



RELIGIOSITY AS A MEDIATION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND BULLYING IN MTSS UMMI LUBUK PAKAM STUDENTS

Fadlul Hayat Lubis¹, Suryani Hardjo², Yudistira Fauzi Indrawan³

^{1,2,3}Program Studi Magister Psikologi, Universitas Medan Area, Medan, Indonesia

Email: hayate.chelsea@gmail.com^{1,2,3}

Abstract: This study analyzes the mediating role of religiosity in the relationship between emotional intelligence and *bullying* among students at MTsS Ummi Lubuk Pakam. Employing *structural equation modeling-partial least squares* (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS software, the results indicate that emotional intelligence has a significant negative effect on *bullying* (T-statistic = 8.191; p-value = 0.000) and a significant positive effect on religiosity (T-statistic = 6.944; p-value = 0.000). Furthermore, religiosity was found to have a significant negative effect on *bullying* (T-statistic = 5.576; p-value = 0.000). Mediation analysis confirmed that religiosity significantly mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and *bullying* (T-statistic = 4.314; p-value = 0.000). It implies that emotional intelligence reduces *bullying* not only directly but also indirectly by fostering increased religiosity. This research highlights the importance of developing emotional intelligence and nurturing religiosity as effective strategies for *bullying* prevention in schools.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Religiosity, Bullying, Mediation, Students

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menganalisis peran religiusitas sebagai mediasi antara kecerdasan emosi dan perilaku *bullying* pada siswa MTsS Ummi Lubuk Pakam. Menggunakan metode *structural equation modeling-partial least squares* (SEM-PLS) dengan SmartPLS, hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa kecerdasan emosi berpengaruh negatif dan signifikan terhadap *bullying* (T-statistic = 8.191; p-value = 0.000), serta positif dan signifikan terhadap religiusitas (T-statistic = 6.944; p-value = 0.000). Religiusitas juga berpengaruh negatif dan signifikan terhadap *bullying* (T-statistic = 5.576; p-value = 0.000). Uji mediasi menegaskan bahwa religiusitas secara signifikan memediasi hubungan antara kecerdasan emosi dan *bullying* (T-statistic = 4.314; p-value = 0.000). Ini mengindikasikan bahwa kecerdasan emosi mengurangi *bullying* tidak hanya secara langsung tetapi juga secara tidak langsung melalui peningkatan religiusitas. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya pengembangan kecerdasan emosi dan pemupukan religiusitas sebagai strategi efektif pencegahan *bullying* di sekolah.

Kata Kunci: Kecerdasan Emosi, Religiusitas, Bullying, Mediasi, Siswa

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INTRODUCTION

Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) is a junior high school level that integrates the national curriculum with the internalisation of Islamic values to develop student character (Arifin et al., 2023; Kholid, 2024; Kosim, 2024; Azhari, 2024; Hidayati, 2024). In the early adolescence phase, individuals experience a search for identity and increased sensitivity to peer relationships, making them vulnerable to psychosocial pressures such as bullying. Bullying is repeated aggressive behavior with an imbalance of power that can negatively impact students' emotional and psychological development, including the risk

of emotional disorders and stress (Halliday et al, 2021; Andrews et al, 2023; Hasan et al, 2025). Empirical evidence shows that the phenomenon of bullying is still prevalent in schools and is strongly related to negative psychological conditions of students (Kamilla, 2025; Zhao et al, 2024; Hidayati et al, 2025).

Contemporary educational research shows that emotional intelligence, the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own and others' emotions, is negatively correlated with aggressive behaviors such as bullying (Alvarado et al., 2020; Zelika et al., 2024; Almanhettam & Sulastri, 2025). Students with high emotional intelligence tend to have better social skills, empathy, and adaptive emotion regulation, thus reducing the likelihood of engaging in aggressive behavior (Anisah et al., 2021; Pranata and Wulandari, 2023; Almanhettam & Sulastri, 2025). These findings are consistent with studies emphasizing the importance of emotional intelligence in improving school social climates and reducing bullying incidents through systematic social-emotional learning (Almanhettam & Sulastri, 2025).

Furthermore, religious values are also seen as crucial in shaping prosocial behavior and modulating students' emotions. Studies on religious education suggest that internalizing religious values can contribute to bullying prevention by fostering self-control, empathy, and tolerance (Nastasia & Khairiah, 2021; Azizurrahman et al., 2023; Dianah, 2024). Furthermore, research examining religiosity as a protective factor in adolescent behavioral dynamics suggests that religious beliefs and practices can help students cope with the negative impacts of stressful social experiences, such as bullying, by increasing psychological resilience to stress (Revens et al., 2021; Nabila & Yandri, 2024).

Although the relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying has been described in the empirical literature, and religiosity has been identified as a factor potentially contributing to the formation of prosocial attitudes and emotional control, research explicitly positioning religiosity as a mediating variable in the influence of emotional intelligence on bullying is still limited, particularly in the context of Islamic education in Indonesia. Developing a conceptual model that integrates psychological and religious dimensions is crucial to understanding this complex mechanism.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze the role of religiosity as a mediating variable in the relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying among students at MTsS Ummi Lubuk Pakam. This study is expected to enrich the theoretical basis of the psychology of education and to provide practical recommendations for developing character education programs that integrate the strengthening of emotional intelligence with religious values in the madrasah environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Religiosity as a Mediating Variable in the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Bullying

Bullying is aggressive behavior that occurs repeatedly due to an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim (Laith and Vaillancourt, 2022; Andrews et al., 2023). Recent longitudinal studies have shown that victims of bullying have a higher risk of experiencing depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and social adjustment disorders

(Yang et al., 2022; Zhong et al., 2021; Giuliani et al., 2025). To prevent bullying from both perpetrators and victims, understanding religiosity provides a strong foundation. Religiosity is a multidimensional construct encompassing beliefs, religious practices, religious experience, religious knowledge, and moral consequences in daily life (Saroglou et al., 2020; Dolcos et al., 2021). In the context of Islamic education, religiosity is not only ritualistic but also reflects the internalization of values such as patience, forgiveness, empathy, and self-control (Muhammad et al., 2024; Badri & Malik, 2024).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a quantitative approach with a survey method, and data analysis was conducted using structural equation modeling-partial least squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS. The study population was students of MTsS Ummi Lubuk Pakam, with a sample of 101 people selected using a purposive sampling technique. The research instrument included a questionnaire to measure emotional intelligence, religiosity, and bullying behavior. The research procedure included preparation, instrument preparation, research implementation, and data processing. Hypothesis testing was conducted using a t-value with a significance level of 0.05. The model is said to be fit if it meets the overall model fit test (GOF Test) and the evaluation of the structural model.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on the outer loading validity test in Table 1 and Figure 1 below, all outer loading values were found to be >0.7 , which means they met the validity requirements based on the outer loading value. Next, validity testing was conducted using the average variance extracted (AVE).

Table 1. Validity testing based on outer loading

	Bullying	Emotional Intelligence	Religiosity
BUL1	0.777		
BUL10	0.910		
BUL11	0.885		
BUL12	0.892		
BUL13	0.896		
BUL14	0.915		
BUL15	0.868		
BUL16	0.905		
BUL17	0.897		
BUL18	0.884		
BUL19	0.921		
BUL2	0.885		
BUL20	0.944		
BUL21	0.905		
BUL22	0.841		
BUL23	0.850		

BUL24	0.952		
BUL25	0.917		
BUL26	0.982		
BUL27	0.937		
BUL28	0.928		
BUL29	0.914		
BUL3	0.883		
BUL30	0.960		
BUL31	0.976		
BUL32	0.965		
BUL33	0.957		
BUL34	0.871		
BUL35	0.930		
BUL36	0.910		
BUL37	0.921		
BUL38	0.898		
BUL39	0.890		
BUL4	0.853		
BUL40	0.860		
BUL41	0.876		
BUL42	0.881		
BUL43	0.907		
BUL44	0.907		
BUL5	0.894		
BUL6	0.888		
BUL7	0.846		
BUL8	0.910		
BUL9	0.916		
KE1		0.839	
KE10		0.749	
KE11		0.878	
KE12		0.874	
KE13		0.758	
KE14		0.759	
KE15		0.869	
KE16		0.727	
KE17		0.775	
KE18		0.789	
KE19		0.825	
KE2		0.800	
KE20		0.829	
KE21		0.742	
KE22		0.868	
KE23		0.718	

KE24		0.821	
KE25		0.835	
KE26		0.718	
KE27		0.873	
KE28		0.825	
KE29		0.739	
KE3		0.858	
KE30		0.863	
KE31		0.859	
KE32		0.887	
KE33		0.913	
KE4		0.762	
KE5		0.867	
KE6		0.722	
KE7		0.737	
KE8		0.753	
KE9		0.815	
REL1			0.922
REL10			0.788
REL11			0.902
REL12			0.917
REL13			0.923
REL14			0.927
REL15			0.916
REL16			0.926
REL17			0.701
REL18			0.933
REL19			0.814
REL2			0.828
REL20			0.741
REL21			0.918
REL22			0.867
REL23			0.919
REL24			0.902
REL25			0.864
REL26			0.768
REL27			0.863
REL28			0.722
REL29			0.817
REL3			0.894
REL4			0.903
REL5			0.914
REL6			0.922
REL7			0.744

REL8			0.929
REL9			0.756

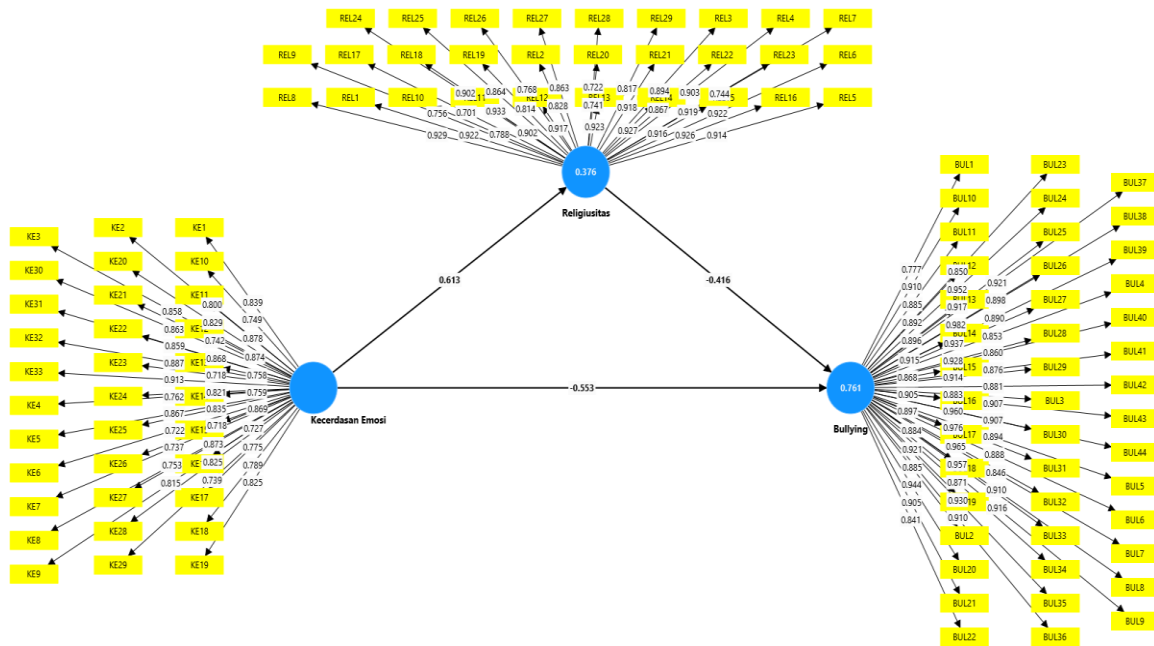


Figure 1. Validity Testing based on Outer Loading

The recommended AVE value is above 0.5. All AVE values are >0.5 , indicating they meet the validity requirements. Next, reliability testing is conducted based on the composite reliability (CR) value.

Table 2. Validity testing based on average variance extracted (AVE)

	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Bullying	0.816
Emotional Intelligence	0.655
Religiosity	0.745

The recommended CR value is above 0.7. All CR values were >0.7 , indicating they met the reliability requirements. Next, reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's alpha (CA).

Table 3. Reliability testing based on composite reliability (CR)

	Composite reliability (rho c)
Bullying	0.995
Emotional Intelligence	0.984
Religiosity	0.988

The recommended CA value is above 0.7. All CA values were >0.7 , indicating they met the reliability requirements based on Cronbach's alpha. Next, discriminant validity testing was conducted using the Fornell-Larcker approach. Table 4.5 presents the results of the discriminant validity testing.

Table 4. Reliability testing based on Cronbach's Alpha (CA)

	Cronbach's alpha
Bullying	0.995
Emotional Intelligence	0.984

Religiosity	0.988
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In discriminant validity testing, the square root of the AVE of a latent variable is compared with the correlation between that latent variable and other latent variables. The square root of the AVE for each latent variable is greater than the correlation between that latent variable and other latent variables. Therefore, it is concluded that the discriminant validity requirements have been met.

Table 5. Discriminant validity testing: Fornell & Larcker

	Bullying	Emotional Intelligence	Religiosity
Bullying	(0.903)		
Emotional Intelligence	-0.808	(0.810)	
Religiosity	-0.755	0.613	(0.863)

Note: The values between “()” are the square roots of AVE.

Based on the results of the discriminant validity test using the HTMT approach, it is known that all values are <0.9, which means that it is concluded that the discriminant validity requirements based on the HTMT approach have been met.

Table 6. Discriminant validity test: HTMT

	Bullying	Emotional Intelligence
Emotional Intelligence	0.793	
Religiosity	0.754	0.590

The following are the results of the significance test of the influence.

Table 7. Path Coefficient Test & Significance Of Influence

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Emotional intelligence -> Bullying	-0.553	-0.556	0.068	8.191	0.000
Emotional intelligence -> Religiosity	0.613	0.614	0.088	6.944	0.000
Religiosity -> Bullying	-0.416	-0.412	0.075	5.576	0.000

The study found that emotional intelligence negatively and significantly affected bullying, with a T-statistic of 8.191 and a p-value of 0.000. It indicates that higher emotional intelligence reduces bullying behavior.

Emotional intelligence also has a positive and significant effect on religiosity, with a T-statistic of 6.944 and a p-value of 0.000. Furthermore, religiosity has a negative and significant effect on bullying, with a T-statistic of 5.576 and a p-value of 0.000.

The results of the mediation test showed that religiosity significantly mediated the relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying, with a T-statistic = 4.314 and a p-value = 0.000. It indicates that emotional intelligence reduces bullying not only directly, but also indirectly through increased religiosity.

Discussion

The findings of this study are consistent with the existing literature, confirming that emotional intelligence directly and significantly influences bullying behavior (Oktaviani

et al., 2020; van Rens et al., 2025). Students with high emotional intelligence tend to have higher self-control, enabling them to face unpleasant situations without resorting to bullying. It aligns with Goleman's (2016) view, which holds that emotional intelligence encompasses the ability to self-regulate, control impulses, and manage moods, enabling individuals to empathise and establish positive social relationships.

This study also supports the important role of religiosity in reducing bullying. High religiosity serves as a powerful internal resource, fostering patience, forgiveness, and optimism. It aligns with research by D.J & Indrawati, 2019; Azizurrahman et al, 2023; Aprilia et al, 2023; Hidayah, 2025, which showed a negative relationship between religiosity and cyberbullying. Importantly, this study demonstrates that religiosity acts as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying. It means that emotional intelligence reduces bullying not only directly but also indirectly through increased religiosity. It highlights that developing emotional intelligence can foster increased religiosity, which in turn helps prevent bullying. However, it is important to note that religiosity is not the sole factor. Hamidah's (2020) research shows that bullying still occurs in Islamic boarding school environments even though students have high levels of religiosity, indicating that other factors, such as school culture and supervision, also play an important role.

CONCLUSION

Emotional intelligence has a negative and significant effect on bullying behavior. Emotional intelligence also has a positive and significant effect on religiosity. Religiosity has a negative and significant effect on bullying behavior. Religiosity significantly mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying.

Theoretical Suggestion: Future research can expand the model by adding other variables that may influence bullying, such as social support, school climate, or student demographic characteristics. It is also recommended to conduct qualitative research to delve deeper into students' experiences and perceptions, and to consider a longitudinal design to observe the development of relationships between variables over time. Practical Suggestion for Schools (MTsS Umami Lubuk Pakam): Develop programs focused on improving students' emotional intelligence, such as soft skills training, counseling, social skills workshops, and emotion management. Furthermore, strengthen religious education and the instillation of religious values in schools to foster positive character and prevent bullying behaviour.

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