

# Seniority Reconstruction and Violence Prevention in Pesantren: A Hybrid Model of Power Transformation

**Syamsul Arifin**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia,  
syamsul.arifin@uin-suka.ac.id

**Mufiqur Rahman**

Institut Agama Islam Al-Khairat Pamekasan, Indonesia,  
maufiqurrahmansurahman@gmail.com

**Muhammad Abri Harahap**

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Al-Bukhary Labuhanbatu, Indonesia  
muhammadsbriharahap@gmail.com

**Imam Tazali**

Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika Jakarta  
imam.itz@bsi.ac.id

**Hamidullah Marazi**

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies from Central University of Kashmir  
hamidnaseem@gmail.com

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Corresponding Author: Syamsul Arifin

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## Abstract

Violence and bullying in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) are rooted in seniority hierarchies through which senior students exercise supervisory authority over juniors. Existing scholarship either defends this hierarchy as pedagogically necessary or calls for its abolition. Neither position addresses reconstruction: how the tradition might be reshaped rather than preserved or dismantled. This study used an interpretive, embedded single-case design to examine how Ma'had Baitul Qur'an Madura transforms senior–junior power relations to prevent violence. Data were collected over six months (July–December 2025) through in-depth interviews with 13 purposively selected participants (senior students, junior students, *ustadz*, and administrators), participant observation, and document analysis. Analysis drew on a combined *Foucault, Weber, and Bourdieu* framework to trace simultaneous shifts in power modality, authority legitimacy, and dispositional foundations. The institution operationalized a hybrid model retaining the structural position of seniority while reorienting its operative logic from coercive discipline to moral and spiritual exemplarity through five integrated mechanisms: faith-based compliance, moral-leadership redefinition, prophetic pedagogical capacity, home pesantren alignment, and cross-hierarchical solidarity. Administrators delivered these through an integrated curriculum, leadership formation (*daurah*), teacher capacity building, parental engagement, and solidarity programming (*Ukhuwah Week*). Disciplinary records documented a 65.95% reduction in recorded violations across implementation phases (Semester 1:  $n = 213$ ; Semester 2:  $n = 64$ ), with coercive incidents declining 43.48%. A pesantren can pursue violence prevention without dismantling its defining traditions. The hybrid model offers a configurational, transferable framework for administrators and policymakers pursuing child-friendly Islamic education, applicable where *kiai*-centered authority and multi-domain programming capacity are present.

**Keywords:** reconstruction; seniority; power relations; violence prevention; hybrid model

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## Introduction

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are among Indonesia's oldest educational institutions, serving approximately 4.4 million students across more than 27,000 schools (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2023). A hierarchical social structure stands at the core of the pesantren's educational philosophy: senior students (santri) mentor and supervise their juniors in a tradition rooted in *ta'dzim* (respectful deference) toward elders and religious authorities, Achmadin et al.,<sup>1</sup> Fauzi et al.,<sup>2</sup> This structure has historically reinforced character formation and communal solidarity, but mounting evidence shows that it can also produce conditions in which violence and bullying take hold.

Data from the Indonesian Education Monitoring Network (JPPI) show reported violence in educational institutions rising sharply from 91 cases in 2020 to 573 in 2024, with pesantren accounting for 114 of those cases (20%).<sup>3</sup> This typology comprises sexual violence (42%), bullying (31%), psychological violence (11%), and physical violence (10%).<sup>4</sup> The pattern is structural, not incidental: the power dynamics governing daily pesantren life create the conditions for abuse, Wudda et al.,<sup>5</sup> Oktaviani et al.,<sup>6</sup> The question is how to reconstruct those traditions without dismantling the values that define them.

Three theoretical frameworks anchor the analytical approach. Foucault's distinction between disciplinary power, which operates through surveillance and punishment, and productive power, which shapes subjects who internalize norms, provides the foundational lens: in the pesantren context, the aim is not to eliminate power but to shift its operative mode.<sup>7</sup> Weber's typology of authority clarifies how this shift occurs institutionally, moving from traditional authority (legitimized by inherited custom) to

<sup>1</sup> Balya Ziaulhaq Achmadin et al., "Deconstructing the Kiai and Santri Relationship: A Critical Review of Power and Cultural Dynamics," *El Harakah: Jurnal Budaya Islam* 26, no. 2 (November 30, 2024): 367–92, <https://doi.org/10.18860/eh.v26i2.29573>.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad Fauzi, Siti Kholifah, and Titi Fitrianita, "Pengetahuan Sebagai Alat Kuasa Penundukan Santri," *Oetoesan-Hindia: Telaah Pemikiran Kebangsaan* 1, no. 1 (October 7, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.34199/oh.1.1.2019.002>.

<sup>3</sup> Rikhul Jannah, "Kaleidoskop 2024: 114 Kasus Kekerasan Terjadi Di Pesantren, PBNU Bentuk Satgas Untuk Menanganinya," NU Online (Jakarta, 2024), <https://nu.or.id/nasional/kaleidoskop-2024-114-kasus-kekerasan-terjadi-di-pesantren-pbnu-bentuk-satgas-untuk-menanganinya-ZkXme?>.

<sup>4</sup> detik Sumut

<sup>5</sup> Afifa Rahma Wudda et al., "PERILAKU KELOMPOK DAN DINAMIKA SENIORITAS : STRATEGI MEMBANGUN" 9, no. 204 (2024): 3073–88.

<sup>6</sup> Indah Oktaviani et al., "Pendidikan Inklusif Gender Sebagai Upaya Pencegahan Kekerasan Seksual Di Pondok Pesantren," *Jurnal Sosiologi USK (Media Pemikiran & Aplikasi)* 18, no. 1 (2024).

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (Pantheon, 1980).

charismatic authority (legitimized by the moral and spiritual qualities of the leader).<sup>8</sup> Where Foucault explains the modality of power, Weber explains its legitimation. Bourdieu's concept of habitus completes the picture. When the religious habitus of senior students is reshaped from domination toward moral service, the change becomes dispositional rather than behavioral, and therefore more durable.<sup>9</sup>

These frameworks yield a unified proposition: pesantren can prevent violence by reconstructing hierarchical traditions rather than dismantling them, shifting seniority's operative logic from coercive discipline to moral exemplarity. This study refers to this configuration as the hybrid model. Foucault supplies one dimension of the shift (disciplinary to productive power), Weber a *Second* (traditional to charismatic authority), and Bourdieu a *Third* (dominant to religious habitus). The hybrid model serves as the theoretical foundation for the empirical case presented here.

The traditionalist position treats hierarchy as a disciplinary instrument. A body of scholarship regards the hierarchical structure of pesantren as essential to its educational mission. Hikmawan et al. argue that traditional power relations are necessary instruments of discipline and that transformation risks weakening authority and disrupting social order.<sup>10</sup> Muhibah frames hierarchy as a mechanism of control and traditional respect,<sup>11</sup> while Farida warns that excessive transformation could erode moral values and foster individualistic attitudes among students.<sup>12</sup> Rohematul Kutsiyah and Itaanis Tianah confirm that the kiai and senior-santri traditions continue to foster a strong culture of obedience.<sup>13</sup> Within this perspective, seniority-based authority is a pedagogical resource to be preserved rather than a problem to be solved.<sup>14</sup> This literature neither accounts for

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<sup>8</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 2 (University of California press, 1978).

<sup>9</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Harvard University Press, 1991).

<sup>10</sup> M Dian Hikmawan, M Godjali, and Ika Indriyany, "Kiai Dan Strukturasi Kekuasaan Di Pandeglang, Banten," *Politika: Jurnal Ilmu Politik* 12 (April 27, 2021): 88–106, <https://doi.org/10.14710/politika.12.1.2021.88-106>.

<sup>11</sup> Siti Muhibah, "Model Pengembangan Pendidikan Karakter Melalui Pendidikan Agama Di Perguruan Tinggi: Studi Kasus Di Universitas Tirtayasa Banten," *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama Dan Keagamaan* 18, no. 1 (2020): 54–69, <https://doi.org/10.32729/edukasi.v18i1.683>.

<sup>12</sup> Fani Farida, "The Modernization Practices of Pesantrens in Salatiga," *ATTARBIYAH: Journal of Islamic Culture and Education* 2, no. 2 (2017): 153–73.

<sup>13</sup> Rohematul Kutsiyah and Itaanis Tianah, "Peran Sentral Kiai Pada Masyarakat Madura: Studi Atas Peran Kiai Di Pondok Pesantren Raudhatul Qur'an Pamekasan," *Entita: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, May 6, 2025, 1007–19, <https://doi.org/10.19105/ejpis.v1i.19218>.

<sup>14</sup> BZ Fitri Pebriaisyah, Wilodati Wilodati, and Siti Komariah, "KEKERASAN SEKSUAL DI LEMBAGA PENDIDIKAN KEAGAMAAN: RELASI KUASA KYAI TERHADAP SANTRI PEREMPUAN DI

the empirical evidence of violence emerging from these same structures nor offers criteria to distinguish productive discipline from abusive domination.

The transformative position calls for restructuring power for humanistic education. A contrasting body of research advocates fundamental reconstruction of power relations in pesantren. Helmi and Sari show that leadership training for senior students increases their sensitivity to juniors' needs.<sup>15</sup> Salim et al.<sup>16</sup> argue that leadership innovation in modern pesantren can bridge tradition and modernity through inclusive collaboration. Islamic pedagogical concepts such as *Ukhuwah Islamiyah*, *Adab*, and the role of the murabbi offer frameworks for more equitable relationships. Kasmar et al.,<sup>17</sup> Muchtar & Inayah,<sup>18</sup> and Fahrurrozi et al.<sup>19</sup> document how *ustadz* are transformed from formal authorities into academic mentors. Character-education and *Ukhuwah Islamiyah* interventions have reduced seniority-based violence,<sup>20</sup> and pesantren regulations grounded in children's rights can balance senior–junior relations without eliminating the mentoring function. Ernawati,<sup>21</sup> Dewi, and Hakim<sup>22</sup> go further and advocate the abolition of seniority systems altogether. This literature, however, tends toward normative prescription without providing systematic evidence of how specific institutions operationalize such changes or evaluating the effectiveness of interventions across multiple domains simultaneously.

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PESANTREN," *Jurnal Harkat: Media Komunikasi Gender* 18, no. 2 (October 3, 2022): 33–42, <https://doi.org/10.15408/harkat.v18i2.26183>.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Helmi and Niki Puspita Sari, "Implementation of the Synergy of Transformational-Servant Leadership Character in Islamic Boarding School," *Journal of Leadership in Organizations* 3, no. 2 (2021): 173–92.

<sup>16</sup> Nur Agus Salim et al., "Islamic Boarding School Leadership Innovation: From Traditional to Modernization of Education," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 4 (January 8, 2025): 447–60, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v5i4.1392>.

<sup>17</sup> Indah Fadilatul Kasmar et al., "The Concepts of Mudarris, Mu'allim, Murabbi, Mursyid, Muaddib in Islamic Education," *Khalifa Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 2 (2019): 107–25.

<sup>18</sup> Nicky Estu Putu Muchtar and Karimatul Inayah, "The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Instilling Ukhuwah Islamiyah through Tafsir Learning," *ATTARBIYAH: Journal of Islamic Culture and Education* 10, no. 1 (June 26, 2025): 103–24, <https://doi.org/10.18326/attarbiyah.v10i1.103-124>.

<sup>19</sup> Fahrurrozi Fahrurrozi et al., "Transforming Learning in Islamic Education: A Study of Pedagogical Change and Student Achievement in Indonesia," *Didaktika Religia* 13, no. 1 SE-Articles (June 10, 2025): 31–51, <https://doi.org/10.30762/didaktika.v13i1.3577>.

<sup>20</sup> Akhmad Ramli et al., "The Urgency of Islamic Character Education to Anticipate Bullying Behavior in Boarding Schools," *At-Ta'dib* 18, no. 1 (June 28, 2023): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.21111/attadib.v18i1.9823>.

<sup>21</sup> Ernawati Ernawati, "Sosialisasi Meningkatkan Kesadaran Santri Terhadap Tindakan Bullying Di Pesantren," *ABDI MOESTOPO: Jurnal Pengabdian Pada Masyarakat* 1, no. 02 (2018): 38–44.

<sup>22</sup> Meliana Dewi and Fany Nur Rahmadiana Hakim, "Kekerasan Seksual Di Pesantren: Analisis Power and Control Dengan Pendekatan Relasi Gender," *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research* 5, no. 4 (2025): 7374–87.

An emerging middle ground proposes reconstructing rather than eliminating seniority. More recent scholarship explores a *Third* possibility: reconstructing seniority as a vehicle for moral exemplarity rather than domination. Ridwan Hermawan et al.,<sup>23</sup> show that seniority patterns carry ambivalent implications, simultaneously training leadership and opening space for interpersonal violence. Nauval<sup>24</sup> describes participatory power relations in which authority is preserved but oriented toward *Ukhuwah* and humanistic education. Huda<sup>25</sup> argues that seniority can shift from control to mentoring, while Matondang et al. reposition its function from domination to spiritual exemplarity.<sup>26</sup> Hosaini et al.<sup>27</sup> propose a tawhid-based pedagogy, and Warsah shows that teacher–student relationships can be oriented toward compassion (*rahmah*) and moral guidance.<sup>28</sup> Mutoharoh documents resistance among younger santri to repressive seniority practices and finds that dialogical spaces encourage more equal approaches.<sup>29</sup> This emerging work points in a productive direction, yet it remains largely theoretical or limited to descriptive accounts of general trends rather than systematic evidence from specific institutions.

Three gaps persist in this literature. *First*, no study has documented how a specific pesantren operationalizes a hybrid model that reconstructs, rather than eliminating or freezing, the hierarchical relation between senior and junior students. Most existing work remains normative: it prescribes reconstruction without tracing the institutional mechanisms through which it occurs. *Second*, no study has examined multidomain interventions, curriculum reform, leadership development, teacher training, and parental engagement as a coordinated whole. Researchers typically address one domain in

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<sup>23</sup> Ridwan Hermawan et al., “Dinamika Bullying Di Lingkungan Pesantren Perspektif Psikososial Dan Pendidikan Islam Yang Holistik,” *Reflection : Islamic Education Journal* 2, no. 3 (July 30, 2025): 272–86, <https://doi.org/10.61132/reflection.v2i3.1193>.

<sup>24</sup> Mukhammad Hubbab Nauval, “The Authority and Domination of Kyai in Forming Religious Discourse and Practice in Islamic Boarding Schools,” *Indev: Literasi Media Dakwah Dan Pengembangan Masyarakat* 3, no. 1 (June 11, 2024): 1, <https://doi.org/10.31958/indev.v3i1.12471>.

<sup>25</sup> Farida Isroani and Muallimul Huda, “Strengthening Character Education Through Holistic Learning Values,” *QUALITY* 10, no. 2 (2022): 289–306.

<sup>26</sup> Fatiha Sabila Putri Matondang, Firman Firman, and Riska Ahmad, “Bullying Menjadi Budaya Pendidikan Di Lingkungan Pesantren,” *Keguruan Online* 10, no. 2 (2022): 37–41.

<sup>27</sup> Hosaini Hosaini et al., “Tawheed-Based Pedagogy: Empowering Islamic Education Through Community Engagement And Pesantren Tradition,” *Journal Of Human And Education (JAHE)* 4, no. 4 (August 14, 2024): 844–52, <https://doi.org/10.31004/jh.v4i4.1110>.

<sup>28</sup> Idi Warsah, “Religious Educators: A Psychological Study of Qur’anic Verses Regarding Al-Rahmah,” *AL QUDDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis* 4, no. 2 (November 12, 2020): 275, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v4i2.1762>.

<sup>29</sup> Mutoharoh, “FENOMENOLOGI RESISTENSI SANTRI TERHADAP TATA TERTIB PONDOK PESANTREN,” *Paradigma* 5, no. 2 SE-Articles (May 10, 2017), <https://ejournal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/paradigma/article/view/19218>.

isolation, thereby missing the compound effects. *Third*, no study has applied a combined *Foucault, Weber, Bourdieu* framework to analyze how power's modality, legitimacy, and dispositional foundations shift simultaneously within a single pesantren, despite the clear theoretical fit of these perspectives.

This study addresses these gaps through an in-depth case study of Ma'had Baitul Qur'an Madura, an Islamic boarding school that has implemented a comprehensive set of interventions to transform senior–junior power relations. Three research questions guide the inquiry: (1) How does Ma'had Baitul Qur'an Madura operationalize the reconstruction of power relations between senior and junior students through its educational programs? (2) What mechanisms enable the reconstruction of seniority from coercive authority to moral exemplarity? (3) To what extent have these interventions contributed to violence prevention in the pesantren environment?

The study contributes on three levels. Theoretically, it introduces and empirically grounds the hybrid model: an institutional arrangement that maintains the structural position of seniority while reconstructing its operative logic from coercive discipline toward moral and spiritual exemplarity through five integrated mechanisms (faith-based compliance, moral leadership redefinition, prophetic pedagogical capacity, home–pesantren alignment, and cross-hierarchical solidarity). Methodologically, it demonstrates the value of an embedded case study design (Yin) that captures the perspectives of students, *ustadz*, and administrators across their distinct roles in analyzing power transformation.<sup>30</sup> Practically, it offers a transferable configurational model for pesantren administrators and policymakers who seek to prevent violence without abandoning the traditions that define pesantren education. The model identifies the conditions under which reconstruction rather than abolition of seniority can operate; its application to contexts with different authority structures or institutional capacities requires contextual adaptation rather than direct replication.

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopts an interpretive paradigm with a qualitative case study design.<sup>31</sup> Rather than measuring variables or testing hypotheses, it captures the lived experiences,

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<sup>30</sup> Robert K Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 6th ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018).

<sup>31</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*.

perceptions, and negotiated practices through which power reconstruction occurs in daily pesantren life, specifically the meanings that students, *ustadz*, and administrators construct around power relations, seniority, and violence.<sup>32</sup> The case study design suits this inquiry because the boundaries between the phenomenon and its institutional context are difficult to separate.

The unit of analysis is Ma'had Baitul Qur'an Madura, a pesantren in Madura, East Java, Indonesia. Three criteria, following Yin's notion of a revelatory case, informed its selection. *First*, the institution combines classical pesantren traditions, Qur'anic-text study, reverence culture, and kiai-centered authority with a modern curriculum that includes leadership training, parental involvement, and character development. Few pesantren integrate these elements with comparable depth, parental involvement, and character-development programs. Few pesantren integrate these elements with comparable depth, which makes this an unusual empirical site for studying how tradition and reconstruction coexist. *Second*, the pesantren has documented both the emergence of seniority-based violence and a subsequent series of comprehensive institutional interventions, allowing the problem and the response to be observed within a single case. *Third*, the institution granted full research access, including dormitory immersion, disciplinary records, and permission to interview students, *ustadz*, and administrators.

The study uses an embedded case study design (Yin), treating the pesantren as the primary unit while analyzing four embedded sub-units: senior students (student leaders), junior students, *ustadz* (*ustadz* and supervisors), and administrators. This structure enables a multidimensional analysis of how each group experiences and enacts power reconstruction within the same institutional setting.

Thirteen participants were selected through purposive sampling based on three criteria: direct involvement in senior–junior power dynamics, direct experience of the institutional interventions under study, and willingness to participate in in-depth interviews. This sampling frame captures the perspectives of institutional actors present during the intervention period. It does not include santri who experienced seniority-based violence before the implementation of the hybrid model, nor alumni who could offer retrospective accounts of the pre-intervention environment. This is a substantive limitation: the reconstruction's success as experienced by those most harmed by the

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<sup>32</sup> Burhan Bungin, "Analisis Data Penelitian Kualitatif," 2007.

previous configuration cannot be assessed from the present sample. Future research should address this through retrospective interviews with alumni or longitudinal designs that track student experience across the full tenure period. Table 1 presents their profiles.

Table 1.  
Participant Profiles

No	Category	Code	Role / Level	Experience	Reason for Selection
1	Senior Student	SS-1	Chairperson, Organtri	6th Year	Primary leadership role; direct mentoring experience
2	Senior Student	SS-2	Security team member	5th Year	Enforcement role; experienced emotional transition
3	Senior Student	SS-3	Organtri member	5th Year	Participated in the <i>daurah</i> training
4	Senior Student	SS-4	Mentor for administrators	6th Year	Experience supervising administrative staff
5	Junior Student	JS-1	MTs/SMP student	2nd Year	Direct experience of senior-junior interaction
6	Junior Student	JS-2	Middle school	Grade 1	New-student perspective on power dynamics
7	Junior Student	JS-3	MTs/SMP student	3rd Year	Observed changes over time
8	Junior Student	JS-4	High school	4th Year	Transition phase between junior and senior
9	Teacher / Mentor	UT-1	Religious education	4 years	Curriculum-design involvement
10	Ustadz / Supervisor	UT-2	Discipline & supervision	4 years	Monthly study facilitator
11	Ustadz / Supervisor	UT-3	Pastoral guidance	4 years	Dormitory supervision
12	Administrator	AD-1	Curriculum section	3 years	Policy-formulation role
13	Administrator	AD-2	Public relations	5 years	Parental-involvement coordination

Field research ran from July to December 2025 at Ma'had Baitul Qur'an Madura. The researcher collected data through three complementary methods: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, serving both data enrichment and methodological triangulation.<sup>33</sup>

*In-depth interviews.* Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all thirteen participants, each lasting 35 to 45 minutes. The protocol covered power relations, seniority experiences, institutional interventions, and perceived change, organized around the three research questions. Senior- and junior-student interviews focused on

<sup>33</sup> John W Creswell and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Sage publications, 2016).

experiences of power dynamics and perceptions of reconstruction. *Ustadz* interviews explored pedagogical practices, the influence of classical-text studies, and observed behavioral shifts. Administrator interviews addressed institutional strategies, policy foundations, and monitoring mechanisms. The researcher audio-recorded all interviews with participant consent and transcribed them verbatim within 48 hours.

*Participant observation.* The researcher engaged in six months of immersion within the pesantren, observing dormitory routines, *tahfidz* sessions, *daurah* meetings, monthly organtri studies, Pekan *Ukhuwah* activities, and Majelis Kiai sessions. A structured protocol guided observation across three dimensions: interaction patterns between senior and junior students, the exercise of authority by student administrators, and teacher involvement in supervisory activities. The researcher recorded field notes immediately after each session, resulting in approximately 15 pages of observational data.

*Document analysis.* The researcher collected and analyzed institutional documents to situate the findings in their historical and social context. These documents included the written regulations of the boarding school; disciplinary-violation records covering the study period (2024–2025); curriculum documents for six programs (*Faith, Qur'an, 'Ulum Syar'iyah, Murafaqat, Leadership Training, and Majelis Kiai & Daurah*); activity schedules for *daurah, rihlah, and Ukhuwah Week*; minutes of the parent study-forum meetings; and archival records documenting changes in disciplinary practice over time. These documents corroborated the interview and observation data and supported the tracking of institutional change.

The analysis followed four phases that integrated inductive coding with Yin's case study analytical strategies. *Phase 1: Organizing and familiarizing.* The researcher organized all interview transcripts, field notes, and document summaries chronologically and by participant category. Repeated readings of the full dataset built familiarity and surfaced initial patterns.

*Phase 2: Thematic coding.* Open coding produced descriptive codes from the data (for example, “seniors offer advice rather than orders,” “juniors feel less afraid,” and “the training program changes perspectives”). The researcher grouped these into axial categories aligned with the five components of the hybrid model: faith-based compliance, the redefinition of moral leadership, prophetic pedagogical capacity, home–pesantren

alignment, and cross-hierarchical solidarity. A coding matrix mapped the relationships among data sources, codes, categories, and theoretical constructs.

*Phase 3: Analytical strategies.* Three of Yin’s strategies structured the coded analysis. Pattern matching compared empirical patterns of power relations at Ma’had Baitul Qur’an Madura against theoretical predictions from the *Foucault, Weber, and Bourdieu* frameworks, examining whether observed shifts in senior students’ behavior aligned with predicted transitions from disciplinary to productive power (Foucault), traditional to charismatic authority (Weber), and dominant to religious habitus (Bourdieu). Explanation building constructed a causal narrative of how the senior–junior hierarchical relationship evolved into an educational and collaborative one; the researcher traced the mechanisms through which each intervention (curriculum, leadership training, teacher development, parental engagement, and solidarity activities) contributed to this reconstruction, building the explanation iteratively through repeated comparison between data and emerging propositions. Time-series analysis examined changes in disciplinary records, participation patterns, and relationship dynamics before and after the implementation of the violence-prevention interventions, drawing on disciplinary records across the study period.

*Phase 4: Cross-case synthesis.* The researcher compared and synthesized findings from each embedded sub-unit (senior students, junior students, *ustadz*, and administrators) to produce a holistic account of the reconstruction process. Convergent findings across sub-units strengthened the conclusions, while divergent perspectives were analyzed for their implications.

Table 2.  
Alignment of Analytical Strategies with Research Questions and Theoretical Framework

<b>Analytical Strategy</b>	<b>Research Question Addressed</b>	<b>Theoretical Lens Applied</b>
Pattern matching	RQ1: How does the pesantren implement this reconstruction?	Foucault (disciplinary → productive power); Weber (traditional → charismatic authority); Bourdieu (habitus reconstruction)
Explanation building	RQ2: What mechanisms enable the reconstruction of seniority?	Five components of the hybrid model at the mechanism level
Time-series analysis	RQ3: To what extent have interventions prevented violence?	Pre–post comparison of disciplinary-offense data

The researcher established trustworthiness through the four criteria of Lincoln and Guba (1985). For credibility, the researcher triangulated methods (interviews, observations, and documents) and sources (senior students, junior students, *ustadz*, and administrators), sustained field engagement over six months, and verified preliminary findings with key informants. To enhance transferability, the researcher provided a detailed description of the pesantren's context, institutional culture, and intervention process, enabling readers to assess applicability to other settings. For dependability, the researcher maintained an audit trail of documented procedures, coding decisions, and analysis notes. For confirmability, the researcher kept reflective notes documenting personal assumptions and potential biases throughout the analysis.

This study adhered to the ethical principles applicable to research involving human participants. For participants under 18, the researchers obtained consent from students and written consent from parents or guardians through the boarding school administration. All participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. The researchers anonymized all personally identifiable information using participant codes ([Table 1](#)) and stored the data in a secure system accessible only to the research team. Interview questions were designed to minimize the risk of re-traumatization; participants could skip any question or stop the interview at any time.

## **Findings**

The findings are organized around the three research questions and the five mechanisms of the hybrid model. We *first* describe the curricular architecture through which the pesantren operationalizes reconstruction (RQ1), then trace the mechanisms by which the pesantren reconstructs seniority from coercive authority into moral exemplarity (RQ2), and finally present evidence on violence prevention (RQ3).

### **Curricular Architecture of the Reconstruction (RQ1)**

Awareness of the potential for violence arising from the seniority culture, compounded by the students' round-the-clock residence at the boarding school, prompted management and *ustadz* to design a more systematic curriculum. From this effort, management and *ustadz* designed six curricula: Faith, Qur'an, 'Ulum Syar'iyah, Murafaqat, Leadership Training, and Majlis Kiai & *Daurah*. Of these six, three target

character formation directly: the Faith Curriculum, the Leadership Training Curriculum, and the Majlis Kiai & *Daurah*, all of which confirm the pesantren’s commitment to strengthening students’ manners and conduct. The Faith Curriculum, for instance, is designed to strengthen belief from an early age, especially at the MTs/SMP level, so that the resulting behavior rests on internalized religious awareness rather than external rules alone.

Teacher capacity was developed in parallel through the structured study of two classical works, *Ar-Rasul al-Mu’allim* and *Khamsuna Mawqifan lin-Nabiyyi* (peace be upon him) *ma’a as-saghir*. Both texts foreground the Prophet’s educational methods in accompanying and interacting with children, serving as key references for cultivating a more humanistic learning climate. In addition to coaching students and *ustadz*, the pesantren established a parental study program held every three months, focused on Qur’anic parenting (for example, drawing lessons from the families of the Prophet Zakaria and of Luqman al-Hakim) to align educational patterns between home and pesantren. Table 3 summarizes how each program reshapes senior–junior relations.

Table 3.  
Reconstruction of Power Relations through the Pesantren’s Curriculum and Programs

<b>Curriculum / Program</b>	<b>Main Focus</b>	<b>Impact on Senior–Junior Relations</b>
Faith Curriculum	Strengthening spirituality and basic manners	Builds religious awareness; obedience stems from faith rather than coercion.
Leadership Training & Majlis Kiai	Wisdom-based leadership formation	Positions senior students as role models rather than oppressive supervisors
Student Retreat ( <i>Daurah</i> )	Emotional and spiritual development of prospective leaders	Encourages leaders to regulate their emotions and guide with compassion
Study of <i>Ustadz</i> (classical texts)	The Prophet’s model of interacting with children	<i>Ustadz</i> and supervisors educate with kindness, not violence
Parenting Studies for Guardians	Aligning home and pesantren parenting styles	Reduces the gap between the home and the pesantren authority
<i>Ukhuwah</i> Week	Cross-level collaborative activities	Dissolves senior–junior distance and fosters equal solidarity

**Mechanisms Reconstructing Seniority (RQ2)**

Faith-based compliance. The pesantren grounds obedience in internalized faith rather than fear of sanction. Administrators came to interpret leadership not as supervision or compulsion but as self-improvement. The driving logic was theological: when senior students exemplify faith, juniors obey by conviction rather than coercion. As AD-1, the

curriculum administrator, observed, the curriculum must now strengthen manners and knowledge rooted in Islamic values, so that the pesantren no longer focuses solely on teaching students to read and memorize the Qur'an, but also directs them to live out these values.

The most visible reconstruction occurred in the role of senior students as administrators (*organtri*, the pesantren's student-leadership council). Through the *daurah* program and monthly studies, fifth-year students entrusted as administrators and sixth-year students serving as their mentors were guided toward spiritual and emotional development. Observation showed that the material emphasized the Prophet's leadership model and the example of his companions, foregrounding wisdom. At the same time, problem-solving was oriented toward *tazkiyatun nufus* (purification of the soul) for both administrators and clerics. The presiding kiai emphasized that administrators' obedience to God shapes the conduct of those they lead, so that if the administrators are upright, the students they lead are likelier to be obedient; he added that punishment is a last resort, to be applied only in accordance with Shari'a procedure and pesantren rules.

Observation of the monthly *organtri* study showed that UT-2, the facilitating ustadz, opened each session with an informal conversation in which administrators voiced their difficulties in guiding students. These difficulties varied by age group: upper-level students were hard to guide because they were close in age to the administrators. In contrast, lower-level students posed challenges because they were still children. At the close of each session, UT-2 read moral messages from classical Islamic figures, including Sufyan al-Tsauri's counsel to Abu Ja'far al-Mansur on the role of a just leader in securing the welfare of the people, and Umar ibn al-Khattab's instruction to al-Mughirah to be a leader who offers security to the good and deterrence to the wrongdoer.

The student leaders' own accounts confirm this reorientation. SS-1, the chairperson of the *organtri*, described his early difficulty in leading peers of his own age and how the monthly *daurah* helped him learn to advise rather than command:

“At *First*, it was quite difficult to guide my friends, especially since they were my age. After attending the monthly *daurah* and studies, I began to understand how to give good advice. The ustadz often emphasized that administrators must set an example, not just give orders.”

SS-2, a member of the security team, recounted a parallel shift from near-aggression toward patience:

“When I *first* became a leader, I often had difficulty controlling my emotions, and I almost resorted to violence. After the guidance in the monthly *daurah*, I learned that a leader must be patient, fair, and not easily angered, as the Prophet exemplified. I realized that when we obey God, the santri are likelier to obey, whereas if we are negligent, they too will be negligent.”

*Prophetic pedagogical capacity.* The structured study of Ar-Rasul al-Mu'allim and Khamsuna Mawqifan equipped *ustadz* and supervisors (*musrif*) to interact with students through the Prophet's humane methods rather than coercion. The pesantren treats every institutional element as capable of both good and harm, which is why it continually upgrades its human resources by having staff examine and emulate the Prophet's patterns of education and interaction.

Home pesantren alignment. AD-2, the public-relations administrator, described how the quarterly parental study aligns the perspectives of the three pesantren constituencies so that education continues during students' holidays:

“The three elements of the pesantren, the administrators and *ustadz*, the students, and the parents, must share the same perspective on children's education, so that the educational process takes place not only at the pesantren but also during the children's vacations. To unify this perspective, the ma'had asks the public relations department to develop study materials for parents. This activity is carried out every three months, four times a year.”

*Cross-hierarchical solidarity.* Among the most notable innovations is *Ukhuwah Week*, an annual program designed to strengthen solidarity. Students are organized into heterogeneous groups of at least 7 members, drawn from all grade levels, and spend a week playing traditional games and sports, such as soccer and volleyball, that emphasize togetherness. At the closing ceremony, each student gives a gift to the peer they disliked most during the activity, especially someone outside their own group, as a gesture of appreciation, reconciliation, and renewed friendship.

Junior students reported that such activities brought them closer to seniors without heavy-handed control. As one junior student put it, the activities made interactions warmer and more relaxed because administrators intervened little. Another described how the administrators' restraint produced respect grounded in self-awareness rather than fear:

“Sometimes when I break the rules, the administrators just smile and do not get angry. But that makes us ashamed, so we recognize our mistake and do not repeat it.”

These accounts indicate that administrators prioritize example and self-control over strict commands, generating respect that arises from awareness of one's own conduct

rather than from coercion. Table 4 synthesizes the resulting shift in the operative logic of seniority across the three theoretical dimensions.

Table 4.  
Shift in the Operative Logic of Seniority

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Before (Coercive Logic)</b>	<b>After (Exemplary Logic)</b>	<b>Theoretical Lens</b>
Modality of power	Surveillance and punishment by senior students	Internalized norms; obedience by conviction	Foucault: disciplinary → productive power
Legitimacy of authority	Authority from inherited custom and rank	Authority from moral and spiritual qualities	Weber: traditional → charismatic authority
Disposition (habitus)	Senior identity oriented to domination	Senior identity oriented to moral service	Bourdieu: dominant → religious habitus
Discipline practice	Punitive sanctions for violations	Guidance, reflection, and counsel	Restorative orientation

**Evidence on Violence Prevention (RQ3)**

Disciplinary records document a measurable shift in the number of violations recorded across the two implementation phases of the character-building program. The hybrid model was launched in July 2024; Semester 1 (July–December 2024), therefore, captures early implementation rather than a pre-intervention baseline, and Semester 2 (January–June 2025) captures the consolidation phase. No pre-intervention baseline exists in the institutional record, which means the data cannot support causal attribution to the hybrid model's components. What the data can establish is a within-implementation trend: recorded violations fell substantially between the early and consolidation phases, a pattern consistent with, though not proof of, the mechanisms described in RQ1 and RQ2. Whether this shift reflects genuine behavioral change, a change in reporting practices, or both remains an empirical question that longitudinal research with a true pre-intervention baseline would need to resolve.

Table 5.  
Source: Institutional disciplinary records, Ma'had Baitul Qur'an Madura (2024–2025)

<b>Violation Category</b>	<b>Semester 1 (Jul–Dec 2024) Early Implementation</b>	<b>Semester 2 (Jan–Jun 2025) Consolidation Phase</b>	<b>Change (n)</b>	<b>Change (%)</b>
Total recorded violations	213	64	−149	−65.95%
Physical or verbal coercion	23	13	−10	−43.48%

Other violations	190	51	-139	-73.16%
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*Source: Institutional disciplinary records, Ma'had Baitul Qur'an Madura (2024–2025). Categories were defined by pesantren staff before implementation and applied consistently across both semesters, as per institutional documentation. These figures represent recorded incidents as entered by supervising staff; independent verification was not conducted. The absence of a pre-July 2024 baseline means the table documents only within-implementation changes.*

Recorded total violations fell from 213 to 64 across the two phases, a within-implementation reduction of 65.95%. Physical and verbal coercion specifically dropped from 23 to 13 incidents (43.48%), while other infractions fell 73.16%. The slower decline in coercion relative to other violations is noteworthy: it suggests that physically and verbally coercive conduct is more resistant to the mechanisms the hybrid model targets than are administrative infractions. This pattern is consistent with the qualitative finding that faith-based compliance and moral-leadership redefinition require sustained dispositional change rather than behavioral adjustment alone. However, two interpretive cautions apply. *First*, because both semesters fall within the implementation period, the reduction documents a within-program trend rather than a pre-to-post comparison. *Second*, the possibility that reporting practices, rather than behavior, changed between semesters cannot be ruled out solely based on institutional records. Both cautions are addressed in the Limitations section.

The pesantren imposed no punitive penalties. The mu'ezzin drew on violation records to counsel students during *tahfidz* and to select topics for the Majelis Kiai; the same records informed the quarterly guardian forum. A supervising ustadz described this approach as more effective than punishment. That judgment is consistent with the authority structure documented in RQ1 and RQ2, in which moral exemplarity performs the work that coercive enforcement once did.

Observational data confirmed the pattern. Students read hadith with the surrounding community after midday and evening prayers. Santri and ustadz moved through the pesantren with visible ease; administrators did not separate themselves from other residents, *adab* held: students kissed the ustadz's hand in greeting and addressed senior santri as "brother." The form of deference remained; its coercive content did not.

Institutionalization ran from management outward. Administrators introduced *daurah*, *rihlah*, Majelis Kiai, *Ukhuwah* Week, and *takrim al-huffaz* at the institutional level; the practices spread until students and staff maintained them without prompting.

The three research questions trace a single arc: programmatic design in RQ1, leadership formation in RQ2, and behavioral outcomes here. The mechanisms work because they operate together, not because any one of them is sufficient on its own.

## Discussion

Seniority remains widely regarded as a dominant factor in the practice of violence in Islamic boarding schools. Research by Sulastri et al.<sup>34</sup> shows that the imbalance between senior and junior students, and the breadth of senior students' authority to implement, supervise, and evaluate pesantren activities, can give rise to forms of violence legitimized by pesantren culture. The case of Ma'had Baitul Qur'an Madura demonstrates systematic counter-efforts through curriculum-based strategies, student leadership formation, and the involvement of guardians in their children's education. This hybrid model accommodates traditional pesantren elements such as ta'dzim Harahap and Ahmad, while cultivating equality and compassion in power relations.<sup>35</sup>

Foucault emphasizes that power does not operate solely through repression; it also shapes subjects through disciplinary practice. When student discipline becomes excessive, the seniority pattern can yield disciplinary power that produces violence.<sup>36</sup> At Ma'had Baitul Qur'an Madura, by contrast, power has been transformed into an educational instrument through the internalization of a religious habitus,<sup>37</sup> cultivated via the Faith Curriculum, the strengthening of students' leadership spirit, and the *daurah*. This pattern has shifted seniors' legitimacy from dominance-based authority to charismatic authority grounded in moral and spiritual example.<sup>38</sup> In practice, coercive power fades as symbolic power rooted in exemplary faith comes to dominate, a finding

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<sup>34</sup> Putri Dwi Sulastri, Abdur Razzaq, and Bela Janare Putra, "IMPLEMENTATION PATTERNS AND STRATEGIES OF THE ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL AL AMALUL KHAIR IN DEALING WITH THE PHENOMENON OF SENIORITY AMONG STUDENTS," *Jurnal Konseling Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 2 (July 13, 2024): 322–31, <https://doi.org/10.32806/jkpi.v5i2.152>.

<sup>35</sup> Musaddad Harahap and Mawardi Ahmad, "Relevansi Tradisi Pondok Pesantren Dalam Membentuk Sikap Ta'dzim Santri Di Pondok Pesantren Dar El-Himkah Kota Pekanbaru," *Jurnal At-Tarbiyyah: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 2 (2020).

<sup>36</sup> Misbah Mustofa, "Analisis Disiplin Dan Kuasa Tubuh Michel Foucault Dalam Kehidupan Santri Pondok Kebon Jambu Al-Islamy Pesantren Babakan Ciwaringin Cirebon," *Jurnal Yaqzhan: Analisis Filsafat, Agama Dan Kemanusiaan* 3, no. 1 (2017).

<sup>37</sup> Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*.

<sup>38</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*.

consistent with Riva'i<sup>39</sup> and Nilan,<sup>40</sup> who show that symbolic practices can shift power relations in pesantren from repressive toward educational and collaborative.

A more critical Foucauldian reading would caution that this shift does not straightforwardly represent emancipation. Productive power, the mode that operates through internalized norms rather than external coercion, is, in Foucault's account, more totalizing precisely because its subjects become self-regulating: they carry the apparatus of governance within themselves. On this reading, the hybrid model's success in reducing coercive incidents might reflect not a more humane institution but a more thoroughly governmentalized one, in which seniority's authority has been extended inward rather than constrained outward. We do not dismiss this reading. It remains, however, analytically incomplete for the present case in two respects. *First*, the pesantren's own normative framework draws a morally significant distinction between coerced compliance and faith-based internalization, a distinction that a purely structural analysis flattens. *Second*, the empirical shift documented here, in which senior students describe their own transition from near-coercion toward patience and example, is consistent with genuine dispositional change, not merely with more effective subjection. Both readings deserve sustained empirical scrutiny in longitudinal research.

In practice, the reconstruction proceeds through three strategies. *First*, the character curriculum (Faith, Leadership Training, and *Daurah*) is strengthened. This aligns with Miller et al.,<sup>41</sup> who show that academic intervention improves social competence, reading achievement, and parent-child interaction, and with Pedro,<sup>42</sup> who underscores the effectiveness of restorative, discipline-based strategies that orient the handling of violations toward guidance, reflection, and personal responsibility rather than punishment. *Second*, student leadership is developed through *daurah* and monthly studies that emphasize the Prophet's example. This step reduces the potential for violence and strengthens self-control among student administrators, consistent with evidence that

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<sup>39</sup> Andi Kardian Riva'i, "Interaksi Simbolik Ustadz-Santri (Studi Fenomenologi Pada Pondok Pesantren Dar El Hikmah Pekanbaru). *Ensiklopedia of Journal*, 2 (4), 60–71," 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Pam Nilan, "The 'Spirit of Education' in Indonesian Pesantren," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 30, no. 2 (March 2009): 219–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690802700321>.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas W. Miller, Robert F. Kraus, and Lane J. Veltkamp, "Character Education as a Prevention Strategy in School-Related Violence," *The Journal of Primary Prevention* 26, no. 5 (September 12, 2005): 455–66, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-005-0004-x>.

<sup>42</sup> Ana Pedro, "School Violence and Violence in School: A Proposal for a Teacher Training Curriculum," *Education* 2, no. 4 (2012): 73–83.

strategic-management approaches can secure children's rights from an early age. *Third*, guardians are involved, which not only strengthens cooperation between pesantren and families but also opens communicative space to support student development, in line with Epstein's concept of school–family partnership, in which parental involvement reinforces social control for children.<sup>43</sup>

These results carry clear implications. Islamic boarding schools need to consciously recognize the potential for violence inherent in seniority patterns so that the reconstruction of those patterns becomes a deliberate aim. Ma'had Baitul Qur'an Madura offers a concrete example of how such a reconstruction can occur and be implemented, demonstrating that change requires commitment from the pesantren, students, and parents alike, and that an equal relationship between senior and junior students can be operationalized.

Previous studies on violence in pesantren generally fall into three positions. The *First* treats the senior–junior hierarchy as inherent to pesantren tradition, so that harsh disciplinary practice is regarded as normal and valid within pesantren education. The *Second* advocates radical reconstruction: abolishing seniority because it enables violence and injustice. The *Third* emphasizes participatory power relations in which authority is preserved but reoriented toward *Ukhuwah* and humanistic education. A fourth strand holds that seniority can be reconstructed into mentoring rather than domination, humanizing pesantren traditions so that they remain aligned with *rahmatan lil-'alamin*, while others explicitly reinterpret seniority by shifting its function from domination to spiritual exemplarity; holds that seniority can be reconstructed into exemplary behavior and mentoring rather than mere stress humanizing pesantren traditions so that they remain aligned with the Islamic value of *rahmatan lil-'alamin*; explicitly reinterpret seniority by shifting its function from domination toward spiritual exemplarity.

This study shares that *Third* context but advances it through a systematic hybrid model. Power relations are not eliminated but reconstructed: seniority is retained and reinterpreted as a means of exemplary behavior, guidance, and spiritual development rather than an instrument of domination. In this way, power relations can strengthen manners, *Ukhuwah*, and moral leadership among santri. The finding enriches the

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<sup>43</sup> Joyce L. Epstein, *School, Family, and Community Partnerships* (Routledge, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429494673>.

discourse on pesantren reform by showing that reconstruction need not entail a break with tradition; on the contrary, tradition can serve as a foundation for reinforcing the values of humanistic Islamic education. The study thus opens space for a new reading of power in pesantren: a participatory relationship that balances authority, togetherness, and the value of example, rather than a fixed hierarchy.

This hybrid model, integrating character education, spiritual leadership, and parental involvement, is relevant to the local context and carries broader implications. It can serve as a reference for pesantren and other religious boarding schools seeking to prevent bullying and violence, while supporting the international agenda for child-friendly education that emphasizes a safe, inclusive, and compassionate learning environment.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Several limitations qualify these findings. As a single-case study of one pesantren with distinctive characteristics, the results should be generalized only with caution. A *Second* limitation concerns gender scope. Ma'had Baitul Qur'an Madura is an all-male institution, and the hybrid model as documented here operates within a single-sex male environment. The JPPI data cited in this study's introduction show that 42% of reported pesantren violence is sexual violence, a category whose dynamics in mixed-gender or female pesantren settings differ substantially from those examined here. The hybrid model's applicability to those contexts cannot be assumed; dedicated investigation of seniority reconstruction in female and mixed-gender pesantren is warranted and urgently needed, given the severity of documented sexual violence cases; transferability rests on the reader's judgment rather than statistical inference.

The evidence for violence prevention (RQ3) is qualitative; the present study does not report pre- and post-intervention counts of violence. Future work should provide those figures to substantiate the observed decline. Future research is encouraged to broaden the scope by including pesantrens of diverse backgrounds, sizes, and traditions to test how well the hybrid model adapts across contexts. Comparative studies of traditional, modern, and technology-based pesantren could deepen understanding of power-relation dynamics, and longitudinal designs are needed to assess the durability of the reconstruction, especially regarding lasting change in senior students' behavior. Combining quantitative approaches, such as perception surveys or measures of violence levels, with qualitative

analysis would yield a more comprehensive picture and a firmer basis for policy and practice in child-friendly, Islamically grounded pesantren education.

## **Conclusion**

The main contribution of this study is a hybrid model: an institutional configuration that preserves the structural role of seniority while shifting its operational logic from coercive discipline to moral and spiritual exemplarity. Five mechanisms operationalize this shift: faith-based compliance, the redefinition of moral leadership, prophetic pedagogical capacity, the alignment between home and pesantren, and cross-hierarchical solidarity; however, their logic is sequential and mutually reinforcing, not merely cumulative. Faith-based obedience establishes a normative foundation: senior students internalize religious obligations that reframe authority as stewardship rather than domination. The redefinition of moral leadership is built upon this foundation by imbuing seniority with positive meaning; senior students are not only prohibited from coercion but are also trained to embody prophetic behavioral standards. Prophetic pedagogical skills then equip the *ustadz* to maintain and articulate this reorientation through daily teaching, so that senior students encounter the same normative framework in the classroom as they bring from leadership training (*daurah*). However, without alignment between home and the pesantren, students return each semester to a family environment that may still operate under coercive seniority norms, thereby eroding the dispositional progress achieved within the institution; parent engagement forums can bridge this gap by extending the normative reach of this model beyond the campus.

Cross-hierarchical solidarity programs consolidate transformation at the relational level, creating repeated structured contact between seniors and juniors under conditions of shared purpose, rather than supervisory asymmetry. Removing any single mechanism would break the chain: moral redefinition without a normative foundation is merely performative; pedagogical capacity without dispositional change produces a façade of compliance; solidarity programs without prior trust-building merely reproduce the asymmetry they seek to eliminate. Disciplinary data show a 65.95% decrease in recorded violations and a 43.48% decrease in incidents of coercion between implementation phases, reflecting this interdependence: the trajectory becomes steeper as mechanisms accumulate, not because individual interventions begin to take effect.

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