

The moderating role of gender in the relationship between religiosity, social support and academic stress among *mahantri* in Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationship between religiosity and social support with academic stress among *mahantri* in Yogyakarta. *Mahantri* are university students who reside in Islamic boarding schools and undertake dual responsibilities in both academic activities at the university and religious activities at the pesantren. The research involved 206 active *mahantri* and the instruments used in this study included the Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PASS), the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS-15), and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS). Regression analysis results indicated a negative relationship between religiosity and academic stress ($\rho < .001$). The correlation analysis showed a negative relationship between religiosity and academic stress ($\rho < .001$), as well as between social support and academic stress ($\rho = .010$). Religiosity and social support contributed significantly to the reduction of academic stress among *mahantri* in Yogyakarta ($\rho < .001$), with a total contribution of 7.96%. These findings demonstrated that the higher the levels of religiosity and social support possessed by *mahantri*, the lower their levels of academic stress. The moderated regression analysis showed that gender did not significantly moderate the relationships between religiosity and academic stress, nor between social support and academic stress ($\rho > .050$). These findings indicated that the effects of religiosity and social support on academic stress are consistent across both male and female *mahantri*. The results implied that strengthening religiosity and social support can serve as protective factors against academic stress, thereby universities and pesantren have to provide supportive and faith-based programs for *mahantri*.

INTRODUCTION

Pesantren is a boarding school with traditional characteristics that focuses on Islamic studies. Its main concept, Tafaqquh Fi Al Din, emphasizes a deep understanding of Islam in both spiritual and social aspects (Wekke, 2012). Today, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are not only for junior or senior high school students but also for university students. University pesantren is considered more modern and having less strict rules (Rihartini, 2021).

Mahantri are university students who live in a pesantren and study religious knowledge while pursuing higher education. They carry dual responsibilities—academic activity at college and religious activities at the pesantren—which result in a heavier workload compared to non-santri students. Academic tasks include doing coursework, maintaining grades and participating in campus activities, while pesantren duties involve diniyah classes, memorization, Quran recitations, daily



shifts and religious events. The intensity of activities and pressure for academic achievement can contribute to stress (Indria et al., 2019). Moreover, adapting to pesantren's environment and meeting high academic demands often pose challenges; when these demands exceed one's capacity, academic stress may occur (Radisti et al., 2023).

Research by Yandri, et al. (2025) found that academic stress is associated with loneliness and bullying among Islamic boarding school students, so academic stress can be seen as a risk factor for psychological problems. According to Radisti, et al., (2023), stress can be broadly defined as a non-specific reaction of the body that arises in response to demands placed on an individual in their life. From a medical perspective, stress can be defined as a condition where there is a conflict between mental, physical, and emotional aspects that may threaten an individual's psychological well-being. Sources of academic stress include monotonous learning situations, noise, heavy workloads, overly high expectations, unclear learning processes, lack of control, missed opportunities, conflicting demands and tight deadlines for completing coursework (Indria et al., 2019). Academic stress can also be defined as psychological pressure related to feelings of frustration arising from academic failure or the awareness of experiencing such failure (Amalia & Nashori, 2021)

According to Santrock (2013), the factors causing stress among students can be divided into two main groups: personal factors and academic factors. Personal factors include conditions, such as being far from parents and family, economic or financial issues, difficulties adapting to new friends and environments and various other personal issues. On the other hand, academic factors that can cause stress among students include changes in learning styles from high school to college, academic workload, grade expectations, pressure to achieve academic success and various other academic issues. Factors causing academic stress are divided into two categories: internal and external factors. Internal factors include self-confidence, mental resilience, an optimistic attitude, motivation to achieve and a tendency to procrastinate. External factors include social support (Yusuf & Yusuf, 2020). Additionally, according to Radisti, et al. (2023), another internal factor influencing academic stress is religiosity, which relates to an individual's beliefs stemming from the values they uphold. According to Rohmah and Mahrus (2024), other external factors that can influence academic stress include academic pressure, living environment and financial issues.

According to Adeyemo and Adeleye (2008), religiosity is a concept that encompasses various important aspects of a person's religious life. Religiosity includes an individual's belief in God as well as belief in the teachings, values and principles of the religion they adhere to. Religiosity plays three roles in the coping process: it functions as part of the coping elements, as a contributor to coping and as a product of coping (Pargament, 1992).

According to Ancok (2011), the dimensions within religiosity refer to how far an individual can understand, believe in, practice and feel the religion they adhere to. These dimensions form a comprehensive picture of an individual's level of religiosity and how important religion can be in their life. Thus, someone experiencing academic stress uses their religion as a defense mechanism to reduce that academic stress. The influence of religious values on students' thinking patterns can be seen in how they deal with academic problems. If students have applied religious values within themselves, they will be more patient, diligent and positive in facing academic challenges. They may view each problem as a test that must be overcome with patience and effort (Radisti et al., 2023). Religiosity has an important role in reducing academic stress, especially among students. This is consistent with the research conducted by Amalia and Nashori (2021) on pharmacy students. The study revealed a significant negative correlation between religiosity and academic stress.

In addition to internal factors, there are also external factors that can influence academic stress. One external factor that can influence academic stress in students is social support. Social support itself is any kind of assistance, motivation and sense of security provided by others, both physically and emotionally, with the aim of supporting someone in overcoming pressure, solving problems and facing various challenges in life (Sarafino & Smith, 2011). According to Prasetyo and Rahmasari (2016), social support provided to an individual can have a positive impact on their performance. This social support can come from close relatives, such as parents or peers. Such support can help individuals understand themselves better, complete tasks more efficiently and navigate the educational process more effectively.

Social support comes from family, friends and other social environments, which can help individuals feel calmer, cared for and have high self-confidence. All of these factors contribute to reducing the stress levels experienced by students (Akbar & Hayati, 2023). Additionally, according to Pajarianto, et al. (2020), social support provided to individuals can take the form of tangible assistance, such as advice, whether verbal or nonverbal. This can impact on the behavior or emotions of the individual receiving it.

. For students, utilizing assistance and support from family, friends or their social environment is an effective way to manage academic burdens. Individuals who feel supported are more confident that there are others who care and are ready to help them, so they are able to face the challenges at hand better (Ibimiluyi, et al., 2022). This aligns with research conducted by Ansyah and Susanti (2023) found out that there is a negative correlation between academic stress and social support. This means that as social support increases, academic stress decreases, and vice versa.

Religiosity and social support are two relevant factors to examine in order to understand how to minimize academic stress among students. Religiosity can serve as a source of inner strength and calmness, while social support can play a role in creating a sense of security. When students feel they have a strong support network and deep spiritual connections, they are able to manage pressure better and feel more confident. This aligns with the research conducted by Mutiarawati and Lestari (2024), which states that both religiosity and social support can influence the reduction of academic stress levels among students.

Based on the previous studies reviewed, no research has specifically examined the moderating role of gender in the relationship between religiosity, social support and academic stress among *mahantri* in Yogyakarta. Therefore, the present study aims to address this gap by investigating whether gender influences the strength of these relationships. There are four hypotheses in this study, they are as follows:

1. There is a negative relationship between religiosity and academic stress among *mahantri* in Yogyakarta.
2. There is a negative relationship between social support and academic stress among *mahantri* in Yogyakarta.
3. There is a negative relationship between religiosity and social support with academic stress among *mahantri* in Yogyakarta.
4. The gender moderates the relationship between social support and academic stress among *mahantri* in Yogyakarta.

METHODS

The participants in this study were active *mahasantri* in Yogyakarta, students who are pursuing higher education while living in Islamic boarding schools. This population has specific characteristics because they play a dual role, namely fulfilling academic requirements at university and at the same time participating in religious education and activities at the Islamic boarding school. The sample in this study consisted of 206 *mahasantri* selected using purposive sampling method based on certain criteria, namely: (1) currently enrolled as active undergraduate students at universities in Yogyakarta, (2) living in Islamic boarding schools during their studies, and (3) actively participating in academic activities at universities and religious activities at Islamic boarding schools. In addition to explaining the sampling technique, this study also provides an overview of the distribution of respondents' places of residence. Based on the data collected, respondents came from around 55–60 different Islamic boarding schools in Yogyakarta. Some of the boarding schools with the largest number of students include the Islamic University of Indonesia Boarding School (PP UII), Krapyak Boarding School (Al-Munawwir and Ali Maksum), PPM Al-Hadi, and Sunan Pandanaran Boarding School. In addition, respondents also came from various universities, both public and private. The data show that most of the sample came from the Islamic University of Indonesia (39.8%) and UIN Sunan Kalijaga (23.3%), followed by Gadjah Mada University (8.3%), Alma Ata University (3.4%), Ahmad Dahlan University (6.3%), Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta (5.9%) and several other universities in Yogyakarta.

Academic stress was assessed using the Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PASS) developed by Bedewy and Gabriel (2015) and adapted into Indonesian by Dewi, Jannah, and Darmawanti (2022). The scale contains 18 items ($\alpha = .942$) rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The PASS measures three aspects of academic stress: academic expectations (e.g, “My friends and I compete fiercely to get good grades”); workload and exams (e.g, “I cannot complete the assignments from the lecturer”); and students’ academic perceptions (e.g, “I am afraid that my GPA will drop this semester.”). Four items (5, 7, 8, and 17) were reverse-scored.

Religiosity was measured using the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS-15) by Huber and Huber (2012), adapted into Indonesian by Chairani (2023) through forward–backward translation ($\alpha = .920–.960$) rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The scale consists of 15 items assessing five dimensions of religiosity: intellectual, ideological, public practice, private practice and religious experience (e.g, “How often do you pray spontaneously when inspired by everyday situations?”). These items measure the frequency of religious activities as well as confidence in religious beliefs.

Social support was assessed using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) by Zimet, et al. (1988), adapted into Indonesian by Sulistiani, et al. (2022) ($\alpha = .85$) rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). This scale contains 12 items covering three sources of support: family, friends and significant others, each represented by four items (e.g, “I get the emotional help and support that I need from my family”).

In this study, researchers collected data by distributing questionnaires through social media. The questionnaire distributed was in the form of a Google Form, which included informed consent and several scale items that must be completed by respondents meeting the criteria. In addition to distributing via social media, the researchers also visited several student boarding schools for data collection. Only respondents who give their consent on the informed consent form will be included

in the study. The research procedures, instruments, and data collection process had obtained ethical approval from the Faculty of Psychology, Islamic University of Indonesia. Ethical clearance was granted through the official letter numbered 2597/Dek/70/DURT/S. Ket/XI/2025 and ensured that the study met ethical standards in conducting research involving human participants.

This study applied a quantitative correlational research design with moderation analysis to examine the moderating role of gender in relationships between religiosity, social support and academic stress among *mahasantri* in Yogyakarta. Data were analyzed using Jamovi software version 2.3.28 and IBM SPSS Statistics 25. Before conducting the correlation and regression analyses, several assumption tests were performed, including normality, linearity, heteroscedasticity and multicollinearity tests, to ensure that the data met the requirements for multiple regression analysis. The Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) was conducted by entering the independent variables, the moderator and their interaction terms into the regression model. The values of R^2 , F and ΔR^2 were obtained by comparing models with and without the interaction terms, indicating the extent to which gender contributed as a moderator. This procedure allows the examination of whether adding the interaction terms improves the model's ability to explain academic stress.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 206 participants who were *mahasantri* in Yogyakarta. There were 83 male participants and 123 female participants. Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires through social media and also by visiting several student Islamic boarding schools in Yogyakarta. The participants in this study were from several public and private universities in Yogyakarta who were active students in their second to tenth semester. The respondents involved in this study ranged in age from 18 to 26 years old. The majority of participants in this study were 20 years old, with a total of 67 students (32.5%). The youngest participant in this study was 26 years old, with a total of 1 (0.5%) student. The participants in this study were predominantly in their early 20.

To determine the categorization for each variable, the researcher used the hypothetical scores of the research data, which included the maximum, minimum and mean scores. Based on these hypothetical scores, the researcher used them as a reference to classify the variables into three hypothetical categories as table 1 below,

Table 1

Categorization of Each Variable

Variables	Category	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Academic Stress	Low	$18 < X < 42$	24	11.7%
	Moderate	$42 \leq X \leq 66$	162	78.6%
	High	$X > 66$	20	9.7%
Religiosity	Low	$15 < X < 35$	2	1.0%
	Moderate	$35 \leq X \leq 55$	4	1.9%
Social Support	High	$X > 55$	200	97.1%
	Low	$12 < X < 28$	4	1.9%
	Moderate	$28 \leq X \leq 56$	46	22.3%
Total			206	100%

Based on the results of the academic stress categorization in table 1, the majority of respondents were at a moderate level of academic stress, totaling 162 people (78.6%). A total of 24 respondents (11.7%) fell into the low academic stress category, while 20 respondents (9.7%) were classified as having high academic stress. These findings indicate that the majority of students experience academic stress at a moderate level.

Based on the results of the categorization of religiosity levels in the table above, it is known that the majority of respondents had a high level of religiosity, namely 200 (97.1%) participants. The rest were classified as having a moderate level of religiosity, namely 4 (1.9%) participants and those with a low level of religiosity were 2 (1.0%) participants. These results indicated that the majority of students have a high level of religiosity.

Based on the results of the categorization of social support levels in the table above, it is known that the majority of social support levels of participants in this study were in the high category, namely 156 respondents (75.7%). A total of 46 (22.3%) respondents had moderate levels of social support, and 4 (1.9%) respondents had low levels of social support. The results of this study indicated that the majority of respondents have high levels of social support.

Before testing the hypothesis, researchers conducted several assumption tests to ensure that the data met the requirements for multiple regression analysis. The tests conducted included normality tests, linearity tests, heteroscedasticity tests and multicollinearity tests. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test using Jamovi version 2.3.28 showed that the three variables were normally distributed ($p = .679$; $p > 0.05$). The linearity test using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 showed a linear relationship between academic stress and religiosity ($p = .000$) and between academic stress and social support ($p = 0.014$), fulfilling the linearity assumption. The results of the heteroscedasticity test showed that although the Breusch–Pagan test ($p = .093$) indicated no heteroscedasticity, the Goldfeld –Quandt test ($p = .010$) and Harrison–McCabe test ($p = .021$) indicated heteroscedasticity; thus, the assumption of homoscedasticity was not fully met. Meanwhile, the multicollinearity test showed that both independent variables had a VIF value of 1.21 (< 10) and a tolerance value of .829 (> 0.1), indicating no multicollinearity. Overall, the data met the main assumptions required for multiple regression analysis, except for heteroscedasticity.

The first hypothesis in this study is that there is a negative relationship between religiosity and academic stress among *mahasantri*, while the second hypothesis in this study is that there is a negative relationship between social support and academic stress among *mahasantri* in Yogyakarta. The correlation test was conducted using Pearson's correlation test because the research data were normally distributed. The results of the correlation test in this study can be seen in the following table,

Table 2

Correlation Test

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	<i>r</i>	ρ
Academic Stress	Religiosity	-0.277	< 0.001
Academic Stress	Social Support	-0.161	0.010

Table 2 showed that there is a significant relationship between the dependent variable, academic stress, and the independent variables, religiosity and social support. The results of the correlation test between religiosity and academic stress showed that $p < .001$ ($p < .05$), which means that there was a significant relationship between religiosity and academic stress among *mahasantri*.

in Yogyakarta. The correlation coefficient value between religiosity and academic stress was $-.277$, indicating a negative relationship between academic stress and religiosity. Meanwhile, the correlation test value between the social support variable and academic stress was $\rho .010$ ($\rho < .05$), indicating a significant relationship between social support and academic stress among *mahasantri* in Yogyakarta. The correlation coefficient value between social support and academic stress was $-.161$, indicating a negative relationship between social support and academic stress. Therefore, it can be concluded that the first and second hypotheses in this study are accepted.

Table 3

Results of Multiple Linear Regression, F-Test, T-Test, and Coefficient of Determination

Predictor	Estimate	t	ρ	Stand. Estimate	R	R^2	F (ρ)
Intercept	84.4969	11.198	< 0.001	-	0.282	0.0796	8.78 (< .001)
Religiosity	-0.4222	-3.438	< .001	0.2542	-	-	-
Social Support	0.0757	-0.760	0.448	0.0562	-	-	-

The third hypothesis in this study is that there is a negative relationship between religiosity and social support with academic stress among university students in Yogyakarta. The researcher analyzed whether religiosity and social support can together reduce the level of academic stress among *mahasantri* in Yogyakarta. Based on the results of the multiple regression analysis above, it was found out that the ρ -value was $< .001$ (< 0.005). This indicates that the independent variables, namely religiosity and social support, together have a significant contribution to reducing academic stress levels among male students in Yogyakarta. Based on the results of the regression analysis, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was obtained at $.0796$. This indicates that both religiosity and social support contributed 7.96% to the variation in academic stress, while the remaining 92.04% were influenced by other factors which were not included in the model. The F-test results showed a value of $F = 8.78$ with a significance level of $\rho < .001$, indicating that the regression model was statistically significant. This means that religiosity and social support simultaneously had a significant effect on academic stress. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the regression model as a whole is significant, and therefore the third hypothesis in this study was accepted.

Table 4

Results of Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA)

Model	R^2	Adj. R^2	F	Sig. (ρ)	ΔR^2
Model 1: Religiosity \times Gender	0.217	0.184	7.315	0.0	0.021
Model 2: Social Support \times Gender	0.268	0.237	8.632	0.0	0.033
Model 3: Religiosity & Social Support \times Gender	0.319	0.285	9.471	0.0	0.051

Based on table 4, the first model examined the relationship between religiosity and academic stress, with gender as a moderating variable. The analysis showed that 21.7% ($R^2 = .217$) of the variance in academic stress could be explained by religiosity and gender. The overall model was statistically significant, with ($F = 7.315$, $\rho < .001$), indicating that religiosity had a meaningful contribution in predicting academic stress. However, the change in R^2 ($\Delta R^2 = .021$) suggested that the moderating effect of gender was weak. This means that although religiosity significantly and negatively predicted academic stress, the strength of this relationship did not differ significantly

between male and female students. Therefore, gender does not moderate the relationship between religiosity and academic stress. The second model tested the effect of social support on academic stress, with gender as a moderator. The results revealed that 26.8% ($R^2 = .268$) of the variance in academic stress was explained by social support and gender. The overall model was significant ($F = 8.632$, $p < .001$). However, the interaction term between social support and gender only contributed an additional 3.3% of explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = .033$), which was small and statistically insignificant. These findings indicated that while social support negatively predicts academic stress, the effect is consistent across both male and female students. Thus, gender did not moderate the relationship between social support and academic stress. The third model combined religiosity and social support along with their interaction terms with gender to assess their simultaneous influence on academic stress. The results showed that 31.9% ($R^2 = .319$) of the variance in academic stress could be explained by the combined predictors, with ($F = 9.471$, $p < .001$), indicating that the overall model was statistically significant. However, the inclusion of the interaction terms increased R^2 by only 5.1% ($\Delta R^2 = .051$), suggesting a minimal moderating effect of gender. This implies that while religiosity and social support jointly influenced academic stress, the role of gender as a moderator remains insignificant. Therefore, it can be concluded that the fourth hypothesis in this study was rejected.

Table 5*Correlation of each Dimension from Variables*

Dependent Variable	Dimension of Religiosity	Coefficient Correlation (r)	Significant (p)
Academic stress	Intellectual	-0.061	0.193
	Ideology	-0.271	< 0.001
	Public Practice	-0.131	0.031
	Individual Practice	-0.374	< 0.001
	Ritualistic Experience	-0.206	0.001
Academic stress	Dimension of Social Support	Coefficient Correlation (r)	Significant (p)
	Social Support from Family	-0.252	< 0.001
	Social Support from friend	-0.005	0.472
	Social Support from significant others	-0.111	0.056

In terms of religiosity, the dimension most strongly associated with a reduction in academic stress was individual practice ($p < .001$, $r = -.374$). The ideological dimension ($p < .001$, $r = -.271$) and ritualistic experience dimension ($p = .001$, $r = -.206$) also showed significant negative correlations, though weaker. The public practice dimension had a weak but significant negative correlation ($p = .031$, $r = -.131$). Meanwhile, the intellectual dimension did not show a significant relationship ($p = 0.061$, $r = -.193$). Among the social support variables, only family support showed a significant negative relationship with academic stress ($p < .001$, $r = -.252$). Peer support ($p = .472$, $r = -.005$) and significant others' support ($p = .056$, $r = -.111$) did not show significant relationships.

The results of the study indicated that religiosity has a strong and significant negative relationship with academic stress among university students in Yogyakarta. This means that the higher the level of religiosity, the lower the level of academic stress experienced. This finding is

consistent with Bataineh (2013), who stated that religiosity is an internal factor that influences academic stress, thus accepting the first hypothesis.

Meanwhile, social support also has a significant but weaker negative relationship with academic stress, in line with Yusuf and Yusuf (2020). Thus, the second hypothesis was also accepted. Simultaneously, religiosity and social support contributed to reducing academic stress (the third hypothesis was accepted), with religiosity showing a greater influence than social support. The individual practice dimension is the aspect of religiosity that most strongly reduces academic stress, as it reflects spiritual practices such as prayer, worship and remembrance (Chairani et al., 2023; Pargament et al., 1992). Students with high religiosity tend to use effective religious coping strategies in dealing with academic pressure (Osman & Ahmed, 2021). Religious activities also strengthen spiritual and social security (Rohmadani & Setiyani, 2019).

In terms of social support, family support has the strongest influence compared to friends or significant others (Ansya & Susanti, 2023). Family support provides a sense of security, comfort, and enhances psychological well-being (Yumika & Marheni, 2023). The emotional warmth from family also helps students feel loved and confident (Yumika & Marheni, 2023). This finding is supported by Khoerani et al. (2024), who state that both religiosity and social support can improve psychological well-being. Religiosity plays a role in emotional regulation, while social support provides tangible assistance in dealing with problems.

However, of the two, religiosity contributes more significantly to reducing academic stress. Mukti and Ansya (2023) showed that social support only affects academic stress by 3.8%, while Orekoya (2025) emphasized the effectiveness of religious coping. Mutiarawati and Lestari (2024) also stated that religiosity is more internal and profound compared to social support, which is external. Spiritual beliefs can be accessed at any time and strengthen mental resilience.

The results of this study indicated that gender does not moderate the relationship between social support and academic stress among university students in Yogyakarta. This means that the effect of social support on reducing academic stress is consistent among both male and female students. These findings are in line with the research by Asensio-Martínez et al. (2023), which showed that social support acts as a protector against stress in general, as well as the research by Karam, et al. (2023), which found out that social support and religiosity help individuals cope with psychological pressure without differences based on demographic characteristics. Both male and female students live and study in the same educational and religious environment, where religious practices, spiritual values and coping norms are shaped by a uniform institutional culture.

The *pesantren* system emphasizes collective worship, daily rituals and spiritual discipline for all students regardless of gender, resulting in a homogeneous religious experience. This homogeneity of religious exposure causes both groups to internalize similar belief structures and coping patterns, such as interpreting stress as a test from Allah (ibtilā') and as a means of tazkiyatun nafs (self-purification). This can shape relatively equal spiritual resilience and emotional regulation between men and women. This explanation is consistent with Rantelili's (2024) findings, which showed that there are no significant differences in academic stress coping strategies based on gender, so that gender does not always determine the form of coping used in an academic context. Meta-analytic evidence suggests that the relationship between religious coping and mental health is complex and context-dependent, thus gender effects are not universally consistent across populations and measures (Cheng et al., 2023).

Thus, the higher the religiosity and social support, the lower the academic stress is. However, religiosity plays a greater role, particularly the individual practice dimension. Meanwhile, in social

support, family support is the most influential aspect. For *mahasantri*, religiosity is not merely a belief system or a set of doctrinal commitments, it serves as a profound source of inner strength that shapes how they think, feel and act in everyday life. In the face of academic, social and spiritual challenges, *mahasantri* tend to actualize their faith values through various religious practices such as prayer (shalat), remembrance of God (dhikr), recitation of the Qur'an and self-reflection (muhasabah). These spiritual activities provide a calming effect and strengthen their sense of connectedness with Allah, who is perceived as the ultimate source of power and control in times of stress.

Religiosity thus functions as an internal coping that helps *mahasantri* regulate their emotional responses and reinterpret stressful experiences from a spiritual perspective. Through the internalization of religious beliefs, they develop qualities such as trust in God (tawakkul), psychological resources that buffer against anxiety, hopelessness and other negative emotions. These faith-based attitudes facilitate emotional regulation, reduce physiological and psychological arousal associated with stress, and promote a more adaptive appraisal of life difficulties.

Furthermore, religiosity provides *mahasantri* with a meaning-making framework that allows them to view challenges not as punishment or misfortune, but as opportunities for self-purification (tazkiyatun nafs) and spiritual growth. This perspective enhances their resilience by fostering a sense of purpose, acceptance and transcendence. In psychological terms, such a belief system contributes to spiritual well-being, supports positive cognitive appraisal and strengthens the individual's capacity for coping effectively with adversity (Aggarwal, et. al., 2023).

Ultimately, religiosity in the life of *mahasantri* acts as both a cognitive and emotional coping resource and a means of interpreting experiences through faith and managing the stress response through spiritual engagement. According to Saleh, et. al. (2024), this integration of spirituality and coping illustrates to what extent religious frameworks can function as protective factors for mental health and psychological resilience among young Muslims in educational and community settings.

This study has limitations. The contribution of religiosity and social support to academic stress is still relatively low, indicating the presence of other factors, such as self-efficacy, emotional regulation, and resilience that have not been studied. Additionally, the duration of residence in the dormitory and the curriculum of student activities have not been explored, despite their potential to influence academic stress. This could be the focus of future research.

CONCLUSION

The findings showed that both religiosity and social support reduce academic stress among *mahasantri*, with religiosity emerging as the stronger protective factor. Religiosity functions as an internal source of resilience by providing meaning, spiritual comfort and a sense of closeness to Allah SWT, while family support serves as an external buffer that offers emotional security when facing academic demands. Moreover, gender does not moderate these relationships, indicating that the positive effects of religiosity and social support operate similarly for both male and female *mahasantri*. These results highlighted the importance of strengthening religious practices and maintaining strong social connections particularly with family as key strategies for reducing academic stress among students living in Islamic boarding schools. For further research, it is also important to differentiate the analysis between various types of dormitories (modern, shalafiyah, NU, tahfidz), considering that each dormitory has different activity patterns and academic demands, which have the potential to cause different levels of stress.

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