

PATRIARCHY AND PATERNALISTIC CULTURE OF RELIGIOUS LEADER DEIFICATION CAUSING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

The rise of sexual harassment perpetrated by religious figures in Islamic educational institutions has raised doubts about the role and objectives of these institutions in Aceh. This research aims to determine how sexual harassment is influenced by religious culture and the impact of such cases on the image of Islamic educational institutions. It is qualitative-descriptive in nature. Data were collected using observation, interviews, and documentation instruments. Meanwhile, data analysis was carried out using descriptive analysis. The results show that cult-like practices contribute to sexual harassment in Islamic

educational institutions as part of the religious culture within these institutions. The strength of these cult practices, as part of the religious culture, is intertwined with the role of patriarchal culture and paternalistic leadership deeply rooted in society. This harassment occurs through the abuse of religious dogma, such as the method of transferring metaphysical knowledge. With the continued increase in cases of sexual harassment within Islamic educational institutions, parents have grown doubtful about the educational process in institutions run by religious figures, leading them to prefer general educational institutions instead. This finding is helpful for understanding the causes and methods of preventing the recurrence of sexual harassment in Islamic educational institutions.

Maraknya pelecehan seksual yang dilakukan oleh tokoh agama di lembaga pendidikan Islam telah menimbulkan keraguan tentang peran dan tujuan lembaga-lembaga tersebut di Aceh. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan bagaimana pelecehan seksual dipengaruhi oleh budaya agama dan dampak kasus-kasus tersebut terhadap citra lembaga pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif-deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan instrumen observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Sementara itu, analisis data dilakukan menggunakan analisis deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa praktik-praktik seperti sekte berkontribusi terhadap pelecehan seksual di lembaga pendidikan Islam sebagai bagian dari budaya agama dalam lembaga-lembaga tersebut. Kekuatan praktik-praktik sekte ini, sebagai bagian dari budaya agama, terkait erat dengan peran budaya patriarki dan kepemimpinan paternalistik yang sangat tertanam dalam masyarakat. Pelecehan ini terjadi melalui penyalahgunaan dogma agama, seperti metode transfer pengetahuan metafisik. Dengan terus meningkatnya kasus pelecehan seksual di lembaga pendidikan Islam, orang tua semakin meragukan proses pendidikan di lembaga-lembaga yang dijalankan oleh tokoh agama, sehingga mereka cenderung memilih lembaga pendidikan umum. Temuan ini berguna untuk memahami penyebab dan metode pencegahan berulangnya pelecehan seksual di lembaga pendidikan Islam.

Keywords: *deification; Islamic educational institutions; paternalistic leadership; patriarchal culture; sexual harassment*

Introduction

Pesantren is one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and has become an icon in giving birth to cadres of ulama up to the present day (Bafadhol, 2017). The term "Pesantren" can consist of two elements: a *Kyai* (a Javanese Islamic cleric) or *Teungku* (an Acehnese Islamic cleric) and Santri (Islamic boarding school students), supported by the existence of a place for the students to live within the educational environment (Almuhajir, 2020; Djamas, 2008; Nirzalin & Febriandi, 2020). The special characteristics of Islamic boarding schools include a curriculum focused on religious sciences, such as Arabic syntax, Arabic morphology, Islamic law, Islamic jurisprudence, Hadith, Qur'anic interpretation, Islamic theology, Sufism, history, and rhetoric. The literature for these sciences uses classic books called the "*kitab kuning*" (Mujib & Mudzakkir, 2006).

Ideally, a religious educational institution, especially an Islamic boarding school, has the significant task of creating Indonesian Muslim individuals and communities who have faith and devotion to Allah SWT (Azra, 2001). This enormous task is carried out by religious leaders to ensure that educational institutions operate in accordance with their religious understanding. Due to the significant role of these religious figures, a tradition of reverence towards them has emerged within the environment. This tradition of reverence is deeply embedded in the journey of Islamic boarding schools, both in religious activities, particularly "*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*" (enjoining good and forbidding evil), and in structured education and religious teachings conducted both inside and outside the boarding school (Huda, 2011). However, recently, this tradition of reverence, which should foster genuine trust in teachers and leaders of Islamic boarding schools, has had harmful and destructive impacts. One visible impact is that the leadership of these religious figures in Islamic educational institutions is often labeled as authoritarian and arbitrary, leading to characteristics of patriarchal and paternalistic leadership (Erlangga et al., 2013; Mastuhu, 1994).

Various phenomena and data showed deviations, especially in the religious education environment, using cult traditions for actions that are contrary to Islamic values, such as sexual harassment and corrupt acts (Nedegaard et al., 2014). The data from the National Commission on Violence Against Women on the fact sheet of sexual violence in education in 2020 states that sexual violence occurs at all levels of education, from early childhood education to higher education. Universities rank first at 27% and Islamic boarding schools or education based on Islam ranks second or 19%, 15% occurs at the high school/vocational school level, 7% occurs at the junior high school level, and 3% respectively in TK, SD, SLB, and Christian-Based Education (Komisi Nasional Perempuan, 2020).

Sexual harassment in the religious education environment is not a new thing but an old behavior but has only recently become national news. One case of sexual harassment is done by perpetrator Moch Subchi Azal Tsani who is the son of the leader and a teacher at the Siddiqiyah Islamic Boarding School, Jombang Regency, East Java. In the statements of the victims, several excuses were made by the suspect to be able to carry out his evil plan, namely teaching spiritual knowledge with strange rituals and even being stripped naked in a hut (Sadiah et al., 2023; Tempo, 2022).

Another case is Herry Wirawan, who is the leader of a *Pesantren* in Bandung and a teacher at three other Islamic boarding schools who take advantage of his position as a leader of a *Pesantren*. He is known to be a pious person who raped 14 female students and even gave birth to children and exploited the children resulting from rape with various lures (Suara Ternate, 2021). The good lure is in the form of a better life, to religious motives (Hardyanthi et al., 2021; Oktariani et al., 2023). These two cases are not the only cases of sexual harassment in Islamic boarding schools. Similar incidents have also occurred in various areas, both those that have been revealed and that have not been revealed, not least in Aceh where the perpetrator was a *Teungku* in northern Aceh in carrying out sodomy acts against his students (AJNN, 2023).

There has been several research on the occurrence of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment in campus environments (Pandor et al., 2023), in public spaces (Pratiwi & H, 2021; Rabathy & Komala, 2021), and in public transportation (Karliana & Prabowo, 2015; Pradini, 2023; Ramdhani, 2017). However, there has not been much research on sexual harassment that focuses on Islamic educational institutions that uphold religious values. It is undoubtedly a haram act and a major sin. Religious leaders carry out the majority of sexual violence that occurs in Islamic educational institutions and is often accompanied by cult practices (Pebriaisyah et al., 2022).

Cult is not one of the causes of sexual harassment that occurs in various Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. Still, this tradition indirectly makes it easier for perpetrators to carry out their actions with various motives. So, moving on from the various problems above, this study concerns the patriarchy and paternalistic as the cult of religious leaders and sexual harassment. It belongs to a study of social phenomena in Islamic educational institutions in Aceh. It comprehensively examines the causes of sexual harassment in the environment of religious education and cult traditions that pave the way for acts that are contrary to various norms. By looking at some of the descriptions above, for this reason, this study focuses on how sexual harassment is influenced by religious culture and the impact of sexual harassment cases on the image of Islamic educational institutions.

Method

This study employed a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, wherein the researcher explored the nature of human experiences related to a specific phenomenon. The phenomenological approach involved research methods that required the researcher to engage directly and for an extended period with several subjects to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Rukminingsih et al., 2020). In this study, the phenomenon examined was the cult tradition within religious educational institutions, which has led to cases of sexual harassment. The locations studied included

salafiyah and modern Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren/Dayah) in the Bireuen and Aceh Besar Regencies.

The research was supported by both primary and secondary data. The qualitative data sources comprised informants, events, locations, and documents. Data collection efforts involved several techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. To obtain primary data, the researchers conducted interviews with several relevant individuals, including the Regional Head of the Aceh Ministry of Religion, officers of the Dayah education service, legislative members, the Aceh Police Criminal Investigation Department, the Head of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service (DPPPA), and people with a religious educational background. These informants were selected based on the following criteria: first, their understanding of specific issues within the Islamic boarding school environment; and secondly, their experience with cases of sexual harassment. Additionally, the researchers collected literature as secondary data. The documentation technique involved retrieving documents from the Ministry of Religion's website, the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service, and articles related to the growth of religious educational institutions and cases of sexual harassment in Aceh. The data analysis techniques in this study included: 1) Data Reduction, 2) Data Display, and 3) Conclusion Drawing/Verification.

Finding and Discussion

The causes of sexual harassment in Islamic Educational Institutions

In Aceh, there are currently many cases of sexual harassment, whether students or teachers perpetrate it, and there are even some religious educators who have abused their students, such as the case that was allegedly perpetrated by the leadership of one Islamic boarding school in Pidie Jaya regency, who abused a 14-year-old student traumatized and depressed. Previously, there was also news about the alleged harassment of 15 students who were still children by the Pesantren leaders in Lhokseumawe City. Three years later, in Aceh Besar regency, there were also allegations of sodomy by

the Pesantren leader against two underage male students. In the western province of Aceh, in Nagan Raya regency, to be precise, a few months ago, there were also reports of sexual crimes committed by Islam teachers who abused their students so that they had to be rushed to the hospital. Another case of sexuality in Islamic educational institutions in Aceh that has surfaced is the case of sexual harassment of 20 female students by a teacher in the North Aceh regency (AJNN, 2023).

Based on the Aceh Sharia Court Data, there are only 28 cases of sexual violence against women and children registered in the Court Case Tracing Information System (SIPPP) at the Aceh Sharia Court (Mahkamah Syar'iyah Aceh, n.d.). These events could be an iceberg phenomenon, which could be a reality much bigger than what the public hears and reports in the media about the shabby behavior of unscrupulous religious teachers who can defame a spiritual, educational institution considered moral. Moreover, the case of alleged sexual harassment in Islamic boarding schools was not highlighted because most Islamic educational institutions in Aceh even covered up this case to maintain the good name of the institution if even a little was revealed because of the openness of the victim and the assistance from the Legal Aid Institute (LBH) in finding and tracing who the perpetrators were. Thus, perpetrators of abuse can receive punishment according to existing laws and feel deterred from repeating these actions (Meutia, 2023). Cases of harassment also occur at the student level; in this case, it is crucial for families, especially, to provide education to children so they can avoid things that lead to harassment. In this case, harassment itself is any unwanted sexual act, whether verbal, written, or sexually suggestive, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that makes a person feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated, sometimes even causing a tremendous traumatic effect (Sigurdardottir & Halldorsdottir, 2021).

In addition, what is in the spotlight is the occurrence of these sexual activities in the environmental space of Islamic educational institutions, which should aim to learn, explore, absorb, and practice Islamic teachings with religious morals instead of doing things that are not in line with their

goals. Even though sexuality has a theological basis in every religion, illegal sexual relations (outside of marriage) are rejected by religious authorities. In the traditions of Semitic religions, for example, this activity is considered a form of adultery where the perpetrators are punished and ostracized from social interactions. Likewise, the practice of deviation, harassment, and sexual violence is also contrary to the principles of all religions. Responding to the phenomenon of sexual violence in Aceh, especially in cases of sexual harassment, there are many factors behind this despicable act.

Patriarchal culture and paternalistic leadership

Based on the observations, Islamic educational institutions such as *Pesantren* have a culture and tradition that tends to place religious leaders such as the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* as exalted figures, central figures, references, and even role models. Still many heads of foundations or officials in Islamic educational institutions often abuse their sacred status or position and take advantage of this leadership style, which gives them an advantageous position. Under the pretext of a religious cult that they use to gain the trust of victims and those around them, they can carry out acts of violence and sexual harassment seamlessly. Obedience to the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* becomes part of what is instilled, so being critical and opposing it will be considered deviant because it is believed to be a source of sin.

Then, the value of patriarchal culture is still strengthening; a man is still considered to have greater power (power relations) than a woman in social and political life, which can lead to discrimination against women, including sexual harassment. McMaster (2020) explained exceptional characteristics or signs in Islamic educational institutions such as *Pesantren*, namely power, patriarchy, obedience, and respect for authority figures (high-ranking foundations or leaders of Islamic educational institutions). These signs can actually facilitate the possibility of violence or sexual harassment. In a sociological context, the strong position and charisma of a religious figure are due to the cult tradition, which is also one of the characteristics that distinguish *Pesantren* from modern educational institutions such as schools and *madrrasah*. In a psychological context, this cult is formed from

the fascination of Santri with the figure of a Kyai, Ustadz or Teungku who is based on emotion (feelings), not rational (thoughts).

Psychologically, this condition has given perpetrators of sexual violence a sense of comfort to carry out their actions in Islamic boarding schools without fear. As a result of cult traditions and the uncontrollable sexual libido of religious leaders, cases of sexual harassment and violence in Islamic boarding schools appear to be mushrooming. Pesantren, as a place of education, is narrated as a "holy" place where parents entrust their children to be educated with religious morals so that their children become good and valuable people in society. Pebriaisyah et al. (2022) said that religious education institutions such as Pesantren are often associated with patriarchal culture, where men are constructed as subjects while women are objects. Islamic boarding schools also show an imbalance of power relations in which the position of a religious figure such as a *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* is higher than the Santri so that the Santri who are harassed do not have the power to fight because they are in a low hierarchy. Bruineessen (1995) describes the position of a *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* as the sole authority in a Pesantren whose words and actions are considered the truth, allowing him to dominate the Santri. Indeed, this condition does not only occur in Islamic boarding schools in Java but also in religious education institutions such as Dayah and Pesantren in Aceh, where a *Teungku* is often positioned as an infallible (holy) figure who has never done anything wrong and sin.

Darma, the head of the Aceh Besar Regency Day education office, explained that in the leadership of this religious figure, the paternalistic culture shows the existence of power relations between the positions of Kyai-Santri such as superiors and subordinates. It can also be interpreted as superior and inferior in terms of these factors because the Santri's obedience to the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* is sacred and cannot be questioned or denied (Darma, 2023). In line with Huda (2011), the one-way learning system in Pesantren has also positioned the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* as primary sources, which automatically place students at the bottom of the hierarchy and are passive. This condition is the primary basis for the emergence of an

emotional-based cult attitude towards the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku*. This cultic tradition or deification later gives rise to unequal power relations in boarding schools. In addition to cases of rape in Islamic boarding schools being considered un-Islamic, the hierarchy of power found in Islamic boarding schools is also not recognized in Islam. The existence of sexual violence in Islamic boarding schools is the worst result of the fusion of religious and modern patriarchy. The unlimited power possessed by male leaders in *Pesantren*, which is justified by various religious verses, comes from modern structures such as colonialism and capitalism and not from Islamic sources.

Based on the analysis, it is evident that the sexual harassment stems from power relations and social class in Islamic educational institutions. The *Santri* and the congregation of Islamic boarding schools will usually place the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* as the elite, namely "holy" people, who are considered incapable of doing wrong. In various religions, the community will often find religious terms metaphysical designations in the mention of spiritual leaders as "holy people," such as the mention of saints, clerics, or similar titles.

Lack of understanding of diversity

Most individuals today are shaped by the culture in which they were born and live, acquiring cultural values, attitudes, and behaviors. Culture determines the definition and description of normality and psychopathology. Islamic educational institutions such as *Dayah* and *Pesantren* tend to be heterogeneous. Each *Santri* who studies at these institutions typically has a diverse socio-economic background, origin, personality, character, and various cultural backgrounds. Additionally, large economic disparities can exacerbate the situation, especially for *Santri* from poorer areas and for Islamic educational institutions in remote areas where sexual crimes can occur more frequently (Annan, 2006; Jones et al., 2023; Lizarraga & Terry, 2021; Macêdo, 2021).

Cultural diversity plays an important role in how certain populations and societies perceive, understand, and process sexual acts and sexual

violence. Activities under the guise of religion or considered religious cults carried out by religious experts are something that cannot be disputed. The high trust given by students or families often does not raise suspicions about these deviant activities, especially among students whose parents have minimal educational background. Undergoing education in institutions such as *Pesantren*, where students have diverse backgrounds, certainly creates loopholes for acts of sexual harassment to occur, presenting a challenge to prevent it (Jufliwani, 2023).

Based on information from Ade, Director of General Criminal Investigation of the Aceh Regional Police, who handles harassment cases, the perpetrators used certain methods to channel their libido in Islamic boarding schools, usually narrated using religious language. The mode can take various forms, such as prayers, useful knowledge, strengthening memorization of the Qur'an, meta facts, and so on (Ade, 2023). This mode of operation seems to be quite effective in deceiving the victims, who are, on average, still underage and immature psychologically. Those who are underage are certainly more vulnerable to being provoked by the actions carried out by unscrupulous *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku*. Moreover, life in Islamic boarding schools is full day and night. Given that students live in these boarding schools 24 hours a day, seven days a week, there is often no one to watch over them constantly. This means that without strict internal and external supervision, abuse of power by religious leaders with a paternalistic culture can occur in religious educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools

Misuse of Religious Dogma

Regarding acts of sexual violence often occur in “religious spaces” such as seminaries and Islamic boarding schools, in this context, one must distinguish between religion as a theological doctrine which refers to sacred texts with a spiritual dimension, and religion as a sociological phenomenon which refers to the behavior of its adherents. Based on this dichotomy, sexual violence is in the sociological domain (reality), not in the theological (normative) domain. Even though it is in the sociological domain, the

perpetrators of sexual violence often use theological arguments such as 'obedience' and 'blessing' to influence their victims. Using dogma with religious attachments as a tool to suppress and dominate is commonplace for those with a paternalistic culture. Punishments and extra lessons given by sexual predators are often attached to a religious cult that cannot be avoided (Ade, 2023).

Regarding this punishment is another finding against the notion that violence is part of the learning media and a form of teaching that is by their cult. Some Islamic educational institutions use violence as a form of punishment for students who break the rules. Punishment aims for students to feel a deterrent, not repeat mistakes and become obedient (Darma, 2023). The practice of sexual violence that occurred in Islamic educational institutions in Aceh can be classified into two categories: the opposite gender and the same gender. Sexual harassment of the opposite gender, namely the perpetrators who commit acts of sexual harassment, are male friends of the same age, *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku*. At the same time, the victims are female teachers/staff and female students. Then, the second category is the same gender, namely: the perpetrators are *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku*, and the victims are boys with a form of sexual harassment. The pattern of occurrence of the practice of sexual violence is divided into several stages, namely:

First, the perpetrator shows more attention to the students who are potential victims, creating closeness between them. Often, the perpetrator shows a good attitude towards the child's parents with the hope that the child's parents feel that their presence with the perpetrator positively impacts the child's development. Second, involving potential victims where unscrupulous *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* are invited to give lectures and serve as their companions at each lecture location. Some parents consider this relationship something to be proud of because of the close relationship between their children and unscrupulous *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku*, making them think their child has potential and is special (Ade, 2023). Third, after gaining the trust of parents and children, the execution of *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* continues to occur, which leads to sexual violence, as in the case of

Kyai, Ustadz, or Teungku who commit sexual harassment under the pretext of helping the students' exam process at Islamic boarding schools. To pass the exam smoothly, students must take part in and receive the transfer of knowledge through sexual intercourse. These students must listen, obey and obey whatever the *Kyai, Ustadz, or Teungku* orders.

In addition, some offer meta-fact knowledge that can fulfill every desire of the *Santri* accompanied by the doctrine of "purification" with rituals carried out by unscrupulous religious experts who are the institution's leaders (Jamil, 2023). This dogma then provides an opportunity for perpetrators to channel their sexual libido through harassment and violence in 'religious spaces'. In a psychological context, as stated by Freud, the definition of libido is not only focused on the issue of sexuality but has an impact on all behaviors (Reber, 2001). In some cases, libido is related to sexuality, so abnormal libido is often associated with sexual violence. This strong and unstoppable libido is frequently touted as the impact of pornography. Nevertheless, factually, pornography is not always inherent in increasing libido. As Rothbart mentioned, access to pornography that is too intense makes it difficult to reach a climax when having sex (Rothbart, 2011).

Intimacy and loyalty

The ongoing intimacy and loyalty instilled based on obedience and trust in the leadership raise a dilemma between a sense of community solidarity in Islamic educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools with human literacy. Solidarity is often interpreted as defending or silencing perpetrators who are fellow *Ustadz* or teaching staff even though they have wrong attitudes and behaviors, including perpetrators of violence and harassment. The existence of familial relationships among fellow teachers (oligarchic relations) makes it generally difficult to identify perpetrators of sexual harassment against students (Juflawan, 2023). This familiarity is also the reason allegations of sexual harassment at Islamic educational institutions in Aceh are rarely exposed. In most *Pesantren*, when harassment occurs, they cover up the case to maintain the good name of the institution where they belong. This familiarity is also the cause of delays in resolving

cases of sexual harassment against students due to the reluctance to become witnesses in these immoral cases (Jamil, 2023).

To overcome this problem, it is necessary to have good cooperation between administrators and teachers. Those involved in managing institutions, such as staff, must also receive education and outreach about sexual harassment, understand laws and regulations on violence and harassment. In addition, they also need to be trained to make educational institution policies that can serve as guidelines in reporting and acting on cases of violence and harassment (Htun & Jensenius, 2020; Yanto et al., 2023). The lack of concrete guidelines and seriousness often makes it difficult to prove sexual assault. Unfortunately, if the alleged crime cannot be proven in most cases, it is considered slander. The protection of students and staff against attacks as well as false accusations requires policies such as implementing a code of conduct so that more minor offenses can be proven. This allows for more minor offenses which have a lower standard of proof, such as being alone with students or obtaining student contact information without permission from the administration of the institution. By matching appropriate professional expectations, grounds for dismissal of a teacher or anyone else violate ethics and standards when a crime against this has not been proven.

In some cases, the accusers often feel insufficient evidence. Yet, after examining the facts, numerous violations sufficient to prove that teachers or central figures were acting outside of professional ethics come to light. However, when standards are ambiguous, it is easy to exploit “gray” areas. Clear codes of conduct make accountability practical and enforceable.

Incompetence in religion and state

One of the other causes of frequent cases of sexual harassment is that the perpetrators do not have a religious understanding and the meaning of the foundation of the Indonesian state, namely *Pancasila* (Muslimah et al., 2019). The noble values contained in *Pancasila* are needed to guide everyday life in society. Those who use *Pancasila* as a guideline in everyday life should be aware that any intention they are doing violate what has been enshrined

in *Pancasila* as the state philosophy. The harassment is very inconsistent with the first precept of *Pancasila*, "Belief in one and only God." Then, someone with a high faith in the religion he adheres to certainly will not commit despicable acts such as harassment. Because every religion explains that treating women inappropriately, especially to the point of harassing them physically and in other ways that traumatize the victim mentally, is prohibited. The act of sexual harassment also violates the second precept, namely "fair and civilized humanity." The human values contained in *Pancasila* teach us to uphold human dignity, do justice to others, and not treat others arbitrarily. Therefore, the importance of the values of *Pancasila*, especially the second precept, is as a guide in handling sexual harassment cases. In addition, the involvement of social institutions helps victims recover from trauma resulting from instances of sexual harassment. This capacity is also one of the applications of the second precept of *Pancasila* (Oktariani et al., 2023).

Moreover, these abuse cases are also very much against the fifth *Pancasila* precept; all members of society, whether young, old, toddlers, students, or all, without discrimination, have the right to be treated fairly. The application of *Pancasila* can provide legal protection and support for victims to have the courage to report cases of sexual harassment. However, the most essential thing is to prevent this from happening again by implementing *Pancasila* values from an early age (Aminuddin & Kumalasari, 2023). The importance of *Pancasila* education is applied starting from elementary school to instill *Pancasila* values. In addition, the importance of early education about reproductive health for children so that later they can understand they can resist behaviors that lead to sexual harassment.

Furthermore, it is essential to ask oneself what effect normalization of abuse has in Islamic circles. At the same time, many efforts have been made to stop harassment in the environment, which aims to teach children about Islam. Children studying at Islamic boarding schools often experience violence, such as being beaten and so on, under the pretext of education. This is no exception for adult students who are frequently beaten and cursed

at, sometimes even by teachers who are emotional and angry. What is happening at this time is undoubtedly far from the way of the Prophet, as it is known from the hadith of Aisyah that Rasulullah SAW. Never hit anyone outside of battle (HR. Muslim No. 2328) (Al-Hajjaj, 2006). *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, *Teungku*, or other similar names are still ordinary human beings; as ordinary humans, they can do right and wrong. This religious elite group is not a group that is infallible or free from sin. They are not God's messengers guaranteed by religious texts as people who can do no wrong. Therefore, this religious elite class, including the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku*, must be seen as ordinary people, treated as ordinary people, and pinned on suspicions like ordinary humans. Islam has conveyed that the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, not to give absolute obedience to anyone, including to the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* in a famous hadith "*la tha'ata li makhluqin fi ma'siyatil Khaliq*" which means no obedience to creatures in an invitation to disobedience to the creator.

Inconsistent law enforcement

The lack of effective and strict law enforcement against perpetrators of sexual harassment may signal that such acts can be carried out without serious consequences. In the aspect of law enforcement, it is not uncommon for victims to be charged with proving their reports amid a narrow evidentiary system and a robust patriarchal system, which results in a high culture of victim blaming by society (Aborisade, 2023; Davies et al., 2022; Murphy-Oikonen et al., 2022). In addition, government regulations have not been able to reach them strongly regarding cases of sexual harassment in Islamic educational institutions in Aceh. Regarding existing rules, Minister of National Education Regulation No. 84 of 2008 concerned Guidelines for Implementing Gender Mainstreaming in the Education Sector. It states that formal education institutions must carry out gender mainstreaming. Also, the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Regulation No. 30 of 2021 concerns the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence (PPKS) in the Higher Education Environment. However, considering that there are several educational institutions whose arrangements are outside the

authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture but under the Ministry of Religion, such as Religious Colleges and boarding schools, including *Dayah* and *Pesantren*, the enforcement of these rules is difficult to execute (Al-Farlaki, 2023).

Although the existence of these rules is considered an effort to protect women and children to avoid violence and sexual harassment, in some places, such as in the province of Aceh, these regulations cannot be used as they should. Because Aceh, with the privileges granted by the state, prioritizes its legal product, namely *Qanun Aceh No. 6 of 2014*, concerning *Jinayat Law* or *Qanun Jinayat*. It regulates ten Islamic crimes: *Khamar* (alcohol consumption), *Maisir* (gambling), *Khalwat* (close proximity between unmarried individuals of the opposite sex), *Ikhtilath* (physical intimacy between unmarried individuals of the opposite sex), Adultery, Sexual Harassment, Rape, *Qadzaf* (false accusation of adultery), *Liwath* (sodomy), and *Musahaqah* (lesbianism). Unfortunately, the *Qanun Jinayat* does not comprehensively address the crime of sexual violence. According to Darma, (2023), the regulatory element only punishes the perpetrators and does not pay attention to the victims' rights of these heinous acts. Even in the handling process, it is not in favor of the victim; instead, the victim is charged with proving the truth (victim blaming). In addition, it can be said that the lack of legal socialization of the Law on Child Protection and the *Qanun Jinayat* is the reason for the increase in cases of sexual harassment in Aceh. In the process, which often ends peacefully, there is mediation where the perpetrator complies with the demands of the victim's family so that it does not proceed to the law (Al-Farlaki, 2023).

Besides that, Islamic educational institutions need to establish clear rules and guidelines on how teachers can discipline students that focus on students' dignity. In addition, teachers must not justify expressing frustration or channeling the teacher's outbursts of anger toward students. If teachers violate relevant guidelines or regulations, they must be reported immediately and dealt with without tolerance for such crimes. All parties need to show children that their welfare is of the utmost concern. Most importantly,

Islamic teachings do not allow and justify anything harmful, such as violence or harassment.

Inadequate facilities and infrastructure

Another cause of sexual harassment cases in Islamic educational institutions is inadequate facilities and infrastructure. Often, Islamic educational institutions such as *Dayah* and *Pesantren* have minimal facilities, such as beds and bathrooms, which forces the students to share, sleeping in the same room and crowded together. Additionally, the limited number of bathrooms makes the students bathe together, which becomes a common practice and does not seem astonishing or taboo to them. This situation provides an opportunity for perpetrators to commit sexual harassment.

Moreover, the students must live in the educational institution by staying in the hostel during their studies. This learning model increases the opportunity for deviant behavior. Another cause is the limited social life of the students outside the institution. They are prohibited from interacting with the opposite sex, are not allowed to leave the grounds of Islamic boarding schools except for urgent reasons, and may only communicate and interact with the same sex (LGBT) within the boarding schools, which can lead to sexual harassment (homosexual and lesbian activities) (Al-Farlaki, 2023).

Lack of sex education

The phenomenon of sexual deviance that occurs in Islamic educational institutions (boarding school-oriented religious education institutions), such as homosexual and lesbian activities, is due to a lack of control and understanding of sex. Sex education is often considered taboo in public circles, making it difficult to introduce and provide knowledge about gender functions. This lack of education can exacerbate cases of harassment, making them more concerning if left unchecked (Rakhmawati et al., 2023). Sexuality is a natural part of human existence, as birth and development originate from sexual events. Religious teachings, including those in Islam, address sexuality. Islam, which rejects celibacy, incorporates sexuality into its teachings. In Islam, legal sexual intercourse (*jimak*) is

considered part of worship and is valued higher than sunnah fasting. Therefore, discussions of sexual relations are detailed in Islamic Fiqh.

In Aceh, there is still a lack of education about sex, including sexual harassment prevention and treatment. This can exacerbate the situation and allow sexual harassment to continue without proper action. Sex education is often considered taboo, making it challenging to introduce and provide knowledge about gender functions, even though cases of harassment are more concerning if left unaddressed (Putra & Erniyati, 2022). Children have a great curiosity during their development, so sex education needs to be provided early by parents and teachers. If parents and teachers do not provide sex education, children will seek information from potentially unreliable sources, such as peers who may understand sexual concepts negatively or adults with harmful intentions (Ningsih, 2023).

Sex education is a form of intervention to address cases of sexual violence against children by introducing words such as vulva, vagina, penis, anus, and breasts—names of body parts that children must understand to avoid harmful behavior. The main objective of efforts to prevent sexual abuse of children in education (by providing sex education) is to help children identify dangerous situations, and prevent sexual harassment. It also aims to understand inappropriate touching, refuse or end interactions with suspicious individuals, and seek help when needed. A lack of education and excessive parental trust in children results in inadequate supervision, leading to sexual abuse in Islamic educational institutions (Al-Farlaki, 2023).

Lack of parental supervision and sensitivity

In such educational institutions, there are no checks and balances on how children are treated. The impact of this treatment often leaves a negative impression on their view of Islam or religious leaders in general. The excessive trust of parents in these institutions can result in neglect of parental monitoring, leading to sexual harassment of their children. Parents often show minimal interest in their children's experiences at the Islamic boarding school, which is critical in revealing cases of sexual harassment (Jamil, 2023).

To eradicate this phenomenon, prevention rules must be established, such as not allowing children to be alone with adults, and ensuring that more than one adult is present in the children's environment. Additionally, individuals must be held accountable for violations of these rules. Children must be taught about boundaries, understanding which touches or conversations are allowed and which are not. Parents need to understand that being a Muslim, an Islamic teacher, or being in an Islamic educational institution does not guarantee immunity from committing horrific acts.

The role of family and parents is crucial in fostering children's openness by paying close attention to their daily lives in Islamic boarding schools. Parents must learn to watch for signs of abuse, encourage their children to communicate any inappropriate behavior, and not teach them to blindly obey authority figures. Children must understand the difference between respect and obedience, and cultivating an assertive attitude can make them less likely targets for harassment by authority figures.

Children play an important role in exposing perpetrators who commit immoral acts against them, ensuring that such behavior is dealt with according to applicable laws and regulations. Without reports from children, the practice of sexual harassment in Islamic boarding schools will remain hidden (Meutia, 2023). By fostering understanding and courage in children, they can contribute significantly to preventing inappropriate actions, especially while studying at Islamic boarding schools. Given the strict rules allowing parents to meet their children only on certain days and conditions, it is vital for *Santri* to communicate their experiences effectively. Thus, the role of children in conveying their experiences is extremely important.

Lack of supervision over internet use

The use of social media containing pornographic content, which is now very easy to access, can trigger acts of sexual harassment because pornography on the internet is addictive. Men who consume pornography are more vulnerable to violence and sexual coercion from peers or adults. Boys exposed to pornography from their early teens will shape their sexual behavior and tend to seek power over women (Ningsih, 2023). Conversely,

adolescent girls are more likely to tolerate emotional, physical, and sexual abuse as a result (Kohut et al., 2021). Internet use should be positive, with monitoring and dissemination of internet ethics.

In addition, the use of social media in advocating social issues is very influential. Social media can play a role in digital activism around the dangers of pornography and sexual harassment by helping motivate others to appear anonymously and share stories to cope with the trauma they have experienced. The public can start campaigns on social media to provide space for people to share the truth and generate conversation around sexual violence. Other methods, such as online forums and blogs, have become channels for victims to unite and drive institutional change. It also works on a macroscopic scale. Communities, as agents of social change, can create petitions that attract the attention of the government and legal aid agencies, holding educational institutions accountable for not protecting students from sexual violence and filtering unstoppable internet use.

The Impact of Sexual Harassment on Islamic Educational Institutions

According to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, Aceh is one of the provinces with the most Islamic educational institutions, with Islamic boarding schools in Aceh ranking fifth most, totaling 1,286 *Dayah* and *Pesantren*. The Head of the Regional Office of the Aceh Ministry of Religion, Iqbal, added that the growth of Islamic educational institutions in Aceh is rapid. In traditional Islamic educational institutions such as *Dayah*, there have been 400 new *Dayah* established in the past two years (Iqbal, 2023). This continued growth is due to the public's expectation of religious education institutions that provide adequate religious knowledge along with other skills. In the last two years, the number of Islamic educational institutions in Aceh has increased by more than 400, reflecting the enthusiasm of the predominantly Muslim population. The establishment of these institutions is a form of participation, contribution, and concern in preparing the Islamic generation in Aceh for the future.

Amid the rapid development of Islamic educational institutions in Aceh, various reports have emerged tarnishing the reputation of these institutions, which are considered to have higher moral and ethical values due to vigorous religious learning. All criminal acts related to sexuality, where both men and women can be the objects, often place women as victims. These actions, which tend to position the subject and object in a static gender manner, are called gender-based violence. This may also be associated with gender inequality, which manifests in burdens, stereotypes, violence, marginalization, and subordination of women in society. Gender-based violence can take the form of rape cases involving various modus operandi such as anger rape, sadistic rape, domination rape, seduction turning into rape, and exploitation rape. Other forms include domestic violence, forced prostitution (commodification), and humiliation. Gender-based violence occurs at all levels of education, from early childhood education to higher education, as shown in figure 1.

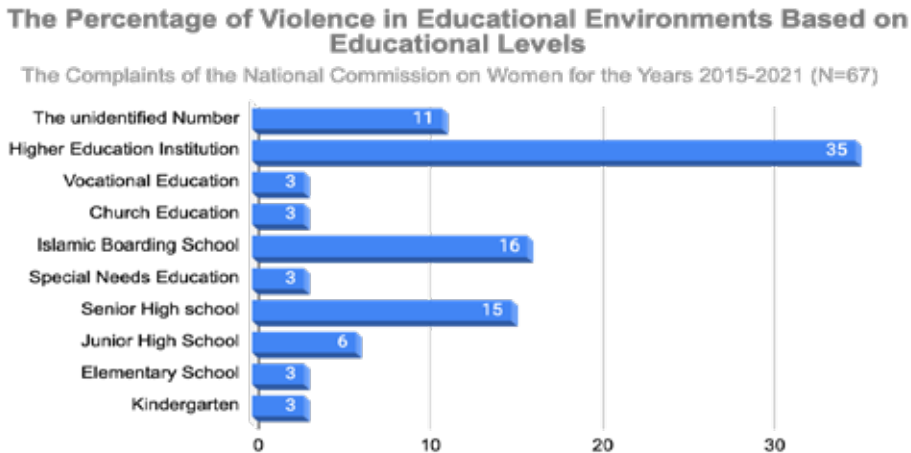


Figure 1. Gender-based violence (Source: data processing)

Based on the records of the National Commission for Women (2020), out of 67 cases reported to Komnas Perempuan during 2015-2021, Higher Education Institutions ranked first (35%), followed by Islamic boarding

schools (16%), and then Senior high schools (15%). An unidentified 11% of cases mentioned the chronology at school without specifying whether it was elementary, junior high, or senior high school. Even so, the number of incidents in Pesantren may be less than 1% of the total number, which reaches 36,600, and does not necessarily represent the population (Ramadhani, 2022). However, the increase in coverage in the mass media cannot be underestimated because it has harmed public perception of Islamic boarding schools, which have so far been seen as places for religious and "holy" people. Moreover, the public is unfamiliar with the practices of Islamic boarding schools because social life in that environment is limited or closed (Darma, 2023).

Sexual harassment is a disgraceful act and is considered a grave sin in Islam. The existence of harassment committed by those who understand religious teachings and serve as teachers of religious knowledge, yet commit immoral acts, is considered very barbaric. Such actions are damaging because, in addition to the commonly seen effects of abuse, perpetrators use religion to cause harm, which is detrimental to the victims' religious life. A safe and comfortable life in the environment of Islamic educational institutions, where religion is taught to reflect positive values for every human being, is now lost and tarnished.

Islamic educational institutions in Aceh should be places for Islamic learning and education for Acehnese children; they should not take repressive actions or commit acts of violence against their students under the pretext of educating them. Even though the attractiveness of Islamic educational institutions in Aceh is higher than in other regions, the rise of harassment cases has made the environment of these institutions appear treacherous (Jufliwani, 2023). Parents with religious concerns often send their children to Islamic schools to learn to read the Qur'an, acquire basic Islamic education, and deepen it. They often believe that children will not be harmed. Unfortunately, abuse often occurs in these institutional settings and can harm children's spiritual development and education, which is what parents seek to protect.

There are also parents who believe that institutions with religious principles cannot guarantee the safety of their students. Consequently, the hopes of parents who want to provide education for both the world and the hereafter through Islamic educational institutions are shattered. According to Maulana (2023), the emergence of sexual predators in Islamic educational institutions in Aceh is considered a vital threat to the existence of Islamic development through these institutions. In fact, Islamic educational institutions are meant to uphold socio-religious life.

Islamic boarding schools should be safe, comfortable, and trusted places to study both worldly and spiritual knowledge, free from such bad behavior. Many parents believe that Islamic boarding schools teach about *akhlakul karimah*, where caretakers and religious teachers should serve as role models for their students (Hasyimi, 2023). The emergence of sexual harassment by caretakers of Islamic boarding schools, who often exploit the innocence of *Santri* under the guise of cult traditions, has caused parents to worry and question the religious understanding practiced by teachers and caretakers at Islamic educational institutions in Aceh (Jamaluddin, 2023). Furthermore, the slow response of these institutions in handling cases of sexual violence, often to maintain the institution's reputation, has further angered the community (Ariful, 2023). Although efforts are being made to eradicate sexual harassment in educational institutions, it is difficult because victims find it hard to report these incidents.

In response to this phenomenon, Islamic boarding schools must take strategic steps to retain community trust. One such step is transforming the education system from emotional-based doctrinal and cult (domination) patterns, which cause students to become passive, to a rational-based critical learning system with dynamic relationship patterns. This change will encourage students to think independently. Independent thinking and a critical attitude from students will help prevent such incidents from recurring in the future. It is not easy, but it is essential.

Islamic teachings are a trust that must be carried out properly without any betrayal of the role of teachers, and Islamic educational institutions are

responsible for the students in their care. They must demonstrate that they prioritize their students' well-being by developing policies, procedures, and accountability mechanisms to ensure zero tolerance for abuse of authority. Managers of Islamic educational institutions need to win the hearts of Muslims by showing that they care about safety, dignity, and justice. They must be proactive in delivering on these ideals, not just concerned about responding to scandals or maintaining a good image, but investing in the welfare of present and future generations of Muslims. Islamic educational institutions should be places where students can learn and grow without the fear of negative experiences.

In this way, it is hoped that in the future, unwanted incidents will no longer occur within Islamic educational institutions, especially in Aceh, which has a unique position in carrying out Islamic sharia. This typical Aceh institution must be free from perpetrators of sexual harassment, regardless of who they are or what form it takes. Islamic educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools can then focus on building the nation's future and become centers of great Islamic civilization. The hope is that future news about Islamic educational institutions in Aceh will be positive and inspirational, representing moderate Islamic values and progressive insights into the future.

Conclusion

The occurrence of sexual violence in Islamic educational institutions in Aceh is caused by various factors. First, there is the "utilization" of a paternalistic leadership culture, making students obedient to teachers in these institutions. Second, the diversity of student backgrounds causes those who understand religion to dare to commit these despicable acts. Perpetrators often target students from poor or uneducated family backgrounds, knowing they can easily influence them. Third, the misuse of religious dogma serves as a tool for persuasion by the perpetrators. Fourth, the closeness and loyalty among teachers allow them to harass students and remain silent about it. This familiarity makes them support each other under

the pretext of maintaining the institution's good name. Fifth, the lack of effective and strict law enforcement against perpetrators of sexual harassment signals that such actions can be carried out freely without serious consequences and without fear of punishment. Sixth, the lack of adequate facilities in Islamic educational institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools, also contributes to the problem. Limited facilities, such as bathrooms and beds, force students to share, leading to sexual deviations, including homosexuality and lesbianism. Seventh, the lack of sex education provided by parents and the government leaves students unaware of the abuse they are experiencing. *Santri* often become victims due to their innocence and youth. Eighth, unmonitored scientific and technological advances, such as unfiltered internet access to pornographic content, negatively impact behavior and lead to sex addiction.

Furthermore, cases of sexual harassment in Islamic educational institutions have serious and tangible impacts on future developments. Sexual harassment by those who understand religious teachings and are teachers of religious knowledge but commit immoral acts is considered barbaric. Islamic boarding schools should be safe, comfortable, and trusted places to study both worldly and spiritual knowledge. Many parents believe that Islamic boarding schools teach about *akhlakul karimah*, where caretakers and religious teachers should serve as role models for their *Santri*. With the continued increase in cases of sexual harassment within Islamic educational institutions in Aceh, parents are losing trust in these institutions and are more inclined to choose public educational institutions for their children.

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