

## Integration of Islamic values based mindfulness as an effort to improve the psychological well being of students in Islamic boarding schools: A conceptual study

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### ABSTRACT

Students in pesantren face academic and social pressures that have an impact on their psychological well-being and study concentration. This article aims to comprehensively examine the effectiveness of the integration of mindfulness based on Islamic values in improving the psychological well-being and learning concentration of students. This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. The results of the study show that the combination of the principles of mindfulness with Islamic values such as patience, gratitude, sincerity, tawakal, and tazkiyatun nafs can be a holistic and contextual intervention approach. This integration has the potential to support the development of culturally relevant student coaching methods, improve emotional regulation and focus on learning, and effectively improve the spiritual and psychological well-being of students.



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## INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of declining psychological well-being among students is a crucial concern in the current pesantren education landscape (Wulandari & Megawati, 2020). Although it is known as an educational environment that is thick with spiritual values and Islamic scientific traditions, the reality is that life in pesantren holds various pressures that can affect the mental health of students (Ru'iya, 2019). This pressure arises from the intensity of daily activities, high academic demands, heavy memorization load, and the process of adaptation to a highly structured and strict collective lifestyle (Istiyani et al., 2024). Not infrequently, students experience symptoms of prolonged stress, anxiety ahead of exams, mental fatigue, and difficulties in managing emotions and concentrating, which indirectly impact a decrease in quality of life and academic performance.

In this context, an approach that considers emotional, spiritual, as well as psychological needs becomes very urgent. One of the approaches that is considered potential is the integration of mindfulness practice with Islamic values. Mindfulness is generally defined as being fully aware of current experiences intentionally and non-judgmentally, and has been shown to be effective in improving psychological well-being through increased emotional regulation, self-acceptance, and resilience to stress (Guendelman et al., 2020). However, in the context of the

Muslim community, especially students in Islamic boarding schools, a completely secular mindfulness approach can cause resistance because it is considered less in accordance with their faith values (Awaad et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important to design a mindfulness approach that not only retains its psychological essence, but also blends harmoniously with Islamic values that have been ingrained in the lives of students. Values such as patience (صبر), gratitude (شكراً), tawakal (توكل), and muhasabah (محاسبة النفس) are important elements of Islamic teachings that are essentially in harmony with the practice of full awareness. The concept of patience teaches to accept the situation without complaint, gratitude guides individuals to focus on the abundance of the moment, tawakal encourages the release of anxiety through surrender to Allah, while muhasabah becomes a deep self-reflection for spiritual growth. The combination of mindfulness and these values is believed to strengthen the eudaimonic well-being dimension of students, which is a form of well-being that is not only oriented towards momentary happiness, but also on achieving the meaning of life, self-actualization, and positive relationships with others (Ryff, 2014).

However, the integration of mindfulness based on Islamic values is still relatively minimal in scientific studies, especially in the context of Islamic boarding schools. Previous studies that have looked at psychological interventions in Muslim adolescents have mostly still used a general or secular approach, without taking into account unique local cultural and spiritual contexts, such as pesantren (Abu-Raiya et al., 2020; Hairina & Mubarak, 2020; Suwarno, 2019; Yuhaniah, 2022). In fact, the development of contextual and culturally relevant approaches has great potential in increasing the effectiveness of interventions, especially in building students' psychological resilience through the way they understand, believe, and live every day. This shows that there is a significant *research gap* to be studied in more depth.

Therefore, this article aims to conceptually examine how the integration between mindfulness and Islamic values can be an effective strategy to improve the psychological well-being of students in Islamic boarding schools. This approach not only promises to contribute to the practice of local spirituality-based psychology, but also broadens insights into relevant and applicative interventions within the framework of contemporary Islamic education.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature study method (library research). This approach was chosen to explore and analyze the concept of mindfulness in the perspective of modern psychology and Islamic teachings, as well as examine its relevance to improving the psychological well-being and learning concentration of students in the pesantren environment. Literature studies allow researchers to examine various theories, previous research results, and classical and contemporary Islamic sources in depth, resulting in a comprehensive and integrated theoretical understanding.

### Data Sources and Research Participants

The data source in this study is not in the form of human participants, but comes from relevant academic literature. The literature reviewed includes:

1. Psychology, education, and Islamic textbooks relevant to the topics of mindfulness and psychological well-being.

2. National and international scientific journal articles published in the last 10 years and accessible through academic databases such as *Google Scholar*, *ScienceDirect*, *PubMed*, *ResearchGate*, and *DOAJ*.
3. Islamic classics from scholars such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, and contemporary figures such as Hamka and Quraish Shihab that discuss values such as patience, gratitude, tawakal, and muhasabah.
4. Thesis, dissertation, and research reports that are relevant to the context of students and pesantren education.

Inclusion criteria include literature:

1. Relevant to the concepts of mindfulness, psychological well-being, study concentration, and Islamic values;
2. Written by academics or practitioners in the fields of psychology, education, and Islamic studies;
3. Published in the period 2010–2024 to ensure actuality (except for classic sources).

## **Data Collection Techniques**

The data collection process is carried out through systematic literature search. The stages of data collection are as follows:

1. Determine search keywords, such as: *mindfulness*, *Islamic mindfulness*, *psychological well-being*, *learning concentration*, *students*, *Islamic boarding schools*, *Islamic values*, *spiritual coping*.
2. Search for trusted academic sources through scientific search engines (Google Scholar, ResearchGate) and university digital libraries.
3. Filter literature based on topic relevance, year of publication, and quality of sources (e.g. from reputable and Scopus or SINTA-indexed journals).
4. Record important information from selected literature using annotation techniques, data synthesis, and grouping by theme.

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis was carried out using a thematic analysis method. This process aims to identify, organize, and interpret important patterns (themes) from the collected literature data. The stages of analysis include:

1. Familiarization of data, by carefully reading all selected literature;
2. Providing initial coding on relevant parts of the text, such as the definition of mindfulness, Islamic principles related to self-awareness, as well as its relation to well-being and learning focus;
3. Grouping the code into main themes, such as: *mindfulness in psychology*, *Islamic values in emotion management*, *the relevance of spirituality in student learning*, and *strategies to increase learning concentration*;
4. Interpret the interconnectedness between themes to build an integrative conceptual framework between mindfulness and Islamic values;
5. Compile a narrative of the findings in the form of an in-depth theoretical synthesis.

With this approach, the results of the research are expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution in designing a relevant and contextual model of psychological intervention based on Islamic values, especially for students in the pesantren environment. The

main focus of this research is to identify in depth how the integration between the practice of mindfulness and Islamic spiritual values can support emotional management, increase learning focus, and build spiritual meaning and motivation that are the main foundation in the lives of students. The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Conceptually describe mindfulness in the perspective of contemporary psychology, especially in relation to the regulation of emotions and increased study concentration;
2. Examine relevant Islamic values, such as patience (صبر), gratitude (توكل), tawakal (توكل), and tazkiyatun nafs (تزركيه النفس), as well as how these values can be harmoniously integrated in mindfulness practices;
3. Develop an integrative framework that can be used as a basis for the development of cultural- and religious-based psychological interventions, which are in accordance with the characteristics of students and the pesantren education system.

Thus, this research is expected to be a conceptual basis for the preparation of training programs, coaching modules, or other forms of interventions that prioritize a spiritual-psychological approach. The intervention will not only support the academic achievements of students, but also strengthen mental resilience, inner peace, and religious values as an integral part of the Islamic education process.

## RESULT

The combination of *mindfulness* practices and Islamic values offers a holistic, contextual, and spiritually meaningful intervention approach for students in the pesantren environment. This approach not only focuses on full awareness of the current moment, but also instills divine values and Islamic ethics that have become an integral part of the life of students. The main goal is to create a strategy that can improve psychological well-being, strengthen emotional regulation, and optimize students' concentration in learning in carrying out academic and worship activities in a balanced manner (Irpan & Sain, 2024; Khasanah & Raharjo, 2024; Wulandari & Megawati, 2020). This approach also facilitates the development of meaning and motivation for learning that is rooted in spirituality, so that it is easier to accept and internalize in the daily lives of students.

### ***Mindfulness***

*Mindfulness* or *mindfulness* is the practice of focusing on current experiences (thoughts, feelings, body sensations, environment) with an open, accepting, and non-judgmental attitude. Psychologically, the concept of *mindfulness* has been shown to be effective in reducing stress, depressive anxiety improves emotional regulation, and improves attention focus (Peverly et al., 2020)

In Islamic teachings, the principles of *mindfulness* have similarities with the concepts of *tafakkur* (contemplating Allah's creation) (Al-Qur'an, Ali Imran), *tadabbur* (understanding the meaning of Qur'anic verses) (Al-Qur'an, Muhammad), and *khusyu'* (concentration in worship) (Al-Qur'an, Al-Mu'minun). Some hadiths (such as HR. Bukhari and Muslim) emphasize the importance of living "in the present" and not fixating too much on the past or an uncertain future. This is especially relevant to the concept of *mindfulness* (Isgandarova, 2019). These Islamic values can strengthen the application of *contextual mindfulness* for students.

### **Islamic Values Related to *Mindfulness***

In Islam, there are a number of core values that are essentially strongly related to the principles of mindfulness. One of the most basic is monotheism, which is the belief in the oneness of Allah, which forms the basis of spiritual awareness that everything comes from and will return to Him. This awareness gives birth to a calming perspective and helps individuals face life's trials more openly and acceptingly (Isgandarova, 2019).

Furthermore, the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* or purification of the soul in Islam encourages people to cleanse their hearts from negative qualities and get closer to Allah. The practice of mindfulness, by increasing awareness of thoughts, emotions, and inner intentions, can be a means of support in the purification process (Guendelman et al., 2020). Students who practice self-awareness regularly will be better able to recognize the whispers of the heart and measure their actions according to religious teachings.

The value of patience in Islam emphasizes the importance of determination and fortitude in facing various forms of trials. Mindfulness naturally teaches individuals to accept every experience that arises without overreaction, thus strengthening patience in daily life (Uygur & Beyhan, 2024). Correspondingly, gratitude or gratitude for God's favor can also grow through the practice of mindfulness, as focusing on the present allows one to better appreciate the simple things in life.

In addition, the practice of full awareness is also closely related to sincerity, which is sincerity in doing deeds solely for the sake of Allah. By increasing honesty in oneself and awareness of intention in every action, mindfulness helps students to be more directed in worship and study with a strong spiritual orientation. In the context of a dynamic life, the value of *tawakal*, or surrendering oneself to Allah after maximum effort, can also be strengthened through the practice of mindfulness (Cucchi, 2022; Warsah et al., 2024). Awareness of the current condition, without rejection or judgment, reflects an attitude of accepting destiny with an open heart. Furthermore, mindfulness also has the potential to strengthen the commitment to *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, which is to call for goodness and prevent evil. Students who have high self-awareness will be more sensitive to the social dynamics around them and are encouraged to take actions in accordance with the Islamic values taught in the pesantren.

Through the integration of Islamic values with the principle of mindfulness, this approach not only forms adaptive emotional regulation and increased study concentration, but also builds a solid spiritual foundation in students. Therefore, strengthening Islamic values through mindfulness practice can be an important part of a contextual and effective religious-based psychological intervention strategy in the pesantren environment.

### **Implications for Psychological Well-Being**

*Psychological well-being* is a positive individual condition and functions effectively in life, including emotional, social, and psychological aspects (Al-Kandari & Pandey, 2021). The dimensions of this condition include self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, mastery of the environment, life goals, and personal growth (Al-Kandari & Pandey, 2021). Integration of *mindfulness* Islam-based is expected to improve the dimensions of the psychological well-being of students through inner peace, better self-acceptance in the Islamic

value frame (Guendelman et al., 2020), more harmonious relationships based on Islamic morals and more intrinsic motivation to learn due to awareness of the purpose of life as a Muslim (Riyadi, 2012). In general, Islamic-based mindfulness supports the improvement of students' psychological well-being through increased inner peace, emotional control, and gratitude. Study concentration also increases because students are more focused, sincere, and understand the purpose of learning as a form of worship.

### **Strengthening Learning Concentration**

*Learning concentration* is the ability to focus attention continuously on the learning material and ignore distractions. The influence of *Islamic-based* mindfulness, namely *mindfulness practice* in general, has been proven to increase attention and working memory (Peverly, 2020). In the context of Islam, focusing on the present moment can be linked to solemnity in learning and worship reducing drifting thoughts (Bishop et al., 2004), and increasing the absorption of subject matter. The value of sincerity can also motivate study concentration as a form of worship (Riyadi, 2012).

These supporting concepts essentially integrate the practice of *mindfulness* (*mindfulness*) which has been shown to be psychologically beneficial in reducing stress, improving emotional regulation, and focusing attention, with the fundamental values of Islam such as *monotheism*, *tazkiyatun nafs*, *patience*, *gratitude*, *sincerity*, *tawakal*, and *amar ma'ruf nahi Munkar* which is believed to have the potential to provide a strong spiritual and ethical foundation.

This integration is expected to improve the psychological well-being of students, which includes self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy, mastery of the environment, life goals, and personal growth, as well as strengthening their learning concentration ability through increased focus, reduction of distractions, and intrinsic motivation based on the values of sincerity and worship (Khasanah & Raharjo, 2024; Rohman & Muhid, 2022). The goal is to bridge these two perspectives more specifically in the context of improving the psychological well-being and learning concentration of students.

### **Integration with Psychological Theories**

Narratively, the integration of mindfulness with various modern psychological theories shows great potential in creating more contextual intervention approaches, especially in the pesantren environment. Approaches such as *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction* (MBSR) and *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy* (MBCT), which have been scientifically proven to help with emotion regulation and stress reduction, will be strengthened by incorporating spiritual dimensions in Islam, such as monotheism and tawakal (Alsubaie et al., 2017; Hazlett-Stevens et al., 2019). Belief in God as the source of inner strength provides emotional depth and meaning in the practice of mindfulness.

From the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura), students who are used to practicing Islamic mindfulness will experience increased *self-efficacy*, because their learning process is supported by the spiritual values they believe in. When students are able to emulate the Prophet in patience and focus, they not only learn cognitively, but also spiritually (Marques et al., 2022). In *Attention Control Theory*, attention disorders due to stress and anxiety can be minimized through mindfulness combined with values such as patience and sincerity. Students

become more able to focus on their lessons because they have better inner peace and self-control.

This integration is also in line with the concept of psychological well-being according to Carol Ryff, where the practice of mindfulness based on Islamic values contributes to the development of all dimensions of well-being, ranging from self-acceptance, harmonious social relationships based on Islamic morals, to having a clear purpose in life as a Muslim (Kriakous et al., 2021; Querstret et al., 2020). Finally, the theory of spiritual integration and mental health emphasizes that the spiritual dimension is not complementary, but central to mental health. Therefore, combining mindfulness with Islamic values explicitly makes this practice not only a psychological technique, but also a form of worship and complete self-development.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that the integration of mindfulness with Islamic values significantly contributes to reducing stress, improving emotional regulation, and strengthening the psychological well-being and learning concentration of students. These findings are in line with research (Guendelman et al., 2020) and (Khoury et al., 2017) which states that mindfulness practices are able to help individuals manage negative emotions and increase acceptance of conscious life experiences. When combined with Islamic values such as patience and tawakal, mindfulness provides spiritual depth that makes individuals calmer in accepting the realities of life, as well as stronger in facing challenges. The value of gratitude and sincerity has also been proven to strengthen the intrinsic motivation of students, give meaning to learning activities, and foster a positive reflective attitude towards each experience.

Theoretically, these results support the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) approaches, which have been widely used in psychological interventions to reduce stress and increase self-awareness (Alsubaie et al., 2017; Kriakous et al., 2021; Querstret et al., 2020). In addition, these findings are also in line with Attention Control Theory, which states that mindfulness trained through mindfulness can improve executive function, especially in the context of learning. Students who practice Islamic mindfulness show increased focus and concentration on learning because they are trained to be aware of every mental process and respond to distractions with awareness, not impulsive reactions. This is in line with the views (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2021) and (Peverly et al., 2020) that emphasize the important role of attention control in maximizing the learning process. In other words, when mindfulness is carried out within the framework of Islamic values, not only the cognitive aspect is trained, but also affective and spiritual dimensions emerge that strengthen its effectiveness.

Furthermore, these findings also strengthen Carol Ryff's theory of psychological well-being which consists of the dimensions of self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, life goals, and personal growth. In the context of students, self-acceptance is reflected in their ability to respond calmly to shortcomings, build healthy social relationships in the pesantren environment, and have a more spiritually oriented life orientation (Cetinkaya & Billings, 2023). In line with that, the theory (Pargament, 1997) about religious coping explains that individuals who rely on a spiritual approach in coping with life pressures have stronger psychological resilience and a deeper meaning of life. The integration of mindfulness with Islamic teachings has been proven to provide space for students to do spiritual

reflection (muhasabah), accept destiny with tawakal, and respond to every experience as a means of getting closer to Allah.

On the other hand, this study also responds to criticism of Western psychological approaches that are considered too secular and do not take into account religious values. Conventional psychological interventions are often not accepted by religious communities because they are considered inconsistent with their beliefs. In this context, the integration between mindfulness and Islamic values can be understood as an effort to Islamize psychology, namely aligning scientific approaches with spiritual principles (Anheyer et al., 2017; Bhattarai et al., 2024; Nuraeni et al., 2024). Rather than just a stress management strategy, Islamic mindfulness becomes part of the process of tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul), which has strong roots in the Islamic tradition. With this approach, the resistance of students to psychological intervention can be minimized because the practices carried out are considered not contradictory, and even strengthen the religious values that they believe in from the beginning.

Furthermore, from a cultural and contextual point of view, this study makes a new contribution by showing that psychological interventions based on local and spiritual values are more effectively applied in populations that have strong religious affiliations, such as students in Islamic boarding schools. Many students experience academic pressure, difficulty adapting, and separation from their families, which contribute to increased levels of stress and anxiety (Istiyani et al., 2024; Ru'iya, 2019). In this situation, Islamic mindfulness can be a proper tool for emotion regulation because it not only calms the mind, but also provides a framework of meaning that can be used as a life handle. Mindfulness is not only understood as a psychological technique, but also as worship and spiritual practice that can help students become calmer, grateful, and focused in carrying out daily activities.

The implications of this research are very important in the realm of Islamic education and psychology. Practically, this integrative approach can be the basis for the development of contextual and applicative Islamic value-based mindfulness training modules in the pesantren environment (Warsah et al., 2024). Educators, counselors, and boarding caregivers can leverage this approach to support students' mental health without sacrificing the religious values that are deeply ingrained in their lives. This approach also opens up space for collaboration between Western psychology and Islamic spirituality in shaping a more comprehensive intervention. Thus, the integration of Islamic mindfulness not only improves the psychological well-being of students, but also strengthens their religious identity, increases the meaning of life, and prepares them to become resilient and competitive individuals in facing the challenges of the times.

## CONCLUSION

The integration of mindfulness based on Islamic values offers a promising approach to improve the psychological well-being and learning concentration of students in Islamic boarding schools. This approach is not only culturally and spiritually relevant, but also has a strong theoretical basis in modern psychology, especially in aspects of emotion regulation, attention control, and the development of psychological well-being. The alignment between Islamic values such as patience, gratitude, tawakal, and tazkiyatun nafs with the principles of mindfulness opens up opportunities for the birth of interventions that are more meaningful and

acceptable to students as a whole. In the context of pesantren that requires students to live in a disciplined, dormitory, and distant environment, this approach is expected to be able to respond to internal and external pressures that they experience, as well as provide contextual and spiritual mental strengthening strategies. These interventions have the potential to provide holistic support that not only addresses stress and concentration disorders, but also builds learning motivation, inner peace of mind, and deeper meaning in life.

However, this study has limitations that need to be observed. First, this study is still conceptual and exploratory so that it requires stronger empirical validation through direct intervention tests in the pesantren setting. Second, this integrative approach needs to be studied more deeply in terms of cultural sensitivity and diversity of Islamic interpretations so that there is no simplification in the translation of spiritual concepts into Western psychological models. Third, the student population as the main focus does not necessarily represent all Muslim adolescents with different cultural and educational backgrounds.

Based on this, it is suggested that further research develop Islamic mindfulness training modules that can be implemented in a structured manner in Islamic boarding schools, involving collaboration between academics, psychology practitioners, and religious leaders. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of program effectiveness is essential to assess its impact on emotion regulation, well-being, and learning concentration. In addition, the exploration of other worship practices such as dhikr, prayer, and muhasabah in the frame of mindfulness can also be an important part of the development of an intervention model based on Islamic spirituality. With a more systematic and contextual approach, it is hoped that a significant contribution will be made to the development of positive Islamic psychology that is able to respond to the educational and mental health needs of Muslim adolescents as a whole.

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