

Management of *Santri* Discipline: Bullying Prevention and Intervention at *Dayah* Terpadu Al-Muslimun

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ABSTRACT

This study explores bullying at Dayah Terpadu Al-Muslimun, an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. It focuses on its physical, verbal, and social forms and their impact on students' mental health, academic performance, and social well-being. The research addresses the prevalence of bullying in this religious context, driven by factors such as inadequate supervision, sociocultural differences, and limited awareness of its consequences. This study aims to (1) identify the dynamics of bullying, (2) analyze its effects on Santri, and (3) develop disciplinary strategies to foster a safer, more inclusive school environment. Using a phenomenological approach, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and observations with eight purposively selected participants (administrators, teachers, and students). Thematic analysis revealed that verbal bullying (e.g., derogatory remarks) and social exclusion were most prevalent, often resulting in emotional distress, disengagement from learning, and isolation. Recommended strategies include integrating anti-bullying education into the curriculum, enhancing supervision in high-risk areas, providing counseling services, and involving parents and the broader community. Challenges include limited resources, cultural acceptance of aggressive behavior, and victims' reluctance to report incidents. By addressing bullying within the unique context of a religious educational institution, this study offers culturally sensitive, practical recommendations for school administrators to cultivate a disciplined yet compassionate learning environment.

Keywords: discipline management, islamic boarding school (dayah), anti-bullying education, active supervision, emotional support programs.

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INTRODUCTION

Dayah, also known as a *Pesantren*, is a traditional Islamic boarding school in Indonesia that serves as a center for religious education and moral development. Within this institution, *Santri* (students) are expected to not only master Islamic knowledge but also internalize values of discipline, respect, and ethical behavior.¹ The dual function of *Dayah* as a religious and character-building institution demands a safe learning environment that is nurturing and free from harm.²

However, one critical challenge facing *Dayah* institutions is the persistence of bullying. Bullying refers to aggressive behavior that is intentional, repetitive and involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim.³ In educational settings, it can manifest in physical, verbal, and social forms, often resulting in long-term psychological distress, diminished self-esteem, academic decline, and social isolation.⁴ These outcomes undermine the core mission of *Dayah* as spaces for both intellectual and moral formation.

While general research on bullying in conventional schools is abundant, studies focusing on bullying within Islamic boarding schools remain limited.⁵ In particular, there is a significant gap in understanding how discipline management in religious educational institutions influences bullying dynamics. The unique structure, authority systems, and value orientation in *Dayah* contexts demand a culturally sensitive exploration of how discipline is implemented and how it may prevent or inadvertently allow bullying to persist.⁶ Previous studies have highlighted that managing school infrastructure and culture plays a crucial role in shaping student behavior and safety.⁷

This study addresses that gap by examining the case of *Dayah* Terpadu Al-Muslimun, a modern-integrated Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. The research aims to explore the forms of bullying in this setting, analyze their psychological and academic impacts on *Santri*, and propose effective, culturally grounded discipline strategies to foster a safer learning environment. Specifically, this study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To identify the forms of bullying at *Dayah* Terpadu Al-Muslimun.
2. To analyze their effects on students' mental health, academic performance, and social relationships.

¹ Imam Syafe'i, "PONDOK PESANTREN: Lembaga Pendidikan Pembentukan Karakter," *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 1 (May 2017): 61, <https://doi.org/10.24042/atjpi.v8i1.2097>.

² Elizabeth Mary Nasseem, "The Complexity of Children's Involvement in School Bullying," *Journal of Children's Services* 12, no. 4 (December 2017): 288–301, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCS-03-2017-0009>.

³ Chang-Hun Lee and Juyoung Song, "Functions of Parental Involvement and Effects of School Climate on Bullying Behaviors Among South Korean Middle School Students," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 27, no. 12 (August 2012): 2437–64, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260511433508>.

⁴ Nasseem, Elizabeth Mary. "The Complexity of Children's Involvement in School Bullying." *Journal of Children's Services* 12, no. 4 (December 2017): 288–301. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCS-03-2017-0009>.

⁵ Nikki Ashcraft, "Overcoming Language Barriers in Content-Area Instruction," *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives* 3, no. 1 (June 2006): 20–30, <https://doi.org/10.18538/lthe.v3.n1.03>.

⁶ Rina Nurdiana, "Analisis Pengaruh Lingkungan Fisik Kelas Terhadap Minat Aktivitas Belajar Anak Usia Dini," *Thufuli: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini* 1, no. 1 (April 2023): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.62070/thufuli.v1i1.16>.

⁷ Srifariyati Srifariyati, Oni Marlina Susianti, and Lukman Lukman, "Manajemen Sarana Prasarana Dalam Menunjang Proses Pembelajaran," *Thawalib: Jurnal Kependidikan Islam* 5, no. 1 (April 2024): 183–94, <https://doi.org/10.54150/thawalib.v5i1.339>.

3. To develop culturally sensitive disciplinary strategies that can prevent and address bullying effectively.

This research is underpinned by two theoretical frameworks: social behavior theory, which posits that interpersonal interactions shape behavioral norms and can either inhibit or escalate aggression and the theory of punishment, which emphasizes the necessity of clear rules and consistent enforcement to promote order and learning. By synthesizing these frameworks, the study offers practical insights into how discipline management can serve as punitive control and a proactive and empathetic approach to maintaining school harmony.

Ultimately, this study contributes to academic and practical discourses by offering administrators, educators, and Policymakers recommendations on integrating anti-bullying measures with character-based Islamic education. It reaffirms the importance of fostering environments where religious values and student well-being are taught and truly protected.

METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological approach to examine perceptions and lived experiences of bullying within the context of the school accreditation process at *Dayah Terpadu Al-Muslimun*, Lhoksukon. Phenomenology was deemed appropriate for uncovering the subjective meanings embedded in participants' experiences, particularly within an Islamic boarding school's unique sociocultural and religious framework.

A purposive sampling strategy selected nine information-rich participants: the principal, three senior teachers, and five students (*Santri*), all with direct experience with or supervised bullying incidents. Participant selection was based on role, length of service, and willingness to engage in in-depth reflection. Data saturation was reached when thematic patterns began to repeat themselves in the ninth interview.

Data collection spanned two weeks and involved semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations in key areas such as classrooms, dormitories, and communal spaces. Interview guides explored the nature, impact, and institutional responses to bullying, while observations complemented verbal data by capturing social interactions and supervisory practices. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent, and field notes were maintained throughout.

Analytic procedures adhered to phenomenological conventions, including bracketing to mitigate researcher bias, horizontalization to extract significant statements, and developing textual and structural descriptions. These steps culminated in synthesizing core themes reflecting the interplay between bullying dynamics and discipline management in the accreditation context.

Credibility was ensured through member checking and peer debriefing, with an audit trail documenting analytical decisions. Reflexivity was maintained, particularly as one researcher shared an educational background with the study setting. Ethical approval was secured from the institutional review board, and informed consent and confidentiality protocols were rigorously upheld.

Importantly, the study foregrounds the relevance of school accreditation as both a pressure point and a potential catalyst for reform in bullying prevention. The findings offer nuanced, context-sensitive insights to inform policy and practice in Islamic educational environments despite its limited scope.

DISCUSSION

Result

This study aims to identify the forms of bullying that occur in the *Dayah* environment using a qualitative phenomenological approach. Based on interviews with five student participants (*Santri*) who have direct experience of bullying, the results of this study are organized into three main themes: verbal bullying, physical bullying, and social exclusion.

Verbal Bullying

A total of two out of five participants stated that they had experienced forms of verbal bullying. This includes teasing, insults, and harsh words from peers. One participant described her experience:

"They often make fun of me because I dress differently." (*Santri IH*)

Physical Bullying

As many as one in five participants reported physical acts such as beatings as a form of bullying. One participant explained:

"A friend once hit me during a conflict." (*Santri AA*)

Table 1. Recapitulation of Bullying Cases at *Dayah* Terpadu Al-Muslimun

No	Case	Type Bullying	Description	Impact
1.	<i>Santri AA</i>	Physical	Beating	Feeling afraid to interact with friends
2.	<i>Santri RAT</i>	Social	Exclusion from certain groups or activities	Being ignored in various activities, even during group study sessions, where his peers do not accept him
3.	<i>Santri IH</i>	Verbal	Making fun of the way she dresses and looks differently.	Reluctant to participate in class discussions and other social activities.
4.	<i>Santri AN</i>	Social	Being ignored in study groups and not invited to social events	The mental health and self-confidence of <i>Santri</i> ultimately hinder their learning process.
5.	<i>Santri RF</i>	Verbal	Long-term teasing	Low self-esteem and anxiety when interacting with friends.

Social Ostracism

Two out of five participants felt that their peers had ostracized them because they did not follow group rules or were considered different. One participant shared her experience:

"I felt ignored when I was not invited to group events." (*Santri AN*).

The results of this study indicate a clear pattern of bullying in the *Dayah* environment, with verbal bullying being the most dominant form. These findings form the basis for further discussion regarding the causal factors and impacts of bullying.

Discussion

Interpretation of Main Findings

The results showed that the most dominant form of bullying in the *Dayah Terpadu Al-Muslimun* environment was verbal bullying. This finding can be interpreted in the context of the strong hierarchical structure between seniors and juniors in the pesantren. In this environment, verbal bullying is often used as a means to discipline new members. This is evident from the experiences of participants who reported that they were often subjected to taunts and insults from peers, which created an atmosphere of fear and anxiety. For example, one participant stated, "*I often hear harsh words from my friends because I refuse to follow their orders.*" This suggests that verbal bullying serves as a means of social control and a mechanism to maintain social hierarchy within the pesantren.

Theoretical Integration

This finding is consistent with research by Muijs (2017) and Sims-Schouten (2020), which shows that verbal bullying is often the main form of violence in boarding education environments.⁸ In the context of Islamic education, verbal bullying can be seen as a tool for character-building and the process of social adaptation. Social theory, as expressed by Kotten (2015), explains that symbolic power in the form of language and social interaction can strengthen existing social structures.⁹ Thus, verbal bullying in pesantren reflects the power dynamics between *Santri* and serves to internalize the social norms expected in the community.

Practical Implications

The results of this study indicate the need to develop internal pesantren policies that emphasize the boundary between discipline and bullying. **Figure 1** below illustrates the relationship between discipline management and bullying, indicating that effective discipline management should include active supervision, character education, and emotional support.

⁸ Daniel Muijs, "Can Schools Reduce Bullying? The Relationship between School Characteristics and the Prevalence of Bullying Behaviours," *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 87, no. 2 (June 2017): 255–72, <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12148>; Wendy Sims-Schouten, "Bullying, School Violence and Climate in Evolving Contexts: Culture, Organisation and Time," *Children & Society* 34, no. 3 (May 2020): 235–37, <https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12365>.

⁹ Natsir B. Kotten, *Pendidikan Karakter: Membangun Watak Kepribadian Anak* (malang: media nusa creative, 2015).

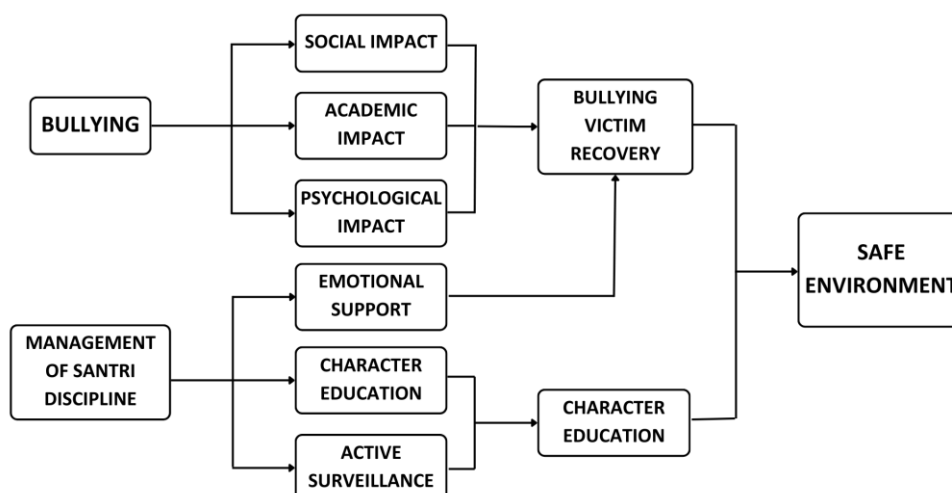


Figure 1. The Relationship between discipline management and bullying.

As illustrated in **Figure 1**, the model emphasizes the connection between bullying and managing *Santri's* discipline. Bullying has multiple impacts, social, academic, and psychological, while effective discipline management relies on three main components: active surveillance, character education, and emotional support. These elements, when combined, create a supportive environment that helps prevent bullying and fosters the recovery of victims.

Based on the research findings, several steps must be taken to address bullying effectively. These include developing more comprehensive training programs focused on bullying and its impacts, enhancing the supervision of university administrators, and increasing parental and community involvement in the process. To create a safe environment, it is essential to implement stronger mentoring programs that support students in dealing with bullying. All these activities should foster a culture of respect and empathy among students.

Limitations of the Study

This study has limitations in terms of the limited number of participants (only eight informants) and the research location, which only focused on one day. In addition, using interviews as the only method also risks subjective bias. These limitations may affect the generalizability of the findings, so it is important to conduct further research with a larger sample and more diverse methods.

Future Research Directions

Future research could adopt a quantitative approach to examine bullying patterns in different pesantren. It is also important to examine the long-term impact of bullying practices on the psychosocial development of *Santri*. In addition, further exploration of Islamic values such as collective responsibility and adab in social interactions could enrich the understanding of how the cultural context shapes the expression and acceptance of bullying.

Figure 2 below illustrates the implementation strategies that can be used to address bullying in pesantren settings.

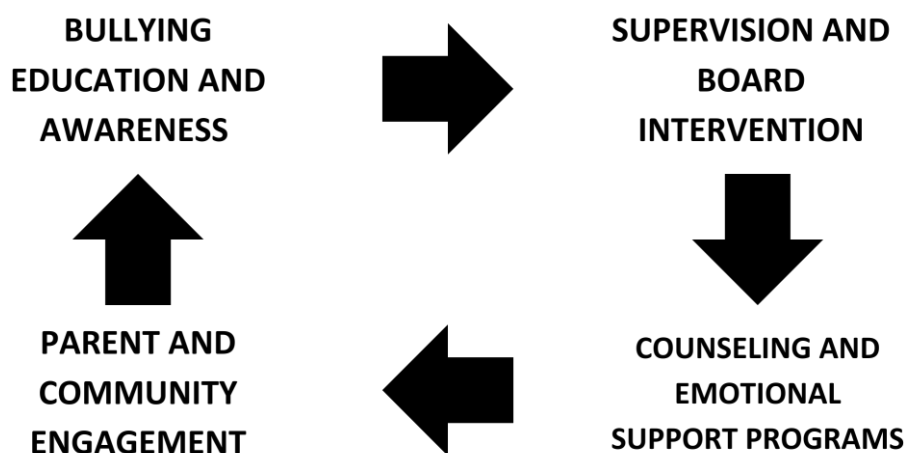


Figure 2. Discipline management strategy

Figure 2 illustrates that effective learning management strategies at *Dayah* Terpadu Al-Muslimun must encompass several comprehensive approaches to addressing bullying. First and foremost, training and raising awareness about bullying is essential. This initial step is crucial, as a well-structured curriculum will provide students with a clear understanding of the definition, characteristics, and negative impacts of bullying. Regular seminars and group discussions should be held to enhance awareness of the importance of love and respect for diversity. Additionally, the participation of community leaders or psychologists experienced in this field can offer broader and deeper perspectives on the issue of bullying, enriching the educational experience and fostering a more inclusive environment.

Students will develop a clear understanding of the definition, characteristics, and negative impacts of bullying. Activities such as seminars (PPA) and group discussions should be held regularly to raise awareness about the importance of love and respect for diversity. Furthermore, it is essential to lead investigations and interventions to create a safe and positive environment for all students. The educational institution's leadership must actively monitor interactions among students, both inside and outside the classroom, to ensure a supportive atmosphere conducive to learning and personal development.

CONCLUSION

Based on research conducted at *Dayah* Terpadu Al-Muslimun, it can be concluded that bullying is a serious problem that disrupts the educational process and mental health of students. The identified forms of bullying, namely physical, verbal, and social, have a significant negative impact on individuals and the community as a whole. The main findings indicate that a lack of awareness regarding the effects of bullying, differences in social background, and inadequate supervision are the leading causes of bullying within the institution. These factors create an environment where bullying behaviors can occur

unchecked, causing psychological distress, academic decline, and social isolation among victims.

In response to this issue, the study proposes several discipline management strategies to reduce bullying and promote a healthier school environment. These strategies include implementing educational and awareness programs that emphasize the consequences of bullying and promote mutual respect among students. Regular training for teachers and administrators on identifying and handling bullying incidents is also essential. Active supervision in classrooms, dormitories, and other common areas can serve as a deterrent against bullying. Furthermore, establishing accessible counseling services is critical, providing emotional support and guidance for both victims and perpetrators of bullying.

Parental and community involvement is key to creating a safe and supportive educational environment. Parents are encouraged to communicate openly with their children and collaborate with school administrators to monitor their behavior. Community leaders and religious figures can be involved in awareness campaigns, using culturally relevant narratives that align with the values of Islamic education to promote empathy and positive behavior.

This research fills a critical gap in the literature by placing the dynamics of bullying within the unique context of pesantren and integrating discipline management theory with culturally sensitive practices. Although implementing these strategies faces challenges, such as limited understanding and insufficient resources, creative and collaborative solutions can help overcome these barriers. *Dayah* managers and policymakers are encouraged to adopt this holistic and empathy-driven intervention, which mitigates bullying and reinforces the moral values at the core of Islamic education.

With strong cooperation among all stakeholders, the problem of bullying can be significantly reduced. By fostering a culture of discipline, mutual respect, and empathy, *Santri*'s welfare can be maintained, ensuring that the data's educational process remains conducive to personal and spiritual development.

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