At-Ta'dib. Vol. 21. No. 2, December 2026
ISSN: 0216-9142
DOI: https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v21i2.176
Available online at:
https://tadib.journal.unida.gontor.ac.id/index.php/tadib/index
e-ISSN: 2503-3514

Religious Coping as a Strategy for Managing Stress Among Generation Z: The Role of Pesantren Based Islamic Education

Ahda Sulaima
Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia
ahdasulaima003@gmail.com
Moh. Muslim
Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia
moh.muslim@unisma.ac.id
Kukuh Santoso
Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia
kukuh.santoso@unisma.ac.id

Received September 22, 2026, Accepted November 19, 2026

Abstract

Research on religion and stress generally views religion as an active mechanism for alleviating stress. This study goes beyond that conventional view by examining Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in Islamic boarding schools as an educational process that builds religious coping skills through the internalization of values, emotional regulation, and spiritual reflection. The purpose of this study is to understand the function of IRE in Islamic boarding schools as a religious coping mechanism for addressing stress caused by academic pressure, social relationships, and the digital age among Generation Z students. The method used in this study is qualitative research conducted through a literature review on studies regarding Islamic boarding school education, IRE, religious coping, mental well-being, and Generation Z. The results indicate that the teaching of patience, trust in Allah, gratitude, zikr, prayer, and self-reflection carried out through learning activities, worship, guidance from kyai and ustadz, dormitory activities, and social interactions contributes to building the religious coping competencies of students. The internalized values provide guidance for students in interpreting stress; worship teaches emotional regulation; and spiritual reflection leads to a re-evaluation of these matters. In conclusion, Islamic boarding schools play a role as proactive educational institutions that build students' religious coping competencies.

Keywords: *Pesantren, Generation Z Students, Religious Coping, Stress Management, Holistic Education*

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z is one of the largest groups in the world, characterized by its tech-savvy nature, active engagement on social media, and exposure to rapidly evolving technology. The ease of access to information and communication comes with risks such as negative social comparison, difficulty concentrating for long periods, stress related to education, and anxiety about the future[1].Constant connectivity, intense academic competition, economic instability, uncertainty surrounding climate change, and social and political instability have made Generation Z a group that is highly vulnerable to mental health issues[2]. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in seven young people experiences a mental health disorder mostly anxiety and depression and this figure is on the rise in Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia[3]. A study conducted by the IDN Research Institute (2024) shows that approximately 65% of Generation Z in Indonesia have faced mental health challenges over the past two years a higher percentage than among Millennials (51%) and Generation X (29%)[4].

We can see this pressure in academic, social, and digital environments. Academically, Generation Z faces challenging coursework, constant exams, high expectations from parents, and future career pressures all of which they must navigate amid digital distractions that affect their concentration and sleep[5]. Socially and digitally, excessive use of social media can lead to depression, anxiety, stress, loneliness, and a decline in well-being, as well as feelings of inadequacy, fear of being left out, inability to concentrate, and exhaustion[6]. Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) the urge to stay constantly connected so as not to miss out on digital interactions plays a role in the link between social media use and mental health issues such as anxiety, depression,

[1] Jon D. Elhai et al., "Using Machine Learning to Model Problematic Smartphone Use Severity: The Significant Role of Fear of Missing Out," *Addictive Behaviors* 103 (April 1, 2020): 106261, https://doi.org/10.1016/J.ADDBEH.2019.106261.

[2] American Psychological Association, "Stress in America 2023: A Nation Recovering from Collective Trauma," https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2023/collective-trauma-recovery, 2023.

[3] World Health Organization, "World Mental Health Report: Transforming Mental Health for All," https://iris.who.int/items/9e2f03fe-7e07-4151-a758-ab2a5f351749, 2022.

[4] Institute IDN Research, "Indonesia Gen Z Report 2024," 2024, https://cdn.idntimes.com/content-documents/indonesia-gen-z-report-2024.pdf.

[5] Michaela C. Pascoe, Sarah E. Hetrick, and Alexandra G. Parker, "The Impact of Stress on Students in Secondary School and Higher Education," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 25, no. 1 (December 31, 2020): 104–12, https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1596823.

[6] Betul Keles, Niall McCrae, and Annmarie Grealish, "A Systematic Review: The Influence of Social Media on Depression, Anxiety and Psychological Distress in Adolescents," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 25, no. 1 (December 31, 2020): 79–93, https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1590851.

stress, and life dissatisfaction among Generation Z[7]. Thus, academic pressure is intertwined with the digital world.

A pesantren is an Islamic educational institution where students study, receive religious instruction, live in dormitories, follow the example of their kyai and ustadz, receive guidance from their musyrif, and interact with their peers. The learning process takes place not only in the classroom but also in the mosque, dormitories, dining halls, and student forums, enabling the pesantren to develop students' intellectual, religious, and moral aspects, as well as their social and emotional skills. Research on students' communication practices indicates that learning at a pesantren encompasses physical, intellectual, and psychological aspects and emphasizes the need for mentors, while other studies highlight the holistic educational system as a key element of moral development[8]. Values such as faith, worship, moral character, responsibility, discipline, brotherhood, and independence are taught through both formal and informal interactions during student activities[9].

The boarding school experience involves a higher level of supervision and discipline compared to education received at home. Students take various subjects, participate in religious activities, and memorize the Quran all while facing requirements regarding punctuality, separation from parents, and socializing with peers from diverse backgrounds, which students perceive as sources of stress[10]. The influence of technology in the boarding school environment compounds the pressures of boarding school life[11]. Academic and digital challenges intersect with the demands of boarding school life, where students must adapt to general and religious studies, group prayers, memorization, study sessions, and very strict rules[12]. Life in a boarding school can be beneficial for some students but not for others due to homesickness, difficulties adapting, and significant academic pressure[13]. This pressure is not

[7] Elhai et al., "Using Machine Learning to Model Problematic Smartphone Use Severity: The Significant Role of Fear of Missing Out."

[8] Chatia Hastasari, Benni Setiawan, and Suranto Aw, "Students' Communication Patterns of Islamic Boarding Schools: The Case of Students in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta," *Heliyon* 8, no. 1 (January 1, 2022), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e08824.

[9] Irhamullah, Wahyu Hidayat, and Herlini Puspika Sari, "Khilafah Lingkungan: Peran Manusia Sebagai Khalifah Dalam Menjaga Bumi," *QAZI : Journal of Islamic Studies* 2 (December 2025): 435–47, https://doi.org/10.61104/qz.v2i2.465.

[10] Sri Ratnawati, "Studi Deskriptif Strategy Coping Stress Pada Santri Yang Berhasil Menyelesaikan Pendidikan Di Pondok Pesantren X," *Jurnal Kesehatan Mental Indonesia* 3, no. 2 (December 31, 2024): 30–41, https://doi.org/10.54771/ZTRGJA60.

[11] Keles, McCrae, and Grealish, "A Systematic Review: The Influence of Social Media on Depression, Anxiety and Psychological Distress in Adolescents," December 31, 2020.

[12] Aisyul Khofifah and Khadijah, "Kesehatan Mental Santri : Analisis Psikologis Kehidupan Remaja Di Pesantren Modern," *Journal of Innovative and Creativity (Joecy)* 5, no. 2 (June 3, 2025): 4892–98, https://doi.org/10.31004/JOECY.V5I2.763.

[13] Elhai et al., "Using Machine Learning to Model Problematic Smartphone Use Severity: The Significant Role of Fear of Missing Out."

inherently a source of stress but can become a stressor for students who are unable to cope with excessive pressure, personal problems, or a lack of emotional support. In other words, student stress requires management throughout the educational process, which encompasses both learning and communal living[14].

Religious coping refers to the process by which a person tries to cope with stressful life situations by drawing on their religious beliefs and values[15]. Such coping mechanisms can be positive such as tawakal (trust in God), seeking a purpose in life, praying, and seeking social support or negative, such as interpreting one's problems as divine punishment. In the case of medical students exposed to various religions, the presence of symptoms of anxiety and depression is associated with negative religious coping rather than positive interpretations[16]. This is particularly important in Islamic Religious Education (IRE), where values education and religious practices can be used by students to develop positive religious coping strategies; however, teachers must be cautious of negative religious ideas that add to the students' burdens[17]. The above points clearly indicate the importance of teaching strategies that not only regulate the relationship between technology and students but also help them manage their emotions. The use of a values-based approach in teaching religion helps students cope with stress[18], and IRE is crucial for the development of students' personalities at Islamic boarding schools[19].

Although research on Generation Z, mental health, and religious problem-solving continues to grow, studies examining the relationship between pesantren education, boarding school life, religious practices, and guidance from kyai, ustadz, and musyrif and their role in developing religious problem-solving skills among santri remain limited. Research on pesantren has largely focused on character development, moral

[14] Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan et al., "BOARDING SCHOOL AND CHARACTER EDUCATION: EXPLORING MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN INDONESIA," *Benchmarking* 9, no. 1 (June 21, 2025): 130–38, https://doi.org/10.30821/BENCHMARKING.V9I1.24575.

[15] Muallifah Muallifah et al., "Peningkatan Kesehatan Mental Santri Melalui Pemberdayaan Konselor Sebaya Di Pesantren," *Jurnal Pembelajaran Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (JP2M)* 7, no. 2 (2026): 374–84, https://repository.uin-malang.ac.id/27866/.

[16] Benedict Francis et al., "Religious Coping, Religiosity, Depression and Anxiety among Medical Students in a Multi-Religious Setting," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 2019, Vol. 16, Page 259* 16, no. 2 (January 17, 2019): 259, https://doi.org/10.3390/IJERPH16020259.

[17] Nurussakinah Daulay et al., "Religiosity as Moderator of Stress and Well-Being among Muslim Students During the Pandemic in Indonesia," *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal* 5, no. 2 (2022): 88–103, https://doi.org/10.25217/IGCJ.V5I2.2696.

[18] Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan et al., "BOARDING SCHOOL AND CHARACTER EDUCATION: EXPLORING MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN INDONESIA," *Benchmarking* 9, no. 1 (June 21, 2025): 130–38, https://doi.org/10.30821/BENCHMARKING.V9I1.24575.

[19] Salamah Sa'diatul Wafa et al., "Integrating Moral Values through the Keputrian Program to Strengthen Students' Character at Muhammadiyah Boarding School Jetis," *At-Ta'dib* 20, no. 2 (2025): 266–78, https://doi.org/10.21111/AT-TADIB.V20I2.43.

values, discipline, leadership, and independence, whereas research on religious coping has developed more extensively in the fields of religious psychology, clinical psychology, and counseling[20]. This gap creates a need for research that views IRE not only as a tool for imparting theological knowledge but also as a learning process that equips students with the ability to face difficulties, manage emotions, seek help, and cope with stress in adaptive ways. The above concept can be linked to the nature of the pesantren as a holistic educational system that integrates learning, practice, role modeling, dormitory life, and community culture.

In line with the present-day problems, this study presents a theoretical discussion on Islamic Religious Education in Pesantren as a means of dealing with religious problems in order to help Generation Z students handle their stress. The study has a number of goals, which include: (1) Examining the causes of stress of Generation Z students; (2) Exploring the religious concepts and actions as the means of problem solving; (3) Discussing the effect of learning, worship practices, teachers' models, dormitory life and community's support in embracing religious problem solving approach; and (4) Improving the curriculum and educational administration in Pesantren.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature-based design to develop a theoretical framework for Islamic Religious Education (IRE) as a religious coping mechanism to address stress among Generation Z. Unlike causal studies that examine cause-and-effect relationships through field research, this study involves the evaluation, comparison, and critical interpretation of various theories and empirical evidence regarding the relationship between IRE and religious coping to enhance adolescents' psychological well-being. This literature review is conducted based on three distinct areas of analysis: value internalization, emotional regulation, and spirituality. The library research method was chosen because it allows for the construction of a theoretical framework based on previous empirical work and academic literature.

The sources used for conducting literature research include Google Scholar, Garuda, SINTA, Scopus, as well as some other credible journal databases. The publication period from 2016 to 2026 is defined, as well as key classic works associated with Islamic education and religious coping theory. "Pesantren," "Islamic boarding school," "santri," "Islamic religious education," "religious coping," "Islamic religious coping," "student stress," "psychological resilience," "mental health," "social-emotional learning," "pesantren curriculum," and "character education in pesantren" are among

[20] Sodikin Sodikin, "Toward an International Model of Islamic Boarding School: Foundational Philosophy, Curriculum Integration, and Educational Transformation," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 1 (April 12, 2026): 122–39, https://doi.org/10.38073/JPI.4519.

the keywords that have been applied. Keywords were combined with Boolean operators AND and OR.

The selection procedure consisted of four stages: identification (from 75 articles), screening of titles/abstracts after duplicates were removed (50 articles), determination of eligibility through reading the full text (45 articles), and inclusion (36 peer-reviewed articles). Inclusion criteria were empirical or conceptual articles published from 2016 to 2026 in national or international journals related to IRE, madrasahs, santri, religious coping, stress, psychological well-being, or Generation Z; and articles containing theoretical reasoning or empirical evidence regarding the relationship between Islamic education, religious values, coping, character, and psychological well-being. Articles are excluded if they lack methodological information, are duplicates, are opinion pieces without a scientific basis, or are irrelevant.

Relevance to madrasahs is assessed in two dimensions. Directly relevant articles are those that discuss topics such as the mental well-being of santri, character development, institutional management, the learning process, and boarding school experiences. Indirectly relevant articles are those that discuss religious guidance, emotional regulation, mental resilience, and social-emotional learning among Muslim students, which are useful for developing a theoretical framework for pesantren education.Articles that pass the selection process will be included in a literature matrix (author and year, research design, subject, focus, and findings) and managed using Mendeley.

The data will be analyzed using qualitative content analysis, which allows for the textual analysis of data to identify themes, patterns, and relationships[21]. Data analysis will involve three interconnected steps (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2020). First, only highly relevant articles will be retained, while irrelevant ones will be excluded. Second, the findings will be categorized based on themes centered on the relationship between religious coping, IRE, and stress management. Third, a conceptual framework will be developed based on these findings to explain the role of IRE as a form of religious coping in stress management among Generation Z adolescents [22]. In addition to these criteria, the selected literature must have a direct or indirect relationship with the educational environment in Islamic boarding schools. A direct relationship refers to aspects such as the mental well-being of students, the management of Islamic boarding schools, the learning process, and dormitory life. Research on religious coping, emotional regulation, mental resilience, and the social-emotional learning of Muslim students forms the basis for establishing the theoretical framework of Islamic boarding school education. Thus, this review indicates that IRE should be understood

[21] Klaus Krippendorff, "Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology," *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, February 2, 2019, https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071878781.

[22] "Miles, M. B., Huberman, M. A., & Saldana, J. (2020). Qualitative Data Analysis (4th Ed.). SAGE Publications. - References - Scientific Research Publishing," accessed September 17, 2026, https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=3739752.

as an educational process that equips students with Islamic coping strategies to enhance psychological resilience and manage stress among Generation Z.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Sources of Stress for Generation Z Boarding School Students in the Boarding School Environment

An analysis of 36 articles shows that stress among Generation Z is caused by psychological, sociocultural, digital, and academic factors. Connectivity, social media, the speed of information, and self-comparison shape the developmental context of this generation. Therefore, the stress they experience stems not only from academic pressure but also from an inability to concentrate, the fear of missing out (FoMO), and uncertainty regarding their identity and future[23].

In Islamic boarding schools, stress is linked to the learning process in the dormitories. Students are involved in various activities such as attending classes, independent study, memorization, group prayer, personal development, participation, and adherence to daily norms. As a result, students may experience stress due to academic challenges, religious studies, dormitory life, socialization, and technology use. These challenges must be transformed into positive learning experiences with the help of appropriate mechanisms at the pesantren[24].

Academic stress is one of the most common sources of stress for Generation Z. Numerous studies have shown that excessive workloads, constant exams, an intense academic environment, strict expectations from parents, and career uncertainty are the primary sources of emotional exhaustion and psychological distress among boarding school students[25].

Dorm life is another source of stress besides academic stress because students must adapt to the dorm environment. Conflicts with roommates, peer issues, pressure to fit in, being away from home, and a loss of privacy can cause emotional stress. However, this does not mean that teenagers attending Islamic boarding schools will inevitably experience psychological problems, but these factors must be taken into account when discussing their development[26].

---

[23] Twenge Jean M, "IGen," https://books.google.co.id/books/about/iGen.html?id=HiKaDQAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y, August 22, 2017.

[24] Khofifah and Khadijah, "Kesehatan Mental Santri : Analisis Psikologis Kehidupan Remaja Di Pesantren Modern."

[25] Michaela C. Pascoe, Sarah E. Hetrick, and Alexandra G. Parker, "The Impact of Stress on Students in Secondary School and Higher Education," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* (Routledge, January 2020), https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1596823.

[26] Muallifah Muallifah et al., "Peningkatan Kesehatan Mental Santri Melalui Pemberdayaan Konselor Sebaya Di Pesantren," *Jurnal Pembelajaran Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (JP2M)* 7, no. 2 (January 17, 2026): 374–84, https://doi.org/10.33474/JP2M.V7I2.24686.

Technology use is another factor causing psychological stress in today's modern world. Frequent internet use increases a person's risk of depression, anxiety, and social anxiety, while also reducing happiness even though technology provides more learning opportunities[27]. Generation Z is the first generation raised with social media and smartphones, which means they are heavily influenced by technology in terms of their psychological development. The lifestyle promoted by technological algorithms reduces resilience and increases vulnerability[28].

FoMO is associated with excessive reliance on social media and emotions such as sadness, loneliness, anxiety, and a lack of life satisfaction. According to Self-Determination Theory, FoMO increases due to psychological factors: when the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are not met making it difficult to achieve emotional balance online communication becomes compulsive[29].The effects of FoMO on Gen Z's mental health are also mentioned in other studies[30].

In addition, concerns about the impact of automation, artificial intelligence, and a changing job market lead to a lack of confidence when making plans for the future. The pandemic and remote learning have had a negative impact on students' mental health, making preventive measures necessary[31].

A comparative analysis of these sources reveals two key points: first, sources that address academic and digital stress[32], generally focus on adolescents in general, whereas sources that study boarding school students[33]. Emphasize adaptation to boarding school life and social support. Second, these stress pathways are rarely examined together, so the cumulative effects of stress in Islamic boarding schools have not yet been thoroughly studied. Therefore, this article proposes a conceptual framework not an empirical one namely that Generation Z boarding school students face pressure from various factors, such as the academic and digital stress experienced by Generation Z adolescents in general, as well as stress related to boarding school life.

[27] Betul Keles, Niall McCrae, and Annmarie Grealish, "A Systematic Review: The Influence of Social Media on Depression, Anxiety and Psychological Distress in Adolescents," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* (Routledge, January 2020), https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1590851.

[28] Twenge Jean M, "IGen."

[29] Richard M Ryan and Edward L Deci, "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation from a Self-Determination Theory Perspective: Definitions, Theory, Practices, and Future Directions," 2020, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860.

[30] Moh Zacky Ni et al., "NUSANTARA: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial ANALISIS DAMPAK FOMO TERHADAP KESEHATAN MENTAL GEN Z," *Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial* 12, no. 5 (2025): 1798–1802, https://jurnal.um-tapsel.ac.id/index.php/nusantara/article/view/19739.

[31] Pim Cuijpers, Afzal Javed, and Kamaldeep Bhui, "The WHO World Mental Health Report: A Call for Action," *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 222, no. 6 (June 16, 2023): 227–29, https://doi.org/10.1192/BJP.2023.9.

[32] Michaela C. Pascoe, Sarah E. Hetrick, and Alexandra G. Parker, "The Impact of Stress on Students in Secondary School and Higher Education," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 25, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 104–12, https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1596823.

[33] Aisyul Khofifah and Corresponding Author, "Kesehatan Mental Santri : Analisis Psikologis Kehidupan Remaja Di Pesantren Modern," *Journal of Innovative and Creativity* 5, no. 2 (June 3, 2025): 4892–98, https://doi.org/10.31004/JOECY.V5I2.763.

Sources of stress cannot be viewed solely as the result of social media use or academic pressures specific to Generation Z. The pesantren environment provides an educational setting and dormitory life that can serve as both a source of stress and a form of protection against it. This idea aligns with the definition of stress as the result of the interaction between environmental demands and individual resources, rather than the environment itself[34]. Discipline, community, religious activities, guidance, and traditions can help foster a sense of responsibility and resilience when implemented in an educational manner. As seen in the discussion above, sources of stress among Generation Z students can be divided into five aspects: (1) academic stress, (2) stress related to dorm life, (3) difficulties adapting to dorm life, (4) stress from social and digital environments, and (5) stress related to the uncertainty of personal development. All of these aspects require appropriate educational programs.

Religious Coping Among Santri from Psychological and Islamic Perspectives

After defining the causes of stress experienced by the students, it is time to discuss the resources that will help them overcome these problems. One such resource is religious coping, which refers to efforts made to utilize one's religious beliefs and values to deal with stressful situations[35].

Based on a review of 35 articles, Generation Z's ability to manage stress is particularly influenced by their belief systems related to religious coping. This literature review demonstrates that religious coping is a complex issue because people not only try to understand their experiences and regulate their emotions but also interpret them from God's perspective.

Coping is defined as an effort to resolve problems, referring to sustained mental and behavioral actions aimed at managing demands that exceed personal resources[36]. According to the transactional model of cognition, appraisals and coping strategies are core elements of stress. However, the categorization of coping into problem-focused coping (modifying stressors) and emotion-focused coping (soothing emotions) has failed to provide an adequate explanation of how highly religious individuals assess

[34] Lazarus S Richard and Folkman Susan, "Stress, Appraisal, and Coping," https://books.google.co.id/books/about/Stress_Appraisal_and_Coping.html?id=i-ySQQuUpr8C&redir_esc=y, March 15, 1984.

[35] Taufik Ginanjar, Agus Abdul Rahman, and Hajir Tajiri, "The Relationship between Islamic Religious Coping and the Mental Health of Madrasah Aliyah Students in Coping with Academic Stress," *Journal Guidance Counseling and Islamic Psychotherapy* 1, no. 1 (December 31, 2025): 71–82, https://ejournal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/ihdina/article/view/2813.

[36] Lazarus S and Folkman Susan, "Stress, Appraisal, and Coping," https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=i-ySQQuUpr8C&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&dq=Stress,+appraisal,+and+coping&ots=DhKQnvliSa&sig=4D1x5qxIIT-rRh5qz5spYeWcsTQ&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Stress%2C%20appraisal%2C%20and%20coping&f=false, 1984.

and cope with stress[37]. This is where the Theory of Religious Coping comes in, given that religion acts as a unique psychological resource that influences coping strategies[38]. Religious coping involves using beliefs, religion, and a relationship with the divine to give meaning to and cope with life's pressures. Religion provides comfort as well as guidance in coping with pain and suffering.

The distinction between positive and negative religious coping is crucial in pesantren education. Strategies involving tawakkal (trust in God), surrender to God, the search for meaning, hope, divine provision, prayer, seeking social support, and a willingness to ask for help are considered positive religious coping. Conversely, negative religious coping involves situations where a person believes that all problems faced are a punishment from God, accompanied by feelings of guilt and distorted religious interpretations that further increase psychological stress. A study conducted among medical students in a multi-religious environment showed that symptoms of anxiety and depression are far more common in negative religious coping than in positive religious coping[39].

This is of great importance in Islamic education. To provide students with opportunities to acquire positive religious coping strategies such as tawakkal (trust in God), surrender to God, seeking meaning, hope, acceptance, prayer, seeking social support, and a willingness to ask for help education in worship and values is necessary. However, teachers or ustadz must be cautious of negative religious beliefs, such as feelings of guilt and the belief that every obstacle is a punishment from God[40].

Social assistance and support for a santri can be obtained from, among others: the kyai, the ustadz, the dormitory supervisor, the musyrif, fellow santris, and leaders. Activities that can foster a sense of brotherhood and belonging include teamwork, organizational work, counseling, reading religious books, discussions, and praying together. Santris always receive advice and counseling whenever they feel stressed, given the importance of social support. Peer counseling programs can help detect problems early on[41].

An analysis of these sources reveals several findings. First, research on the coping

---

[37] S Richard, Lazarus, and Folkman Susan, "Stress, Appraisal, and Coping," https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=i-ySQQuUpr8C&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&dq=Stress,+appraisal,+and+coping&ots=DhKQnngfOa&sig=unnf1XycxBR_GcW6Cits7AVL4iw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Stress%2C%20appraisal%2C%20and%20coping&f=false, 1984.

[38] Ginanjar, Rahman, and Tajiri, "The Relationship between Islamic Religious Coping and the Mental Health of Madrasah Aliyah Students in Coping with Academic Stress."

[39] Francis et al., "Religious Coping, Religiosity, Depression and Anxiety among Medical Students in a Multi-Religious Setting."

[40] Nurussakinah Daulay et al., "Religiosity as Moderator of Stress and Well-Being among Muslim Students During the Pandemic in Indonesia," *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal* 5, no. 2 (September 26, 2022): 88–103, https://doi.org/10.25217/IGCJ.V5I2.2696.

[41] Muallifah et al., "Peningkatan Kesehatan Mental Santri Melalui Pemberdayaan Konselor Sebaya Di Pesantren," January 17, 2026.

strategies used by santri indicates variations in general coping strategies such as confrontational coping and problem-solving planning as measured by the Ways of Coping instrument, which does not account for religious aspects in coping[42]. Consequently, the Santri's religious coping was not revealed in that research. Second, studies on religious coping were conducted among medical students in a multi-religious environment[43] and among Muslim students during the pandemic, with religiosity serving as a moderating factor[44]. Both studies indicate a correlation, not how religious coping is formed, and the subjects differ from the Santri. Third, the findings of studies on negative religious coping[45] demonstrate that religious coping is not automatically a positive source of coping mechanisms. In summary, santri's religious coping must be viewed as a competency that can be learned through education, but it can also be learned incorrectly if education is not accompanied by any guidance.

Thus, the santri's attitude toward religious matters is not merely a psychological phenomenon but also the result of a continuous educational process based on the example set by teachers, worship, reflection, social interactions, and problem-solving experiences. The next question that needs to be considered is the role of the educational process at the pesantren in shaping religious coping mechanisms.

Pesantren Education as a Pedagogical Mechanism for Internalizing Religious Coping Strategies

According to the findings of this study, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in the context of pesantren is not merely viewed as a subject involving the teaching of theology alone. In fact, the pesantren itself constitutes a holistic process that encompasses cognitive, affective, moral, and spiritual development, as well as dormitory life and socialization, all within the framework of IRE. Thanks to this series of processes, Islamic values are instilled as religious skills that enable students to face challenges in academic, social, boarding school, and digital settings.

The implicit curriculum in pesantren plays a role equivalent to the values instilled through the formal curriculum. Teachers' communication styles, the disciplinary system, problem-solving procedures, the division of tasks, behavior during worship, interactions between seniors and juniors, and dormitory life are examples of the implicit curriculum. Because it occurs continuously, the implicit curriculum can instill qualities such as patience, trust, gratitude, responsibility, empathy, and independence

[42] Ratnawati, "Studi Deskriptif Strategy Coping Stress Pada Santri Yang Berhasil Menyelesaikan Pendidikan Di Pondok Pesantren X."

[43] Francis et al., "Religious Coping, Religiosity, Depression and Anxiety among Medical Students in a Multi-Religious Setting."

[44] Daulay et al., "Religiosity as Moderator of Stress and Well-Being among Muslim Students During the Pandemic in Indonesia," September 26, 2022.

[45] Francis et al., "Religious Coping, Religiosity, Depression and Anxiety among Medical Students in a Multi-Religious Setting."

in the students' personalities[46].

Based on a literature review, this study identifies three main mechanisms through which Religious Engagement (IRE) aids in stress management: first, the internalization of spiritual values; second, spirituality through reflection leading to adaptive cognitive appraisals; and third, enhanced emotional regulation. These three main mechanisms constitute categories within the Methodology, while social support serves as the channel that facilitates these three categories. Therefore, religious values become a coping strategy that can be used to address academic, social, and online stress.

First, the internalization of values. These values must be instilled through various means so that an individual internalizes them and acts in accordance with them. Spiritual values such as faith, patience, gratitude, honesty, and compassion are instilled in students through education, reflection, worship, and the example set by religious education teachers (IRE) at Islamic boarding schools. In addition to PAI teachers, other parties expected to serve as role models include kyai, ustadz, dormitory supervisors, and musyrif. Ustadz serve as a bridge between religion and education, while kyai serve as spiritual and moral role models. Dormitory supervisors and musyrif serve as role models in the daily lives of students. Examples of patience, integrity, justice, conflict management, and problem-solving help students internalize religious values[47].

Second, spiritual reflection and reassessment. Transactional stress theory states that stress is influenced by the cognitive evaluation of the situation at hand[48]. Spiritual reflections such as Muhasabah, Tadabbur, and reflective Zikir provide students with a meaningful context and enable them to reassess that stress as a test, a learning process, or a process of personal growth[49]. To avoid becoming mere rituals, spiritual practices must be connected to students' actual experiences[50].

Third, emotional regulation. Spiritual practices in the pesantren context can be enhanced by linking them to social-emotional learning to regulate emotions. Meditation, prayer, zikir, salat, and self-reflection can be part of a reflective process that helps students become more aware of their emotions, discuss their challenges, and find ways to respond to those challenges through discussion and instruction. Ultimately, spiritual practices must be connected to the students' experiences in order to foster self-awareness

[46] Wafa et al., "Integrating Moral Values through the Keputrian Program to Strengthen Students' Character at Muhammadiyah Boarding School Jetis."

[47] Abdul Karim et al., "Islamic Spiritual Leadership of Kyai in Fostering Santris' Entrepreneurial Spirit and Independence in Boarding School," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 12 (January 1, 2025): 101817, https://doi.org/10.1016/J.SSAHO.2025.101817.

[48] Lazarus S Richard and Folkman Susan, "Stress, Appraisal, and Coping."

[49] Ginanjar, Rahman, and Tajiri, "The Relationship between Islamic Religious Coping and the Mental Health of Madrasah Aliyah Students in Coping with Academic Stress."

[50] Atin Supriatin and Aida Rahmi Nasution, "IMPLEMENTASI PENDIDIKAN MULTIKULTURAL DALAM PRAKTIK PENDIDIKAN DI INDONESIA," https://e-journal.metrouniv.ac.id/elementary/article/view/785, 2017.

and personal growth[51].

Fourth, social support as a channel. Islamic boarding schools provide a social support network not only through religious instruction but also within the religious community. Social support can be obtained from the musyrif, student affairs officers, kyai, ustadz, dormitory staff, and peer groups. A sense of brotherhood and belonging can be fostered through group activities such as Quran recitation, counseling, organizational work, teamwork, halaqah, and group prayer. This social support network ensures that students receive assistance, advice, information, and empathy when facing various types of stress. Peer counseling programs can help students express their problems and engage in honest dialogue[52].

A comparison of readings from various sources reveals that common elementsnamely, exemplary behavior, regular worship, and communal living are mentioned with different objectives. In research on character development[53] and spiritual leadership, kyai[54] and ustadz are primarily used as tools for character development and fostering independence. Meanwhile, in research on social-emotional learning, spirituality and[55] peer counselors[56] are utilized as means to promote the students' mental well-being. The argument presented in this article is that these elements have not yet been explicitly linked as a single pedagogical process that shapes religious coping.

Essentially, at the conceptual level, IRE (Islamic Religious Education) is best understood as a form of preventive mental health education not merely the teaching of religious doctrine. IRE helps transform belief patterns and behaviors into psychological skills so that students can manage stress through adaptive approaches, perceive problems positively, and regulate their emotions to build resilience in this increasingly complex digital age. Essentially, this study asserts that the primary achievement of IRE is the systematic internalization of positive coping strategies by integrating modern pedagogy, psychological coping theory, and Islamic educational philosophy in a way that builds resilience in Generation Z.

---

[51] Suryadi Nasution et al., "Empowering Santri Well-Being: Integrating Spiritual Practices and SEL in Pesantren Mental Health," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 23, no. 1 (June 30, 2025): 121–41, https://doi.org/10.21154/CENDEKIA.V23I1.10526.

[52] Muallifah et al., "Peningkatan Kesehatan Mental Santri Melalui Pemberdayaan Konselor Sebaya Di Pesantren," 2026.

[53] Wafa et al., "Integrating Moral Values through the Keputrian Program to Strengthen Students' Character at Muhammadiyah Boarding School Jetis."

[54] Abdul Karim et al., "Islamic Spiritual Leadership of Kyai in Fostering Santris' Entrepreneurial Spirit and Independence in Boarding School," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 12 (January 1, 2025): 101817, https://doi.org/10.1016/J.SSAHO.2025.101817.

[55] Nasution et al., "Empowering Santri Well-Being: Integrating Spiritual Practices and SEL in Pesantren Mental Health."

[56] Muallifah et al., "Peningkatan Kesehatan Mental Santri Melalui Pemberdayaan Konselor Sebaya Di Pesantren," January 17, 2026.

A Conceptual Framework for Pesantren Education to Develop Religious Coping Skills Among Generation Z Students

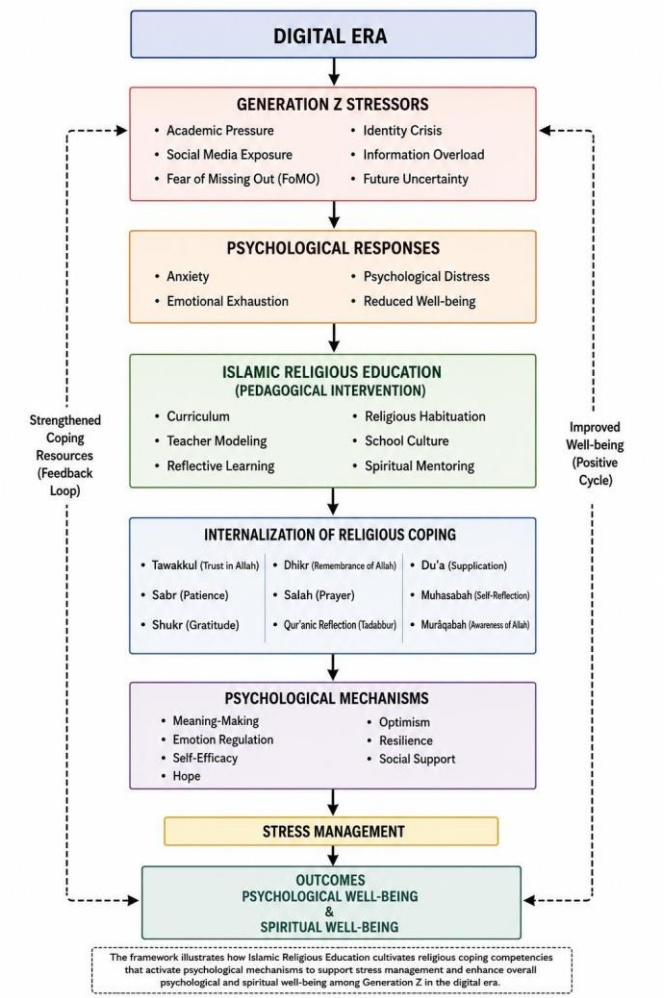
According to a literature review, although there has been extensive research on IRE, religious coping, and the mental well-being of Generation Z, no study has explored the relationship among these three factors. The literature on Generation Z addresses issues related to their mental health, anxiety, academic stress, social media, and digital addiction[57]. As for IRE, the literature in this field focuses on religious education and its various aspects, such as literacy, character education, and moral education. The literature on religious coping stems from the disciplines of clinical psychology and counseling, which view religion as a personal resource rather than a strategy developed through education[58]. Hence, it constitutes a huge theoretical gap. It is suggested in this study that Islamic Religious Education should be redefined as an educational framework that involves learning how to cope religiously with stresses, thus making it possible to promote both mental well-being and educational psychology in an Islamic way. The limitations of this theory are significant[59]. This study proposes a theoretical shift and suggests that IRE be defined as an educational framework that incorporates religious coping with stress and contributes to mental well-being and Islamic educational psychology.

[57] Keles, McCrae, and Grealish, "A Systematic Review: The Influence of Social Media on Depression, Anxiety and Psychological Distress in Adolescents," January 2020.

[58] Sodikin, "Toward an International Model of Islamic Boarding School: Foundational Philosophy, Curriculum Integration, and Educational Transformation," April 12, 2026.

[59] Sodikin Sodikin, "Toward an International Model of Islamic Boarding School: Foundational Philosophy, Curriculum Integration, and Educational Transformation," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 1 (April 12, 2026): 122–39, https://doi.org/10.38073/JPI.4519.

Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework



However, it should be emphasized that Figure 1 is a conceptual model developed based on a literature review and is not an empirically verified model. The relationships between the components, represented by arrows, should be interpreted as theoretical hypotheses that require verification in further research.

The model illustrates the fact that Generation Z experiences stress not only due to psychological causes but also due to environmental pressures. Based on an analysis of previous studies, environmental pressures can include academic competition, interactions with technology, social comparison, FoMO (fear of missing out), identity exploration, and career uncertainty. These environmental pressures lead to negative psychological effects such as anxiety and emotional exhaustion.

Stress is viewed as a state in which the magnitude of environmental pressures exceeds an individual's ability to cope with them. In Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), these pressures may be related to academic and religious demands,

dormitory life, social interactions, and technology, causing students to feel unable to cope with these situations due to a lack of adaptive skills and necessary resources. Therefore, Islamic boarding schools must not only avoid unnecessary pressures but also enhance their students' adaptive abilities[60].

IRE serves as the foundation of educational techniques; in the proposed model, IRE develops coping skills among students. IRE differs from therapeutic interventions administered after psychological problems arise; rather, IRE offers a series of preventive educational activities through the students' learning experiences. This aligns with current modern community mental health practices[61].

According to this model, the pesantren environment consists of six interconnected components, as illustrated in Figure 1. First, the curriculum equips students with the fundamental principles of faith and moral character regarding patience, gratitude, obedience, perseverance, and responsibility. Second, the examples set by teachers, caregivers, and counselors demonstrate how one should manage emotions, practice patience, show empathy, and solve problems. Third, reflective learning encourages students to reflect on their knowledge through tadabbur (contemplation) of the Quran, reading, discussions, and journaling. Fourth, religious practices are carried out routinely through communal prayer, zikr, supplication, and Quranic recitation. Fifth, spiritual counseling in the dormitories enables students to cope with adjustment and socialization issues. Sixth, the pesantren culture which emphasizes communal living and community values serves as the context in which these five components are carried out[62].

Based on a systematic analysis of 12 scientific articles published between 2016 and 2026, it was concluded that zikir can help alleviate stress and anxiety among Islamic boarding school students while improving their problem solving abilities through emotional regulation, psychological calm, and self control[63]. This conclusion should be considered carefully, taking into account several methodological limitations of this study, including the small number of participants and the absence of a control group.

A correlational study of 214 Muslim respondents living in the United Kingdom revealed that supplication (du'a) is associated with psychological well-being, and zikr is associated with subjective well-being[64]. A systematic review of 28 experiments

[60] Pascoe, Hetrick, and Parker, "The Impact of Stress on Students in Secondary School and Higher Education," December 31, 2020.

[61] Organization, "World Mental Health Report: Transforming Mental Health for All."

[62] Chatia Hastasari, Benni Setiawan, and Suranto Aw, "Students' Communication Patterns of Islamic Boarding Schools: The Case of Students in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.," *Heliyon* 8 (January 2022): e08824, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e08824.

[63] Nurhasanah Putri et al., "Dzikir Sebagai Mekanisme Coping Dalam Menurunkan Stres Dan Kecemasan Pada Mahasiswa: Kajian Literatur," *Observasi : Jurnal Publikasi Ilmu Psikologi* 4, no. 3 (July 2, 2026): 01–12, https://doi.org/10.61132/OBSERVASI.V4I3.2288.

[64] Müslüman Örneklemler et al., "Cognitive-Behavioral-Related Prayer Types and Mental Health Relations among Muslim Samples," *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi* 25, no. 1 (June 15, 2021): 437–54, https://doi.org/10.18505/CUID.888468.

showed that listening to recitations of the Qur'an can reduce anxiety in various situations. Practices such as prayer, zikr, and tawakkal are reported as religious coping practices in Islam[65].However, none of these studies focused on Islamic boarding school students, and the studies on the Quran pertained to listening rather than reading it oneself[66]. Therefore, these findings can be considered as indications from the literature, but not as evidence of effectiveness for Islamic boarding school students.

This framework has three characteristics that distinguish it from currently used frameworks. While the transactional model views coping resources as something that already exists within an individual or their environment[67], this framework incorporates educational pathways for the development of those resources. Unlike research on character education, this framework links the outcomes of education to psychological processes rather than solely to ethical achievements. It also differs from research on religious coping in the clinical field in that this framework views religious coping as an outcome of education rather than as a personal resource. The feedback loop shown in Figure 2 indicates that coping resources influence how religious adherents assess subsequent stressors. This is a conceptual hypothesis that has not yet been tested.

Therefore, the theoretical framework suggests that IRE has the potential to serve as a holistic learning approach to help Generation Z become resilient through psychological resilience. Through the use of religion-based coping strategies, IRE not only nurtures the spiritual nature of the students but also makes them resilient enough to cope with stress. At this point, this argument is purely theoretical and needs to be empirically verified, as stated in section 4.5.5.

Theoretical and Practical Implications for Pesantren Education and Mental Health Pedagogy

The conceptual framework developed through the elaboration of the IRE theory has significant implications, as this framework will also aid in the practice of mental health promotion within educational institutions. By integrating principles from the philosophy of education, the psychology of religion, and stress management, this study contributes to the literature by shifting away from the conventional understanding that IRE serves merely as a tool to help students learn about religion and receive moral education. This study proposes a broader perspective on education specifically, IRE as a tool for the psychological resilience of Generation Z.

[65] Ashraf Ghiasi and Afsaneh Keramat, "The Effect of Listening to Holy Quran Recitation on Anxiety: A Systematic Review," *Iranian Journal of Nursing and Midwifery Research* 23, no. 6 (2018): 411, https://doi.org/10.4103/IJNMR.IJNMR_173_17.

[66] Ginanjar, Rahman, and Tajiri, "The Relationship between Islamic Religious Coping and the Mental Health of Madrasah Aliyah Students in Coping with Academic Stress."

[67] Lazarus S Richard and Folkman Susan, "Stress, Appraisal, and Coping."

Theoretical Implications

From this integration, it is clear that IRE can be considered a holistic educational approach that encompasses knowledge, emotions, spirituality, and behavioral change. The above statement helps support the idea of comprehensive education, in which learning is viewed as the development of cognitive abilities alongside an individual's emotional well-being and social life. In this way, resilience psychology becomes an intentional rather than an accidental part of educational goals[68].

The new concept of IRE also contributes to the discussion on competency-based education. Generally, competency-based education places its primary focus on cognitive achievement, whereas the IRE model allows for the assessment of students' ability to internalize Islamic teachings in order to address their emotional issues and maintain their mental well-being[69].

The second theoretical implication relates to the association between spirituality and positive psychology. Some of the key characteristics of positive psychology are happiness, optimism, and a sense of meaning in life, and these characteristics are considered consistent with the goals of Islamic education. Regarding religious education, values such as gratitude and hope can be included in the list of values that can be incorporated into IRE as a means of integration[70]. Conceptually, the author identifies gratitude as a sense of thankfulness, husnuzan billah as optimism, patience as resilience, and ubudiyah which is submission to Allah as meaning in life. This conceptual identification is the author's interpretation and requires empirical verification. Therefore, it can be concluded that IRE is consistent with the development of psychological well-being among Muslim adolescents.

The theoretical implication of the current study is that the relationship between IRE and religious coping mechanisms goes beyond the mere benefits of religious education on mental well-being. The literature review provides insight into the distinction between religiosity and psychological well-being[71], or between pesantren education and character development[72]. This study takes a step further in three aspects. First, the topic of discussion is the treatment of religion as a learning outcome, while the concept of religiosity is considered a given. Second, the process is explained using three pedagogical principles the internalization of values, spiritual reflection, and emotional regulation with social support serving as the medium. Finally, the

[68] Gert Biesta, "Educational Research: An Unorthodox Introduction," https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/en/publications/educational-research-an-unorthodox-introduction/, March 19, 2020.

[69] OECD, *Beyond Academic Learning* (OECD, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1787/92a11084-en.

[70] Idi Warsah et al., "Applying Positive Psychology Principles in Islamic Education: A Conceptual Review," *Belajea: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (November 20, 2024): 87–118, https://doi.org/10.29240/BELAJEA.V9I2.11192.

[71] Daulay et al., "Religiosity as Moderator of Stress and Well-Being among Muslim Students During the Pandemic in Indonesia," September 26, 2022.

[72] Wafa et al., "Integrating Moral Values through the Keputrian Program to Strengthen Students' Character at Muhammadiyah Boarding School Jetis."

background of this study is the pesantren as a form of holistic education comprising academic instruction, worship, exemplary conduct, dormitory life, and community living[73].

Given these theoretical implications, it can be argued that the ability to solve problems from a religious perspective can be considered one of the outcomes of pesantren education. Thus, the effectiveness of education cannot be measured solely by the level of knowledge about Islam but also by the ability to apply Islamic values to cope with stress, regulate emotions, build relationships, and seek help. This will form the basis for the discussion on pesantren curriculum development in the following section.

Implications for the Development of Pesantren Curricula

According to the findings of this study, the IRE curriculum should be developed using an approach that emphasizes the memorization of the religion's core principles. Psychological resilience should be integrated as part of the curriculum development objectives. Learning outcomes should include an understanding of stress within the framework of Islamic values; managing emotions and solving problems in a religious context; practicing gratitude and patience in the face of difficulties; applying principles from the Quran to resolve psychological issues; and behaving in accordance with Islamic values in digital media[74].

The models for integrating pesantren curricula presented in the literature focus on the basic philosophy and transformation of education[75]. The framework presented in this article includes an additional dimension that, according to the author's analysis, has not been explicitly addressed in the cited sources: the development of religious coping as a learning outcome. The curricular implications stem from the three mechanisms mentioned in Section 4.3.

The IRE curriculum must be developed in accordance with the madrasah's learning and boarding school contexts. Studies in theology, ethics, fiqh, the Quran, hadith, peer counseling, organizational skills, and time management will enable students to develop their problem-solving skills within a religious context. In addition to assessing religious knowledge, the IRE curriculum also aims to evaluate students' skills in problem-solving, managing their emotions, building social relationships, seeking help, and applying Islamic principles in the context of their daily lives. The evaluation tools used by IRE include individual journals, observations, self-

[73] Hastasari, Setiawan, and Aw, "Students' Communication Patterns of Islamic Boarding Schools: The Case of Students in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta."

[74] UNESCO, "Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education," https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/reimagining-our-futures-together-new-social-contract-education, September 1, 2021.

[75] Sodikin, "Toward an International Model of Islamic Boarding School: Foundational Philosophy, Curriculum Integration, and Educational Transformation," April 12, 2026.

assessments, peer assessments, activity portfolios, and mentor notes[76]. This type of assessment is not intended to identify whether someone suffers from a psychological disorder, but rather to evaluate the extent to which students have integrated Islamic principles into their daily lives.

The following are several operational measures suggested by the author based on the three core mechanisms discussed in Section 4.3, which have not yet been empirically tested. The curriculum can translate these three core mechanisms into learning outcomes and assessment tools as follows. Regarding the internalization of values, the expected outcome is that students will be able to define and provide examples of patience, gratitude, and tawakkal in a given situation, with indicators such as daily journals and observations by instructors. Regarding spiritual reflection, the expected learning outcome is that students can reflect on their problems in light of Islamic values, with assessment taking the form of reflective journals and portfolio creation. Regarding emotional regulation, the expected outcome is that students will be able to choose appropriate ways to calm themselves, with assessment tools such as self-assessment and peer assessment. Curriculum integration should also promote interdisciplinary collaboration among IRE, guidance and counseling, psychology, and character education. All educators not just counsellors need to foster mental health.

Implications for Teaching Practices and the Care of Boarding School Students

Based on the findings from the literature discussed, it is clear that the learning experience has an impact beyond mere knowledge transfer. Therefore, it is important for IRE teachers to use teaching methods that facilitate a spiritual learning process for their students.

Through reflective teaching, students will be able to apply the lessons they learn from the Quran to resolve various issues they face, such as studying under pressure, internet addiction, identity issues, and the ethical use of technology. Teachers can help students reflect on their stress through reflective journals, Quranic reflection, dialogue, and problem solving rather than viewing patience as merely a theological issue.

For example, when discussing patience, teachers can encourage students to recall experiences such as struggling to memorize, exam stress, conflicts with roommates, or missing their families. Students are required to identify their problems, recognize their emotions, draw on Islamic values, determine the actions they should take, and seek help from those who can assist them[77].

This literature review highlights the importance of religious education for the mental well-being of Generation Z[78] and the importance of peer counselors in Islamic

[76] Sodikin, "Toward an International Model of Islamic Boarding School: Foundational Philosophy, Curriculum Integration, and Educational Transformation," April 12, 2026.

[77] Aqila Khairani Nasution et al., "Peran Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Meningkatkan Kesehatan Mental Pada Generasi Z," *Adabiyah Islamic Journal* 2 (December 2024): 194–205, https://doi.org/10.31289/aij.v2i2.13715.

[78] Nasution et al.

boarding schools[79]. Although both emphasize the importance of support, few have specifically addressed the process of structured guidance or how to prevent negative religious coping. These two additional components were incorporated into the theoretical framework based on findings regarding negative religious coping identified in Section 4.2. Structured guidance for students can be carried out in four steps: (1) Students understand their situations and feelings; (2) the counselor helps them understand matters related to religious values and practices, such as patience, tawakal, or prayer; (3) students develop solutions; and (4) students seek help from either a counselor or a peer. Because religious practices can sometimes take a negative form[80], mentors need to know how to identify beliefs that contribute to stress, including excessive guilt and feelings of being punished by God[81].

Similarly, spiritually-based mindfulness practices also help improve emotional intelligence and concentration. This can be achieved through self-reflection, reflective reading of the Quran, reflective dhikr, and meditation.

Implications for Management and Leadership in Pesantren Education

According to the conceptual framework of this study, the psychological well-being of students at Islamic boarding schools can be improved through more than just classroom instruction. Boarding school leaders must create an educational environment that is oriented toward the psychological well-being of the students.

Pesantren administrators must implement guidance programs that involve all stakeholders such as kyai, imams, Islamic education teachers, dormitory supervisors, musyrifs, student leaders, and counselors (if available). It is crucial for all individuals involved to collaborate so that students are not left alone to face the academic, social, disciplinary, and psychological challenges they encounter. In addition, Islamic boarding schools must provide a safe counseling service for students where they can receive comprehensive assistance and communicate with their peers[82].

The aspect of digital well-being must be taken into account. Given that excessive use of social media has a negative impact on Generation Z, Islamic boarding schools must integrate Islamic ethics with digital literacy. The subjects that should be taught include responsibility (amanah), self-discipline (mujahadah al-nafs), and moderation (wasathiyyah)

[79] Muallifah et al., "Peningkatan Kesehatan Mental Santri Melalui Pemberdayaan Konselor Sebaya Di Pesantren," 2026.

[80] Francis et al., "Religious Coping, Religiosity, Depression and Anxiety among Medical Students in a Multi-Religious Setting."

[81] Daulay et al., "Religiosity as Moderator of Stress and Well-Being among Muslim Students During the Pandemic in Indonesia," September 26, 2022.

[82] Muallifah et al., "Peningkatan Kesehatan Mental Santri Melalui Pemberdayaan Konselor Sebaya Di Pesantren," January 17, 2026.

Additionally, one has to mention digital welfare policy. Since overconsumption of social media negatively impacts Gen Z, it is necessary for the Islamic educational institutions to merge Islamic ethics with digital literacy. The subjects that have to be taught are responsibility (amanah), self-discipline (mujāhadah al-nafs), and moderation (wasatiyyah).

The development of peer counselors in Islamic boarding schools79 and the direction of community-based mental health80 form the foundation of these managerial implications. The framework presented in this article links these two elements to the institutional responsibility of Islamic boarding schools to provide a social support structure that is, channels that enable the three core mechanisms described in Section 4.3 to function. The following steps are operational proposals by the author and have not yet been empirically tested. Pesantren management can implement five steps: (1) establish students' mental health as part of the pesantren's work plan and culture; (2) train kyai, ustadz, caregivers, and musyrif in reflective guidance and the identification of negative religious coping mechanisms; (3) establish referral pathways from dormitory advisors to counselors or professionals; (4) develop a peer counseling program; and (5) formulate a technology use policy that integrates Islamic ethics and digital literacy. Their effectiveness needs to be monitored through periodic evaluations involving the students.

Table 1. Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework in Pesantren Education

Framework components	Curriculum	Teaching and Guidance	Institutional Management
Internalization of values	Learning Outcome: Explain and demonstrate patience, gratitude, and trust in God in real-life situations. Indicators: daily journal entries and instructor observations.	The exemplary conduct of kyai, ustadz, and musyrif; the real-life experiences of santri are used as teaching materials.	Training educators to serve as role models; a pesantren culture consistent with the values taught.
Spiritual reflection	Learning Outcome: Reevaluate issues using an Islamic value framework. Indicators: reflective journal and portfolio.	Muhasabah, tadabbur, journals, and dialogue; identification of signs of negative religious coping mechanisms.	Time and space for reflection in the daily schedule; referral pathways to counselors or other professionals.
Emotional regulation	Learning Outcome: Select appropriate ways to calm oneself. Indicators: self-assessment and peer assessment.	Practical worship is linked to the santri's experiences; social-emotional learning.	Management of daily activity loads; digital well-being policies based on Islamic ethics and digital literacy.
Social support (channels)	Interdisciplinary Integration: IRE, guidance and counseling, psychology, character education.	Peer counseling, halaqah, and group mentoring.	An integrated mentoring system; peer counseling programs; periodic evaluations involving students.

Social support (channels) Cross-disciplinary integration	IRE, guidance and counseling, psychology, character education.	Peer counseling, halaqah, and group guidance.	Integrated guidance system; peer counselor program; periodic evaluations involving students.

Note: This table is an operational proposal derived from the conceptual framework and has not yet been empirically tested.

Directions for Future Research

This study makes several contributions, which can be explained as follows: Based on its theoretical foundation, this study integrates IRE and religious coping into a single framework in which religious coping is viewed as a learned outcome resulting from a learning process, rather than merely an effect of religious education on mental well-being. From a practical perspective, this study presents the application of the above framework through the curriculum, teaching, guidance, and administration of Islamic boarding schools, as described in Table 1. Both of the above implications are based on the literature review conducted in Sections 4.1–4.4, which are cited and supported by their respective sections.

The main limitation of this study lies in its conceptual aspects. The proposed model is based on a literature review but has not yet been empirically tested. Therefore, the relationships between the various components can only be considered theoretical propositions. Most of the reviewed literature is based on populations and contexts different from those of pesantren students. Thus, caution is needed when generalizing these findings to pesantren.

Several areas require further research on this topic. First, there is a need for empirical testing of the proposed concepts using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This involves using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the relationships between coping skills, IRE, and stress management.

Second, future research should develop and validate an instrument to measure the level of religious coping skills resulting from education. This will help evaluate the success of IRE in fostering adaptive religious coping among santri. Third, future longitudinal studies should investigate the development of religious coping during the learning period. This will help create age-appropriate interventions. Fourth, quasi-experimental studies can be used to test the effectiveness of the operational design presented in Table 1.

A cross-cultural comparative study involving Muslim adolescents with different educational levels would contribute to the current research. Given the implications that have emerged from the synthesis of the concepts mentioned above, it is clear that IRE can be a crucial element of preventive mental health education in the 21st century. By integrating concepts from Islamic education and modern psychology, educational institutions can produce graduates who are intellectually and psychologically healthy.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the experience of stress among Generation Z is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon arising from the interaction of various factors, such as academic pressure, digital engagement, social comparison, fear of missing out (FoMO), the search for identity, and uncertainty about the future. In Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), stress levels increase due to the nature of dormitory life, discipline, the need to live far from family, and the need to adapt to a collective environment. It is not enough to address stress solely through psychological approaches. Instead, stress must also be managed through educational measures.

An analysis of 36 articles shows that Islamic boarding schools can be both a source of stress and a source of protection. When learning, worship, dormitory activities, the exemplary behavior of kyai, ustadz, and musyrif, and support from the community are carried out in a structured and educational manner, all these activities have the potential to increase students' resilience to stress. Religious coping mechanisms such as tawakal (trust in God), sabar (patience), syukur (gratitude), zikir (remembrance of God), doa (prayer), tadabbur (reflection on the Quran), and muhasabah (self-reflection) have the ability to help students reflect on their stressful experiences, regulate their emotions, and maintain psychological balance. However, not all religious coping mechanisms are beneficial. In fact, negative forms of religious coping such as viewing hardships as divine punishment and feeling excessive guilt can make the situation even worse. Therefore, religious coping should be understood as a learned skill that requires guidance.

Conceptually, this study proposes that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in pesantren can be understood as preventive mental health education. Its three mechanisms are the internalization of spiritual values, spiritual reflection that supports adaptive cognitive assessment, and emotional regulation. All three are facilitated through social support and operationalized in the curriculum, teaching and mentoring, as well as pesantren management (Table 1). Evidence regarding zikir is promising but indirect. A systematic review of 12 studies by Putri et al. (2026) indicates that zikir has the potential to help reduce stress and anxiety among college students. However, the reviewed studies had small sample sizes and did not include control groups, and none of the studies directly examined boarding school students.

This article is conceptual in nature and relies solely on secondary sources. The proposed framework (Figure 2) and its operational steps are still theoretical propositions, not empirically verified findings. Future research should test this framework using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approaches, including Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Research should also develop and validate instruments to measure religious coping as an educational outcome, conduct longitudinal studies on the development of religious coping during the educational period, and carry out quasi-experimental studies on the interventions listed in Table 1

in Islamic boarding schools. Pesantren leaders and Islamic education (PAI) teachers can use this framework as a starting point to integrate psychological resilience into the curriculum, counseling, and policies. Educators also need training to recognize negative religious coping and refer students to professionals when necessary.

REFERENCE

American Psychological Association. "Stress in America 2023: A Nation Recovering from Collective Trauma." https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2023/collective-trauma-recovery, 2023.

Biesta, Gert. "Educational Research: An Unorthodox Introduction." https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/en/publications/educational-research-an-unorthodox-introduction/, March 19, 2020.

Cuijpers, Pim, Afzal Javed, and Kamaldeep Bhui. "The WHO World Mental Health Report: A Call for Action." *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 222, no. 6 (June 16, 2023): 227–29. https://doi.org/10.1192/BJP.2023.9.

Daulay, Nurussakinah, Nefi Darmayanti, Ade Chita Putri Harahap, Sri Wahyuni, Rina Mirza, Salamiah Sari Dewi, Suryani Hardjo, et al. "Religiosity as Moderator of Stress and Well-Being among Muslim Students During the Pandemic in Indonesia." *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal* 5, no. 2 (2022): 88–103. https://doi.org/10.25217/IGCJ.V5I2.2696.

Elhai, Jon D., Haibo Yang, Dmitri Rozgonjuk, and Christian Montag. "Using Machine Learning to Model Problematic Smartphone Use Severity: The Significant Role of Fear of Missing Out." *Addictive Behaviors* 103 (April 1, 2020): 106261. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.ADDBEH.2019.106261.

Francis, Benedict, Jesjeet Singh Gill, Ng Yit Han, Chiara Francine Petrus, Fatin Liyana Azhar, Zuraida Ahmad Sabki, Mas Ayu Said, Koh Ong Hui, Ng Chong Guan, and Ahmad Hatim Sulaiman. "Religious Coping, Religiosity, Depression and Anxiety among Medical Students in a Multi-Religious Setting." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 2019, Vol. 16, Page 259* 16, no. 2 (January 17, 2019): 259. https://doi.org/10.3390/IJERPH16020259.

Ghiasi, Ashraf, and Afsaneh Keramat. "The Effect of Listening to Holy Quran Recitation on Anxiety: A Systematic Review." *Iranian Journal of Nursing and Midwifery Research* 23, no. 6 (2018): 411. https://doi.org/10.4103/IJNMR.IJNMR_173_17.

Ginanjar, Taufik, Agus Abdul Rahman, and Hajir Tajiri. "The Relationship between Islamic Religious Coping and the Mental Health of Madrasah Aliyah Students in

Coping with Academic Stress." *Journal Guidance Counseling and Islamic Psychotherapy* 1, no. 1 (December 31, 2025): 71–82. https://ejournal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/ihdina/article/view/2813.

Hastasari, Chatia, Benni Setiawan, and Suranto Aw. "Students' Communication Patterns of Islamic Boarding Schools: The Case of Students in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta." *Heliyon* 8 (January 2022): e08824. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e08824.

Institute IDN Research. "Indonesia Gen Z Report 2024," 2024. https://cdn.idntimes.com/content-documents/indonesia-gen-z-report-2024.pdf.

Irhamullah, Wahyu Hidayat, and Herlini Puspika Sari. "Khilafah Lingkungan: Peran Manusia Sebagai Khalifah Dalam Menjaga Bumi." *QAZI : Journal of Islamic Studies* 2 (December 2025): 435–47. https://doi.org/10.61104/qz.v2i2.465.

Karim, Abdul, Oman Fathurohman, Sulaiman, Lina Marliani, Fakhri Fajrin Kurniawan, Firman Nugraha, Muaripin, Fitri Meliani, Mohammad Ridwan, and Risbon Sianturi. "Islamic Spiritual Leadership of Kyai in Fostering Santris' Entrepreneurial Spirit and Independence in Boarding School." *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 12 (January 1, 2025): 101817. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.SSAHO.2025.101817.

Keles, Betul, Niall McCrae, and Annmarie Grealish. "A Systematic Review: The Influence of Social Media on Depression, Anxiety and Psychological Distress in Adolescents." *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*. Routledge, January 2020. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1590851.

Khofifah, Aisyul, and Khadijah. "Kesehatan Mental Santri : Analisis Psikologis Kehidupan Remaja Di Pesantren Modern." *Journal of Innovative and Creativity (Joecy)* 5, no. 2 (June 3, 2025): 4892–98. https://doi.org/10.31004/JOECY.V5I2.763.

Krippendorff, Klaus. "Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology." *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, February 2, 2019. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071878781.

Lazarus S Richard, and Folkman Susan. "Stress, Appraisal, and Coping." https://books.google.co.id/books/about/Stress_Appraisal_and_Coping.html?id=i-ySQQuUpr8C&redir_esc=y, March 15, 1984.

"Miles, M. B., Huberman, M. A., & Saldana, J. (2020). Qualitative Data Analysis (4th Ed.). SAGE Publications. - References - Scientific Research Publishing." Accessed September 17, 2026. https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=3739752.

Muallifah, Muallifah, Ali Kadarisman, Hakmi Hidayat, Aprilia Mega Rosdiana, Mas Rukhin Lubabul Huda, and Serly Amria. "Peningkatan Kesehatan Mental Santri

Melalui Pemberdayaan Konselor Sebaya Di Pesantren." *Jurnal Pembelajaran Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (JP2M)* 7, no. 2 (2026): 374–84. https://repository.uin-malang.ac.id/27866/.

Nasution, Aqila Khairani, Sri Wahyuni, Cahaya Cahaya, and Muhammad Fikri. "Peran Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Meningkatkan Kesehatan Mental Pada Generasi Z." *Adabiyah Islamic Journal* 2 (December 2024): 194–205. https://doi.org/10.31289/aij.v2i2.13715.

Nasution, Suryadi, Ali Jusri Pohan, Kholidah Nur, Zelly Putriani, and Sekolah Tinggi Agama. "Empowering Santri Well-Being: Integrating Spiritual Practices and SEL in Pesantren Mental Health." *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 23, no. 1 (June 30, 2025): 121–41. https://doi.org/10.21154/CENDEKIA.V23I1.10526.

OECD. *Beyond Academic Learning*. OECD, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1787/92a11084-en.

Organization, World Health. "World Mental Health Report: Transforming Mental Health for All." https://iris.who.int/items/9e2f03fe-7e07-4151-a758-ab2a5f351749, 2022.

Örneklemler, Müslüman, Arasında Bilişsel-Davranışla, İlişkili Dua, Türleri Ve, Ruh Sağlığı, İlişkisi Fatümetül, Zehra Güldaş, et al. "Cognitive-Behavioral-Related Prayer Types and Mental Health Relations among Muslim Samples." *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi* 25, no. 1 (June 15, 2021): 437–54. https://doi.org/10.18505/CUID.888468.

Pascoe, Michaela C., Sarah E. Hetrick, and Alexandra G. Parker. "The Impact of Stress on Students in Secondary School and Higher Education." *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*. Routledge, January 2020. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1596823.

Pendidikan, Jurnal Manajemen, Dan Keislaman, Muhammad Zainuri, and Khotibul Umam. "BOARDING SCHOOL AND CHARACTER EDUCATION: EXPLORING MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN INDONESIA." *Benchmarking* 9, no. 1 (June 21, 2025): 130–38. https://doi.org/10.30821/BENCHMARKING.V9I1.24575.

Putri, Nurhasanah, Laila Azmi, Salman Ruhul Jadid, Rahmadianti Aulia, Departemen Psikologi, Fakultas Psikologi, and Dan Kesehatan. "Dzikir Sebagai Mekanisme Coping Dalam Menurunkan Stres Dan Kecemasan Pada Mahasiswa: Kajian Literatur." *Observasi : Jurnal Publikasi Ilmu Psikologi* 4, no. 3 (July 2, 2026): 01–12. https://doi.org/10.61132/OBSERVASI.V4I3.2288.

Ratnawati, Sri. "Studi Deskriptif Strategy Coping Stress Pada Santri Yang Berhasil Menyelesaikan Pendidikan Di Pondok Pesantren X." *Jurnal Kesehatan Mental Indonesia* 3, no. 2 (December 31, 2024): 30–41. https://doi.org/10.54771/ZTRGJA60.

Ryan, Richard M, and Edward L Deci. "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation from a Self-Determination Theory Perspective: Definitions, Theory, Practices, and Future Directions," 2020. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860.

S Richard, Lazarus, and Folkman Susan. "Stress, Appraisal, and Coping." https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=i-ySQQuUpr8C&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&dq=Stress,+appraisal,+and+coping&ots=DhKQnngfOa&sig=unnf1XycxBR_GcW6Cits7AVL4iw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Stress%2C%20appraisal%2C%20and%20coping&f=false, 1984.

Sodikin, Sodikin. "Toward an International Model of Islamic Boarding School: Foundational Philosophy, Curriculum Integration, and Educational Transformation." *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 1 (April 12, 2026): 122–39.

Supriatin, Atin, and Aida Rahmi Nasution. "IMPLEMENTASI PENDIDIKAN MULTIKULTURAL DALAM PRAKTIK PENDIDIKAN DI INDONESIA." https://e-journal.metrouniv.ac.id/elementary/article/view/785, 2017.

Twenge Jean M. "IGen." https://books.google.co.id/books/about/iGen.html?id=HiKaDQAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y, August 22, 2017.

UNESCO. "Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education." https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/reimagining-our-futures-together-new-social-contract-education, September 1, 2021.

Wafa, Salamah Sa'diatul, Nurul Iman, Katni Katni, Syamsul Arifin, and Munadi Tauhid. "Integrating Moral Values through the Keputrian Program to Strengthen Students' Character at Muhammadiyah Boarding School Jetis." *At-Ta'dib* 20, no. 2 (2025): 266–78. https://doi.org/10.21111/AT-TADIB.V20I2.43.

Warsah, Idi, Ruly Morganna, Berliani Aslam, Alkiromah Warsah, Bizikrika Hably, and Hudaya Warsah. "Applying Positive Psychology Principles in Islamic Education: A Conceptual Review." *Belajea: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (November 20, 2024): 87–118. https://doi.org/10.29240/BELAJEA.V9I2.11192.

Zacky Ni, Moh, Ma Hilya, Mirna Nur Alia Abdullah, and Rizaldi Mujayapura Retsa. "NUSANTARA: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial ANALISIS DAMPAK FOMO TERHADAP KESEHATAN MENTAL GEN Z." *Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial* 12, no. 5 (2025): 1798–1802. https://jurnal.um-tapsel.ac.id/index.php/nusantara/article/view/19739.