

INSTITUTIONALISING PEACE EDUCATION IN PESANTREN: PEDAGOGICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL PATHWAYS TO ANTI-VIOLENCE CHARACTER FORMATION

Zamzami Sabiq^{1*}, Mohammad Takdir² 

^{1 2} Universitas Annuqayah, Sumenep, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author : sabiqzamzami@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study investigates how peace education is institutionalised within the pedagogical and organisational practices of an Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) to foster anti-violence character formation among students. Using a qualitative case study, data were collected from 8 participants selected through purposive sampling, including *kiai*, teachers, students, administrators, and alumni, through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The findings reveal three key patterns. First, peace education is embedded in everyday religious learning and character-based pedagogy grounded in the values of prophecy, compassion, respect, and moral responsibility. Second, institutional mechanisms—including mediation practices, counselling, *ta'zir* (educational disciplinary measures), and



curriculum integration — reinforce the internalisation of non-violent values. Third, the leadership of the *kiai*, together with community and family engagement, strengthens the sustainability of peace education beyond the classroom. This study advances peace education scholarship by proposing an institutional model of peace education in *pesantren*, demonstrating how religious pedagogy and institutional culture operate together to cultivate anti-violence character within an Islamic educational setting.

Keywords: *Peace Education; Pesantren; Character Education; Violence Prevention.*

Abstrak

Studi ini meneliti bagaimana pendidikan perdamaian diinstitutionalisasi dalam praktik pedagogis dan institusional sebuah pesantren untuk menumbuhkan pembentukan karakter anti-kekerasan di kalangan siswa. Dengan menggunakan studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan dari 8 informan yang dipilih melalui strategi pengambilan sampel, termasuk kiai, guru, siswa, dan administrator, melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi partisipan, dan analisis dokumen. Temuan menunjukkan tiga pola utama. Pertama, pendidikan perdamaian tertanam dalam pembelajaran agama sehari-hari dan pedagogi berbasis karakter yang berlandaskan nilai-nilai kenabian, kasih sayang, rasa hormat, dan tanggung jawab moral. Kedua, mekanisme kelembagaan — termasuk praktik mediasi, konseling, ta'zir (tindakan disiplin pendidikan), dan integrasi kurikulum — memperkuat internalisasi nilai-nilai tanpa kekerasan. Ketiga, kepemimpinan kiai, bersama dengan keterlibatan komunitas dan keluarga, memperkuat keberlanjutan pendidikan perdamaian di luar ruang kelas. Studi ini berkontribusi pada kajian pendidikan perdamaian dengan mengusulkan model kelembagaan pendidikan perdamaian di pesantren, yang menunjukkan bagaimana pedagogi keagamaan dan budaya kelembagaan terintegrasi bersama untuk menumbuhkan karakter anti-kekerasan dalam lingkungan pendidikan Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Pendidikan Perdamaian; Pesantren; Pendidikan Karakter; Pencegahan Kekerasan.*

INTRODUCTION

Concerns about violence in educational institutions have recently escalated, particularly within Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), which represent some of the oldest types of Islamic education in Indonesia. While *pesantren* are conventionally viewed as environments for moral development and religious education, the ongoing occurrence of violent practices and illicit conduct within these institutions underscores a significant conflict between established religious principles and actual social conditions. *Pesantren*, as institutions of Islamic education, have considerable problems in cultivating students' character, specifically in promoting emotional moderation, humility, and ethical behavior. This situation highlights the necessity for more systematic institutional solutions, such as enhancing monitoring mechanisms and implementing value-based instructional strategies, to maintain the moral authority and social legitimacy of *pesantren* as religious educational institutions (Kahar et al., 2019).

The phenomenon of violence is not exclusive to *pesantren* but occurs across various educational settings, including higher education institutions. However, within *pesantren*-based environments, patterns of violence often emerge in the relational dynamics between senior and junior students, reflecting hierarchical social structures embedded in communal living systems. In contrast, violence in higher education contexts is frequently associated with student activism and broader socio-political expression. This difference suggests that violence in *pesantren* cannot be understood merely as deviant individual behaviour but must also be analysed as part of institutional culture and peer socialization processes that shape student interactions and identity formation.

Empirically, student-related violence in Indonesia often reflects broader tensions between idealized roles and lived experiences. While students are commonly positioned as agents of change and future leaders, their engagement in violent practices reveals contradictions within educational and moral formation processes. From the perspective of religious education, such phenomena raise critical questions about the effectiveness of moral and character education in cultivating non-violent dispositions. Violence, in this sense, cannot be justified either normatively or socially, as it undermines both individual development and the broader goals of education in fostering responsible and ethical citizenship (Ma`arif & Kartiko, 2018).

Within both pesantren and higher education environments, violence persists as a recurring issue, indicating that educational institutions continue to face challenges in translating moral values into everyday practice. Aggressive behaviour among students is often influenced by factors such as emotional immaturity, peer pressure, and institutional tolerance of coercive practices (Lestari & Susanto, 2019). In pesantren contexts, where communal life intensifies social interaction, these dynamics may be further reinforced. As such, educational institutions, particularly those grounded in religious values, are expected to play a more proactive role in addressing these issues through holistic character education and ethical guidance.

Islamic boarding schools, as institutions rooted in religious tradition, hold a strategic position in addressing moral and character crises among young people. The integration of religious teachings into educational practice provides a strong foundation for cultivating ethical awareness and non-violent behaviour. However, when gaps emerge between religious ideals and institutional practices, a “character crisis” may develop, affecting students’ long-term personal and social development. If left unaddressed, such conditions risk undermining the broader

objectives of Islamic education, particularly in preparing morally responsible future generations.

The persistence of violence in educational contexts—including pesantren—reflects a broader structural issue in the relationship between education, discipline, and socialization. In many cases, practices such as student orientation and initiation processes are designed to build resilience and discipline, yet they may inadvertently reproduce forms of verbal or physical violence ([Ma'arif & Kartiko, 2018](#)). Within pesantren, these practices are often justified as part of character training; however, they can create environments where coercion and intimidation are normalized. This highlights the need to critically re-evaluate such practices within the framework of contemporary religious education.

Violence in pesantren is therefore not a new phenomenon but rather a recurring issue shaped by institutional traditions and social hierarchies. While orientation processes aim to prepare new students for communal life, they may also expose them to power imbalances that facilitate bullying. In such contexts, senior students may exercise authority in ways that lead to psychological or physical harm, transforming educational spaces into areas of contestation rather than moral development. This dynamic raise important concerns about how authority, discipline, and ethical values are negotiated within religious educational institutions ([Rahmanillah et al., 2018](#)).

From a religious education perspective, the persistence of bullying and violence can be interpreted as a failure to effectively internalize moral and ethical teachings. Educational institutions are expected to function as spaces for nurturing holistic human development, yet the presence of violence suggests the need for alternative pedagogical approaches. One such approach is the integration of peace education, which emphasizes empathy, dialogue, conflict resolution, and respect for others. Within Islamic

traditions, these values are deeply rooted and can provide a strong foundation for developing non-violent character among students ([Muwakhidah, 2021](#)).

Pesantren, as faith-based educational institutions, play a central role in shaping students' moral and social behaviour. Therefore, efforts to address violence must go beyond punitive measures and instead focus on transformative educational strategies. Counseling, moral guidance, and community-based interventions are essential in helping students develop resilience and ethical awareness. In this regard, peace education offers a relevant framework for bridging the gap between religious teachings and lived practice within pesantren environments.

Research on the implementation of peace education in Islamic educational institutions has been widely developed, particularly in relation to the integration of Islamic values into pedagogical practices. For example, a study by [Asnawan \(2021\)](#) examined a peace education model based on wasatiyyah (Islamic moderation) and local wisdom, while [Afiah & Fadhliyah \(2022\)](#) demonstrated that these values are deeply embedded in pesantren traditions. Other studies have explored the philosophical foundations of peace education, emphasizing ethical values such as tolerance, balance, and social harmony ([Santoso & Khisbiyah, 2021](#)). Recent studies further demonstrate that peace education in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) is increasingly evolving from value transmission to institutional transformation. For example, child-friendly education has been proposed as an integrated framework to prevent violence through participatory learning, positive discipline, and the cultivation of a safe educational environment ([Sayyi et al., 2025](#)). Similarly, a compassion-based curriculum has been shown to strengthen students' resilience to violence and radicalism by instilling compassion, empathy, and Islamic ethical values across curricular and extracurricular activities ([Lubis et al., 2025](#)). These studies demonstrate that peace

education is becoming more holistic, extending beyond classroom instruction to encompass institutional culture and educational governance.

Meanwhile, a growing body of research has examined violent and bullying behaviour within Islamic boarding school environments, particularly focusing on its psychological consequences for students ([Anggresta & Maya, 2020](#)). These studies consistently show that bullying has significant negative effects on students' mental health, including heightened anxiety, fear, loss of self-confidence, and difficulties in social interaction ([Permata, 2022](#)). Beyond immediate emotional distress, such experiences can hinder students' ability to fully develop their potential, disrupt their concentration in learning, and weaken their capacity to build healthy peer relationships. The impact is especially pronounced among new students, who are already in a vulnerable phase of adaptation to the pesantren environment ([Permata, 2022](#)). Exposure to bullying during this transitional period often exacerbates stress and impedes their social and psychological adjustment, indicating that violence in pesantren is not merely incidental but structurally linked to processes of acculturation and hierarchy within the institution ([Nurlelah & Mukri, 2019](#)).

In response to these challenges, previous studies have identified several strategies employed by pesantren to prevent and address violent behaviour ([Rahmati & Mubarak, 2023](#)). These include the provision of anti-violence counseling, the reinforcement of moral and religious values (*akhlaq*), and the application of disciplinary measures toward perpetrators ([Alwi et al., 2023](#)). Such approaches reflect an emphasis on moral regulation and behavioural correction within the framework of Islamic education. However, while these measures demonstrate institutional awareness of the problem, their effectiveness often depends on how consistently they are implemented and integrated into broader educational practices. This suggests that addressing violence

requires not only reactive interventions, but also proactive and systemic approaches embedded within the educational culture of pesantren.

More recent research has highlighted the potential of psychoeducational approaches in addressing violence among santri. By focusing on awareness-building, emotional regulation, and behavioural control, these approaches aim to equip students with the cognitive and social skills necessary to prevent deviant behaviour. Empirical findings indicate that psychoeducation can contribute to increased self-awareness and reduced tendencies toward aggression, particularly among younger students (Anggung & Prasetyo, 2023). Nevertheless, such approaches tend to emphasize individual-level change and may not fully address the institutional and cultural dimensions that sustain patterns of violence within pesantren environments.

In addition, several studies have pointed to the importance of educational management and institutional interventions in mitigating violence. Strategies such as adaptive psychological support, continuous mentoring, and structured guidance for both perpetrators and victims have been identified as important mechanisms for improving students' mental well-being (Alwi et al., 2023). These efforts highlight the role of pesantren not only as educational institutions but also as social environments responsible for safeguarding students' psychological health. Furthermore, culturally grounded approaches, such as the *tanbih* model, have been proposed as alternative frameworks for peace education (Toipah, 2021). By emphasizing values of tolerance, ethical conduct, and protection against discrimination, these approaches offer a normative basis for fostering more inclusive and non-violent educational environments. Overall, previous studies have focused on peace education as a normative educational concept or violence prevention as a behavioral and psychological issue. Few studies integrate these perspectives to explain how peace education is

simultaneously embedded in the philosophical foundations, pedagogical practices, and institutional governance of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). This gap highlights the need for an analytical framework that integrates religious values, learning processes, and institutional culture to explain the formation of nonviolent character.

This study has adopted an integrated analytical framework that combines peace education, social learning, and character education. Peace education provides a normative foundation by emphasizing dialogue, empathy, conflict resolution, and respect for human dignity. Social learning theory explains how these values are transmitted through observation, modeling, imitation, and reinforcement within the social environment of Islamic boarding schools. Character education complements this perspective by explaining how moral values are internalized through ongoing educational practices, institutional culture, and the relationships between *kiai*, teachers, and students. Together, these three perspectives enable this study to analyze not only what peace values are taught, but also how they are learned, institutionalized, and transformed into non-violent character.

Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School was chosen because it represents one of the largest and oldest Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, with an educational system that integrates formal, non-formal, and community-based learning. This Islamic boarding school consistently promotes religious moderation, character education, and peaceful conflict management while maintaining strong traditional Islamic values. These characteristics make Annuqayah an appropriate case study to examine how peace education is institutionalized within the organizational culture and traditions of Islamic boarding schools.

This study aims to develop an integrated peace education model that focuses on the philosophical foundations, pedagogical

processes, and institutional governance at the Annuqayah Islamic boarding school. Unlike previous studies that primarily address curriculum, Islamic values, or violence prevention separately, this study demonstrates how peace education is institutionalized through daily educational practices, leadership, disciplinary systems, and community participation. This institutional perspective is a key novelty of this study and offers a more comprehensive explanation of how nonviolent character is cultivated within Islamic boarding schools.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach to examine the implementation of peace education in fostering anti-violence character among students at Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School, Sumenep, East Java. A qualitative design is considered appropriate as it enables an in-depth exploration of social phenomena, particularly the meanings, practices, and values embedded within the pesantren environment. The study aims to understand how peace education is conceptualized and enacted in everyday institutional life, as well as how it contributes to shaping students' moral and behavioural dispositions.

This research adopts a field study design, focusing on the natural setting of the pesantren as a site of religious and educational practice. By engaging directly with the social context, the study sought to capture participants' emic perspectives, namely their own understandings and experiences regarding peace education and non-violent character formation. The research was conducted between October and December 2023, allowing sufficient time for data immersion and contextual interpretation.

The research participants consisted of 8 informants, including 2 kiai (religious leaders), 3 pesantren administrators, and 3 students. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select

participants who were directly involved in or affected by the implementation of peace education. Inclusion criteria included: (1) participants who had been actively involved in the pesantren's educational and disciplinary activities for at least one year; (2) managers and *kiai* responsible for educational management or student guidance; and (3) students with experiences relevant to peace education, including those who had experienced or witnessed conflict, bullying, or disciplinary interventions within the pesantren. This variation provided a more comprehensive understanding of the institutional perspectives and lived experiences of students.

Data was collected through three primary techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. First, participant observation was conducted to examine daily activities, interactions, and institutional practices related to peace education and student behaviour ([Arikunto, 1993](#)). This method allowed the researcher to capture both formal and informal dimensions of educational processes ([Nasir, 1998](#)). Second, semi-structured interviews were carried out to explore participants' perspectives on the philosophical foundations, implementation strategies, and challenges of peace education ([Koentjaraningrat, 1994](#)). Interviews with *kiai*, administrators, and students provided multi-level insights into institutional and individual experiences. Each interview lasted approximately 45–90 minutes and was conducted in Indonesian. With the participants' consent, all interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim to ensure accurate analysis. Follow-up interviews were conducted if further clarification was needed. Third, documentation analysis was used to complement and triangulate the field data, including institutional regulations, educational materials, policy documents, and relevant literature concerning peace education and character formation.

The data analysis process follows an interactive model as proposed by [Miles & Huberman \(2014\)](#), consisting of three concurrent stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The analysis began with open coding of interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary materials. Similar codes were then grouped into broader analytical categories, which were refined into overarching themes about the philosophical foundations, pedagogical practices, institutional mechanisms, and character outcomes of peace education. Throughout the analytical process, codes and themes were continuously compared across data sources to identify patterns, relationships, and differing perspectives. The final themes were interpreted using an integrated framework of peace education, social learning theory, and character education.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, methodological triangulation and source triangulation were employed by comparing information obtained through observations, interviews, and documentary evidence, as well as across different participant groups. The researchers conducted extended fieldwork to gain a deeper contextual understanding, while discussions with fellow qualitative researchers increased analytical consistency. Additionally, selected interview findings were discussed with several participants (member checking) to confirm the accuracy of the interpretations. Ethical considerations were also carefully maintained, including the protection of participants' identities, particularly those involved in sensitive experiences related to violence—and the use of informed consent in all stages of data collection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prophetic Ethics and the Moral Foundations of Peace Education in Pesantren

This section presents an analytical examination of the philosophical foundations underlying the implementation of peace education in fostering non-violent character among students. The findings indicate that peace education in Islamic boarding schools is embedded in interrelated theological, moral, and socio-cultural values that shape daily educational practices. Rather than operating as a stand-alone program, peace education is integrated into the institutional culture of Islamic boarding schools.

One of the prominent philosophical foundations identified from the interviews was the application of the Prophet's hadith which emphasizes compassion and respect across generations. The hadith, *"He is not one of us who does not show mercy to the young and respect to the elders"* (reported by At-Tirmidhi), serves as a normative ethical framework guiding interpersonal relations within the pesantren environment. Among students at *pesantren*, this principle is operationalized through institutional rules and daily practices that prioritize empathy, care, and mutual respect. The internalization of this prophetic ethic reinforces peace education as a manifestation of *rahmah* (compassion), shaping students to develop tolerant and non-violent dispositions toward others. As expressed by one informant:

"Since many cases of violence occurred in the pesantren environment, the Kiai has paid special attention to students involved in bullying, both as perpetrators and victims. Some experienced harsh treatment, physically and psychologically. I was often given permission to conduct special mentoring sessions for them. This reflects the philosophical foundation of peace education to prevent violence" (P1, interview, October 24, 2023).

Another recurring theme relates to the moral authority of the *kiai*, particularly through expressions of concern (*mahabbah*) for students. The *kiai* not only functions as a transmitter of religious knowledge but also as a moral guardian who actively intervenes in cases of deviant behavior, including violence. Students who violate norms or experience victimization are not merely punished but are guided through a rehabilitative and educative approach. This reflects an ethical pedagogy rooted in compassion and moral responsibility, positioning peace education as a form of transformative care rather than coercive discipline.

Interview data also reveal a significant shift in the understanding of student resilience. Historically, student orientation practices (e.g., *Ordik*) often involved elements of physical and psychological pressure justified as “mental training.” However, this research finds a paradigm shift toward non-violent approaches that emphasize capacity-building and personal development rather than coercion. The rejection of violence in orientation programs reflects a critical re-evaluation of traditional practices considering their psychological impact. As noted by another informant:

“Since I became responsible for student activities, I received direct instructions from leaders and lecturers to eliminate violence in orientation programs. Although the aim was to build mental strength, harsh treatment often produced negative consequences. Therefore, we shifted toward strengthening students’ capacities in more constructive ways” (P2, interview, October 26, 2023).

Participants consistently linked peace education to the Islamic boarding school's institutional commitment to *akhlak* (moral character). At *pesantren*, moral cultivation is not supplementary but foundational, reflecting the prophetic mission to perfect human character. Peace education thus becomes an extension of this moral vision, fostering inclusive, respectful, and harmonious social relations across differences, including religious diversity.

The development of peace education also incorporates an anthropocentric—and increasingly eco-anthropocentric—perspective. This approach moves beyond purely theological or ritual dimensions to emphasize humanistic and ecological responsibility. As articulated by Kiai (P3), education should not merely involve knowledge transmission but must cultivate empathy, social awareness, and responsibility toward both humans and the environment. This broader ethical orientation situates peace education within a holistic framework that integrates social justice and environmental ethics.

Environmental awareness was also repeatedly identified as part of students' non-violent character formation. Peace education is expanded to include ecological awareness, encouraging students to develop attitudes of care, responsibility, and sustainability. The cultivation of environmental ethics is seen as inseparable from the formation of non-violent behavior, as destructive attitudes toward nature are understood as extensions of broader patterns of aggression.

Informants further emphasised that environmental ethics reinforce students' moral responsibility beyond interpersonal relationships. Students are encouraged to embody ethical responsibility not only in human interactions but also in their relationship with nature, reflecting their role as *khalifah* (stewards of the earth). As highlighted by an informant:

“Philosophically, caring for the environment reflects an attitude of responsibility and empathy. Environmental education empowers students to protect nature and avoid destructive behavior. This responsibility must be shared by all, as it shapes how students respond to environmental challenges” (P3).

Across interviews, participants consistently described peace education as inseparable from prophetic ethics, institutional values, and daily educational practices. These findings suggest that nonviolent character is cultivated through the ongoing interaction

between religious teachings, moral guidance, and students' daily experiences in the Islamic boarding school environment.

Peace Education as a Response to Everyday Violence and Character Formation

This section analyzes the urgency of peace education in fostering non-violent character among students at the Islamic Boarding School. Prior to elaborating on its urgency, it is essential to identify the key factors contributing to the formation of non-violent character within the pesantren context. Interview results consistently identified the family as the earliest context in which students develop empathy, emotional regulation, and respect for others before living in Islamic boarding schools. The effectiveness of peace education in pesantren cannot be separated from the influence of a harmonious and supportive family background, which shapes students' early moral development and behavioral orientation toward non-violence. A nurturing family environment instills empathy, emotional stability, and respect, which later becomes foundational in students' interactions within the boarding school setting. As highlighted by one informant:

"I observe that violence in student environments has become increasingly concerning, even involving physical acts. In broader educational contexts, bullying has often become a way for students to assert themselves. This phenomenon requires serious attention, especially considering the growing number of victims" (P1, interview, October 29, 2023).

Religious and moral education emerged as another major factor shaping students' non-violent behaviour. Strong religious grounding enables students to regulate behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings and pesantren norms. Educational processes that emphasize moral values, ethical reflection, and self-discipline contribute significantly to the development of non-violent character. This is further reinforced by students' internal awareness

to balance emotional impulses with rational and ethical considerations when engaging in social interactions.

Participants also emphasised the importance of everyday peer interaction within the pesantren. Positive and supportive peer relationships foster a sense of belonging and psychological safety, which are essential for character development. At *pesantren*, structured sharing sessions are implemented to address interpersonal conflicts and personal challenges faced by students. These dialogical spaces enable emotional expression, conflict resolution, and the cultivation of empathy, thereby reinforcing non-violent attitudes.

Institutional rules and disciplinary practices were also identified as important influences. The regulatory framework, disciplinary system, and pedagogical approaches adopted by the pesantren contribute to shaping students' behavioral patterns. Clear rules, consistent enforcement, and educative forms of discipline encourage students to internalize norms and develop self-regulation. Rather than relying solely on punitive measures, institutional mechanisms in *pesantren* emphasize preventive and corrective strategies that align with the principles of peace education.

Individual life experiences have also influenced how students respond to conflict. Psychological factors such as emotional intelligence, moral reasoning, and self-control determine how students respond to conflict and social pressure. Students who possess higher emotional awareness and moral sensitivity are more likely to develop non-violent dispositions. Additionally, experiences of victimization or hardship can either reinforce vulnerability or, when properly guided, foster resilience and empathy toward others.

Rather than functioning independently, these factors interact throughout the students' daily lives. Participants described nonviolent character as the result of ongoing reinforcement across

family, religious instruction, peer interactions, and institutional culture, rather than a single educational intervention. Considering these factors, the urgency of implementing peace education becomes increasingly evident, particularly in response to the rising incidence of violence within educational institutions, including *pesantren*. Violence in *pesantren* often resembles an “iceberg phenomenon,” where many cases remain hidden beneath the surface, yet collectively threaten the moral integrity and public image of Islamic educational institutions. Although physical violence at *pesantren* is relatively limited, verbal aggression and psychological intimidation remain prevalent and cannot be normalized, as they generate discomfort and long-term emotional impact on victims.

The urgency of peace education is further underscored by the phenomenon of students experiencing discomfort or alienation due to negative peer interactions. One common form of bullying observed in the *pesantren* context is excessive joking or teasing, which is often culturally normalized but may cross the boundary into verbal abuse. Practices such as assigning derogatory nicknames or humiliating peers in public settings have become habitual and are sometimes trivialized as part of *pesantren* culture. However, such practices can contribute to emotional distress and undermine students’ psychological well-being.

In practice, these behaviors occupy a grey area between social interaction and verbal violence. Not all forms of teasing are perceived as harmful, as interpretations vary depending on individual sensitivity and intention. As noted by students, jokes delivered within acceptable boundaries may not cause harm, but when excessive or targeted, they can lead to feelings of humiliation and resentment. This ambiguity highlights the need for critical awareness and ethical boundaries within student interactions, reinforcing the relevance of peace education in redefining acceptable social conduct.

Bullying behaviors are also frequently observed during the orientation of new students, commonly referred to as *Binasaba*. While orientation programs are designed as positive initiatives to introduce students to pesantren lives, including its history, values, and routines—they may inadvertently become spaces where hierarchical power relations are expressed. Without proper supervision, these activities risk reproducing patterns of verbal or psychological pressure under the guise of discipline and adaptation.

In this context, peace education becomes crucial as a transformative framework for reshaping student character. Its implementation aims to cultivate peaceful, tolerant, and respectful individuals capable of managing conflict constructively. Given the demanding nature of pesantren life and the potential psychological pressures faced by students, peace education serves as a preventive and rehabilitative approach. Activities such as conflict resolution training, intercultural awareness programs, and ethical discussions are instrumental in promoting non-violent behavior. As emphasized by another informant:

“The adoption of peace education trains students to develop empathy and compassion toward others. Although these activities may seem simple, they significantly influence students’ ability to appreciate differences. This process also shapes leadership attitudes, encouraging more tolerant and wise responses to problems” (P2, interview, October 30, 2023).

Overall, participants viewed peace education as an integral component of everyday life in the pesantren. Rather than addressing violence only after it occurs, peace education was described as creating a preventive culture that promotes empathy, mutual respect, and peaceful conflict resolution.

Institutionalising Peace Education in Pesantren: Pathways to Non-Violent Character Formation

This section presents an in-depth analysis of the implementation of peace education in fostering non-violent character among students at the Islamic boarding school of Annuqayah. Violence within the pesantren environment constitutes a critical issue that requires systematic and sustained intervention from institutional stakeholders. Such violence is often characterized by intentional harm, persistent patterns of aggression, and asymmetrical power relations between dominant and vulnerable students. These dynamics position pesantren as a crucial site for examining how educational interventions can mitigate bullying and cultivate non-violent dispositions.

As traditional Islamic educational institutions, pesantren play a pivotal role not only in transmitting religious knowledge but also in shaping students' moral and ethical character. One of the primary approaches employed is the integration of peace education grounded in Islamic teachings that emphasize *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), tolerance, and social harmony. In practice, peace education is implemented through a combination of formal curricular integration and informal pedagogical practices, including training programs, seminars, dialogical learning, and daily religious activities. As noted by one informant, *"peace education is not only taught in class but practiced in daily interactions among students, especially in how they respect differences and resolve conflicts"* (P3).

Based on interview data with key stakeholders, several strategic pathways for implementing peace education in fostering non-violent character can be identified. One of the principal institutional strategies identified was the integration of peace education into the formal curriculum. Educational materials addressing social conflict, interreligious dialogue, and tolerance are embedded in classroom instruction across various levels of

pesantren education. This curricular approach positions peace education not merely as supplementary knowledge but as a core component of character formation. As one administrator explained, *“students are introduced to the concept of peace and conflict resolution as part of their learning process so that they can avoid violent behavior from an early stage”* (P1). By introducing students to non-violent frameworks for resolving conflict, pesantren seek to counteract egocentric tendencies that often underlie aggressive behavior.

Participants also described mediation training and peace workshops as practical mechanisms for developing students’ conflict resolution skills. These programs, often conducted in collaboration with external organizations, equip participants with practical skills in conflict resolution and negotiation. This initiative reflects a shift from punitive approaches toward transformative learning. As highlighted by a student participant, *“through mediation training, we learn how to manage emotions and solve problems without hurting others”* (P5).

Further interview data shows that community and environmental service programs function as experience-based learning spaces. Through participation in community service and environmental care programs, students develop empathy, social responsibility, and ecological awareness. These experiences contribute to the internalization of non-violent values by linking ethical reflection with concrete social practices. One informant emphasized that *“being involved in social activities makes students more aware of others’ needs and reduces selfish attitudes that often trigger conflict”* (P4).

Peace education was also embedded within the daily culture of the pesantren. This includes routine religious practices such as Qur’anic recitation, ethical guidance from *kiai*, active student participation in learning, and the cultivation of literacy traditions. These practices function as symbolic and practical mechanisms for reinforcing peaceful dispositions. As expressed by

an informant, *“kiai continuously remind students to prioritize good manners and avoid actions that harm others”* (P2).

Continuous moral development (*tarbiyah akhlaqiyyah*) emerged as another recurring institutional practice. The pesantren emphasizes the internalization of ethical values such as respect, humility, and non-violence through direct guidance from *kiai* and institutional norms. In this context, moral education transcends cognitive instruction and becomes a lived practice embedded in everyday interactions.

Institutional supervision was consistently described as an important mechanism. When bullying persists, disciplinary mechanisms involve direct engagement with pesantren leaders, creating a moral accountability framework that emphasizes reflection and behavioral transformation. As one administrator stated, *“students who engage in violence are not only punished but also guided so they understand the impact of their actions”* (P6).

Participants also highlighted the importance of collaboration between Islamic boarding schools and students' families as a strategic step in developing peace education. This partnership ensures continuity between family-based and institutional value formation. One informant noted that *“communication with parents is important to ensure that students receive consistent guidance both at home and in the pesantren”* (P7).

Reflective seminars and dialogical forums are also held regularly to foster an anti-violence character. These activities function as reflective spaces where students critically engage with the ethical implications of violence. As a student explained, *“these discussions help us understand that even small acts like teasing can hurt others and should be avoided”* (P8).

Rather than functioning as isolated initiatives, participants described these strategies as mutually reinforcing components within a broader institutional system. Peace education was

experienced through classroom learning, religious guidance, daily interactions, disciplinary practices, and collaboration with families, demonstrating that nonviolent character is built through ongoing institutional and social strengthening.

Overall, the implementation of peace education at the Islamic boarding school reflects a multi-dimensional approach that integrates curricular, institutional, and socio-cultural strategies. This holistic model not only addresses the symptoms of violence but also transforms the underlying values and relational dynamics that sustain it, thereby contributing to the formation of a more peaceful and ethically grounded student community.

Analysis of Peace Education in Pesantren: Philosophical Foundations, Character Formation, and the Construction of a Non-Violent Culture

The findings reveal that the philosophical foundations of peace education in the pesantren context are deeply rooted in Islamic ethical teachings, particularly those derived from prophetic traditions emphasizing compassion, respect, and social harmony. This aligns with the framework of peace education theory, which posits that sustainable peace must be grounded in moral values and ethical consciousness rather than merely the absence of violence. In this study, the internalization of prophetic values—such as loving the young and respecting elders—functions as a normative basis for constructing non-violent character among students.

This suggests that peace education in pesantren is not externally imposed but emerges organically from religious epistemology, thereby reinforcing its legitimacy and effectiveness. Furthermore, this finding resonates with Islamic ethics, where moral conduct (*akhlak*) becomes central to shaping individual and collective behavior. The emphasis on compassion (*rahmah*) and ethical conduct reflects a moral ontology that situates peace as an intrinsic component of religious life. Therefore, the philosophical grounding of peace education in pesantren represents a synthesis

between theological principles and contemporary educational approaches to conflict transformation.

These findings extend the existing literature by demonstrating that peace education in Islamic boarding schools is not simply an adaptation of a global peace education framework, but rather an authentic model rooted in Islamic prophetic ethics. Rather than treating religion as an external value framework, these findings demonstrate that theological principles serve as the primary mechanism through which nonviolent character is institutionalized. This offers a conceptual contribution to the study of peace education by illustrating how faith-based institutions have produced positive peace models rooted in context.

In addition, the central role of *kiai* as moral authority highlights the importance of relational and charismatic leadership in the internalization of non-violent values. This finding can be analytically understood through social learning theory, which emphasizes observational learning and modeling as key mechanisms of behavioral formation. The *kiai*, as a respected figure, serves not only as a transmitter of knowledge but also as a living embodiment of peaceful conduct, thereby influencing students through imitation and internalization. This process reflects how non-violent character is cultivated through daily interactions and symbolic practices within the *pesantren* environment. Moreover, the consistent reinforcement of ethical behavior through advice, supervision, and institutional norms strengthens the social learning process. Empirical studies ([Bandura, 1971](#); [Lickona, 1996](#)), demonstrate that moral behavior is more effectively developed when learners observe congruence between values and actions. Thus, the *pesantren* environment provides a holistic learning space where moral instruction and lived experience are mutually reinforced. These dynamic underscores the importance of integrating leadership, culture, and pedagogy in fostering sustainable peace.

These findings confirm and extend previous studies that emphasized the role of kiai in conveying religious values ([Asnawan, 2021](#); [Afiah & Fadhliah, 2022](#)). While previous studies primarily focused on the kiai's normative authority, this study demonstrates that their influence also operates through everyday modeling, emotional guidance, and institutional practices that shape students' behavioral dispositions. This broadens previous understandings of pesantren leadership from religious teaching to peacebuilding leadership.

Furthermore, the philosophical orientation toward anthropocentric and eco-ethical values indicates an expansion of peace education beyond human relationships to include environmental responsibility. This aligns with contemporary developments in peace education that emphasize ecological justice and sustainability as integral to peacebuilding ([Harris & Morrison, 2012](#)). The incorporation of environmental ethics into character formation reflects a broader understanding of non-violence that includes harmony with nature. Such an approach resonates with habitus theory, where repeated practices and institutional norms shape durable dispositions (habitus) among individuals. In the pesantren context, daily practices such as communal living, environmental care, and collective rituals contribute to the formation of a peaceful habitus ([Bourdieu, 1972](#)). This suggests that peace education is not limited to formal instruction but is embedded in the social structure and cultural practices of the institution. Consequently, the philosophical foundations identified in this study demonstrate a multi-dimensional framework that integrates theology, ethics, and social practice. This holistic approach enhances the relevance of pesantren as a model for peace education in diverse socio-cultural contexts.

The findings indicate that the increasing prevalence of bullying and subtle forms of violence within educational settings, including pesantren, underscores the urgent need for systematic peace education interventions. This phenomenon reflects what

peace education theory identifies as the persistence of structural and cultural violence, where harmful behaviors are normalized within everyday interactions. In the pesantren context, practices such as excessive joking, social exclusion, and verbal intimidation often operate as hidden forms of violence that are socially tolerated. This aligns with Galtung's concept of cultural violence, which legitimizes harmful actions through norms and traditions (Galtung, 1996). Therefore, peace education becomes essential not only to prevent overt violence but also to deconstruct normalized behaviors that perpetuate harm. The findings demonstrate that students often fail to recognize certain actions as violence due to their embeddedness in social practices. This highlights the importance of critical awareness as a core component of peace education. By fostering reflective thinking, students can re-evaluate their behavior and develop more empathetic interactions. Rather than viewing bullying solely as an individual's fault, these findings have shown that certain forms of violence are reproduced through institutional culture and peer socialization. Consequently, preventing violence requires organizational transformation in addition to individual moral development. This interpretation has shifted the focus from behavioral correction to institutional reform, which has received little attention in previous studies of Islamic boarding schools.

Moreover, the role of family background, social interaction, and institutional regulation in shaping non-violent characters suggests a multi-layered framework of influence. This can be effectively analyzed using character education theory, which emphasizes the integration of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in moral development. The findings show that students with supportive family environments and positive social interactions are more likely to develop empathy and self-control. Conversely, exposure to negative experiences, including being victims of violence, can either reinforce or challenge their moral development depending on institutional intervention. This

indicates that peace education must address not only individual behavior but also structural and relational factors. Empirical research [Nucci & Krettenauer \(2008\)](#) supports the idea that moral character is shaped through continuous interaction between personal experiences and social environments. The findings of this study confirm that the formation of non-violent character among santri is shaped by multi-layered ecological factors, including family background, peer interaction, and institutional culture. This is consistent with recent studies showing that bullying in pesantren is influenced by both individual and environmental dimensions ([Khoir & Kurniawati, 2025](#)). The findings of this study also refine character education theory by demonstrating that nonviolent character develops through the mutually reinforcing interaction of three dimensions: religious values, institutional culture, and social learning processes. Previous studies generally examined these dimensions separately, while this study demonstrates how their integration has resulted in a sustainable peace education ecosystem within Islamic boarding schools.

In addition, the urgency of peace education is further reinforced by its role in promoting emotional regulation and conflict resolution skills among students. The findings suggest that students who participate in peace education activities demonstrate greater awareness of the consequences of violence and improved ability to manage interpersonal conflicts. This supports the argument that peace education contributes to the development of socio-emotional competencies, which are critical for non-violent behavior ([Johnson & Johnson, 2005](#)). According to social learning theory, these skills are learned through social context-based guided practice, feedback, and reinforcement. The pesantren setting is perfect for these kinds of learning processes since it emphasizes shared responsibility and communal living. Additionally, including religious principles increases kids' intrinsic will to behave peacefully. This implies that peace education in pesantren is especially successful in influencing long-term behavioral change

because it functions at both the cognitive and emotive levels. Therefore, the ability of peace education to address both the symptoms and underlying causes of violence in educational settings is what makes it so urgent.

The implementation of peace education in the pesantren setting demonstrates a multi-dimensional approach that integrates curricular, co-curricular, and socio-cultural strategies. The inclusion of peace education within the formal curriculum reflects a deliberate effort to institutionalize non-violent values as part of the educational process. This aligns with Peace Education Theory, which emphasizes the importance of embedding peace principles within educational systems to achieve sustainable outcomes. By incorporating topics such as conflict resolution, tolerance, and interfaith dialogue, pesantren provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate complex social interactions. This approach moves beyond reactive measures toward proactive character formation. Empirical studies [Harris & Morrison \(2012\)](#) suggest that curriculum-based peace education significantly enhances students' understanding of non-violence. Therefore, the integration of peace education into formal learning structures represents a critical step in transforming educational practices. Unlike previous research, which largely examined peace education as curriculum content, this study shows that institutionalization occurs simultaneously through the curriculum, leadership practices, daily religious routines, disciplinary mechanisms, and community participation. This suggests that peace education functions as an institutional culture and not simply a teaching activity.

In addition, the use of mediation training and participatory learning activities highlights the importance of experiential learning in peace education. This approach can be understood through social learning theory, where learning occurs through active engagement and social interaction. Students are not merely

passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in conflict resolution processes. This participatory model enhances their ability to apply theoretical concepts in real-life situations. Furthermore, collaboration with external organizations strengthens the capacity of pesantren to implement innovative educational programs. The findings indicate that such collaborations provide access to new methodologies and resources, thereby improving the quality of peace education. This reflects the importance of institutional openness and adaptability in educational reform. Consequently, the implementation of peace education becomes a dynamic process that evolves in response to changing social conditions.

Moreover, the creation of a culture of peace within the pesantren environment underscores the role of informal education in character formation. Daily practices, rituals, and social interactions contribute to the internalization of non-violent values among students. This phenomenon can be analyzed using habitus theory, where repeated practices shape durable dispositions that guide behavior. In this context, peace education is not limited to structured programs but is embedded in the lived experiences of students. The consistent reinforcement of ethical values through religious practices, communal activities, and leadership guidance creates a supportive environment for non-violent behavior. This holistic approach ensures that peace education is sustained beyond formal instruction. Furthermore, the implementation of peace education in pesantren aligns with previous findings that emphasize the importance of institutional strategies, including curriculum integration, supervision, and moral guidance in preventing bullying (Junaidi & Sahrandi, 2025).

Theoretically, these findings contribute to the study of peace education by suggesting that the institutionalization of peace in faith-based education depends on the interaction between pedagogical practices, institutional governance, and religious moral authority. This integrated perspective complements existing

models of peace education, which have largely emphasized curriculum reform or conflict resolution skills while paying less attention to the institutional culture that sustains peaceful behavior.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that peace education in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) is understood as an institutional and cultural process, not merely a pedagogical intervention. By integrating peace education theory, social learning theory, and character education, this study asserts that nonviolent character is built through the interaction of prophetic ethics, institutional leadership, communal learning, and everyday social practices. This integrated analytical framework constitutes the study's primary theoretical contribution and offers a context-based model of peace education for faith-based educational institutions beyond the context of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study demonstrate that *pesantren* cultures fundamentally disavow violence as an acceptable method for managing student conduct or addressing disputes. The institutionalization of peace education functions not only as a normative ideal but also as a transformational pedagogical strategy that ingrains non-violence in students' moral dispositions and daily behaviors, rather than depending on coercive methods. Through the integration of ethical instruction, spiritual guidance, and communal living, peace education contributes to the formation of *santri* who are not only disciplined but also capable of negotiating conflict through dialogical and empathetic approaches. In this sense, *pesantren* emerge as critical sites for cultivating socially responsible and ethically grounded human capital, reinforcing their relevance in addressing contemporary challenges related to youth violence and moral decline.

Moreover, the study identifies a multi-layered configuration of factors shaping the development of non-violent character among students, encompassing familial background, socio-environmental dynamics, and individual psychological capacities. The implementation strategies observed—ranging from curriculum integration and mediation training to the cultivation of a peace-oriented institutional culture—highlight that character formation is not achieved through singular interventions but through sustained and systemic engagement. Importantly, the collaborative involvement of pesantren authorities, parents, and peer communities underscores the necessity of a holistic ecosystem in reinforcing peace education. Theoretically, this study contributes to the study of peace education and Islamic education by demonstrating that the institutionalization of peace education in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) is shaped by the interaction of prophetic ethics, social learning processes, and character education within an integrated institutional culture. Rather than conceptualizing peace education solely as curriculum content or conflict resolution training, this study proposes an institutional model in which religious values, leadership practices, and everyday communal life collectively support the formation of nonviolent character. This integrated perspective expands the existing peace education literature by providing a context-based model derived from faith-based educational institutions in non-Western settings.

Practically, these findings suggest that peace education should be integrated into various dimensions of Islamic boarding school governance, rather than implemented as a stand-alone program. Policymakers and Islamic boarding school leaders can strengthen violence prevention by integrating peace education into the curriculum, leadership development, student orientation programs, teacher training, counseling services, and collaboration with parents. Such a comprehensive institutional approach can support the creation of a sustainable culture of peace while

strengthening the educational mission of Islamic boarding schools to promote moral responsibility, social harmony, and conflict transformation.

However, this study is not without limitations. First, its reliance on a single case study limits the generalizability of the findings across diverse pesantren contexts in Indonesia, which may vary in organizational culture and pedagogical orientation. Second, the qualitative design, while providing depth, does not allow for the measurement of long-term behavioral outcomes of peace education interventions. Therefore, further research should conduct comparative studies across various types of Islamic boarding schools, including traditional, modern, and integrated Islamic boarding schools, to test the applicability of this institutional model. Longitudinal and mixed-methods research is also recommended to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of peace education in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, further studies could explore how digital learning environments, community partnerships, and educational policies influence the institutionalization of peace education in Islamic educational settings. Despite these limitations, this study offers a significant empirical and conceptual contribution by positioning pesantren-based peace education as a viable framework for anti-violence character formation, with implications for broader educational policy and practice in plural and conflict-prone societies.

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