



## THE IMPORTANCE OF STRESS MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS: EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS

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### **Abstract:**

The aim of the research was to find out how big a role stress management plays in the stability of students. Where life in various Islamic boarding schools demands that students behave independently and are trained to do several things independently too. The research was conducted at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School using a case study type qualitative research method. Data collection techniques are interviews, observation and documentation. The results of the research show that students who are predominantly teenagers are very vulnerable to mental health disorders. This is because the students are still in the learning process with a quite busy schedule. The role of foster carers in providing assistance to students greatly influences the development of the students' condition, especially in Mental Health. Several activities and policies are carried out by central and regional Islamic boarding school administrators to implement stress management for students in the hope that students will continue to participate in all Islamic boarding school activities well.

**Keywords:** *Stress Management, Islamic Boarding Schools, and Mental Health of Santri*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Stress management is the process of managing pressure or mental burdens that can affect a person's well-being (Rinawati 2023). It involves efforts to identify, understand, and respond effectively to situations or factors that cause stress. Stress management aims to help a person cope with stress in a healthy and productive way, without harming physical or mental well-being (Salam et al. 2023). The stress management process can involve a variety of approaches. This may include developing self-awareness of sources of stress, using effective coping strategies, and changing negative thought patterns. In addition, it is important to maintain a balance between work, personal life and rest time. Stress management is also a process that involves conscious efforts to manage and reduce the impact of pressure or stressors in daily life (Khadijah and Indriastuti 2023). Stress can come from a variety of sources, such as job demands, relationship problems, uncertainty about the future, or traumatic events. The goal of stress management is to help someone respond more effectively to these challenges without sacrificing their mental and physical well-being (Asri and Arisandy 2023).

In this stressful and dynamic world, humans are often faced with various challenges that can trigger stress in various aspects of their lives (Hapsari et al. 2023). Stress, as a natural response to physical or mental stress, can have a significant impact

on an individual's well-being. Therefore, stress management becomes something that is not only relevant, but also essential in efforts to maintain balance and well-being (Mardia 2023). The present era has brought humans into a fast and complex flow of life, with demands and pressures that grow along with the progress of the times. In this context, stress becomes a loyal companion for most individuals, creating a dynamic that can affect physical and mental well-being (Alawiyah 2020). Stress management, as a response to this complexity, has emerged as an increasingly important focus of study for understanding and application in everyday life (A. N. Rahmawati, Putri, and Sumarni 2021). Stress, as a response to pressure or challenges, not only affects energy and motivation levels, but can also touch psychological and physical dimensions simultaneously. Therefore, the sustainability of individual well-being requires the adoption of effective strategies to manage and respond to stress wisely (Adiyono 2020).

The World Health Organization (WHO) explains that mental health is a condition of well-being that is recognized by individuals, and in which there are abilities to manage the burden caused by thoughts or stress in daily life in a reasonable manner (Sari et al 2020). Simply put, an individual can work productively and generate interactions with others and play a good role in the environment. Mental health is not only a bad influence on well-being in life, mental health is also very influential in the emergence of various diseases such as causing a person to easily feel weak, dizzy, migraines, indigestion, pain. muscles, and heart palpitations (Lidiana and Gati 2021). Stress is also often characterized by difficulty sleeping at night (insomnia), the body continually shaking, feet feeling cold and sweaty, dry mouth, difficulty swallowing things, and decreased sexual desire. On the other hand, if a person has good mental health, he can carry out and carry out activities productively and use his potential to the maximum. Apart from that, he is also able to think positively and clearly when faced with various kinds of problems that befall him (S. Rahmawati, Firmiana, and Hadiansyah 2021). This will lead him to become a better person in responding to problems and also solving problems well. A healthy mentality is also very good for living a social life. People with healthy mental health can communicate better, are easy to understand in the way they convey it, are easy to get along with, and have healthy friendships. are also more able to make good contributions to friends, communities or people around them (Kurniawati and Setyaningsih 2022).

Stress management in Islamic boarding schools is a holistic approach that is integrated into the daily lives of the students (Surya et al. 2020). Stress management is not only considered as a response to certain situations, but rather as an integral part of character formation and spiritual education in Islamic boarding schools (Makiyah and Putra 2020). As a traditional Islamic educational institution, Islamic boarding schools place stress management as the main element in shaping students' personalities (Uyyun 2020). In a scientific approach, Islamic boarding schools teach that stress is not something that must be completely avoided, but rather a reality of life that can be faced and processed wisely (Nasikhin 2024). Therefore, students are trained to have high self-awareness of potential sources of stress and to develop appropriate coping strategies. Education in Islamic boarding schools includes religious, moral, and ethical aspects, all of which contribute to effective stress management (Khanah and Rahayu 2023). The students are taught to view stress as a test or trial that can be overcome with steadfastness and trust in God. In this context, worship, such as prayer, dhikr and recitations, is considered a spiritual means to calm the soul and overcome stress (KHOTIMAH 2021).

Stress Management is also given special attention at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School, because the number of students exceeds five thousand students, requiring the management, both central and regional administrators, to implement Stress Management among students. This aims to answer all the problems that occur in the daily lives of santri, such as bullying, boredom in participating in activities, and several problems faced by introverted santri. Stress management is a special concern because students are required to take part in all activities that have been determined by the Islamic boarding school administrators. The format of Islamic boarding school

activities is based on religious activities, including activities of the nature of bataniyyah, 'amaliyyah, and activities that are skills development, all of which are carried out regularly. This has an impact on the mental condition, thoughts and heart of the students while participating in Islamic boarding school activities. Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School places stress management on the foundation of in-depth spiritual education. The students are taught to see every challenge in life as a test that can be faced with faith and fortitude. Daily worship, such as congregational prayers, reading the Koran, and dhikr, are the main means of calming the soul and reducing spiritual tension. Apart from that, self-awareness education is also a key element in stress management. Students are encouraged to clearly understand the sources of stress in their lives and to develop a deep understanding of themselves. Through self-reflection and spiritual guidance, they learn how to deal with stress with an attitude of patience and acceptance.

Stress management at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School also pays attention to physical aspects. Light sports activities, such as morning exercises or taking a leisurely walk in nature around the Islamic boarding school, are part of the daily routine to relieve physical tension. This Islamic boarding school understands that good physical health can contribute to resistance to stress. Several research efforts related to stress management have been carried out. Darmayanti and Daulay (2020) stated in their research results that showed that the experimental group had higher happiness than the control group. This difference was proven to be significant with the effect of stress management training on student happiness being 0.163 or 16.3%. Sinaga and Puspitasari (2023) in their article also stated that the research results show that the majority of stress management training participants are 70% women, 20 years old (60%), Christian (80%), high school graduates (90%), parents paid for education. (70%) and living with parents or boarding 40% and found six themes of stress management carried out by nursing students in undergoing mixed learning, namely studying alone, time management, looking for a place with good signal, doing hobbies, looking for a support system, and self-motivation . It is hoped that the mixed learning method can increase student learning satisfaction, become a reference and consideration in determining learning methods and strategies in realizing Independent Campus Learning Freedom. Altika and Susilawati (2023) also said in their article about the results of a literature review which showed that effective work stress management contributed to increasing employee performance. Key findings include the impact of stress management on employee productivity, motivation and well-being. The study also emphasizes the important role of organizations in creating a work environment that supports effective work stress management. Several factors that influence the effectiveness of managing work stress include social support, work autonomy, recognition and appreciation, task relief, and organizational justice.

Pryastuti, Jamrizal, and Musli (2023) stated that the higher the level of knowledge of organizational members, the easier it is to follow changes. An effective organization will make planned changes to all devices and systems, structure, procedures, culture, quality of human resources and business strategy. If there is a mismatch between the system and the environment, it will create stressful conditions for both members and leadership. A condition that can cause stress in the workplace is the actual physical working conditions, such as heat, cold, light levels and social density. A person will experience high stress if their socio-economic status is low, which is represented by a combination of economic status as measured by income, social status as assessed by education level, and also employment status as assessed by position. The task demands that are the main stressor are overload. Meanwhile, Suparmi, Theojaya, and Winata (2023) stated that the research results showed that the working hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted. The  $r$  value is 0.833 which shows a significant positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and stress management in students. This means that the positive abilities of spiritual intelligence and the stress management dimension are driven by spiritual intelligence abilities. The meaning of this relationship is that the higher the spiritual intelligence, the better the students'

stress management. On the other hand, the lower the spiritual intelligence, the worse the students' stress management.

The current research update is the application of stress management carried out in Islamic boarding schools and Islamic boarding schools, where in general the daily life of the students is regulated by a schedule of activities from when they wake up until they go back to sleep. This is clearly different from the life of students at school and the life of employees in companies, because previous research focused on employees and students so the difference between current research and previous research is the research object. Life in Islamic boarding schools has its own characteristics so it is worth researching.

The aim of the research is **THE IMPORTANCE OF STRESS MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN Islamic Boarding Schools: EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS**, namely to find out that the role of stress management on the mental health condition of students has a significant influence. The mental health condition of students has the potential to have quite big problems because they are entering an independent learning process with the assistance of administrators which is very different from the assistance of their parents at home. Another aim of the current research is to identify the stress management process at the Nurul Jadid Islamic boarding school for several students who have different stress patterns, each with an effective pattern so that the implementation of stress management can be optimal or not. This also refers to modern-based Islamic boarding schools with Islamic boarding school origins covering all of Indonesia.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses a qualitative research method, namely a research method that uses descriptive data in the form of written or spoken language from observable phenomena. The reason researchers use this method is because this method has the advantage of being able to directly present the nature of the relationship between the researcher and those being studied, and is easy to adapt to reality which has multiple dimensions. The researcher uses a case study type of research, where the researcher will explore a phenomenon and collect information in depth and detail using various data collection procedures over a certain time period. Apart from that, this type of research focuses intensively on one particular object and studies it as a case. In this study, the primary data source was obtained from the results of the researcher's interviews with informants, namely the head of the BK/WA division of the central Islamic boarding school, the head of the regional foster carer and several administrators and members of the foster carer, using a quota sampling technique and determining the sources to be researched. Apart from interview techniques, researchers used secondary data sources through observation of archives and several documents owned by related parties. The steps in obtaining data for this research activity use three methods, namely interviews, observation and documentation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The research was carried out in several central dormitories and one of the satellite dormitories, namely the Jalaluddin Ar-rumi (G) area, where several activities were held aimed at maintaining the mental health stability of students. Several policies also lead to the implementation of stress management for students and are expected to be able to help students maintain physical and mental health while living in Islamic boarding schools.

Foster guardians have an important role in guiding and caring for students in the Islamic boarding school environment. Foster guardians act as companion figures who have responsibility for several aspects of the students' lives (Fitriyah 2021). In terms of academics, guardians help monitor the students' learning progress. They are involved in preparing independent study schedules, providing support to overcome learning difficulties, and providing motivation so that students remain focused on education. Apart from that, the role of morals and ethics is also the focus of foster



carers. They are responsible for teaching religious values, providing moral direction, and providing guidance in carrying out daily life in accordance with Islamic principles.

Foster carers also participate in managing the students' time. They help organize study time, worship, and other activities to achieve an optimal balance between religious education and daily activities. In the psychological aspect, foster carers act as emotional companions. Foster carers become a place for students to confide in, provide psychological support, and help overcome personal problems that students may face. Character development is also the responsibility of foster carers. They help shape personality, responsibility, self-discipline and attitudes in accordance with the teachings of the Islamic religion. Foster carers work together with the school or Islamic boarding school to ensure that the students receive optimal education. Communication with teachers and school staff is an important part of supporting the development of students. Apart from the educational aspect, foster carers also provide financial and logistical support to the students. They are responsible for ensuring and arranging that daily needs, educational costs and other requirements are met.

The application of psychological management at the Nurul Jadid Islamic boarding school, there is a system of foster carers who are the main actors in carrying out stress management for students and are the administrators who know best about the condition of the students. Because the basic function of foster carers at the Nurul Jadid Islamic boarding school is to accompany the students for 24 hours from when the students wake up until the students go back to sleep. This shows that the role of foster carers in maintaining the mental health stability of students is very significant. In the life of students, students often experience moods or emotional states that are prone to changes, such as students in the first two days of each week tend to have a good mood because the day before the first day, or during the students' holidays, the students indirectly has refreshed their mental condition. They do sports, play, or take complete rest such as chatting casually for quite a long time. It's different when students enter the third to sixth day where the tendency is to be in a less good mood. In this phase, students usually prefer to do activities that are less useful and have the potential that students will experience poor mental health and have the impact of doing something negative.

Ustadz Muhammad Zainullah, one of the foster guardian coordinators at the boys' dormitory said that foster guardians have an important role in maintaining the mental health stability of students in the Nurul Jadid Islamic boarding school environment. Foster guardians function as emotional protectors and psychological supports for students. In this role, foster carers create strong emotional bonds with students, provide a safe place to talk about feelings, and listen attentively. Foster guardians are not only figures who respond to problems, but also play a proactive role in preventing and maintaining the mental stability of students. They understand the pressures and challenges that students may face in the context of Islamic education, such as academic burdens, spiritual demands, and the dynamics of Islamic boarding school life. In carrying out their functions, foster carers guide students in developing stress management strategies and provide moral support. They are a source of inspiration, help students understand positive values, and provide a healthy outlook on difficult situations.

Foster carers also play a role in helping students build adaptation skills and mental resilience. They provide guidance on how to deal with change, manage expectations, and develop a positive attitude towards challenges as they arise. In addition, the consistent and supportive presence of foster carers helps create a comfortable atmosphere in the Islamic boarding school environment. By observing changes in behavior and paying attention to group dynamics, foster carers can detect potential mental problems early and provide assistance as needed. Ustadz Muhammad Kholel, as the central BK/WA administrator, stated that foster carers at Islamic boarding schools have a very crucial role as the front guard in maintaining the mental well-being of students. They not only function as daily supervisors, but also become important figures who accompany and provide emotional support to the students,

forming deeper relationships with each individual. First of all, Ustadz Kholel continued to say that foster carers have an important role in detecting changes in behavior or signs of stress in students. Through daily interactions, they can feel whether there are changes in the students' mood, motivation, or social interactions. This allows them to respond more quickly and provide assistance if needed. Apart from that, foster carers also act as loyal listeners. They create a safe space for students to talk about their feelings, concerns or personal problems. In this process, foster carers not only listen, but also provide support without judgment, creating trust and comfort for students to share.

In its implementation, the central BK/WA management regulates the issuance of special regulations for foster carers including their authority, SOP and main duties. This aims to ensure that in carrying out guardianship management, foster carers are able to understand the duties and objectives of guardianship in Islamic boarding schools. Next, the BK/WA management regulates the number of students who will be looked after, because the number of students at the Nurul Jadid Islamic boarding school is quite large, so it is necessary to arrange the grouping of foster carers to achieve the target of guardianship that has been set. According to Ustadz Faizur Rofiq Lutfil Huda, one of the heads of the men's dormitory area, said that ideally each foster guardian would accompany 5 students, however this number could change because the Islamic boarding school's need for foster guardians is quite large, while the availability of foster guardians is insufficient. This can have an impact on the mental health stability of students and become a problem that must be resolved by the BK/WA administrators.

NO	FOSTER GUARDIAN	FOSTER STUDENTS
1	USTADZ A	FOSTER STUDENTS 1
		FOSTER STUDENTS 2
		FOSTER STUDENTS 3
		FOSTER STUDENTS 4
		FOSTER STUDENTS 5
2	USTADZ B	FOSTER STUDENTS 1
		FOSTER STUDENTS 2
		FOSTER STUDENTS 3
		FOSTER STUDENTS 4
		FOSTER STUDENTS 5

Furthermore, the foster carers will hold special activities every week to re-control everything that happens to the foster students, such as physical and mental health, activities at school and Islamic boarding school activities. In the guardianship activities, the foster carers will also provide briefings to all the foster students so that in being mentored by the foster carers, the foster students feel the benefits of mentoring and the foster students feel that they are being cared for in a real way. This is quite important considering that when they are teenagers, they want intense assistance from both their older siblings and their parents.

Devotional activities are a form of self-introspection experience which aims to stimulate thinking, spiritual growth and develop life values (Zulkhairi 2023), especially for teenagers. Meditation not only includes reflection on personal experiences, but also encourages deeper understanding related to moral values, empathy, and the meaning of life. Devotional activities are often held in a calm and supportive environment, such as a prayer room, activity hall, or even outdoors. Teenagers are invited to reflect on various aspects of their lives, involve themselves in the process of self-knowledge, and explore the values they hold. Devotionals can also include spiritual elements, by inviting teenagers to reflect on their connection to something larger, such as God, the universe, or the moral principles that underlie their lives. This activity provides an

opportunity for them to explore the dimensions of spirituality and build connections with higher values.

Devotional activities at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School are held regularly in the Jalaluddin Ar-rumi boys' dormitory which is directly led by K. Muhammad Al-fayyadl. This activity is carried out after the Maghrib prayer until after the Isha' call to prayer. According to Ustadz Fawwaz Darroni, one of the administrators of the Jalaluddin Ar-rumi hostel, said that this devotional activity was purely on the initiative of the kyai to reflect on everything that had been done by the students. Reflection activities also provide an opportunity for students to introspect themselves with the aim of correcting mistakes that have been made and to maintain positive habits that have been made as well. Additionally, devotional thinking can be a means of forming spiritual connections, which has a positive impact on mental well-being. Through reflection on religious values and moral principles, students can find deeper meaning and purpose in life. Ustadz Fawwaz Darroni continued that devotional activities have a significant positive impact on the mental health stability of students in Islamic boarding schools. Meditation is not just a moment of introspection, but is also a means to strengthen mental well-being through self-understanding, emotional acceptance, and the formation of spiritual values. Reflection provides an opportunity for students to undergo a deeper process of self-knowledge. In silence and calm, they can reflect on their feelings, thoughts, and life experiences. This helps students to better understand their identity, life goals, and identify the values that are important to them in facing life's challenges.

Ustadz Faizur Rofiq Lutfil Huda, Head of the Jalaluddin Ar-rumi Region, stated that in the context of mental health, devotional activities also play a role in strengthening acceptance of emotions. Students are invited to recognize and accept the various feelings they experience without judgment. This process helps reduce stigmatism around negative emotions, creating space for healthy emotional growth. Additionally, devotional thinking can be a means of forming spiritual connections, which has a positive impact on mental well-being. Through reflection on religious values and moral principles, students can find deeper meaning and purpose in life. This can provide mental stability, because a strong spiritual foundation can be a source of calm in facing difficulties. Ustadz Faizur Rofiq also stated that apart from the devotional activities held, the supervisor's representatives also held special meetings between the supervisor's representatives, foster guardians and foster students on a scheduled basis to monitor the students so that the mental health of the students remained stable so that the students were able to learn and receive knowledge well. good and it is hoped that the students will practice it in the future. The Deputy Supervisor will ask the students about their progress in learning at school, obstacles when participating in Islamic boarding school activities, what their eating patterns are and history of illness if any, as well as problems related to the students' individual problems. After he collected data regarding the condition of the students, he immediately gave directions to the guardians of the students concerned to help find solutions and direction for providing intense assistance.

Another purpose of holding devotional activities is as a special time for students to take a break from all the problems they are experiencing. Ustadz Fawwaz Darroni said that devotional activities at Islamic boarding schools provide various benefits for students beyond the aspect of mental well-being. First of all, reflection is a moment where students can escape for a moment from the hustle and bustle of everyday life at the Islamic boarding school. In a calm and serene atmosphere, they have the opportunity to reflect and experience inner peace, helping to reduce stress and anxiety levels. Reflection is also a place to develop critical and analytical thinking skills. When reflecting, students are invited to introspect themselves and delve more deeply into their thoughts. This process opens up space for them to evaluate their values, beliefs, and outlook on life, honing sharper thinking skills.

In addition, reflection provides students with the opportunity to increase their emotional intelligence. Through a better understanding of feelings and emotions, they

can better manage interpersonal relationships, strengthen social connectivity, and develop better communication skills. Devotional activities can also contribute to moral and ethical development. In an atmosphere of introspection, students can reflect on their actions and decisions, helping to form better character and values that are in line with the religious and moral principles taught at the Islamic boarding school. Apart from individual benefits, reflection also has a positive impact on social dynamics among students. The process of reflection and conversation that emerges from this activity can build solidarity and togetherness between them, creating a supportive environment and gathering support for each other.

## CONCLUSION

Foster guardians have an important role in guiding and caring for students in the Islamic boarding school environment. Foster guardians act as companion figures who have responsibility for several aspects of the students' lives. In terms of academics, guardians help monitor the students' learning progress. They are involved in preparing independent study schedules, providing support to overcome learning difficulties, and providing motivation so that students remain focused on education. Apart from that, the role of morals and ethics is also the focus of foster carers. They are responsible for teaching religious values, providing moral direction, and providing guidance in carrying out daily life in accordance with Islamic principles. The application of psychological management at the Nurul Jadid Islamic boarding school, there is a system of foster carers who are the main actors in carrying out stress management for students and are the administrators who know best about the condition of the students. Because the basic function of foster carers at the Nurul Jadid Islamic boarding school is to accompany the students for 24 hours from when the students wake up until the students go back to sleep. This shows that the role of foster carers in maintaining the mental health stability of students is very significant.

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