

The Role of Civil Society in the Development of Islamic Religious Education at Muhammadiyah Boarding School

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the role of civil society in the development of Islamic religious education at Pondok Pesantren Muhammadiyah Boarding School (MBS) Martapura, especially in supporting the realization of a humanist and violence-free educational ecosystem. The main focus of the research is the implementation of the “Santri Friendly” principle, which is an educational approach that rejects the use of punishment (ikob) and physical violence, and prioritizes dialogue-based recovery methods and social responsibility. The handling of violations is carried out through a restorative approach based on the recovery triangle, which involves perpetrators, victims and affected communities as a form of integration of justice values and collective learning. This research uses a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Informants consisted of pesantren administrators, teachers, santri, santri guardians, and elements of civil society involved in pesantren life. The results showed that civil society in MBS Martapura acts as a comprehensive horizontal control system, including caregivers, kitchen staff, cleaning, and structural administrators, to ensure that Santri-Friendly values are consistently internalized. This role also includes santri involvement in rule-making, consequence dialogue, and collective understanding of the impact of mistakes on the community. This collaboration results in an Islamic educational environment that not only emphasizes academic excellence, but also strong character building and social empathy.

Keywords: Civil Society, Islamic Religious Education, Santri Friendly, Humanist Boarding School

1 Introduction

Islamic religious education has a central role in shaping the character and spirituality of students in Indonesia. As a country with a majority Muslim population, Indonesia has a religious education system that develops in various institutional forms, one of which is Islamic boarding schools. Pesantren not only functions as a center for the transmission of Islamic sciences, but also as a place for the formation of personality, social values, and morality of students [1]. In its development, the pesantren education system underwent a transformation both in terms of curriculum and pedagogical approaches, including in adopting a more humanist and inclusive approach.

One of the approaches that emerged as a response to educational practices laden with symbolic and physical violence is the concept of friendly santri. This approach rejects the pattern of ikob (corporal punishment) that is still found in some traditional educational institutions, and replaces it with a recovery pattern based on the principle of restorative justice. This approach aims to build awareness, responsibility, and collective understanding of the violations that occur, through the active involvement of the perpetrators, victims, and affected communities [2]. In the context of pesantren, this is a progressive step in creating an educational climate that supports positive and sustainable character building.

Various previous studies also support the urgency of this approach. Research by Nurlaela confirms that child-friendly pesantren strategies that avoid violence and prioritize dialog are able to create a safe and conducive learning environment for children's development [4]. Boarding schools can form santri as civil society agents who think critically, have ethics, and play an active role in social life [3]. Sufistic

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character in pesantren became the foundation of transformative education that formed the spiritual and social awareness of santri [5]. In addition, a study by Noval examines the application of restorative justice in conflict resolution in pesantren, highlighting the importance of mediation between perpetrators, victims, and the surrounding community in creating meaningful justice [6]. Transformative education in pesantren encourages the quality of formal learning while forming an independent and responsible personality [7].

In such a system, the role of civil society becomes very significant. Civil society is no longer just an external actor monitoring the education process, but is also directly involved as part of the education ecosystem itself. This role is realized in the form of horizontal supervision, collaboration in the formulation of social norms, and facilitation of conflict resolution based on shared values [8]. In Pondok Pesantren Muhammadiyah Boarding School (MBS) Martapura, actors such as pesantren administrators, teachers, santri guardians, kitchen staff, janitors, and senior santri are actively involved in shaping a santri-friendly environment through open communication, empowerment, and participatory dialog.

This approach reflects the transition from an authoritarian education system to a more participatory and democratic one, in line with the transformative education framework that emphasizes the importance of dialogue, critical reflection, and empowerment in the learning process [9]. In interviews with MBS Martapura administrators, it was found that offenses committed by santri are handled with a restorative triangle approach that includes the perpetrator, victim, and community, where all parties are involved to understand the impact, improve relations, and restore social harmony.

Departing from this background, this study aims to examine in depth the role of civil society in supporting the development of Islamic religious education oriented towards restorative justice values and santri-friendly principles at MBS Martapura Islamic Boarding School. The focus of the research is directed at the pattern of relations between the pesantren's internal community and the education system applied, as well as the extent to which civil society participation is able to form a culture of discipline without violence.

2 Literature Review

Theoretically, this research rests on three main foundations, namely: (1) Humanistic Education Theory, (2) Restorative Justice Theory, and (3) Civil Society Concept in education.

Humanistic Education Theory

Humanistic education theory emphasizes the importance of respect for the individuality of learners, the development of their full potential, and the creation of a learning environment that supports emotional and spiritual growth [10]. In the context of pesantren, this approach is realized through a santri-friendly strategy that rejects violent practices and encourages active participation of santri in the formulation of social norms.

Restorative Justice Theory

Restorative justice is an alternative approach to dealing with offenses or conflicts that focuses on restoring relationships, social responsibility, and reconciliation between perpetrators, victims, and affected communities [2]. In practice at MBS Martapura, this approach is realized through a triangle of restoration that includes the offender, the aggrieved party, and elements of the surrounding community.

The Concept of Civil Society in Education

Civil society in education refers to non-state actors who are actively involved in monitoring, advocating and developing an education system that is democratic and responsive to the needs of society [8]. In the pesantren environment, civil society consists of santri guardians, caregivers, pesantren administrators, kitchen staff, cleaning, and senior santri who are also horizontal supervisors of the application of santri-friendly values in the daily lives of santri.

3 Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design within a constructivist paradigm, which assumes that social reality is formed through interaction and interpretation of meaning by individuals in their social context [11]. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Then, the analysis process was carried out thematically through data reduction, categorization, and interpretation based on the concept of civil society from Edwards [2][8]. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, and confirmation of interpretation results to informants.

4 Results and Discussion

This study reveals that the application of the principle of friendly santri in the Muhammadiyah Boarding School (MBS) Martapura Islamic Boarding School is implemented through a restorative justice approach that involves the perpetrators, victims, and the pesantren community as a civil society. One of the pesantren caregivers stated that santri mistakes are not resolved through physical punishment, but through an educational recovery process. The recovery that is carried out is guided by the triangular theory of restitution, which encourages individuals to correct the mistakes that have been made and build a stronger character. This process involves the offender's awareness of the impact of the wrongdoing. Each mistake is discussed together to provide a collective understanding of its consequences for the environment. Perpetrators are invited to dialogue to understand the social impact of their actions, and to take remedial action.

In addition to the restorative approach, MBS Martapura also builds social control through the involvement of all elements of the pesantren community. Civil society in this context is not only limited to santri guardians or the outside community, but also kitchen staff, cleaning, teachers, and senior santri who have moral responsibility in upholding santri-friendly values. It is important to pay attention to the implementation of handling a mistake, namely by persuasion through dialog and understanding first. The involvement of santri in the preparation of rules and consequences also characterizes the participatory approach applied. Santri are not only objects, but also subjects in the character education process. Based on the results of the interview, involving santri in the preparation of rules can be more effective in providing an understanding of all the consequences of each action. Inviting santri to actively participate in the preparation of rules is also part of education, because it can increase the sense of responsibility and awareness in santri to act in accordance with applicable rules.

Based on the results of the interview, the Pondok Pesantren Muhammadiyah Boarding School (MBS) Martapura stated that the role of mudabir or senior santri is limited to being a control agent, not a punisher. This is to prevent potential violence due to the emotional instability of adolescents. In its implementation, the application of santri-friendly values still faces challenges. One of them is the difference in the quality of communication between elements of the pesantren. Some parts have not fully understood or applied this principle consistently. Based on this, santri-friendly values must continue to be instilled so that it can become a habit for every element of the pesantren. Also, it is not only applied during learning, but also in socializing in the pesantren environment so that it can be consistently applied in the social environment.

Overall, the educational approach at MBS Martapura reflects a close integration of restorative justice principles, active community participation and Islamic values-based character building. This strategy not only avoids repressive approaches, but also emphasizes the importance of restoring social relations and strengthening values through community involvement in every coaching process. This is in line with the concept of restorative justice proposed by Zehr that offenses should be addressed not as mere violations of the law, but rather as disruptions to social relations, which must be thoroughly restored through dialogue and collective responsibility [2].

The involvement of civil society in the pesantren environment-including teachers, senior santri, kitchen staff, and santri guardians-shows the practice of horizontal social control consistent with Edwards' theory, in which civil society plays an important role in shaping a just, democratic, and participatory social order [8]. This finding is reinforced by the research of Irayanti which states that pesantren have great potential in producing santri as civil society agents who play an active role in society. This involvement is evident in the involvement of santri in making internal rules and resolving violations collectively [3].

In addition, research by Wajdi, Lubis, & Siregar shows that Sufistic characters and spiritual habituation in pesantren are able to create a transformative educational process that forms the spiritual and social awareness of santri [5]. This is in line with Martapura MBS practices that not only emphasize compliance with rules, but also build inner awareness through reflective and iterative learning experiences. In this context, values such as empathy, responsibility and solidarity are not only taught, but sustainably instilled through direct involvement in the community.

Meanwhile, Noval's findings on the implementation of restorative justice in pesantren highlight the importance of mediation and the role of the community in resolving conflicts involving santri [6]. The recovery triangle model applied at MBS Martapura is a concrete representation of this approach, where wrongdoers are invited to realize the moral consequences of their actions through dialogue with victims and affected communities.

Thus, MBS Martapura can be categorized as a representation of a progressive pesantren that successfully internalizes Islamic values through a more inclusive, just, and transformative approach. The integration of restorative, participatory, and spiritual approaches in its education system makes an important contribution to the contextual, responsive, and sustainable character-based Islamic education model in the modern era.

5 Conclusion

This research shows that the educational approach applied at Pondok Pesantren Muhammadiyah Boarding School (MBS) Martapura is based on santri-friendly values that reject the practice of physical and symbolic violence in the santri development process. Instead, this pesantren develops a restorative justice-based recovery system that emphasizes dialogue, understanding of moral consequences, and social responsibility towards the community. The implementation of this approach involves all elements of civil society in the pesantren environment horizontally, including teachers, dormitory supervisor, kitchen and cleaning staff, and pesantren caregivers. Their active involvement is a form of participatory social control, which strengthens a culture of discipline based on awareness, not coercion. Every violation is not resolved by repressive punishment, but through a dialog mechanism between the perpetrator, victim, and affected community, as reflected in the practice of the recovery triangle.

In addition, pesantren also provide space for santri participation in the formulation of rules and collective reflection on mistakes. This reflects a democratic and transformative approach to education, which not only forms compliance, but also moral awareness and social empathy. This model strengthens the findings of a number of previous studies that emphasize the importance of restorative approaches, Sufistic-based character education, and civil society involvement in realizing a just, inclusive and dignified Islamic education environment.

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