



BULLYING'S IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH OF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DORMITORIES

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ABSTRACT

Islamic boarding schools as religious-based educational institutions have an important role in shaping the character and personality of students. However, increasingly intensive interactions in the dormitory environment and social pressure between students often create conditions that are vulnerable to bullying behavior, both verbal and physical. This study highlights the impact of bullying on the mental health of students in the Islamic boarding school environment, where intimidation behavior can trigger anxiety disorders, depression, and decreased self-esteem. **Methods** The study used a systematic review method using PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis). database search by searching for articles from 3 databases, namely Google Scholar, Science Direct and Scopus. Obtained 162 articles with the keywords "Impact of Bullying", "Mental Health", and "Boarding School". Bullying victims experience various psychological disorders, such as trauma, stress, fear, and the desire to leave the Islamic boarding school. Bullying also has a direct effect on increasing depression, anxiety, and decreased self-esteem of victims. In addition, negative emotions such as anger and the urge to take revenge can cause victims to become perpetrators, creating a continuous cycle of revenge. Bullying victims often show signs of anxiety, loss of enthusiasm for learning, and difficulty rebuilding a sense of security in their social environment. Bullying in the Islamic boarding school environment has a significant impact on the mental health of students, including trauma, anxiety, stress, and decreased self-esteem. In addition, some victims show defensive behavior that develops into aggression, creating a cycle of revenge. The long-term effects of bullying not only affect psychological well-being, but also disrupt the social and academic lives of victims. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is needed in the form of emotional support, protection, and effective policies to minimize the negative impacts of bullying in the Islamic boarding school environment.

Keywords: boarding school; impact of bullying; mental health

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools, as one of the religion-based educational institutions in Indonesia, play an important role in shaping the character and personality of students. The pesantren environment that is disciplined, isolated from the outside world, and based on Islamic religious teachings, is expected to be a place that supports the mental and spiritual development of students. However, it is undeniable that like other educational institutions, pesantren also face social challenges, one of which is bullying. The high intensity of interaction in the dormitory environment, coupled with social pressure among students, often creates situations that are prone to bullying behavior, both verbally and physically. The impact of this bullying behavior can lead to anxiety disorders, depression, and a decrease in self-esteem, all of which have a negative impact on the mental health of students. A pilot study in boarding schools in Germany conducted by Pfeiffer and Pinquart (2014) found that students who study in boarding schools are more likely to play the role of perpetrators as well as victims of bullying compared to students who attend public schools.

Constant exposure to bullying behavior can trigger or worsen mental health conditions such as major depression and even increase the risk of suicide attempts. In addition to mental health, victims of bullying also often experience social difficulties, such as isolation from peers, as well as a lack of support from the community or authorities. Researchers report that in general, between 15% and 30% of adolescents have experienced bullying. However, these estimates vary depending on the type of bullying experienced, geographic location, and how bullying is defined and measured (Maynard et al., 2016; Modecki et al., 2014). Based on a 2021 UNICEF report, most adolescents aged 13-15 years have experienced violence in the form of physical fights and bullying from peers at school (Isnawati & Yunita, 2022). The Cluster for the Fulfillment of Children's Rights (PHA) recorded 2,971 cases throughout 2021. Based on data received by KPAI, the cluster with the highest number of cases is the Family Environment and Alternative Care, reaching 2,281 cases (76.8%). Followed by the Education, Leisure Utilization, Cultural Activities, and Religion cluster with 412 cases (13.9%), then Basic Health and Welfare with 197 cases (6.6%), and the Civil Rights and Freedoms cluster with 81 cases (2.7%).

KPAI data from January to September 2023 showed that there were 1,800 complaints of bullying cases related to the Fulfillment of Children's Rights (PHA) and Special Protection of Children (PKA). Data from the Education, leisure use, and cultural activities clusters ranked second with 143 cases (7.9). KPAI issued a number of recommendations that need to be implemented immediately to eliminate violence in the educational environment. This recommendation is addressed to the Central Government, Regional Governments, as well as the Education Unit, the community, and families. One of the recommendations is that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) together with the Ministry of Religion (Kemenag) immediately evaluate the curriculum and learning methodology by emphasizing strengthening mental health, character strengthening learning, spiritual and social attitudes based on habits integrated with the family and community environment.

Bullying in the pesantren dormitory environment is not only a challenge for students' character education, but also has a significant impact on their mental health. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is needed to address this problem, including the implementation of appropriate policies and support from various relevant parties. With recommendations from KPAI and the strengthening of the curriculum that focuses on mental health and character learning, it is hoped that the pesantren environment can become a safe place and support the psychological development of students. This step is very important to prevent bullying and ensure the mental well-being of students in the long term. This study aims to explore the phenomenon of bullying within the environment of Islamic boarding schools, including the structural and social factors that contribute to the formation of such behavior, such as the culture of seniority and hierarchical systems. This research also seeks to analyze the impact of bullying on students' mental health, particularly in terms of psychological disorders, learning motivation, and the desire to leave the boarding school.

METHOD

This study applies the systematic review method using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis) guidelines. Data collection is carried out through 3 databases, namely Google Scholar, Science Direct, and Scopus. The final results of the screening process show that there are five articles that have been reviewed. The keywords used in the search are "Mental health," "impact of bullying," and "boarding school." There were 162 articles from Google Scholar, 159 articles from Science Direct, 2 articles from

Scopus, 1 article. The inculcation criteria in this study are journal articles that have been published in 2019 – 2023 and related to the impact of bullying on mental health in the pesantren environment.

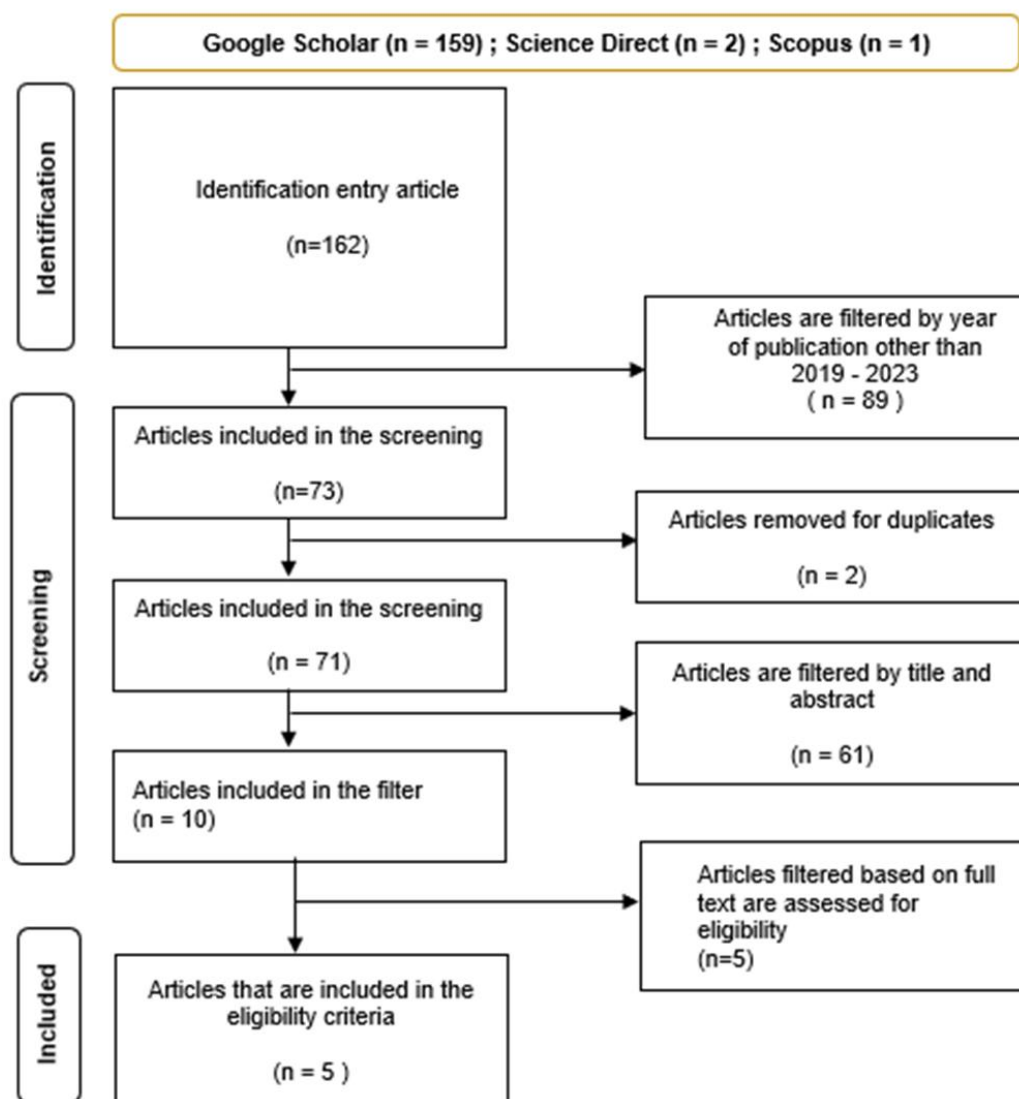


Figure 1. PRISMA Diagram of the article search process

RESULT

Table 1.
Article Search Results

Not	Author (years)	Heading	Journal	Method	Result
1.	Nurlelah, et.al (2019)	The Impact of Bullying on the Mental Health of Students (Case Study at Darul Muttaqien Parung Islamic Boarding School)	Journal of Islamic Education	Qualitative approach	The impact of bullying on students includes various problems, especially on mental health, such as trauma, stress, fear of living in the Islamic boarding school environment, even to the point of stopping or leaving the Islamic boarding school, because they are worried about experiencing bullying cases

Not	Author (years)	Heading	Journal	Method	Result
					again. In fact, there are several students who decided to leave the Darul Muttaqien Islamic Boarding School due to the bullying cases they experienced.
2.	Yuhbaba, Z. N (2019)	Exploration of bullying behavior in Islamic boarding schools	Dr. Soebandi Health Journal	Purposive sampling	The impact felt by the participants was in the form of physical violence, feelings of discomfort, sadness, fear, anxiety to the point of wanting to stop or leave the pesantren. Bullying cases that occur in the Islamic boarding school environment result in a bad impact on the victim in the bio-psycho- and social development of the victim.
3.	Nugroho, S. et al. (2021)	Psychological Dynamics in Turning Victims of Bullying into Perpetrators of Bullying in Students at Islamic Boarding Schools	Journal of Islamic Psychology	Grounded theory	Psychological reactions appear, such as anger, disappointment, wanting revenge, fear, or feeling helpless. The aggrieved phase is the starting point of the appearance of negative emotions in the victim, characterized by the appearance of revenge after being bullied in the form of physical, verbal, or blackmail. The movement of emotions in a negative direction is triggered by negative influences and cognition after the victimization phase. This will be one of the determining factors for the victim to become a bully or not. Negative emotions will be more intense, persistent, or even decrease in each dynamic phase of the change from victim to bully.
4.	Oktaviani, R. et, al. (2023)	The Impact of Bullying Behavior on the Mental Health of Students: A Case Study at the Islahuddin Islamic Boarding School in Kediri	Golden Ink Institute Journal	Qualitative approach with case study research type	The results of the study found that the impact of bullying on mental health was that bullying victims became quiet, weak, afraid when meeting the perpetrator, tired of the perpetrator's treatment of them, became very depressed, and also not enthusiastic about learning.

Based on the table above, several articles related to the impact of bullying on mental health in the pesantren dormitory environment, there are similar findings that indicate that bullying affects the bio-psycho-social aspects of students significantly. Students who are victims of bullying experience various mental disorders, ranging from stress, trauma, fear, to anxiety that results in the discomfort of living in the dormitory. Some victims even chose to leave the

pesantren in response to their fears and worries that they would experience similar events in the future.

DISCUSSION

Bullying is one of the problems that are often encountered in the pesantren environment. The phenomenon of bullying in Islamic boarding schools is a complex issue and requires special attention. Pesantren as a religion-based educational institution has a distinctive social system, where seniority relationships are often part of the culture and daily life of students. In a hierarchical environment in the pesantren environment, the difference in status between senior and junior students often creates an unbalanced interaction pattern, where the more senior students have greater power or influence over their juniors. The culture of bullying in Islamic boarding schools, if analyzed in depth, seems to be a phenomenon that is deeply rooted in the social structure and norms that apply in the environment. This phenomenon can be said to be "institutionalized" and "inherited" because bullying behavior patterns do not only last for a certain period of time, but have become part of the dynamics of daily life in many Islamic boarding schools.

The phenomenon of "institutionalizing" and "continuing to be inherited" can also occur in this pesantren environment because the lack of supervision of social interaction between students also contributes to this problem. On the other hand, the stigma attached to bullying victims often makes them afraid to report. The fear of repercussions or rejection from peers can prevent them from seeking help, so the bullying cycle continues without any intervention. In addition to "institutionalizing" and "continuing to be inherited", bullying in the pesantren environment also affects the mental health of students who are victims of bullying. This is reinforced by the findings of various studies that show that victims of bullying in Islamic boarding schools experience psychological impacts such as stress, anxiety, trauma, and low motivation to learn. Nurlelah et al. (2019) and Yuhbaba, Z.N. (2019) found that bullying causes mental health disorders, such as trauma, stress, fear, and the desire to leave the pesantren. This is in line with research conducted by (Hawker et al., 2000) that examined the impact of bullying on victims. They found that bullying had a direct effect on increased depression, anxiety, and decreased self-esteem in various educational settings, including dormitories. Nugroho, S. et al. (2021) emphasizing that negative emotions, such as anger and a desire for revenge, can encourage victims of bullying to become perpetrators. This correlates with research (Ttofi et al., 2008), which suggests that the cycle of revenge in bullying victims can lead to aggressive behavior later in life, especially if they don't get enough emotional support from the environment.

Oktaviani, R. et al. (2023) who reported that bullying victims became quiet, afraid to meet the perpetrator, lost their enthusiasm for learning, and showed signs of anxiety, in line with research (Wang et al., 2009) which shows that victims of bullying often experience psychological impacts such as anxiety and decreased academic motivation. Wang et al also found that bullying victims often have difficulty rebuilding a sense of security in their social environment, especially in boarding schools. Fadillah et al. (2023) found that some victims of bullying experienced prolonged stress and trauma that was severe enough to decide to leave the pesantren. These findings support the results of a study (Due et al., 2005) that states that repeated bullying can lead to higher levels of anxiety and depression, even leading to excessive school dropouts or absenteeism. Because et al. also emphasized that an unsupportive school environment can worsen the victim's condition, which shows a pattern similar to the situation in the pesantren.

In line with the aforementioned studies, a recent study by Arifin et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of social support in reducing the negative impacts of bullying. The study showed that students who had strong emotional support from their peers and teachers tended to cope better with the psychological consequences of bullying. In addition, a study by Maulana et al. (2021) revealed that a school-based intervention program involving training to raise students' awareness of bullying could significantly reduce the incidence of such behavior and improve the social climate in Islamic boarding schools. This indicates that preventive and interventional efforts can have a positive impact in reducing bullying cases and supporting students' mental well-being. In addition, research by Fahmi and Kurniawan (2021) stated that a community-based approach in Islamic boarding schools, involving senior students as "mentors" for their juniors, can serve as an effective support system to reduce bullying. This study emphasized that by building closer relationships between senior and junior students through positive activities, such as character building and discussion groups, bullying can be minimized. Finally, research by Rizky and Putri (2022) revealed that psychological training and conflict management programs in Islamic boarding schools can help students manage their feelings better, as well as increase awareness of the negative impacts of bullying. This study shows that by providing adequate social and emotional skills, Islamic boarding schools can reduce bullying cases and improve the social climate among students.

CONCLUSION

Bullying in Islamic boarding schools is a complex phenomenon and involves many structural and social aspects. A strong culture of seniority and hierarchy in pesantren, which may have initially been intended to build discipline and respect, has played a role in maintaining bullying patterns. This can happen possibly due to the limited emotional support and the supervision system that tends to be loose, which results in bullying behavior becoming part of the daily dynamics and continuing to be inherited among students. The impact of this act of bullying is not only limited to psychological disorders such as stress, anxiety, and depression, but can also affect the mental health of students more broadly, including decreased motivation to learn, fear, and the desire to leave the pesantren. Several studies show that victims of bullying in Islamic boarding schools experience deep trauma that can even encourage them to behave aggressively or repeat patterns of bullying behavior towards others. This finding shows the need for serious attention from the pesantren to design more effective policies in preventing and handling bullying. A more inclusive environment is needed, strengthening supervision of social interaction between students, and adequate counseling or mentoring programs. This effort is expected to break the chain of bullying behavior that has taken root, so that pesantren can really become a safe and conducive place for the development of students' character and

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