

Child Protection in Islamic Boarding Schools In Madura: A Case Study Policy Implementation and Its Impact on Santri Welfare

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to fill the gap in the literature regarding the implementation of child protection policies in pesantren and their impact on student welfare. This research uses a qualitative case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of implementing child protection policies in pesantren and their impact on student welfare. The data collection involved in-depth interviews with stakeholders in the pesantren, including administrators, teachers, administrative staff, and students. Data analysis was conducted thematically, using an inductive approach, where key findings were developed from the collected data and organized into relevant themes. Pesantren has adopted and implemented comprehensive child protection policies. These pesantren have a clear and written child protection policy. This policy includes guidelines regarding the management of cases of violence, reporting procedures, and mechanisms to protect santri from various forms of abuse. They have established a particular unit or team overseeing the implementation of the child protection policy and are responsible for handling reports and providing sanctions according to the applicable policies. The internal monitoring system includes periodic audits and evaluations to implement the child protection policy well. The recommendations from the research results that can be formulated are as follows: 1) Improved Training and Education, 2) strengthen their institutional structure by establishing a special task force or unit responsible for child protection and santri welfare issues, 3) develop and implement clear and specific child protection policies, including procedures for handling cases of violence and harassment, as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, 4) awareness campaigns on the importance of child protection need to be conducted regularly in pesantren.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Child Protection;
Policy; Pesantren;
Student welfare.

1. Introduction

Child protection is very urgent considering that children are very vulnerable to inhumane treatment because their abilities and strengths are

far below adults, both parents at home and teachers and education personnel.

The above is because every child has the right to live, develop, play, rest, and play an active role in activities of their choice. Children also have the right

to be treated humanely by their dignity, receive protection, and be free from marginalization and discrimination (Thomas et al., 2016).

Pesantren ideally appears as an educational institution that upholds moral values, including appreciating and respecting the rights of children and students in carrying out their education. Respect for the rights of children and students allows Pesantren to organize child-friendly education by protecting children and students from acts of violence when implementing their education.

However, several cases of violence occurred in pesantren, including the following: 1) a student named Teguh Purnomo, a student at PP. Roudlotul Toyibin, Bojonegoro, died as a result of beatings by his fellow center in 2015. 2) Adam FS, a student at PP. At-Taqwa, Lamongan. He died after being beaten by his friends in 2017, 3) M. Iqbal, a student of PP. Darussalam, Surabaya, died after being beaten by fellow boarding school friends. 4) in 2019, Alhalim also died due to beatings by fellow boarding school friends. The latest incident was the death of a student of PP. Gontor Ponorogo due to being beaten by his friend during recess. The latest case is the death of a student of Darus Salam Gontor Ponorogo Islamic Boarding School in East Java (AM), whom his friend assaulted during recess. The persecution experienced by the student began with bullying between students, which led to the death of student AM on August 22, 2022.

The role of pesantren in the Indonesian education system cannot be separated from the long history of the development of Islamic education in the

archipelago. As traditional educational institutions that educate millions of santri, pesantren play a key role in shaping students' character, religious understanding, and moral integrity. Recent data shows more than 27,000 pesantren spread across Indonesia with a total student population of more than four million. Pesantren provides religious education and is essential in providing general education and life skills for santri. However, despite their significant role in education, pesantren face great challenges in implementing effective child protection policies, a crucial aspect of human rights and child welfare.

This research aims to implement child protection policies in Pondok Pesantren Darul Ulum Banyu Anyar, Palengaan, Pamekasan and Pondok Pesantren Al-Amin Prenduan, Sumenep and assess their impact on students' welfare. Using a comprehensive case study approach, this study will analyze various aspects of policy implementation in different pesantren, identify the constraints faced and measure the direct impact on students' welfare. The study will also provide recommendations to improve the effectiveness of child protection policies in pesantren and provide practical insights for pesantren managers and policymakers.

The problem of implementing child protection policies in pesantren is an issue that requires serious attention in the context of education and child welfare in Indonesia. Although pesantren are considered traditional educational institutions that shape students' character and morality, their existence is inseparable from the challenges of effectively implementing

child protection policies. Child protection policies adopted by pesantren often face difficulties in implementation, posing risks to the physical and psychological well-being of the students. Some arising problems include non-uniformity in understanding and implementing policies, lack of resources, and cultural constraints that hinder the implementation process. In this context, this study aims to identify the implementation of child protection policies in pesantren and evaluate their impact on students' well-being. With an in-depth understanding of these issues, it is hoped that this research can significantly contribute to improving the effectiveness of child protection policies in pesantren and keeping child welfare as a top priority in Islamic education in Indonesia.

This study aims to fill the gap in the literature regarding the implementation of child protection policies in pesantren and their impact on student welfare. In the context of pesantren as Islamic educational institutions that have a significant role in shaping the character and morality of students, child protection is an essential aspect to pay attention to. Although there have been efforts from the government and various related parties to implement child protection policies in pesantren, there are still gaps in the understanding and implementation of these policies.

This research is motivated by the gap in the literature regarding implementing child protection policies in pesantren. Although pesantren are considered educational institutions that play an essential role in shaping students' character and morality,

implementing child protection policies in pesantren settings still poses many challenges. Some previous studies tend to focus more on educational and religious aspects, leaving the need for in-depth research on the practical implementation of child protection policies in pesantren. In addition, the lack of empirical studies that specifically evaluate the impact of child protection policies on student welfare in pesantren is also a gap that needs to be filled.

This research is novel and important in the scientific context of child protection in Pesantren. Implementing child protection policies in Pesantren raises new aspects that must be carefully considered in the research literature. Although several studies touch on this topic, there is still a lack of understanding of the critical factors that influence the implementation of these policies in Pesantren.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Challenges in Implementing Child Protection Policies in Islamic Boarding Schools

Several studies have shown that Islamic boarding schools face various challenges in implementing child protection policies. For example, a study highlights that although Law Number 35 of 2014 on Child Protection has been enacted, its implementation in *salafiyah* Islamic boarding schools continues to face significant challenges (Muhtar & Hasib, 2026). This is attributed to deeply rooted disciplinary traditions, such as the practice of *ta'zir*, which may conflict with child protection norms.

In addition, research by Nasrullah, Solichin, and Siswanto indicates that child protection in

Indonesian Islamic boarding schools remains constrained by normative gaps between Islamic legal principles and state regulatory instruments. These gaps create structural challenges in the effective implementation of child protection policies (Nasrullah et al., 2026).

In addition to normative and cultural constraints, resource-related factors also constitute significant obstacles to the implementation of child protection in Islamic boarding schools. Many Islamic boarding schools, particularly small-scale and traditional institutions, still lack adequate professional personnel and facilities to optimally support child protection efforts. Limited training for caregivers and teachers has resulted in low levels of understanding and implementation of child protection policies, causing cases of violence to often be inadequately and insufficiently addressed in a timely manner (Muhtar & Hasib, 2026).

Furthermore, communication and reporting barriers also constitute major problems. In Islamic boarding school environments that tend to be closed and emphasize familial values, children who experience violence often feel afraid or reluctant to report incidents due to fear of stigma or pressure from their surroundings. The implementation of child protection policies in Islamic boarding schools is difficult to carry out effectively. This highlights the importance of establishing an inclusive and accessible child protection management system for all students (*santri*) (Nasrullah et al., 2026).

2.2. Strategies for Improving Child Protection in Islamic Boarding Schools

Several studies have proposed strategies for improving child protection in Islamic boarding schools. For example, a study by Samudera (2026) proposes integrating child safeguarding principles with the culture of Islamic boarding schools to prevent violence. This approach emphasizes the importance of establishing a sustainable prevention culture and involving all stakeholders in creating a safe and empowering environment for *santri* (Samudera, 2026).

In addition, a study by Al Fajri and Hajaroh evaluated the accountability of the Child-Friendly Islamic Boarding School policy implementation using the CIPP model at Al Mawaddah Islamic Boarding School for Girls. The findings indicate that comprehensive evaluation can help improve transparency and accountability in the implementation of child protection policies in Islamic boarding schools (Fajri & Hajaroh, 2026).

A holistic approach that integrates education, training, and cadre development in Islamic boarding schools is key to improving child protection. Samudera emphasizes the importance of continuous training for teachers, caregivers, and Islamic boarding school administrators so that they are equipped to identify signs of violence and respond appropriately. In addition, educating children about their rights and protection mechanisms should also be incorporated into the curriculum so that they become more aware of their rights and more willing to report when they experience or witness acts of violence (Samudera, 2026).

Furthermore, systematic evaluation and monitoring are essential strategies for ensuring the effective implementation of child protection policies. A study by Al Fajri and Hajaroh indicates that by applying the CIPP evaluation model (Context, Input, Process, Product), Islamic boarding schools can identify shortcomings in policy implementation and undertake the necessary improvements on an ongoing basis. The involvement of stakeholders, such as students' parents or guardians, local governments, and child protection institutions, is also necessary to establish synergies that can support the successful implementation of child protection programs in Islamic boarding schools (Fajri & Hajaroh, 2026).

3. Methodology

This research uses a qualitative case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of implementing child protection policies in pesantren and their impact on student welfare. The qualitative case study approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the complex and in-depth context of the phenomenon under study, in this case, the implementation of child protection policies in pesantren. This research design allows researchers to examine in detail the implementation of the policy and how students feel its impact.

The research procedure began with the selection of pesantren as the unit of analysis. The selection is based on specific criteria that include variations in size, geographical location, and the level of implementation of child protection policies. This study chose Darul Ulum

Banyu Anyar Islamic Boarding School, Palengaan, Pamekasan and Al-Amin Islamic Boarding School, Prenduan, Sumenep, as the research locations because these Islamic boarding schools have implemented child protection in earnest and are demographically located in two different districts on the island of Madura.

The data collection technique involved in-depth interviews with various stakeholders in the pesantren, including administrators, teachers, administrative staff, and students. These interviews were designed to comprehensively understand their perspectives and experiences regarding implementing child protection policies.

Data analysis was conducted thematically, using data from interviews and documentation to identify patterns, trends, and key findings related to implementing child protection policies in pesantren. The data were analyzed using an inductive approach, where key findings were developed from the collected data and then organized into relevant themes.

Through data collection techniques and careful analysis, this study is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the factors that influence the implementation of child protection policies in Pesantren and their impact on students' well-being.

4. Results and Discussion

As an Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, Pesantren is responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of children under their care. To effectively implement child protection, policies implemented in

pesantren can cover the following aspects:

4.1 Integrated Child Protection Policy

a. Establishment of a Child Protection Committee

The pesantren formed a special team in charge of protecting children from all forms of violence, discrimination, and rights violations. This team is responsible for monitoring the condition of the children and providing treatment if violations are found.

A Pesantren administrator said, "I strongly support forming the Child Protection Team in Pesantren. We at Pesantren Darul Ulum formed this team about one year ago. The team comprises teachers, pesantren staff, and specially selected santri representatives. Their task is critical to keep children safe and avoid various forms of violence and rights violations (Rustina et al., 2026). In addition, this team is also responsible for providing rapid response if a case arises, including conducting investigations and providing psychological support to victims."

The committee is tasked with conducting investigations if there are reports or indications of violations of children's rights (Pratama, Pettalongi, & Nurdin, 2022). To protect all parties involved, this investigation process must be carried out with confidentiality, objectivity, and fairness principles. After the investigation, the team will recommend actions that need to be taken, such as imposing sanctions on the perpetrators, moving students to a safer environment, or providing medical and psychological assistance to victims (Luhinets et al., 2020; Mafturrahman et al., 2023).

b. Regulations and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

Development of regulations and SOPs that detail how to handle cases of violence, abuse or other offenses against children. This includes reporting procedures, handling, and actions to be taken against perpetrators.

A Pesantren administrator said as follows: "At Pesantren Al-Amin, the development of regulations and SOPs for handling cases of violence and offenses against children is a top priority. We designed this SOP with consultation guidelines on child protection and input from psychologists and legal experts. The SOP covers steps ranging from initial detection, reporting process, and investigation to actions to be taken against the perpetrator. We ensure that all parties, including staff and santri, understand these procedures clearly and easily. Everyone in the pesantren is trained to understand and implement this SOP."

"As a senior santri, I see that the rules and SOPs here are implemented very seriously. When there is a suspected violation, we must immediately report it to the teacher or the child protection team. The reporting process is quite clear: there are special forms to fill out, and reports can also be submitted in person if the situation is urgent. I once witnessed a friend reporting inappropriate behavior, and I saw the team act quickly to check and handle the situation according to the SOP."

The development of detailed regulations and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) governing how to handle cases of violence, abuse or other offenses against children is a crucial step in maintaining a safe and supportive

environment for children. These regulations and SOPs aim to provide clear guidelines for all stakeholders, including staff, teachers, and parents, in dealing with situations involving child abuse or violence (Abdullah et al., 2022; Andhini & Arifin, 2019; Sonita, 2013).

c. Supervision and Monitoring Policy

Carry out regular supervision in the dormitories and the pesantren environment to ensure the children are safe and prosperous. This supervision also includes the interaction between students and each other, as well as between teachers and pesantren staff.

A boarding school administrator said: "If there is an emergency or a report from a santri, we immediately act according to established procedures. For example, if there is a report of a missing santri from the dormitory, we immediately search and contact the relevant parties. We are also trained to handle fires or natural disasters by ensuring all students follow safe evacuation procedures. Our every action is always reported and documented for evaluation.

Close supervision in pesantren is one of the critical strategies for ensuring the safety, well-being, and holistic development of the santri. This supervision covers the physical environment and the social interactions between the santri and the pesantren staff. Close supervision aims to prevent violence, harassment, or other inappropriate actions that may harm the santri. This includes ensuring dormitory conditions are safe and free from physical threats and identifying and addressing conflicts or intimidation between fellow students. In addition, close supervision also supports the social

and emotional development of santri by facilitating positive and supportive interactions between peers, teachers, and pesantren staff. This helps to create an inclusive and supportive environment for Santri's personal growth (Benda & Corwyn, 1997; Smith et al., 2003)

Regular supervision in dormitories and the pesantren environment plays a crucial role in maintaining the safety and well-being of santri. This activity is not only limited to physical supervision but also includes psychosocial aspects, such as interactions between santri, teachers, and pesantren staff. This supervision aims to ensure that each individual is safe and healthy and supports optimal personal development. Routine supervision involves regular patrols and inspections by pesantren caregivers or security staff to ensure the boarding facilities meet safety standards. The study by Leve et al. underscores the importance of a safe physical environment as a critical factor in the well-being of children in boarding schools (Leve et al., 2009). Safe facilities include bedrooms, learning spaces, and play areas free from physical danger. The above supervision is realized in the supervision of social interactions. In addition to physical aspects, supervision also includes monitoring social interactions between students, teachers, and staff. Eccles and Roeser explain that positive and supportive interpersonal relationships between students and teachers can improve students' emotional and academic well-being (Eccles et al., 2011).

d. Reporting System

Establish a safe and trusted reporting system where santri can report their issues or concerns without fear of

negative consequences. This system can be a suggestion box or a dedicated hotline.

A pesantren administrator shared the following: I feel that the reporting system in this pesantren is beneficial and provides a sense of security. We have several ways to report issues, including suggestion boxes in public areas and a dedicated hotline that can be called anytime. I used the suggestion box to report a hygiene issue in the dormitory and saw that my message was responded to immediately. The boarding school followed up on the report quickly and fixed my reported problem. Knowing that there is a system that supports us makes me feel calmer and confident that the pesantren cares about our comfort and safety." (Eccles et al., 2011)

4.2 The Impact of Santri Protection Policy on Their Welfare

The following are some of the impacts of child protection policies in pesantren on the well-being of santri they are;

a. Physical Well-Being

A pesantren administrator shared the following: In our pesantren, we take our child protection policy seriously. We have adopted strict security procedures and supervise santri activities more intensively. Every santri is supervised by experienced caregivers and Ustad. We also implement regulations that prohibit any form of physical violence. This increases the sense of security among the centers and promotes an environment more conducive to learning and development."

Strong child protection policies play an essential role in ensuring the health and physical safety of santri in pesantren. This includes implementing strict security procedures, better supervision, and regulations to protect against physical violence. In addition, this policy includes improving the quality of health and hygiene facilities, such as the availability of clean toilets, handwashing stations, and access to clean water.

Providing routine health services, such as regular health check-ups and immunizations, is also vital to monitor and address health issues. Exemplary policy implementation creates an environment that supports the physical and mental development of santri, providing a comfortable and physically hazard-free place to live and an atmosphere that supports learning and social development.

Studies such as Jones support the importance of these protective policies by demonstrating the risk of violence and its impact on children. Lund et al. link socio-economic conditions to mental health, while Ferguson highlights the importance of a safe environment (*Sanitation*, 2022).

b. Safe and conducive environment

As a result, child protection policies can improve Santri's mental and emotional health. Counseling programs, emotional skills training, and a safe reporting mechanism for santri who experience difficulties contribute to stress reduction and improved emotional well-being.

A santri said, "I feel calmer with the emotional skills training. We are taught how to manage stress and emotions, and it helps. I used to feel

stressed during exams, but now I can handle it better. Having a place to report problems also makes me feel safer knowing someone will listen and help."

A safe and supportive environment significantly impacts students' mental and emotional health. Effective child protection policies create an atmosphere conducive to emotional and psychological development. According to research by Shonkoff et al., a safe and stable environment promotes healthy brain development in children, contributing to their ability to cope with stress and function well in various aspects of life. Research by Bethell et al. also shows that children who live in safe environments have better mental health and are better able to cope with trauma and stress (Bethell et al., 2016).

4.3 Implementation of policies that promote inclusivity and address bullying and discrimination

Anti-discrimination policies can help create a more harmonious social environment. It supports positive relationships between santri and encourages the development of their social skills. This policy also leads to the forming of social structures that support collaboration, empathy, and cooperation among santri, strengthening their social networks.

This policy is constructive in creating a more harmonious social environment. With clear rules against bullying and discrimination, santri feels safer and more accepted. "We also organize activities that promote cooperation and empathy, such as group discussions and collaborative projects, which help strengthen relationships among students. As a result, santri are

more open in their interactions and find it easier to build positive social networks."

Policies promoting inclusivity are essential in creating a harmonious social environment. The study by Verkuyten et al. shows that effective inclusivity policies can reduce discrimination and increase a sense of unity and attachment among children and adolescents (Abbeduto et al., 2019; Verkuyten et al., 2019).

This, in turn, improves social well-being and creates an environment where every individual feels valued and accepted. Meanwhile, research by Roffey found that an inclusive approach in educational settings helps build more positive relationships between students, which contributes to a more supportive and safe learning environment (Abbeduto et al., 2019).

5. Conclusion

The implementation of child protection policies in pesantren still varies. Pesantren has adopted and implemented comprehensive child protection policies. These pesantren have a clear and written child protection policy. This policy includes guidelines regarding the management of cases of violence, reporting procedures, and mechanisms to protect santri from various forms of abuse. Some pesantren have established a particular unit or team overseeing the implementation of the child protection policy. This unit is also responsible for handling reports and providing sanctions according to the applicable policies. The internal monitoring system includes periodic audits and evaluations to implement the child protection policy well. Pesantren provides a safe physical environment with facilities that support the welfare of santri, such as decent

rooms, clean places of worship, and adequate health facilities. In pesantren who successfully implement child protection policies, there is an improvement in santri welfare, especially in mental and physical health and a sense of security while living in pesantren. In contrast, in pesantren that have not implemented the policy effectively, santri often face the risk of physical and emotional abuse, as well as a lack of protection of their rights.

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