



From Mujāhdat al-Nafs to Qalb Salīm: Islamic Values as Foundations for Mental Resilience in Contemporary Education

Iis Rosilah

Master's Scholar, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, West Java-Indonesia.

Email: iisrosilah14@gmail.com

Dima Noor Ziehad

UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia.

Email: dimaziehad@gmail.com

Fauzia Irfieh

UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia.

Email: fauziairfieh@gmail.com

This study examines how Islamic psychological values can strengthen students' mental health as a foundational basis for ethical and holistic educational reform. Core values—such as self-discipline (Mujāhdat al-Nafs), inner tranquility (Qalb Salīm), moral-spiritual consciousness (Iḥsān), purification of the soul (Tazkiyat al-Nafs), and spiritual optimism (Rajā')—are conceptualized as potential sources of psychological resilience in responding to academic pressures and the challenges of the digital era.

Employing a mixed-methods approach, this research integrates qualitative analysis to interpret key Islamic psychological constructs related to mental well-being with quantitative methods to examine the relationship between the internalization of these values and indicators of positive mental health among Generation Z students. Data were collected through interviews, observations, document analysis, and standardized survey instruments.

The findings are expected to contribute an ethical and spiritual framework for contemporary educational reform, particularly in the development of mental health support programs that integrate Islamic values to enhance students' psychological resilience and overall well-being.

Keywords: Islamic Psychology, Mental Health, Islamic Values, Educational Reform.

Introduction

A growing body of international evidence points to a decline in the mental well-being of adolescents and young adults worldwide. Over the last two decades, reports consistently document rising rates of anxiety, depression, and psychosocial distress among 10–24-year-olds (Twenge et al., 2024). This escalating crisis underscores the critical need for a



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multisectoral response, with education positioned as a key intervention point. Compellingly, systematic reviews identify religiosity and spirituality as significant protective factors against such conditions, especially depression and anxiety (Long et al., 2023). Yet, a disconnect persists: contemporary educational frameworks have largely failed to incorporate these spiritual dimensions into their mental health strategies, despite empirical research affirming their positive contribution to youth psychological well-being.

Research within Muslim communities consistently highlights the profound role faith plays in safeguarding adolescent mental health. For instance, Setiawan and Hartini (2022) observed that young people with deeper religiosity often experience greater psychological well-being. This mirrors the findings of Widita (2021), whose work illustrated how religiosity operates as a vital buffer against stress and psychological distress for Muslim adolescents. Together, these studies reveal that religiosity transcends spiritual identity; it functions as a dynamic personal resource. It provides a framework for coping with hardship, a source of enduring meaning, and a stable foundation for regulating emotions—core components that collectively nurture an individual's mental resilience.

Based on these findings, this research argues for the conceptual power of classical Islamic spiritual principles, specifically *mujahadat an-nafs* (self-discipline) and *qolbun salīm* (inner purity), in designing contemporary mental resilience programs. These principles are not antiquated; they resonate strongly with modern psychological paradigms that identify self-regulation, emotional resilience, and meaning as key protective factors. Empirical support comes from longitudinal studies indicating that spirituality significantly lowers depression risk and problematic behaviors in adolescents (Fernandez et al., 2025). Thus, the present article seeks a synergistic integration. It aims to synthesize the Islamic ethical-spiritual tradition with current insights from psychology and education to formulate a coherent model for strengthening youth mental resilience through the deep, personal embodiment of Islamic values.

Method

This study employs a mixed methods approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of Islamic values—particularly the concepts of *mujahadat an-nafs* and *qolbun salīm*—as the foundation for developing mental resilience in the context of contemporary education. This combined approach was chosen because the research problem is complex

and contextual, requiring data mining from both quantitative trends and the subjective meanings experienced by the participants.

The research design used was a mixed methods model with a sequential explanatory model, involving the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by in-depth qualitative data analysis. The quantitative phase aimed to obtain a general overview of the relationship between understanding Islamic psychological values and the mental health of Generation Z adolescents. Meanwhile, the qualitative phase was used to deepen and interpret the statistical findings through exploration of the experiences, perspectives, and reasoning of informants.

In the first stage, quantitative data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires to 100 respondents aged between 15–25 years who represent the characteristics of generation Z in Indonesia. The research instrument was structured in the form of a four-level Likert scale, which measures two main variables, namely: (1) the level of understanding of Islamic psychological and spiritual values, and (2) positive mental health conditions. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with the consideration that generation Z is the age group most vulnerable to mental health stress and also experiences the challenge of declining religious literacy as reported in various contemporary studies. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation tests to determine the relationship between the variables studied.

The second stage involved qualitative data collection through in-depth interviews with three groups of informants: religious leaders, psychology practitioners, and representatives from the Bandung City Health Office. The interviews focused on deepening understanding of Islamic psychological values and the real-world situation of adolescent mental health in urban settings. Furthermore, this research utilized a literature review of reputable scientific articles from the Scopus and Sinta databases relevant to the themes of Generation Z mental health, spiritual well-being, and Islamic education.

Qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, a process of selecting, simplifying, and focusing information by extracting parts relevant to the research focus. All interview transcripts were screened to identify data supporting the core themes, while discarding irrelevant information. The reduced data were then analyzed using thematic analysis to uncover patterns, relationships, and key concepts related to the link between the internalization of Islamic psychological values and adolescent mental health.

To ensure data validity and legitimacy, this study employed source triangulation, comparing and verifying data obtained from questionnaires, interviews, and literature

sources. This strategy was implemented to increase the credibility and academic accountability of the research results.

Through this methodological approach, this research is expected to yield a comprehensive understanding of the integrative model between Islamic values education and strengthening adolescent mental health. This model is expected to serve as a strategic reference in formulating future sustainable education policies and practices.

Research result

Contemporary adolescent mental health reveals a troubling convergence of external and internal pressures. Psychologist Elsa Marina document escalating psychological distress in the 13–25 cohort, largely fueled by hostile digital environments characterized by cyberbullying, body shaming, and harassment. This vulnerability is critically amplified by a deficit of familial emotional support and the presence of domestic conflict. These intersecting challenges highlight an urgent need for protective frameworks. Strengthening intrinsic values derived from Islamic ethics—particularly *rahmah* (compassion), *sakinah* (tranquility), and *tafaqquh* (profound comprehension)—offers a promising pathway to build the resilience and stability necessary for youth mental well-being.

An interview with a representative from the Bandung City Health Office, Mr. Gerindra, further strengthened this picture. Based on data from mental health screenings of adolescents in the Bandung area during the 2021–2024 period, high scores were found on five key indicators: prosocial behavior, peer relationship problems, hyperactivity, conduct disorders, and emotional disturbances. He further explained that adolescents with mental health disorders generally exhibit a decline in self-discipline, such as low motivation to learn, lack of concern for personal hygiene, and irregular eating patterns. These findings indicate a close relationship between mental health conditions and self-control (*mujahadat an-nafs*), a fundamental value in Islamic teachings.

In line with this, the results of an interview with religious figure K.H. Miftah Fauzi Rakhmat emphasized that the main foundation of mental resilience from an Islamic perspective stems from the strength of faith. He quoted Surah Ar-Ra'd verse 28, which states that peace of mind (*qolbun salīm*) can be achieved through *dhikr* and remembrance of Allah. Furthermore, the value of optimism (*rajā'*) is also seen as an important principle that must be instilled, namely the belief not to despair of Allah's mercy and forgiveness. In the context of adolescent life, he emphasized the importance of asceticism, namely not

being lost in sadness when losing something and not being overjoyed when gaining something. Furthermore, the practice of dhikr done aloud and in congregation is also seen as an effective medium for channeling emotions and calming the inner state.

These qualitative findings are supported by the results of a questionnaire distributed to 100 respondents. The results of the questionnaire indicate that the majority of respondents are in the moderate to high category in the application of Islamic psychological values, such as patience (sabr), gratitude (syukur), empathy (rahmah), and the attitude of surrender to God (tawakkal). Specifically, data analysis shows a clear relationship between self-discipline (mujāhadat an-naḥs) and inner peace (qolbun ṣalīm), as illustrated in the results of the questionnaire data processing.

The results of interviews with 3 sources were strengthened by the results of a questionnaire given to 100 respondents, it was found that the majority of participants were in the medium to high category in applying Islamic psychological values, such as patience (patience), thanks (gratitude), empathy (mercy), and surrender to God (trust). Specifically, researchers found a correlation between self-striving with a pure heart as seen in the following picture

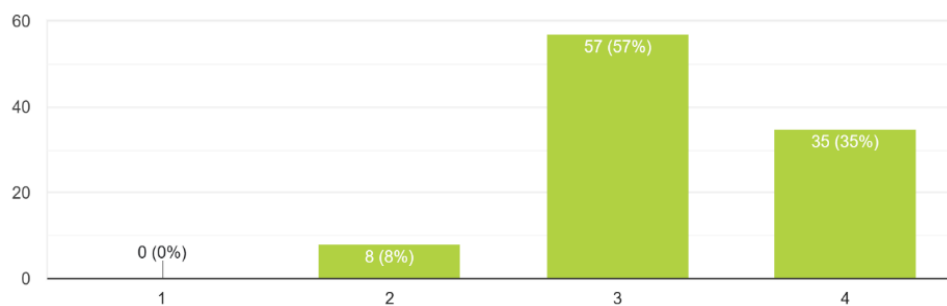


Figure 1: Results of a questionnaire on discipline and diligence in completing tasks and fulfilling mandates. Source: Researcher (2025)

Based on the questionnaire results regarding discipline and perseverance in completing tasks and fulfilling mandates, 57% of respondents agreed and 35% strongly agreed that they exhibited discipline and perseverance. Thus, overall, 92% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they demonstrated discipline and perseverance in carrying out their responsibilities.

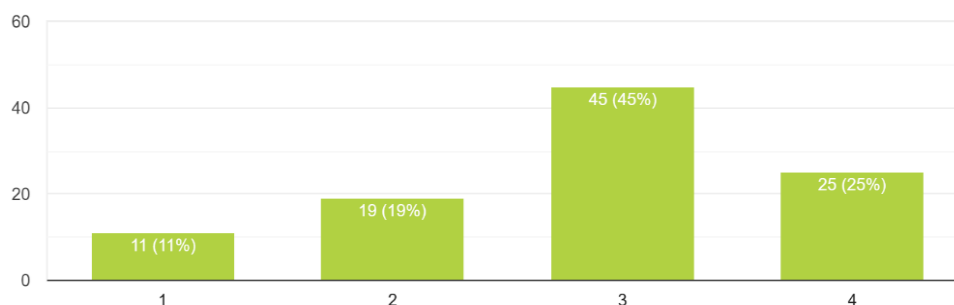


Figure 2: Results of a questionnaire on feelings of peace and tranquility felt by respondents.

Source: Researcher (2025)

Meanwhile, in the questionnaire regarding respondents' feelings of peace and tranquility, 11% strongly disagreed, 19% disagreed, 45% agreed, and 25% strongly agreed. Thus, it can be concluded that 70% of respondents feel that their current living conditions are relatively peaceful and tranquil.

The quantitative findings indicate that high levels of agreement on the importance of self-discipline (mujāhadat an-nafs) are directly proportional to the high percentage of respondents who experience inner peace (qolbun salīm). This indicates that the stronger an individual's efforts to control themselves and overcome negative impulses, the greater their chances of achieving a stable and peaceful psychological state. In other words, the practice of mujāhadat an-nafs contributes significantly to fostering inner peace in adolescents.

The questionnaire data also shows that around 30% of respondents in the 15–25 year age group reported experiences feeling restless, and less at ease in everyday life. These findings indicate that some teenagers and Generation Z are in a vulnerable psychological state, especially regarding aspects of emotional well-being and emotional regulation. This percentage is significant, considering that the respondents came from a developmental stage that should have relatively good social and cognitive adaptation capacities.

The finding of emotional unrest among some respondents demonstrates the need for a foundation of values that can strengthen adolescents' self-regulation. In this context, Islamic psychological values are relevant because they offer a spiritual and moral framework that can help adolescents manage life's pressures more adaptively. Thus, the psychological needs of Generation Z can be directly linked to the importance of strengthening religious values in building their mental resilience.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that Islamic psychological values play a strategic role as a supporting factor in strengthening the mental health of Generation Z.

The process of internalizing these values serves not only as a moral guideline but also as a psychological mechanism that helps adolescents respond more adaptively to various life pressures. Therefore, strengthening education in Islamic psychological values within the family and school environment needs to be continuously developed to support the healthy and balanced mental growth of the younger generation.

Discussion

Modern psychology increasingly acknowledges the profound role of religiosity and spirituality in anchoring an individual's mental equilibrium, a relevance that extends deeply to the lived experience of Generation Z. Robust meta-analyses reveal that interventions incorporating spiritual and religious elements do not merely offer temporary relief; they sustainably alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety while fostering a more durable sense of psychological well-being (Rosmarin et al., 2023). This empirical validation moves theory into the realm of practical, lived support. It solidifies the understanding that spiritual values—including those nurtured within Islamic tradition—function as a vital inner resource, a source of resilience that can shield individuals as they navigate the inevitable stresses of life.

The religious coping theory developed by Pargament explains that individuals who rely on positive religious coping strategies—such as prayer, *tawakkul* (religious trust), and *dhikr* (remembrance of God)—tend to have better emotional regulation, lower stress levels, and greater mental resilience. In the Islamic context, values such as *tawakkal* (trust), patience, gratitude, and *mujahadat an-nafs* (self-reliance) serve as adaptive psychological mechanisms that help adolescents respond constructively to stress. This is supported by empirical findings showing that deeply internalized religiosity is positively correlated with increased subjective well-being (Ikhwanisifa & Raudatussalamah, 2022). Several studies in Indonesia have also shown that adolescents with high levels of religiosity tend to have more stable psychological well-being, even when faced with academic, social, and emotional stress. For example, research on adolescents in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) showed that religiosity significantly contributes to improved psychological well-being, particularly in areas such as meaning in life, self-acceptance, and environmental management (Rahmawati, n.d.). These findings confirm that religious values can be a vehicle for adolescents to develop a more positive life orientation.

Furthermore, the practice of worship and the tradition of *dhikr* in Islam play a crucial role in fostering peace of mind and emotional stability. Research by Putri et al. (2023)

explains that religious activities have a therapeutic effect on mental health, as they can create a more organized psychological state, reduce anxiety, and strengthen a sense of spiritual connection. These values align with the concept of qolbun salīm, a state of calm, purity, and safety of the heart, as taught in Islam.

In terms of psychosocial development, religiosity has also been shown to be closely linked to increased resilience, namely an individual's ability to survive, recover, and adapt when faced with life's stresses. A study of medical students showed that spirituality and religiosity were positively correlated with psychological resilience and life satisfaction, confirming that religious values can strengthen coping structures in adolescents and young adults (Soylu, 2025). This finding is highly relevant for Generation Z, who are currently faced with increasingly complex social, emotional, and digital challenges.

Based on these theories and empirical findings, it is clear that the internalization of Islamic psychological values serves not only as a moral guideline but also as an adaptive psychological mechanism that contributes to strengthening adolescent mental health. Therefore, the integration of Islamic values into family and school education is increasingly important to help adolescents build a strong psychospiritual foundation. With this foundation, adolescents are expected to be able to manage stress more effectively, maintain emotional balance, and develop a healthy mental state during the transition to adulthood (Daradjat, 1970).

Psychologically, the relationship between spiritual values and mental health can be explained through several mechanisms. Spiritual practices contribute to emotional regulation, reduce anxiety levels, provide a sense of meaning in life, and foster a sense of connectedness with God and the social environment. All of these aspects collectively form an internal and external support system that strengthens an individual's mental resilience. Within this framework, internalization of Islamic values serves not only as a moral compass but also as a source of inner strength, an adaptive coping strategy, and a foundation for psychological stability.

Thus, the integration of Islamic psychological values education into the family and school environment is highly urgent. Through consistent education and the internalization of these values, adolescents can internalize these values, enabling them to develop a strong psychospiritual foundation for maintaining mental health and well-being when faced with various life pressures. Therefore, existing empirical data and

theoretical frameworks confirm that Islamic values serve not only as social and moral norms but also as adaptive psychological mechanisms that sustainably support adolescent mental health.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that Islamic psychological values have a significant role in strengthening the mental health of Generation Z adolescents. Questionnaire data shows that 92% of respondents agreed with the importance of self-discipline (*mujāhadat an-nafs*), while 70% of respondents stated that they felt inner peace (*qolbun salīm*). These findings indicate a strong relationship between the ability to control oneself with emotional stability and peace of mind in adolescents.

The results of this study were further strengthened by interviews with psychologists, health service representatives, and religious leaders. All three confirmed that the values of faith, the practice of *dhikr* (remembrance of God), optimism (*rajā'*), and the practice of asceticism (*zuhud*) serve as adaptive mechanisms that help adolescents respond to life's pressures in a healthier and more constructive manner. These values have been shown to be a source of inner strength in facing increasingly complex emotional, social, and psychological challenges.

Theoretically, the findings of this study align with Pargament's concept of religious coping, Rosmarin et al.'s perspective on the therapeutic effects of religiosity, and Zakiah Daradjat's perspective on the role of religion in maintaining mental health. These three perspectives emphasize that spirituality and religious values serve not only as moral guidelines but also as sources of emotional regulation, strengthening psychological resilience, and maintaining an individual's mental balance.

Thus, this study concludes that strengthening the internalization of Islamic values within the family and school environment is a crucial strategy for building stable, adaptive, and resilient mental health among Generation Z adolescents. The integration of Islamic psychological values into education is expected to provide a solid psychospiritual foundation for the younger generation in navigating the dynamics of modern life.

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