

Bullying in Pesantren (Islamic Boarding School): A Systematic Review of Its Psychological Effects, Influencing Factors, and Intervention Strategies

Ahmad Kholiquil Khoir^{1*}, Farida Kurniawati²

^{1,2} Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, University of Indonesia, Indonesia

Corresponding Author*: choir020597@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Pesantren or Islamic boarding school is an educational institution that prioritizes teaching Islamic moral values. However, cases of bullying among santri (students) are common in these schools, and there is a need for conducting a systematic literature review to help pesantren overcome cases of bullying among santri. This study used a systematic review approach following PRISMA protocols to qualitatively synthesize studies on bullying among santri. The databases used in this study included Google Scholar, Scopus, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, Springer Link, and Sage Journals, with 21 studies included in the final analysis. These studies used qualitative or quantitative designs with participants ranging from 5 to 556. It focused on studies relevant to the topic, based on empirical data, with accessible full texts, covering broad aspects of bullying, published in reputable journals, providing sufficient information, with a theoretical background, using relevant research methods, and showing consistency between theoretical foundation and analytical outcomes. Studies were excluded if they do not meet the inclusion criteria. The results showed that bullying harms the psychology of santri. Influencing factors include environmental factors (e.g. peers, teachers, parents, digital media, and non-physical environment) and personal factors (i.e. personal attributes and personal social-contextual). Prevention and intervention strategies have targeted both the internal (person-focused) and external (environment-focused) influences of bullying; however, in terms of intervention strategies tend to be limited to targeting internal influences. This review has several weaknesses: it focuses only on bullying without considering related constructs such as harassment, exclusion of grey literature, and is limited to pesantren.

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a prevalent issue that occurs in schools worldwide. According to a survey conducted in 83 countries, 30.5% of adolescent students reported experiencing bullying (Biswas et al., 2020). A national survey conducted by the Ministry of Education in Indonesia showed that 24.4% of students in schools are at risk of being bullied (CNN Indonesia, 2023). This issue is not confined to public schools but also affects religious-based educational institutions such as pesantren (Elaine, 2024). Pesantren is a traditional Islamic educational institution that is dedicated to understanding, appreciating, and practicing the teachings of Islam by prioritizing Islamic religious morals as a guideline for everyday life (Pakar, 2020). Apart from being closely associated with Islam, pesantren also has Indonesian roots, because similar institutions have existed since the Hindu-Buddhist era in Indonesia (Madjid, 1997).

As an educational institution based on Islamic and Indonesian values, pesantren has its own teaching methods and learning objectives. In terms of teaching methods, pesantren have *sorogan*: an individual teaching method, where santri learn directly face to face from the teacher ("one on one") (Dhofier, 1999). As for the learning objectives, pesantren prioritizes moral improvement and internalization of good character in santri, rather than merely information distribution (Dhofier, 1999). Therefore, pesantren usually include mystics (*tasawwuf*) and ethics (*akhlaq*) as learning materials for their students (Dhofier, 1999), because both materials are considered capable of guiding santri to nurture good character (Madjid, 1997). In short, the education of noble morals is the main orientation of the pesantren education system. Although pesantren has noble orientation, bullying remains a significant issue in some of these schools (Elaine, 2024).

Given this context, pesantren should have an environment that is safe from bullying behavior. Yet, many cases of bullying have been reported in this institution. Bullying is defined as aggressive behavior where somebody intentionally and repeatedly causes discomfort or injury to another person (American Psychological Association, 2018). Based on a survey by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) in 2023, there were 3,800 cases of bullying; nearly half of which occurred in educational institutions, including pesantren (Elaine, 2024). Indeed, some cases of bullying in pesantren have even resulted in death, for instance, notable cases occurred at the Pesantren Tartilul Qur'an Al Hanifiyah in Kediri (Lumbanrau, 2024), Padang Panjang in 2019, Mojokerto in 2019, Ponorogo in 2021, and Tangerang in 2021 and 2022 (CNN Indonesia, 2024).

Of the various cases of bullying that resulted in death, the most common type of bullying was physical. On the other hand, bullying can also manifest as verbal or more subtle actions (American Psychological Association, 2018) such as ostracization. In this case, the types of bullying in pesantren include verbal and social bullying, not only physical bullying. Nashiruddin (2019) stated that bullying in pesantren can be verbal, physical, and social. Verbal bullying includes swearing, teasing by calling the victim's parents' names, giving the victim animal nicknames (e.g. monkeys), and making threats. Physical bullying may include pulling hair, smacking, pushing the head, pinching, pouring water while sleeping, and so on. Finally, social bullying includes ostracization, such as avoiding and excluding the victim from group activities.

Although bullying can be verbal or social, it has significant negative impacts on students and may even lead to suicidal ideation. Several studies have explored the psychological impact of bullying in pesantren. However, existing empirical research is still limited to examining the psychological impact of students' bullying in isolation, and to date, no comprehensive systematic review has been conducted. Take for an example, the study by Wati et al. (2023) focused solely on the impact of verbal bullying on female students (*santriwati*). In addition, Arfah dan Wanitini (2023) also examined the impact of bullying behavior solely on santris' psychological distress with a qualitative approach. Therefore, this systematic review will comprehensively synthesize existing studies on bullying's psychological impacts among students in pesantren to fill the identified gap.

In addition, given the negative effects of bullying, it is also crucial to investigate every factor that correlates and influences bullying in pesantren. In this context, several studies have also investigated these factors. Nonetheless, the existing empirical studies are limited to linking specific variables to bullying in pesantren: the study by Ismiradewi et al. (2021) linked school well-being and social support to bullying behavior, and Oktaviani et al. (2020) linked emotional intelligence and personality to bullying behavior. In fact, bullying is influenced by complex factors that interact with each other (Waseem & Nickerson, 2024; Bussey, 2023). Therefore, a synthesis of existing empirical studies is needed to obtain a comprehensive picture of the various factors that influence bullying in

pesantren. This review will also integrate findings on various correlating factors to clarify the complexity behind bullying behavior in pesantren.

In this regard, a theory that can serve as a framework for understanding the complex factors of bullying in pesantren is social cognitive theory (SCT). SCT is relevant, as it can analyze how environmental factors in pesantren (e.g., teacher support and supervision) interact with santri's personal factors (e.g., self-control) in shaping bullying behavior. Nevertheless, there has been no study that uses SCT to understand how empirically proven-factors influence bullying in pesantren context. In fact, this theory provides a comprehensive analysis of human function in a triadic reciprocal interaction model, where bullying *behavior* is determined by the *environment* and *person* (Bandura, 1986, as cited in Bussey, 2023). In this context, *behavior* refers to an individual's involvement in bullying behavior, *environment* refers to various social variables that affect person (i.e. students in pesantren), while *person* involves the conception of bullying, personal belief, related moral standards, and self-regulation (Bussey, 2023).

In addition, several studies have also explored strategies implemented in prevention and intervention of bullying behavior in pesantren. However, these studies only highlight the strategies of pesantren at specific factor of SCT and are implemented at certain pesantren. There have been no studies that systematically explore the strategies across various pesantren in preventing or intervening bullying behavior that focus on the person and environment influences, for instance, Astriani et al. (2023) conducted a study on bullying prevention which focused solely on person-focused strategies (i.e. empathy training). Regarding intervention strategies, one example is the study by Yunita and Addiarto (2023), in which support group therapy is used as an intervention to improve resilience in victims of bullying. The researchers similarly focused on the person influence.

There have been literature review studies related to bullying in pesantren, yet some of those are unsystematic review, such as the study by Emilda (2022). This means that they do not use literature review guidelines agreed upon by the scientific community. As for articles that explicitly mention the type of review used, there are two articles from Arif et al. (2024) and Ru'iya (2019). Both used the systematic literature review method. However, neither Arif et al. (2024) nor Ru'iya (2019) have clear criteria for the screening processes related to the inclusion or exclusion according to the PRISMA guidelines (Moher et al., 2009; Page et al., 2021), only the identification process was explained. In this case, Arif et al. (2024) only excluded duplicates or non-journal articles, and no further exclusion criteria were mentioned. Therefore, after we checked the articles included in the synthesis process, a significant proportion of the articles did not discuss bullying in pesantren (especially articles from Scopus database).

Considering these facts, it is necessary to reconduct a systematic review study using clear exclusion and inclusion criteria in the screening and literature review process for bullying in pesantren subject. Additionally, the two articles only investigated bullying prevention strategies in pesantren without discussing intervention measures. In relation to this, questions need to be added regarding bullying intervention strategies in pesantren based on existing studies. Given that inappropriate interventions in bullying (e.g. band-aid approaches) can worsen the existing situation (Batanova, 2024). Therefore, there needs to be a clear picture of whether bullying interventions in pesantren have been implemented appropriately and effectively.

Based on the explanations presented earlier, this study poses four research questions (RQ). First (RQ1), what does empirical evidence suggest about the major psychological outcomes of bullying on santri as victims in pesantren? Second (RQ2), what does empirical evidence suggest about the associated factors and determinants of bullying in pesantren? Third (RQ3), what types of person-

and environment-focused prevention strategies that have been conducted in pesantren to address bullying? Fourth (RQ4), what types of person- and environment-focused intervention strategies that have been conducted in pesantren to overcome bullying? These four questions were posed because we were motivated by a desire to deepen understanding of bullying in pesantren, which may aid pesantren authorities in creating a safer learning environment for santri, free from bullying behavior. Thus, santri can better learn and internalize Islamic moral values in safe setting.

METHODS

The method used in this study was systematic literature review (SLR). SLR is "a literature review designed to find, assess, and synthesize the best available evidence related to a particular research question to provide an informative and evidence-based answer" (Boland et al., 2017). In the process of conducting article review, we followed reporting standard based on the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) along with the PRISMA checklist (Moher et al., 2009; Page et al., 2021). The PRISMA flowchart as shown in Figure 1 displays the number of articles identified, the number of articles excluded, and the number of articles included for qualitative synthesis.

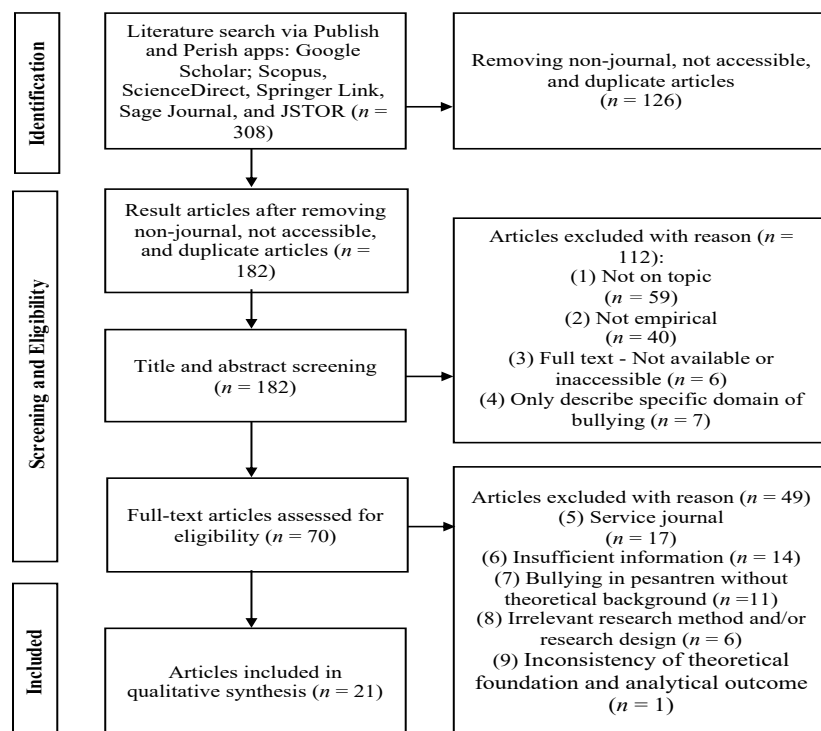


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart

Initially, to find relevant articles for this study, we used the Publish and Perish apps with Google Scholar as a database. Based on these sources, we obtained 302 articles in Google Scholar that matched the theme of bullying in pesantren. The terms used to search articles were in Bahasa and in English: "bullying" or "perundungan" or "perisakan" in the title, and "pesantren, islamic boarding school" or "pondok, pesantren" in the keyword as shown in Table 1. These keywords were made general given the limited specific literature on bullying in pesantren. A broader keyword approach allows the study to cover more diverse references, thus providing a comprehensive picture of bullying in pesantren and facilitating answers to each research question posed.

Tabel 1. The Identification Stages of the Research

No.		Result	Search String
1.	Google Scholar	209	"bullying" in the title; "pesantren, islamic boarding school" in the keyword (via Publish and Perish).
2.	Google Scholar	91	"perundungan" in the title; "pondok, pesantren" in the keyword (via Publish and Perish).
3.	Google Scholar	2	"perisakan" in the title; "pondok, pesantren" in the keyword (via Publish and Perish).
4.	Scopus	2	"bullying" AND "pesantren" OR "islamic boarding school" in the title, keyword, and abstract.
5.	Sage Journal	0	
6.	Springer Link	0	
7.	ScienceDirect	1	
8.	JSTOR	3	

Table 2. The Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

No.	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Description of Exclusion
1.	On Bullying in Pesantren	Not on topic	The article addresses another topic and not bullying in pesantren.
2.	Empirical	Not empirical	The article does not report an empirical study such as literature review.
3.	Full text - available or accessible	Full text - Not available or accessible	The full-text article is neither accessible nor available on the website.
4.	Covering broad aspects of bullying	Only describe specific domains of bullying	The article only investigates the correlation between specific psychological variables (e.g. resilience toward prosocial among bullying victims), and thus doesn't answer the research questions.
5.	Scientific journal	Service journal	The article only reports the description of the community service activities that were carried out.
6.	Sufficient information	Insufficient information	The article does not report the research methods or the results and/or the discussion, such as missing an explanation of the research instruments.
7.	Using theoretical background	Bullying in pesantren without theoretical background	Studies in this category examined bullying in pesantren, but without defining or conceptualizing bullying. Thus, it remains unclear why the investigated components should be part of bullying.
8.	Using relevant research methods	Irrelevant research method and/or research design	Studies in this category used irrelevant research methods and/or research designs in examining the purpose of the study.
9.	Consistency of theoretical foundation and analytical outcome	Inconsistency of theoretical foundation and analytical outcome	The article mentions the theory at the beginning, but it is not applied as a foundational basis for analyzing the primary findings.

Then, we also used 1000 articles via Publish and Perish for the initial selection without year restriction due to the limited number of published scientific journals related to pesantren. The search began on September 16, 2024, and concluded on 5 October, 2024. In this context, we included articles that are relevant to the topic, based on empirical data, with accessible full texts, covering broad aspects of bullying, scientific journals, providing sufficient information, with a theoretical background, using relevant research methods, and showing consistency between theoretical foundation and analytical outcomes, as shown in Table 2. In addition to Google Scholar, we also explored other databases such as Scopus, Sage Journals, Springer Link, ScienceDirect, and JSTOR separately. These databases were selected due to their international recognition as high-quality scholarly literature and their availability of full-text access to the authors. From this search, only six articles were found: three in JSTOR, two in Scopus, and one in ScienceDirect. In this search, we used

the search terms "bullying" AND "pesantren" OR "Islamic boarding school" in the title, abstract, and keyword.

In the process of study selection, the ninth criterion was applied as the basis to exclude articles, as shown in Table 2. To confirm the identification of the full-text selection process, both authors independently carried out the study selection. First, we identified 302 articles from the Google Scholar database. After appending six articles from Scopus, ScienceDirect, and JSTOR, we removed inaccessible articles, duplicates, and non-journal (e.g. undergraduate thesis and proceeding) to ensure that the article had received external feedback, 182 articles remained. Secondly, we screened articles by reading the titles and abstracts. We exclude articles if the study were (1) not on bullying in pesantren, (2) not an empirical study, (3) only explaining specific psychological dimension or variable of bullying victims or perpetrators (e.g. association between resilience and prosocial among bullying victims), thus doesn't answer the research questions, and (4) not available in full-text version. From this stage, 70 articles remained.

Furthermore, we assessed the full-text version and excluded articles if they were (5) service articles, (6) insufficient information of the method and/or result and/or discussion, (7) bullying in pesantren without theoretical background, (8) irrelevant research method and/or research design, and (9) inconsistency of theoretical foundation and analytical outcome. In this regard, to obtain a description of every article, we standardized article data by creating a data extraction form that includes: the research title, author, year of article publication, inclusion and exclusion criteria decisions, justification or reasons for inclusion and exclusion, research variables, research objectives, research design, research methods, participant characteristics, research locations, research instruments, theories used, and main findings of each study on bullying in pesantren. Out of 70 potentially eligible articles from the prior stage, 49 articles were excluded, leaving 21 articles for the qualitative synthesis process, as shown in Figure 1. In term of data analysis and synthesis, we applied narrative synthesis that used text to draw and explain findings from multiple studies, focusing on a broad range of questions rather than solely rely on those associated with the effectiveness of a particular treatment (Popay et al., 2009).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We included 21 articles for the qualitative synthesis process. All articles included in this process were published in peer-reviewed journals between 2017 and 2024. Most of the studies were published in 2023 with a percentage of 43% ($n = 9$). Then, out of the 21 studies, 62% ($n = 13$) of them employed qualitative method, and 38% ($n = 8$) applied quantitative methods. In the studies using a qualitative method, 24% ($n = 5$) applied case study for the research design, 14% ($n = 3$) phenomenology, 14% ($n = 3$) descriptive, 5% ($n = 1$) used phenomenography, and 5% ($n = 1$) were not explicitly explained. As for the eight studies with a quantitative method, 29% ($n = 6$) applied a correlational design, 5% ($n = 1$) experimental design, and 5% ($n = 1$) used structural equation modelling (SEM). More details on included articles are shown in Table 3. Regarding the research locations, all were in Indonesia, and the majority were pesantren in the East Java province with a percentage of 29% ($n = 6$), West Sumatra 19% ($n = 4$), Aceh 14% ($n = 3$), North Sumatra 10% ($n = 2$), Yogyakarta 5% ($n = 1$), West Java 5% ($n = 1$), Banten 5% ($n = 1$), North Kalimantan 5% ($n = 1$), and not explicitly explained as many as 10% ($n = 2$).

Table 3. Results of Studies on Bullying in Pesantren

No.	Authors	Methods	Results
1.	Priyanto and Nurhuda (2024)	Qualitative phenomenology. Participants were homeroom teachers, guidance and counseling teachers, and santris.	Bullying prevention includes socialization at the start of the school, prohibition on teachers using violence. Intervention includes providing counseling services, mediation, and giving punishments. For verbal bullying, these include copying one chapter of Koran, community service, or humiliating the perpetrator in the public. Physical bullying is addressed with suspension or expulsion.
2.	Retnowuni and Yani (2019)	Qualitative phenomenology. Participants were five santris who had participated in <i>gerakan pondok menyenangkan</i> (GPM).	GPM can encourage santri to understand and appreciate friends, cooperate between santri, increase students' motivation to help others, and make them feel comfortable and happy living in the pesantren, so that bullying is prevented.
3.	Fakhrizal et al. (2023)	Qualitative, case study. Participants were a guidance and counseling teacher, six homeroom teachers, and two santri	Bullying in pesantren takes many forms including physical, verbal, and social abuse. Bullying prevention includes providing advices, warnings, guidance and counseling, socialization, developing santris' self-esteem, and increasing religious activities.
4.	Alwi et al. (2019)	Qualitative, case study. Participants were perpetrators as well as victims of bullying, and <i>musyrif</i> (boarding school teacher).	Bullying in pesantren takes many forms including physical, verbal, and social abuse. Influencing factors include revenge for being a victim of bullying, family background and parenting, lack of supervision of ustaz/musyrif and staff. Bullying prevention are carried out by separating dormitories, involving all <i>musyrif</i> and senior santri. Intervention for perpetrator carried out by providing advice and calling parents.
5.	Retnowuni and Yani (2022)	Qualitative phenomenology. Participants were five students who were perpetrators of bullying.	Influencing factor for santri to become bullies include being considered superior and gaining power, revenge for being victims, and gaining inner satisfaction.
6.	Nasution and Adi (2023)	Qualitative descriptive. Participants were eight subjects: principal, homeroom teacher, student affairs teacher, santris as bullying perpetrators, and school counselors.	Bullying occurred because of the victim's unique physical condition, seniority, peer modelling, and gaining a sense of superiority. Bullying prevention includes socialization, creating rule of sanction, and strengthening communication between teachers and parents.
7.	Nugroho et al. (2020)	Qualitative, case study. Participants were four alumni of pesantren who had been perpetrators of bullying at pesantren.	Six factors that influence santri to become perpetrators of bullying: aggressivity, authoritarian parenting style with violent, seniority, influence of digital media, lack of supervision in pesantren, and the normalization.
8.	Yuhbaba (2019)	Qualitative, case study. Participants were five santris who had been victims of bullying.	Bullying in pesantren takes many forms including physical, verbal, and social abuse. Bullying is understood as act of violence and oppression in which the perpetrator acts arbitrarily towards the victim. Bullying is influenced by envy and jealousy, mischief, seniority, and lack of supervision. Victims of bullying feel anxious, afraid, uncomfortable in pesantren, and feverish.
9.	Sari and Rambe (2022)	Qualitative descriptive. Participants were santris, teachers, pesantren leaders, and boarding school teacher.	The sanctions given by pesantren include: reprimands and assignments. If repeated, the perpetrator's parents are called, given suspension to the santri, or dropped out.
10.	Us'an et al. (2023)	Qualitative descriptive. Participants were school principal, teacher, and santris.	Bullying prevention practices were carried out using a neuropsychological approach: self-control through guidance, fasting habits, cooperation and values of friendship, religious activities, empathy for students, patience and discipline.
11.	Arfah and Wantini (2023)	Qualitative, case study. Participants were four santris who were victims of bullying and four santris who are perpetrators of bullying.	Bullying is influenced by aggressiveness, permissive parenting, socioeconomic status, and mass media. Prevention was done through teaching Islamic values, involving every parties of the pesantren, and campaigning. The impacts include depression,

			low self-esteem, social isolation, chronic stress, low academic motivation, low academic achievement and high absenteeism.
12.	Marthunis and Authar (2017)	Qualitative phenomenography. Participants were 10 <i>musyrif</i> and seven <i>santris</i> .	Interventions on bullies include giving sanctions to clean the toilet and bathroom. Then, giving advice, mediation between perpetrator and victim, inviting the parents of bullies to the schools, and physical sanctions such as completely shaving the hair, and making the bullies stand under the hot sun for some time.
13.	Fadilah et al. (2023)	Qualitative. Participants were teachers, <i>santris</i> , and the parents of <i>santris</i> with amount of 12 subjects.	Bullying prevention strategies include socializing rules to new students and parents regarding bullying, and providing space for students to express themselves. Bullying interventions include giving warnings, physical and non-physical sanctions, calling parents and scoring.
14.	Hartono and Yasmin (2023)	Quantitative correlational. Participants were male and female <i>santris</i> in grades 11 and 12 with a total of 556 subjects.	Insignificant relationship between peer-attachment and bullying behavior among <i>santri</i> .
15.	Wati et al. (2023)	Quantitative corelational. Participants were female <i>santris</i> with amount of 46 subjects.	Positive relationship between verbal bullying and loneliness on victimized- <i>santriwati</i> .
16.	Ismiradewi et al. (2021)	Quantitative correlational. Participants were male and female <i>santris</i> in grades 10 dan 11 with amount of 58 subject.	Negative relationship between school well-being and parental social support with bullying. Negative relationship between school well-being and bullying. No relationship between parental social support and bullying.
17.	Islamiyati et al. (2024)	Quantitative correlational. Participants were 179 <i>santris</i> of grade 12 with an age range of 18-19 years.	Humility does not have a significant effect on bullying. Forgiveness has negative effect on bullying. Humility and forgiveness together are not strong enough to explain the overall variation in bullying.
18.	Oktaviani et al. (2020)	Quantitative correlational. Participants were 200 teenage <i>santris</i> , male and female.	Emotional intelligence in total has a significant negative effect on bullying behavior in <i>santri</i> . The agreeableness personality in the Big Five has a positive influence on bullying behavior. The other four personalities (neuroticism, conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness) do not have a significant effect.
19.	Rahmaniah et al. (2021)	Structural equation modeling (SEM). Participants were 8th and 9th grade adolescents in both <i>pesantren</i> with the criteria of 12-15 years of age, having lived in the dormitory for a maximum of three years, and coming from complete families before entering the <i>pesantren</i> with amount of 134 subjects.	Mother with warmth and acceptance parenting style, has a negative effect on bullying tendency. Cognitive empathy negatively affects students' tendency to bully others. The non-physical environment does not have a direct relationship with bullying or empathy in students; however, certain aspects of this environment, such as rules and sanctions in <i>pesantren</i> , are correlated with the formation of students' character and behavior. Male students, compared to female students, have higher scores as both perpetrators and victims of bullying. The duration of stay in <i>pesantren</i> is positively correlated with bullying behavior as perpetrators. Father's age is negatively associated with child involvement in bullying, both as perpetrators and victims, while father's education level is positively correlated with students' cognitive and affective empathy. Lower economic status is associated with a higher tendency for adolescents to become victims of bullying. Additionally, the parenting style of boarding school teachers, specifically support and closeness, enhances students' cognitive empathy and reduces their tendency to engage in bullying, both as perpetrators and victims
20.	Yunita and Addiarto (2023)	Quantitative experimental. Experimental. Participants were female <i>santris</i> who had experienced bullying with a total of 64 subjects.	Support group therapy significantly increases resilience in victims of bullying. After the intervention, the intervention group showed a significantly higher increase in resilience levels compared to the control group, which only received standard health education on bullying.

21	Ramadhan and Yasmin (2023)	Quantitative correlational. Participants were male and female santri in grades 11-12 of high school with a total of 240 subjects	Negative relationship between school climate and bullying among santri.
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Psychological Effects of Bullying

Regarding the effects, three existing studies have investigated the impact of bullying on the psychological dynamics among santri, all indicating negative emotional consequences, both in qualitative and quantitative designs. The most common negative effects experienced by santri as victims of bullying are psychological distress (Yuhbaba, 2019; Arfah & Wantini, 2023) poor academic performance, high absenteeism rates, and social isolation (Arfah & Wantini, 2023). While these studies reveal similar emotional impacts, Wati et al. (2023) specifically identified the relationship between verbal bullying and loneliness in female santri. These findings indicate that bullying, particularly verbal bullying, has significant negative consequences, yet it raises the question of whether the psychological impacts differ by form of bullying (i.e., verbal, physical, or social) and across different population. This gap indicates the need for further study to explore how these different forms of bullying impact santri's psychological dynamics in various contexts, given that bullying in pesantren institution is multifaceted (Fakhrizal et al., 2023; Alwi et al., 2019; Retnowuni & Yani, 2022; Yuhbaba, 2019).

Therefore, as an effort to gain a thorough understanding of the effects of bullying among santri's psychological dynamics, future research could investigate additional psychological impacts from both verbal and other forms of bullying using quantitative correlational approaches, among others as there is only one study using quantitative approach in exploring psychological effects of bullying (Wati et al., 2023). In addition, given previous studies only looking at the effects of bullying with qualitative case study methods, future studies might employ other qualitative designs and examine diverse populations to broaden the scope of current findings. Indeed, a significant body of research has examined the psychological impacts of bullying among students within school environments (Ahmed et al., 2022; Källmén et al., 2021; Xu & Fang, 2021). However, these studies typically focus on general school settings. For pesantren institution specifically, which embody both Indonesian and Islamic values have yet to be thoroughly examined. Further investigation into the effects of different bullying types on santri could enhance understanding of this issue, enabling pesantren authorities to address the needs of bullying victims more appropriately and effectively.

Correlated and Influencing Factors of Bullying

According to social cognitive theory (SCT; Bussey, 2023), bullying behavior is explained by reciprocal interactions between *person* (i.e., social expectation, self-expectation, self-efficacy) and *environment* (i.e. peer, teacher, digital media, parenting) factors. In the environment factors that influence bullying in pesantren, we classified them into five main components: peer, teacher, digital media, parents, and non-physical environment. Most of these categories align with the main components of the environment factors of SCT (Bussey, 2023). First, peers. In this context, bullying is asserted by seniority and peer-based behavioral imitation (Yuhbaba, 2019; Nasution & Adi, 2023), although quantitatively bullying is not related to peer attachment (Hartono & Yasmin, 2023). Second, teachers. In the context of pesantren, the closeness and support of *musyrif/ustaz* (boarding school teacher) to santri lessens bullying occurrences among both perpetrators and victims (Rahmaniah et al., 2023). This means that limited emotional support and lack of supervision (Alwi et al., 2019;

Yuhbaba, 2019) increase the likelihood of bullying. Third, digital media. Exposure to violent games and video content has been linked to bullying behaviors (Arfah & Wantini, 2023; Alwi et al., 2019).

Fourth, parenting. Research indicates that maternal warmth and acceptance are inversely related to bullying tendencies among santri (Rahmaniah et al., 2023). Both authoritarian parenting with violence and permissive parenting styles (Yuhbaba, 2019; Arfah & Wantini, 2023) affect santri to become bullies. On the other hand, a positive correlation exists between paternal age and the likelihood of santri to engage in or experience bullying (Rahmaniah et al., 2023). Father's educational level shows a positive correlation with cognitive and affective empathy in santri, which, in turn, reduce santri's engagement in bullying behaviors (Rahmaniah et al., 2023). This means that higher paternal education appears to lower the risk of santri exhibiting bullying behaviors. Fifth, the non-physical environment of the pesantren. In this case, the normalization of bullying contributes to their prevalence (Nugroho et al., 2020). Then, a supportive school climate is inversely associated with bullying incidents (Ramadhan & Yasmin, 2023; Ismiradewi et al., 2021), though this does not apply to non-physical elements like rules, disciplinary actions, or instructional methods (Rahmaniah et al., 2023).

Furthermore, several variables within the person factors are associated with or influence bullying in pesantren. These variables are grouped into two main categories: personal attributes and personal socio-contextual. Personal attributes are the first category, where emotional intelligence, for instance, negatively impacts bullying (Oktaviani et al., 2020) and the trait of agreeableness is positively associated with bullying tendencies, but neuroticism, conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness show no significant effect. In addition, forgiveness inversely correlates with bullying behavior (Islamiyati et al., 2024), cognitive empathy is inversely related to engagement in bullying (Rahmaniah et al., 2023), no significant relationship was found with humility (Islamiyati et al., 2024). Aggressiveness was linked to a higher likelihood of santri becoming bullies (Arfah & Wantini, 2023). The second category, personal socio-contextual, including gender differences; for instance, male santri were more likely to be both perpetrators and victims of bullying than female santri (Rahmaniah et al., 2023). In these categories, a desire for revenge, personal satisfaction (Retnowuni & Yani, 2019), feelings of envy, jealousy, and a sense of mischief (Yuhbaba, 2019), bullying can also be influenced by desire for gaining power and being considered superior by peers (Nasution & Adi, 2023; Retnowuni & Yani, 2023), which is described as 'social expectation' in *person* factors of SCT (Bussey, 2023). For further detail, please refer to Table 4.

Table 4. Correlated and Influencing Factors of Bullying

Types of Factors	Components	Their Relationship with Bullying
Environment	Peer	Seniority, Imitation of Behavior → Bullying
Environment	Teacher (<i>Musyrif/Ustaz</i>)	Emotional Support & Supervision ↑ → Bullying ↓
Environment	Digital Media	Violence Content ↑ ~ Bullying ↑
Environment	Parenting (Maternal)	Warmth & Acceptance ↑ → Bullying ↓
Environment	Parenting (Maternal & Paternal)	Authoritarian with Violence/Permissive ↑ → Bullying ↑
Environment	Fathers' Education	Higher Education ↑ ~ Bullying ↓
Environment	Fathers' Age	Older ↑ ~ Bullying ↑
Environment	Non-physical Environment	Bullying Normalization → Bullying; Positive climate ↑ ~ Bullying ↓
Person (personal attributes)	Emotional Intelligence	High ↑ → Bullying ↓
Person (personal attributes)	Aggressiveness	High ↑ → Bullying ↑
Person (personal attributes)	Forgiveness	High ↑ ~ Bullying ↓
Person (personal attributes)	Agreeableness	High ↑ → Bullying ↑
Person (personal attributes)	Cognitive Empathy	High ↑ → Bullying ↓

Person (Personal Contextual)	Socio-Gender	Male ~ Risk of Bullying (Victim & Perpetrator)
Person (Personal Contextual)	Socio-Social Motivation	Revenge, Envy, Desire for Dominance → Bullying

Note. ~ = correlation; → = influence; ↑ = higher; ↓ = lower

As shown in the Table 4, it can be stated that there are *environment* and *person* factors that consistently correlate and influence students' bullying behavior. Within the SCT framework, this relationship can be explained through environmental factors influencing personal characteristics, which ultimately lead to or prevent bullying, for example, permissive and authoritarian parenting style with violence is likely to be associated with increased individual aggressiveness, which can contribute to the tendency of students to become bullies (Arfah & Wantini, 2023; Yuhbaba, 2019). However, this mediation model relationship requires further research. This relationship is plausible, as Gómez-Ortiz et al. (2015) found that undemocratic parenting styles, such as authoritarian styles with violence and permissive parenting, were associated with increased aggressiveness, which then increased the likelihood of students becoming bullies. Conversely, emotional support from musyrif/ustaz may strengthen students' emotional intelligence, which ultimately reduces the risk of bullying behavior (Oktaviani et al., 2020; Rahmaniah et al., 2023). This mechanism may occur in pesantren, as emotional self-efficacy has been shown to mediate the relationship between teacher support and bullying behavior in students in public schools (Zeng et al., 2022). Yet, in the context of pesantren, this mediation model relationship requires further investigation.

In addition, based on Table 4, it is evident that the factors influencing bullying within the context of pesantren are multifaceted and involve various dimensions. One of the primary challenges pesantren face in their efforts to reduce bullying is the presence of innate factors such as aggressiveness and authoritarian parenting style (Arfah & Wantini, 2023). This factor is established before the child enters the school environment, making it difficult for the pesantren to directly alter it. This differs from public schools, where students typically continue to live with their parents or families, enabling direct interventions through collaboration between the school and parents. In contrast, upon entering pesantren, the child's prior parenting patterns are deeply ingrained, complicating potential interventions, necessitating a specialized approach and a long-term strategy involving external stakeholders.

Furthermore, the studies reviewed above also highlight several areas warranting further exploration. In *environment* factors, future research could examine how parenting styles—both maternal and paternal—influence bullying behaviors in santri. This need arises from conflicting findings in two qualitative case studies. Take for an example, Nugroho et al. (2020) found a correlation between permissive parenting and bullying behavior, whereas Arfah and Wantini (2023) observed that authoritarian parenting with violent tendencies had a similar influence. This discrepancy raises the question of whether both parenting styles independently influence bullying behavior or if only one has a definitive effect. Additionally, it remains unclear whether both parents must exhibit these parenting styles to impact bullying behavior, or if influence from only one parent suffices. Conversely, Merrin et al. (2024) suggest that violent in parenting styles may predispose students not only to perpetrate bullying, but also to become victims themselves. Thus, the relationship between parenting styles and santris' bullying behavior requires deeper investigation.

Regarding person factors, future studies could explore the two components of person factors in SCT: self-efficacy and self-expectation (students' standards against bullying) which remains unexplored. Besides, factors that drive santri who have experienced bullying to become perpetrators

themselves also need further exploration. The investigation of factors contributing to the victim-to-perpetrator dynamic within pesantren settings remains critical. While Nugroho et al. (2021) provide a foundational study, its singular focus on one pesantren limits the broader applicability of its findings, necessitating further study. Such research could inform pesantren in developing effective prevention to address bullying victims from becoming future perpetrators. Indeed, Retnowuni and Yani (2019) attribute this behavior to a desire for revenge; however, this explanation may be insufficient. Revenge typically targets the original aggressor, rather than unrelated individuals. Thus, additional study is needed to investigate this complexity.

Person- and Environment-Focused Prevention Strategies to Address Bullying

The strategies to curb bullying from pesantren could be explained through both person- and environment-focused. Person-focused prevention strategies target santri's internal influences, while environment-focused prevention strategies address santri's external influences of bullying behavior. To prevent bullying from the person-focused, pesantren have implemented awareness campaigns on bullying for new santri at the start of the academic year (Priyanto & Nurhuda, 2024; Fadilah et al., 2023) using media like posters and organized lectures (Priyanto & Nurhuda, 2024; Arfah & Wantini, 2023). In addition, preventive strategies include giving advices and warnings, providing guidance and counseling, boosting santris' confidence and self-worth, and enhancing engagement in religious activities, including optional (*sunnah*) fasting and communal prayers or *salat jema'ah* (Fakhrizal et al., 2023; Us'an et al., 2023). Additionally, efforts include promoting self-regulation through empathy, encouraging cooperation or friendship values (Arfah & Wantini, 2023; Us'an et al., 2023), and qualities like patience and discipline.

On the other hand, related to environment-focused, bullying prevention in pesantren includes separating dormitories by grade level, such as junior high and high school santri (Alwi et al., 2019), involving all ustaz and senior santri for supervision and guidance roles (Arfah & Wantini, 2023), establishing designated spaces for santris' self-expression (Fadilah et al., 2023), strengthening teacher-parent communication (Nasution & Adi, 2023), and prohibiting teachers from using violence (Priyanto & Nurhuda, 2024). There is also pesantren that implement the *Gerakan Pondok Menyenangkan* (GPM) program at the pesantren Darul Ulum, East Java. Findings from this study indicate that GPM helps santri develop mutual respect, foster cooperation, motivate santri to support each other, and create a comfortable and positive environment in pesantren, contributing to a reduction in bullying incidents (Retnowuni & Yani, 2019).

Based on the findings from the studies discussed it appears that pesantren have adopted person- and environment-focused prevention strategies or addressing both internal and external influences. However, some prevention strategies focusing on this area still require evaluation of its effectiveness and what can be done further. First, within the person-focused prevention; socialization efforts are typically provided at specific times, such as the beginning of the school year. Indeed, this approach can reduce the normalization and equip new santri with knowledge, such as how to report incidents of bullying (Nugroho et al., 2020), yet it may not fully address the underlying issue. The reason is, despite being aware of reporting mechanisms, santri are often reluctant to use them, because they are afraid of the perpetrator's reaction (Amri, 2019). Therefore, pesantren should consider incorporating assertiveness training for new santri, enabling them to report bullying incidents promptly.

For existing santri, particularly seniors with past experiences as victims of bullying, pesantren could provide forgiveness, emotional regulation, and empathy training to prevent them from

projecting their past trauma onto younger santri. This approach is crucial, as factors like seniority and a desire for revenge (often expressed through displacement) can act as catalysts for bullying among santri (Yuhbaba, 2019; Retnowuni & Yani, 2019; Rahmaniah et al., 2022). Additionally, forgiveness, emotional regulation, and both cognitive and affective empathy are inversely correlated with bullying behaviors (Islamiyati et al., 2024; Rahmaniah et al., 2022; Oktaviani et al., 2020). Although santri at pesantren engage in daily religious practices, which are theoretically capable of fostering forgiveness, emotional regulation, and empathy of santri, do not appear to directly reduce bullying behaviors among santri. If these activities had a direct impact, cases of bullying would likely not persist in pesantren, given their consistent implementation. Consequently, focused program aimed at bullying prevention in pesantren are necessary.

Based on the explanation above, pesantren have implemented several environment-focused prevention strategies. However, some of those strategies present challenges, for instance, assigning seniors to supervise juniors may inadvertently contribute to bullying behavior within pesantren (Yuhbaba, 2019; Retnowuni & Yani, 2019; Rahmaniah et al., 2022). In addition, Retnowuni and Yani (2019) found the GPM program effective in bullying prevention, yet the effectiveness of this program was only evaluated at a single pesantren. Broader implementation across other pesantren is needed to assess the program's consistency and effectiveness.

On the other hand, pesantren could benefit from implementing new policies for bullying prevention, such as performing thorough psychological evaluations on incoming santri during the recruitment and selection processes. This is due to a role of aggressiveness (Arfah & Wantini, 2023) and parenting styles in affecting bullying behavior (Nugroho et al., 2020). Thus, psychological assessments are necessary to map each santri's psychological profile, helping pesantren decide whether to accept or reject admission to applicant with specific psychological histories. As such, individuals may be at risk of becoming perpetrators or victims of bullying.

Person- and Environment-Focused Intervention Strategies to Overcome Bullying

This section outlines the intervention (i.e. post-incident) strategies for bullying in pesantren, focusing on both person and environment influences. Person-focused intervention targets santri's internal influences of bullying behavior, while environment-focused intervention targets external influences. Some person-focused intervention strategies in pesantren include counseling to both perpetrators and victims of bullying, giving advice (Priyanto & Nurhuda, 2024; Sari & Rambe, 2022; Alwi et al., 2019; Marthunis & Authar, 2017; Fadilah et al., 2023), academic punishment, community services, humiliating the victim in public (Priyanto & Nurhuda, 2024), mediating between parent and santri, suspension or even expulsion (Sari & Rambe, 2022). Marthunis and Authar (2017) found that bullying interventions in pesantren include tasks such as cleaning toilets, mediating between perpetrators and victims (Fadilah et al., 2023), to corporal punishment, such as making the perpetrators bald, or making them stand under the hot sun for a period. In terms of victim-focused interventions, Yunita and Addiarto (2023) concluded that support group therapy can be an effective approach to enhance the resilience of bullying victims.

The findings from previous studies indicate that pesantren interventions to overcome bullying among santri tend to prioritize person-focused. Environment-focused strategies are limited to involving the parents of santri who have engaged in bullying, primarily for mediation purpose (Sari & Rambe, 2022). Thus, there is a need for pesantren to implement additional environment-focused interventions to enhance the effectiveness of bullying intervention strategies, for instance, pesantren could establish accountability by addressing *musyrif* or ustaz or other responsible parties within the

pesantren, as factors contributing to bullying behavior often include inadequate attention and/or supervision from those parties in the pesantren environment (Alwi et al., 2019). Moreover, pesantren authorities could offer training or guidance to *musyrif* or boarding school teacher, encouraging them to build close and supportive relationships with santri, as this has the potential to lessen bullying incidents (Rahmaniah et al., 2022).

Moreover, despite extensive person-focused interventions by pesantren, some methods used to deal with bullies required re-evaluation. This is because pesantren still used physical punishments such as sun exposure or head shaving as interventions for bullying intervention, and public shaming (Marthunis & Authar, 2017; Priyanto & Nurhuda, 2024). However, studies have shown that physical or corporal punishment can lead to externalizing behaviors (e.g., aggression), internalizing issues (e.g., depression), lower academic performance, and so on (World Health Organization, 2021; Visser et al., 2022). For public shaming, it was also ineffective in reducing bullying behavior (Garandeau et al., 2016). In other word, these interventions are risky and ineffective. Therefore, pesantren should urgently reconsider or even remove such practices and implement alternative and evidence-based approaches.

The policy that may be implemented by pesantren to improve the quality of interventions for bullying perpetrators is to involve professional psychologists or trained school counselors to carry out Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). This is because several experimental studies show that CBT has proven effective in reducing students' bullying tendencies (Iswanti et al., 2017; Sa'adah et al., 2021; Hess et al., 2017). Although these studies were conducted with students in general or public school, CBT-based interventions are worth trying for intervening with bullying perpetrators in Islamic boarding schools. Regarding interventions for victims, support group therapy, as suggested by Yunita and Addiarto (2023), could be implemented in other pesantren settings to enhance victims' resilience, as it has proven effective, and to examine its consistency and/or effectiveness in another psychological variable.

CONCLUSION

Bullying has a direct negative effect on the santri's mental health. However, limited quantitative research has focused on the impact of bullying within pesantren. Besides, qualitative studies so far have mostly used case study designs. Several studies, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, have examined factors linked to bullying in pesantren. These factors are grouped into two main categories: environment and person. Each factor contains several components. The environment factor includes peers, teachers, digital media, parents, and non-physical environment. The person factors are divided into personal attributes and personal socio-contextual. Pesantrens have adopted strategies to both prevention and intervention of bullying behaviors among santris. In preventing bullying, pesantren have targeted both internal (*person-focused*) and external (*environment-focused*) influences. Some efforts that target internal influences include providing socialization and encouraging santri to increase religious practices. The strategies that target external influences include separating junior and senior santri's dormitories and providing a place for santri to express themselves. In terms of interventions, pesantren primarily target internal influences (*person-focused*) by offering advice and administering disciplinary actions, while environment-focused interventions are generally limited to involving parents in mediation.

Based on the results of the study, pesantren should take several measures to prevent and handle bullying effectively. From an individual perspective (*person-focused*), pesantren are advised

to implement assertiveness training for new students to empower them to report bullying incidents with efficacy. In addition, pesantren should hold empathy, forgiveness, and emotional regulation training, particularly for senior students who have been victims, to prevent them from continuing bullying behavior towards junior. From an environmental perspective (*environment-focused*), policies such as assigning seniors to supervise juniors should be reassessed, as they may inadvertently trigger bullying behavior. Pesantren are also encouraged to conduct comprehensive evaluations of successful bullying prevention programs, such as the *Gerakan Pondok Menyenangkan* (GPM) and implement psychological assessments in the student admission process to assess the risk of bullying behavior early on. For post-bullying interventions, pesantren should abandon the practice of physical punishment and public shaming of perpetrators, and replace it with evidence-based intervention methods, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which are effective. In addition, pesantren should enhance the role and responsibility of *musyrif* through training aimed at improving the quality of support and supervision. On the other hand, given the unique cultural and religious context of pesantren, we acknowledge that while direct generalization might be limited, the insights obtained could be relevant and informative for addressing bullying in religious boarding schools with comparable hierarchical and cultural structures in other countries.

Future research should delve deeper into the psychological impacts of different forms of bullying (verbal, physical, social) using quantitative correlational methods and a broader range of qualitative approaches. In addition, it is also crucial to further investigate the role of parenting styles (authoritarian, permissive) on bullying behavior, including clarifying the individual or combined influence of each parenting style, as well as their impact on students as perpetrators or victims of bullying. Further research should also explore underexamined components of social cognitive theory, specifically, self-efficacy and self-expectations related to bullying prevention. In addition, the phenomenon of the transition from victim to perpetrator of bullying should be studied more comprehensively. It is also essential to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of various prevention and intervention programs implemented by pesantren, and to further investigate the role of *musyrif* in reducing bullying through optimal support. Besides, this review has several weaknesses that need to be considered. First, related to the scope of our review. We only focused the analysis of this study on bullying and did not include similar constructs such as violence or harassment or assault or abuse that might contribute to a deeper understanding of bullying in pesantren. Second, we also excluded grey literature from this review, allowing us to miss certain results that could contribute to the understanding of bullying in pesantren. Third, this review only focused on Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia that is called pesantren.

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