
The Internalization of Islamic Spirituality in Strengthening the Psychological Resilience of Generation Z Students in Madrasah Environments

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the internalization of Islamic spirituality in strengthening the psychological resilience of Generation Z students in a madrasah setting. This study is motivated by the increasing psychological distress among adolescents due to academic pressure, social dynamics, and exposure to digital media, which affect students' emotional well-being. Although various studies have shown a relationship between spirituality and mental health, research on the internalization of Islamic spirituality as a factor in strengthening psychological resilience in madrasahs remains limited. This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design at MA Arraudlah Tumapel Duduksampeyan Gresik. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving the madrasah principal, Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, guidance counselors, homeroom teachers, and students. The results indicate that the internalization of Islamic spirituality is achieved through the regular practice of religious activities, teachers' exemplary behavior, and daily religious practices. Activities such as congregational prayer, istighosah, tahlil, and communal prayer help students manage their emotions, reduce academic anxiety, and improve their ability to adapt to psychological stress. This study confirms that Islamic spirituality serves as a form of religious coping in strengthening the psychological resilience of Generation Z students at the madrasah.

Keywords: Islamic spirituality; psychological resilience; religious coping; Generation Z; madrasah education

A. Introduction

Adolescence is a complex and vulnerable stage of development, marked by physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that interact to shape an individual's personality (Mastorci et al., 2024). At this stage, adolescents are in the process of discovering their identity and begin to develop values and principles to guide their future (Rahayu & Dong, 2023). From a developmental psychology perspective, this phase is known as a crucial transitional period, during which individuals face various internal and external demands that can potentially lead to psychological stress (Erikson, 1968; Fahrezi, n.d.).

In the Indonesian context, adolescents make up a significant portion of the population and play a strategic role in the nation's development. Data from the Central Statistics Agency shows that the population aged 15–19 years exceeds 22 million (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2025). Meanwhile, UNICEF estimates that the total adolescent population is approaching 46 million (UNICEF

Indonesia, 2024). Most members of this group belong to Generation Z, a generation that has grown up in a highly digital environment. Generation Z's adaptability and digital connectivity make it easier to access information, but at the same time increase their vulnerability to psychological stress resulting from heavy exposure to social media (APJII, 2024).

Various studies show that heavy social media use is linked to an increased tendency toward social comparison, pressure to maintain one's self-image, and a decline in self-confidence among adolescents (Nugraha et al., 2024). In addition, academic pressure, family conflicts, and a lack of social support further exacerbate adolescents' psychological well-being. This condition is known as psychological distress, which refers to a negative emotional state that arises when individuals feel unable to cope with environmental demands (Richard S. Lazarus, 1984).

Globally, the World Health Organization reports that one in seven adolescents experiences a mental health disorder. In Indonesia, the Indonesian Health Survey shows that approximately 15% of students experience excessive anxiety and a decline in motivation to study. These findings underscore that psychological distress is a critical issue that requires a comprehensive and context-specific approach to management (World Health Organization, 2022).

In the face of such circumstances, psychological resilience is a crucial ability that enables individuals to endure, adapt, and recover from stress. A number of international studies indexed in Scopus indicate that protective factors such as social support, community, and spirituality are significantly associated with adolescents' mental well-being (Mesman et al., 2021; Pinto et al., 2021). This indicates that an approach focused solely on psychological aspects is insufficient, making it necessary to integrate the spiritual dimension into mental health promotion.

From an Islamic perspective, spirituality is not merely understood as the practice of ritual worship, but also encompasses inner awareness, closeness to God, and the internalization of values such as patience, gratitude, and trust in God. These values serve as adaptive coping mechanisms that help individuals manage life's pressures (Ilyas, 2024). Pargament asserts that engagement in religious activities can enhance psychological control and reduce stress levels (Pargament, 1999).

Several previous studies have shown a positive association between spirituality and adolescents' mental health. Smith and Denton found that religiosity contributes to improved coping skills and resilience (Smith & Denton, 2005). Azizah also pointed out that spirituality plays a role in maintaining adolescents' emotional stability (Rahmah et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Wajdi emphasized that strengthening one's spirituality can help reduce anxiety during crises such as a pandemic (Wajdi, 2022). These findings indicate a consensus that spirituality plays a significant role in adolescents' mental health. These findings align with the research by Himmah and Khumaini, which emphasizes that the internalization of Qur'anic values amid the tide of digitalization plays a strategic role in shaping character and strengthening students' moral resilience in the modern era (Himmah & Khumaini, 2025).

However, previous studies have tended to address spirituality in the context of general religiosity or mental health during the pandemic, whereas research on the internalization of Islamic spirituality as a mechanism for building psychological resilience among Generation Z students in madrasah settings remains limited. This indicates a research gap that warrants further investigation.

Given this gap, this study aims to examine the internalization of Islamic spirituality within the madrasah environment as a strategy to strengthen the psychological resilience of Generation Z students. The novelty of this study lies in the analysis of the process of internalizing Islamic spirituality through madrasah religious culture as a strategy for strengthening the psychological resilience of Generation Z students. Thus, this study is expected to provide a theoretical

contribution to the development of Islamic education and adolescent psychology studies, as well as a practical contribution to formulating strategies for strengthening spirituality-based mental health in the madrasah environment.

B. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical case study design (Creswell, 2013). This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of the internalization of Islamic spirituality in strengthening students' psychological resilience within the madrasah environment. The research was conducted at MA Arraudlah Tumapel Dukuksampeyan, Gresik. The research subjects included the madrasah principal, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers, homeroom teachers, and students. Subjects were selected purposively based on their involvement in religious activities and the student guidance process.

Data was collected through participatory observation in the madrasah environment and during religious activities such as congregational prayer, group prayer, istighosah, and tahlil. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 key informants, and document analysis was performed, covering institutional archives and operational reports. Observation was used to directly observe religious activities and the students' conditions. Interviews were conducted to explore the informants' experiences and perspectives, while documentation was used to supplement the research data. The Miles, Huberman & Saldaña analysis model was used in this study through three stages: condensation, display, and conclusion drawing (Saldaña, 2014). To ensure data validity, the researcher employed source and method triangulation.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Islamic Spirituality in Strengthening Students' Psychological Resilience

Research reveals that Islamic spirituality at MA Arraudlah Tumapel Dukuksampeyan Gresik is understood as an effort to draw closer to Allah Swt, which is manifested not only through formal worship but also through inner awareness, faith, and attitudes in dealing with academic pressures and personal problems.

This Islamic spirituality is implemented in various religious activities such as congregational prayer, istighosah, tahlil, and communal prayer, which are carried out routinely as part of the madrasah's culture. These activities serve as the primary means of instilling spiritual values in students. The research findings regarding Islamic spirituality are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Forms of Islamic Spirituality and Their Manifestations

Aspect	Description
Spiritual Awareness	Students make God the center of their lives
Religious Practices	Prayer in congregation, istighosah, tahlil, communal prayer
Behavioral Impact	More calm, patient, and able to control emotions
Integration into Learning	Spiritual values are integrated into Islamic Education (PAI) lessons

Islamic spirituality at MA Arraudlah Tumapel Duduksampeyan Gresik is understood as an effort to draw closer to Allah Swt. In this context, Islamic spirituality is understood as the students' inner awareness to recognize, believe in, and make Allah SWT the center of their lives. Interview findings indicate that the concept of Islamic spirituality at this madrasah involves consistently encouraging students to learn to understand and draw closer to Allah Swt. Additionally, their belief that Allah is the One and Only God, the Absolute One, is introduced and reinforced. This reinforces the conviction that spirituality is not merely about worship, but about how that awareness of divinity is embedded in their daily lives.

These findings are supported by observations made within the madrasah environment. The researchers observed that religious activities such as congregational prayer, group prayer, istighosah, and tahlil were conducted regularly and participated in by the students in an orderly manner. In addition, students also appeared accustomed to beginning and ending learning activities with prayer and demonstrated respect toward teachers and peers. These conditions indicate that spiritual values are not only taught theoretically but are also internalized through daily practice within the madrasah environment.

This indicates that Islamic spirituality serves as a source of inner strength that plays a role in strengthening students' psychological resilience. This is consistent with the concept of *tazkiyah an-nafs*, which emphasizes the importance of purifying the soul as a path to inner peace (Ma'muroh et al., 2024). In addition, Quraish Shihab's view that Islamic spirituality is not only related to ritual aspects, but also to inner experiences such as peace of mind, sincerity, and an attitude of submission to Allah (*Quraish Shihab: Berserah Diri, Kunci Mendapatkan Ketenangan Batin Oleh Maria Flora Diterbitkan 24 Mei 2020*, n.d.).

Hamka's view that a close relationship with God can strengthen one's mental resilience is also reflected in students' behavior, as they demonstrate greater patience and a better ability to control their emotions when facing academic pressure (Rokim, 2022). From a psychological perspective, these findings align with Viktor E. Frankl's theory, which states that individuals who find meaning in life are better able to cope with difficult situations. Islamic spirituality provides students with meaning and purpose in life, helping them avoid being overwhelmed by stress (Arroissi & Mukharrom, 2021).

These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that spirituality plays a role in enhancing individuals' psychological resilience. However, this study offers a novel perspective by demonstrating that Islamic spirituality is not merely understood conceptually but is systematically internalized through madrasah culture and ongoing religious activities. Thus, spirituality functions as an active coping mechanism in dealing with psychological distress.

2. Forms of Psychological Distress Among Students in the Learning Process

Psychological distress among students in the learning process can manifest in various forms, including academic anxiety, emotional exhaustion, social and personal pressures, and difficulties concentrating on learning. These findings are summarized in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Forms of Psychological Distress Among Students

Type of Distress	Description
Academic anxiety	Feeling anxious about exams and assignments

Emotional exhaustion	Feeling exhausted due to the academic workload and daytime school schedule
Social pressure	Problems with friends and family
Difficulty concentrating	Trouble focusing during class

Based on field observations, students' psychological distress during learning at MA Arraudlah Tumapel Duduksampeyan Gresik was found to manifest in various forms and intensities. In terms of form, psychological distress manifests as academic anxiety, emotional exhaustion, stress resulting from personal and social problems, and difficulties concentrating on studies. This was noted by the guidance counselor, who stated that students tend to feel more exhausted, less motivated, and anxious as their academic workload increases, particularly due to classes being held during the day.

This finding is consistent with Lazarus and Folkman's theory, which states that distress arises when environmental demands are perceived to exceed an individual's ability to cope with them. (Richard S. Lazarus, n.d.) The emotional exhaustion experienced by students is also consistent with the findings of Viertio et al., who noted that distress in adolescents is often characterized by fatigue and difficulty concentrating (Saini et al., 2024).

In addition to academic factors, external factors such as social relationships and the use of digital media also influence students' psychological well-being. Excessive use of social media can lead to mental fatigue and a decline in concentration while studying (Yuliana et al., 2024). Unlike previous studies, which tended to emphasize academic factors as the primary cause of distress, this study shows that students' psychological distress is influenced by a combination of academic and social factors, as well as digital media usage habits. This provides a more comprehensive understanding of students' psychological well-being in the context of learning.

3. Internalizing Islamic Spirituality to Strengthen Students' Psychological Resilience

At MA Arraudlah Tumapel Duduksampeyan Gresik, there is a gradual process of internalizing Islamic spirituality, which includes instilling values, fostering religious practices, setting an example through teachers, and applying these principles in daily life. This process is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

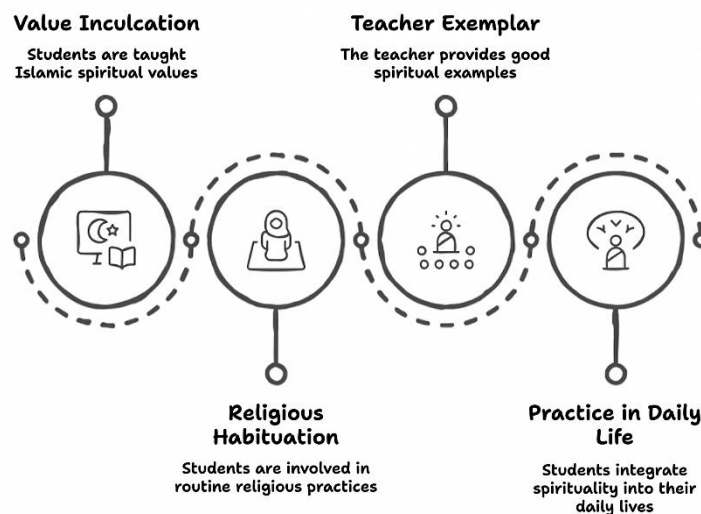


Figure 1. The Process of Internalizing Islamic Spirituality

This internalization process takes place gradually, beginning with an understanding of spiritual values, followed by practice and modeling, until these spiritual values are ultimately ingrained in students' attitudes and behaviors as they cope with academic pressures. The principal explained that the process of instilling spiritual values is carried out in stages, beginning with providing understanding through classroom instruction so that students grasp Islamic teachings. The next step is habit formation through regular religious activities to practice applying these values in daily life. This process is then reinforced through teachers serving as role models, so that these spiritual values gradually become ingrained in the students and reflected in their behavior, including when facing academic pressures.

The above explanation is supported by the researcher's observations, which indicate that the internalization of Islamic spirituality at MA Arraudlah occurs gradually through learning, the practice of religious activities, and the exemplary behavior of teachers. The researcher observed that students participate in religious activities on a regular basis and that teachers model religious attitudes, patience, and composure in their daily lives within the madrasah environment.

This process of internalization is consistent with the theory of value internalization in Islamic education, which encompasses the stages of transformation, transaction, and transinternalization of values (Biantoro & Rahmatullah). This finding is also relevant to Al-Ghazali's concept of spiritual development through the practice of worship and the cultivation of moral character (Ma'muroh et al., 2024).

The role of teachers as role models is also a key factor, as noted by Abdul Majid and Dian Andayani, who state that modeling is an effective method in values education (Agus, 2023). From a psychological perspective, these findings are consistent with Reivich and Shatté's theory of resilience, which emphasizes the importance of the ability to manage emotions and adapt when facing stress (Reivich, Karen Shatté, n.d.).

The findings of this study can be analyzed in greater depth through the perspective of religious coping proposed by Kenneth I. Pargament. From this perspective, spirituality functions as an adaptive coping mechanism when individuals face life's pressures. Religious activities such as congregational prayer, istighosah, tahlil, and communal prayer not only provide spiritual peace but also enhance students' perceived control and self-efficacy in dealing with various psychological pressures. These conditions contribute to increased psychological resilience because students believe that there is a transcendent power to rely on when facing life's difficulties (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Pargament, 1997).

Furthermore, the gradual internalization of spiritual values through learning, habit formation, and the example set by teachers indicates a process of value transformation in students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. Values such as patience, gratitude, trust in God, and sincerity when understood and practiced in daily life help shape a stable religious character. From the perspective of moral development psychology, this process aligns with the theory of value internalization, which emphasizes the importance of habit formation and the social environment in shaping an individual's character. Internalized spirituality then becomes a psychological resource that helps students better regulate their emotions when facing academic or social pressures.

Further analysis can be viewed through the lens of Viktor Frankl's logotherapy, which emphasizes the importance of meaning-making in coping with suffering (Frankl, 2006). Through the spiritual understanding that every trial hold wisdom and purpose, students tend to be able to transform stress into a process of self-learning. This interpretation fosters optimism and hopes for the future, which are crucial components in the development of psychological resilience. Thus, Islamic spirituality serves not only in the realm of religious rituals but also builds internal psychological strength that helps students endure and adapt positively to distress.

Furthermore, the internalization of Islamic spirituality within the madrasah environment also contributes to fostering school connectedness that is, a sense of belonging, acceptance, and support within the school environment. A religious and supportive madrasah environment fosters a positive psychological climate, enabling students to feel more emotionally secure. This demonstrates that strengthening spirituality not only impacts individual well-being but also shapes the school's social and cultural support systems, which play a crucial role in safeguarding the mental health of Generation Z students.

This study makes a new contribution by integrating spiritual, educational, and psychological approaches to explain student resilience. The results indicate that resilience is influenced not only by individual factors but also by a school environment that actively instills spiritual values.

D. Conclusion and Recommendations/Implications

This study shows that the internalization of Islamic spirituality plays a significant role in strengthening the psychological resilience of Generation Z students in the madrasah environment. Islamic spirituality is not only understood as the practice of ritual worship but also as a process of developing inner awareness, emotional regulation, and reinforcing the meaning of life when facing academic and social pressures. Through the regular practice of religious activities such as congregational prayer, istighosah, tahlil, communal prayer, as well as the exemplary behavior of teachers, spiritual values are gradually internalized into students' daily lives.

The results of the study indicate that students' psychological distress manifests as academic anxiety, emotional exhaustion, social pressure, and difficulties concentrating on their studies. In this context, Islamic spirituality serves as a form of religious coping that helps students manage stress, enhance inner peace, and strengthen their ability to adapt to various pressures. The religious and supportive madrasah environment is also a key factor in fostering students' psychological resilience.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the body of research on the relationship between Islamic spirituality and adolescent mental health, particularly in the context of madrasah education. This study also offers a conceptual contribution by suggesting that the internalization of Islamic spirituality can be understood as a psychopedagogical approach to strengthening the resilience of Generation Z students. Practically, the findings of this study can serve as a foundation for madrasahs to develop spiritual development programs that are integrated with educational services and psychological counseling for students.

This study is limited to a single research site and employs a qualitative approach; therefore, its findings cannot yet be broadly generalized. Consequently, future research is encouraged to expand the study to a more diverse range of madrasah contexts or to adopt a mixed-methods approach in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between spirituality and psychological resilience in adolescents.

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