



ANALYSIS OF THE XPOSE UNCENSORED PROGRAM IN SHAPING PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDCARE SECURITY PATTERNS IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS

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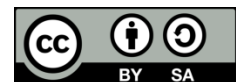
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of television investigative journalism on shifts in the security paradigm within religious education settings. The primary focus of this study is to analyze how the program "Xpose Uncensored" on Trans7 constructs a social reality that shapes public trust. This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method to explore the psychological dynamics and shifts in the perceptions of boarding school guardians following exposure to dramatic investigative content. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, content observation, and documentation of emerging phenomena during the 2025-2026 period. The results of this study indicate that the program systematically deconstructs traditional pesantren values through three main strategies: the deconstruction of adab values into physical marginalization, economic stigmatization through transactional framing, and the delegitimization of santri service (roan) as labor exploitation. The research findings reveal a significant cultivation effect, in which parents of students experience distorted perceptions on the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions. The media successfully homogenized the parents' perspectives into a collective fear (mainstreaming) that transformed the image of the pesantren from a "sacred space" into a "risky feudal institution. As a result, a crisis of public trust has emerged, prompting parents to shift from a trust-based, delegative parenting style to a suspicious, investigative one, and even leading them to consider transferring their children to public schools to ensure their physical and mental safety

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1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a social process that enables individuals and groups to build shared understanding through the exchange of messages, symbols, and meanings. In the context of modern society, this communication process occurs not only interpersonally but also extensively through mass media, which have the ability to expand the reach of messages and influence audiences' interpretations of social reality. Harun et al. (2012) emphasize that communication occurs dynamically and is influenced by the channel, message content, and the surrounding situational context. In such circumstances, mass media is not merely

a conveyor of information but also a crucial actor in shaping public perception on sensitive social issues, including education, child protection, and the safety of care environments.

One form of mass communication that has a strong influence is investigative journalism on television. Unlike routine news reporting, investigative journalism works through in-depth investigation, emphasizing the dramatic, and presenting narratives often designed to capture public attention. In Indonesia, television still holds a crucial position as an effective audio-visual medium for conveying messages persuasively and emotionally. However, in the media industry, television production is also inseparable from commercial logic, including the need to maintain audience attention through engaging, dramatic, and sometimes controversial packaging techniques (Budi, 2011). In this context, framing becomes a crucial strategy because the media can select certain aspects of reality, highlight them, and then direct how the audience understands an event.

Issues concerning Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) are particularly vulnerable to media framing because they are viewed not only as educational institutions but also as socio-religious institutions with moral authority within society. For many Muslim families, *pesantren* are synonymous with moral development, discipline, and character building for children. However, when the media highlights problematic aspects of parenting patterns and power relations within *pesantren*, these institutions can be perceived differently by the public. The broadcast of the October 13, 2025, edition of *Xpose Uncensored* provides a notable example of this situation, as it addressed issues of student safety, disciplinary practices, and parenting relations within *pesantren* in a visually and narratively powerful investigative format. Such broadcasts have the potential to shift guardians' understanding of Islamic boarding schools from normative beliefs about Islamic boarding schools to a more critical, even anxious, attitude toward their children's safety.

This shift in perception can be explained through cultivation theory, which positions television as a symbolic environment that gradually shapes audiences' beliefs about social reality. Gerbner argues that media exposure does not always produce immediate effects but rather works cumulatively and over the long term, shaping how people perceive the world (Wood, 2000). Signorielli and Morgan (1990) explain that cultivation analysis focuses on the relationship between media content patterns and the formation of audience beliefs. In the context of this research, investigative broadcasts about Islamic boarding schools can be understood as symbolic representations that provide guardians with a new framework for assessing the safety of parenting practices within these institutions. When broadcasts portray Islamic boarding schools through narratives of risk, inequality, and vulnerability, guardians' perceptions can be driven toward a more cautious evaluation of institutions previously perceived as safe. This process aligns with the notion that media plays a role in constructing symbolic realities that influence the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of audiences (Komala & Irwansyah, 2024; Alamiyah et al., 2022; Junaidi, 2018).

Although studies on media and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) have developed, most previous research has focused primarily on the representation of Islamic boarding schools in general news, the image of Islamic educational institutions, or media discourse on broader religious issues. Studies specifically examining how uncensored investigative television programs shape parents' perceptions of the safety of parenting in Islamic boarding schools are still relatively limited. This is where this research gap lies. This study not only highlights the content of the programs as a media product but also positions parents as the primary subjects who experience the process of interpreting these programs. Thus, the novelty of this research lies in its attempt to connect the analysis of the framing of investigative programs with changes in parents' perceptions across three main dimensions—cognitive, affective, and conative—of the issue of parenting safety in Islamic boarding schools.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze how the *Xpose Uncensored* program constructs the reality of parenting security in Islamic boarding schools and how this construction influences the perceptions of guardians. More specifically, this study examines the framing of security issues in the program and examines changes in guardians' perceptions in terms of knowledge, emotional responses, and behavioral tendencies after watching the program. This objective is important to clarify the research's position as a mass communication study that focuses on the relationship between media construction, audience perception, and trust in religious educational institutions. Thus, this study is expected to provide academic contributions to media and communication studies, while also enriching understanding of the dynamics of public trust in Islamic boarding schools amidst the strong influence of investigative television programs.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study approach to explore in-depth the phenomenon of changes in parental perceptions after exposure to specific programs. The case study was

chosen based on the need to understand the causal relationship between the investigative narrative in the program "Xpose Uncensored" and the psychological dynamics of guardians of Islamic boarding school students in a real-life context in 2026. Through this approach, the researcher aims to comprehensively describe how media framing of security and parenting issues in Islamic boarding schools can influence public trust in religious educational institutions.

The subjects of this study were parents or guardians of Islamic boarding school students who actively follow information on television and watched the October 13th edition of "Xpose Uncensored" on Trans7. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique to obtain in-depth data from individuals who met relevant criteria: having children studying at Islamic boarding schools and experiencing post-broadcast anxiety. Meanwhile, the research focuses on parental perceptions, encompassing cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions, regarding security and parenting systems in Islamic boarding schools as a result of the construction of reality presented by the media.

The data in this study were collected through three main techniques to obtain comprehensive information: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with parents of Islamic boarding school students to explore in detail their cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions after watching the Xpose Uncensored program. Researchers also observed the visual and narrative content of the program to identify the framing techniques used by the media. Furthermore, documentation techniques were applied by collecting records, broadcasting regulations, and articles related to the Islamic boarding school case in 2025 and 2026 to support the validity of the field findings..

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The Construction of the Reality of Islamic Boarding School Security in the Xpose Uncensored Show

The Xpose Uncensored show constructs the reality of Islamic boarding schools by oversimplifying the traditions of adab and the power relations between kiai (Islamic teachers) and santri (students), which are then framed as feudal practices. Through dramatic editing techniques and biased perspectives, the media portrays the students' respectful behavior—such as crawling or certain eating habits—not as spiritual values, but as forms of oppression and a loss of egalitarianism. This construction intentionally creates a negative image, portraying Islamic boarding schools as rigid institutions out of step with modern humanitarian values, in pursuit of sensational content.

Furthermore, the narrative also constructs an exploitative reality of Islamic boarding school security by emphasizing the perceived unequal financial and welfare aspects of the students. By highlighting the luxurious lives of religious authority figures compared to the simplicity of the students' facilities, the show leads public opinion to view Islamic boarding schools as morally and economically unsafe spaces for the community. As a result, this construction of reality not only distorts the facts about the traditional Islamic education system but also triggers a crisis of public trust and a negative stigma that undermines social harmony between Islamic boarding schools and the wider community.

The following image is an uncensored expose video showing students respecting their teachers or kiai at an Islamic boarding school that has gone viral.

If you want to drink milk, you have to squat first!!



In the broadcast, the narrator of Xpose Uncensored delivers a satirical narrative about the distribution of drinks at Islamic boarding schools. The narrative reads:

This Ibu Nyai is truly noble, she kindly distributes milk in small plastic cups to her students. But to get a sip of the milk, the students must steadfastly squat. Oh, maybe they're exercising, in fact they look a bit like children being drilled by the Public Order Agency (Satpol PP).

Through this narrative, Xpose Uncensored deconstructs the values of local Islamic boarding school wisdom by comparing the tradition of respect (adab) with the physical training of the security forces (Satpol PP). The phrase "maybe they're exercising" and the comparison with "being trained by the Satpol PP" indicate a cynical media effort that shifts the spiritual meaning of tawadhu (humility) into a form of physical marginalization deemed inhumane. Furthermore, the use of the phrase "just for a sip of milk" serves to downplay the significance of the gift, while simultaneously framing Ibu Nyai not as a giver of affection, but as an authority figure who demands excessive physical obedience for little reward. This aligns with the theory of reality construction, where the media not only reports events but also reframes them to elicit specific emotional reactions from viewers.

The Xpose Uncensored program also constructs a narrative that targets the financial and lifestyle aspects of authority figures in Islamic boarding schools. This narrative is stated as follows:

A cleric who is rich but the congregation gives envelopes



"It's not just young students; even older students who meet their kiai still crawl to kiss their hands. And what's surprising is that it turns out they're the ones who crawl to kiss the envelopes." Netizens suspect that this could be why some kiai are becoming increasingly wealthy; their luxury cars cost billions, and their sarongs are the most expensive brands, costing between 400,000 and 12 million rupiah. And at family gatherings, relatives splash out on the money. After all, if someone is wealthy, their congregation should be given material things. But what can I do? By giving an envelope to a kiai, it's hoped that blessings will come. If not, then just take the lesson."

The broadcast constructs the reality of Islamic boarding schools through a transactional framing, where the tradition of physical respect for students is tendentiously linked to the motive of giving material things or "envelopes" to obtain blessings. The media deliberately creates a narrative of social inequality by contrasting the luxurious lifestyles of kiai and their families with the economic conditions of the congregation, thus shifting the image of Islamic boarding schools from institutions of moral education to spaces of financial exploitation. Through the use of sarcastic language, this program deconstructs religious authority with the aim of destroying the security of reputation and public distrust in the integrity of Islamic boarding school institutions.

Asked to mop and wipe leaves (Received the blessing of being a free domestic worker at the kiai's house)



The program Xpose Uncensored highlighted the domestic workload of Islamic boarding school students (santri). The media attempted to contrast the wealth of authority figures with the physical activities performed by students at the kiai's residence.

"They're already rich and given lots of envelopes, but the housework that should be done by domestic helpers is being delegated to the male and female students. Recently, several videos of students cleaning their kiai's house went viral, including sweeping, mopping, washing clothes, washing kitchen utensils, and even wiping the leaves of the kiai's collection of plants. Some consider this to be akin to feudalism during the colonial era, but some students engage in roan dalem, or community service, at the kiai's house, as a privilege, even if it's free."

The program constructs the santri's community service (roan) as a form of exploitation of domestic labor by comparing the tradition of community service to feudal practices during the colonial era. The media framed the division of household chores—such as washing and cleaning the kiai's personal collection—not as character education or spiritual service, but rather as an attempt to shift the workload of domestic helpers for the material gain of the pesantren caretakers. By emphasizing the term "free work," this narrative deliberately delegitimized the sincerity of the santri and marginalized the pesantren as institutions that perpetuate social inequality and modern slavery in the public perception.

Based on an analysis of the Xpose Uncensored broadcast, it can be concluded that the media has constructed a reality that distorts parenting patterns and security values within the pesantren environment through three main strategies:

First, the deconstruction of adab values into physical marginalization. The media framed the tradition of respect (tawadhu) as a form of oppression of human dignity. By equating santri ethics with "Satpol PP training," the media eliminated the spiritual dimension of pesantren parenting and replaced it with an image of a rigid, feudal, and inhumane institution.

Second, economic stigmatization through transactional framing. The media constructs Islamic boarding school parenting as a space for financial exploitation by contrasting the opulence of the kiai (Islamic cleric) with the simplicity of the santri (students). The "envelope" narrative and hedonistic lifestyle are used to undermine the security of the pesantren's reputation, so that the public views the teacher-student relationship not as based on sincere knowledge, but rather on material transactions for the sake of perceived blessings.

Third, the delegitimization of devotion as exploitation of domestic labor. The media frames the roan (service) activities of santri as practices of modern slavery and colonial-era feudalism. By labeling domestic duties as "free work," the media deliberately ignores the value of character education and independence, and portrays pesantren as socially unsafe places that perpetuate class inequality.

Overall, these broadcasts do not simply report facts but construct a sensational and cynical artificial reality. This construction leads to public distrust that threatens the symbolic security and social harmony of pesantren institutions in modern society.

Analysis of Parents' Cognitive, Affective, and Conative Perceptions

The Xpose Uncensored broadcast acted as a catalyst that transformed parents' perspectives on Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) because it systematically attacked the three pillars of human perception. This change occurred because the broadcast provided alternative information that contradicted the traditional values held by parents.

The primary cause of this cognitive shift was the broadcast's presentation of a new discourse that undermined the parents' established understanding of the meaning of adab (ethnicity). Cognitively, parents initially understood practices such as squatting or helping out at the Kiai's house as instruments for character education and the instilling of humility (tawadhu). However, through narratives comparing these activities to "feudalism" and "Satpol PP training," the media forced parents' cognitive redefinitions. This rationale was strengthened by the media's provision of visual evidence (viral videos) used to justify the argument that systemic injustice existed in Islamic boarding schools. As a result, parents' knowledge shifted from idealistic to critical. They began to question the effectiveness of a closed system that was seen as risking hiding child rights violations.

Meanwhile, in the affective aspect, perceptions change drastically because the media uses fear mongering techniques through audiovisual dramatization. The use of gripping background music and sharp, sarcastic diction can touch parents' most sensitive areas: their children's safety and security. This emotional dimension is exacerbated by social pressure from the outside environment; skeptical comments from neighbors or extended family after watching the program create a collective feeling of "threat." Parents/guardians of students no longer simply feel proud of having students as students, but begin to feel anxiety, shame, and even fear that their children will become victims of the "exploitation" portrayed by the media. This negative sentiment grows because the media successfully frames authority figures (Kiai/Nyai) not as moral protectors but as intimidating authority figures.

Changes in the conative dimension are also a direct result of the accumulation of cognitive doubt and affective anxiety. Parents/guardians of students tend to change their behavior due to the need to reduce

uncertainty (uncertainty reduction theory). The reasons behind parents' increased contact with their children, questioning caregivers, or even considering transferring their children to public schools are all defensive mechanisms. They feel the need to take greater control over their children's fates because their trust in the Islamic boarding school's internal security system has been eroded by the broadcast. This change in behavior indicates that the perceptions constructed by the media have reached the stage of real action, with parents shifting from a "passive-trusting" position to an "active-investigative" one to ensure their children's physical and mental safety.

The primary reason this broadcast is able to change perceptions is because it successfully presents a conflicting reality. The media contrasts the spiritual reality parents believe in with the materialist-managerial reality portrayed by the media as the "real" reality within the walls of the Islamic boarding school. This causes parents to lose their anchor of certainty, shifting their perception from a sense of absolute security to a state of wariness filled with suspicion.

The Cultivation Effect: The Formation of Overconfidence

The cultivation effect in this phenomenon operates through a mainstreaming mechanism, where the media homogenizes the diverse perspectives of students' guardians into a single, collective perception of fear. Based on an analysis of the responses of research subjects, this overconfidence is formed through several fundamental dimensions that construct a new reality in the minds of students' guardians.

First, the belief arises that the "closed" nature of the Islamic boarding school education system automatically carries a high risk and creates a breeding ground for bullying. The cultivation effect constructs the mindset of students' guardians that media visualizations—such as physical punishment of students—constitute a common, ongoing phenomenon across all Islamic boarding schools. This phenomenon is fueled by the intense visual drama, which causes students' guardians to lose their critical ability to distinguish between "individual cases" and "general reality." Consequently, the need for excessive investigative oversight of the institution arises.

Second, this overconfidence is reinforced by the visual contradiction created by the media between the luxurious life of the *kiai* (Islamic cleric) and the physical suffering of the students. Media cultivation creates a stigma that every "envelope" or "roan" (community service) activity is a form of hidden exploitation. This narrative resonates with the economic fears of modern society, shifting the paradigm of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) from places seeking blessings (*tabarruk*) to transactional institutions deemed morally unsafe.

Furthermore, this cultivation effect is reinforced by dramatic elements such as the use of gripping music and sarcastic narratives, repeatedly consumed through clips on social media. This fosters the belief that the media's version of "reality" has greater validity than the objective reality experienced by their children in Islamic boarding schools. The impact is a distortion of perception, where the value of the Islamic boarding school curriculum and character education are neglected by guardians' focus on the potential physical risks portrayed by the media.

This shift in perspective is reflected in guardians' increasing desire to transfer their children to public schools or a drastic increase in the intensity of protective communication. This demonstrates that their perceptions have been fully "cultivated," believing that without immediate preventive action, their children risk becoming the next victims. Sociologically, the media has successfully deconstructed the image of "Islamic boarding schools as sacred spaces" into "Islamic boarding schools as backward, feudal institutions." In conclusion, the essence of the cultivation effect in *Xpose Uncensored* is a shift in social reality. This program instills the belief that Islamic boarding school culture contradicts universal humanitarian principles. As a result, the students' guardians experienced a profound crisis of trust, not because they witnessed the incident directly, but because the media's construction had created a "new truth" about the insecurity of parenting patterns within the Islamic boarding school environment.

Systematic Impact on Trust in Islamic Boarding School Institutions.

The systematic impact on trust in Islamic boarding schools due to these broadcasts can be explained in depth as a phenomenon of erosion of social legitimacy. When the media constructs Islamic boarding schools as physically, economically, and morally unsafe spaces, the impact is no longer limited to the individual Islamic boarding school being reported on, but rather undermines the overall societal trust system (generalized distrust).

Paradigm Shift from Sacred Institutions to Risky Institutions The primary cause of this systematic impact is the deconstruction of the image of the "sacredness" of Islamic boarding schools, which has long been the foundation of trust in Indonesian society. Narratives about students "crawling for a sip of milk" or "working as free domestic workers" create a new logic in parents' minds, suggesting that Islamic boarding schools are

no longer places to purify the soul, but rather places that pose a humanitarian risk. The sociological reason for this is that the media has successfully replaced the narrative of spirituality with a narrative of secularism that measures everything in terms of human rights and material compensation. Consequently, systemic trust has collapsed as the public begins to doubt the function of Islamic boarding schools as safe institutions for character education.

Another systemic impact is the weakening of the position of *kiai* (Islamic scholars) and *ustaz* (Islamic teachers) as holders of supreme moral authority. When the media cynically highlights luxurious lifestyles and "envelopes," this creates moral uncertainty in the public mind. The reason behind this is that the media has broken the chain of *khidmah* (service), previously considered noble, into a mere employer-employee relationship. This systematically undermines the structure of obedience between students and parents, as trust that was once based on respect turns into suspicion. This endangers the long-term stability of Islamic boarding schools, as the effectiveness of education in Islamic boarding schools depends heavily on absolute trust in their teachers. Systematically, this broadcast undermines the reciprocal relationship between Islamic boarding schools and the wider community. The media's construction of a "dangerously closed system" fuels public demands for external intervention or excessive government oversight, which could erode the autonomy of Islamic boarding schools. The underlying impact is the loss of symbolic security; parents no longer feel at ease leaving their children without close daily supervision (as seen in changes in parental behavior, leading to more frequent contact with their children). This decline in social capital has the potential to reduce the number of applicants (new students) due to a collectively cultivated fear within the community.

The most dangerous systemic impact is the normalization of stigma. Due to repeated exposure to narratives, the public tends to "generalize" that every Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) has a feudal and exploitative parenting style. This occurs because these broadcasts create an "overconfidence" that Islamic boarding schools are outdated institutions. Systemically, this creates social isolation for Islamic boarding schools in modern society, where they are perceived as institutions that are out of step with 21st-century values of egalitarianism and transparency.

It can be concluded that these broadcasts create a *Domino Effect of Doubt*, where doubts about one aspect (e.g., the *kiai's* lifestyle) spread to doubts about all aspects of education (curriculum, discipline, and physical security). This systemic impact forces Islamic boarding schools to step out of their traditional comfort zones and re-prove to the public that they remain safe institutions. This requires considerable resources and time to restore damaged public trust.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the *Xpose Uncensored* program plays a significant role in constructing guardians' perceptions of the safety of parenting practices in Islamic boarding schools through framing issues that emphasize aspects of discipline, economic relations, and parenting practices. The program not only functions as a conveyor of information but also forms a symbolic reality that influences guardians' perspectives in the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions. Cognitively, guardians experience a reassessment of parenting practices in Islamic boarding schools; affectively, anxiety and doubts about child safety arise; and conatively, behavioral changes occur towards a more vigilant and investigative attitude. These findings confirm that investigative television journalism has a strong constructive power in shaping public perceptions of religious educational institutions. However, the results of this study are contextual and limited to a specific case, so further research is needed to compare the influence of similar programs in different educational institution contexts and audience characteristics.

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