

Violence in Pesantren and the Culture of Silence Behind Religious Walls

Arkaan Wisnu Pratama¹, Dina Nadhyfa², Jauza Rasyiq Hernanta³, Muhammad Daffa Al Abiyyu⁴

arkaanpratama909@gmail.com¹, nadhyfadina@gmail.com²,
jauzarasyiq25@gmail.com³, daffaklampok321@gmail.com⁴

Telkom University Purwokerto

Abstract: *This article explores the occurrence of bullying in Islamic boarding schools and the culture of silence that exists within religious institutions. Pesantren is considered a place where students can receive education and develop their skills, but they are also involved in acts of bullying due to their physical and psychological nature. This research reveals that the hierarchical structure and culture of seniority in Islamic boarding schools create conditions that are prone to bullying, where young students are subjected to arbitrary actions by older students. The article also mentions other factors that discourage students from reporting bullying, such as fear of retaliation and lack of support from boarding school administrators. Utilizing descriptive techniques, this study seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of bullying in Islamic boarding schools and emphasizes the importance of creating a safe and responsive environment to incidents of violent behavior.*

Keywords: *Bullying, Culture of Silence, Seniority, Santri Protection.*

Abstrak: Artikel ini mengulas tentang terjadinya kekerasan di pesantren dan budaya diam yang ada di dalam lembaga keagamaan. Pesantren dianggap sebagai tempat dimana para siswa dapat menerima pendidikan dan mengembangkan keterampilan mereka, tetapi mereka juga terlibat dalam tindakan kekerasan karena sifat fisik dan psikis mereka. Penelitian ini mengungkap bahwa struktur hierarki dan budaya senioritas di pondok pesantren menimbulkan kondisi yang rentan terhadap tindak kekerasan, di mana santri muda menjadi sasaran tindakan sewenang-wenang oleh santri yang lebih tua. Disebutkan juga dalam artikel ini faktor-faktor lain yang membuat siswa enggan melaporkan kekerasan, seperti takut akan pembalasan dan tidak adanya dukungan dari administrator pondok pesantren. Dengan memanfaatkan teknik deskriptif, penelitian ini berupaya memberikan pemahaman mendalam tentang dinamika kekerasan di pesantren dan menekankan pentingnya menciptakan lingkungan yang aman dan tanggap terhadap insiden perilaku kekerasan.

Kata kunci: *Kekerasan, Budaya Diam, Senioritas, Perlindungan Santri.*

Introduction

Religious walls refer to boundaries that socially, culturally and psychologically separate groups based on their religious beliefs. The concept is often associated with social segregation or isolation arising from different religious views and spiritual beliefs in society. This phenomenon can take many forms, ranging from physical boundaries such as separate places of worship, to social manifestations such as differential access to educational or employment opportunities based on religion. In various journals and scholarly articles, the topic of religious walls is often discussed in the context of religious pluralism and tolerance. One of the main issues is how these religious walls contribute to social fragmentation, which in turn can lead to interfaith conflict or discrimination. Research in the field of sociology of religion reveals that religious walls can also be symbolic, separating communities through different religious norms, values and symbols.

Several articles highlighted that in multicultural societies, these religious walls can be further strengthened by political and economic factors. Conflicts or competition over resources often involve religious elements, and religious walls become more evident when religion is used as a means to build collective identity. On the other hand, there is also literature that focuses on the importance of interfaith dialogue to lower tensions and break down these walls, especially in the context of globalization that increasingly brings different communities together.

Research Methods

The research strategy used in this research is a descriptive reference study, which seeks to explain findings by utilizing a variety of sources, including scientific journals, books, papers, and others. Researchers can gain a deeper understanding and explanation of events in their natural setting by using this technique.

In contrast to approaches that focus on numerical and statistical measurements, descriptive methods emphasize interpretation, understanding of context, and subjective meaning. Through this approach, researchers can conduct in-depth studies of reference materials to gain insight into aspects of human, social, and cultural life. This descriptive approach provides space to consider complexity and context that cannot necessarily be measured quantitatively, allowing researchers to explore broader aspects of social reality.

Results And Discussion

Definition and Purpose of an Islamic Boarding School

Many prominent academics in Indonesia have emerged from pesantren, the oldest educational institution in Indonesia. Pesantren have been the home and school for many famous Islamic figures. Derived from the Javanese word "santri",

meaning religious students, the English phrase "boarding school" entered the English language. The origin of the term "pondok" can be traced back to the Arabic word "funduuq," meaning house. In contrast to traditional institutions, boarding schools provide living quarters where students participate in secular and religious education programs simultaneously. This creates a sense of community and connectedness among students. However, this environment can also open up the possibility of undesirable behaviors, such as violence and harassment. Such incidents can occur in a dormitory or boarding school environment, due to various factors, such as differences in personalities, perspectives, and qualifications. Violence in this environment can have various negative impacts, especially for students in dormitories.

Pesantren, as traditional Islamic schools with a mission to spread religious teachings, moral principles, and human values, play a crucial role in Indonesian culture and are held in high esteem. However, the number of such educational institutions is increasing alarmingly, accompanied by many violent incidents. This clearly deviates from the true meaning of pesantren, which emphasizes the creation of a peaceful environment through spiritual and moral development. Therefore, this situation raises doubts about the effectiveness of the education system in pesantren, which in turn creates a lot of fear and anxiety in Indonesian society, especially among parents who are increasingly worried about the safety of their children in an unsafe place. It should reflect piety, morality and sentiment.

Eperson's behavior is shaped by a unique combination of innate traits and environmental cues, including social norms, education, experience, beliefs, and the power and influence of others. Depending on one's perspective, these behaviors can be considered normal, unusual, or even deviant. According to sociologists, the most basic type of human social activity is behavior, which is defined as actions that are not directed at another person.

As widely reported in the media, many reports of violence that occurred in dormitories or pesantren resulted in fatalities. It is unfortunate that education in Indonesia is also based on religious aspects and violence can still occur. Many of these incidents are covered up in order to maintain the good image of the organization and other interests without thinking about the victims and their families who feel the impact of the violence that has befallen them. As happened a few years ago, the son of the owner of a boarding school in one of the boarding schools in the city of Jombang committed an act of sexual violence against one of the students at the boarding school and took a long time for this incident to be revealed in the legal field.

Types of Bullying

1. Physical bullying

Negative behavior that has a noticeable impact on the physical appearance of the victim is known as physical bullying. In this case, bullying is an act based on an

imbalance of power, where the victim often lacks the ability to fight back or defend themselves. In general, bullying behavior refers to actions that can be both visible and invisible, but in physical bullying, the impact on the victim's physique is usually directly visible, making it the most recognizable type of bullying.

Research shows that various forms of physical bullying that occur in the integrated dayah of Lhokseumawe City include behaviors such as blocking the victim's path, pushing, hitting, throwing objects at the victim, and grabbing the head. These actions not only result in physical injuries but can also have an impact on the psychological condition of the victim.

2. Verbal bullying

Verbal bullying is a form of bullying that uses words in order to pressure or demean another individual, often to give the perpetrator a sense of superiority or power. In some cases, the impact of verbal bullying can be more harmful than physical bullying. While physical bullying tends to be easily recognizable because it leaves obvious physical marks on the victim's body, verbal bullying often has a deeper and more lasting psychological impact. The effects of verbal bullying can significantly affect the mental health of the victim and may not be immediately apparent, making it sometimes more difficult to identify or address.

3. Relational or Psychological Bullying

Relational or psychological bullying is a form of abuse that is often difficult to detect directly from the outside. It includes actions that consistently lower the victim's self-esteem by ignoring, ostracizing, rejecting or avoiding the victim. The goal of relational bullying is to damage the victim's social relationships, cut them off from friends, or ostracize them. This behavior can take indirect but aggressive forms, such as glares, sighs or mocking laughter, giggles, and rude and demeaning body language.

Impact of Bullying

Physical bullying is an aggressive act that involves direct contact with a person's body, such as hitting, kicking, pushing or pinching. This form of violence is intended to physically injure or humiliate the victim and is often repeated. Abusers often use violence or physical dominance to bully their victims, which can result in physical injury or emotional trauma. Physical abuse not only affects the body but can also have a major psychological impact on the victim.

1. Impact of Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying is a type of bullying that involves using words to hurt or demean someone. This can take the form of taunts, insults, rude comments, derogatory nicknames, or even threats. Abusers often use words to attack the victim's self-esteem and emotions, causing significant psychological impact. Although it does not involve physical violence, verbal bullying can have a

devastating mental and emotional impact on its victims and can continue for some time.

2. Impact of Relational or Psychological Bullying

Relational or psychological harassment is a form of harassment that is intended to damage a person's social relationships or status in a group. This can be done by spreading rumors, excluding someone from a friendship group, or manipulating situations to make the victim feel isolated and rejected. This type of harassment is often not directly visible but its impact can be very painful as it affects the victim's confidence and morale. Although it does not involve physical violence, relational abuse can cause deep and prolonged psychological distress.

Bullying Factors in Pesantren

Pesantren, as traditional Islamic schools with a mission to spread religious teachings, moral principles, and human values, play a crucial role in Indonesian culture and are highly valued. However, the number of such educational institutions is increasing alarmingly, accompanied by many violent incidents. This clearly deviates from the true meaning of pesantren, which emphasizes the creation of a peaceful environment through spiritual and moral development. Therefore, this situation casts doubt on the effectiveness of the education system in pesantren, which in turn creates a lot of fear and anxiety in Indonesian society, especially among parents who are increasingly concerned about the safety of their children in an unsafe place that is supposed to reflect piety, morality and sentiment.

In the case of violence in pesantren, there must be many factors underlying the violence. Based on research published in many reputable journals and articles, they consistently emphasize the prevalence of violence in pesantren, based on strict regulations regarding interactions between students in different age groups. In addition, the distinctive environmental characteristics of pesantren further exacerbate the situation as the school has a large and diverse student population. The students, called "santri", come from various regions and bring diverse cultural backgrounds, which sometimes lead to conflicts and misunderstandings. Cases of violence that occur in pesantren are often caused by several factors, such as lack of parental supervision in an unfamiliar environment, conflicts over customs and traditions, and lack of supervision and management in the school environment. It is not uncommon for santri to view the laws and regulations in these educational institutions as an obstacle to their personal freedom, even though the guidelines are intended to increase santri discipline and obedience. ³ These factors, when combined, create a complex context that can easily lead to violence.

Violence in pesantren takes various forms, both physical and immaterial, often stemming from issues of revenge and hierarchy (seniority) among students. In-depth interviews conducted at one such facility revealed instances where elders administered corporal punishment, including beatings, to their juniors on the grounds that students following this made it difficult to stand for morning prayers.

This led to revenge and backlash between junior and senior high school students, which escalated into fights outside the pesantren. This story is an example of the complexity of violence in educational settings. It can be argued that internal as well as external causes contribute to the prevalence of violence in pesantren.

The Role of *Stakeholders* (Educators, Parents, Government) in Violence Prevention Efforts in Pesantren

Violence against santri in pesantren is a serious problem that requires the active role of many parties, including educators, parents, and the government in an effort to prevent such acts of violence. The role of teaching staff in efforts to prevent violence in the pesantren environment can be fulfilled by creating a safe and comfortable learning and daily living environment, continuing to supervise the activities of students and providing support in the form of counseling to students who experience emotional disturbances, needs, and psychological support. Then, the teaching staff must also educate character by teaching moral values such as tolerance, empathy and mutual respect in daily activities. The teaching staff must also be able to model behavior and be interactive so that students can imitate the good attitude of the teaching staff. In addition, pesantren must also have a system for handling cases of violence that occur in pesantren, such as preparing and socializing reporting procedures in the event of violence, so that victims of violence know how to report violence. The boarding school must also provide strict and appropriate sanctions against anyone who commits acts of violence in the boarding school, both students and teaching staff, and protect victims of violence.

In this case, parents also play an essential role in preventing acts of violence in the pesantren environment. Building positive communication with their children will encourage them to open up and share what they are experiencing at the pesantren. At that time, parents should also monitor their children regularly by visiting and discussing with their children and caregivers to monitor their development and health. Parents should also provide emotional support to their children, showing that they are always ready to support and protect their children in all conditions.

The government also has an important role in preventing violence in education. The government should formulate strict regulations regarding the prevention of violence in educational institutions, including pesantren, and carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of policies implemented in educational institutions, including pesantren. The government is also obliged to train teaching staff in preventing and handling acts of violence in educational institutions. Financial support from the government can also be provided, for example by providing funding for violence prevention programs and improving student welfare. Finally, in accordance with "applicable laws, the government must strictly punish perpetrators of violence and provide protection and assistance to victims of violence".

Conclusion

Education is a fundamental right of every citizen, as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. In the national education system, education is divided into formal, non-formal and informal education". Boarding schools, as a form of formal education, are religious institutions that have long operated in Indonesia with a boarding school system. In boarding schools, students not only study, but also live in the same location during the school year. Despite their religious foundation, boarding schools still face cases of child abuse. This violence is triggered by various factors, such as the lack of parental supervision in an unfamiliar environment, conflicts related to customs and traditions, and the lack of adequate governance and supervision. Violence experienced by children, whether in the form of physical, verbal, psychological, or sexual violence, has a detrimental impact physically and psychologically on victims. As a place of religious education, pesantren have the responsibility to provide a safe and pleasant environment for their students to learn in order to avoid and overcome incidents of violence. The activities of students can be more closely monitored to achieve this goal, provide guidance and counseling services for students who need emotional support, and apply strict sanctions for perpetrators of violence, both students and teaching staff, while providing protection for victims. Furthermore, parents also have a crucial role in preventing violence in pesantren through active communication with their children to build openness. The government also plays a role in this effort by establishing strict regulations for the prevention of violence in educational institutions, including pesantren, as well as conducting regular supervision and evaluation of the policies implemented. Preventing violence in educational institutions and creating a safe and conducive learning environment for children requires collaboration between pesantren, parents, and the government.

References

- Alwi, S. (2021). *Perilaku bullying di kalangan santri Dayah Terpadu Kota Lhokseumawe*. Medan: CV. Pusdikra Mitra Jaya.
- Emilda. (2022). *Bullying di pesantren: Jenis, bentuk, faktor, dan upaya pencegahannya*. *Jurnal Sustainable*, 5(198-207).
<https://doi.org/10.32923/kjimp.v5i2.2751>
- Ernawati. (2018). Sosialisasi Meningkatkan Kesadaran Santri terhadap Tindakan Bullying di Pesantren. 01(02), 38 – 44.
- Harlen, S. A. (2022). Pemenuhan hak santri atas kasus pelanggaran hak asasi manusia oleh oknum pondok pesantren (Fulfillment of the rights of the students incase of violations of human rights committed by a board of boarding school). *HAM: Jurnal Hak Asasi Manusia*, 13(199-214).
- Isa, M. D., Rizky, A. V., Kurnia, I. Yusti, M. S., & Mara, A. (2024). Pencegahan Kekerasan di Lingkungan Pondok Pesantren dengan

- Mengenal Berbagi Faktor Kekerasan di Lingkungan Pondok Pesantren (boarding school). *Kultura: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum, Sosial, dan Humaniora*, 2(9), 232–239.
- Nurchotimah, A. S. (2021). *Pengawasan Pelayanan Publik*. Yogyakarta: Jejak Pustaka.
- Pebriaisyah, B. F., Wilodati, & Komariah, S. (2022). Kekerasan seksual kyai terhadap santri perempuan di pesantren. *Kafa'ah Journal of Gender Studies*, 12(2), 34.
- Rahayu, L. S. (2023). Perlindungan hukum terhadap anak dari kekerasan seksual dilingkungan pesantren. *Jurnal Riset Hukum Islam*, 3(2), 123-145.
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung:Alphabet.