

Developing a Capability-Based Ecological Counseling Framework for Student Development in Islamic Elementary Schools

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Abstract

Guidance and Counseling Services in Islamic Elementary Schools generally still focus largely on handling student behavior cases. The services provided have not been systematically directed at strengthening students' capabilities for substantive freedom to develop academically, socially, and spiritually, so there is a need for an effective service model. This study aims to analyze strategies for strengthening students' capabilities through an ecological counseling approach at SDI Surya Buana in Malang City. The research approach uses qualitative methods with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the principal, classroom teachers, and guidance counselors; participatory observation of learning practices and character habituation; and documentation of school programs. The research results show that strengthening students' capabilities occurs through the integration of self-regulation habits in the classroom, school-parent collaboration, a reflective culture grounded in Islamic values, and preventive-developmental counseling interventions. The ecological approach allows for synergy between the classroom environment, school policies, and family parenting patterns in shaping student agency and resilience. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of developing a systemic, collaborative, and capability-expanding counseling service model for Islamic elementary schools as the foundation for transformative Islamic basic education.

Keywords

Capability, Ecological Counseling, Islamic Elementary School, Self-Regulation, Resilience.



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INTRODUCTION

Islamic basic education is normatively positioned as a strategic foundation in the formation of faithful, knowledgeable, and noble individuals. In this phase, schools not only transfer knowledge but also serve as ecosystems for character development, student independence, and mental-spiritual resilience. However, the empirical reality of basic education, including in Islamic schools, shows significant academic anxiety related to the suboptimal development of students' self-regulation and learning resilience. (Nakhostin-Khayyat et al., 2024). In addition, self-regulation can reduce procrastination, which contributes to academic stress and anxiety, while resilience serves as a protective factor that improves academic performance. (Hidayat et al., 2025). Many students still show a high dependence on teacher direction, have difficulty maintaining learning focus for a long period, give up easily when facing challenging tasks, and are not yet able to manage emotional responses adaptively in academic situations. This phenomenon reflects the gap between the ideals of Islamic education, which emphasize the formation of independent and resilient individuals (*das sollen*), and the reality of educational practice in elementary schools (*das sein*), which still shows students' weak internal capacity to manage the learning process autonomously (Sa'edi et al., 2025) .

From an educational psychology perspective, self-regulation is an active process that enables individuals to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning activities independently. Research by Barry J. Zimmerman confirms that self-regulation is a key component of successful learning because it involves metacognitive awareness, motivational control, and regulation of learning behavior. (Afifatun, 2025) . On the other hand, resilience in child development studies is understood as an individual's adaptive capacity to survive and recover from various difficulties through a combination of personal strengths and environmental support. Research by Ann S. Masten shows that resilience is not simply an innate characteristic but rather the result of interactions between individuals and the social support systems available to them. When self-regulation and resilience skills do not develop optimally from elementary school, long-term academic success and an individual's readiness for lifelong learning become vulnerable. This situation is further complicated in the digital era, characterized by high levels of information distraction, changing family parenting patterns, and social dynamics that influence children's character formation.

This situation has also been identified empirically at SDI Surya Buana in Malang City. This Islamic elementary school integrates the national curriculum with Islamic values and is strongly committed to developing student character. However, initial observations indicate that some

students still face difficulties in managing study time consistently, maintaining motivation when facing challenging assignments, and managing emotional responses to academic failure. The mentoring services available at the school have been primarily run by classroom teachers and tend to be reactive to student behavioral issues. A systematic approach that integrates the role of family, school policies, and institutional culture in developing student potential has not been fully formulated within a structured strategic framework. This situation demonstrates a mismatch between the ideal goals of Islamic education, which emphasize the development of independent and moral individuals, and the practice of mentoring services, which is still limited to a short-term, problem-solving approach.

In the Islamic educational tradition, the ability to manage oneself is closely related to the concepts of *tazkiyatun nafs* and moral development, while resilience in facing difficulties is related to the values of patience and *istiqamah* Bidang (Hidayat et al., 2026). Thus, strengthening self-regulation and learning resilience is not only a psychological need but also an integral part of Islamic education's mission to shape individuals capable of actualizing the values of monotheism in everyday life. This perspective aligns with the human development approach proposed by Amartya Sen through the concept of *the capability approach*. Sen emphasized that the quality of development is not measured solely by formal achievements such as academic grades or economic indicators, but by expanding an individual's actual ability to choose and live a valuable life. (Wati et al., 2025) . However, in educational practice, learning orientation often remains focused on measurable cognitive achievements, while strengthening substantive capabilities such as self-regulation, resilience, and agency has not been explicitly formulated as a goal of school services.

The issues of student self-regulation and resilience cannot be understood solely in an individualistic manner. The ecological systems theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner explains that child development is influenced by layered interactions among various environmental systems, from the microsystem encompassing family and school, to the mesosystem representing relationships between environments, to the exosystem relating to institutional policies, to the macrosystem reflecting cultural and religious values that frame educational practices. (Ulfa, 2026) . In the context of Islamic schools, the macrosystem is characterized by values of monotheism, etiquette, and morality, serving as the normative foundation for student character formation. However, if the interactions between these system levels are not strategically integrated, efforts to strengthen student character and learning independence will be less effective.

Various recent studies have shown that educational approaches that systematically integrate environmental support have a significant influence on the development of student learning resilience. A study by Sheridan and Gutkin (2000) confirmed that collaborative interventions between schools and families can improve students' academic success and psychological well-being. Similarly, research shows that children's resilience develops optimally when there is synergy between family support, a supportive school environment, and an institutional culture that encourages positive development. However, in the context of Islamic elementary education in Indonesia, the integration of the capability approach and ecological counseling as strategies to strengthen students' potential remains relatively limited. Most studies emphasize strengthening religious character or improving academic learning outcomes, without formulating capability as a theoretical construct operational in elementary school guidance services.

Based on this review, it can be concluded that there are conceptual and practical gaps in the development of students' potential in Islamic elementary schools. First, there is still limited integration between the capability approach and ecological systems theory as a strategic framework for strengthening students' self-regulation and resilience. Second, the practice of guidance services at the elementary school level still tends to be administrative and curative, not fully aligning with a preventive-developmental approach that focuses on strengthening students' internal capacities. This gap makes it crucial to research strategies for strengthening students' capabilities through an ecological counseling approach in Islamic elementary schools.

Taking this context into account, this study aims to analyze the condition of students' capabilities and to formulate a strategy for strengthening them through an ecological counseling approach at SDI Surya Buana, Malang City. Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of a guidance and counseling service paradigm in Islamic elementary education by integrating the capability approach and the theory of developmental ecological systems. Pragmatically, the results of this study are expected to produce relevant implementation strategies for strengthening Islamic elementary education services that are more systemic, collaborative, and oriented towards the sustainable development of student potential. Thus, this study not only seeks to describe phenomena in the field but also offers a strategic framework for innovation in Islamic elementary education services to develop an independent, resilient, and virtuous generation.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of strengthening students' capabilities through an ecological counseling approach in the natural context of schools, rather than to test quantitative hypotheses or make statistical generalizations. (Adlini et al., 2022) This approach can explore the meaning, interaction patterns, and dynamics of the school environmental system that influence the development of self-regulation and student learning resilience contextually. The case study design was used because the research focused on a single location, namely SDI Surya Buana Malang City, to explore the phenomenon in depth and holistically within clear system boundaries. This approach aligns with the characteristics of ecological counseling, which views individual development as the result of interactions among various environmental systems, such as family, school, and social culture. (Nasution, 2023) .

Research subjects were determined purposively, with the consideration that they were directly involved in the process of student coaching and guidance in the school. The research subjects numbered 126, including 1 principal, 5 classroom teachers, and 120 students. The principal was chosen as the key informant because he plays a strategic role in determining the direction of school policies related to character development programs and student guidance services (Bidang, Abdussamad & Sik, 2021). Class teachers are important subjects because they interact directly with students in the daily learning process and play a role in fostering student self-regulation and behavior. Meanwhile, students were chosen as the main subjects in this study because they are the parties who directly experience the process of strengthening capabilities, particularly in aspects of self-regulation and learning resilience. The purposive selection of subjects aimed to obtain rich and in-depth data regarding strategies for strengthening student capabilities in the real-life school context (Roosinda et al., 2021) .

Data collection in this study was conducted using three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal and teachers to gather information regarding school policies, character development strategies, and student mentoring practices related to capability building. In addition, guided interviews were conducted with students to understand their learning experiences, challenges in self-management while learning, and the forms of support they experience from teachers and the school environment. (Alaslan, 2023) . Participatory observation was conducted by

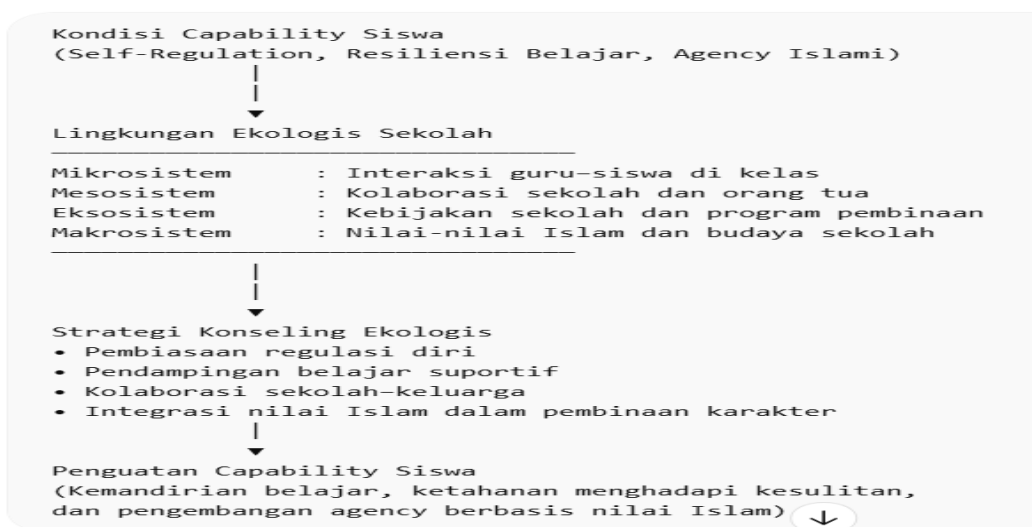
directly observing classroom learning activities and students' daily activities in the school environment. Through this observation, researchers were able to identify interaction patterns between teachers and students, classroom dynamics, and mentoring practices that reflect an ecological counseling approach that focuses on indicators of student self-regulation behavior, resilience in facing learning difficulties, and interpersonal communication patterns formed within the school environment. Documentation studies were conducted to complement and strengthen the data obtained from interviews and observations. The documents analyzed included school work programs, school regulations, character development modules, student development records, and various archives of school activities related to guidance and character strengthening services.

Data analysis was conducted interactively and continuously from the data collection stage to drawing conclusions. The analysis process followed the interactive analysis model developed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which was later refined with Johnny Saldaña (Lerche, 2012) . This analysis model includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification (Rana et al., 2023) . Data reduction involved selecting, focusing on, and simplifying raw field data, then grouping it into thematic categories such as student self-regulation, learning resilience, school policies, and ecological counseling practices. The next stage was data presentation, which organized the reduced data into a systematic narrative, a thematic matrix, or a relationship chart between categories to facilitate researchers' identification of patterns and interrelationships between phenomena. The final stage was conclusion drawing and verification, the process of interpreting the data to formulate a strategy pattern for strengthening students' capabilities through an ecological counseling approach. The conclusions obtained were continuously verified through rechecking field data and comparisons across data sources to produce valid and consistent findings (Patel, 2009) .

To ensure data validity, this study employed the trustworthiness framework proposed by Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, encompassing four main criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Data credibility was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods by comparing information obtained from the principal, teachers, and students through interviews, observations, and documentation. Furthermore, member checking was conducted with key informants to ensure the researchers' interpretations matched the informants' intended reality. Transferability was maintained by presenting detailed contextual descriptions of the school's characteristics, research subjects, and the conditions of guidance and character development services

at SDI Surya Buana Malang City, enabling readers to assess the relevance of the findings to other similar contexts. Dependability was maintained through systematic and well-documented research procedures, including the preparation of an audit trail in the form of field notes, interview transcripts, and a data categorization process. Confirmability was maintained by ensuring that the research findings were based on traceable empirical data, including the use of direct quotes from informants and the researcher's reflection on possible biases in the research process.

Peta Konsep Kerangka Penelitian



With this descriptive qualitative research design, the study is expected to yield a comprehensive understanding of students' capabilities and strategies for strengthening them through an ecological counseling approach at SDI Surya Buana in Malang City. Furthermore, this study is expected to develop a relevant conceptual model for guidance and counseling services in Islamic elementary schools that are more systemic, preventive, and oriented toward the sustainable development of students' potential.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

A. Student Capability Conditions

Research results at SDI Surya Buana Malang City indicate that students' capabilities develop within a dynamic, context-specific spectrum. Capability in this study is defined as students' substantive ability to manage themselves (*self-regulation*), survive and recover from learning difficulties (*resilience*), and act in accordance with their values (*agency*). This concept refers to the

capability approach developed by Amartya Sen, which emphasizes an individual's ability to actualize valuable life choices. In the context of Islamic basic education, the development of students' capabilities is also influenced by the school's environmental system, as explained in Urie Bronfenbrenner's developmental ecology theory.

The research data were obtained through a combination of data collection techniques, including classroom observations, in-depth interviews with the principal, class teachers, and students, school document analysis, and a simple survey of student learning experiences. Overall, the study involved 42 fourth and fifth-grade students, four class teachers, and one principal as key informant. Data triangulation results indicate that student capabilities develop through the interaction between classroom learning structures, the school's religious culture, and family support.

1. Student Self-Regulation

Observations of learning activities indicate that most students demonstrated fairly good disciplinary behavior in following the learning routine. At the beginning of the lesson, students independently prepared textbooks, participated in group prayers, and listened to teacher instructions without requiring repeated reprimands. This finding is supported by documentation of school regulations and student contact books, which indicate a relatively low level of disciplinary violations throughout the semester (Rodríguez et al., 2022).

However, when learning demands greater independent initiative, variations in self-regulation abilities are observed among students. In thematic-based group project activities, observations showed that some students still waited for teacher direction before beginning tasks. Some students also tended to lose focus when the teacher was not nearby. This suggests that student self-regulation is still heavily influenced by external supervisory structures.

Table 1. Student Self-Regulation Indicators Based on Classroom Observations

Self-Regulation Indicators	Number of Students	Percentage
Prepare learning equipment independently	34	81%
Following teacher's instructions without reprimand	36	86%
Starting an assignment without waiting for the teacher's instructions	25	60%
Able to manage time in group assignments	22	52%
Complete the task on time	30	71%

Interviews with classroom teachers revealed that student discipline is more easily established when there is a clear structure to activities. One teacher stated that students are relatively

compliant with classroom rules, but not all are able to plan independent learning strategies.

These findings were further supported by interviews with students, who revealed that some of them worked primarily on assignments due to concerns about being reprimanded or receiving low grades. This suggests that learning motivation is still dominated by external regulation, rather than intrinsic awareness (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2023). From the perspective of Barry J. Zimmerman's self-regulated learning theory, mature self-regulation encompasses the ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate the learning process reflectively. Field findings indicate that these abilities are still developing in some students.

2. Learning Resilience

Students' learning resilience is evident in how they respond to academic failure and learning challenges (Malik & Garg, 2020). Document analysis of midterm grades revealed that some students experienced a decline in their grades in mathematics and science. Further observations revealed two distinct patterns of response to this situation. Some students actively asked teachers for clarification and participated in remedial activities, while others tended to be passive and reluctant to try again. These differences in response indicate varying levels of academic resilience among students.

Table 2. Student Responses to Learning Difficulties

Response to Adversity	Number of Students	Percentage
Actively ask for further explanation	18	43%
Taking remedial classes voluntarily	16	38%
Waiting for the teacher's help	13	31%
Showing a passive attitude	11	26%
Avoiding discussions about low grades	9	21%

Interviews with teachers revealed that students who exhibit high levels of resilience generally have communicative family support and are accustomed to engaging in dialogue about learning difficulties. Conversely, students who are less resilient tend to avoid discussing academic failure and display more intense expressions of frustration (Olowononi et al., 2020).

Observations during group presentations also showed that resilient students were more confident in performing despite previous mistakes. They tended to accept correction from teachers and peers with openness. This finding aligns with Ann S. Masten's concept of resilience, defined as an individual's adaptive capacity to recover from negative experiences through a supportive environment (Nafila, 2021).

However, an analysis of school program documents indicates that there is no explicitly

designed academic resilience development module. Therefore, student resilience development is largely shaped by a supportive school culture and teacher role models in providing constructive feedback.

3. Agency Based on Islamic Values

The Islamic value-based dimension of agency is a distinctive characteristic of the educational context at SDI Surya Buana Malang City. Observations of school activities indicate that religious practices such as congregational Dhuha prayer, memorization of the Quran (tahfidz), and end-of-learning reflections are integral parts of school life. These activities serve not only as rituals but also as a means of internalizing moral values in students' learning behavior (Rianti, 2021).

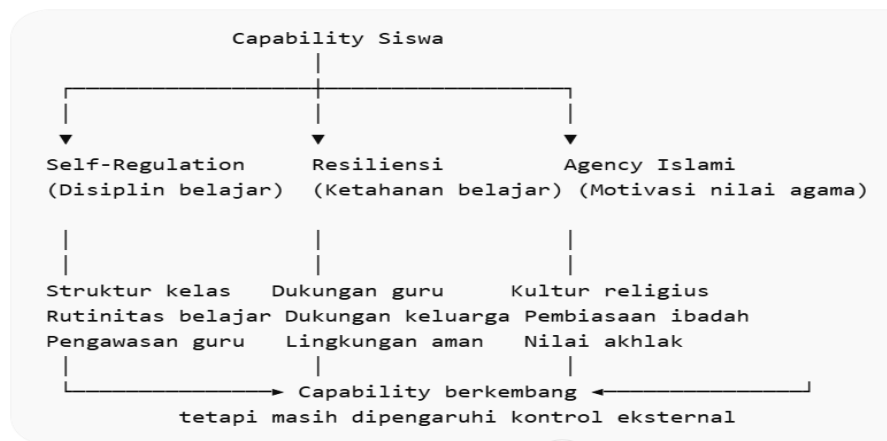
Interviews with students revealed that their motivation to learn is often linked to religious values (Khalid & Sarea, 2021). Some students stated that they study diligently because they want to earn rewards and make their parents happy. This suggests that religious values have become a normative foundation in shaping students' behavioral orientation.

Table 3. Student Learning Motivation Based on a Short Survey

Sources of Learning Motivation	Number of Students	Percentage
Want to get good grades	28	67%
Want to make parents proud	26	62%
Consider learning as worship	19	45%
Afraid of getting reprimanded by the teacher	15	36%
Motivated by peers	14	33%

The school's vision and mission documentation also affirms the institution's commitment to Islamic character development. In an interview, the principal stated that the school's educational goals emphasize not only academic achievement but also the development of students' moral character and responsibility.

However, observations of group work situations without direct supervision indicate that some students still depend on more capable peers and tend to copy answers. This suggests that the internalization of the values of honesty and responsibility has not yet fully become a reflective awareness in all learning situations. From a capability perspective, agency refers to an individual's ability to act in accordance with their values and to influence the direction of their life. (Supriyatno et al., 2021). Based on research findings, students' moral agency at SDI Surya Buana already has a strong theological foundation, but still requires strengthening through a more dialogical process of reflection and mentoring.



Overall, the results of interviews, observations, surveys, and document analysis indicate that students' capabilities at SDI Surya Buana Malang City have developed in a religious and supportive school environment. Self-regulation is evident in disciplined learning behavior, resilience is seen in some adaptive responses to academic failure, and Islamic value-based agency has been internalized in students' learning motivation.

However, these three dimensions of capability have not yet fully developed as autonomous and reflective abilities. Self-regulation is still heavily influenced by external structures; resilience has not been fostered through systematic development programs; and moral agency still requires strengthening through deeper reflection.

These findings emphasize the importance of developing strategies to strengthen students' capabilities through an ecological counseling approach that focuses not only on individual students but also on optimizing systemic interactions among teachers, families, and the Islamic educational culture in the school environment.

B. Implementation of Counseling Services in Islamic Elementary Schools

The results of the study indicate that counseling services at SDI Surya Buana Malang City have been implemented through character development and student mentoring integrated into the Islamic school culture, although they have not yet been fully structured as a comprehensive school guidance and counseling service system. Research data were obtained through in-depth interviews with the principal and class teachers, observations of learning activities, surveys of student learning experiences, and analysis of school documents such as work programs, academic calendars, and teacher-parent communication records. The study involved 42 fourth and fifth-grade students.

4 class teachers, and 1 principal as the main informant. From the perspective of the developmental ecology theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, counseling services in schools are still

predominantly at the microsystem level, namely, direct interactions between teachers and students in the context of daily learning. (Sukri et al., 2021) . Meanwhile, the integration of services at the mesosystem and exosystem levels, which include systemic coordination between schools, families, and institutional policies, has not yet been fully developed in a structured manner.

1. Form of Service Running

Based on interviews with the principal and class teachers, counseling services at SDI Surya Buana are delivered through an embedded guidance approach that integrates guidance into daily learning and habituation activities. The school does not yet have a dedicated guidance and counseling teacher at the elementary school level, so student mentoring is carried out by class teachers and homeroom teachers. Observations of school activities reveal several forms of mentoring services that have been implemented in practice, including religious character development, individual mentoring, and intensive communication with students' parents.

Table 4. Forms of Implementation of Student Assistance Services

Form of Service	Data Source	Practice Description
Religious habituation	Observation, school documents	Dhuha prayer in congregation, student sermon, daily reflection
Informal individual mentoring	Teacher interview	Personal dialogue after class hours, when students experience learning difficulties or social conflicts
Communication with parents	Documentation of the liaison book and online groups	Coordination regarding late assignments, changes in student behavior
Classical character mentoring	School program documents	Activities to develop moral values, manners towards teachers, and learning responsibilities

Observations of classroom activities indicate that religious practices are a key tool in developing students' character. At the beginning of the lesson, students participate in a group prayer and a short reflection session led by the teacher. During these reflection sessions, the teacher frequently reinforces moral values such as discipline, responsibility, and honesty in learning. The results of a short survey of students also showed that most students felt emotional support from teachers when facing learning difficulties.

Table 5. Student Perceptions of Teacher Support

Statement	Agree	Percentage
The teacher helped me when I had difficulty learning.	36 students	86%
The teacher wants to listen to my story	32 students	76%
The teacher gave me advice when I made a mistake	34 students	81%
I feel comfortable talking to the teacher	30 students	71%

Interviews with students also revealed that some students found it easier to share problems with their teachers than with their peers. One student stated that he felt comfortable talking to his teacher when experiencing learning difficulties or conflicts with friends.

These findings indicate that interpersonal relationships between teachers and students at the school are relatively close and supportive. In the school guidance and counseling literature presented by Norman C. Gysbers and Patricia Henderson, positive relational relationships between teachers and students are a critical factor in the success of developmental guidance services in schools.

2. Systemic Limitations in Service Implementation

Although student mentoring services have been operating culturally within school life, research has identified several systemic limitations that undermine the effectiveness of strengthening students' capabilities. (Abdurrahman & Hadi, 2021) .

First, the lack of professional counselors at the elementary school level has led support services to be more pedagogically than psychologically oriented. Interviews with school principals revealed that schools lacked resources for guidance counselor positions due to policy and budget constraints. Consequently, the process of assessing students' developmental needs has not been systematically conducted.

Table 6. Availability of Counseling Service System Components

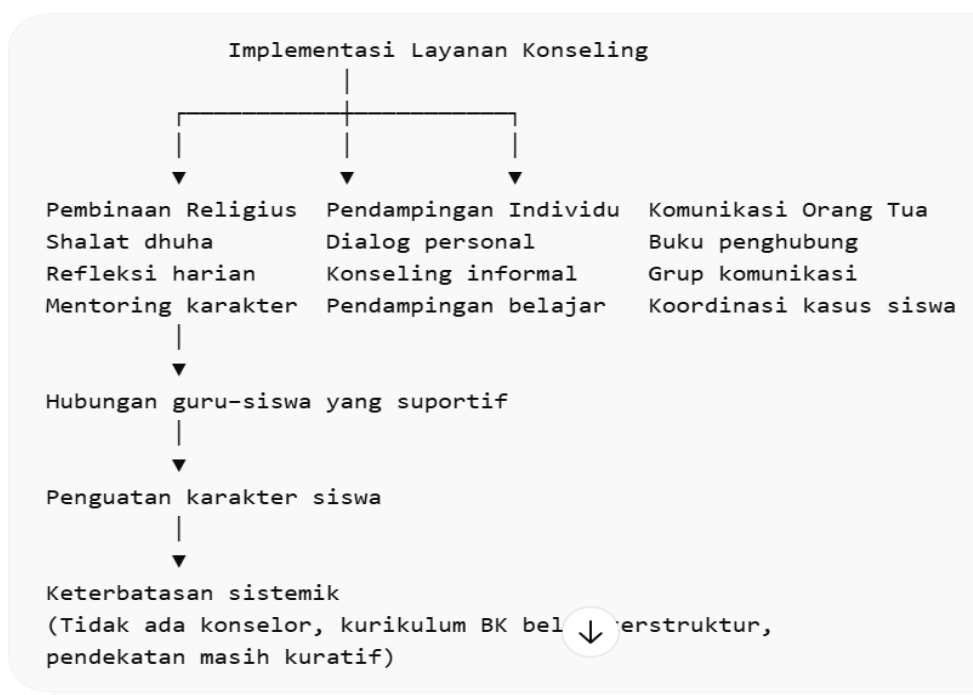
Service Components	Conditions at School
Professional guidance counselor	Not available
Psychopedagogical assessment instruments	Not yet available
Developmental counseling services curriculum	Not structured yet
Learning problems prevention program	Informally integrated

Second, the study also found that schools lack a systematically designed developmentally-based counseling curriculum. Analysis of school documents shows that character-building programs are more often integrated into religious activities and school discipline, but they are not designed based on capability development indicators such as self-regulation, resilience, and agency.

Third, the service approach is still predominantly curative and incidental. Observations and interviews show that teacher interventions typically occur when specific problems arise, such as conflict between students or declining academic achievement. This suggests that services are still oriented toward case resolution rather than preventive and systemic development of student potential. (Pangestuweni et al., 2021) .

Fourth, cross-system collaboration between schools and families is not yet fully structured. Although communication between teachers and parents is quite intensive through contact books and online communication media, there are no regular forums such as *parenting classes*, *case conferences*, or regular student development evaluation meetings.

Counseling Service Implementation Synthesis Diagram



Overall, counseling services at SDI Surya Buana Malang City have been delivered through various religious character development practices, informal mentoring by classroom teachers, and collaborative communication with parents. These practices demonstrate that the school has a foundational educational culture that supports student character development. However, counseling services still face several systemic limitations, particularly in institutional structure, availability of professional staff, developmental service curricula, and mechanisms for assessing and evaluating student development. From the perspective of the capability approach developed by Amartya Sen, the educational environment plays a crucial role in expanding individuals' substantive freedom to develop. The findings of this study indicate that the school environment provides

positive value, support, and social relationships, but it has not yet been fully organized as a system consciously designed to expand students' capabilities in a measurable and sustainable manner.

These findings underscore the importance of developing strategies to strengthen student capabilities through a more structured, preventative, and developmentally based ecological counseling approach. This approach is expected to integrate the roles of teachers, families, and school policies in building an Islamic basic education ecosystem that supports the holistic development of students' abilities.

C. Capability Strengthening Strategy through an Ecological Approach

The results of the study indicate that strengthening student capability at SDI Surya Buana Malang City develops through a series of educational practices that substantively reflect an ecological approach, although it has not been explicitly formulated as a systematic ecological counseling model. Data obtained through classroom observations, interviews with teachers and the principal, analysis of school documents, and surveys of student and parent perceptions indicate that the capability strengthening strategy takes place through interactions involving various student development environments. From the perspective of the ecological theory of human development proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, a child's developmental environment is composed of several interacting layers of systems, namely the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The findings of this study indicate that these four layers contribute simultaneously to creating an environment that supports the development of self-regulation skills, learning resilience, and student agency. Within the framework of the capability approach developed by Amartya Sen, these educational practices can be understood as efforts to build **an enabling environment** that expands students' substantive freedom to develop optimally.

At the microsystem level, capability building occurs primarily through direct interaction between teachers and students in the classroom. Observations of fifth-grade classroom learning indicate that teachers consistently implement regulatory habituation strategies such as opening prayers, setting daily learning targets, self-reflection at the end of the lesson, and verbal reinforcement of disciplined and responsible behavior. In one thematic learning session, teachers ask students to write down their task completion targets at the beginning of the lesson and conduct self-evaluations at the end of the session. Document analysis of student reflection books reveals self-evaluation columns such as "Today I have..." and "What I need to improve...". This practice serves as a simple reflection-based self-regulation reinforcement mechanism that gradually trains students

to develop awareness of their own learning process. Interviews with classroom teachers revealed that the reflection habituation is designed to help students learn to control their behavior and take responsibility for their learning independently, without constant reminders from the teacher. Observational evidence indicates that students who regularly engage in reflection activities show greater consistency in task completion and reduced distractibility throughout the learning process.

At the mesosystem level, strengthening student capabilities is supported by collaborative relationships between schools and parents. School communication documentation data show that teachers routinely communicate students' academic and behavioral progress through contact books and digital platforms such as parent messaging groups. Interviews with the principal indicate that the school actively encourages two-way communication between teachers and parents, particularly when students exhibit decreased motivation to learn or struggle to manage their learning behavior. In several cases identified through teacher records, the school and parents jointly agreed on support strategies such as limiting device use at home or establishing a more structured learning schedule. Observations at parent-teacher meetings also revealed informal discussion sessions on parenting styles and character development. Although these activities have not been systematically structured into a regular parenting class program, these forums serve as a space to strengthen value alignment between the family and school environments. Research findings indicate that students who receive consistent support from their parents tend to have higher levels of learning persistence and academic resilience than those who experience inconsistent support from their families.

At the ecosystem level, capability strengthening is influenced by school policies and institutional structures that shape the broader educational climate. Analysis of the school's vision and mission document indicates that SDI Surya Buana has a strong orientation toward character building and strengthening Islamic morals as part of its educational goals through a weekly character development program, a positive behavior appreciation system through a points mechanism, and mentoring for students with learning difficulties. Interviews with the principal revealed that these policies are designed to foster a safe, supportive, and conducive school environment for students' holistic development. Observations indicate that the school's disciplinary approach emphasizes reflective dialogue rather than repressive punishment. Teachers tend to encourage students to understand the consequences of their behavior and encourage them to reflect on their actions. This approach indirectly strengthens students' agency and personal responsibility in their learning and social life at school. However, the research also indicates that the school does

not yet have a structured professional guidance and counseling service unit and does not yet use systematic assessment instruments for student capability development.

At the macrosystem level, strengthening student capabilities is influenced by the cultural and religious values that underpin school education. Observations of school activities indicate that all educational activities are consistently linked to Islamic values such as trustworthiness, responsibility, and a devotional orientation in learning. Routine programs such as congregational Dhuha prayers, Quran memorization activities, and student religious lectures serve as a means of internalizing spiritual values in school life. Interviews with students indicate that most students interpret learning activities as part of their worship and as a form of responsibility to God and their parents. The integration of Islamic values is also evident in school curriculum documents. This integration contributes to the formation of religious-based agency, encouraging students to link their behavioral choices with spiritual beliefs. However, observations in situations outside of direct teacher supervision indicate that some students still exhibit behavioral inconsistencies in applying these values. This indicates that the internalization of religious values has not fully developed at a reflective and autonomous level and therefore requires reinforcement through a more dialogical and contextual counseling approach (Olowononi et al., 2020) .

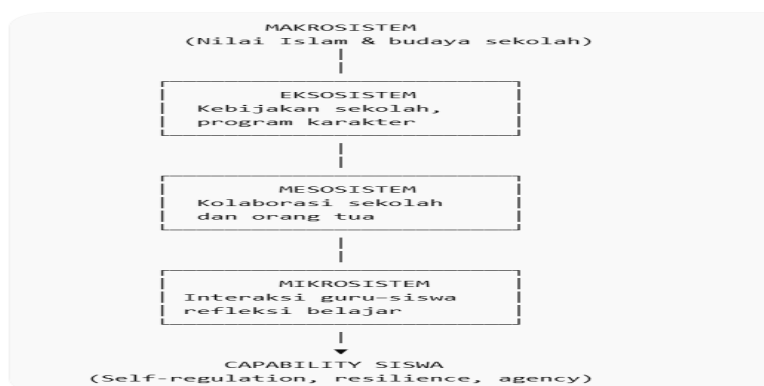
Overall, the research findings indicate that the strategy for strengthening student capability at SDI Surya Buana Malang City has been implemented within an ecological framework that includes interactions between the classroom microsystem, mesosystem collaboration between school and family, ecosystem support in the form of school policies, and the integration of Islamic values as a macrosystem of educational culture. Data from interviews, observations, documentation, and surveys indicate that the school environment has enabled the development of self-regulation skills, learning resilience, and student agency. However, this strategy is still cultural and practical in nature so that it has not been fully formulated as a systematic ecological counseling model, based on capability development assessments, and integrated into school guidance and counseling services. The following are conceptual findings from the strategy at SD Islam Surya Buana.

Table 7. Data Fields from Research Data Collection Results

Data Collection Technique	Data Source	Main Information Area	Key Findings
Class observation	Teachers and students of grade V	Practice of learning habits, self-reflection, discipline	The habit of reflection increases the consistency of task completion.
Interview	Headmaster	Character education	The school prioritizes a

		policy	dialogical approach and character building
Interview	Classroom teacher	Self-regulation learning and habituation strategies	Teachers use daily reflection to train students' self-control.
Documentation	Student reflection book	Student self-evaluation	Students write down learning targets and evaluations
Documentation	Connecting book	School-parent communication	Teachers convey students' academic and behavioral development
Observation of school activities	Religious activities	Internalization of Islamic values	The dhuha, tahfidz, and kultum programs strengthen spiritual values
Student survey	Students in grades IV–VI	Perception of learning motivation and environmental support	Family support is correlated with learning resilience

Conceptual Diagram of Capability Strengthening Strategy



Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the strategy for strengthening student capability at SDI Surya Buana Malang City takes place through systemic interactions between various student development environments that align with the ecological systems theory framework developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner. This theory emphasizes that individual development is not only influenced by personal characteristics, but also by the dynamic interaction between individuals and their social environment which is structured in several layers of systems, namely the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Malik & Garg, 2020) . Data obtained through learning observations, interviews with teachers and principals, and analysis of school documents indicate that strengthening student capability at the school takes place through mechanisms that reflect these four systems.

At the microsystem level, research findings indicate that classroom self-regulation practices are a key factor in shaping students' self-regulation abilities. Activities such as daily learning reflections, setting learning targets, and reinforcing positive behaviors demonstrate that direct interactions between teachers and students serve as the primary context for developing constructive learning habits. From Bronfenbrenner's perspective, these interactions are referred to as *proximal processes*, namely repetitive and meaningful interaction processes that are the primary drivers of individual psychological development (Afifatun, 2025). Observations show that students who consistently engage in reflective learning activities tend to demonstrate increased discipline in completing assignments and greater control over their learning behavior. These findings suggest that the quality of pedagogical interactions has a more significant influence on student development than the formal curriculum structure alone. These findings are in line with previous research results which explain that every ecological system consisting of 10 aspects needs to be studied and made relevant to the conditions present in schools or madrasahs (Muzammil, 2022).

At the mesosystem level, this study found that the relationship between school and family plays a crucial role in strengthening students' capability development. Interview data from teachers and parents showed that intensive communication between school and family supports consistent values and developmental patterns across home and school environments. Students who receive consistent learning support from their parents demonstrate higher levels of learning persistence and stable academic motivation than those who do not. These findings reinforce Bronfenbrenner's. This is also supported by previous research by Crawford and Hidayat, which states that cohesion between microsystems, in this case the relationship between family and school, can increase the chances of optimal child development (Crawford, 2020). When educational values and practices at home align with those at school, the process of internalizing learning habits becomes more effective.

At the **ecosystem level**, school policies indirectly create an environment that supports student development. Analysis of school documents shows that SDI Surya Buana implements various policies aimed at character development, such as a reward system for positive behavior and a dialogical approach to disciplinary violations. These policies create a safe and supportive psychological climate for student development. From a developmental ecology perspective, the ecosystem functions as an opportunity structure that shapes children's experiences even though children do not always interact directly with the system (Wati et al., 2025). Thus, school policies that support character development can be understood as **developmental affordances** that expand the

space for students' actualization of capabilities.

At the **macrosystem level**, this study demonstrates that Islamic values serve as a cultural foundation that frames all educational practices in schools. Routine activities such as congregational Dhuha prayers, Quran memorization programs, and the instilling of moral values in learning demonstrate that the religious dimension serves as a system of meaning that shapes students' behavioral orientation. Interviews with students indicate that most students interpret learning activities as part of their worship and moral responsibility. Overall, the findings of this study confirm that strengthening students' capabilities in Islamic elementary schools cannot be understood in isolation but must be seen as the result of complex interactions among individuals and various interconnected environmental systems.

Capability Approach in the Context of Islamic Education

Research findings can also be analyzed through the perspective of **the capability approach** developed by Amartya Sen. In this approach, human development is not measured solely by achievement, but by the expansion of individual substantive freedom to be and do something valuable (beings and doings) (Bidang, Ulfa, 2026). In the context of education, capability refers to the opportunities students have to develop their potential optimally.

The results of the study indicate that habituating self-regulation in the classroom, strengthening learning responsibilities, and implementing a culture of reflection in schools have expanded students' **functionings**. Examples of developing functionings include the ability to manage study time, complete assignments independently, and reflect on learning behavior. However, capability in Sen's perspective is not only related to actual ability, but also to **reflective freedom** to choose actions based on value considerations directed at the benefit and moral responsibility (Wati et al., 2025). The integration of Islamic values at SDI Surya Buana demonstrates that strengthening students' capabilities is inseparable from the development of moral values and spiritual awareness. Islamic educational capability can be understood as the development of human potential (*fitrah*) that is in line with the values of monotheism, social responsibility, and worship orientation which is in line with previous research that school environments that integrate spiritual values and character building have a positive influence on the development of self-regulation and student learning motivation.

Contribution to the Development of Counseling Service Models

The results of this study provide a conceptual contribution to the development of a **Guidance**

and Counseling (BK) service model in Islamic elementary schools. In practice, guidance and counseling services at the Elementary School (SD) level need to transform towards a counseling service model with real practice that are **preventive-developmental** and oriented towards strengthening student capabilities through the following three stages:

- (1). BK services in elementary schools need to be designed as an intervention system that strengthens **the class microsystem**, for example through self-reflection habituation programs, emotional regulation training, and strengthening decision-making skills. Class teachers can act as facilitators to help students' self-regulation abilities gradually,
- (2). BK services need to strengthen **the mesosystem dimension** through a systematic parenting education program. Preparing a collaborative program between schools and parents,
- (3). At the **ecosystem level**, schools need to develop educational policies based on student development data, including the use of assessment instruments to measure the development of self-regulation, learning resilience, and students' social skills, so that it can help schools design more targeted interventions,
- (4). The integration of Islamic values as a macrosystem needs to be formulated in the form of a value *-based counseling module* that allows the process of internalizing moral values to take place in a reflective and dialogical manner (Ulfa, 2026) .

Theoretically, this research offers a synthesis of Bronfenbrenner's developmental ecology theory and Sen's capability approach within the framework of Islamic education. This synthesis gives rise to the capability-oriented ecological counseling paradigm, a counseling approach that aims to expand students' substantive freedom to develop academically, socially, and spiritually through the interaction of integrated environmental systems (Garcés Velástegui, 2020).

Tabel 8. Research Findings Synthesis Table

Ecological System	Field Data	Impact on Capability	Educational Implications
Microsystem	Learning reflection, daily targets, behavioral reinforcement	Improving self-regulation	Habituating self-regulation in the classroom
Mesosystem	School–parent communication	Improving learning resilience	Parenting education program
Ecosystem	School character policy	Supportive psychological environment	Reward and coaching system
Macrosystem	Integration of Islamic values	Moral and spiritual agency	Islamic value-based counseling

Capability-Based Ecological Counseling Model Diagram



CONCLUSION

This research confirms that strengthening student capability is a crucial dimension in the development of Islamic basic education, which focuses not only on academic achievement but also on expanding students' internal capacity for holistic development. Capability, in the context of basic education, is understood as students' substantive freedom to develop their potential, encompassing self-regulation, learning resilience, social responsibility, and spiritual awareness. Within the framework of Islamic education, capability development is part of the process of personality formation, which balances intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects. Therefore, Islamic basic education needs to be directed at strengthening student agency through reflective learning practices, constructive pedagogical interactions, and the establishment of a school culture that supports character development and value awareness.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that strengthening student capabilities becomes more effective when developed through an ecological approach that considers the interconnectedness of various student developmental environments. From the perspective of Urie Bronfenbrenner's developmental ecology theory, student development is influenced by the systemic interaction between classroom contexts, family, school policies, and the surrounding cultural values. Synthesizing this framework with Amartya Sen's capability approach yields a new conceptual framework in the form of a capability-based ecological counseling paradigm that positions educational and counseling services as a preventive-developmental process to expand students' substantive freedom to learn and develop. Overall, this study demonstrates that the strategy of

strengthening capabilities through an ecological counseling approach has contextual relevance for the development of more integrative, transformative, and sustainable Islamic basic education services in shaping a generation that excels not only academically but also emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

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