

Infrastructure as a Fundamental Dimension of Fulfilling the Rights of Students in Islamic Boarding Schools

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ABSTRACT

Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren), as fundamental Islamic educational institutions in Indonesian society, have full responsibility for the welfare of their students. However, discourse on students' rights is often more focused on education and religious freedom, while the dimension of the right to safe, adequate, and healthy infrastructure is often neglected. This article aims to analyze the juridical-normative position of infrastructure as a fundamental element in the fulfillment of students' basic rights. Using a normative legal approach, this study examines the relevant regulatory framework, including Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, and Law No. 18 of 2019 on Islamic Boarding Schools. The analysis focuses on how the obligations of the state and Islamic boarding school administrators to provide a safe environment, as mandated by children's rights to survival, growth, and development, inherently include the provision of infrastructure that meets safety, health, and appropriateness standards. The analysis shows that infrastructure is not merely a supporting facility, but rather a prerequisite for realizing the rights to education, health, and protection from physical and psychological violence. Failure to provide adequate infrastructure constitutes negligence that violates the fundamental rights of Islamic boarding school students. Therefore, this article recommends strengthening the state's oversight mechanism for infrastructure standards in Islamic boarding schools, while not neglecting institutional autonomy, to ensure comprehensive protection of students' rights and their fulfillment.

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INTRODUCTION

As one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) accommodate millions of students from diverse social, economic, and geographic backgrounds (Abidin & Sirojuddin, 2024; Arif, Nasir, et al., 2025; Hamdanah et al., 2025; Ma'arif et al., 2025; Masuwd et al., 2025). Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs shows that the number of Islamic boarding schools continues to increase (Hakim, 2023), but this quantitative growth is not always accompanied by an equal distribution of educational infrastructure (Khamid et al., 2023; Miftahuddin et al., 2024). Various qualitative reports and field findings indicate that basic facilities, such as adequate classrooms, sanitation, healthy dormitories, access to clean water, and safety facilities, are still limited (Febiantoni et al., 2025; Zainal, 2022). This condition is a crucial issue because infrastructure is not merely a technical element, but a structural prerequisite for fulfilling the basic rights of students as students, as guaranteed by human rights principles and national education policies.

Several previous studies have discussed Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) from the perspective of curriculum, kyai leadership, scholarly traditions, and pedagogical transformation in the modern era (Aisyah et al., 2022; I. Kurniawan et al., 2022; Ma'arif et al., 2025; Rofiq, 2025). Other studies have also highlighted the rights of children and students in the context of formal education, including the right to a safe and dignified learning environment (Abas et al., 2025; Badrudin, 2022; Baihaqi et al., 2023; Mubarak et al., 2024). However, studies that specifically and systematically position infrastructure as a fundamental dimension in fulfilling the rights of students in Islamic boarding schools are still relatively limited. Some studies tend to view infrastructure as an administrative support factor, rather than as a normative element directly related to educational justice and the protection of student rights. (Pratama, 2025; Purwanti et al., 2023). This gap indicates that the existing literature has not fully addressed the conceptual and empirical relationship between Islamic boarding school infrastructure and the fulfillment of students' rights.

This article aims to address these shortcomings by positioning Islamic boarding school infrastructure as an essential dimension in fulfilling the rights of students (*santri*), both from an Islamic education perspective and a human rights framework (Arif, Zekkari, et al., 2025; Rofiq, 2025; Salim et al., 2024; Utama & Salim, 2024). The paper focuses on analyzing how the quality and availability of infrastructure influence the fulfillment of students' rights to safety, health, learning comfort, and dignity as educational subjects. With this approach, the article not only broadens the discourse on Islamic boarding schools but also offers a perspective that differs from previous studies that have emphasized solely normative-theological or managerial aspects. Furthermore, this paper attempts to test the argument that the fulfillment of students' rights cannot be separated from fair and adequate infrastructure. Infrastructure is positioned not as a complement to policy, but as a concrete indicator of the commitment of Islamic boarding school institutions and the state to guaranteeing the right to equal education. Therefore, this article proposes the thesis that infrastructure quality is a key variable in realizing rights-friendly, inclusive, and sustainable Islamic boarding schools and needs to be explicitly included in the evaluation and development framework of Islamic boarding school education in Indonesia.

METHODS

This research uses a normative legal approach enriched with conceptual analysis to examine the fulfillment of students' rights in the context of Islamic boarding school education. This approach views law as a system of norms and principles that shape the obligations of the state and non-state actors in guaranteeing children's educational rights. The normative framework was chosen because

infrastructure issues are not merely technical but are intertwined with concepts of educational justice, child protection, and public responsibility for a safe and dignified learning environment.

The primary legal materials in this study include Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, and Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools. These three regulations are analyzed in an integrated manner to identify the construction of legal obligations that bind the state and Islamic boarding school administrators in guaranteeing children's rights to survival, growth, and development. The analysis is also supported by secondary legal materials in the form of international and national academic literature discussing the right to education, a safe learning environment, and the governance of religious-based educational institutions.

The legal analysis is conducted through systematic and conceptual interpretation by exploring the relationships between norms in various legal instruments (Chaudhary et al., 2024). The conceptual approach is used to clarify the meaning of a safe and appropriate educational environment as an integral part of the right to education, so that infrastructure is not positioned as an additional facility, but rather as a normative element inherent in the obligation to protect children. Within this framework, standards of safety, health, and infrastructure adequacy are understood as logical consequences of the recognition of the rights of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) as legal subjects. Furthermore, this study implicitly uses a comparative legal approach by linking national norms with general principles of child protection and the right to education that have developed in international legal discourse. This approach is not intended to conduct an explicit jurisdictional comparison, but rather to assess the consistency and adequacy of national regulations in meeting universal standards for a safe learning environment. Thus, this methodology allows for a critical evaluation of the extent to which the legal framework for Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia has internalized globally recognized principles of child rights protection.

Through a combination of normative, conceptual, and implicit comparative legal approaches, this study builds a methodological basis for testing the argument that fulfilling the rights of Islamic boarding school students requires the recognition of infrastructure as a fundamental dimension of the legal responsibility of the state and Islamic boarding school administrators. This approach is expected to produce an analysis that is not only normatively coherent but also relevant in the context of developing Islamic boarding school education policies oriented toward rights protection and sustainability.

The conceptual framework of this research systematically places Islamic boarding school infrastructure within a legal and human rights framework. The analysis begins with the national regulatory framework, which serves as the normative basis for the provision of education and child protection, and is then translated into the principles of children's rights and the right to education. These principles establish the legal obligations of the state and Islamic boarding school administrators to provide a safe and appropriate educational environment. Islamic boarding school infrastructure is positioned as a concrete manifestation of these obligations, as the quality of the facilities directly determines whether the standards of safety, health, and appropriateness of the learning environment are met. This framework culminates in the fulfillment of the rights of students as legal subjects, understood not only as access to education but also as a guarantee of dignity, protection, and justice in the Islamic boarding school educational process. This framework confirms the research's main argument that infrastructure is not an additional element, but rather a fundamental dimension in fulfilling students' rights.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The national regulatory framework has provided a strong normative basis for fulfilling the rights of students in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), but this has not been explicitly translated into an obligation to provide standardized educational infrastructure. An analysis of the Child Protection Law confirms that children's rights to survival, growth, and development carry legal consequences in the form of an obligation to create a safe and healthy environment. This environment, in the context of boarding schools such as Islamic boarding schools, inherently includes the physical condition of the building, sanitation, housing, and other supporting facilities that determine the safety and well-being of students.

A review of the National Education System Law shows that students' right to a quality education is not only interpreted as access to the learning process, but also includes guarantees of a decent and humane learning environment. Although this regulation does not specifically address the infrastructure standards for Islamic boarding schools, the general principles of educational quality and student protection allow for normative interpretation that educational facilities are an integral part of the right to education. Therefore, the lack of technical regulations cannot be used as an excuse to ignore legal responsibility for infrastructure quality. Furthermore, an analysis of the Islamic Boarding School Law indicates state recognition of the uniqueness of Islamic boarding schools as community-based and religious educational institutions. However, this recognition has not been fully accompanied by the formulation of clear obligations regarding minimum infrastructure standards that guarantee the safety and health of students. The results of this study indicate that Islamic boarding school regulations still emphasize the institutional aspects and educational functions, while the physical dimensions of the learning environment tend to be positioned as an internal matter for Islamic boarding school administrators.

From a conceptual perspective, the research findings confirm that Islamic boarding school educational infrastructure cannot be separated from the construction of students' rights as legal subjects. Infrastructure serves as a concrete medium through which the right to education is realized or violated (Muzayana, 2024). When facilities do not meet safety and suitability standards, students' rights to protection and dignity are normatively reduced, even though formal access to education remains available (Hariadi et al., 2024). These findings reinforce the argument that the fulfillment of rights is not solely measured by the existence of educational institutions, but also by the quality of the physical environment that supports the educational process. Overall, the research findings demonstrate a gap between the normative recognition of students' rights in national regulations and the operationalization of infrastructure obligations in the Islamic boarding school context. This gap indicates the need to reposition infrastructure as a fundamental dimension in fulfilling students' rights, rather than merely a technical or administrative aspect. Thus, this research emphasizes that strengthening the Islamic boarding school legal framework must be directed at explicitly integrating the protection of children's rights, the right to education, and appropriate and safe infrastructure standards.

Table 1. Comparison of Regulatory Frameworks Related to Infrastructure as an Element in Fulfilling the Rights of Students

Analysis Aspects	Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection	Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System	Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools
Position of Children/Students	Children are positioned as legal subjects who have	Students are understood as citizens who have the	Santri are recognized as students in the Islamic boarding school

		inherent rights to protection and welfare.	right to receive quality educational services.	education system with unique Islamic values.
Rights Protection Orientation		Emphasizing the right to survival, growth and development in a safe environment	Emphasizing the right to quality and equitable education	Emphasizing the recognition, facilitation, and empowerment of Islamic boarding schools
Position of the Physical Environment		A safe and healthy environment is a prerequisite for normative child protection.	A suitable learning environment is seen as part of the quality of education.	The physical environment of Islamic boarding schools is implicitly recognized without detailed standards.
Infrastructure Setup		Infrastructure is understood as an inherent part of the child protection environment.	Infrastructure is seen as a means of supporting the implementation of education	Infrastructure tends to be positioned as an internal Islamic boarding school affair.
Explicit Level of Settings		High in principle but not technically	Moderate and general in nature	Low and more of an institutional recognition nature
Implications for the Rights of Students		Infrastructure becomes a normative element of protecting children's rights	Infrastructure functions as a supporter of educational rights	Infrastructure has not been emphasized as a dimension of students' rights

The table shows the differences in orientation and depth of infrastructure-related regulations in the three laws that serve as the legal basis for fulfilling the rights of students in Islamic boarding schools. The Child Protection Law places a safe and healthy physical environment as an inherent part of protecting children's rights, so that infrastructure can be understood normatively as a fundamental element of fulfilling rights. The National Education System Law recognizes the importance of a suitable learning environment but positions it within the general framework of educational quality without specific emphasis on the context of boarding school education (Apologia et al., 2024; Fauzi et al., 2025; Muhith et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the Islamic Boarding School Law places greater emphasis on state recognition of the existence and uniqueness of Islamic boarding schools as community-based and religious educational institutions (Ummah et al., 2025). In these regulations, infrastructure has not been explicitly formulated as part of the legal obligation to fulfill students' rights, but rather tends to be viewed as a technical aspect of implementation. This comparison confirms the normative gap between child rights protection and Islamic boarding school regulations, while also strengthening the research argument that infrastructure needs to be repositioned as a fundamental dimension in fulfilling students' basic rights.

Discussion

Legal Obligations of the State and Islamic Boarding Schools in Providing Safe Infrastructure

The obligation to provide safe Islamic boarding school infrastructure cannot be viewed as a policy choice, but rather as a legal consequence of recognizing children's rights and the right to education. Within the national legal framework, the state holds primary responsibility as a duty bearer to ensure that every child in educational institutions, including Islamic boarding schools, is protected from risks that threaten their safety and well-being (Akhmad, 2024). This responsibility is positive, meaning the

state is not only prohibited from committing violations but is also obliged to take active steps to ensure a safe and appropriate learning environment (Nisa & Purnomo, 2025). In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this state obligation extends to education providers as the direct implementers of educational services. Islamic boarding schools, despite their unique traditions and management autonomy, remain bound by child protection norms and the universal principle of the right to education (Ekaningsih et al., 2022; Multazamy Rohmatulloh et al., 2022). Islamic boarding school infrastructure, such as dormitory buildings, classrooms, sanitation, and safety systems, serve as concrete instruments through which these legal obligations are realized. Thus, failure to provide infrastructure that meets safety and health standards can be understood as a form of neglect of legal obligations, not simply a technical or resource limitation.

The relationship between the state and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in providing infrastructure is complementary, not substitutive. The state cannot completely abdicate its responsibility under the guise of pesantren autonomy, while pesantren cannot deny their legal obligations under the guise of community independence. The state's legal obligations include policy formulation, facilitation, supervision, and minimum standards, while pesantren are obligated to implement these principles in their daily educational practices (Hasyim, 2022). Safe infrastructure serves as a meeting point between state authority and the moral and legal responsibilities of pesantren. Furthermore, the provision of safe infrastructure serves as an indicator of legal commitment to protecting the rights of students (santri). Adequate infrastructure reflects recognition of the dignity of students as legal subjects entitled to protection, not simply recipients of education. From this perspective, the quality of infrastructure not only impacts the effectiveness of learning but also serves as a benchmark for the extent to which the principles of child protection and educational justice are truly internalized in pesantren governance. This strengthens the argument that the legal obligations of the state and pesantren in providing infrastructure cannot be separated from the goals of education itself. Education that ignores safety and the suitability of the physical environment has the potential to structurally diminish the rights of students (Mazele & Amoah, 2021; Rohmadi et al., 2024). Therefore, safe infrastructure must be understood as a normative foundation for fulfilling students' rights, not simply an administrative complement to the Islamic boarding school education system.

Infrastructure as a Manifestation of Children's Rights to Survival and Development

Islamic boarding school educational infrastructure is a concrete manifestation of the fulfillment of children's rights to survival and development, which are guaranteed normatively. This right does not stop at abstract guarantees, but rather demands concrete conditions that allow children to undergo the educational process without exposure to physical or psychosocial risks. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, which are characterized by boarding school education, the quality of infrastructure is a determining factor in whether this right is truly protected or is actually diminished in daily practice. The right to survival is closely related to the safety and health aspects of the educational environment. Infrastructure that does not meet safety standards, such as fragile buildings, poor sanitation systems, or high occupancy density, has the potential to directly threaten the safety of students. From a child protection law perspective, these conditions cannot be viewed as tolerable consequences, but rather as violations of the obligation to create a safe environment. Thus, Islamic boarding school infrastructure serves as the primary medium in guaranteeing students' rights to live with dignity.

Beyond the safety dimension, infrastructure also plays a crucial role in fulfilling children's rights to optimal growth and development. A suitable physical environment supports students' mental health, learning comfort, and emotional stability. Adequate learning spaces, humane dormitories, and clean and healthy supporting facilities enable students to develop cognitively, socially, and spiritually

(Maimun et al., 2025; Nuhrodin & Dhina, 2021). Within this framework, infrastructure is no longer understood as a passive tool, but as an active element that shapes the educational experience and overall development of children. This discussion also emphasizes that the failure to provide adequate infrastructure has implications for the unequal fulfillment of children's rights. Students who study in environments with minimal facilities are vulnerable because their right to development is not met equally. This inequality has the potential to perpetuate structural injustice in the education system, particularly for children from limited socioeconomic backgrounds who rely on Islamic boarding schools for educational access (Sabarudin et al., 2024). Thus, the quality of infrastructure has a justice dimension that cannot be ignored.

By viewing infrastructure as a manifestation of children's rights to survival and development, this discussion strengthens the argument that the fulfillment of Islamic boarding school (santri) rights must be measured by the actual conditions of the educational environment. This approach challenges the prevailing view that separates normative rights from the physical reality of education. From this perspective, Islamic boarding school infrastructure serves as a substantive indicator of the extent to which child protection principles are truly internalized in the implementation of Islamic education.

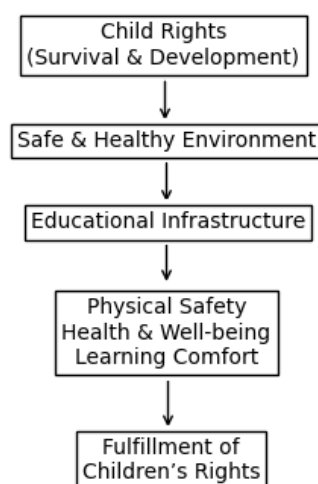


Figure 1. Infrastructure as a Manifestation of Children's Rights to Survival and Development

The figure 1 illustrates the conceptual relationship between children's rights and educational infrastructure as an inseparable whole. The flow begins with the recognition of children's rights to survival and development, which requires a safe and healthy educational environment. This environment is then concretely realized through the provision of adequate educational infrastructure. Infrastructure is not understood as a neutral element, but rather as a means that directly determines children's physical safety, health, well-being, and learning comfort. This entire flow culminates in the substantive fulfillment of children's rights, which is measured not only by access to education but also by the quality of the physical environment that supports the process of dignified growth and development (Lundy et al., 2024; Suryana et al., 2023). This framework emphasizes the position of infrastructure as a concrete manifestation of the legal and moral commitment to protecting children's rights in Islamic boarding school education.

The Tension between Islamic Boarding School Autonomy and the Standards for the Protection of Students' Rights

This research reveals a normative tension between the principle of Islamic boarding school autonomy and demands for the fulfillment of standards for the protection of students' rights. Islamic boarding schools have historically developed as community-based educational institutions with

independence in curriculum management, governance, and boarding life. This autonomy is a key strength of Islamic boarding schools in maintaining the identity and traditions of Islamic education. However, in the context of protecting children's rights, autonomy cannot be understood as a space free from universal and binding legal obligations (Singh, 2023). Tensions arise when standards for the protection of students' rights, particularly those related to the safety and health of the physical environment, are perceived as an interference with the independence of the Islamic boarding school. In practice, limited technical regulations regarding Islamic boarding school infrastructure are often interpreted as legitimizing the full handover of facility management to the boarding school administrators. This discussion demonstrates that this understanding has the potential to place students in a vulnerable position, as the protection of their rights depends on the institution's internal capacity and awareness, rather than on uniform legal standards.

From a legal perspective, Islamic boarding school autonomy should be understood functionally, not absolutely. Autonomy serves to regulate the specific values and methods of education, but cannot be used to negate the principle of child protection and the right to education. Safety standards and infrastructure adequacy are part of the non-negotiable minimum obligations, as they directly relate to the rights of students to life, health, and dignity. Therefore, the limits of Islamic boarding school autonomy lie at the point where internal practices have the potential to violate students' fundamental rights. This discussion also highlights the role of the state in managing this tension through a proportional approach. The state is not sufficient to simply recognize the autonomy of Islamic boarding schools; it is also obligated to ensure that such recognition does not lead to the neglect of students' rights (Basha, 2024; UNESCO, 2022). An approach that emphasizes facilitation, guidance, and the establishment of minimum standards can provide a balance between respecting Islamic boarding school independence and upholding rights protection. Within this framework, state intervention is understood as a form of legal responsibility, not as an attempt at homogenization or excessive control.

Thus, the tension between Islamic boarding school autonomy and standards for protecting the rights of students should not be seen as mutually exclusive. This discussion emphasizes that these two principles can be reconciled through a legal interpretation that places students' rights as the normative boundary of autonomy. Safe and adequate Islamic boarding school infrastructure is a crucial point where this balance is tested, and it also serves as an indicator of the extent to which Islamic boarding school autonomy is implemented in alignment with the principles of child rights protection and educational justice.

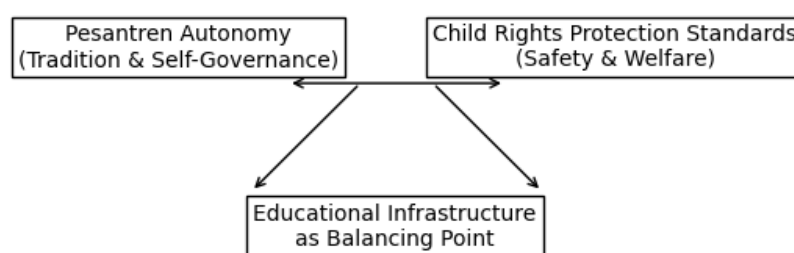


Figure 2: Tension between Islamic Boarding School Autonomy and Standards for the Protection of Students' Rights

The figure 2 represents the normative tension between Islamic boarding school autonomy and the standards for protecting the rights of students as two opposing but not mutually exclusive principles. Islamic boarding school autonomy is depicted as a space for self-management rooted in tradition and internal governance, while the standards for protecting the rights of students reflect universal demands for the safety and well-being of children. The two-way arrow indicates the reciprocal relationship and potential tension between these two principles. The Islamic boarding school's educational

infrastructure is positioned at the bottom as a point of balance, bringing together the independence of the Islamic boarding school with the obligation to protect rights. This framework emphasizes that the provision of safe and adequate infrastructure serves as a normative medium for aligning institutional autonomy with the standards for protecting the rights of students, so that both can operate coherently within the Islamic boarding school education system.

Normative Implications of Infrastructure for Educational Justice in Islamic Boarding Schools

The educational infrastructure of Islamic boarding schools has significant normative implications for the realization of educational justice for students. Educational justice relates not only to the opportunity to enter educational institutions but also to the actual conditions experienced by students during the learning process. Adequate infrastructure serves as a structural prerequisite for every student to enjoy the right to education equally, regardless of social, economic, or regional background (Murdianto, 2023). From an educational law perspective, disparities in infrastructure quality have the potential to give rise to substantive injustice. Students studying in environments with limited facilities face health and safety risks and learning barriers that students in Islamic boarding schools with better infrastructure do not experience. This disparity demonstrates that access to formal education alone is insufficient to guarantee justice, as the quality of the physical environment also determines the extent to which the right to education can be fully enjoyed. Infrastructure is thus a crucial variable in assessing the equality of students' rights.

Another normative implication is evident in the relationship between the state and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in ensuring educational justice. When Islamic boarding school infrastructure is entirely left to the institution's internal capabilities, students from Islamic boarding schools with limited resources are at a disadvantage. In this context, educational justice demands the presence of the state through affirmative policies, minimum standards, and supporting mechanisms that can reduce disparities between Islamic boarding schools. Safe and adequate infrastructure is a concrete instrument for the state to realize the principle of justice in religious-based education. This discussion also shows that educational justice in Islamic boarding schools cannot be separated from the recognition of the dignity of students as legal subjects (Ali & Musliem, 2024; Juliana et al., 2026; A. Kurniawan et al., 2023; Muntasir et al., 2025; Sutrisno et al., 2025). Learning environments that do not meet appropriate standards have the potential to diminish the dignity of students, placing them in an unequal position compared to students in other educational institutions. Within this framework, quality infrastructure is not a form of privilege, but rather an expression of fair treatment and respect for the basic rights of students (Habibah, 2025; Mumtaz et al., 2024).

The normative implications of infrastructure for educational equity in Islamic boarding schools emphasize the need for a paradigm shift in Islamic boarding school education governance. Infrastructure must be understood as an integral part of educational equity, not simply a technical aspect of development. This approach reinforces the argument that fulfilling the rights of students requires an integration of child rights protection, state responsibility, and the provision of adequate infrastructure as the foundation for sustainable educational equity.

Table 2. Normative Implications of Infrastructure for the Equity of Islamic Boarding School Education

Aspects of Educational Justice		Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection		Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System		Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools	
Position of Children/Students	of Children positioned as	are legal	Students understood as	are citizens	Santri are recognized as	part of the	national

	subjects who have equal rights to protection and welfare.	who have the right to fair educational services.	religious-based education system.
The Meaning of Justice	Justice is defined as equal protection for the safety and development of children.	Justice is defined as equal access and quality of educational services.	Justice is more emphasized in the recognition of Islamic boarding school institutions
The Relationship between Infrastructure and Rights	Infrastructure is a normative prerequisite for protecting children's rights	Infrastructure functions as a means of supporting fairness in the quality of education.	Infrastructure has not been formulated as a dimension of educational justice
Potential for Inequality	Infrastructure inequality has direct implications for child rights violations.	Inequality in facilities creates inequality in the quality of learning.	The inequality of Islamic boarding schools is perceived as a difference in internal capacity.
Role of the State	The state is obliged to actively ensure a safe and healthy environment.	The state is responsible for ensuring equal distribution of quality education.	The state acts as a recognizer and facilitator of Islamic boarding schools
Normative Implications	Infrastructure is an instrument of child protection justice	Infrastructure is an indicator of educational justice	Infrastructure has not been an indicator of Islamic boarding school justice

This table shows that the three laws have different orientations in interpreting educational justice and the position of infrastructure in fulfilling the rights of Islamic boarding school students. The Child Protection Law normatively positions a safe and healthy environment as an integral part of protecting children's rights, so that infrastructure directly functions as an instrument of justice. Within this framework, infrastructure inequality is seen as a form of structural injustice that impacts the violation of children's rights. The National Education System Law positions infrastructure as part of the quality of educational services, so its relationship to educational justice is functional. Infrastructure is an indicator of equal learning quality, although it is not specifically formulated in the context of boarding school education. Meanwhile, the Islamic Boarding School Law places more emphasis on the recognition and empowerment of Islamic boarding school institutions, so the infrastructure dimension has not been articulated as part of educational justice for Islamic boarding school students.

This comparison highlights a normative gap in the construction of justice in Islamic boarding school education. Infrastructure has not been fully positioned as a dimension of justice in Islamic boarding school regulations, despite its conceptual and normative role in fulfilling students' rights. This finding strengthens the argument that reformulating Islamic boarding school policies requires integrating infrastructure as an instrument of rights-based educational justice.

Directions for Rights-Based Islamic Boarding School Infrastructure Policy Reformulation

Reformulation of Islamic boarding school infrastructure policy needs to be guided by a rights-based approach that places students as the primary subjects of educational protection and services. Infrastructure can no longer be understood solely as technical physical facilities, but rather as a normative prerequisite for fulfilling students' rights to safety, health, and development. Within this framework, Islamic boarding school infrastructure policy must be based on the principle of the best

interests of the child, ensuring that every decision regarding the construction and management of facilities is directly oriented toward protecting students' rights.

A rights-based approach also demands a shift in the state's role from merely recognizing Islamic boarding school institutions to guaranteeing minimum standards of safe and adequate educational services. Policy reforms need to clarify the state's responsibility to ensure the availability, affordability, and quality of Islamic boarding school infrastructure without diminishing its religious character and institutional independence. In this context, state intervention should not be interpreted as limiting Islamic boarding school autonomy, but rather as a structural protection mechanism for the non-negotiable rights of students. Furthermore, a rights-based Islamic boarding school infrastructure policy requires the integration of child protection standards into technical regulations and oversight mechanisms. The infrastructure of dormitories, classrooms, sanitation, and other supporting facilities should be assessed not only for their physical suitability but also for their impact on the security, mental health, and sustainable development of students. This perspective encourages the development of rights-oriented evaluation indicators, so that infrastructure disparities are no longer perceived as variations in internal capacity but rather as educational equity issues that demand policy responses.

The direction of policy reformulation also necessitates strengthening collaboration between the state, Islamic boarding school managers, and civil society in providing equitable infrastructure. Islamic boarding schools remain the primary actors in managing values-based education, while the state acts as a facilitator and supervisor, ensuring that standards for protecting the rights of students are met. This synergy enables the development of policies that are sensitive to the context of Islamic boarding schools while also consistent with the principles of children's rights and educational justice. Thus, the reformulation of rights-based Islamic boarding school infrastructure policies aims not only to improve the quality of educational facilities but also to build a framework of justice that protects the dignity and safety of students. This approach broadens the meaning of infrastructure from merely a physical asset to a normative instrument that connects Islamic boarding school autonomy, state responsibility, and the fulfillment of children's rights within a unified, equitable and sustainable education policy.

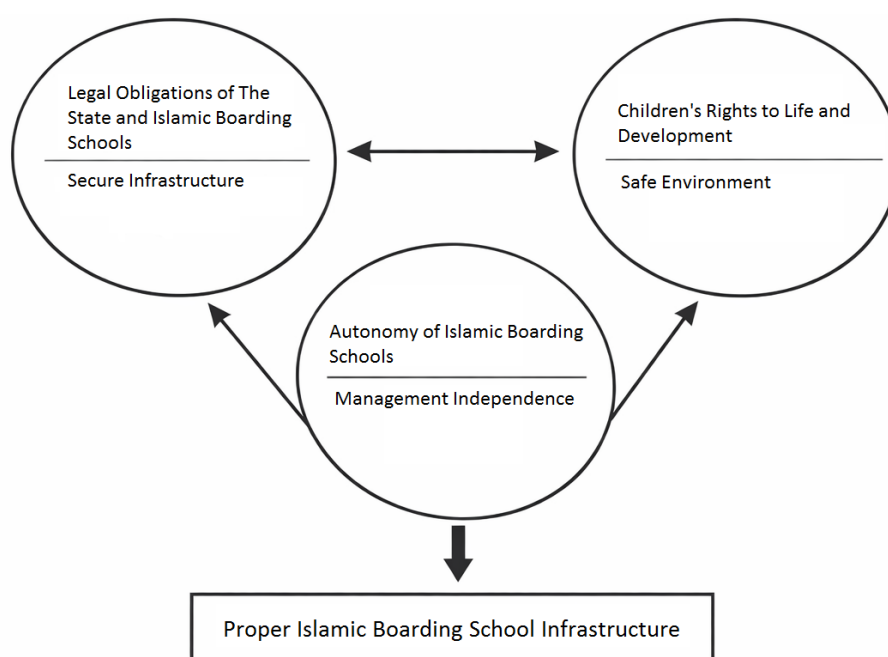


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of Infrastructure as a Right of Students

The figure 3 above represents the causal and normative relationship between the regulatory framework, legal obligations, and the actual conditions of Islamic boarding school education. The diagram positions the fulfillment of students' rights as the end result of a series of obligations between

the state and Islamic boarding school administrators, mediated by the quality of educational infrastructure. This position emphasizes that students' rights do not exist in the abstract, but are realized through a safe, healthy, and appropriate learning environment. The visual flow in the figure shows that the fulfillment of students' rights cannot be separated from the principle of children's rights to survival, growth, and development. Islamic boarding school infrastructure is presented as a material instrument that enables these principles to operate in daily educational practices. The availability of safe dormitories, adequate sanitation facilities, and healthy learning spaces are understood as normative prerequisites for creating a dignified and equitable learning experience. Furthermore, the figure illustrates that the fulfillment of students' rights is the meeting point between the state's legal responsibility and Islamic boarding school autonomy. Infrastructure serves as an integration space where standards for rights protection can be internalized without negating the character and traditions of Islamic boarding schools. Thus, the fulfillment of the rights of students in the picture is not interpreted as the result of a single policy, but rather as a consequence of the harmony between regulations, institutional governance, and the practice of providing rights-oriented educational infrastructure.

Table 3. Concepts for Analysis of Islamic Boarding School Infrastructure from the Perspective of Students' Rights

Dimensions of Analysis	Normative Focus	Infrastructure Position	Implications for the Rights of Students
Legal obligations of the state and Islamic boarding schools	Constitutional and legal responsibilities in ensuring a safe educational environment	Infrastructure is understood as a legal obligation inherent in the function of protecting and serving education.	Guaranteeing the safety, health and protection of students as legal subjects
Children's rights to survival and development	Fulfillment of children's basic rights in the context of boarding education	Infrastructure functions as a material medium that enables the rights to life and development to be realized in real terms.	Encourage learning conditions that support the physical, mental and social growth of students
Autonomy of Islamic boarding schools and standards of rights protection	The tension between management independence and the obligation to fulfill minimum rights standards	Infrastructure becomes a meeting point and an arena for negotiation between autonomy and regulation.	Balancing the institutional wisdom of Islamic boarding schools with the principles of justice and protection of the rights of students

This table summarizes the research's analytical framework, positioning Islamic boarding school infrastructure as a normative node connecting legal obligations, children's rights, and institutional autonomy. In the first dimension, infrastructure is positioned as a direct consequence of the legal responsibility of the state and Islamic boarding school administrators to provide a safe educational environment. The second dimension emphasizes that infrastructure is not merely a physical facility, but rather a concrete means for realizing children's rights to survival and development in the context of boarding school education. The third dimension demonstrates that infrastructure becomes a dialectical space between Islamic boarding school autonomy and standards for protecting the rights of students, where the fulfillment of rights is not intended to eliminate the independence of the Islamic boarding school, but rather to direct it toward more just and dignified educational practices. Overall, this table demonstrates that educational justice in Islamic boarding schools cannot be separated from how infrastructure is understood and regulated within the framework of children's human rights.

Research findings within an international legal framework can be linked to globally recognized principles of protecting children's rights and the right to education. From an international legal perspective, the rights of Islamic boarding school students (*santri*) as children in a boarding school environment align with the principle of the right to a safe, inclusive, and dignified education as outlined in international instruments on children's rights and education. This research finding demonstrates that educational infrastructure is not merely a technical issue, but an integral part of the state's obligation to ensure the protection and well-being of children in all forms of educational services, including religious-based education (Hambali et al., 2025; Khoirurrijal et al., 2023; Sarkowi et al., 2025).

Several international studies confirm that the physical educational environment is closely related to the fulfillment of children's rights to safety and development (Isbah, 2020a, 2020b). International education law experts emphasize that a state's failure to ensure safe and healthy educational facilities can be categorized as a form of neglect of its obligation to protect children's rights. The findings of this study align with this view but expand on it by demonstrating that in the context of Islamic boarding schools, infrastructure also serves as a normative bridge between religious values and universal human rights standards. Thus, this study complements the international literature, which generally focuses on public schools, by including religious educational institutions as subjects of child rights analysis. On the other hand, several previous studies tended to separate the autonomy of faith-based educational institutions from the state's obligation to fulfill children's rights standards (Iskandar, 2023; Nuha & Atikoh, 2025; Soleh, 2024). This approach often places the state in a passive position in respecting the diversity of educational systems. This study offers a different interpretation by demonstrating that Islamic boarding school autonomy does not conflict with standards for protecting the rights of students (*santri*) as long as infrastructure is understood as a non-negotiable aspect of children's fundamental rights (Ridwan et al., 2025; Safi'I et al., 2022). This finding corrects a long-standing assumption in international discourse that views state intervention in religious education as a threat to institutional freedom.

By comparing the findings of this study with expert opinions and the results of international studies, it can be emphasized that fulfilling the rights of Islamic boarding school students (*santri*) through adequate infrastructure is a universal state obligation. The research's primary contribution lies in strengthening the argument that Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), as part of the national education system, are not outside the international child rights protection regime. Rather, they serve as strategic spaces to demonstrate how local and religious values can be harmoniously integrated with international legal principles to fulfill children's rights and ensure educational equity.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Islamic boarding school educational infrastructure plays a far more significant normative and functional role than simply supporting learning. Key findings indicate that the quality and security of infrastructure directly impact the fulfillment of students' rights, particularly their rights to safety, health, and dignified development. The impact of this infrastructure is far broader than previously assumed, as it influences not only the technical aspects of education but also determines the degree of justice and rights protection within the Islamic boarding school system. These findings challenge the long-held view that separates the fulfillment of children's rights from the physical conditions of the educational environment and open up new discussions about infrastructure as a human rights dimension in faith-based education.

Scientifically, this research contributes by strengthening normative arguments in the study of children's rights and education, while simultaneously challenging the tendency of previous research to view Islamic boarding school infrastructure as a purely administrative issue. This study introduces a rights-based infrastructure conceptual framework as a new analytical approach that connects the state's legal obligations, the autonomy of Islamic boarding schools, and the fulfillment of students' rights

within a coherent normative construct. Thus, this research enriches the discourse on education law and children's rights, particularly in the context of religious educational institutions, which have so far received little attention in studies of infrastructure and educational justice.

However, this study has limitations that require attention. The analysis focused on the normative legal framework and specific regulatory cases, so the findings cannot be generalized to all Islamic boarding school contexts, which have diverse geographic and institutional contexts. Variations in empirical data related to infrastructure conditions, as well as factors that differentiate students, such as age and social background, have not been fully captured. Therefore, further research with broader data coverage and diverse methodological approaches is needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between infrastructure, student rights, and educational equity in Islamic boarding schools.

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