments in the digital era.

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