

A Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support Model for Promoting Learning Well-Being in Islamic Boarding Schools

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Abstract

Student mental health has become a critical issue in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) due to students' exposure to continuous academic, social, and residential demands that may lead to anxiety, homesickness, burnout, and declining learning motivation. Although many pesantren implement educational mentoring practices, the pedagogical mechanisms through which these practices support students' mental health remain insufficiently conceptualized. Existing studies predominantly explain student mental health from psychological and counseling perspectives, with limited attention to Tarbiyah as a pedagogical framework for promoting learning well-being. Therefore, this study aims to develop a Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support Model and examine its contribution to promoting students' learning well-being in an Islamic boarding school. This study employed a qualitative case study design at Pondok Modern Assalam Sukabumi, Indonesia. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving school leaders, student affairs officers, homeroom teachers, musyrif, mudabbir, and students. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña through open, axial, and selective coding. The findings reveal that student mental health support is implemented through a multi-layered mentoring system integrating pedagogical care, social support, character education, and Islamic spirituality within preventive, curative, community-based, and spiritual intervention strategies. The model contributes to five indicators of learning well-being: inner peace, learning motivation, academic improvement, healthy social relationships, and discipline grounded in pesantren values. This study contributes a conceptual framework that positions Tarbiyah as the philosophical and pedagogical foundation for student mental health support, thereby extending the discourse on mental health promotion in Islamic residential education.

Keywords: *Student Mental Health; Tarbiyah; Islamic Boarding School; Learning Well-Being; Pedagogical Mentoring.*

INTRODUCTION

Creating a conducive learning environment is one of the fundamental prerequisites for successful educational outcomes. Such an environment is not merely characterized by the availability of learning facilities, discipline, and well-organized educational activities, but also by psychological conditions that enable students to feel safe, comfortable, respected, and motivated to learn. In recent years, increasing attention has been devoted to student well-being as educational paradigms have increasingly recognized well-being as an integral component of educational quality. Learning well-being is regarded as a condition that enables students to engage optimally in learning activities, develop their full potential, and experience meaningful and positive learning processes.¹ Furthermore, students with higher levels of self-efficacy who experience effective instructional practices tend to demonstrate better academic achievement ²

Within the context of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), learning well-being has become an increasingly important issue due to the distinctive characteristics of students' daily lives compared with those in conventional educational institutions. In addition to participating in formal learning activities, santri reside in boarding facilities where they are continuously exposed to academic, religious, social, and disciplinary demands throughout a twenty-four-hour educational environment. Although the boarding school system offers numerous advantages in fostering character development, strengthening Islamic values, and cultivating positive habits, previous studies have shown that residential education also presents various challenges, including adjustment difficulties, homesickness, peer conflicts, academic pressure, physical and emotional exhaustion, and declining learning motivation.³ Without an adequate mentoring system, these challenges may negatively affect students' learning experiences and their engagement in educational activities.

This study contributes to the literature in three important ways. First, it reconceptualizes student mental health in Islamic boarding schools from an individual psychological concern into a pedagogical phenomenon embedded within the Tarbiyah system, thereby extending the discourse beyond conventional psychological and counseling perspectives. Second, this study develops a Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support Model grounded in empirical evidence from the pesantren context, providing a conceptual model that explains how multi-layered pedagogical mentoring supports students' mental health. Third, the study advances the concept of learning well-being by integrating Islamic educational philosophy, pedagogical care, social support, and spirituality into a holistic framework for promoting students' mental health and well-being in residential Islamic education.

From a pedagogical perspective, however, research on santri well-being remains relatively limited. Educational processes within pesantren are fundamentally built upon intensive interactions between students and various educational actors, including kyai (Islamic boarding school leaders), ustadz (teachers), homeroom teachers, musyrif (dormitory mentors), dormitory administrators, and fellow students. These relationships function not only as channels for knowledge transmission but also as mechanisms for character formation, personality development, and continuous guidance in addressing various life challenges. Within the Islamic educational tradition, this educational

¹ Victoria Laura DeSensi, "Embedding Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Design to Support College Student Well-Being and Learning Outcomes: A Review of the Relevant Literature," *Journal of the National Organization for Student Success* 1, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.61617/jnoss.25>.

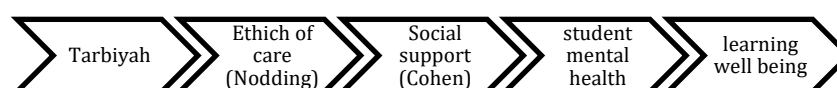
² Maria-Jose Lera et al., "Effective Educational Practices and Students' Well-Being: The Mediating Role of Students' Self-Efficacy," *Current Psychology* 42, no. 26 (2023): 22137–47, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03266-w>.

³ Jaziela Huwaida et al., *Social Support as a Form of Stress Coping Mechanism among Students Facing Social Problems in Islamic Boarding Universities*, 2025.

process is conceptualized as tarbiyah, which emphasizes nurturing, mentoring, guidance, and the holistic development of students' potential.⁴

Within the philosophy of Islamic education, Tarbiyah is viewed as a holistic process of nurturing students' intellectual, spiritual, moral, emotional, and social development. Al-Attas emphasizes that the primary aim of Islamic education is the cultivation of *adab*, shaping individuals with balanced character and ethical responsibility. Unlike contemporary psychological approaches that primarily address student mental health through individual counseling or therapeutic interventions, Tarbiyah positions students' well-being as an educational outcome developed through continuous nurturing, moral formation, and caring pedagogical relationships. While Tarbiyah provides the philosophical foundation of this study, Noddings' Ethics of Care explains how caring relationships between educators and students become the pedagogical mechanism for fostering supportive learning environments. Complementing this perspective, Social Support Theory explains how these relationships generate emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal support that strengthens students' mental health. Accordingly, this study adopts a conceptual framework positioning Tarbiyah as the overarching educational philosophy that operates through pedagogical care and social support to promote student mental health and ultimately enhance learning well-being in Islamic boarding schools.

Figure 1: illustrates the conceptual framework underlying this study



Within the philosophy of Islamic education, Tarbiyah is understood as a holistic process of nurturing students' intellectual, spiritual, moral, emotional, and social development. Al-Attas argues that the primary aim of Islamic education is the cultivation of *adab*, shaping individuals with balanced character and ethical responsibility. In the pesantren context, this philosophy is operationalized through continuous guidance, character formation, and caring relationships provided by ustadz, musyrif, homeroom teachers, and dormitory administrators. Rather than viewing student mental health solely as an individual psychological issue, the Tarbiyah approach positions it as an educational outcome fostered through pedagogical care, value internalization, and social support. Accordingly, this study conceptualizes Tarbiyah as a pedagogical approach that promotes student mental health and learning well-being within Islamic boarding schools.

Previous studies have examined student well-being from different perspectives.⁵ demonstrated that religiosity contributes to students' mental health; however, their study primarily explained psychological associations without examining educational processes.⁶ emphasized resilience in helping students adapt to boarding school life but did not investigate the pedagogical

⁴ Abdul Jabar Idharudin and Balkis Nur Azizah, "Transformasi Karakter Religius Santri Melalui Halaqah Tarbiyah: Analisis Peran Murabbi Dan Internalisasi Nilai 5M Wahdah Islamiyah Di Pesantren Tahfidz: Transforming Religious Character through Halakah Tarbiyah: The Role of Murabbi and the Implementation of the 5M," *AL-QIBLAH: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 6 (2025): 697–712.

⁵ Bagas Rahmatulla and Cindy Thalia, "Hubungan Religiusitas Dengan Kesehatan Mental Pada Populasi Dewasa Muda Muslim Di Indonesia," Articles, *Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi MIND SET* 14, no. 02 (2023): 151–62, <https://doi.org/10.35814/mindset.v14i02.4895>.

⁶ Ratu Darojatun Nisa et al., "Studi Kasus Resiliensi Dan Manajemen Kepribadian Santri Dalam Meningkatkan Produktivitas Di Pondok Pesantren Salafy Miftahus Sholawat," *Jurnal Konseling Dan Psikologi Indonesia* 2, no. 1 (2026): 116–24.

mechanisms that cultivate resilience. ⁷ highlighted the role of counseling services in supporting students' adjustment, yet focused mainly on individual counseling interventions. ⁸ found that social support reduces students' stress, although the study did not explain how such support is systematically generated within the pesantren educational system. Collectively, these studies conceptualize student mental health predominantly from psychological and counseling perspectives, while limited attention has been devoted to Tarbiyah as an educational philosophy that structures caring relationships and mental health support within pesantren.

Despite growing evidence regarding the importance of religiosity, resilience, counseling, and social support for students' mental health, little is known about how Tarbiyah operates as a pedagogical mechanism that systematically supports student mental health and promotes learning well-being in Islamic boarding schools. Moreover, no conceptual model has yet been developed to explain how multi-layered mentoring within the pesantren educational system contributes to these outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to: investigate how Tarbiyah is operationalized as a pedagogical approach to student mental health support within the pesantren system, analyze the pedagogical mechanisms through which Tarbiyah contributes to students' learning well-being; and develop a Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support Model grounded in empirical evidence from an Islamic boarding school.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the implementation of a Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support Model in promoting the learning well-being of santri at Pondok Modern Assalam Sukabumi, West Java. The pesantren was purposively selected because it has implemented a structured Tarbiyah-based mentoring system involving multiple educational actors, including school leaders, student affairs officers, homeroom teachers, and dormitory mentors, making it an information-rich case for examining the pedagogical mechanisms of student mental health support. A case study approach was chosen because it enables an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon within its real-life context. ⁹

Data were collected between April and June 2025 through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement, experience, and responsibilities in implementing the Tarbiyah-based mentoring system. The participants included the head of the boarding school, who provided information on institutional policies; officers from the Student Affairs Division, who were responsible for coordinating student mentoring and intervention; homeroom teachers and musyrif (dormitory mentors), who accompanied students in their daily academic and residential activities; and selected santri who had directly experienced the mentoring process and were able to reflect on its influence on their learning well-being.

Data were collected over a four-month period through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their roles, responsibilities, and direct involvement in implementing the Tarbiyah-based mentoring system. The study involved eight participants, consisting of one boarding school leader, two teachers, one musyrif (dormitory mentor), two mudabbir (dormitory

⁷ Mochamad Ikbal, "LAYANAN KONSELING INDIVIDU DALAM PENYESUAIAN DIRI SANTRI BARU DI PONDOK PESANTREN MODREN ZAMZAM INTEGRATED ISLAMIC SCHOOL," *Universitas Islam Negeri Prof. KH Saiduddin Zuhri*, 2022.

⁸ Huwaida et al., *Social Support as a Form of Stress Coping Mechanism among Students Facing Social Problems in Islamic Boarding Universities*.

⁹ Ismail Sheikh Ahmad et al., "Doing Qualitative Research for Beginners: Basic Underlying Steps and Related Issues," *An-Najah University Journal for Research-B (Humanities)* 39, no. 12 (2025): 1091–108.

administrators), and two santri who had directly experienced the mentoring process and were able to reflect on its contribution to their learning well-being. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face using an interview guide developed from the study's conceptual framework. Each interview lasted approximately 45–90 minutes, was audio-recorded with participants' informed consent, and was accompanied by field notes documenting contextual information and preliminary analytical reflections. Participant observation was carried out during classroom activities, dormitory life, mentoring sessions, and daily religious programs to examine how Tarbiyah-based mentoring was implemented in practice. The observations focused on interactions among educators and students, mentoring practices, and students' behavioral responses within their natural educational setting. To complement and triangulate the interview and observation data, document analysis was conducted by reviewing institutional documents, including student mentoring guidelines, boarding school regulations, organizational structures, mentoring reports, and student development records. Data collection continued until data saturation was achieved, as indicated by the recurrence of similar information across participants and the absence of substantially new them.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail were employed throughout the study. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing¹⁰. The analysis began with open coding to identify meaningful concepts from interview transcripts, field notes, and institutional documents. These initial codes were then grouped through axial coding to establish relationships among categories related to Tarbiyah-based mentoring, pedagogical care, social support, student mental health, and learning well-being. Finally, selective coding was conducted to integrate these categories into a coherent conceptual explanation, resulting in the development of the Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support Model. Throughout the analytical process, the researchers continuously compared data across sources and methods to ensure consistency and credibility.¹¹ In addition, researcher reflexivity was maintained through reflective memos and regular discussions among the research team to minimize personal bias and ensure that interpretations remained grounded in the participants' experiences. The relationships among the identified themes were subsequently synthesized into a conceptual model explaining how Tarbiyah-based pedagogical practices operate as a mechanism for strengthening student mental health and promoting learning well-being in Islamic boarding schools.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Development of a Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support System

The interview findings revealed that although Pondok Modern Assalam Sukabumi does not have a formal mental health service unit, it has established a comprehensive Tarbiyah-based mentoring system integrated into its student care framework. This system is collaboratively implemented by the boarding school leadership, the Student Affairs Division, homeroom teachers, musyrif, and mudabbir, enabling the early identification and educational support of students experiencing psychological challenges such as anxiety, academic stress, burnout, homesickness, and social conflicts.

¹⁰ Sarath S. Kodithuwakku, "Qualitative Methods for Policy Analysis: Case Study Research Strategy," in *Agricultural Policy Analysis: Concepts and Tools for Emerging Economies* (Springer, 2022).

¹¹ Sarah J. Tracy and Angela N. Gist-Mackey, "Qualitative Methods in Organizational Communication," *Organizational Communication Theory and Research* 8 (2024): 85.

The analysis further demonstrated that the mentoring system is fundamentally grounded in the philosophy of Tarbiyah, which is operationalized through the implementation of the Ten Commandments (TENCO), the Five Core Values of the Pesantren (Panca Jiwa Pondok), and the concept of cultivating Bibit Unggul (excellent character). As explained by the boarding school leader:

“The primary foundation is the values embedded in Tarbiyah, or education itself. We guide students to develop positive spiritual, religious, and disciplinary values. Our goal is to cultivate noble character, time discipline, responsibility, and a strong sense of Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah)

These findings indicate that the effectiveness of the mentoring system is not primarily derived from formal psychological interventions but from the continuous internalization of Tarbiyah values through caring educational relationships. Core pesantren values—including sincerity, honesty, perseverance, discipline, responsibility, and resilience are consistently cultivated in students' daily lives, creating a supportive educational environment that strengthens student mental health and promotes learning well-being.

Table 1: The Coding Process for Developing the Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support Model

Interview Excerpt	Open Code	Axial Category	Selective Theme	Contribution to the Conceptual Model
<i>"Landasan utamanya adalah nilai-nilai dalam Tarbiyah... agar santri berakhlak mulia, disiplin, dan memiliki semangat ukhuwah Islamiyah."</i> (Boarding School Leader)	Tarbiyah values; character education ; spiritual guidance; discipline	Educational philosophy	Tarbiyah as the Foundation of Student Development	Establishes the philosophical foundation of the Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support Model.
<i>"Perencanaan melibatkan bagian pengasuhan, wali kelas, pengurus asrama, bahkan pengurus organisasi santri."</i> (Boarding School Leader)	Collaborative planning; shared responsibility; institutional coordination	Organizational collaboration	Multi-layered Mentoring System	Demonstrates that student mental health support is implemented collaboratively through multiple educational actors.
<i>"Kami memanggil anak secara</i>	Personal approach; active	Early intervention	Pedagogical Care	Explains how caring teacher–student

<i>personal... ditanya permasalahannya supaya tidak berlarut-larut."</i> (Homeroom Teacher)	listening; individual mentoring			relationships function as the primary pedagogical mechanism.
<i>"Kalau ada perubahan sifat pada anak tersebut pasti nanti saling koordinasi dengan pengurus rayon atau pengasuhan."</i> (Homeroom Teacher)	Coordination; information sharing; referral	Integrated support	Social Support System	Shows that student support is strengthened through coordinated collaboration among educational stakeholders.
<i>"Biasanya perubahan terlihat dari keaktifan, perilaku, dan nilai akademik anak."</i> (Homeroom Teacher)	Behavioural improvement; academic progress; active participation	Student development outcomes	Learning Well-being	Indicates the educational outcomes of the mentoring process.
<i>"Kita tidak langsung memberi sanksi, tetapi menggiring, mendekati, dan menasihati anak."</i> (Head of Student Affairs)	Empathy; counselling; persuasive guidance; non-punitive approach	Emotional guidance	Pedagogical	Illustrates that mental health support is delivered through caring educational interactions rather than punishment.
<i>"Alurnya dari pengurus rayon atau OPPM ke wali kelas atau pengasuhan, lalu ke pimpinan."</i> (Head of Student Affairs)	Referral mechanism; hierarchical reporting; case management	Structured intervention	Multi-layered Mentoring System	Explains the referral mechanism for handling increasingly complex psychological problems.

"Perubahan dilihat dari sikap sehari-hari karena kehidupan pesantren berlangsung selama 24 jam." (Head of Student Affairs)	Continuous observation; behavioural monitoring; daily supervision	Continuous evaluation	Learning Well-being	Demonstrates continuous monitoring as part of evaluating students' psychological recovery.
"Kalau melihat anak ada masalah, kami tanya ada masalah apa." (Dormitory Leader/Mudabbir)	Observation; emotional awareness; personal communication	Early detection	Early Identification of Student Mental Health Problems	Represents the first stage of identifying students requiring mentoring support.

Observational findings indicate that the student mental health support model is implemented through coordinated leadership, continuous monitoring, and staged interventions based on the complexity of students' problems. The system operates through four interconnected mentoring layers: (1) mudabbir (dormitory administrators), (2) homeroom teachers, (3) the student affairs division, and (4) the school leadership.

The first layer, mudabbir, provides the closest daily support by living with the santri in the dormitories, enabling the early identification of emotional and behavioral changes through continuous observation.

The second layer, homeroom teachers, serves as parental figures in students' academic and socio-emotional development by identifying academic and social difficulties and providing individualized guidance through personal and empathetic mentoring.

The third layer, the student affairs division, coordinates intensive interventions while also implementing preventive measures, including psychological assessments during student admission. The mentoring process emphasizes Tarbiyah principles by prioritizing compassionate guidance over punitive measures. As one participant explained:

"Not every mistake should be punished. We must reach their hearts, guide them, and help them understand why they should avoid repeating the same mistakes. The essence of education is transforming those who are not yet good into better individuals, and helping those who are already good become even better. Education is not merely about delivering knowledge; it is about reaching the person."¹²

For cases involving family-related issues, the student affairs division collaborates with parents and, when necessary, refers students to external mental health professionals, reflecting the integration of traditional pesantren values with contemporary psychological practices.

The fourth layer, the school leadership, serves as the highest decision-making authority by establishing institutional policies, supervising the mentoring system, and ensuring coordination through structured reporting and regular evaluation meetings.

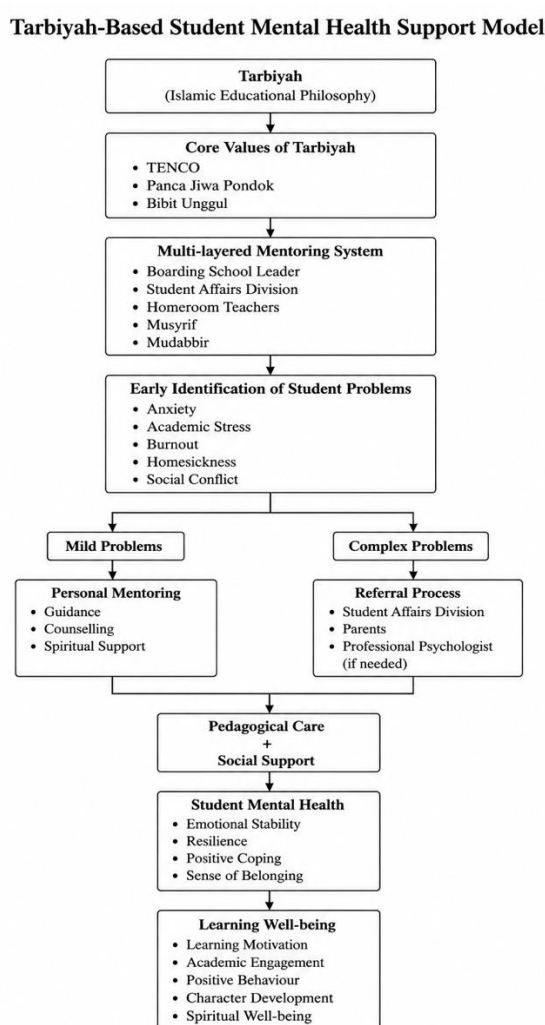
¹² P1, "03/W-RR/31/I/2026," January 31, 2026.

As described by one of the participants:

“Coordination is conducted through both written and informal reports. Every division is required to submit weekly reports on the 8th, 15th, and 22nd of each month, followed by a comprehensive report at the end of the month. The school leaders review and sign these reports as part of the monitoring and coordination process”¹³

The reporting mechanism for handling student problems follows a hierarchical pathway beginning with early detection by the mudabbir, followed by individualized mentoring by homeroom teachers, structured intervention by the student affairs division, and, when necessary, policy decisions made by the school leadership. However, this process is not linear; rather, it operates as a continuous cycle characterized by ongoing evaluation, coordination, and feedback at every stage.

Figure 2 : 4 Layer Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support Model



¹³ Ridho, “03/W-RR/31/I/2026.”

The conceptual framework illustrates the systematic implementation process of the student mental health support model at Pondok Modern Assalam Sukabumi, beginning with the institutional structure and extending to its practical implementation in the field.

Implementation of the Student Mental Health Support Model

The third finding concerns the indicators of students' learning well-being as the primary outcome of the Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support Model. Rather than being predetermined from existing theoretical frameworks, these indicators were inductively derived from the qualitative data through the processes of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. During open coding, participants' descriptions of students' behavioural, emotional, academic, and social changes were identified as meaningful units. These codes were subsequently grouped into broader categories through axial coding and synthesized into five interrelated indicators of learning well-being during selective coding. Table 1 presents the analytical process through which the indicators were generated from the empirical data.

Table2: student well being indicator

No	Indicator	Field Evidence
1	Peace and Inner Calm The students feel more at peace after receiving personal guidance	anxiety and pressure have decreased
2	Enthusiasm and Motivation to Learn	Class participation increased, no longer gloomy, more enthusiastic in pondok activities.
3	Academic Improvement:	Academic grades tend to improve after emotional issues are addressed thru mentoring.
4	Healthy Social Connections The ability to interact with peers has improved	no longer feeling alone in the pesantren.
5	Discipline and Value Adherence	Behavioral changes toward being more disciplined, having noble character, and being active in collective worship.

The improvement in students' learning well-being was consistently confirmed by participants across different levels of the Tarbiyah-based mentoring system. The boarding school leader (P1) explained that students' progress was evaluated through changes in behaviour, academic performance, and participation in boarding school activities.

“The indicators include behaviour, academics, and students' participation. We assess how their attitudes, academic achievement, and participation develop throughout their education.” (P1)

Similarly, the dormitory mentor (MD1) reported that continuous mentoring enabled students to become calmer, more confident, and emotionally supported.

“We continue accompanying them until they feel that someone still cares about them and they are no longer facing their problems alone.” (MD1)

This finding was also confirmed by a student (S1), who reported that the guidance received from the mudabbir and homeroom teacher helped restore emotional stability and learning motivation.

“I became more enthusiastic and felt much calmer because my problems were resolved after receiving advice and guidance.” (S1)

These findings indicate that students' learning well-being was strengthened through coordinated support provided by school leaders, teachers, dormitory mentors, and students themselves within the Tarbiyah-based mentoring system.

The interview and observation data further revealed that the Tarbiyah-based mentoring system operates through four complementary approaches, namely preventive, curative, community-based, and spiritual approaches. Each approach serves a distinct function in supporting students' mental health and collectively contributes to the development of learning well-being, as presented in Table 2.

Table 3: Tarbiyah Approach for student mental health

Approach	Program	Objective
Preventive	Tarbiyah, Religious studies, Discipline training	Preventing psychological problems
Curative	Individual counseling, personal approach	Handling problematic students
Community	Peer support, mentors, administrators.	Building a supportive learning environment thru the dormitory system
Spiritual	Dhikr, self- reflection, worship guidance	Strengthening life values

The findings further indicate that students experiencing mild psychological problems are initially supported through preventive Tarbiyah practices, including personal mentoring, religious guidance, and character education. When these interventions are insufficient, cases are referred through a structured mentoring system involving the Student Affairs Division, boarding school leaders, parents, and, when necessary, professional psychological services. This tiered intervention reflects the collaborative nature of the Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support Model in promoting student mental health and learning well-being.

The Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support Model as a Holistic Approach in Islamic Boarding Schools

The findings indicate that although Pondok Modern Assalam Sukabumi does not have a formal mental health service unit, it has developed a Tarbiyah-based mentoring system integrated into its student care framework. Within the pesantren context, student mental health is viewed not merely as an individual psychological concern but as an educational outcome cultivated through the internalization of spiritual values, discipline, ukhuwah, and personal responsibility.

These findings are consistent with the concept of Islamic holistic education, which views education as a balanced process of developing students' intellectual, spiritual, moral, emotional, and social dimensions. Al-Attas argues that the primary aim of Islamic education is the cultivation of adab¹⁴, while Al-Faruqi emphasizes the integration of revealed and acquired knowledge Al-Faruqi¹⁵, and Nasr highlights the importance of spiritual development as the foundation of human well-being Nasr, S. H. (1989). Collectively, these perspectives position education as a holistic process that nurtures both character and psychological well-being.

The present study extends these perspectives by demonstrating that Tarbiyah is operationalized through a structured mentoring system involving school leaders, teachers, musyrif, mudabbir, and peer support. Rather than relying solely on psychological counselling, the pesantren promotes student mental health through pedagogical care, character formation, spiritual guidance, and supportive educational relationships, making Tarbiyah a practical model of Islamic holistic education for fostering learning well-being.

The findings also support the Whole School Approach to Mental Health promoted by WHO, UNESCO, and UNICEF, which emphasizes that student mental health should be fostered through a coordinated effort involving school leadership, teachers, students, families, and the wider community rather than relying solely on individual counselling services. This approach highlights the importance of supportive school policies, positive relationships, safe learning environments, and clear referral mechanisms in promoting students' well-being. The Tarbiyah-based mentoring system identified in this study reflects these principles through the collaborative involvement of school leaders, the Student Affairs Division, homeroom teachers, musyrif, mudabbir, and peer support in preventing, identifying, and responding to students' psychological challenges. However, the present findings extend the Whole School Approach by demonstrating that Islamic educational values—such as adab, spirituality, discipline, and ukhuwah—serve as the philosophical foundation that integrates pedagogical care and mental health promotion within the pesantren context.¹⁶

Multi-Layered Mentoring as a Social Support System

The findings reveal a four-layered mentoring system involving mudabbir, homeroom teachers, the student affairs division, and the school leadership. This structure provides hierarchical mental health support according to the complexity of students' psychological and social problems.

¹⁴ Fery Darmawan et al., "The Thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas on Ta'dib and Ta'lim in Contemporary Islamic Education," *AFKARINA: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 11, no. 1 (2026): 76–88, <https://doi.org/10.33650/afkarina.v11i1.15312>.

¹⁵ Muchlas et al., "The Integration of Science and Spirituality: A Comparative Study of the Thought of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Seyyed Hossein Nasr," *Fikrah: Jurnal Ilmu Aqidah Dan Studi Keagamaan* 13, no. 2 (2025): (257–276), <https://doi.org/10.21043/fikrah.v8i1.33916>.

¹⁶ WHO, "Making Every School a Health-Promoting School: Global Standards and Indicators.," World Health Organisation (WHO), n.d., https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-promoting-schools?utm_source=chatgpt.com#tab=tab_1.

Consistent with Social Support Theory¹⁷, the system delivers emotional, informational, instrumental, and esteem support. In this context, mudabbir provide daily emotional support, homeroom teachers offer academic and personal guidance, the student affairs division delivers intensive interventions, and the school leadership provides structural support through institutional policies.

Furthermore, the proposed model represents a community-based approach to student mental health support, in which responsibility for students' well-being is shared among school leaders, teachers, musyrif, mudabbir, and peers rather than being limited to mental health professionals. This finding is consistent with the Whole School Approach to Mental Health, which emphasizes that students' mental health is most effectively promoted through coordinated collaboration among all members of the educational community, supported by positive school policies, caring relationships, and a supportive learning environment¹⁸. Within the pesantren context, these principles are operationalized through the Tarbiyah system, where continuous mentoring, spiritual guidance, and character education are integrated into students' daily lives. Therefore, the present study extends the Whole School Approach by demonstrating that Tarbiyah serves not only as an educational philosophy but also as a pedagogical framework for promoting student mental health and learning well-being in Islamic boarding schools.

The Tarbiyah Approach as a Restorative Educational Approach

The findings show that the Tarbiyah-based mentoring model prioritizes compassionate guidance over punitive measures, reflecting a restorative educational approach that emphasizes students' personal growth rather than punishment.¹⁹ As one participant stated, “Not every mistake should be punished; instead, we must reach the students' hearts.”

The study also highlights the central role of spirituality in supporting students' mental health. Within the Tarbiyah system, spiritual practices such as dhikr, muhasabah, religious guidance, and the continuous internalization of Islamic values are not merely devotional activities but educational processes that cultivate self-awareness, emotional regulation, patience, and trust in Allah (tawakkul). These practices help students reinterpret stressful experiences, regulate negative emotions, and develop psychological resilience when facing academic and social challenges.

From the perspective of Islamic psychology, this developmental process reflects the gradual transformation of the self toward nafs al-muṭma'innah—a tranquil soul characterized by inner peace, emotional stability, optimism, and submission to Allah. Rather than representing an immediate outcome of spiritual practices, nafs al-muṭma'innah emerges through the continuous process of Tarbiyah, in which spiritual development, character formation, and supportive educational relationships work together to strengthen students' mental well-being. This interpretation is consistent with previous studies showing that religious engagement and spirituality contribute to psychological well-being while reducing anxiety, depression, and stress.

Rather than positioning Islamic and contemporary psychological perspectives as separate paradigms, the present findings demonstrate an integrative approach in which Tarbiyah provides

¹⁷ Catherine Schaefer, “Book Reviews : Social Support and Health, Sheldon Cohen and S. Leonard Syme, Eds. Academic Press, Orlando, 1984,” *Health Education Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (1985): 109–12, <https://doi.org/10.1177/109019818501200110>.

¹⁸ World Health Organization, UNESCO, and UNICEF, “Promoting and Protecting Mental Health in Schools and Learning Environments: A Briefing Note for National Governments. Geneva: World Health Organization., 2022, https://www.unicef.org/reports/promoting-and-protecting-mental-health-schools-and-learning-environments?utm_

¹⁹ Tahasak Sahay and Claudia Yuni Pramita, “Rekonstruksi Pemidanaan Bagi Pelaku Anak Dengan Pendekatan Restorative Justice,” *Al-Zayn: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Hukum* 3, no. 5 (2025): 7840–49.
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the philosophical foundation for supporting students' mental health within the pesantren context. This finding is consistent with Harun and Taib (2025)²⁰, who argue that the integration of Islamic concepts into psychological research should begin with the dewesternization of psychological assumptions and continue through the Islamization of knowledge, whereby contemporary psychological theories are reinterpreted within an Islamic worldview. In this study, psychological support is not limited to individual emotional intervention but is integrated with spiritual development, character formation, and caring educational relationships grounded in Tarbiyah. These findings also extend previous evidence demonstrating the positive association between religiosity and mental health among Muslim populations²¹. While previous studies primarily explain religiosity as an individual protective factor, the present study shows how religiosity and spiritual values are systematically cultivated through the Tarbiyah system to promote students' mental health and learning well-being.

The Impact of Mentoring on Students' Learning Well-Being

The study identified five indicators of santri's learning well-being: inner peace, learning motivation, academic achievement, healthy social relationships, and discipline. These findings suggest that students' mental health is closely linked to the quality of their learning experiences.

Table 4: Mapping of the Findings with Learning Well-being and PERMA Well-being Model

Learning Well-being Indicator (Findings)	PERMA Dimension (Seligman)	Learning Well-being Concept	Evidence from the Tarbiyah-Based Mentoring Model
Peace and Inner Calm	Positive Emotion	Emotional well-being	Students became calmer, experienced reduced anxiety and emotional pressure after receiving continuous mentoring and spiritual guidance.
Enthusiasm and Motivation to Learn	Engagement	Active learning engagement	Students showed greater participation in learning activities and became more motivated after receiving pedagogical support.
Healthy Social Connections	Relationships	Supportive social relationships	Continuous mentoring by <i>musyirif</i> , teachers, and peers strengthened students' sense of belonging and social connectedness.
Discipline and Value Adherence	Meaning	Personal growth and value development	Internalization of Tarbiyah values, discipline, and responsibility helped students develop meaning and purpose in their educational journey.

²⁰ Mohd Ferdaus Harun and Maisarah Mohd. Taib, “‘Putting An Islamic Scholar’s Hat on Psychologist’: A Framework for Integrating Islamic Concepts into Psychological Research,” *Asian Journal of Islamic Psychology* 2, no. 1 (2025): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.23917/ajip.v2i1.7812>.

²¹ Rahmatulla and Thalia, “Hubungan Religiusitas Dengan Kesehatan Mental Pada Populasi Dewasa Muda Muslim Di Indonesia.”

Academic Improvement	Achievement	Academic development	Students demonstrated improved academic performance after their emotional and psychological problems were addressed.
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The findings support the concept of learning well-being, which emphasizes that students' well-being extends beyond academic achievement to include emotional well-being, supportive social relationships, engagement in learning, and opportunities for personal growth.²² As presented in Table 3, the five indicators identified in this study correspond closely to the dimensions of Seligman's PERMA Well-Being Model, which has been empirically applied to understand students' well-being in higher education.²³ Peace and Inner Calm reflects the dimension of Positive Emotion, Enthusiasm and Motivation to Learn corresponds to Engagement, Healthy Social Connections represents Relationships, Discipline and Value Adherence aligns with Meaning through the internalization of Tarbiyah values, while Academic Improvement reflects Achievement. This mapping indicates that the Tarbiyah-based mentoring model supports students' well-being across all five dimensions of PERMA. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with Hossain, who argues that students' well-being encompasses positive emotions, supportive relationships, engagement, achievement, and a sense of purpose. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that the Tarbiyah-based mentoring model promotes both students' mental health and learning well-being through an integrated pedagogical and spiritual approach.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that student mental health in Islamic boarding schools should be understood not merely as an individual psychological concern but as a pedagogical outcome fostered through the Tarbiyah system. By examining the implementation of a multi-layered mentoring system in Pondok Modern Assalam Sukabumi, this study proposes a Tarbiyah-Based Student Mental Health Support Model that conceptualizes mental health support as an integrated educational process involving pedagogical care, social support, spiritual development, and character formation.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by extending the discussion of student mental health beyond conventional psychological and counselling perspectives. The proposed model integrates the philosophy of Tarbiyah with Ethics of Care, Social Support Theory, and the Whole School Approach to Mental Health, providing a contextual framework for understanding how Islamic educational institutions can systematically promote students' mental health and learning well-being. The findings also offer an educational interpretation of mental health promotion by positioning Tarbiyah as the philosophical foundation through which supportive relationships, spiritual values, and educational practices operate as interconnected mechanisms.

Practically, the model may serve as a reference for Islamic boarding schools and other residential educational institutions in designing comprehensive student mental health support systems that integrate educational, social, and spiritual dimensions into everyday mentoring

²² Saira Hossain et al., "What Constitutes Student Well-Being: A Scoping Review Of Students' Perspectives," *Child Indicators Research* 16, no. 2 (2023): 447–83, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-022-09990-w>.

²³ Melissa K. Kovich et al., "Application of the PERMA Model of Well-Being in Undergraduate Students," *International Journal of Community Well-Being* 6, no. 1 (2023): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-022-00184-4>.
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practices. Rather than relying solely on professional psychological services, the findings suggest that student well-being can be strengthened through collaborative involvement among school leaders, teachers, dormitory mentors, students, and families within an institutional mentoring framework.

This study is limited to a single qualitative case study conducted in one Islamic boarding school; therefore, the transferability of the findings should be interpreted cautiously. Future research is recommended to validate the proposed conceptual model across different pesantren contexts using comparative case studies or mixed-methods approaches, as well as to develop quantitative instruments for measuring the effectiveness of Tarbiyah-based student mental health support.

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