



Resilience in Santri: The Impact of Social Support on the Quran Memorization Journey

Abdullah Azzam Al Afghani ^{1*}, Milcha Fakhria ²

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

² Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang, Indonesia

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Abstract: Santri who attend school and simultaneously memorize the Quran in Pondok Pesantren face greater challenges than their peers. This study explores the forms of social support that can improve the resilience of santri who memorize the Quran. This study used a non-experimental quantitative approach involving 180 students in five Islamic boarding schools in Central Java. Hypothesis testing was conducted using Hierarchical Linear Regression. The results showed that emotional support ($\beta=0.306$, $p<0.01$) and informational support ($\beta=0.237$, $p<0.01$) significantly predicted resilience, while instrumental support did not ($\beta=0.154$, $p>0.05$). Furthermore, social support in the form of friendship increased students' resilience to 42.7% ($R^2=0.427$, $F(1,175)=9.730$, $p<0.001$). These findings demonstrate the importance of peer support, guidance from religious teachers (kyai), and a supportive environment in the process of memorizing the Quran. This study shows that for Quran memorizers, resilience is strengthened through togetherness, guidance, and emotional support that collectively enable them to face spiritual and academic challenges.

Keywords: Resilience; Quran memorizers; Social Support

Abstrak: Santri yang bersekolah dan sekaligus menghafalkan Quran menghadapi tantangan yang lebih besar dibandingkan rekan sebayanya. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bentuk-bentuk dukungan sosial dalam meningkatkan resiliensi santri penghafal Quran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif non eksperimen dengan melibatkan 180 santri di lima pondok pesantren di Jawa Tengah. Uji hipotesis dilakukan dengan Regresi Linear Hierarkis. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa dukungan emosional ($\beta=0.306$, $p<0.01$) dan dukungan informasional ($\beta=0.237$, $p < 0.01$) secara signifikan memprediksi resiliensi, sementara dukungan instrumental tidak ($\beta=0.154$, $p > 0.05$). Selanjutnya, dukungan sosial berbentuk dukungan pertemanan meningkatkan resiliensi santri menjadi 42.7% ($R^2=0.427$, $F(1,175)=9.730$, $p < 0.001$). Temuan ini menunjukkan pentingnya dukungan dari teman sebaya, bimbingan dari kyai, dan

*Corresponding Author: Abdullah Azzam Al Afghani (abdullah_azzam@walisongo.ac.id), Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia.

lingkungan yang mendukung dalam proses menghafal Al-Quran. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa bagi penghafal Al-Quran, resiliensi dikuatkan melalui kebersamaan, bimbingan, dan dukungan emosional yang secara kolektif memungkinkan mereka menghadapi tantangan spiritual dan akademik.

Kata Kunci: Resiliensi; Penghafal Quran; Dukungan Sosial

Introduction

Santri (student who living in a dormitory, under the guidance of a kyai) often face various obstacles throughout their journey because they have to balance spiritual activities and academic commitments in their formal school. This even challenging especially for those who also memorizing the Quran in their programs. Many Quran memorizers face difficulty in memorization, psychological pressure, and temptations to give up. Balancing between these roles can lead to high levels of stress, requiring special effort to maintain motivation and perseverance in the memorization process (Haque, 2018).

In facing such dual-role challenges, Quran memorizers require resilience, which is the ability to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten the viability, function, or development of the system. Resilience is a concept in positive psychology, referring to an individual's mental and emotional strength in the face of adversity (Masten, 2001). Resilience is not only viewed from a psychological perspective, but also from a spiritual one. In Islam, strong resilience can be nurtured through faith and piety, which serve as sources of strength for individuals when encountering life's hardships. Resilience becomes even more decisive for Quran memorizers who are also attending formal education in school. Students with high resilience are generally better equipped to manage stress and overcome both academic and spiritual obstacles (Reivich & Shatté, 2002). This situation poses challenges for student memorizers who must divide their attention between memorizing the Quran in pesantren and fulfilling academic responsibilities in their school. Hence, it is important to explore the key factors that support their resilience, such as spiritual support and social support from their friends and environment.

Quran memorizers often experience ups and downs in internal motivation during their memorization journey. The pressure that comes with these difficulties can be overwhelming, and make them falls burnout. The numerous challenges encountered during this process require the development of skills and abilities to withstand hardship. In such circumstances, Quran memorizers must develop what is known as psychological resilience, the inner strength that enables them to endure adversity and still in committ to their ultimate objective of completing the memorization of the Quran.

Resilience is one of the variables in positive psychology that refers to the phenomenon of individuals who still have good mental health despite experiencing stress and adversity (Javanmard, 2013). Connor and Davidson (2003) describe resilience as a dynamic process for adapting to changes in the various facets of life such as difficulties and distress. Reivich and Shatté (2002) define it as a personality characteristic that moderates the negative effects of stress and promotes adaptation through life's challenges and hardships. Grotberg(2003) emphasizes that resilience comprises an individual's ability to prevent, minimize, or overcome difficult situations, either by improving oneself or by fortifying one's strength to endure harsh conditions.

Some research supports the idea that resilience is not only about enduring difficulties but also involves learning and growing from those experiences. The concept is rooted from an individual's

capacity for psychological flexibility, which allows them to adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining a sense of purpose and direction (Bonanno, 2004). Moreover, for Quran memorizers, spiritual practices and faith seems to serve as a factor that guides people through life challenges and functions as a pathway to resilience and maintaining well-being (Manning, 2014) as spiritual beliefs provide a framework for meaning-making and emotional support (Pargament, 1997). This integration of psychological and spiritual resilience is relevant for individuals who seek to balance the high demands of memorizing the Quran and other life responsibilities.

Furthermore, protective factors such as social support play a key role in shaping the resilience of Quran memorizers. Social support is crucial for maintaining good physical and mental health. Researchers hypothesize that high levels of social support can increase resilience to stress. Masten (2001) stated that strong communal support and personal confidence in facing challenges are the foundation of resilience. For memorizers, these factors play a crucial role in overcoming the difficult obstacles of memorization, while faith and spirituality keep them motivated and focused. Remaining committed amidst adversity truly underpins how resilience leads to sustained success in memorizing the Quran. Continued encouragement from family, friends, and places like Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) has been shown to improve mental health and help them manage stress better (Wu et al., 2021). In essence, these kinds of social networks act as a shield against difficult times, helping people to stick to their goals and bounce back more quickly from failure (Luthans et al., 2006; Masten, 2001; Masten et al., 1990).

Social support refers to the perception or reality of assistance provided by others, which can manifest in various forms. Sarafino and Smith (2017) categorize social support into four primary types: emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and companionship support. These types of support collectively enhance an individual's psychological strength and resilience, particularly in contexts that require sustained effort, such as Quran memorization.

Islam provides specific guidance regarding stress management and strengthening resilience. The concept of *tawakkul*, or complete dependence on Allah after making maximum efforts, is one way to strengthen faith. Likewise, performing acts of worship such as prayer, *dhikr* (remembering Allah), and reading Quran can bring inner peace and increase a person's ability to deal with life's stresses (Haque & Keshavarzi, 2014). In Islam, people who memorize Quran and are able to overcome various trials and tests are promised great rewards in the Hereafter. As illustrated in these verses, Allah (SWT) gives positive rewards to those who show patience and perseverance, providing ease, relief, and ultimately a higher position in the afterlife (Surah Al-A'la verse 8-9; Surah Al-Insyirah verse 5-6; Surah AlBaqarah verse 155; Surah Ali 'Imran verse 195). These individuals are assured of peace and honor in the hereafter as a reward for their steadfastness and trust in Allah (SWT). This divine promise fosters resilience among Muslims, as they understand that their efforts in this world contribute to their ultimate success in entering *jannah* (Paradise), with the grace and blessings of Allah (SWT). The journey of resilience, strengthened by faith, trust in Allah (*tawakkul*), and perseverance, represents a path to personal and spiritual fulfillment (Dzulkifli & Mahudin, 2021).

Based on previous research, individual resilience can be maintained through ongoing support, often defined as protective factors, including the social environment (Wu et al., 2021; Luthans et al., 2006; Masten, 2001; Masten et al., 1990). Other studies have shown that social support from family, friends, and mentors is crucial in helping individuals, especially adolescents, adapt to challenging situations and

maintain psychological well-being (Zautra, Hall, & Murray, 2010). For Islamic boarding school students dedicated to memorizing the Quran, resilience is crucial due to the demands of their dual roles as students and memorizers. Social support can help them persevere in the memorization process and cope with the stress they inevitably experience in this situation.

Most research on resilience and social support focuses on individuals with direct access to family and close friends, often in familiar and comfortable environments (Garmezy, 1991; Werner & Smith, 1992). However, those *santri* live in a unique and diverse cultural environment that requires a high degree of adaptation. Furthermore, *santri* are faced with adherence to rules, structured routines, and prolonged separation from their families. This cultural context differs significantly from conventional educational environments, as students are placed in a strict religious environment with minimal direct parental involvement. These factors create a distinct and unique social ecosystem where resilience is fostered through peer support, guidance from teachers (*kyai*), and the overall boarding school environment, rather than through a common family structure.

The novelty of this study lies in its exploration of resilience within the cultural context of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), where social support mechanisms function differently than in a typical school environment. Because students are often far from their families, the *pesantren* environment must automatically fill the emotional, social, and instrumental support roles that commonly provided by parents and the family environment. This study investigates how resilience is fostered in such an environment, where students are encouraged to rely on friendships and guidance from teachers/*kyai*. Although previous research has highlighted the role of parental support in adolescent resilience (Werner & Smith, 2001; Hunter & Chandler, 1999), research on how resilience develops in adolescents physically separated from their primary caregivers is limited. This study aims to address this gap by examining the social support that emerges within the unique cultural and community environment of Islamic boarding schools, where students are guided to rely on social and spiritual resources as they navigate the challenges of memorizing the Quran.

This study employs a non-experimental quantitative design to examine the effect of social support on the resilience of Quran memorizers. The subjects of this study are 180 Quran memorizers in Central Java who also have dual roles as students, aged between 15 and 19. The participants were selected through convenience sampling, based on accessibility and availability, with five Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) serving as the research sites. The instruments used include a resilience scale adapted from the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) by Connor & Davidson (2003) and a social support scale based on the social support theory by Sarafino & Smith (2017). The resilience scale showed a good reliability coefficient (α) of 0.816 with a total of 21 items, while the social support scale had a reliability coefficient of 0.719 and item discrimination indices ranging from 0.348 to 0.753, totaling 11 items. Hypothesis testing was conducted using linear regression analysis to assess the relationship between aspects of social support and resilience. All analyses were performed using IBM SPSS 22 software on Windows OS.

Results and Discussion

Data Overview

The participants in this study, as shown in Table 1, consisted of 180 individuals from five Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Central Java. The majority of participants were female, with 170 female participants (94%) and 10 male participants (6%). The age distribution of the participants ranged from 15 to 19 years. Most participants were 17 years old (31%), 16 years old (21%), 19 years old (20%), 15 years old (19%), and 18 years old (9%). The duration of Quran memorization range between 0 - 3+ years, 20 participants had been memorizing for less than 1 year, 105 participants for 1-2 years, 28 participants for 2-3 years, and 27 participants for more than 3 years.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

Characteristics	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	10	6%
Female	170	94%
Age (Years)		
15	34	19%
16	37	21%
17	56	31%
18	17	9%
19	36	20%
Years of Memorizing		
< 1	20	11%
1-2	105	58%
2-3	28	16%
>3	27	15%

Assumption Tests

Before conducting the hypothesis test, we performed assumption tests to examine the characteristics of the research variables. The multicollinearity test showed a tolerance value of 0.905 (VIF = 1.1, <10), indicating that there is no multicollinearity. The normality test using Shapiro-Wilk showed p value = 0.977 (>0.05), indicating that the regression model is normally distributed. Additionally, the scatterplot visually demonstrated homoscedasticity in the regression model. The linearity test resulted in a value of 1.43, p = 0.104 (>0.05), indicating that the variables in this model are linear. These results confirm that the assumptions are met, allowing for regression analysis to be conducted.

Table 2. Assumption Tests

Assumption	Value	Results
Multicollinearity	0.905 (VIF = 1.1, <10)	No multicollinearity
Normality	p = 0.977 (>0.05)	Normal distribution
Linearity	1.43, p = 0.104 (>0.05)	Linear

Hypothesis Tests

The hypothesis testing was conducted using hierarchical linear regression, aimed at examining whether the aspects of the Social Support (Emotional Support, Informational Support, Instrumental Support, and Companionship) have an impact on Resilience in Santri. The regression analysis was performed using the Enter method, where predictors were added one by one into the regression model. The results of the hierarchical regression are summarized in Table

Table 3. Summary of Hierarchical Regression

Predictor/s	Resilience		
	b	β	t
Step 1			
Emotional support	2.015	0.306	4.285**
$R^2 = 0.306, F(1, 178) = 18.359***$			
Step 2			
Emotional support	1.397	0.212	2.794**
Informational support	1.438	0.237	3.127**
$R^2 = 0.375, F(1, 177) = 14.522***$			
Step 3			
Emotional support	1.120	0.170	2.165*
Informational support	1.110	0.183	2.272*
Instrumental support	0.615	0.154	1.892
$R^2 = 0.398, F(1, 176) = 11.016***$			
Step 4			
Emotional support	0.811	0.123	1.532
Informational support	0.682	0.113	1.316
Instrumental support	0.493	0.123	1.512
Companionship	0.884	0.194	2.259*
$R^2 = 0.427, F(1, 175) = 9.730***$			

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

In Step 1, emotional support was a significant predictor of resilience ($\beta=0.306, p < 0.01$), accounting for 30.6% of the variance in resilience ($R^2=0.306$), $F(1,178) = 18.359, p < 0.001$. In Step 2, adding informational support increased the explained variance to 37.5% ($R^2=0.375$), and both emotional support ($\beta=0.212, p < 0.01$) and informational support ($\beta=0.237, p < 0.01$) emerged as significant predictors of resilience, $F(1,177) = 14.522, p < 0.001$. In Step 3, the addition of instrumental support further increased the explained variance to 39.8% ($R^2=0.398$), $F(1,176) = 11.016, p < 0.001$. Here, emotional support ($\beta=0.170, p < 0.05$), and informational support ($\beta=0.183, p < 0.05$) were all predictors, but instrumental support was not significant and instrumental support ($\beta=0.154, p > 0.05$).

In the final model (Step 4), companionship was added, increasing the explained variance to 42.7% ($R^2=0.427$), $F(1,175) = 9.730, p < 0.001$. In this model, emotional support ($\beta=0.123, p > 0.05$), informational support ($\beta=0.113, p > 0.05$), instrumental support ($\beta=0.123, p > 0.05$), and companionship ($\beta=0.194, p < 0.05$) contributed to predicting resilience, though only companionship reached statistical significance. This pattern suggests that while each type of support adds some predictive value for resilience, companionship appears to be the strongest and most consistent predictor when all factors are included in the model.

Table 4. Further Analysis

Predictor/s	Resilience		
	F	Sig	Note
Gender	0.819	0.44	n.s
Age	1.716	0.149	n.s
Years of Memorizing	15.80	< 0.001	sig

This research has demonstrated the roles of different types of social support in predicting resilience among students memorizing the Quran in a boarding school context. The findings show that emotional support initially emerged as a significant predictor of resilience, aligning with the notion that students far from their families may benefit significantly from empathy and encouragement from peers (Wong et al., 2006; Rahim & Rosli, 2019). This type of support includes expressions of empathy, understanding, and encouragement. Emotional support is vital for Quran memorizers as it provides comfort and validation, reducing feelings of isolation and emotional distress. When family members or peers show genuine concern and empathy, it strengthens the memorizer's resolve and fosters a sense of belonging (Sarafino & Smith, 2017). In a similar vein, studies indicate that emotional support plays a crucial role in helping students cope with the psychological demands of their academic commitments, particularly in contexts where they are separated from their families (Sari & Supardi, 2020).

Informational support also plays an important role, as guidance and shared knowledge are valuable in the learning environment of Quran memorization. Research shows that informational support can enhance students' confidence and problem-solving skills, helping them navigate complex or stressful situations in educational settings (Kurniawati & Fauzi, 2021; Putri et al., 2020). This type of support fosters a sense of security and preparedness, especially in academic or religious studies, where students benefit from peer-to-peer knowledge exchange (Santoso et al., 2019). However, instrumental support, which involves material or financial aid, appears less relevant in this context, likely because the students' primary needs are met within the boarding school environment, and their focus is on spiritual and educational pursuits rather than material gains (Setiawan & Nugroho, 2021).

Companionship or friendship emerged as the strongest and most consistent predictor of resilience. This finding suggests that students in this unique educational setting rely heavily on the social bonds they form with peers who are also striving toward similar religious and academic goals (Wahyudi et al., 2022; Syahputra & Yusuf, 2020). Since these students spend most of their time away from family, their daily interactions, shared routines, and collective experiences with friends in the dormitory environment provide a critical source of strength and resilience (Fadhilah et al., 2021). Research has shown that companionship in such settings not only promotes a sense of belonging but also helps students develop emotional resilience by building close-knit, supportive friendships (Lestari & Rahayu, 2023).

We conducted a further analysis to examine whether there were differences in resilience among Quran memorizers based on age, gender, and years of memorization. The results, as shown in Table 4, indicate that gender and age were not significant predictors of resilience, with F-values of 0.819 ($p= 0.44$) and 1.716 ($p =0.149$), respectively, both of which were not statistically significant (n.s). However, the years of memorizing the Quran were a significant predictor of resilience, with an F-value of 15.80 and a p-value of less than 0.001. This suggests that resilience levels are significantly associated with the length of time spent memorizing the Quran, while gender and age do not have a substantial impact.

The length of time spent memorizing the Quran can enhance resilience due to the continuous adaptation and mental discipline it requires. Resilience is closely linked to an individual's capacity to adapt to challenges, and the repetitive nature of Quran memorization involves overcoming cognitive demands such as retention, focus, and recall. According to Karatsoreos and McEwen (2013), resilience is shaped by the brain's ability to adapt through processes like allostasis, which achieves "stability through change" in response to environmental stressors. Long-term Quran memorization may activate similar adaptive mechanisms, strengthening neural circuits related to memory and concentration. This sustained mental training promotes stability in the face of stress and builds resilience by fostering neurobiological adaptations associated with prolonged cognitive effort.

Conclusion

Social support and resilience are considered mental health protective factors because they facilitate positive adaptations to adversity. As a positive mental feature, resilience helps individuals counter negative influences of stressors and allows them to cope with adversities or stressful events in a better way, experience fewer negative emotions (Cao et al., 2024).

This research highlights the role of social support in increasing the resilience of santri (students in a boarding school), emphasizing the importance of maintaining close peer relationships as a protective factor against the academic and personal challenges of a *pesantren* learning environment. At the first stage, emotional support emerged as an initial significant predictor of resilience, underscoring the importance of empathy and encouragement in mitigating feelings of isolation. Next, informational support also played a significant role by offering guidance and sharing knowledge, which enhanced students confidence and improved their ability to solve problems. However, instrumental support, such as material aid, had a limited impact, reflecting the self-sufficient and spiritually focused nature of the boarding school context.

Social support is crucial in Islamic teachings. Islam emphasizes brotherhood, solidarity, and mutual care among people. This kind of support can help individuals experiencing life's difficulties overcome their problems through unity and shared faith. This principle is also supported by a hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim: "The believers, in their mutual kindness, compassion, and sympathy, are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds with wakefulness and fever" (Sahih Muslim). Another hadith teaches, "A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. Whoever fulfills the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever brings his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection; and whoever screens a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection" (Sahih Bukhari). The interpretation of this hadith will make students strengthen each other and can foster resilience.

Further analysis showed that resilience was significantly related to the duration of the Quran memorization process. The longer a person memorized the Quran, the more resilient they were. This suggests that prolonged cognitive effort, commitment, and discipline also contribute to increased resilience. In contrast, gender and age did not significantly predict resilience. This suggests that, compared to age and gender, social support and long-term commitment to a noble cause play a greater role in building resilience, in line with Islamic values of brotherhood and mutual support as key components of resilience in this context.

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