Journal of Islamic Education Research | Vol. 7 No. 3 (2026)
Available online at: https://jier.uinkhas.ac.id/index.php/jier
e-ISSN: 2716-0998
p-ISSN: 2716-1005

Developing an Integrated Child-Friendly Pesantren Model: Bridging Indonesian and Egyptian Islamic Boarding Education

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Article History:
Received: 20-2-2026
Revised: 29-3-2026
Accepted: 15-6-2026
Published: 11-6-2026

Keywords:
Child-Friendly Pesantren; Islamic Moral Governance; Child Protection; Islamic Boarding Education; Al-Azhar; Comparative Islamic Education

Abstract: This study aims to develop an Integrated Child-Friendly Pesantren Model by examining how Indonesian local Islamic educational practices can be strengthened through dialogue with Egyptian Islamic educational traditions, particularly the Al-Azhar system. Employing a qualitative multiple-case-study design within an interpretivist paradigm, data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis at Pesantren Nurul Qornain Sukowono and Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember, East Java, Indonesia. The findings were interpreted through a comparative framework informed by educational principles associated with Al-Azhar institutions in Egypt and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal four interconnected components of child-friendly Islamic boarding education: preventive habituation, relational protection, meaningful participation, and Islamic moral governance. Preventive habituation promotes self-regulation through structured routines; relational protection ensures emotional safety through trust-based teacher–student relationships; meaningful participation strengthens belonging and social responsibility; and Islamic moral governance integrates *adab*, *akhlaq*, *amanah*, and *rahmah* into institutional leadership and educational management. The novelty of this study lies in the development of the Integrated Child-Friendly Pesantren Model, which extends the Child-Friendly School framework by synthesizing Indonesian pesantren traditions with comparative insights from Egyptian Islamic education. This study contributes a culturally grounded and internationally relevant framework for child protection, student well-being, character development, and value-based governance in contemporary Islamic boarding schools.

***Abstrak**: Penelitian ini bertujuan mengembangkan Model* Pesantren *Ramah Anak Terintegrasi melalui kajian praktik pendidikan Islam lokal Indonesia yang diperkaya dengan wawasan pendidikan Islam Mesir, khususnya sistem Al-Azhar. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi multikasus pada* Pesantren *Nurul Qornain Sukowono dan* Pesantren *Nurul Islam 1 Jember, Jawa Timur. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa* pesantren *ramah anak dibangun melalui empat komponen utama, yaitu pembiasaan preventif, perlindungan relasional, partisipasi bermakna, dan tata kelola moral Islam. Pembiasaan preventif membentuk regulasi diri melalui rutinitas yang terstruktur, perlindungan relasional menciptakan rasa aman emosional melalui hubungan guru–santri yang berbasis kepercayaan, partisipasi bermakna memperkuat rasa memiliki dan tanggung jawab sosial, sedangkan tata kelola moral Islam mengintegrasikan nilai adab, akhlak, amanah, dan rahmah dalam kepemimpinan serta pengelolaan lembaga. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada pengembangan Model* Pesantren *Ramah Anak Terintegrasi yang memperluas kerangka Child-Friendly School melalui sintesis antara tradisi* pesantren *Indonesia dan wawasan pendidikan Islam Mesir. Penelitian ini berkontribusi dengan menawarkan kerangka konseptual yang relevan untuk memperkuat perlindungan anak, kesejahteraan santri, pembentukan karakter, dan tata kelola pendidikan berbasis nilai di* pesantren *kontemporer.*

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Please cite this article in APA style as:
Fauzi, I., Aminulloh, & Billah, M.M., (2026). Developing an Integrated Child-Friendly Pesantren Model: Bridging Indonesian and Egyptian Islamic Boarding Education. *Journal of Islamic Education Research, 7(3)*, 391-416; https://doi.org/10.35719/jier.v7i3.573

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) represent one of the most enduring and distinctive forms of Islamic education in Indonesia. Unlike formal schools that primarily focus on academic instruction, pesantren function as comprehensive educational communities where religious learning, moral formation, spiritual cultivation, socialization, and daily life are integrated into a residential environment. Historically, pesantren have played a central role in transmitting Islamic knowledge while simultaneously preserving local religious traditions, shaping social ethics, and strengthening communal identity. This resilience in responding to modernization, globalization, and educational reform demonstrates the adaptive character of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia (Anggraeni et al., 2024; Lathifah et al., 2025; Sofi et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the growing complexity of contemporary social life has generated new challenges for pesantren, particularly regarding child protection, student well-being, and the creation of safe educational environments.

Recent studies have revealed that violence remains a significant issue within various educational institutions, including Islamic boarding schools. Cases of physical punishment, verbal abuse, psychological intimidation, bullying, peer violence, and sexual harassment continue to emerge in residential educational settings. The boarding school environment creates unique vulnerabilities because students live within institutional structures for 24 hours a day, intensifying peer interactions, hierarchical relations, and dependence on authority figures. Imam (2023) argues that bullying in pesantren often develops within senior-junior relationships and dormitory cultures that normalize unequal power relations. At the global level, a large-scale study involving 95,545 students demonstrated that bullying victimization is strongly associated with depression, emotional distress, post-traumatic stress symptoms, poor sleep quality, and psychosocial maladjustment (Zhao et al., 2023). Similarly, Molina et al. (2022) emphasize that educational institutions should function as safe havens that protect children's physical, psychological, and social well-being. These findings indicate that educational quality cannot be measured solely by academic achievement but must also encompass child protection, emotional security, and institutional safeguarding mechanisms.

The urgency of strengthening child protection in pesantren is further reflected in Indonesian national data. Reports from the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) indicate that Islamic boarding schools rank among educational institutions with significant numbers of reported violence cases, including sexual abuse. Meanwhile, the East Java Child Protection Agency documented numerous incidents involving violence against children within educational environments, including pesantren. These findings reveal a critical contradiction between the normative ideals of Islamic education and the practical realities experienced by some students. While pesantren are founded upon Islamic

values of compassion (*rahmah*), justice (*'adl*), dignity (*karāmah al-insān*), and moral responsibility (*amanah*), these ethical principles do not automatically translate into effective institutional protection systems. Consequently, there is a growing need to develop educational models that integrate Islamic moral values with contemporary child-protection frameworks (Nurjanah et al., 2022; Pinandito & Rustamaji, 2026; Rais et al., 2025; Rafiq & Alvi, 2025).

Within this context, the concept of Child-Friendly Pesantren (Pesantren Ramah Anak, hereafter CFP) has emerged as a strategic educational response. The concept adapts the global Child-Friendly School (CFS) framework to the socio-cultural and religious environment of pesantren. UNICEF defines child-friendly education as an educational system that guarantees children's rights, promotes participation, ensures physical and psychological safety, and creates inclusive learning environments that support holistic development (UNICEF, 2009; UNICEF, 2023). However, implementing child-friendly principles within pesantren requires contextual adaptation because pesantren differ substantially from conventional schools. Their educational systems are characterized by residential life, collective discipline, religious authority, intensive teacher-student interaction, and the integration of learning with everyday social practices. Therefore, child-friendly pesantren should not merely replicate global educational frameworks but reconstruct them through Islamic educational values and local institutional traditions.

From the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, the development of a CFP aligns closely with the ethical foundations of Islamic pedagogy. Islamic educational thought emphasizes mercy, moral cultivation, respect for human dignity, and educators' responsibility to nurture learners through compassionate guidance rather than coercive domination. Children are viewed as entrusted beings whose intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual development must be protected and facilitated. Rizqi (2024) argues that Islamic humanistic education promotes harmonious interpersonal relationships and respectful educational communication. Likewise, character education theory highlights empathy, responsibility, moral reasoning, and ethical commitment as central dimensions of educational development (Lickona, 2009). Consequently, child-friendly pesantren should integrate Islamic moral formation with institutional mechanisms that ensure safety, participation, accountability, and protection from violence.

The relevance of this issue extends beyond Indonesia and connects to broader discussions within global Islamic education. One important comparative context is Egypt, particularly the educational tradition associated with Al-Azhar. As one of the oldest and most influential Islamic educational institutions in the Muslim world, Al-Azhar has historically shaped Islamic scholarship, religious authority, and educational reform across diverse Muslim societies (Ismail, 2023; Nakissa, 2022). Contemporary scholarship demonstrates that Egyptian Islamic education continues to negotiate the relationship between religious tradition, institutional governance, educational modernization, and social transformation (Alayan & Rohde, 2021; Nakissa, 2023; Rock-Singer, 2022; Scott, 2020). Unlike Indonesian pesantren, which are deeply embedded within local community networks and *kiai*-centered authority structures, Egyptian Islamic education operates within a more centralized institutional framework. Nevertheless, both systems share common concerns

regarding moral education, student discipline, religious identity formation, and educational responsibility.

The comparison between Indonesian pesantren and Egyptian Islamic educational practices is theoretically significant because it enables a broader understanding of how Islamic educational institutions respond to contemporary safeguarding challenges while maintaining religious authenticity. Indonesian pesantren contribute valuable insights regarding communal care, local wisdom, teacher–student closeness, and participatory religious culture. Conversely, Egyptian Islamic educational institutions provide important perspectives concerning institutional continuity, educational governance, and the integration of classical Islamic scholarship with modern educational administration. Examining these two traditions comparatively offers opportunities to construct a more comprehensive model of child-friendly Islamic boarding education that is locally grounded yet globally relevant.

Theoretically, this study draws upon three interconnected frameworks. First, the CFS framework emphasizes the principles of provision, protection, and participation as essential dimensions of child-centered education (Jansson et al., 2022; UNICEF, 2009). Second, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory explains that children's development is influenced by interactions across multiple environmental layers, including family, peers, educational institutions, community structures, and broader cultural systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This perspective is particularly relevant for pesantren because students' experiences are shaped not only by formal regulations but also by daily interactions, dormitory culture, peer networks, and religious authority structures. Third, contemporary school-climate and safeguarding theories emphasize that positive relationships, participatory governance, supportive environments, and effective reporting mechanisms significantly reduce violence while improving students' psychological well-being and educational engagement (Hong & Espelage, 2012; Gaffney et al., 2021; Martinsone et al., 2023; Walsh et al., 2023).

Previous studies concerning CFP have contributed valuable insights into violence prevention, anti-bullying programs, and the integration of child-rights principles within Islamic educational institutions. Research has shown that anti-violence policies, educator training, child-rights literacy, and participatory educational practices can strengthen protective environments within pesantren (Nurlaela & Arifin, 2023; Sayyi et al., 2025). Other studies highlight the importance of governance systems, internal control mechanisms, and spiritual values in preventing deviant behavior and strengthening institutional discipline (Abdullah et al., 2023; Boufounou et al., 2024; Setiawan et al., 2026). Nevertheless, the majority of existing research remains descriptive or evaluative. Most studies focus on assessing the implementation of child-friendly principles rather than on constructing a comprehensive conceptual-operational model that integrates governance, daily habituation, relational protection, participatory engagement, spiritual values, and safeguarding mechanisms within a unified framework.

Moreover, comparative studies linking Indonesian pesantren practices with broader Islamic educational traditions remain relatively limited. Existing scholarship tends to examine child-friendly education either within local Indonesian contexts or within general educational frameworks, without

systematically engaging with international Islamic educational experiences. Consequently, there remains a significant theoretical and empirical gap concerning how local Islamic educational practices can be enriched through dialogue with global Islamic educational traditions while simultaneously addressing contemporary safeguarding challenges. This gap becomes particularly important in light of increasing international attention to child protection, educational inclusivity, and multicultural engagement in Islamic educational institutions.

Responding to these gaps, this study develops an integrated CFP model through a multi-case investigation of Pesantren Nurul Qornain Sukowono and Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember while incorporating comparative insights from Egyptian Islamic educational practices. The study proposes that effective CFPs are built upon four interconnected components: preventive habituation, relational protection, meaningful participation, and Islamic moral governance. Preventive habituation refers to structured daily routines that cultivate discipline, self-regulation, responsibility, and moral awareness. Relational protection emphasizes humanistic teacher-student relationships characterized by empathy, trust, emotional support, and early detection of psychosocial risks. Meaningful participation highlights children's involvement in social, religious, and communal activities that strengthen agency, belonging, confidence, and collective responsibility. Islamic moral governance integrates *adab* (proper conduct), *akhlaq* (moral character), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and *rahmah* (compassion) into institutional leadership and educational management.

Accordingly, this research aims to develop a comprehensive model of Child-Friendly Pesantren by analyzing caregiving practices, social interactions, governance structures, participation mechanisms, and protection systems within two Indonesian pesantren while situating these findings within a broader dialogue with Egyptian Islamic educational traditions. The novelty of this study lies in its effort to bridge local Islamic educational practices, Islamic intellectual traditions, and global child-protection discourse. Rather than merely adapting the Child-Friendly School framework to pesantren settings, this study reconstructs the framework by integrating Indonesian pesantren local wisdom and comparative Islamic educational insights. In doing so, it contributes both theoretically and practically to contemporary Islamic education by offering a culturally grounded, spiritually informed, and internationally relevant model for creating safe, inclusive, and humanistic Islamic boarding school environments.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach within an interpretivist paradigm to examine the development of a CFP model and to understand how child-friendly educational practices are interpreted, implemented, and negotiated within Islamic boarding school environments. The interpretivist paradigm assumes that social reality is constructed through human interaction, experience, and contextual meaning-making rather than existing as an objective and fixed phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to explore the lived experiences, educational practices, and institutional cultures that shape child protection, student participation, and caregiving systems in pesantren. Through direct engagement with educational

actors, the study sought to understand how child-friendly principles are embedded within everyday educational life and Islamic moral traditions.

The research adopted a multiple-case study design. Case-study research is particularly suitable for investigating contemporary phenomena in their real-life contexts when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2018). The multiple-case design enabled the researcher to compare patterns, identify similarities and differences, and generate stronger analytical propositions across different institutional settings. This design was selected to facilitate the development of a more comprehensive and transferable CFP model based on empirical evidence from multiple educational contexts.

The primary fieldwork was conducted in two Islamic boarding schools located in Jember Regency, East Java, Indonesia: Pesantren Nurul Qornain Sukowono and Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember. These institutions were purposively selected because they demonstrate strong commitments to student welfare, structured dormitory management, moral education, and the implementation of child-friendly educational practices. Both pesantren provide rich contexts for examining how Islamic educational values are translated into daily routines, protective relational mechanisms, participatory activities, and safeguarding practices. Pesantren Nurul Qornain represents a boarding school environment that emphasizes structured discipline, communal regulation, and adolescent character formation. In contrast, Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember offers a context characterized by child-centered learning, emotional care, and developmental support for younger learners.

To strengthen the comparative dimension of the study, findings from the Indonesian pesantren were interpreted in dialogue with educational principles and institutional characteristics associated with the Egyptian Al-Azhar educational system, particularly the Al-Azhar Institutes Sector (*Qitā' al-Ma'āhid al-Azhariyyah*) and Al-Azhar secondary educational institutions. These institutions represent one of the most influential traditions of Islamic boarding and religious education in the Muslim world and provide important comparative insights concerning moral formation, educational governance, religious authority, student discipline, and educational care. The Egyptian context was not employed as a direct fieldwork site but as a comparative interpretive framework that enabled the researchers to situate local pesantren practices within broader Islamic educational traditions. This approach supports the development of a CFP model that remains rooted in Indonesian local wisdom while engaging with wider discourses of Islamic educational reform, institutional safeguarding, and student well-being.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling. This sampling strategy is widely recommended in qualitative case study research because it enables the selection of information-rich participants with substantial knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2015). The participants included *kiai* (pesantren leaders), caregivers, dormitory administrators, teachers, student mentors, and students. These groups were selected because they directly engage with educational management, caregiving practices, disciplinary systems, student participation, and child-protection mechanisms. Additional informants from relevant institutional units were included to broaden perspectives and strengthen data triangulation.

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Participant observation involved direct observation of daily activities within the pesantren environment, including communal worship, dormitory routines, educational interactions, disciplinary practices, social activities, and informal student relationships. Observation enabled the researcher to document behaviors, institutional norms, and interactional dynamics that may not be fully articulated through interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences, interpretations, and perceptions regarding child-friendly education, student protection, institutional governance, participation mechanisms, and the challenges of implementing child-friendly principles within pesantren settings. The semi-structured format ensured consistency across participants while allowing flexibility to pursue emerging themes. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and supported by detailed field notes.

Document analysis complemented observation and interview data. Institutional documents examined included organizational structures, student handbooks, child-protection policies, disciplinary regulations, annual reports, meeting minutes, activity reports, and other relevant administrative records. These documents provided context on institutional governance, safeguarding mechanisms, and educational programs. The integration of observation, interviews, and document analysis enabled methodological triangulation and facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of CFP practices.

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During the data-condensation stage, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary materials were systematically coded, categorized, and reduced to align with the research focus. Initial coding focused on themes such as preventive habituation, relational protection, participation, governance, safeguarding, Islamic educational values, and institutional culture. In the data-display stage, themes were organized into matrices, conceptual diagrams, and narrative summaries to facilitate pattern identification and cross-case comparison. The final stage involved conclusion drawing and verification, in which emerging interpretations were continuously refined through comparisons across data sources, participant groups, and institutional contexts.

The analysis proceeded through two complementary stages. First, within-case analysis was conducted to understand the unique characteristics of each pesantren and to identify the internal mechanisms through which child-friendly principles were implemented. Second, a cross-case analysis was conducted to identify recurring patterns, shared themes, and contextual differences across the two institutions. This comparative process facilitated the formulation of an integrated CFP model comprising four interconnected components: preventive habituation, relational protection, meaningful participation, and Islamic moral governance. These findings were subsequently interpreted through the lenses of Child-Friendly School theory, Islamic educational philosophy, ecological systems theory, and comparative insights derived from Egyptian Islamic educational traditions.

Several strategies were employed to ensure the study's trustworthiness. Credibility was strengthened through source, methodological, and temporal

triangulation. Source triangulation involved comparing perspectives obtained from leaders, teachers, caregivers, administrators, and students. Methodological triangulation was achieved by integrating findings from interviews, observations, and documents. Time triangulation was conducted through repeated data collection over different periods to minimize situational bias. Furthermore, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, iterative interpretation, and continuous verification were applied to strengthen analytical rigor (Morse, 2015).

Transferability was enhanced through thick description of the research settings, participant characteristics, institutional cultures, and educational practices, enabling readers to assess the applicability of findings to other contexts. Dependability was maintained through systematic documentation of research procedures, coding processes, field notes, interview protocols, and analytic memos. Confirmability was supported through reflexive journaling and the maintenance of an audit trail documenting key methodological and interpretive decisions throughout the research process. Reporting procedures also followed recognized qualitative research standards, emphasizing transparency, reflexivity, and analytical clarity (Tong et al., 2007; Tracy, 2010; Nowell et al., 2017).

Ethical considerations were observed throughout all stages of the study. Participants were informed about the objectives of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through the use of pseudonyms and the removal of identifying information. Particular attention was paid to student participants due to their status as minors. Interviews were conducted in supportive, non-threatening environments, and no information was disclosed that could jeopardize participants' safety or well-being. The researchers also maintained reflexive awareness regarding their positionality and the hierarchical nature of pesantren institutions to ensure respectful, balanced, and ethically responsible interpretation of the findings.

The study was conducted from January to November 2025. The research process included proposal development, institutional permission, participant recruitment, data collection, data validation, data analysis, interpretation of findings, manuscript revision, and final reporting. This extended period enabled sustained engagement with the research sites. It facilitated the development of an empirically grounded and theoretically informed CFP model integrating Indonesian local Islamic educational practices with insights from Egyptian Islamic boarding education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Preventive Habituation Practices as the First Pillar of the Child-Friendly Pesantren Model

The findings indicate that preventive habituation constitutes the first pillar of the Integrated CFP Model. Across both research sites, preventive measures were not implemented through punitive control but through the systematic organization of daily routines and environmental conditioning. These routines repeated positive practices designed to shape self-regulation, responsibility, and moral discipline.

At Pesantren Nurul Qornain Sukowono, preventive habituation was embedded within structured dormitory life through routines emphasizing cleanliness, punctuality, environmental responsibility, healthy consumption patterns, and restrictions on gadget use. Educational posters promoting water conservation, discipline, and digital self-control were strategically displayed throughout the pesantren, serving as continuous visual reminders that reinforced expected behaviors. Observations revealed that students routinely organized their footwear, maintained dormitory cleanliness, and adhered to institutional schedules without constant supervision. These practices demonstrate how environmental arrangements can reduce opportunities for deviant behavior while simultaneously cultivating responsibility and communal awareness.

A caregiver explained: "*We do not immediately punish students when they violate rules. Instead, we continuously habituate them through daily routines so that discipline becomes a personal need rather than an external obligation*." (Caregiver, Pesantren Nurul Qornain)

Field observations further revealed that newly enrolled students initially required adaptation, but gradually internalized pesantren norms through repeated exposure to structured routines and collective expectations.

In contrast, Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember implemented preventive habituation through developmentally appropriate activities designed for young children. Daily practices included morning exercise, structured play, toy organization, rotational leadership in Dhuha prayer, and monthly swimming activities. These activities functioned not merely as recreational programs but as mechanisms for strengthening emotional regulation, social competence, independence, and self-discipline.

A teacher explained: "*Children learn more effectively through enjoyable experiences. When they are actively engaged in physical activities and positive routines, they become calmer, more cooperative, and more willing to follow guidance*." (Teacher, Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember)

Observation data confirmed that children became more focused, emotionally stable, and socially cooperative following participation in structured physical and social activities.

Although the forms of implementation differed, both pesantren shared a common philosophy: prevention should occur before behavioral problems emerge. Consequently, daily routines served as low-opportunity settings that minimized risk while maximizing opportunities for character development.

Comparative Insights from Al-Azhar Educational Institutions

A comparative analysis suggests that similar preventive principles are found within the Al-Azhar Institutes Sector (*Qitā' al-Ma'āhid al-Azhariyyah*) and within Al-Azhar secondary educational institutions. Al-Azhar emphasizes structured religious routines, supervised learning schedules, collective worship, and moral discipline as mechanisms for shaping student behavior. In both educational traditions, preventive education is achieved through habituation rather than reactive punishment. However, Indonesian pesantren demonstrate greater integration between formal routines and community-based residential life, whereas Al-Azhar

institutions tend to implement preventive mechanisms through standardized educational governance and institutional supervision.

Table 1. Comparative Characteristics of Preventive Habituation Practices

Dimension	Pesantren Nurul Qornain	Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember	Al-Azhar Educational Institutions
Main Strategy	Structured routines and environmental regulation	Positive stimulation and experiential learning	Institutional discipline and religious routines
Target Outcome	Self-regulation and responsibility	Emotional regulation and independence	Moral discipline and religious commitment
Prevention Mechanism	Behavioral shaping through daily habituation	Developmental and recreational activities	Supervised religious and academic activities
Educational Orientation	Adolescent character formation	Holistic child development	Religious scholarship and moral formation



Water Conservation *Digital Device Restriction* *Morning Physical Activity*

Figure 2. Preventive Habituation Practices in Child-Friendly Pesantren

Water conservation awareness, digital device restriction policies, and structured morning physical activities function as preventive educational strategies that foster self-regulation, discipline, responsibility, and healthy behavioral development among students within a child-friendly Islamic boarding school environment.

The findings demonstrate that preventive habituation functions as the first layer of protection within child-friendly Islamic education. Through consistent routines and supportive environments, children and adolescents internalize discipline, responsibility, and moral awareness without coercion.

Humanistic Teacher-Student Relationships as Relational Protection

The second major finding reveals that humanistic teacher–student relationships serve as the core mechanism of relational protection within child-friendly pesantren. In both institutions, emotional security emerged through trust, dialogue, empathy, and teacher responsiveness rather than through fear-based discipline.

At Pesantren Nurul Qornain, relational protection was cultivated through monthly forums that brought together teachers, students, and parents. These forums provided students with opportunities to communicate concerns, discuss personal challenges, and receive support in a non-intimidating environment. Teachers intentionally positioned themselves as mentors and facilitators rather than authoritarian supervisors.

One teacher stated: "*Students must feel safe when sharing their problems. If they are afraid to speak, many difficulties will remain hidden and unresolved*." (Teacher, Pesantren Nurul Qornain)

The pesantren also implemented a sharia-based financial management system that minimized financial conflicts among students and reduced opportunities for unhealthy borrowing practices. This illustrates how supportive institutional structures reinforced relational protection.

At Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember, relational protection was expressed through the principles of *Asah-Asih-Asuh* (guidance, affection, and care). Teachers actively participated in children's daily activities and provided emotional support whenever children experienced anxiety or distress.

A teacher explained: "*When children are upset or afraid, we approach them first, listen to them, and help them feel secure. Guidance should begin with affection*." (Teacher, Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember)

Field observations showed that children frequently approached teachers voluntarily, sought assistance without hesitation, and demonstrated strong emotional attachment to caregivers. Such interactions indicate a secure relational environment that supports both emotional well-being and behavioral regulation.

Comparative Insights from Al-Azhar Educational Institutions

Comparative interpretation reveals that both Indonesian pesantren and Al-Azhar institutions view teachers as moral guides whose authority derives from ethical example and religious credibility. However, Indonesian pesantren demonstrate stronger patterns of emotional intimacy and everyday interaction between teachers and students. In contrast, Al-Azhar institutions tend to maintain more formal teacher–student relationships within structured educational frameworks. While both traditions emphasize moral guidance, Indonesian pesantren provide a particularly distinctive model of relational protection through close interpersonal engagement.

Table 2. Comparative Characteristics of Relational Protection

Dimension	Indonesian Pesantren	Al-Azhar Educational Institutions
Teacher Role	Mentor, caregiver, role model	Religious educator and moral authority
Relationship Pattern	Personal and communal	Formal and institutional
Protection Strategy	Emotional attachment and dialogue	Ethical supervision and counseling
Educational Impact	Psychological safety and trust	Moral guidance and academic discipline



Figure 3. Humanistic Teacher–Student–Parent Interaction as Relational Protection

Monthly dialogue forums involving teachers, students, and parents provide a safe space for communication, reflection, and problem-solving. These interactions strengthen trust, emotional attachment, and social support, thereby functioning as an important mechanism of relational protection within the child-friendly pesantren environment.

The findings indicate that relational protection forms the emotional foundation of child-friendly pesantren. Protection emerges through trust, empathy, communication, and teacher responsiveness rather than through surveillance or punitive control.

Meaningful Participation as Social Protection

The third pillar identified in this study is meaningful participation. Findings from both pesantrens demonstrate that participation is not merely an educational supplement but an essential mechanism for building a sense of belonging, confidence, social responsibility, and collective identity.

At Pesantren Nurul Qornain, participation was embedded in communal work, environmental maintenance, dormitory management, and collective responsibility for shared spaces. Students collaborated to maintain cleanliness, organize facilities, and care for the pesantren infrastructure. Teachers participated alongside students, creating an educational atmosphere characterized by cooperation rather than hierarchy.

A dormitory supervisor noted: "*We want students to feel that the* pesantren *belongs to them as well. When they participate in maintaining and improving it, they develop responsibility and a stronger sense of belonging*." (Dormitory Supervisor)

At Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember, participation occurred through religious celebrations, Islamic cultural events, and social activities. Children helped prepare decorations, participated in performances, recited prayers, and contributed to communal celebrations under close teacher guidance.

One teacher explained: "*Participation helps children gain confidence. When they are trusted to contribute, they become proud of their role in the community*." (Teacher, Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember)

Observations showed that children participated enthusiastically in Islamic New Year celebrations and other social-religious activities, demonstrating increased confidence, cooperation, and attachment to the community.

Comparative Insights from Al-Azhar Educational Institutions

Comparable participation mechanisms are evident in Al-Azhar educational institutions, where students engage in religious programs, academic competitions, Qur'anic activities, and community-oriented events. However, participation in Indonesian pesantren is more deeply integrated into everyday communal life, whereas participation in Al-Azhar is often structured through formal institutional programs.

Table 3. Comparative Characteristics of Student Participation

Dimension	Pesantren Nurul Qornain	Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember	Al-Azhar Educational Institutions
Participation Type	Communal work and environmental management	Religious celebrations and social activities	Religious, academic, and extracurricular programs
Main Outcome	Collective responsibility	Confidence and belonging	Religious engagement and civic responsibility
Participation Pattern	Daily communal participation	Developmentally appropriate involvement	Structured institutional participation

Emerging Integrated Child-Friendly Pesantren Model

Cross-case analysis revealed that effective child-friendly Islamic boarding education is not primarily determined by infrastructure or technological resources. Instead, it emerges through the integration of four interconnected components that collectively create a safe, inclusive, and developmentally supportive educational ecosystem.

1. Preventive Habituation

Preventive habituation refers to the systematic organization of daily routines that cultivate discipline, responsibility, self-regulation, and moral awareness. Through environmental conditioning, structured schedules, and repeated positive practices, students gradually internalize desirable behaviors without coercive intervention. This component serves as the first line of defense by reducing opportunities for misconduct and strengthening positive character development.

2. Relational Protection

Relational protection refers to the creation of emotionally secure relationships between teachers and students. The findings indicate that children and adolescents are more effectively protected when they trust educators, feel comfortable expressing concerns, and experience guidance through empathy and dialogue. Emotional attachment, teacher accessibility, and humanistic interaction serve as critical mechanisms for preventing violence, bullying, and psychosocial distress.

3. Meaningful Participation

Meaningful participation refers to students' active involvement in educational, social, religious, and communal activities. Participation fosters ownership, belonging, confidence, and social responsibility. The findings demonstrate that students who perceive themselves as valued members of the educational community are more likely to develop positive identities and less likely to experience exclusion or marginalization.

4. Islamic Moral Governance

The fourth component represents the major conceptual contribution of this study. Islamic Moral Governance refers to a system of institutional leadership and educational management grounded in Islamic ethical principles such as *adab* (proper conduct), *akhlaq* (moral character), *amanah* (responsibility), and *rahmah* (compassion). Rather than relying solely on formal regulations, governance is exercised through moral authority, ethical leadership, role modeling, and value-based accountability.

Comparative analysis revealed that both Indonesian pesantren and Al-Azhar educational institutions place strong emphasis on moral supervision and religious responsibility. However, important differences exist. Indonesian pesantren tend to implement governance through community-based relationships, emotional closeness, and localized Islamic traditions. In contrast, Al-Azhar institutions rely more heavily on institutional structures, standardized administration, and formal religious authority. Integrating these strengths produces a more comprehensive model of child-friendly Islamic education.

Table 4. Integrated Child-Friendly Pesantren Model

Component	Primary Function	Indonesian Contribution	Egyptian Comparative Insight
Preventive Habituation	Behavioral prevention	Daily routines and character formation	Structured religious discipline
Relational Protection	Emotional safeguarding	Humanistic teacher–student relationships	Ethical educational authority
Meaningful Participation	Social protection	Community engagement and collective responsibility	Institutional participation programs
Islamic Moral Governance	Value-based institutional protection	Community-centered moral leadership	Structured religious governance

Cross-case analysis and comparative interpretation with Egyptian Islamic educational traditions revealed that effective child-friendly Islamic boarding education is constructed through the interaction of four mutually reinforcing components. These components do not operate independently but function as an integrated system in which governance, relationships, participation, and habituation collectively shape a safe and supportive educational environment. Figure 4 presents the conceptual structure of the Integrated Child-Friendly Pesantren Model developed from the findings of this study.

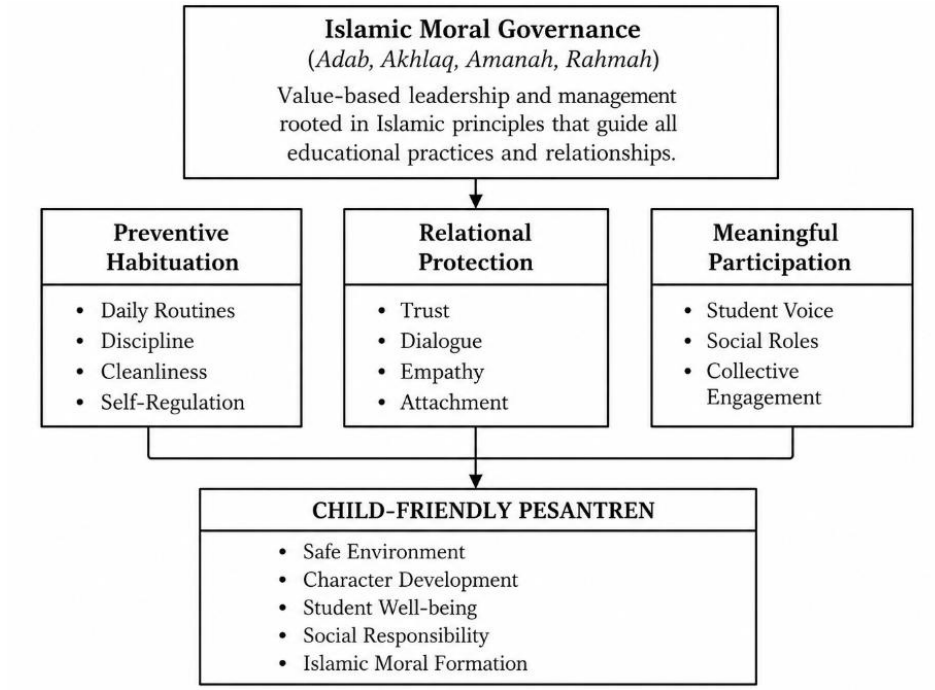

Figure 4. Integrated Child-Friendly Pesantren Model

Figure 4 illustrates that Islamic Moral Governance functions as the overarching normative framework guiding educational practices within the pesantren. Preventive Habituation, Relational Protection, and Meaningful Participation operate as the three operational components that directly influence students' daily experiences. Together, these components generate a child-friendly educational ecosystem characterized by safety, emotional well-being, social inclusion, character formation, and Islamic moral development. This integrated framework constitutes the principal theoretical contribution of the present study and provides a transferable model for Islamic boarding schools seeking to strengthen child protection while preserving Islamic educational values.

Discussion

Preventive Habituation and the Ecology of Child Protection

The findings demonstrate that preventive habituation constitutes the foundational pillar of the Integrated CFP Model. Across both Pesantren Nurul Qornain Sukowono and Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember, daily routines including room organization, environmental cleanliness, water conservation campaigns, structured physical activities, and controlled use of digital devices function not merely as disciplinary instruments but as preventive mechanisms that cultivate self-regulation, responsibility, and moral awareness. These findings support the CFS framework, which emphasizes that safe educational environments are established not only through protective policies but also through the creation of positive behavioral norms embedded within everyday educational experiences (Mahinay et al., 2025; Saleh et al., 2025; Wulan & Fridani, 2021). Similarly, Damayanti et al. (2024) and Bakhtiar et al. (2025) argue that child-friendly educational settings become more effective when behavioral expectations are reinforced through structured environments, institutional rules, and educational symbolism.

From a theoretical perspective, preventive habituation operates through two interconnected mechanisms. First, external structures such as schedules, environmental arrangements, and supervision reduce opportunities for risky behavior. Second, repeated exposure to positive routines facilitates the internalization of values, transforming externally imposed compliance into internally regulated conduct. This finding is consistent with Cross et al. (2019) and Volosevici & Isbasoiu (2025), who argue that sustainable behavioral change occurs when external regulation gradually evolves into self-regulation. Within pesantren environments, preventive habituation therefore functions not only as a disciplinary system but also as a moral-learning process through which students develop personal responsibility and ethical self-awareness.

The findings further resonate with ecological systems theory, which emphasizes that children's development is shaped by continuous interactions between individuals and their surrounding environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In both pesantren, environmental cues, collective routines, peer expectations, and institutional values collectively create a developmental ecology that encourages positive behavior while discouraging misconduct. Similar conclusions have been reported in international studies demonstrating that structured activities, sports participation, and life-skill programs contribute significantly to bullying prevention, student engagement, and psychosocial well-being (Gaffney et al., 2021; Latino et al., 2025; Tolan, 2023; Torres et al., 2025).

The comparative perspective with Egyptian Islamic education reveals important parallels. Within the Al-Azhar Institutes Sector (*Qitā' al-Ma'āhid al-Azhariyyah*), student formation is likewise grounded in structured religious routines, supervised learning schedules, collective worship, and moral discipline. Both educational traditions recognize that character development is achieved through sustained habituation rather than reactive punishment. However, the Indonesian pesantren context exhibits a stronger integration between preventive routines and communal residential life, enabling students to experience moral education continuously throughout daily activities. In contrast, Al-Azhar institutions generally implement preventive discipline through more formalized administrative and educational structures. This distinction suggests that local community-based educational practices may complement institutionalized approaches to child protection within Islamic education.

Despite its strengths, preventive habituation also faces challenges. The findings indicate that newly enrolled students often require a prolonged adaptation period, and some forms of compliance remain procedural rather than fully internalized. This observation supports studies emphasizing the importance of mentoring, value orientation programs, and reflective educational practices to ensure that routines become meaningful rather than mechanical (Montgomery & Wilson, 2026; Sustri & Herlinawati, 2025; Zamiri & Esmaeili, 2024). Consequently, strategies such as buddy systems, reflective discussions, and emotional mentoring are essential for transforming routine compliance into enduring character formation.

Relational Protection and Humanistic Islamic Pedagogy

The second major finding concerns the role of humanistic teacher-student relationships as a mechanism of relational protection. The results demonstrate that

emotional safety within pesantren is achieved primarily through trust, empathy, dialogue, and supportive interactions rather than through surveillance or punitive control. These findings align closely with humanistic educational theory, which holds that meaningful interpersonal relationships are fundamental to children's social, emotional, and moral development.

At Pesantren Nurul Qornain, monthly forums involving teachers, students, and parents provide a safe space for communication, reflection, and problem-solving. These forums strengthen emotional attachment while encouraging students to express concerns without fear of punishment or stigmatization. Such findings support Hamre and Pianta's (2001) argument that positive teacher–student relationships contribute significantly to emotional security, academic engagement, and reduced behavioral problems. Likewise, Ten Bokkel et al. (2023) demonstrate that affective teacher–student relationships play a crucial role in reducing bullying and peer victimization.

The findings from Pesantren Nurul Islam further illustrate how relational Protection is operationalized through the principles of *Asah-Asih-Asuh* (guidance, affection, and care). Teachers actively participate in children's daily activities and provide continuous emotional support, creating a secure attachment environment characterized by trust and responsiveness. This approach is consistent with Sabol and Pianta (2012), who found that positive teacher-child relationships are associated with higher self-confidence, lower anxiety levels, and reduced behavioral difficulties.

Importantly, relational protection within pesantren extends beyond emotional interaction to include institutional safeguarding mechanisms. The implementation of a sharia-based financial management system at Pesantren Nurul Qornain illustrates how structural arrangements can prevent exploitation, unhealthy borrowing practices, and socially driven financial conflicts. This finding reinforces the argument that effective child protection requires both relational warmth and systemic safeguards (Damayanti et al., 2024; McKeown & Yeung, 2023; McDonald et al., 2023; Rogowski, 2026).

The comparative perspective with Egyptian Islamic education provides additional insights. Both Indonesian pesantren and Al-Azhar institutions conceptualize teachers as moral guides whose authority derives from ethical example and religious credibility. However, important differences emerge, such as teacher-student interactions. Indonesian pesantren demonstrate stronger patterns of emotional closeness and daily interaction, whereas Al-Azhar institutions generally maintain more formal relationships within structured educational settings. While both approaches contribute to moral development, the Indonesian model offers a distinctive contribution by integrating emotional attachment and moral mentorship into everyday educational life.

These findings suggest that relational protection should be understood as a core component of child-friendly Islamic education. Emotional support, trust-based communication, and teacher accessibility not only enhance student well-being but also serve as early warning signs for psychosocial distress, bullying, and other forms of vulnerability. However, as highlighted by Hart and Bracey (2023) and Wulan & Fridani (2021), relational Protection must be complemented by accountability mechanisms such as complaint channels, parental involvement, and transparent

supervision to prevent potential abuses of authority within hierarchical educational institutions.

Meaningful Participation as Social Inclusion and Child Empowerment

The third pillar emerging from this study is meaningful participation. The findings indicate that active involvement in social, religious, and communal activities contributes significantly to students' sense of belonging, confidence, and social responsibility. Participation, therefore, functions not merely as an educational activity but as a mechanism of social protection and empowerment.

At Pesantren Nurul Qornain, participation is embedded in communal responsibilities, including environmental maintenance, dormitory management, and collective work activities. These practices encourage students to develop ownership of their educational environment while strengthening solidarity and ecological awareness. Such findings support research demonstrating that collaborative community activities enhance social bonding, reduce interpersonal conflict, and foster inclusive educational climates (Deroncele-Acosta & Ellis, 2024; Martinsone et al., 2023; Smolleck & Fryd, 2018).

Similarly, at Pesantren Nurul Islam, participation is facilitated through religious celebrations, social events, and public performances. These activities provide children with opportunities to express themselves, contribute to their communities, and develop confidence in supportive environments. The findings correspond with research indicating that participation in extracurricular and community-based activities enhances school belonging and reduces vulnerability to psychological distress and victimization (Ajibewa et al., 2025; Mora et al., 2023; Porter et al., 2024; Li et al., 2025).

The comparative analysis with Al-Azhar educational institutions reveals notable similarities. Students in Al-Azhar schools likewise participate in religious programs, Qur'anic activities, academic competitions, and community-oriented initiatives. However, participation within Indonesian pesantren is more deeply integrated into everyday communal life, whereas participation within Al-Azhar tends to occur through formally organized institutional programs. This difference reflects broader distinctions between community-centered and institution-centered educational traditions.

Importantly, the findings also underscore the necessity of inclusive participation. Participation should not be limited to highly confident or academically successful students but should be designed to accommodate diverse abilities, personalities, and developmental needs. Consistent with Child-Friendly School principles, universal participation ensures that every child has meaningful opportunities to contribute, thereby reducing exclusion and strengthening collective belonging (Esteban, 2022; Long, 2024; Tolan, 2023). Consequently, social participation should be viewed as a protective educational strategy that simultaneously promotes empowerment, inclusion, and psychosocial well-being.

Islamic Moral Governance: A Distinctive Contribution

The most significant theoretical contribution of this study is the identification of Islamic moral governance as the fourth and overarching component of the Integrated CFP Model. While previous studies on child-friendly education have focused primarily on protection, participation, and educational environments, the

present findings demonstrate that effective child protection within Islamic educational institutions is fundamentally shaped by moral governance grounded in Islamic ethical principles.

Islamic moral governance refers to the integration of *adab* (proper conduct), *akhlaq* (moral character), *amanah* (responsibility), and *rahmah* (compassion) into institutional leadership, educational management, and daily interactions. Rather than relying solely on formal regulations, governance is exercised through ethical leadership, moral example, and value-based accountability. In this model, protection is not merely a technical or administrative responsibility but a moral obligation embedded within Islamic educational philosophy.

Comparative analysis reveals that both Indonesian pesantren and Al-Azhar educational institutions emphasize moral supervision, religious responsibility, and ethical leadership. However, they operationalize these principles differently. Indonesian pesantren tend to govern through community-centered relationships characterized by emotional closeness, local wisdom, and collective responsibility. By contrast, Al-Azhar institutions emphasize institutional authority, organizational structures, and formalized religious governance. These complementary strengths suggest that child-friendly Islamic education can be strengthened by integrating relational approaches with institutional accountability mechanisms.

The concept of Islamic Moral Governance also contributes to broader discussions on child safeguarding within faith-based educational settings. Owusu-Sekyere et al. (2022) and Walsh et al. (2023) argue that safeguarding requires not only protective procedures but also supportive institutional cultures. Likewise, Esmaeili and Ibrahim (2025) and Hutchinson et al. (2015) emphasize that child protection in Islamic contexts must be aligned with religious values and cultural understandings of care and responsibility. The present study extends these perspectives by demonstrating how Islamic moral principles can function as governance mechanisms that simultaneously support protection, participation, and character formation.

Towards an Integrated Child-Friendly Pesantren Model

The synthesis of findings reveals that effective child-friendly Islamic boarding education emerges through the interaction of four interconnected components: preventive habituation, relational protection, meaningful participation, and Islamic moral governance. These components do not operate independently but function as an integrated educational ecosystem.

Preventive habituation provides behavioral structure and moral discipline. Relational protection ensures emotional safety and psychosocial support. Meaningful participation fosters a sense of belonging, empowerment, and social responsibility. Islamic moral governance provides the ethical framework that guides and connects all educational practices. Together, these components create an environment in which child protection, character development, student well-being, and Islamic moral formation are mutually reinforcing.

This model expands the CFS framework by incorporating Islamic educational values and comparative insights from Egyptian Islamic educational traditions. Rather than simply adapting global child-protection principles to Islamic settings, the model reconstructs them through the integration of local wisdom, religious

ethics, and community-based educational practices. Consequently, the Integrated CFP Model represents both a theoretical advancement in Islamic education studies and a practical framework for strengthening child protection in contemporary Islamic boarding schools.

This study contributes to the advancement of Islamic education scholarship by proposing the Integrated CFP Model. This conceptual framework extends the CFS paradigm by integrating Indonesian local Islamic educational practices and comparative insights from Egyptian Islamic boarding education. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on child protection policies or the implementation of child-friendly principles, this research demonstrates that effective child-friendly Islamic education emerges through the interaction of four interconnected components: preventive habituation, relational protection, meaningful participation, and Islamic moral governance. The study further contributes to the literature on Islamic education by introducing *Islamic moral governance* as a distinctive theoretical construct that positions *adab*, *akhlaq*, *amanah*, and *rahmah* as foundational mechanisms for safeguarding children and fostering holistic development within faith-based educational institutions. By bridging global child-protection discourse, Islamic educational philosophy, and comparative educational traditions represented by Indonesian pesantren and the Al-Azhar educational system, this research offers a culturally grounded yet internationally relevant framework for developing safe, inclusive, and humanistic Islamic boarding school environments. From a practical perspective, the model provides evidence-based guidance for policymakers, pesantren leaders, and educators seeking to strengthen child protection, student well-being, character formation, and participatory educational practices in contemporary Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the development of a CFP extends beyond the implementation of child-protection policies or the provision of supportive facilities. The findings reveal that four interconnected components; preventive habituation, relational pProtection, meaningful participation, and Islamic moral governance collectively create a safe, inclusive, and developmentally supportive educational ecosystem. More importantly, the study finds that Islamic Moral Governance, grounded in the principles of *adab*, *akhlaq*, *amanah*, and *rahmah*, exerts a broader influence than previously assumed because it functions not only as a moral foundation but also as a governance mechanism that shapes daily routines, interpersonal relationships, and student participation. This finding challenges the common assumption that child-friendly education in Islamic boarding schools is primarily dependent on formal regulations and safeguarding procedures, and instead highlights the central role of value-based leadership and Islamic ethical culture in sustaining child protection and holistic student development. Consequently, the study opens new discussions on integrating child safeguarding, character education, and Islamic educational governance within contemporary Islamic educational institutions.

The study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it reinforces previous findings regarding the importance of structured routines, positive teacher-student relationships, and active student participation in promoting child well-

being and preventing violence. Second, it questions approaches that view child protection primarily through administrative and policy-based mechanisms by demonstrating that effective protection is also embedded in everyday educational interactions and moral practices. Third, the study introduces the concept of the integrated CFP Model, which integrates Indonesian local Islamic educational practices with comparative insights from Egyptian Islamic boarding education, particularly the Al-Azhar educational tradition. This model enriches scholarly discussions on Islamic education by extending the CFS framework through the incorporation of Islamic moral values and governance principles, thereby offering a culturally grounded yet internationally relevant framework for child-friendly Islamic education.

Despite these contributions, the study has several limitations. The research was conducted using a qualitative multiple-case-study design involving two pesantren in Jember, Indonesia. It employed the Egyptian context as a comparative interpretive framework rather than as a direct fieldwork site. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted within their specific socio-cultural and institutional contexts and cannot be generalized to all pesantren or Islamic educational institutions. Future studies should involve larger, more diverse samples, incorporate direct comparative fieldwork in both Indonesian and Egyptian institutions, and employ mixed-methods or longitudinal designs to examine the long-term effects of child-friendly educational practices on bullying prevention, student well-being, character formation, and educational outcomes.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be proposed. Policymakers and pesantren leaders should strengthen child-protection systems by integrating safeguarding procedures with Islamic moral values and community-based educational practices. Educational institutions are encouraged to develop structured orientation programs, buddy systems for new students, teacher training in relational protection and early detection of psychosocial risks, as well as inclusive participation programs that ensure all students have opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the educational community. Furthermore, the principles of Islamic moral governance should be systematically incorporated into institutional policies and leadership practices to ensure that child protection, character development, and student well-being become integral dimensions of contemporary Islamic education. Through these efforts, CFP can evolve into educational environments that not only protect children from harm but also nurture their moral, social, emotional, and spiritual development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Pesantren Nurul Qornain Sukowono and Pesantren Nurul Islam 1 Jember for their invaluable support, cooperation, and openness throughout the research process. Special appreciation is extended to the leaders, caregivers, teachers, students, and administrative staff of both institutions for generously sharing their experiences, insights, and institutional practices, which significantly contributed to the development of this study. The authors also acknowledge Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, Indonesia, for facilitating the research process and providing academic support throughout the project.

The authors further appreciate the contribution of the broader Islamic educational discourse represented by the Al-Azhar educational tradition in Cairo, Egypt, particularly the educational principles and institutional practices associated with the Al-Azhar Institutes Sector (*Qitā' al-Ma'āhid al-Azhariyyah*) and Al-Azhar secondary educational institutions, which served as important comparative references in the conceptual development of the Integrated Child-Friendly Pesantren Model.

This research was supported by the Research Assistance Program of the State Higher Education Operational Assistance (BOPTN), Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, Indonesia, Fiscal Year 2025, under Litapdimas Registration Number 251100000104410. The funding agency had no role in the study design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, manuscript preparation, or the decision to submit the article for publication.

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