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## Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Qanaah-Based Coping Intervention to Improve Psychological Well-Being in Islamic Boarding School Students: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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# Evaluating the Effectiveness of the *Qanaah*-Based Coping Intervention to Improve Psychological Well-Being in Islamic Boarding School Students: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to assess the success of *qanaah* coping as a training approach to improve the psychological well-being of students. *Qanaah* in Islam is a disposition of accepting and finding contentment in the results of one's endeavours, while eschewing sentiments of discontent and inadequacy. The participants in this study were eight students demonstrating diminished psychological well-being attributable to maladaptive thought habits. The study utilised a one-group pretest-posttest design, implementing cognitive restructuring via *qanaah* coping inside a group counselling framework. The study employed a psychological well-being scale with 26 reliable items to assess the intervention's efficacy. The instrument had substantial dependability, evidenced by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.898. Given that the significance value exceeded 0.05, the instrument was considered acceptable. The results indicated a t-score of -5.767 and a significance level of 0.001, which is below 0.05, signifying statistical significance. The mean psychological well-being score improved from 60.685 in the pre-test to 109.105 in the post-test, resulting in the null hypothesis being rejected. The *qanaah* coping technique was determined to be beneficial in enhancing the psychological well-being of students in Islamic boarding schools.

**Key Words:** Coping *qanaah*; Psychological well-being of new students; Islamic boarding schools

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## INTRODUCTION

As residential educational institutions, Islamic boarding schools have one feature that sets them apart from other educational institutions (Habiburrahim, et al., 2022). The defining traits in question are the ideals of Islamic boarding schools that shape the lives of social contact between kiai, ustadz (teacher), and santri (student). (Ma'rufah et al., 2014). The development of Islamic Boarding School from the 16th century became a center for learning religious knowledge with a unique learning method and full of traditional values (Bruinessen, 1995). The book's development from the 16th to the 19th century accompanied the changes at the Islamic Boarding School. If in the past, education in Islamic Boarding Schools placed tradition as a big project, nowadays education in Islamic Boarding Schools must be able to answer the challenges of modernity. Globalization and advancement are two sides of the same coin that has invaded residential schools. This provides an unusual problem for Islamic Boarding Schools. A future Islamic Boarding School education proposal that combines tradition and innovation. This indicates that future Islamic Boarding School curricula will be modernized while being rooted in

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tradition. On the one hand, Islamic boarding schools must uphold their traditions as "original" or "indigenous" Indonesian institutions (Barton, 1997). However, with all of the items they offer, Islamic Boarding Schools cannot resist globalization and modernization.

Islamic boarding schools are educational institutions in which there is an effort to increase faith and piety to Allah SWT, develop proper scientific knowledge, and serve religion, society, and the state (Subekti, 2018). So that in the implementation of learning activities, students are taught the noble values of Islamic Boarding School which are applied to all lines of the life of students. This gives the students' personality that is different from those of students in other educational institutions.

These individual personality differences cannot be separated from how the domination of the cultural values that shape them (Halomoan, et al., 2023). Essential values for the dominant behavior in human life, thus studying group behavior include (1) instrumental values and terminal values; (2) intrinsic value and extrinsic value; (3) personal values and social values; and (4) subjective value and objective value (Budimansyah & Komalasari, 2011) the form of Islamic Boarding School culture is determined by how the system of values, beliefs, assumptions, and norms are implemented in all forms of activity in the Islamic Boarding School (Muhith, 2018) Islamic Boarding School is one of the educational institutions with a dormitory system where the internalization of values will be easy to do because all activities are centralized, scheduled, well-monitored, all student activities have been arranged in such away. Schools with a boarding system can also improve student wellbeing by synergizing all school components to strengthen services in helping students (Heyeres et al., 2019). In addition, school arrangements and control of factors that affect students internally and externally can be improved by boarding schools so that staff interactions with students, families, and mental health areas can be controlled (McCalman et al., 2020). In addition, the social behavior of students in boarding schools is very different; the most striking thing is that at the beginning of the transfer of students from non-boarding schools to boarding schools, there are emotional symptoms and indicators of more significant mental health problems. This research was conducted on transitional students from elementary school to boarding school at the high school level; the results obtained are emotional symptoms and indicators of mental health problems are reduced when the process of students going through some time starting to take part in activities in boarding schools (Mander & Lester, 2017).

Islamic boarding schools shape behavior through religious values. Religious values provide peace strengthen efforts to become a better person (Zainud & Hakim, 2020). So that the development of the Islamic Boarding School program based on the value of religiosity is perfect in schools with religious concepts, and the process of internalizing these values is included in all aspects of the planned agenda (Bahiroh & Suud, 2020). One of the programs that can be prepared is group guidance (Susiati et al., 2019). The expected result is that students have a high understanding of religion and religiosity so that it can affect their character and behavior such as respecting each other in diversity because pluralism has implications for actions that lead to the recognition of freedom of religion, freedom of thought, or freedom to seek information (Nuraini & Nashiruddin, 2021). A well-organized reinforcement of the value of religiosity can change a group's behavior, such as political participation, social conflict prevention behavior, and so on (Vergani et al., 2017).

To change character and behavior, religiosity must manifest and reflect a positive context in every aspect and condition of each person (SALEH et al., 2020). When it is in a negative context, religiosity can change several things in the knowledge system, such as the creative thinking process (Liu et al., 2018) and science learning in which a general measure of religiosity is negatively related to knowledge of science, a relationship mediated in part by the relationship between religiosity and negative attitudes toward science (McPhetres & Zuckerman, 2018). It is essential to distinguish the types of religiosities in the study of religiosity (Bahçekapili & Yilmaz, 2017).

Religiosity is a vast concept and tends to be challenging to define. The explanation leads to its connection with the term "religion." Indeed, religiosity and religion cannot be separated because they both come from the same Latin, *religio*, or *religare*, which means to collect or bind. The term *religio* emerged in English, *religion*, which was translated into Indonesian as *religion* and *religiosity*. One of the problems with new students at Islamic Boarding School, especially in seventh grade, is mental pressure on students about their inability to learn, adapt, and discomfort with new environmental conditions. These thoughts always haunt the students in all their activities so that they cannot develop their potential well in the Islamic Boarding School. The idea that he could not set, the thought of being

uncomfortable, the thought of wanting to go home, wanting to leave the Islamic Boarding School, the Islamic Boarding School would be a barrier to achieving his goals were some of the ideas of the santri which, when analyzed were examples of negative thoughts. These negative thoughts make students who are not free from pressure or mental problems. This refers to the inability of students in Islamic boarding schools to accept themselves and their past lives (self-acceptance), self-development or growth (personal growth), and the belief that their lives are meaningful and have a purpose (purpose). In life, one possesses the characteristic of positive interactions with others (positive relationship with others), the ability to successfully control one's life and surroundings (environmental mastery), and the ability to select one's own actions (autonomy).

One of the factors that influence psychological well-being is religiosity. Several studies state the relationship between religiosity and psychological well-being, including research (Argyle, 2013) which says that religiosity helps individuals maintain individual mental health during difficult times. In addition, Najati (2005) states that religious or religious life can help humans reduce anxiety, anxiety, and tension. Adams and Gullotta 1983 (Desmita, 2009) indicate that religion gives a moral framework within which a person may compare his actions. Religion can help to regulate behavior by explaining why and for what a person is here. Religion may give a sense of comfort and safety, particularly for youths searching for their identity. Thouless (2000) also mentions that no one can develop religious attitudes in isolation from the brothers in our environment. Frankl (Logoterapi, 2007) also explains a spiritual dimension in humans besides the physical and psychological dimensions. Individuals can find the meaning of psychological well-being by realizing values derived from religion. Spirituality and religiosity are positive predictors of individual well-being. Operational construction of the moderating effect of any belief on the positive relationship between spirituality/religiosity and personal well-being (Villani et al., 2019).

Coping qanaah is one type of positive religious coping. The selection of qanaah as one of the positive copings on the negative thoughts of students because qanaah is one of the predictive values developed by the Sumber Payung Islamic Boarding School Sumenep. Positive religious coping methods reflect a secure relationship with transcendent powers, a sense of spiritual connectedness to others, and the wonderful world (Jones, 2020).

## METHOD

### Participants

This study employs a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design. The intervention, in the form of the coping qanaah technique, was administered to the experimental group. The level of psychological well-being was measured both before and after the intervention. The participants in this study were eight students from an Islamic boarding school in Sumenep who were identified as having low psychological well-being.

### Instrumentation

The data collection instrument used was a psychological well-being scale consisting of six aspects: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The scale had previously undergone validity and reliability testing. Based on the validity test results, 42 items were found to be valid. The reliability test produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.898, indicating high reliability, as the value exceeded the accepted threshold.

### Procedures & Data Analysis

The treatment in the form of a coping qanaah technique is given to the experimental group, and the level of psychological well-being is measured before and after the treatment is given. From the data collection results, it was found that there were eight students who had low psychological well-being. Based on the results of the pretest data, the subject was given treatment in the form of coping qanaah which was included in the cognitive restructuring strategy, with the following stages:

### *Rationalization*

At this stage, it is explained about the principles, objectives, counseling procedures, and the duties and obligations of the counselee and counselor.

### *Identify the Problem of the counselee in a problem situation*

At this stage, the counselor explains the counselee's irrational thoughts that result in low students' psychological well-being. Thoughts always interfere with the counselee in all learning activities and daily activities.

### *Introduction to the Qanaah Coping*

This stage introduces the meaning of qanaah to the counselee, where qanaah is one of the characteristics of the prophet Muhammad SAW, one of the values developed at the Sumenep Umbrella Islamic Boarding School. In addition, the counselee is taught to operationally define the form of the qanaah value that he can learn.

### *Exersice Qanaah coping*

After the counselee can operationalize the meaning of qanaah in his life, the counselee learns to make positive sentences using the operational purpose of qanaah.

### *Reinforcement*

Reinforcing what has been done by the counselee is a form of the counselor's appreciation for what the counselee has done and makes this a motivation to change his mind.

The data analysis technique used was paired sample t-test. This was done because the pretest and post-test data had met the parameter assumptions; namely, the data were normally distributed and homogeneous. The data was stated to have a significant difference of  $p \leq 0.05$ . Data was represented by mean  $\pm$  SD. All statistical analysis using SPSS software for windows version 21.

## **RESULTS**

Based on the pre-test results, the average psychological well-being score was 60.86, while the post-test score increased to 109.13, with a total of eight participants. The standard deviation (SD) for the pre-test was 5.19, and for the post-test was 19.55. Descriptive analysis indicated a substantial increase in the average level of psychological well-being following the intervention. Furthermore, the results of the paired sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores ( $p \leq 0.001$ ). These findings suggest that the qanaah coping strategy was effective in enhancing the psychological well-being of new students at the Islamic boarding school.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the *qanaah* coping strategy was effective in enhancing the psychological well-being of new students at the Islamic boarding school. Psychological well-being, as conceptualized in this study, includes six key aspects: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. A significant improvement was found between pre- and post-test scores, indicating that cognitive restructuring through *qanaah* can serve as a potent tool for cultivating adaptive thinking and emotional regulation among students transitioning into boarding school life.

The choice of *qanaah* as an intervention is deeply rooted in the cultural and religious context of Islamic boarding schools, or *pesantren*. The term *santri*—commonly used to refer to students in Islamic

boarding schools—is etymologically traced back to the Sanskrit word *sastri*, meaning "literate" or "one who reads," and to the Indian term *shastri*, referring to those who study sacred texts. While these linguistic origins highlight Indonesia's long-standing multicultural influences, the meaning of *santri* in modern Islamic education reflects a synthesis of religious devotion, discipline, and moral development. In fact, some interpretations in Islamic pedagogy view *santri* as an acronym for four Arabic letters—sin, nun, ta', and ro'—each representing values that a student is expected to embody.

Psychological challenges among new *santri* often arise due to adjustment stress, homesickness, academic pressure, and internalized negative thoughts. These conditions, if left unresolved, can hinder personal growth, academic performance, and social integration. To address this, the current study implemented a cognitive restructuring strategy rooted in Islamic teachings, specifically through the application of *qanaah*, which emphasizes contentment and trust in divine provision. As stated in the Qur'an, "...it may be that you dislike a thing and it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing and it is bad for you. Allah knows, while you do not know." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 216). This verse underpins the philosophical foundation of *qanaah*, promoting patience and acceptance in the face of hardship.

*Qanaah* is one of the prophetic values integrated into the curriculum and culture of Islamic boarding schools such as Sumber Payung in Sumenep. The boarding school's educational philosophy fosters the development of three core values: *iman* (faith), *ilmu* (intellect), and *amal* (social responsibility). Prophetic education in this context follows a humanistic approach that aims to nurture moral character, critical thinking, and spiritual depth. Its implementation follows a structured process of planning, organization, execution, and evaluation, built upon four key foundations: *iman* (faith), the Qur'an, prophetic traditions, and knowledge (Fauzi & Kamilah, 2021).

The relevance of *qanaah* as a coping strategy is further supported by empirical findings from broader literature. Religiosity and spirituality have been identified as protective factors against symptoms of depression and anxiety in various populations, including medical students (Kuhlman et al., 2019). Other studies have highlighted that the role of religiosity extends to shaping consumption behavior (Dali et al., 2019), strengthening work ethics (Noegroho & Wulansari, 2020), and increasing prosocial values such as honesty and self-control (Chourou, 2020). Among *ulama*, the combination of religiosity, spirituality, and *qanaah* is strongly correlated with emotional well-being (Murtaza & Bashir, 2020). Within the *pesantren* context, religiosity is not only an internalized belief but also a lived experience that manifests in daily behaviors, discipline, and interpersonal relationships (Zainud & Hakim, 2020).

The practical application of *qanaah* in this study was reflected in students' internal dialogues and self-statements such as, "I am grateful for the opportunity to study," or "Bismillah, I will try to enjoy and accept everything as a form of gratitude." Such affirmations not only reframe negative thoughts but also promote emotional resilience. This is consistent with prior research that found *qanaah* helps reduce consumerist tendencies (Rahayuningsih, 2016) and, when paired with social support, contributes to improved well-being and heightened spirituality (Sedek, 2017). Furthermore, Islamic-based interventions have shown promise in supporting mental health, with literature reviews indicating their efficacy in alleviating psychiatric symptoms (Sumarni, 2019).

In conclusion, this study adds to the growing body of literature emphasizing the value of culturally and religiously embedded interventions in enhancing psychological well-being. The integration of *qanaah* as a positive coping mechanism not only aligns with Islamic boarding schools' spiritual mission but also offers a culturally congruent framework for promoting emotional resilience among *santri*. As *pesantren* continue to serve as vital institutions for both religious and psychological development, embedding values like *qanaah* into student support programs offers a promising direction for future educational and therapeutic practices.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the *qanaah* coping strategy has been proven effective in enhancing the psychological well-being of new students at Islamic boarding schools. Utilizing the full potential of Islamic boarding schools, particularly by developing and internalizing their religious and prophetic values, offers a promising alternative for student support and guidance. Therefore, further research is

warranted to deepen the exploration and reinforcement of the unique educational and spiritual resources embedded within Islamic boarding schools.

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