

Control of Syar'i Ghibah Practices Using Six Sigma and SWOT Analysis to Enhance Islamic Ethical Culture in Educational Settings

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ABSTRACT

Ghibah (backbiting) remains a common communication problem in educational environments, including those with strong religious values. This study aims to develop a Sharia-based model for controlling ghibah by integrating the Six Sigma (DMAIC) method and SWOT analysis to improve Islamic communication ethics. A mixed-methods approach was used, involving 235 educators from three types of institutions. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observations, then analyzed using Six Sigma indicators along with thematic and SWOT analysis. The results show that ghibah behavior is still prevalent, especially in the form of involvement as both listeners and speakers. The initial sigma level (2.3–2.6) indicates weak behavioral control. After implementing interventions such as Islamic communication training, SOP development, and awareness programs, the sigma level improved to above 3.0 in several indicators. In conclusion, the integration of Six Sigma and SWOT within an Islamic ethical framework is effective in reducing ghibah behavior, although sustainable change requires continuous institutional support.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication plays a crucial role in fostering a harmonious and professional working climate within educational institutions. Beyond formal communication channels, however, informal communication often emerges in the form of gossip or rumors, which in Islamic teachings is referred to as *ghibah*, defined as speaking negatively about others in their absence (Han, 2021). This practice has serious implications for moral integrity and social relationships in schools. (Han, 2021) argues that gossip undermines trust and collaboration among teachers, while Himmetoğlu (2020) identifies gossip as a significant challenge affecting organizational climate and performance in educational settings.

The phenomenon of *ghibah* persists across various educational institutions, including those that strongly uphold moral and spiritual values. This indicates a gap between religiosity and ethical behavior. Indonesia, for instance, ranks as the seventh most religious country globally, with a religiosity index of 98.7 according to CEOWORLD and Global Business Policy (Wilson, 2024). However, a meta-analysis by Kelly (2024) reveals a weak correlation between religiosity and prosocial

behavior ($r = 0.13$), suggesting a discrepancy between moral claims and actual practices, often described as religious hypocrisy (Matthews & Mazzocco, 2017). Consequently, negative communication practices such as *ghibah* remain prevalent despite continuous moral and religious guidance. (Antony et al., 2020)

In Islamic perspective, *ghibah* is a reprehensible act strictly prohibited, as emphasized in Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 12, where it is likened to “eating the flesh of one’s dead brother” (Hasanah & Hartono, 2024). In this study, *ghibah syar’i* is not interpreted as a justification of gossip, but rather as a framework for behavioral regulation grounded in Islamic principles. Communication management is approached through the ethical teachings of Islam, distinguishing between prohibited *ghibah* and permissible communication intended for public benefit, such as giving advice, warning against wrongdoing, or upholding justice (Muhyi, Rindu, & Islamy, 2022). Therefore, the concept of *ghibah syar’i* in this research emphasizes the cultivation of Islamic communication ethics to prevent harmful gossip and promote honest, respectful, and constructive communication within educational environments.

Recent studies have explored gossip and rumor dynamics in organizational and educational contexts; however, several limitations remain. Adkins (2017) examines gossip from a theoretical and epistemological perspective without offering systematic control strategies. DiFonzo dan Bordia (2007) focus on the psychological aspects of rumors descriptively, lacking practical application in educational settings. Han 2021 investigates rumors in a specific school context, yet the findings are limited in generalizability and lack standardized control mechanisms. More recent discussions (Alnajem & Al-sudani, 2024; Kamal & Nursahwal, 2023) also highlight that research tends to focus on behavioral impacts rather than developing structured, value-based intervention models. Thus, there is a significant research gap in designing measurable and spiritually grounded strategies to control *ghibah* effectively in educational institutions. Based on this gap, the research problem addressed in this study is: how can *ghibah* behavior be systematically controlled in educational institutions through an approach that integrates managerial methods and Islamic ethical values Accordingly, the objective of this study is to develop a *ghibah syar’i* control model that is both measurable and applicable, integrating Six Sigma methodology and SWOT analysis within an Islamic ethical framework.

This study offers a novel contribution by combining a data-driven management approach with spiritual-ethical principles. The Six Sigma method, particularly the DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control) stages, is employed to identify root causes, measure behavioral deviations, and design data-based solutions (Narula & Grover, 2017). Meanwhile, SWOT analysis is utilized to formulate strategic interventions tailored to the specific conditions of educational institutions (Yuharnis & Erni, 2024). The integration of these approaches is expected to produce an effective behavioral control system that is not only managerially sound but also aligned with Islamic moral values, thereby strengthening ethical communication and character development in educational environments. This paper is structured as follows. The first section presents the introduction, outlining the background, research gap, and objectives. The second section discusses the research methodology. The third section presents the findings and discussion, followed by the conclusion and implications of the study. (Niñerola et al., 2019)

This study offers a novel contribution by integrating a data-driven management approach, namely Six Sigma (DMAIC), with SWOT analysis within an Islamic ethical framework to address *ghibah* behavior in educational settings. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on the psychological or descriptive aspects of gossip, this research develops a structured, measurable, and value-based intervention model that combines managerial techniques with spiritual-ethical principles. (Antony & others, 2022) This integration not only provides a systematic method for identifying and reducing unethical communication practices but also bridges the gap between theoretical understanding and practical implementation in educational institutions. The urgency of this study lies in the persistent prevalence of *ghibah* behavior despite strong religious awareness in educational environments, indicating a critical gap between moral knowledge and actual behavior. If left unaddressed, such communication practices can negatively affect institutional culture, trust, and professional relationships. (Goh & others, 2006) Therefore, developing an effective and sustainable control model is essential to strengthen ethical communication and promote a more conducive

educational environment. This research responds to that need by offering a comprehensive approach that is both empirically measurable and aligned with Islamic values.(Han, 2021)

This study holds significant urgency as *ghibah* (backbiting) remains a persistent phenomenon in educational environments, including institutions grounded in strong religious values, indicating a clear gap between religious understanding and actual behavioral practices. If left unaddressed, such negative communication practices can undermine organizational culture, weaken interpersonal trust, and hinder the creation of a conducive and ethical educational environment.(Wacana & Mujiyono, 2025) Therefore, there is a critical need for a control model that is not only normative but also measurable, applicable, and sustainable.(Greenslade-Yeats et al., 2025) The novelty of this research lies in the integration of a data-driven managerial approach, namely the Six Sigma (DMAIC) method, with SWOT analysis within an Islamic ethical framework. Unlike previous studies that are predominantly descriptive or focused solely on the psychological aspects of *ghibah*, this research proposes a structured, systematic, and value-based intervention model.(Kelly & others, 2024) This integrative approach not only contributes theoretically to the development of Islamic communication studies and educational management but also offers practical solutions that can be directly implemented to foster ethical, professional, and value-oriented communication cultures in educational settings.(Rad et al., 2023)

This study offers a novel contribution by integrating a data-driven managerial approach, namely Six Sigma (DMAIC), with SWOT analysis within an Islamic ethical framework to systematically control *ghibah* behavior in educational settings. Unlike previous studies that predominantly focus on descriptive or psychological aspects of gossip, this research develops a structured, measurable, and value-based intervention model that bridges the gap between moral knowledge and actual behavior. The urgency of this study lies in the persistent prevalence of *ghibah* despite strong religious awareness, indicating a critical disconnect between ethical understanding and social practice. If left unaddressed, such behavior can undermine institutional trust, communication quality, and organizational culture. Therefore, this study provides a comprehensive and applicable solution by combining managerial precision with spiritual-ethical values to promote sustainable ethical communication in education.

METHODS

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design that integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches in a structured sequence. (Goh, Tang, Lam, & Gao, 2006). The research was conducted from July to September 2025 in three educational institutions with different characteristics: a non-formal Islamic institution, a formal Islamic school, and a public school. (Draucker et al., 2020) The population consisted of all educators and staff, with a total of 235 participants selected using total sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis to ensure data triangulation. The instruments measured participants' understanding, involvement, frequency, and attitudes related to *ghibah* behavior. Quantitative data were analyzed using Six Sigma metrics, including Defects per Opportunity (DPO), Defects per Million Opportunities (DPMO), and Sigma Level, while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify behavioral patterns, social dynamics, and ethical influences (Draucker, Rawl, Vode, & Carter-Harris, 2020).

Furthermore, this study applied the Six Sigma DMAIC framework (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control) as a process improvement model. The Define stage identified *ghibah*-related problems, the Measure stage quantified behavioral defects, the Analyze stage explored root causes using analytical tools, the Improve stage developed intervention strategies such as Islamic communication training, SOP development, and awareness programs, and the Control stage ensured sustainability through monitoring and evaluation. (Kurniawan, 2021) In addition, SWOT analysis was used to assess internal and external factors, including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, in order to formulate appropriate strategic interventions. (Shokri, 2017)The integration of these approaches enabled the development of a systematic and applicable model for controlling *ghibah* behavior in educational institutions. (Draucker et al., 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study in a structured and analytical manner based on the DMAIC approach (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control). The results are reported objectively and linked directly to the research objectives, namely: (1) identifying the level of ghibah behavior in educational institutions, (2) measuring the quality level using Six Sigma metrics, and (3) formulating effective intervention strategies to reduce such behavior (Goh et al., 2006).

Finding 1 High Prevalence of Ghibah Behavior Across Educational Institutions

The initial findings from the Define phase address the first research objective, namely identifying the prevalence of ghibah behavior across educational institutions. The results indicate that ghibah behavior remains prevalent across all three types of institutions. Based on data collected from 235 respondents, five Critical to Quality (CTQ) indicators were identified, covering cognitive (A1), behavioral (B1, B2), and affective (C1, C2) dimensions.

Table 1 presents the CTQ classification used to evaluate behavioral defects related to ghibah.

Table 1. Critical To Quality (CTQ)

Category	Type of Defect	Characteristics	Code
Cognitive (Understanding)	Inadequate understanding of the prohibition of ghibah	Respondents do not know, partially understand, or knowingly violate the prohibition	A1
	Involvement as a ghibah speaker	Respondents participate in ghibah conversations	B1
Behavioral	Involvement as a ghibah listener	Respondents listen without attempting to stop or avoid it	B2
	Low awareness of the impact of ghibah	Respondents lack consistency in understanding its negative impacts	C1
Affective (Attitude & Awareness)	Weak commitment to avoiding ghibah	Respondents show inconsistent commitment to avoiding ghibah	C2

Further analysis shows that behavioral involvement in ghibah both as speakers (B1) and listeners (B2) dominates all categories. This is supported by aggregated data in Table 5, where B2 (97.02%) and B1 (95.32%) exhibit the highest defect rates among all respondents. This pattern indicates that social interaction plays a dominant role in sustaining ghibah behavior, regardless of institutional type.

Table 2. Defect Data - Islamic Nonformal Institution

Code	Criteria	Total	Percentage
A1	Do not know: 3 (4.11%), partially know: 9 (12.33%), know but negligent: 28 (38.36%), knowingly violate: 11 (15.07%)	51	69.86%
B1	Very frequent: 5 (6.85%), frequent: 3 (4.11%), occasional: 14 (19.18%), very rare: 51 (69.86%)	73	100%
B2	Very rare listeners: 27 (36.99%), frequent listeners: 38 (52.05%), very frequent listeners: 8 (10.96%)	73	100%
C1	Not aware: 13 (17.81%), underestimate: 9 (12.33%), socially aware: 21 (28.77%), religiously aware but inconsistent: 19 (26.03%)	62	84.93%
C2	No commitment: 9 (12.33%), weak commitment: 12 (16.44%), situational commitment: 23 (31.51%), religious commitment but inconsistent: 17 (23.29%)	61	83.56%

Table 3. Defect Data - Islamic Formal Institution

Code	Criteria	Total	Percentage
A1	Do not know: 1 (0.79%), partial: 29 (22.83%), negligent: 30 (23.62%), deliberate violation: 35 (27.56%)	95	74.80%

B1	Very frequent: 0%, frequent: 7 (5.51%), occasional: 37 (29.13%), very rare: 83 (65.35%)	127	100%
B2	Rare listeners: 20 (15.75%), frequent: 73 (57.48%), very frequent: 27 (21.26%)	120	94.49%
C1	Not aware: 11 (8.66%), underestimate: 28 (22.05%), socially aware: 33 (25.98%), religious but inconsistent: 32 (25.20%)	104	81.89%
C2	No commitment: 7 (5.51%), weak: 27 (21.26%), situational: 39 (30.71%), religious but inconsistent: 37 (29.13%)	110	86.61%

Table 4. Defect Data - Public Elementary School

Code	Criteria	Total	Percentage
A1	Do not know: 3 (8.57%), partial: 9 (25.71%), negligent: 8 (22.86%), deliberate: 5 (14.29%)	25	71.43%
B1	Very frequent: 2 (5.71%), frequent: 1 (2.86%), occasional: 7 (20%), very rare: 14 (40%)	24	68.51%
B2	Rare listeners: 13 (37.14%), frequent: 18 (51.43%), very frequent: 4 (11.43%)	35	100%
C1	Not aware: 9 (25.71%), underestimate: 7 (20%), social: 8 (22.86%), religious inconsistent: 6 (17.14%)	30	85.71%
C2	No commitment: 4 (11.43%), weak: 6 (17.14%), situational: 12 (34.29%), religious inconsistent: 9 (25.71%)	31	88.57%

Table 5. Combined Data of Three Institutions

Code	A1	B1	B2	C1	C2	Total
Nonformal	51	73	73	62	61	73
Formal	95	127	120	104	110	127
Public School	25	24	35	30	31	35
Total	171	224	228	196	202	235

These findings suggest that although respondents possess a basic understanding of the prohibition of ghibah, this knowledge does not consistently translate into actual behavior. This indicates a gap between cognitive awareness and behavioral implementation.

Such a discrepancy supports previous studies highlighting the inconsistency between religious knowledge and social practice (Kelly et al., 2024). Moreover, the dominance of passive involvement (as listeners) suggests that social conformity, group acceptance, and communication norms play a critical role in sustaining ghibah behavior. This finding is consistent with social behavior theory, which emphasizes that individual actions are strongly influenced by group dynamics and environmental factors (Crampton, Hodge, & Mishra, 1998). Therefore, behavioral change interventions should not only focus on strengthening knowledge but also on restructuring social interactions and communication patterns within educational environments.

Finding 2 Low Initial Sigma Level Indicates Poor Behavioral Control

In the Measure phase, behavioral defects were quantified using DPO, DPMO, and Sigma Level. The findings show that all institutions operate within a low Sigma range (≈ 2.3 – 2.6), reflecting limited control over ghibah behavior.

Tables 6–9 present the measurement results across the three types of educational institutions.

Table 6. DPO and DPMO Data of Nonformal Islamic-Based Institutions

Code	Unit (U)	Defect (D)	CTQ (O)	DPO	DPMO	Sigma
A1	73	51	5	0.139726027	139,726.0274	2.58 σ
B1	73	73	5	0.2	200,000	2.34 σ
B2	73	73	5	0.2	200,000	2.34 σ

C1	73	62	5	0.169863014	169,863.0137	2.46 σ
C2	73	61	5	0.167123288	167,123.2877	2.46 σ

In nonformal Islamic-based institutions, indicators B1 and B2 record the highest DPMO values (200,000; $\sigma = 2.34$), indicating frequent occurrence of ghibah-related interactions. In contrast, cognitive and affective indicators (A1, C1, C2) show relatively lower defect levels, although they still require improvement.

Table 7. DPO and DPMO Data of Formal Islamic Educational Institutions

Code	Unit (U)	Defect (D)	CTQ (O)	DPO	DPMO	Sigma
A1	127	95	5	0.149606299	149,606.2992	2.54 σ
B1	127	127	5	0.2	200,000	2.34 σ
B2	127	120	5	0.188976378	188,976.378	2.38 σ
C1	127	104	5	0.163779528	163,779.5276	3.48 σ
C2	127	110	5	0.173228346	173,228.3465	2.44 σ

A similar pattern appears in formal Islamic institutions, where B1 remains the highest (200,000; $\sigma = 2.34$), followed by B2 (188,976; $\sigma = 2.38$). This suggests a discrepancy between religious knowledge and actual communication practices.

Table 8. DPO and DPMO Data of Public Elementary Schools

Code	Unit (U)	Defect (D)	CTQ (O)	DPO	DPMO	Sigma
A1	35	25	5	0.142857143	142,857.1429	2.57 σ
B1	35	24	5	0.137142857	137,142.8571	2.59 σ
B2	35	35	5	0.2	200,000	2.34 σ
C1	35	30	5	0.171428571	171,428.5714	2.45 σ
C2	35	31	5	0.177142857	177,142.8571	2.42 σ

Public elementary schools demonstrate comparatively lower defect levels. The highest value is observed in B2 (200,000; $\sigma = 2.34$), while other indicators fall within 137,000–177,000 ($\sigma = 2.42$ – 2.59), indicating less frequent but still present ghibah behavior.

Table 9. Combined DPO and DPMO Data of the Three Educational Institutions

Code	Unit (U)	Defect (D)	CTQ (O)	DPO	DPMO	Sigma
A1	235	171	5	0.145531915	145,531.9149	2.55 σ
B1	235	224	5	0.190638298	190,638.2979	2.38 σ
B2	235	228	5	0.194042553	194,042.5532	2.36 σ
C1	235	196	5	0.166808511	166,808.5106	2.47 σ
C2	235	202	5	0.171914894	171,914.8936	2.45 σ

The combined data confirm that B2 (listener involvement) has the highest DPMO (194,043; $\sigma = 2.36$), followed by B1 (190,638; $\sigma = 2.38$). Conversely, A1 records the lowest DPMO (145,532; $\sigma = 2.55$), indicating that understanding of ghibah prohibition is relatively better established than its behavioral application.

Across institutions, nonformal Islamic settings show the highest defect range (175,000–200,000; $\sigma \approx 2.4$), followed by formal Islamic institutions (170,000–190,000; $\sigma \approx 2.4$ – 2.5), while public schools present the lowest range (140,000–175,000; $\sigma \approx 2.5$ – 2.6).

Overall, behavioral indicators (B1 and B2) dominate the defect profile, highlighting social interaction as the primary source of the problem. The relatively lower defect in A1 indicates that knowledge alone does not ensure behavioral compliance. This finding supports behavioral theory, which emphasizes that action is shaped not only by cognition but also by environmental reinforcement and social dynamics. Moreover, it aligns with previous studies underscoring the influence of social context on ethical communication practices.

Finding 3 Behavioral Factors (B1 and B2) as the Main Root Cause of Ghibah

Analyze Phase: Pareto and Fishbone Diagrams

The Analyze phase was conducted using Pareto and Fishbone diagrams to identify the main contributing factors to ghibah practices across three educational institution

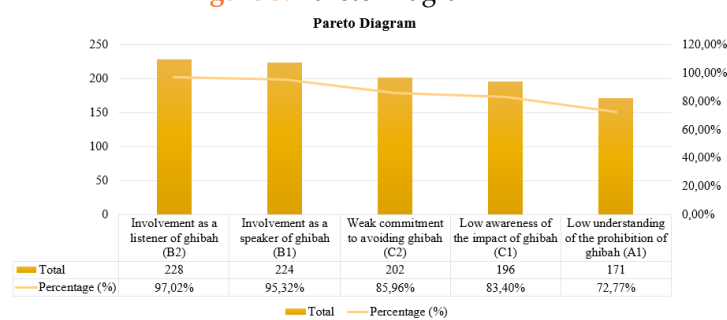
a. Pareto Diagram

The Pareto diagram was used to determine the dominant types of ghibah-related behaviors that require prioritization for improvement. Based on the combined data from the three institutions, five types of defects were identified as follows:

Table 10. Percentage of Ghibah Defect Types (Combined Data from Three Institutions)

Type of Defect	Number (persons)	Cumulative Percentage
Involvement as a listener of ghibah (B2)	228	97.02%
Involvement as a speaker of ghibah (B1)	224	95.32%
Weak commitment to avoiding ghibah (C2)	202	85.96%
Low awareness of the impact of ghibah (C1)	196	83.40%
Low understanding of the prohibition of ghibah (A1)	171	72.77%

Figure 3. Pareto Diagram



The table and Pareto diagram indicate that involvement in ghibah, both as listeners and speakers (B2 and B1), represents the dominant issue and should be prioritized for improvement. Meanwhile, understanding, awareness, and commitment function as supporting factors influencing such behavior.

b. Fishbone Diagram

The Fishbone Diagram was employed to explore the main causal factors of ghibah practices based on five Critical to Quality (CTQ) indicators: understanding (A1), perpetrator (B1), listener (B2), awareness (C1), and commitment (C2). Data obtained from observations, interviews, and questionnaires served as the basis for identifying the root causes.

Based on the fishbone analysis, the causal factors are categorized into two main groups:

Uncontrollable Factors (difficult to fully control)

- Human factors (human resources, psychological & emotional aspects):
Fluctuating spiritual awareness, the desire for social acceptance, insecurity/low self-esteem, emotional venting, the need for social validation, identity seeking, physical and mental fatigue, and ingrained habits from non-Islamic environments. These factors directly influence CTQ B1 and B2.
- Islamic environment (social culture & atmosphere):
Collective habits, informal interaction spaces prone to ghibah, a sense of togetherness often built through discussing others, a relaxed atmosphere that encourages free speech, and competitive dynamics among educators and staff. These factors reinforce social involvement in ghibah (B1 and B2).

Controllable Factors (can be improved or intervened)

- **Methods (communication habits & patterns):**
Unfocused conversations, subtle but sarcastic language, non-assertive communication, lengthy storytelling patterns, repetition of old gossip, passive responses during ghibah, and lack of practical Islamic communication techniques such as *tabayyun* (verification) and private advice. These factors can reduce B1 and B2 and support improvements in A1, C1, and C2.
- **Rules (regulation & social control):**
Lack of enforcement of Islamic communication ethics, minimal social sanctions, rules focusing more on administrative aspects, student evaluation procedures that sometimes lead to ghibah, and the absence of reward systems for educators and staff who maintain healthy communication. These factors facilitate changes in social behavior.
- **Values/Ethics (internalization of Islamic morals):**
Strong knowledge but weak implementation, fluctuating faith, low awareness of *ihsan*, misinterpretation of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood ethics), rationalization of sinful behavior, lack of *husnuzan* (positive thinking) practice, and declining awareness of the hereafter. These factors support improvements in A1, C1, and C2.
- **Media (reminders & da'wah creativity):**
Sermons and posters that are too general, lack of creative media innovation, absence of visual triggers in ghibah-prone areas, misuse of digital media for gossip, limited interactive simulations, and the absence of anti-ghibah campaigns based on challenges or collective movements. These factors strengthen intervention efforts.

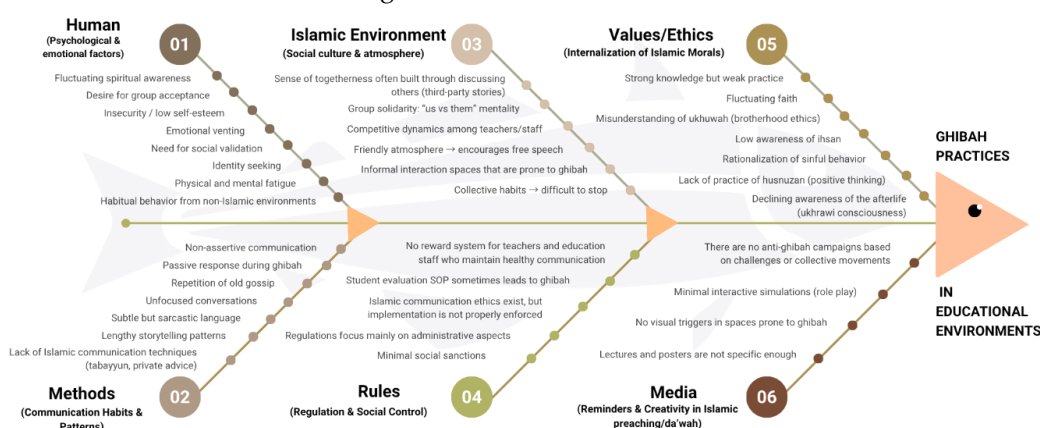


Figure 4. Fishbone Diagram of the Causes of Ghibah Practices in the Three Educational Institutions

Based on the Fishbone Diagram, it can be concluded that human and environmental factors are the primary causes of ghibah behavior (B1/B2), while methods, rules, values/ethics, and media represent key intervention points to reduce DPO/DPMO and improve social behavior in accordance with Islamic principles.

Finding 4 Strategic Interventions Improve Behavioral Quality

In the Improve phase, strategic interventions were formulated using IFAS–EFAS and IE Matrix analysis.

Table 11. IFAS Matrix of Ghibah (Backbiting) Practices

Internal Factors	Weight	Rating	Weight × Rating
Strengths			
Participants' basic understanding of the prohibition of ghibah is already quite good	0.15	4	0.60
Institutional leadership support for healthy communication	0.10	4	0.40
Institutional infrastructure supports development activities	0.08	3	0.24
Internal community is solid and willing to learn	0.07	4	0.28

Weaknesses

Ghibah practices are still high (B1/B2)	0.15	2	0.30
Participants' religious commitment is not yet consistent (C2)	0.20	2	0.40
Awareness of the impact of ghibah is low (C1)	0.08	2	0.16
Lack of anti-ghibah reminder media	0.07	2	0.14
Lack of practical Islamic communication techniques (tabayyun, private advice)	0.05	2	0.10
No SOP/regulation for controlling ghibah	0.05	2	0.10
Total IFAS	1.00		2.72

Table 12. EFAS Matrix

External Factors	Weight	Rating	Weight × Rating
Opportunities			
Support from the Islamic community and positive collective culture	0.12	4	0.48
Advances in digital media technology for educational campaigns	0.20	4	0.80
Educators' willingness to participate in training and workshops	0.08	4	0.32
Routine religious activities as a trigger for anti-ghibah awareness	0.05	3	0.15
Threats			
Social environment that tolerates ghibah	0.30	2	0.60
Work pressure and informal interactions that trigger ghibah	0.08	2	0.16
Ghibah practices outside the institution (home/social environment)	0.07	2	0.14
Competition among educators leading to gossip	0.05	2	0.10
Misuse of digital media for gossip	0.05	2	0.10
Total EFAS	1.00		2.85

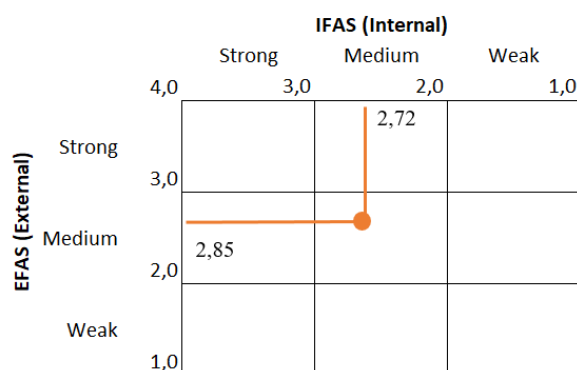


Figure 5. SWOT Quadrant (Matriks IFAS-EFAS)

The IFAS score (2.72) and EFAS score (2.85) place the institutions in a growth-oriented quadrant, indicating strong potential for improvement through strategic interventions.

The implemented strategies include:

- SO: Strengthening Islamic communication culture through leadership and digital campaigns
- WO: Training in Islamic communication (tabayyun, emotional control) and SOP development
- ST: Utilizing institutional strength to counter negative social norms
- WT: Establishing peer control and reward-punishment systems

These strategies align with constructivist and social learning theories, where behavior is shaped through interaction, modeling, and reinforcement.

Finding 4 Significant Improvement in Sigma Level After Intervention

The Control phase confirms the effectiveness of the interventions. As shown in Table 13, all CTQ indicators experienced an increase in Sigma Level:

Table 13. Sigma Level Improvement After Implementation of Ghibah Control Strategy in Three Educational Institutions

Type of Defect	A1	B1	B2	C1	C2
Before	2.55 σ	2.38 σ	2.36 σ	2.47 σ	2.45 σ
After Implementation	3.10 σ	2.95 σ	2.90 σ	3.00 σ	3.05 σ

This improvement demonstrates a measurable reduction in behavioral defects and confirms the effectiveness of structured interventions.

Notably, although behavioral indicators (B1 and B2) improved significantly, they remain slightly below 3 sigma, suggesting that social behavior change requires sustained intervention over time.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that ghibah behavior remains a persistent social-communication issue across educational institutions, despite relatively adequate cognitive understanding among respondents. This indicates a significant gap between knowledge and behavioral practice, which aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior, where behavior is not determined solely by knowledge but also by subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Rad et al., 2023). In this context, although respondents understand the prohibition of ghibah (A1), social interaction patterns (B1 and B2) strongly influence actual behavior, demonstrating the dominance of environmental and normative pressures over individual cognition. (Adkins, 2017)

The results of the Measure phase further confirm that all institutions operate within a low Sigma Level (approximately 2.3–2.6), indicating weak behavioral control systems. This is consistent with previous studies in behavioral ethics in educational environments, which emphasize that moral awareness alone is insufficient without structural reinforcement and institutional monitoring mechanisms (Mehrabani, 2012). The relatively higher defect rates in behavioral indicators (B1 and B2) compared to cognitive indicators suggest that communicative environments in schools and Islamic institutions play a critical role in sustaining informal gossip practices. Moreover, the dominance of listener involvement (B2) as identified in the Pareto analysis highlights the role of passive participation in perpetuating unethical communication. This finding expands existing literature on organizational communication, which often focuses on active rumor spreaders but underestimates the role of silent participants in reinforcing social acceptance of deviant communication patterns (Han, 2021). In educational contexts, silence or passive listening can function as implicit approval, thereby strengthening group-based normalization of ghibah behavior (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

The Fishbone analysis further demonstrates that both individual and environmental factors contribute to the persistence of ghibah. Human factors such as emotional regulation, insecurity, and the need for social validation are consistent with previous research on workplace communication behavior, which shows that emotional stress and identity-seeking often manifest in negative interpersonal communication (Greenslade-Yeats et al., 2025). Meanwhile, environmental and cultural factors within institutions, such as informal communication spaces and weak enforcement of ethical communication norms, reinforce these behaviors through social learning mechanisms (Ulfiyah, Saripah, & Syarifudin, 2023). The improvement observed in the Control phase, where all Sigma levels increased after intervention, indicates that structured behavioral management strategies can effectively reduce communication-related ethical violations. This supports Social Learning Theory, which posits that behavior can be modified through reinforcement, modeling, and institutional conditioning (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2010). The introduction of communication training, SOP development, and digital-based awareness campaigns demonstrates that behavioral change is more effective when supported by systemic and continuous interventions rather than isolated moral instruction.

The IFAS–EFAS analysis further positions the institutions in a growth-oriented quadrant, suggesting strong potential for improvement through strategic interventions. The use of digital media as an opportunity aligns with recent studies emphasizing the role of technology in shaping

ethical communication environments in schools and workplaces. (Mehrabani, 2012) Digital interventions such as awareness campaigns and structured communication platforms have been shown to reduce informal rumor dissemination and improve transparency in organizational communication (Kurniawan, 2021). However, despite measurable improvements, behavioral indicators (B1 and B2) remain below the 3-sigma threshold, indicating that social behavior change requires long-term reinforcement. This finding highlights a limitation of short-term intervention models in addressing deeply rooted social communication habits. Cultural norms, habitual interactions, and peer influence require sustained institutional commitment to achieve stable behavioral transformation. (Rusyani, 2025) In addition, the study is limited by its cross-sectional design in the measurement phase, which may not fully capture long-term behavioral dynamics. Future research should employ longitudinal approaches to examine whether improvements in Sigma levels can be sustained over time. Furthermore, future studies could explore the integration of digital behavioral monitoring systems or artificial intelligence-based communication analysis to enhance early detection and prevention of ghibah behavior in educational settings. (Aziz & Suhaimi, 2023)

Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of the interaction between language, social behavior, and institutional culture in shaping ethical communication practices. It highlights that controlling ghibah behavior requires not only cognitive awareness but also structural, cultural, and technological interventions that work together in an integrated system.

CONCLUSION

This study develops and evaluates a Sharia-based ghibah (backbiting) control model in educational institutions by integrating the Six Sigma DMAIC methodology and SWOT analysis within an Islamic ethical framework. The findings demonstrate that ghibah behavior remains a persistent communication issue across different educational settings, despite relatively strong cognitive understanding of its prohibition. Behavioral indicators, particularly involvement as both listeners (B2) and speakers (B1), consistently emerge as the dominant sources of communication defects, indicating that social interaction patterns and environmental influences play a more significant role than knowledge alone in shaping unethical communication practices. The application of Six Sigma reveals that all institutions initially operate at a low sigma level (approximately 2.3–2.6), reflecting weak behavioral control systems. However, after the implementation of structured interventions including Islamic communication training, SOP development, awareness campaigns, and reinforcement mechanisms an improvement in sigma levels is observed across all Critical to Quality (CTQ) indicators, reaching above 3.0 in several dimensions. This indicates that systematic and data-driven behavioral interventions, when combined with Islamic ethical values, are effective in reducing negative communication behavior and improving institutional communication culture.

Furthermore, the integration of SWOT analysis enables the formulation of context-sensitive strategies that align institutional strengths with external opportunities while addressing internal weaknesses and environmental threats. These combined approaches contribute to a more comprehensive model of behavioral governance that bridges managerial effectiveness and spiritual-ethical development. Theoretically, this study extends the application of Six Sigma beyond industrial and operational contexts into behavioral and ethical communication management within education. Practically, it offers a structured framework for educational institutions to build a culture of ethical communication grounded in Islamic values. Future research is recommended to explore longitudinal impacts of the model and to integrate digital monitoring or AI-based systems for early detection of unethical communication patterns in educational environments.

This study highlights that the primary finding lies in the dominance of behavioral involvement particularly as listeners and speakers—as the core driver of ghibah practices, indicating that social interaction patterns and environmental reinforcement outweigh cognitive understanding in shaping unethical communication behavior. The measurable improvement in Sigma levels after intervention confirms that integrating Six Sigma and SWOT within an Islamic ethical framework provides an effective and structured approach to reducing such behavior. However, since behavioral

indicators have not yet reached optimal sigma levels, future research should focus on longitudinal designs to assess the sustainability of behavioral change over time, expand the study across more diverse educational contexts to enhance generalizability, and explore the integration of digital monitoring systems or artificial intelligence-based communication analysis to enable real-time detection and prevention of ghibah practices. Such developments are essential to strengthen adaptive, scalable, and technology-supported ethical communication models in educational institutions.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the research was conducted in only three educational institutions with different characteristics, which may limit the generalizability of the results to broader educational contexts. Second, although a mixed-methods approach was employed, the quantitative data relied heavily on self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to social desirability bias given the moral and religious sensitivity of ghibah behavior. Third, the application of the Six Sigma (DMAIC) framework to behavioral and ethical communication contexts requires careful contextual adaptation, as the method was originally developed for industrial and process-based quality improvement. Fourth, the study design primarily captures short-term changes through pre- and post-intervention measurements, limiting the ability to assess the long-term sustainability of behavioral transformation. Fifth, while the study identifies key internal and external factors through SWOT analysis, broader socio-cultural influences, informal communication networks, and digital interaction patterns were not fully controlled or quantitatively measured. Future research is therefore recommended to employ longitudinal designs, expand sample size and institutional diversity, and integrate digital or AI-based behavioral monitoring systems to enhance the robustness, validity, and generalizability of the findings.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

NA conceptualization, research design, methodology development, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, and writing the original draft of the manuscript FT, NZ, NS, assisted in data collection, field validation, and provided input during analysis and interpretation; EF supervision, critical review, and final approval of the manuscript for publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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