

Challenges and Strategies for Addressing Sexual Violence in Pesantren: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Sexual violence in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) is a complex and urgent issue that needs to be addressed, considering that pesantren, as religious educational institutions, should serve as a safe environment for students. This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to analyze the challenges and strategies for addressing sexual violence in pesantren. The analysis of various sources reveals that the main challenges include patriarchal culture, limited knowledge and awareness, as well as ineffective policies. Implemented strategies, such as policy reinforcement, education and awareness, and reporting and support systems, show varying results. Although there have been advancements, existing challenges still require further efforts to create a safer environment for students. The proposed recommendations include the development of internal policies, enhancement of educational programs, development of a safe reporting system, collaboration with external organizations, and continuous evaluation and monitoring. These measures are expected to enable pesantren to contribute to the prevention of sexual violence in society at large.

Keywords: Sexual violence, pesantren, Systematic Literature Review, countermeasures, policy, education.

Introduction

Sexual violence is a serious human rights violation that requires immediate attention, particularly in religious educational environments like pesantren. Pesantren, as institutions that play a significant role in shaping the character and morality of young generations, should provide a safe space for students to learn and develop. However, various reports and studies indicate that sexual violence in pesantren is not uncommon, resulting in harmful impacts on both victims and the broader community.

Sexual violence in pesantren can manifest in various forms, from verbal harassment to sexual coercion. The factors contributing to sexual violence in pesantren are highly complex, involving power dynamics, social norms, and a lack of understanding about individual rights. In this context, the power relationship between kyai (pesantren leaders) and students, particularly female students, often becomes a vulnerable point that can be exploited by perpetrators of violence (Nurisman, 2022). Research by Pebriaisyah suggests that patterns of sexual violence often stem from unequal social structures, where

female students are placed in vulnerable positions (Lyza Sari Rahayu & Fariz Farrih Izaddi, 2023).

Legal aspects also pose challenges in addressing sexual violence in pesantren. Although Law No. 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes (UU TPKS) provides a stronger legal framework, its implementation on the ground faces various obstacles. Weak law enforcement, a lack of understanding of victims' rights, and societal stigma against victims of sexual violence are significant barriers in combating this issue (Fitri Pebriaisyah et al., 2022). Therefore, a comprehensive and collaborative approach involving the government, educational institutions, and society is necessary to create a safe environment for students.

Sexual education is also a crucial strategy in preventing sexual violence in pesantren. Adequate education about individual rights, personal boundaries, and ways to protect oneself from potential sexual violence can help students, especially females, to be more vigilant and capable of identifying dangerous situations (Khusniyati Masykuroh & Qosyasih, 2023). Studies indicate that sexual education provided early by parents and educational institutions can contribute to the reduction of sexual violence cases (Kurniawati et al., 2022).

In this study, the author will conduct a systematic analysis of the challenges and strategies for addressing sexual violence in pesantren. Through a literature review approach, this study aims to identify factors that influence the occurrence of sexual violence, as well as to explore various strategies that can be implemented to effectively prevent and address this issue. Thus, it is hoped that the findings of this review can contribute to the development of better policies and practices in tackling sexual violence in pesantren.

Methodology

This research employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to analyze the challenges and strategies for addressing sexual violence in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). SLR is a systematic and structured method used to identify, evaluate, and integrate relevant research findings from various sources. The aim of this SLR is to provide a comprehensive overview of the issue of sexual violence in pesantren and assess the effectiveness of the strategies implemented. As stated by Probosambodo, sexual violence, including rape, is a violation of the bodily and sexual integrity of victims, the majority of whom are women and children (Probosambodo & Widiastuti, 2023). The SLR research procedure consists of several steps as follows:

1. Identifying Research Questions: The research questions addressed in this SLR are: What are the challenges in addressing sexual violence in pesantren? What strategies have been implemented to tackle sexual violence in pesantren? How effective are the strategies implemented in combating sexual violence in pesantren?
2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: The inclusion criteria for articles to be analyzed include: Articles discussing sexual violence in pesantren. Articles detailing

strategies for addressing sexual violence. Articles published in accredited academic journals within the last 10 years. The exclusion criteria include: Articles irrelevant to the topic of sexual violence in pesantren. Articles not available in Indonesian or English.

3. Literature Search: The literature search was conducted through academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Scopus using keywords like "sexual violence in pesantren," "strategies for addressing sexual violence," and "policy evaluation in pesantren." The search considered publication years and the relevance of the articles.
4. Article Selection: After the search, articles found were selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selection process was conducted in stages, starting from titles, abstracts, to full texts. Two independent researchers performed the selection to ensure objectivity.
5. Data Collection: Relevant data from the selected articles were collected and categorized based on themes such as challenges, strategies, and effectiveness. Data collection was conducted using tables to facilitate analysis.
6. Data Analysis: The data analysis employed a qualitative approach. The researchers identified patterns, themes, and relationships between the challenges and the strategies implemented. The results were presented in narrative form, highlighting the main findings from the SLR. As Fernández-Fuertes et al. pointed out, myths about sexual aggression persist and contribute to the problem of sexual violence, especially among adolescents (Fernández-Fuertes et al., 2020).
7. Report Writing: The final report was compiled based on the analysis, including a summary of findings, a discussion on challenges and strategies, and recommendations for further research and field practices. In this context, Nengyanti emphasized the importance of effective policy implementation in preventing and addressing sexual violence in educational institutions (Nengyanti et al., 2024).

Research Findings

Challenges in Addressing Sexual Violence in Pesantren

Sexual violence in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) is a serious issue that demands urgent attention. Pesantren, as religious educational institutions, should ideally serve as safe spaces conducive to the holistic development of students. However, numerous challenges hinder efforts to combat sexual violence in these institutions. These challenges can be categorized into several factors: pesantren culture and structure, limited knowledge and awareness, policy and regulation, as well as privacy and victim safety concerns.

Pesantren Culture and Structure: The culture in many pesantren is characterized by strong obedience to the authority of caretakers or "kyai," creating an imbalanced hierarchical relationship. This dynamic can pressure students, especially female ones, into remaining silent about sexual violence they may experience (Nurisman, 2022). Moreover, patriarchal values, coupled with conservative religious interpretations, often

stifle openness on issues of sexual violence. Research by Pebriaisyah demonstrates that the power dynamics between kyai and female students may facilitate the occurrence of sexual violence (Lyza Sari Rahayu & Fariz Farrih Izaddi, 2023). Additionally, the stigma associated with victims and their families reporting sexual violence cases poses a significant challenge, as they often face social exclusion and negative judgment from the pesantren community (Fitri Pebriaisyah et al., 2022).

Limited Knowledge and Awareness: A significant challenge lies in the limited knowledge and awareness about sexual violence among students, caretakers, and educators. Many still lack a sufficient understanding of gender rights and protections against sexual violence (Khusniyati Masykuroh & Qosyasih, 2023). The absence of educational programs or training related to this issue further hampers students' ability to handle potentially dangerous situations. Rahayu underscores the importance of adequate education in enhancing understanding of sexual violence and individual rights in pesantren settings (Kurniawati et al., 2022). Therefore, efforts to increase awareness and knowledge through comprehensive educational programs are urgently needed.

Policy and Regulation: Current policies and regulations are still inadequate in regulating the prevention and handling of sexual violence in pesantren. Although Law No. 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes provides a stronger legal framework, challenges in its implementation persist, including the lack of reporting mechanisms and support systems for victims (Purwanti & Hardiyanti, 2018). Nurisman notes that weak law enforcement and insufficient support from authorities further hinder the handling of sexual violence cases in pesantren (Septiani, 2021). Moreover, challenges in integrating national policies on gender-based violence protection within pesantren also need to be addressed (Bahri & Mansari, 2021).

Privacy and Victim Safety: Privacy and victim safety are critical challenges in addressing sexual violence in pesantren. Protecting the identity of victims is often difficult in the closed environment of pesantren, where information can easily spread, further stigmatizing the victim (Pratiwi et al., 2022). Fear of retaliation or marginalization from the pesantren community also discourages victims from speaking out (Lyza Sari Rahayu & Fariz Farrih Izaddi, 2023). Therefore, it is crucial to create a safe and supportive environment where victims feel comfortable reporting incidents and receiving the necessary assistance.

Strategies for Addressing Sexual Violence in Pesantren

Addressing sexual violence in pesantren requires a systematic and integrated approach that encompasses policies, education, reporting systems, and collaboration with external institutions. The following strategies can be implemented to tackle this issue:

1. **Strengthening Policies and Regulations:** Developing internal policies within pesantren that support victim protection and prevent sexual violence is essential. These policies must include clear procedures for handling sexual violence cases and provide protection for victims (Lyza Sari Rahayu & Fariz Farrih Izaddi, 2023). The implementation of the Law on Sexual Violence Crimes (TPKS) within

pesantren education must also be strengthened so that all parties understand their rights and responsibilities in addressing sexual violence cases (Fitri Pebraisyah et al., 2022). Additionally, collaboration between pesantren, the government, and civil society organizations can enhance existing regulations, creating a safer environment for students (Khusniyati Masykuroh & Qosyasih, 2023).

2. **Education and Awareness:** Education and awareness are key to preventing sexual violence. Implementing educational programs on gender awareness and sexual violence for students, teachers, and caretakers is necessary to improve their understanding of these issues (Kurniawati et al., 2022). Integrating human rights protection and comprehensive sexual education into pesantren curricula can help students understand their rights and learn how to protect themselves (Purwanti & Hardiyanti, 2018). Training for caretakers and kyai on the importance of preventing and addressing sexual violence should also be conducted to foster a more responsive culture toward these issues (Septiani, 2021).
3. **Reporting and Support Systems:** Developing secure and confidential reporting mechanisms for sexual violence victims within pesantren is crucial. This will help ensure victims feel safe to report without fear of stigma or retaliation (Bahri & Mansari, 2021). Additionally, providing psychological and legal support services for victims must be a priority to help them recover from trauma (Pratiwi et al., 2022). Establishing specialized committees or units within pesantren to handle sexual violence cases can lead to more effective and focused responses (Lyza Sari Rahayu & Fariz Farrih Izaddi, 2023).
4. **Enhancing Collaboration with External Institutions:** Cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), child protection agencies, and the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) in advocating for sexual violence victims is crucial. Through such collaboration, pesantren can access resources and training necessary to improve their capacity to address sexual violence cases (Khusniyati Masykuroh & Qosyasih, 2023). Expanding pesantren access to anti-violence programs provided by the government and external organizations can also strengthen prevention efforts (Sari, 2022). Furthermore, involving pesantren in national and international forums on combating gender-based violence can provide additional insights and support in addressing sexual violence.

Effectiveness of Implemented Strategies

The effectiveness of strategies to combat sexual violence in pesantren requires thorough evaluation. Three main aspects need to be analyzed: policy implementation, the impact of education and awareness programs, and the effectiveness of reporting and support systems.

1. **Evaluating Policy Implementation in Pesantren:** Analysis of policies implemented in pesantren shows that their effectiveness in preventing sexual violence and protecting victims varies. Some pesantren that have adopted sexual violence

protection policies have demonstrated increased awareness among students and caretakers about the importance of individual rights protection (Nurisman, 2022). However, Pebriaisyah notes that despite the existence of policies, their implementation is often hindered by patriarchal culture and power imbalances between kyai and students, which can deter victims from reporting (Lyza Sari Rahayu & Fariz Farrih Izaddi, 2023). Case studies of pesantren that successfully implemented protection policies highlight the importance of leadership support in creating a safe environment for students (Fitri Pebriaisyah et al., 2022).

2. Assessing the Impact of Education and Awareness Programs: Anti-sexual violence education programs implemented in pesantren have shown positive impacts on increasing the understanding of both students and caretakers. Masykuroh reports that educational programs involving parents and caretakers can raise awareness about sexual violence and prevention strategies (Khusniyati Masykuroh & Qosyasih, 2023). Additionally, research by Farouqi shows that education programs designed to enhance teachers' skills in sexual education contribute to increased knowledge and skills in preventing sexual violence (Kurniawati et al., 2022). Measuring changes in perceptions and attitudes towards sexual violence issues in pesantren after implementing these programs indicates significant improvements, although challenges remain in ensuring consistent education (Purwanti & Hardiyanti, 2018).
3. Evaluating the Success of Reporting and Support Systems: Analysis of the effectiveness of sexual violence reporting mechanisms in pesantren shows that many victims still feel unsafe reporting incidents. This is due to social stigma and fear of retaliation from the pesantren community (Septiani, 2021). However, pesantren that have developed secure and confidential reporting mechanisms have shown increased victim satisfaction and a sense of safety in obtaining support (Bahri & Mansari, 2021). Research by Bahri and Mansari suggests that the establishment of special units in pesantren to handle sexual violence cases can increase victim confidence in reporting and seeking assistance (Pratiwi et al., 2022). Therefore, continuous efforts to strengthen reporting and support systems to be more responsive to victims' needs are critical.

Conclusion

Sexual violence in pesantren is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires serious attention from various stakeholders. Through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, this study has identified several challenges in addressing sexual violence, including the patriarchal culture and structure of pesantren, limited knowledge and awareness, and the lack of fully effective policies and regulations. The effectiveness of implemented strategies, such as strengthening policies, education and awareness programs, as well as reporting and support systems, has shown mixed results. While progress has been made in some areas, existing challenges still require further efforts to create a safe environment for students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed to improve the handling of sexual violence in pesantren:

1. Strengthening Internal Policies. Pesantren need to develop and implement clear and comprehensive internal policies regarding the prevention and handling of sexual violence. These policies should involve all parties, including students, caretakers, and parents, to foster collective awareness.
2. Education and Awareness. Educational programs on gender awareness and sexual violence should be integrated into the pesantren curriculum. Training for caretakers and kyai is also necessary to enhance their understanding of these issues and the importance of creating a safe environment.
3. Developing Reporting Systems. Safe and confidential reporting mechanisms should be established to ensure victims feel secure in reporting incidents. Additionally, providing psychological and legal support services for victims must be a priority.
4. Collaboration with External Organizations. Pesantren should collaborate with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and child protection agencies to gain support in advocacy and training related to sexual violence prevention.
5. Evaluation and Monitoring. Periodic evaluation and monitoring of implemented policies and programs are crucial to identifying gaps and making necessary improvements.
6. Raising Public Awareness: Efforts to raise public awareness about sexual violence and individual rights should be carried out through campaigns and outreach programs to minimize the stigma attached to victims.

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