



## THE DEMISE OF SUFI VALUES IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION: Bullying in Madurese *Pesantrens*

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**Abstract:** The recent exposure of bullying in pesantren has raised an irony, threatening its reputation as a safe place to prepare students (*santri*) with motivation, self-reliance, well-character, and dedication. This research explores bullying in pesantrens in Madura, East Java, Indonesia. It employs a qualitative and critical descriptive approach and hypothetically relates the bullying to the demise of sufi values in the pesantren. Purposely selecting six pesantren (two from each type: Salaf, semi-modern, and modern) as samples, with respondents consisting of students, teachers and staff, this research seeks to accommodate the complexity of patterns or types that might have contributed to how bullying takes place and how it may relate to some sufi values. It turns out that among several types, bullying occurs most prevalently between students and teachers (*ustadh*), serving interchangeably as doers and victims. This can be as much related to social hierarchy within the pesantren as to the double roles that both play. The bullying indicates the demise of sufi values and can be attributed to at least four factors: insufficient contextualization during the learning process, imbalanced reading materials for the subject, an ineffective learning process, and a hierarchical atmosphere among the participants.

**Keywords:** Bullying, *Pesantrens*, Sufi Values, Educational Institution

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### Introduction

DESPITE BEING IRONIC, bullying in *pesantren* keeps happening. This can be seen in several cases eventually taken into public, such as

what occurred in Sukoharjo,<sup>1</sup> Ponorogo,<sup>2</sup> and Kediri.<sup>3</sup> It implies that *pesantren* may indicate unsafe schooling system, despite the fact they are believed to be an ideal place for its students from any moral threats. Bullying in *pesantren* must be avoided, let alone in those with higher numbers of students. Meanwhile, habits and unwritten rules in *pesantren* may create a social hierarchy that, if misused, can lead to bullying practices. While some *pesantren*, such as Al-Masoem Pesantren in Bandung and As-Saidiyyah 2 Bahrul Ulum Pesantren in Jombang, choose anti-bullying as the tagline to respond to it,<sup>4</sup> it is essential to note that the recent increase in bullying need to be taken into serious consideration and solution.

On a broader scope, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission revealed approximately 3,800 bullying cases in Indonesia throughout 2023. Nearly half of these occurred in educational institutions.<sup>5</sup> To some, a student in Temanggung set fire to his school as a coping strategy for the frequent bullying he had endured.<sup>6</sup> In terms of physical violence, a student in Medan was beaten to death, and another student in Gresik was stabbed in the eye, resulting in loss of vision.<sup>7</sup> These cases illustrate the severe consequences of bullying, which potentially threatens one's life.

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<sup>1</sup> Septyantoro, "Viral Santri Ponpes Di Sukoharjo Tewas Diduga Dianiaya Senior," 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Sandra Desi Caesaria and Dian Ihsan, "Pondok Pesantren Gontor Akui Ada Bullying Kasus Tewasnya Santri," 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Raja Emben Lumbanrau, "'Aku Takut, Mama Tolong Cepat Jemput', Santri Di Kediri Tewas Diduga Dianiaya - Mengapa Terulang Lagi Kekerasan Di Pesantren?," 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Azam Syukur Rahmatullah, Fitriah Suud, and Nurlinda Azis, "Healing Bullying Behavior on Santri at Islamic Boarding School," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 20, no. 2 (2022): 240.

<sup>5</sup> Elaine Meilita, "KPAI Reveals Around 3,800 Bullying Cases Throughout 2023, Nearly Half Occurring in Educational Institutions," Kelana Kota, 2024, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Kenzu Heru S and Santoso Anton, "Bullied Student Torches School in Temanggung," Antara Indonesian News Agencies, 2023, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Indonesia BBC, "Here's the Translation: --- Elementary School Girl's Eye in Gresik Stabbed Until Blind - 'Bullying in Indonesia Is an Emergency,'" BBC News Indonesia, 2023.

Bullying is, in fact, a serious social issue<sup>8</sup> that negatively impacts the mental and physical health of victims, often causing stress,<sup>9</sup> anxiety,<sup>10</sup> depression, and trauma. It can even occur online through social media, leading to declines in academic performance and social isolation. It is a form of delinquent behavior that infringes on others' fundamental rights and causes significant harm<sup>11</sup> since it can lead to both verbal and physical violence.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, preventive and educational measures are needed to address and prevent bullying in schools and communities. To address verbal bullying in *pesantrens*, techniques such as teacher counseling training and implementing anti-bullying policies are considered capable of supporting mental health.<sup>13</sup>

*Pesantrens*, on the other hand, are designed to educate students in many aspects beyond pedagogy.<sup>14</sup> This can be seen in both their formal curricula and the habits they build within. Among others, *santris* are taught and trained in sufism (*akhlaq* and *tasawwuf*) as a subject so that they can treat their peers, parents,

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<sup>8</sup> Harfiah Herman and Nur Ida, "Planting Values of Islamic Religious Education to Prevent Bullying Behavior," *Proceedings of International Conference on Sustainable Innovation 2022* 1, no. 1 (2022): 65.

<sup>9</sup> Sumera Batool, Ӧ Rabia, and Ӧ Yousaf, "Bullying in Social Media: An Effect Study of Cyber Bullying on the Youth," *Pakistan Journal of Criminology* 9, no. 4 (2017): 122.

<sup>10</sup> Wendy Craig et al., "Social Media Use and Cyber-Bullying: A Cross-National Analysis of Young People in 42 Countries," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 66, no. 6 (2020): s101, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.03.006>.

<sup>11</sup> Nurhidah Sarifah, "Bullying Dengan Kekerasan Fisik Sebagai Pelanggar Hak Dasar," *Jurnal Ilmiah Research Student (JIRS)* 1, no. 1 (2023): 110.

<sup>12</sup> W. Al Wasi, "Perlindungan Hak Asasi Manusia Teritama Pada Kasus Bullying Di Lingkungan Sekolah," *Civilia: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Dan Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan* 2, no. 4 (2023): 90.

<sup>13</sup> Prasetyo Muhammad Anggung Manumanoso, Fadlin Iswan, and Madman Ruchdee, "Towards A Bully-Free Pesantren: The Role of Educational Management With Adaptive Psychology and Mental Health Interventions Muhammad," *At-Ta'dib* 18, no. 2 (2023): 90, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315129587>.

<sup>14</sup> For example, pesantren may develop teaching that sustain spiritualism and multiculturalism. See, for instance, Saepudin Mashuri, Sauqi Futaqi, and Ahmad Sulhan, "Spiritual Base of Pesantren for Building Multicultural Awareness in Indonesian Context," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 24, no. 1 (February 15, 2024): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v24i1.17141>.

teachers, and others with proper respect. This input is, therefore, well-integrated into both written and unwritten rules of the hidden curriculum of *pesantren*, closely linked to local ethics and etiquette, to ensure that *santris* implement what they learn in classrooms or non-formal teaching, such as *pengajian kitab*, into their daily life. Once they break the rules, they will be subjected to either social or formal sanctions. The bullying phenomena among *santris*, as outlined above, therefore indicates the demise of sufi values within Islamic education institution.

This research focuses on *pesantrens* in Madura, Indonesia, a region known for its strong adherence to Islamic values. The studies by Jonge, Niehof, Mansurnoor, and Bouwsma, respectively, show how Madurese society maintains itself as a traditionalist bastion, putting *pesantrens* and *kiais* in central position.<sup>15</sup> A phenomenon within a *pesantren* can, therefore, reflect as well as influence what happens in society in general, including the intricate phenomenon of bullying, for instance, regarding local values, power relations, and indigenous ethical norms. Considering that a large number of *pesantren* exist in Madura, this research selects six *pesantren* as purposive samples to represent the various types of traditional (*salaf*), semi-traditional, and modern. The *pesantren* categorization, according to Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, is deemed representative considering that many *pesantren* are found to maintain traditional references while adapting to, for instance, modern classical systems and devices.<sup>16</sup> *Pesantrens* that focus on studying *kitab kuning* as the primary source are considered traditional or *salaf*. In contrast, modern *pesantrens* use more structured and integrated curricula along with the latest technologies and teaching techniques. The semi-modern one, meanwhile, stays between them in the interim. Two interviewees represent every type of *pesantren*. This representation can generally depict the phenomenon of bullying within *pesantren* in real-life descriptions. The findings of this research can also be

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<sup>15</sup> Halim Subahar, *Modernisasi Pesantren; Studi Transformasi Kepemimpinan Kiai Dan Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Abd. Halim Soebahar, *Modernisasi Pesantren; Studi Transformasi Kepemimpinan Kiai dan Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2013), 48.

relevant to similar educational institutions, such as seminaries or full-day dormitory schools, which are committed to educating students on all aspects of their lives.

Furthermore, this current research would like to complement previous studies on *pesantren* in Madura, which have not comprehensively addressed bullying as a recent yet alarming phenomenon from a specific perspective. Emilda,<sup>17</sup> Ubaidillah,<sup>18</sup> Retnowuni,<sup>19</sup> Barus,<sup>20</sup> and Marthunis<sup>21</sup> conducted research about bullying in *pesantrens* and mapped some typologies and its triggering factors. Meanwhile, Said Alwi et al.,<sup>22</sup> Abdurrohim et al.,<sup>23</sup> Azizah,<sup>24</sup> and Moh. Arif et al.<sup>25</sup> show that bullying in some institutions, especially in *pesantren*, can be minimized by several strategies depending on how creative the caretakers are in governing the *pesantren* management systems. From the research

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<sup>17</sup> Emilda Emilda, "Bullying Di Pesantren: Jenis, Bentuk, Faktor, Dan Upaya Pencegahannya," *Sustainable Jurnal Kajian Mutu Pendidikan* 5, no. 2 (2022): 198–207, <https://doi.org/10.32923/kjmp.v5i2.2751>.

<sup>18</sup> M. Idrus Ubaidillah, "Faktor-Faktor Penyebab Perilaku Bullying Santri Di Pondok Pesantren Tubagus Pangeling Kota Depok" (Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, 2022).

<sup>19</sup> Arifa Retnowuni and Athi' Linda Yani, "Eksplorasi Pelaku Bullying Di Pesantren," *Borobudur Nursing Review* 2, no. 2 (2022): 118–26.

<sup>20</sup> Jumat Barus, Ninda Safitri, and Husaini, "Study of Verbal Bullying in Early Adolescents," *Journal for Lesson and Learning Studies* 6, no. 1 (2023): 92–100, <https://doi.org/10.23887/jlls.v6i1.61003>.

<sup>21</sup> Marthunis Marthunis and Nailul Authar, "Bullying at Aceh Modern Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantrens): Teachers' Perceptions and Interventions," *Sukma: Jurnal Pendidikan* 1, no. 2 (2017): 219–48, <https://doi.org/10.32533/01201.2017>.

<sup>22</sup> Said Alwi, Muhammad Iqbal, and Nur Hidayah Nabihah Manas, "Preventing Bullying in Integrated Islamic Boarding Schools of Lhokseumawe City: A Strategic Management Approach," *Idarah (Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kependidikan)* 7, no. 1 (2023): 17–34, <https://doi.org/10.47766/idarah.v7i1.138>.

<sup>23</sup> Ely Fitriani et al., "Exploring Anti-Bullying Strategies in Islamic Boarding Schools: A Comparative Study of Indonesia and Malaysia" 16, no. Lestari 2018 (2024): 3704–15, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i3.5448>.

<sup>24</sup> Azizah Asmaul Fauzi, "Efforts by Educators to Prevent Bullying in Islamic Boarding Schools Princess Walisongo" 3, no. 2 (2023).

<sup>25</sup> Muhamad Arif, Mohd Kasturi Nor Abd Aziz, and Yuldashev Azim Abdurakhmonovich, "Trend Strategy To Prevent Bullying in Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 12, no. 2 (2024): 639–70, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v12i2.1087>.

on bullying in *pesantrens*, there is still limited research on mapping and analyzing the phenomenon of bullying in *pesantrens*, as well as identifying possible relevant factors. Furthermore, there is a lack of research on the teaching of sufism, whose values are contradictory to both bullying practices and motives. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the phenomenon of bullying in *pesantren* from the perspective of *sufism* in the context of Madura.

This study aims to analyze bullying in Madurese *pesantren* and then examine its relevance to the presumed decline of sufi values, which are supposedly well-delivered in *pesantren* curricula. It argues that although sufism subject and its derivatives are still widely catered to, it needs some adaptation and adjustment to the recent trends in society so that the scope of good and bad deeds, what to do and what not to do to fellows are made relevant to society's recent developments. When bullying is deemed as a new phenomenon without any precedent, for instance, doing it will not be counted as an evil deed. The literature or textbook on sufism is not outdated, yet needs adaptation to recent social trends in society.

This research employs a qualitative and critical descriptive approach to explore bullying in *pesantrens*. The qualitative approach is well-suited for exploring the nuanced and complex phenomenon of bullying in *pesantren*. It enables an in-depth understanding of the social and cultural dynamics that contribute to bullying behaviors, which may not be fully captured through quantitative methods. Meanwhile, the critical and descriptive approach aims to provide a detailed and systematic description of the forms and contexts of bullying. This involves not only documenting and categorizing different types of bullying behaviors but also critically analyzing them in light of sufism. The critical aspect of this approach ensures that the research goes beyond mere description, offering a reflective and evaluative perspective on the data.

The phenomenon of bullying is identified through interviews using snowball methods with *santris*, who have experienced or witnessed bullying, as well as teachers or *staff* who also play roles as caretakers or law enforcers. The interview process was designed to be semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in exploring various aspects of bullying while ensuring that all relevant topics were covered. The questions were open-ended, encouraging

participants to share their experiences and perspectives freely. In addition to these, the study also involved observation within *the pesantren* area, as well as the analysis of relevant documents, such as school policies, disciplinary records, and books on sufism used in the *pesantren*. Through all of this, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the forms of bullying and valid data from methodology triangulation. It offers critical insights into how these behaviors align with the presumably demise of Islamic Sufi values in the *pesantrens*.

### **Bullying in *Pesantrens***

Bullying in education refers to acts of intimidation, violence, or harassment in schools or other educational institutions, whether physical, verbal, social, or digital (cyberbullying).<sup>26</sup> Bullying in schools does not differ significantly from bullying in other places. For example, it is assumed that, before today, any harsh punishment from teachers to students was deemed normal, as it was considered part of the educational process rather than bullying. Nevertheless, it is no longer viewed in the same way as it was before, as any bad treatment is now considered bullying.<sup>27</sup> Another dynamic is that it is not only teachers who become the subjects of bullying but also the students targetting either teachers, fellow students, or school staff. This shift not only signifies a massive dynamic but also the prevalence of bullying practices themselves. Therefore, it is urgent to examine the practice in more depth so that possible solutions can be formulated, as it contradicts Islamic teachings that are supposed to be deeply internalized in the *pesantren*.

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<sup>26</sup> Cut Mutiara Putri, Ani Anisah, and Fiqra Nazib, "Perundungan Dunia Maya (Cyberbullying) Dan Cara Mengatasi Perspektif Islam," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 3, no. 1 (2024): 202, <https://doi.org/10.52434/jpai.v3i1.3746>.

<sup>27</sup> Ahmad Suheri Harahap, "Kekerasan Fisik Oleh Pendidik Terhadap Peserta Didik Dalam Undang-Undang Perlindungan Anak Perspektif Hukum Pidana Islam," *Mizan: Journal of Islamic Law* 4, no. 1 (2018): 173–224; Muhammad Nizan and Suhendri, "Persepsi Terhadap Pelaksanaan Hukuman Di SMA Dharmawangsa Medan," *Sabilurrasyad* III, no. 1 (2018).

Islamic teachings explicitly prohibit bullying. The Qur'an forbids belittling others in Surah Al-Hujurat 49:11<sup>28</sup> Moreover, it condemns the mockery of Prophet Noah in Surah Hud 11:38.<sup>29</sup> Surah Al-Humazah 104:1<sup>30</sup> threatens those who spread slander, while Surah An-Nahl 16:3<sup>31</sup> refutes false accusations against Prophet Muhammad. Hadiths also support this prohibition, indicating that insulting, belittling, and harming others are not allowed in Islam. Various perspectives on bullying imply that it becomes dangerous not only for the victim but also for the doers because bullying is deemed to addict its doers to repeat the action more and more, let alone on a greater scale while influencing others to do the same.<sup>32</sup>

In the context of *pesantren*, bullying often occurs naturally and is frequently a byproduct of the living habits within the environment. For instance, the hierarchical structure between *santri* and *ustadh* (primarily associated with caretakers or so-called *pengurus*) is particularly significant.<sup>33</sup> In addition, senior *sacaretakers* are accustomed to being assigned as caretakers as well as junior teachers who teach younger *santris*. In this context, the caretaker enjoys double privilege, namely as both the teacher and the one who enforces the *pesantren* rules while supervising the daily activities of *santris*.

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<sup>28</sup> Sindy Kartika Sari, "Bullying Dan Solusinya Dalam Al-Qur'an," *Academic Journal of Islamic Principles and Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (2020): 66, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajipp.v1i1.2421>.

<sup>29</sup> Imamul Arifin, Nurul Aini Aprilianti, and Salsabila Nadia Putri, "Terapi Istighfar Sebagai Solusi Untuk Mencegah Bullying Di Kalangan Pelajar," *Jurnal Psikologi Islam* 8, no. 1 (2021): 44, <https://doi.org/10.47399/jpi.v8i1.117>.

<sup>30</sup> Sri W Rahmawati, "Kontribusi Komitmen Beragama Orang Tua Terhadap Pengasuhan Holistik," *Humanitas* 15, no. 2 (2018): 104, <https://doi.org/10.26555/humanitas.v15i2.7749>.

<sup>31</sup> Amanatul Khomisah Emi Rahmawati, Indra Dwi Jayanti, "Pengaruh Metode i'rab al - Qur'an Terhadap Kemampuan Menghafal al- Qur'an Santri Pondok Pesantren Nurul Furqon Rembang," *Edukasi* 20, no. 1 (2022): 1-14.

<sup>32</sup> Nan Greenwood, Theresa Ellmers, and Jess Holley, "The Influence of Ethnic Group Composition on Focus Group Discussions," *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 14, no. 1 (2014): 389, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-14-107>.

<sup>33</sup> Kari Stamland Gusfre, Janne Stoen, and Hildegunn Fandrem, "Bullying by Teachers Towards Students—a Scoping Review," *International Journal of Bullying Prevention* 5, no. 4 (2023): 331-47, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42380-022-00131-z>.

Some informants tried to expose the existence of bullying habit in *pesantrens*. The following testimony of a *santri* shows how he feels offended when an *ustadh* calls him badly due to his law-breaking habits as follow:

“I am the one who most frequently got the punishment from the *ustadh*, especially for not praying together, not attending *kitab* recitation, being absent from the *diniyah* school, and others. An *ustadh* sometimes calls me the college disease (sort of troublemaker). The calling broke my heart.” (*Santri 1*; translated from Madurese language)

It shows how the *santri* admits his rule-breaking habit, yet he cannot tolerate being called denigrating by an *ustadh*. In other words, *santri* is fully aware of his mistakes, yet he cannot consider it worth getting bad calls from the *ustadh*. In addition to rule violations, another common cause of punishment for *santri* is the failure to meet targets, as evidenced by the following testimony from fellow *santri* of the same *pesantren* type.

“An *ustadh* pushed me too hard. Normally, it takes 25 days to memorize 48 pages (of the Qur'an), or around 1.5 to 2 pages a day. However, I was often asked by him to memorize three pages a day. Sometimes, I forcefully make it, but sometimes, no, and if the latter happens, I should get prepared to get the punishment of being hit on the leg. If I fail at two targets, I will receive the punishment twice, such as being hit on the leg, pinched on the ear, or slapped on the cheek. It makes me angry because my legs are so hurt, but nothing I can do. I receive all the punishment while suffering annoyed feelings because having revenge is not possible. Sometimes, I am just murmuring in my heart or even mocking him silently.” (*Santri 9*; translated from Madurese language)

The excerpt indicates that the bullying took place in a *tahfidz pesantren* in which students memorize the Qur'an using a daily target. Furthermore, the patterns of bullying are not quite different from one another. The teacher plays his role in managing the student and ensuring they comply with the rules, while the student likely think that the punishment or demand, if they receive one, is exaggerated. They would like to take some revenge when it is possible, but they are not brave enough to endure further and worse risks, as told by the next informant from a semi-modern *pesantren* as follows:

“Some *ustadhs* do not understand *santris'* situation. When we are sick, sometimes we are accused of being lazy. It confuses us because it means we

still need to meet our daily target of memorizing the Qur'an. In fact, we cannot make it because we are sick. In this specific situation, we still got the punishment or at least were urged to stand up in the midday while reciting (a 12-page prayer recitation for asking protection).

Additionally, we might have been hit on the leg. It made us angry, mocking silently, for we do not have any power, and if we were brave enough to make it, they would likely punish us more." (*santri* 8; translated from Madurese language)

Although the *pesantren* type differs, specifically between *salaf* and semi-modern, there are no differences in the presumed bullying circle, starting from the punishment presumed as bullying. Based on this assumption, *santri* would like to fight back. However, the situation does not enable them to do so, let alone in *salaf* pesantren, which generally demands that *santri* respect their elders, particularly *ustadh*, more than semi-modern and modern *pesantren* do.<sup>34</sup>

Apart from the first two starts of bullying circle, it turns out that *santris* have typical expectation on how their *ustadhs* would treat them, particularly at exceptional circumstances like when they are sick. When this is not fulfilled, they find an excuse to resist. Although the three mentioned excerpts imply the impossibility for *santri* to bully (back) their *ustadhs*, a few cases show different. Surprisingly, 'it is found in the following excerpt from a *santri* informant from another *salaf* pesantren;

"Once, it drove me so cranky. I hit him (my *ustadhi*), I pushed him, and I smacked him many times. He made me angry several times; he also mocked me, underestimated me, and looked an eye on me. It is too bad. However, finally, I apologized to him and promised not to repeat it. Hopefully, I will not do it again." (*santri* 4; translated from the Madurese language)

Although this may rarely happen, the above testimony suggests that, to some extent, *santri* might lose control and take revenge against the teacher. What makes it surprising is that it happens in a *salaf* pesantren, which is typically identified with

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<sup>34</sup> Arif, Aziz, and Abdurakhmonovich, "Trend Strategy To Prevent Bullying in Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren)."

strong obedience and polite behavior to the teacher.<sup>35</sup> To this point, it becomes blurred between bullying and enforcing the *pesantren* rules. Some *pesantrens* allow *santris* to get physically punished, while others do not. For the latter type, which is modern primarily or semi-modern *pesantren*,<sup>36</sup> A physical hit is not tolerated, so any perpetrator will be considered a bully immediately. While physical bullying is not tolerated, the following finding reveals another type of bullying.

"An *ustadh* is strict, unfriendly, overly sensitive, and like to call *santri* randomly, like 'Dul' and 'Mat.' (Therefore), when he comes to a class, *santri* likes to say, 'Ugh, *Ustadh* Dul is coming,' '*Ustadh* Mat,' and the like, although his name is neither Dul nor Mat. I usually complain when I get a mentor like that because it is annoying never serious, and I like to scold *santri* for no reason. This teacher is not creative, teaching in a harsh, reckless, and inconsistent manner." (*santri* 6; translated from Madurese language)

In comparison to physical bullying, verbal bullying may be considered less severe. It is also found in modern *pesantrens*, which tend to be more aware of the issue of bullying within recent society. However, the above excerpt indicates how verbal bullying can be as hurting as physical bullying, mainly when it is delivered in public so that other people can hear it, as also spoken in the following excerpts.

"In my college, there is no physical punishment like hitting. Punishment is more in snapping. This snapping turns out to be emotionally influential as it comes in the form of mocking, such as calling someone "dog," "thief," and other derogatory terms. It is not educating us, but rather emotionally disturbing even becoming harrassment because it denigrates us so much" (*Santri* 2; translated from the Madurese language)

While the above excerpt came from a *salaf pesantren*, implying the silent resistance of *santri*, the same tone was delivered by another *santri* from a modern *pesantren*, describing how they dislike being mocked publicly. It turns out that no matter what

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<sup>35</sup> Ruchan Ozkilic and Hulya Kartal, "Teachers Bullied by Their Students: How Their Classes Influenced After Being Bullied?," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 46, no. 1998 (2012): 3435-39, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.080>.

<sup>36</sup> Gusfre, Støen, and Fandrem, "Bullying by Teachers Towards Students—a Scoping Review."

type of *pesantren* is, what does not hurt physically can give them traumatic experiences they merely cannot endure.

"I once have experienced being bullied in front of other *santris*, even though I did not do anything wrong. I was walking around when an *ustadh* called me a disrespectful/naughty *santri* in front of many people. Sometimes, he comes and pinches my arm without any reason. I also experienced being threatened by another *ustadh* if I did not follow his specific order, which I assume is contrary to the *pesantren*'s regulation. On one occasion, I found him bringing a mobile phone, and he urged me to keep silent. When I told the secret (of him bringing an HP), I was punished (due to any rule-breaking action) for reciting *istighfar* and *Yasin* while standing beside *musholla* and then cleaning the culvert." (*Santri* 3; translated from Madurese language)

The testimony reveals how verbal bullying in the public sphere makes *santris* suffer physical and relational bullying, which, in their perspective, is a kind of power abuse. This evil deed by *ustadh* turns out to be another reason to trigger defiance among *santris* while disregarding potential risks or consequences they might face. *santri*'s bravery in complaining about an *ustadh*'s evil deed, as the last-mentioned excerpt shows, is in line with their equal status as fellow *santri*. Testimony from a teacher of a salaf pesantren depicts how they are often offended by the disrespectful behavior of students, as follows.

"Many *santris* like to mock their *ustadh*, both verbally and in writing. Some do it directly, while others do it indirectly. They like to say, 'If we have the same label as *santri*, it means we are the same.' 'If we are still living here, it means we are just the same.' 'Do not overact too much,' and so on. I once received an 'anonymous letter full of anger, insults, and offensive words. I responded calmly, without any outward reaction, and ignored it because I believed they did not fully understand that what I was doing was based on *kyai*'s orders and guidance. Sooner or later, they will realize their wrongdoing and apologize because if they keep doing it, their knowledge will not be beneficial for days ahead.'" (*ustadh* 2; translated from Madurese language)

The testimony shows how *santris* transition from soft to stiff resistance about their *ustadhs*, regardless of the type of *pesantren* they attend. In this case, what the *santri* three did, by revealing the secret of an *ustadh*, seems connected to the testimony of *ustadh* two about the reason why the *santri* treats their *ustadh* the same way. This becomes complicated, accentuating how bullying practices can be intermingled with defense, where everyone resorts to it in

any circumstance whenever they feel threatened. It also raises the question of whether bullying can be defined as a continuation of power relations. If an *ustadh* bullies a *santri*, it makes sense to categorize it as bullying. However, when the situation is otherwise, and it is a *santri* who bullies an *ustadh* who is socially higher, can it still be called bullying? It is said that *santri* also fights back against the *ustadh* when they deem it worthy of doing so, either as an initiative or as a form of revenge.<sup>37</sup>

Whether or not it is a part of bullying practice, it is found that the practice is differently executed between *santris* and *ustadhs*. Mostly, *santris* makes it secretly or indirectly, while *ustadh* will likely do it straightforwardly. One of the clearest examples is when *santris* make bad nick names for *ustadh* secretly only in their circle, as the following excerpt from a semi-modern *pesantren* shows:

"My friends and I usually call an *ustadh* 'someone selfish' because he likes to assign us tasks and set targets beyond our abilities in unreasonable time limits. Therefore, we secretly gave him a bad name like "the weak," "the short," "the thin," and 'the smelly.' These kinds of jokes were common when I was a new student. However, I eventually stopped as time went by where we were continuously taught to do good deeds and always reminded to maintain ethics, respect, and proper behavior, especially towards the *ustadhs*." (*santri* 5; translated from Madurese language)

This honest testimony, furthermore, implies that *santris* are fully aware of doing bad things, so they express their resistance secretly within their circle only. When they eventually become aware of what they are supposed to do, they begin to change their behavior, even behind the *ustadh*'s back. On the other hand, the following testimony from an *ustadh* made it obvious how they perceived *santri*'s response;

"I have been an *ustadh* here for a long time, and I feel offended when *santris* are defiant, disrespectful, or underestimating others, not obeying rules, stubborn, lazy, and missing their targets. They always say, 'Oh, why, *ustadh*? Why should we do it? *Kyai* does not even give us that much target.' They do not realize that knowledge can only be gained by not doing things that their *ustadh* dislike; they must be respectful, having good manners, polite, and

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<sup>37</sup> Sigit Nugroho, Seger Handoyo, and Wiwin Hendriani, "Dynamics in the Changing of Bullying Victims into Bullies at Student in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Psikis: Jurnal Psikologi Islami* 7, no. 2 (2021): 151–60.

neither ignoring nor being rude to their *ustadh*." (*Ustadh* 1; translated from Madurese language)

The recently quoted testimony from a *salaf ustadh* reveals that what and how *santris* complain about the treatment they receive has nothing to do with *pesantren* type. *Santri* 5 from a semi-modern *pesantren* turns out to be softer in resisting their dislike, while those from *salaf* do it abruptly and publicly. Additionally, a case from a modern *pesantren* uncovers another story on how *santri* expressed their resistance, namely by sending an anonympuse letter as follows:

"There was also an occasion where a *santri* sent an *ustadh* a threatening letter with an unidentified sender.' The threat sounded serious, like: 'Do not make us rebel; who do you think you are? Be careful, *ustadh*,' or other threats with a similar tone. Some even verbally say: 'Watch out, *ustadh*,' otherwise I will tell my father about this. It is fortunate for you to be here in *pesantren*,' etc. They are all not proper words for a *santri* to say or act upon. These kinds of things are usually coming from new *santri* who are still young and unfamiliar with traditions and culture of *pesantren*, including politeness ethic in using *Bahasa Madura*." (*Ustadh* 3; translated from Madurese language)

The testimony clearly shows how their emotional reaction to centrist behaviors underprioritized. Instead of blaming the behavior, *ustadh* likely makes excuses for *santris*' behavior, considering their younger ages, less experience, and innocent perspectives. On the other hand, *santris* themselves turn out to be not only relying on emotional triggers or seniority tendency in responding to *ustadhs*' treatment of bullying. Like what occurred in *Ustadh* 3's case, *santri* also rely on logical reasons, particularly in assessing *ustadhs*' treatment on them.

"I often hear phrases in a high tone like, 'If you keep pushing us too hard, watch out, *ustadh*,' or 'Do not push us too much, *ustadh*.' These kinds of phrases are often said by *sentries* who refuse to follow their *ustadhs*' orders, especially when they find them annoying. For me, this is normal behavior because most *uantris* who fail to achieve their targets are slow learners who often have mental and psychological disturbances, feeling pressured by the targets and rules. A solution to this is that an *ustadh* should set a good example by enforcing religious norms, using polite language, and being nurturing so that the *santris* can more easily gain beneficial knowledge. Guide them to realize their wrong doings without making them feel burdened." (*Santri* 7; translated from Madurese language)

The excerpt shows how *santri* reminds *ustadh* that they have no immunity for doing evil deeds. This furthermore implies that the bad attitude of *santris* sometimes closely relates to their unfulfilled expectations. They observe that *ustadh* needs to be nice and good, soft-spoken, and obey the rules so that their words will be reciprocated well. Therefore, when *santris* assesses there is something wrong with *an ustadh's* attitude, it will be hard to make them respect the *ustadh*, let alone obey what he told them to do.

Based on the above, it turns out that bullying in *pesantren* is highlighted in some cases, putting *santris* as the victim. However, it was found that in a few cases, teachers (*ustadhs*) were the victims. This current research also reveals that, among other possibilities, there are two most prevalent types of bullying, categorized by the subject and object, with the first being the most common. In later discussion, however, it becomes somewhat blurred, as the actor can also be the previous object that takes revenge on either the same or a different subject. The typology can be summarized in Table 1 using coding S for *santri*, U for *ustadh*, PS for *pesantren salaf*, SM for *semi-modern pesantren*, and M for *modern pesantren*:

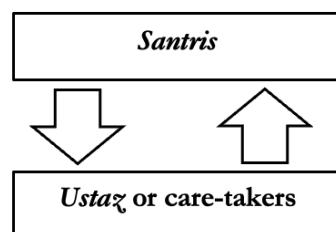
Table 1. The Typology of Bullying under Madurese Pesantren

Respondents Code	Pesantren Type	Actor	Victim	Bullying Type
S1	S	<i>Ustadh</i>	<i>Santri</i>	Verbal
S2	S	<i>Ustadh</i>	<i>Santri</i>	Verbal
S3	M	<i>Ustadh</i>	<i>Santri</i>	Verbal and physical
S4	S	<i>Santri</i>	<i>Ustadh</i>	Physical
S5	SM	<i>Santri</i>	<i>Ustadh</i>	Verbal
S6	M	<i>Ustadh</i>	<i>Santri</i>	Verbal
U1	S	<i>Santri</i>	<i>Ustadh</i>	Verbal
U2	S	<i>Santri</i>	<i>Ustadh</i>	Verbal
U3	M	<i>Santri</i>	<i>Ustadh</i>	Verbal
S7	SM	<i>Ustadh</i>	<i>Santri</i>	Physical
S8	SM	<i>Ustadh</i>	<i>Santri</i>	Physical
S9	S	<i>Ustadh</i>	<i>Santri</i>	Physical

Sources: Researchers' interview result

Table 1 shows that *the type of pesantren* does not correlate with the type of bullying, implying that the bullying phenomenon is not

limited to any specific setting and that its occurrence is natural rather than dependent on the location. More importantly, it shows how *ustadhs* and *santris* can be either actors or victims in the bullying practice. So far, no record has been found of bullying among fellow *santris* or *ustadhs*. This, however, does not necessarily indicate its absence; yet, the prevalence of the two types suggests that they are more likely to occur than other types. The two are categorized at different hierarchical positions so that each has a typical tendency. This is another factor which leads both *santris* and *ustadhs* perceive that bullying mainly occurs between those two different groups. A cyclical interaction among actors in *pesantrens*, illustrating the existence of bullying, is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** The Cyclical Interaction of Bullying Actors in pesantren

Figure 1 shows that *ustadhs* and *santris* faced a cyclical interaction of bullying. *Santris* bullied the *ustadhs* because they were often teased and scolded, and some others performed bad treatments, often due to their law-breaking or unfulfilled study target. This aligns with Benefield's research, which indicates that teachers are now the new target of bullying.<sup>38</sup> She argued that teachers got maltreatment from both students and parents in the form of verbal bullying. Similar to Benefield, Ozkilic, et al.<sup>39</sup> emphasizes that teachers can also be victims of bullying. They discovered that negative behavior from students in the class could

<sup>38</sup> Jane Benefield, "Teachers - the New Targets of Schoolyard Bullies?," no. November (2004): 1–23.

<sup>39</sup> Ozkilic and Kartal, "Teachers Bullied by Their Students: How Their Classes Influenced After Being Bullied?"

lead to bullying by their teachers. The pattern in Figure 1 indicates that there is a possibility that the victims may become the actors.<sup>40</sup>

The whole excerpts that we deem representative show that bullying is multifaceted.<sup>41</sup> From the *ustadh*'s perspective, it may not be fully realized because they consider it as enforcing the rule, as they are obliged to do so. When they exceed the standard limit in punishing the *santris* through either verbal or physical means, it can be measured by how they categorize it as either a personal or public matter.<sup>42</sup> Efforts to be professional without being influenced by personal sentiment can be challenging when the *ustadhs* only consider their rights without compensating for it with best practices to fulfill their obligations in both teaching, enforcing the rules—including punishing *santris*—and interacting well with others. To this point, bullying comes from abuse of power and privilege.

Meanwhile, from the point of view of *Santris*, who tends to be reactive to *ustadhs*' treatment, bullying can neither be realized because they likely think that it is revenge instead of bullying. They resist what the *Ustadh* do in some ways, ranging from silent resistance to noisy one, from mocking in front of the *Ustadh* directly to giving them a physical threat. They might make an alibi that they are not bullying anyone but instead maintaining their right to be treated well. However, this action might also be crossing the limit when they, for example, engage in body shaming or discuss personal matters in public.

Seemingly, there will always be found either excuses or reasons for bullying without continuous serious efforts to make this situation better while making it in line with *pesantren* values or

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<sup>40</sup> Surilena Hasan and Jessica Jessica, "Non-Exposure Parenting Increases Risk of Bullying Behavior in Junior High School Students," *Universa Medicina* 35, no. 1 (2016): 56, <https://doi.org/10.18051/univmed.2016.v35.56-64>.

<sup>41</sup> Susan M. Swearer and Shelley Hymel, "Understanding the Psychology of Bullying: Moving toward a Social-Ecological Diathesis-Stress Model," *American Psychologist* 70, no. 4 (2015): 344–53, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038929>.

<sup>42</sup> Risa Rahmawati et al., "Teachers' Strategies: Can It Prevent Bullying to Early Childhoods in Preschool Education?," *Journal Corner of Education, Linguistics, and Literature* 3, no. 4 (2024): 368–76, <https://doi.org/10.54012/jcell.v3i4.287>.

Islamic teachings. Among the possible first steps to take is gaining insight into *pesantren* curricula, which directly impact *santris'* behavior, such as sufism as a subject that leads *santris* to react in specific circumstances or learn how to behave in public. Suppose the bullying continues to occur under various circumstances. In that case, it is worth questioning the effectiveness of learning about one subject of sufism because although it never fades, its effect or existence might be further questioned considering recent changes in *santri*'s behavior, including the specific case of bullying. The next part of the article will explore its assumption of the demise of *sufism* values within the *pesantren*.

### **The Teaching of Sufism in *Pesantren* and the Demise of Its Values**

The data displayed in the previous section indicates how standard bullying practices are in *pesantren*. If the publicly exposed cases are among the worst, as they endanger lives and souls, the same practices on a lower scale might be more prevalent. Both *santriss* and *ustadh* can be subjects and objects of bullying because of action deemed to be wrong, unprofessional, disobedient, harsh, impolite, and improper treatment. Sometimes, bullying is not intended as such because it is perceived as self-defense, rule enforcement, or even revenge for past mistreatment.

Apart from its intricate definition, a statement on bullying by Quraish Shihab can serve as an example. He mentioned that bullying or mocking is a behavior where someone highlights another person's flaws with the intent to ridicule and insult, either through words or actions.<sup>43</sup> Shihab highlights that no matter what the motive is, as long as it is done for the sake of ridiculing and insulting, it can be considered bullying. Meanwhile, highlighting another person's flaws implies that bullying likely has nothing to do with power relations. Although power relations give the strong one the potential to bully the weak, the weak can bully back as soon as they decide to do so. The exposure of that flaw can, therefore, trigger bullying without considering factors such as

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<sup>43</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, "Wawasan Al-Qur'an," *Wawasan Al-Qur'an Tafsir Maudhu'I Atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat*, 1996.

finding excuses for other persons' specific circumstances and the like.

To this point, it is found that bullying has many backgrounds, either to initiate an act or take revenge. When it is intentionally done, there are always reasons to engage in bullying. An *ustadh* might bully a *santri* while fulfilling their obligation to manage their daily activities and monitor their set study targets. In contrast, a *santri* can retaliate in kind when feeling mistreated. In a milieu like a *pesantren*, where both *santris* and *ustadhs* are adolescents in their teens or early twenties, who can be characterized by relatively unstable emotional control, any bad gesture, speech, or act might not have been well thought out beforehand, making it understandable to find it prevalent. However, this does not mean there is justification for this.

However, in the context of *pesantrens*, this practice seems ironic, considering that it is supposed to be a conducive place where people within, both *santris* and *ustadhs*, are taught not only to think critically but also to enrich their spiritual lives and behave appropriately. This primary goal is internalized in *pesantren* curricula, rules, daily activities, and the overall atmosphere. One of the study subjects directly connected to this matter is sufism, or *tasawwuf*, which is sometimes conveniently termed *akhlaq* (a guide to proper behavior). If the former focuses on inner spiritual treatment, then the latter is a result of it, so both inner and outer attitudes are brought into alignment. *Tasawwuf* primarily focuses on refining one's spirituality, managing psychological crises, coping with external temptations, forgiving others, and behaving well toward them, while *akhlaq* emphasizes turning theoretical guidance into practical application. According to Mumtaazah et al., there is a strong association between sufis understanding and spiritual quotient.<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile, Sari et al. demonstrate a favorable association between bullying and spiritual quotient. These two

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<sup>44</sup> Y Mumtaazah and Z Qamariah, "The Correlation Between Learning Sufism Moral And Spiritual Intelligence Of Prospective English Language Teachers In Islamic English Education Study Program," *Jurnal Bima: Pusat Publikasi Ilmu* ... 2, no. 2 (2024).

studies suggest a link between bullying and *tasawwuf*.<sup>45</sup> In other words, Sufism is what Witteven called moral universal values, which, according to him, should be the first thing that the government urges every school to enforce. He later emphasized the urgency of delivering this value, such as through self-science curricula, particularly in response to the rise of violence in both private and public spheres, including within the school environment.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, in all traditional (*salaf*), semi, and modern *pesantren*, the subject of *tasawwuf* becomes one of the primary ones that none misses from the curricula. Generally, it becomes an important element in traditional mass learning (*pengajian*) in *pesantren*. In contrast, in semi-modern ones, it can be found in both formal and non-formal classes, as the observation results of this research have shown. This trend shows that, regardless of the type of *pesantren*, the *tasawwuf* subject will likely be delivered through teaching-learning activities. Table 2 lists the names of *tasawwuf* books taught in the sampled *pesantrens*.

**Table 2.** The Tawawuf Sufi books taught in Madurese *pesantren*

<b>Pesantren Initial</b>	<b>Pesantren Type</b>	<b>Books on Sufism</b>
MU	<i>Salaf</i>	Ihya' 'Ulumuddin Syarh Al-Hikam Minhajul Abidin Risalatul Muawanah
MUQ	<i>Salaf</i>	Minhajul Abidin Risalatul Muawanah
SB	Semi Modern	Nashoihul Ibad Minhajul Abidin
PDS	Semi Modern	Bidayatul Hidayah Al-Ushfuriyah
SKB	Modern	Bidayatul Hidayah Minhajul Abidin
MTU	Modern	Bidayatul Hidayah Al-Ushfuriyah

<sup>45</sup> Susi Puspita Sari et al., "The Analysis of Relationship between Student Bullying Behavior and Student Spiritual Intelligence," *Mudir Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan* 5, no. 2 (2023): 460–63.

<sup>46</sup> V. J Witteven, *Tasawuf in Action; Spiritualisasi Diri Di Dunia Yang Tak Lagi Ramah*, (Jakarta: Serambi, 2004).

Sources: researchers' documentations

Table 2 shows that sufism subjects are taught in all types of *pesantren* using sufi books written in Arabic. The textbooks are not significantly different from one another, implying a similar preference among all types of *pesantren* for the books they use as teaching instruments. Apart from the assumption that these *pesantren* endorse the same ideology and affiliation, this also indicates that in this context, *santri* are still made familiar with the Arabic language while learning various subjects. In addition to learning Sufism, they also learn Arabic vocabulary, structures, and culture, even though some Indonesian scholars write books on the subject.

In an interview with a caretaker of a *salaf* *pesantren*, he introduced the *pesantren* he lives in by accentuating the school of *fiqh*, *tawhid*, and *tasawwuf* that it adopts. This clearly shows that *tasawwuf* is an inseparable aspect of *pesantren* curricula, both in formal and applied cultural lessons. He even mentions that although the subject is not sufism, the values of sufism are often delivered on several occasions, ranging from how to cleanse the heart and get rid of hatred, jealousy, and other nasty things.<sup>47</sup>

Another similarity is that the lesson on *tasawwuf* is delivered by an *ustadh* instead of a *kiai*. In the hierarchical structure of a *pesantren*, an *ustadh* is the right-hand of the *kiai*, who delegates some of his duties to the *ustadh*, including teaching *santri* and enforcing the *pesantren*'s rules. *Ustadh* can live in a *pesantren* as a senior *santri* or outside, having graduated from the *pesantren* or recently become a sympathizer and thus assigned to teach in the *pesantren*. In this sample research, there found both first and second types of the *ustadh* as the teachers of sufism subjects. The former one is an *ustadh* who also becomes the caretaker where, according to previous data, can become either subject or object of bullying. The fact that bullying most prevalently occurs between *ustadh* and *santri* discloses that relationship between senior and junior *santri* or between regular *santri* and the caretaker likely matters more

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with Syukron, a caretaker of a *salaf* *pesantren* (MUQ) in Pamekasan, October 9, 2024.

than that between teacher-student. In other words, although it was found that the *Ustadh* teaching Sufism are not the ones engaged in bullying cases, becoming a teacher does not necessarily mean that a *Ustadh* will be safe from the bullying circle.

Additionally, in the context of non-formal classes in *pesantren*, when *tasawwuf* teaching occurs, the name of the subject is rarely mentioned; instead, the names of the books are used, as observations have shown. On the other hand, *santri* might not be fully aware that what they learn is sufism. It does not mean that they do not understand what they learn. They are not accustomed to mention—and to think—that what they learn is *tasawwuf*. Moreover, in the formal schools, as found in both modern and semi-modern *pesantren*, there found no *tasawwuf* subject. The closest one is *akhlaq* or *aqidah akhlaq*, which do not explicitly state sufism by name. This implies that Sufism is embodied more in the spirit of the overall *pesantren* curriculum than in its literal pronunciation in names. However, there does not seem to be any cause or factor beyond the prevalence of bullying practice in *pesantren*. It happens and can be related to some of the following factors:

*First*, the teaching of sufism has been delivered with less contextualization to the broader social phenomena. Some interview excerpts reveal that when discussing the material subject, it is rare to find any explanation that closely resembles the recent phenomenon, including bullying practices. In fact, some discussions on the subject are relevant to the theme, ranging from the importance of behaving well and avoiding bullying others to virtues such as humility, steadfastness, forgiveness, modesty, reasonable assumptions (husnudzan), patience, trustworthiness, honesty, contentment, and optimism.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, based on observations, it turns out that *ustadh* tends to spend much time in giving the meaning of Arabic text, explaining the Arabic grammar (*nahu*) and morphology (*sarraf*), then give explanation solely based on the text instead of surrounding social facts about recent human interaction, let alone about bullying. It is assumed that

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<sup>48</sup> Yusno Abdullah Otta, "Tasawwuf Dan Tantangan Perubahan Sosial," *Ullumuna*, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v14i2.223>.

discussion of bullying is avoided because it is deemed sensitive. Baharuddin et al. stated that *tasawwuf* should not only be explained in theory but, more importantly, also be practiced in our daily lives.<sup>49</sup> They argued about the balance between theory and practice. This suggests that Sufism can serve as a grounded theory for teaching characters, especially in avoiding bullying.

*Second*, in non-formal classes where the *tasawwuf* subject is delivered, there is less—not to say none—chance for *santri* to ask questions. Observations reveal that they listen to what the *ustadh* says without having a chance to raise their hand or express their thoughts on some points in the subject. There appears to be a distance between the current discussion theme inside and outside classes. Bullying practice is a hot topic among *santri* and *ustadh*, yet they seldom talk about it inside the class. Moreover, when delivering the subject, an *Ustadh* tends to prioritize finishing material, thereby putting aside any opportunity to discuss the issue further in a satisfactory manner, let alone relating it to any recent phenomenon. It is primarily believed that a complete understanding of the entire book (*kitab*, in this context) is necessary to find *baraka* from its authors. Hence, rushing to teach the *kitab* is quite common.

*Third*, *tasawwuf* teaching in *pesantren* tends to put teachers in a higher position. In other words, it is text-centered, targeting students rather than teachers. For instance, it is widely perceived that a naughty student will face severe consequences for their misbehavior. It is said that any knowledge they gain will not be practical in a good way once they engage in bullying their fellow students, let alone their teachers.<sup>50</sup> Students are expected to do many things, yet there are only a few discussions regulating how teachers should behave, let alone treat the students.

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<sup>49</sup> Baharuddin et al., “The Tasawwuf As the Character Education Solution in Indonesia,” *Tsaqafah* 20, no. 1 (2024): 99–126, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v20i1.10120>.

<sup>50</sup> Torikhul Wasyik and Abdul Muhid, “The Urgency of Classical Learning Motivation in the Millennial Era: Al-Zarnuji’s Perspective,” *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v3i3.772>.

A book entitled *Kifayatul Atqiya' wa Minhaj Al-Asfiya'*<sup>51</sup> Mention three dangers of offending a teacher's heart, namely (1) students will forget what they have memorized, (2) their ability to articulate knowledge will become dull, and (3) they will live in poverty at the end of their lives. Accordingly, it is said that *santri*, who violate the rules and rebel by bullying their teachers, may face misfortune after graduation. This misfortune may not occur if they apologize to their teachers, but the calamity often arises as a result of violating the rules established by the *pesantren*.<sup>52</sup> There is nothing wrong with the statement in the book. However, it requires considerable contextualization about recent phenomena, considering that, for instance, the definition of a teacher has expanded significantly beyond its previous scope. More specifically, the increasing awareness among students about both the rights and obligations of each party does occur, making them expect a more egalitarian relationship.

*Fourth*, the teachers who deliver *tasawwuf* subjects or books are mostly those who also serve as caretakers and reside alongside *santri* in *pesantren*. This puts them in a high yet insignificant position because what they deliver in the class might likely be ignored or underestimated by *santri*. Once *santri* asses that their behavior is not in line with what they deliver in the lessons, *santri* tends not to pay attention to both subjects they teach and them as persons. This is in line with a popular quote in *pesantren*, "*undzur ma qala wa la tandzur man qala*," which implies that in real life, any advice will not be easily taken for granted unless it comes from the right person. In other words, action speaks louder than the wording, as Ulug et al.<sup>53</sup> In their research, they conclude that teachers' positive attitude leads to students' positive behavior in

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<sup>51</sup> Sayyid Bakri Al-Makki bin Sayyid Muhammad Syatho Ad-Dimyath, *Kifayatul Atqiya' Wa Minhaj Al-Asfiya'* (al-Haramain, 1999).

<sup>52</sup> Imam Al-Ghazali, "Ayyuhal Walad," *Semarang: Quds Media*, 2005.

<sup>53</sup> Mucella Ulug, Melis Seray Ozden, and Ahu Eryilmaz, "The Effects of Teachers' Attitudes on Students' Personality and Performance," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 30, no. 2004 (2011): 738-42, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.10.144>.

the classroom and vice versa—moreover, Kahveci et al.<sup>54</sup> and Muzamil et al.<sup>55</sup> said so. They stated that teachers' attitudes and performance affect students' motivation, personality, and performance in their lives.

To sum up, the demise of Sufi values, which often lead to bullying, must be addressed sooner. Both formal educational institutions and *pesantren* need to undergo a curriculum transformation that balances the theory and practice of *tasawwuf* in their teaching activities. Direct examples shown by caretakers or *ustadhs* as role models may be the deciding elements in nurturing Santris' sufi values.

## Conclusion

Bullying in Madurese *pesantren* most prevalently happens among *santris* and *ustadhs* as the actors and victims interchangeably. It takes in physical and verbal forms with its characteristics, like secret mocking of the *ustadh* among *santris*, while *ustadhs* do it openly due to their multiple roles and privileges. Bullying can be either self-initiated or revenge-driven, making it a complex phenomenon within the *pesantren*, which is supposed to nurture not only religious values but also ethical rules, polite attitudes, and good behaviors, after all. Surprisingly, the trend of bullying has taken place relatively the same among people of different types. This initial finding particularly requires further observation, mainly to identify the most effective type of *pesantren* in preventing bullying behaviors. Another important finding about the demise of Sufi values within the *pesantren*, beyond the high number of bullying practices, also calls for the use of another approach and method, such as direct observation on how the teaching takes place and how strongly it influences *the behavior of santris* or *ustadhs*. The expansion of the research locus

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<sup>54</sup> Hakkı Kahveci, "The Positive and Negative Effects of Teacher Attitudes and Behaviors on Student Progress," *Journal of Pedagogical Research* 7, no. 1 (2023): 290–306, <https://doi.org/10.33902/JPR.202319128>.

<sup>55</sup> Yasir Imran1 Muhammad Muzamil1\*, Kashif Iqbal1, Sumaira Parveen1, "The Effects of Teachers' Attitudes on Students' Personality and Performance," *Journal of Social Sciences and Management Studies* 30 (December 31, 2011): 738–42, <https://doi.org/10.56556/jssms.v1i3.106>.

might also be considered, as this current research, in addition to limiting the scope to *pesantren* in Madura, also focuses on male *pesantren*, while female *pesantren* likely show diverse trends and tendencies. After all, this study highlights the need for the *pesantren* to be more open to recent trends in its milieu by providing space to discuss social issues, such as bullying, in various forums ranging from teaching and learning forums to decision-making ones. Therefore, it can keep its reputation as a multifaceted education center well.

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