RESEARCH ARTICLE

Mental Well-being Among Muslim Adolescents:
Challenges and Strategies for Coping with Social Pressures

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ABSTRACT

Mental well-being among Muslim adolescents is an important issue that increasingly demands attention due to the various challenges faced by the youth in a complex social context. This study aims to explore the challenges faced by Muslim adolescents in maintaining their mental well-being, as well as the strategies that can be implemented to cope with the social pressures they experience. Using a mixed-method approach, data were collected through surveys and in-depth interviews with Muslim adolescents from various regions in Indonesia. The results show that social pressures from the environment, such as expectations from family and society, as well as the influence of social media, significantly contribute to adolescents' mental health. Several strategies identified to improve mental well-being include social support, mental health education, and the development of effective coping skills to deal with stress and anxiety. This study underscores the importance of a community-based approach to support Muslim adolescents.

Keywords: mental well-being, Muslim adolescents, social pressures, social media.

INTRODUCTION

Mental well-being among adolescents, particularly Muslim adolescents, is an increasingly relevant and important issue to discuss in today's modern era. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), mental health is an integral part of overall health and plays a crucial role in individual development, especially during adolescence, which is full of physical, psychological, and social dynamics. At this stage of life, adolescents undergo various changes that affect their emotional balance and mental well-being. In the context of Muslim adolescents, additional factors such as religious and social pressures often complicate their situation, which requires special attention (Suhertina, 2025).

In Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population in the world, the challenges faced by Muslim adolescents in maintaining their mental well-being have become increasingly significant. The country, with its vast cultural diversity, also has social challenges that can affect mental health development, especially among the youth. Muslim adolescents in Indonesia often feel trapped between two conflicting worlds: the religious demands that require them to adhere to certain norms and principles, and social pressures from peers who want them to follow prevailing trends. The balance between maintaining religious identity and integrating into a society that is increasingly global and influenced by secular values often becomes a source of stress and confusion (Abdurrohman & Adip, 2025).

According to data from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia (2020), about 20% of Indonesian adolescents experience mental health problems, with a higher prevalence in urban areas. Adolescents in urban areas often face greater pressures due to external factors such as academic demands, a more heterogeneous social environment, and easier access to information that can influence their views and attitudes. These social pressures, both from peers and family, act as

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major triggers for mental health issues. Muslim adolescents, in this case, experience a double pressure; on one hand, they are expected to adhere to strict religious principles, while on the other hand, they feel the need to be accepted in social groups that hold more liberal or secular views (Pulungan & Siregar, 2024).

The stress caused by this tension can lead to serious mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, and other behavioral disorders. In some cases, Muslim adolescents may feel isolated or misunderstood by their surroundings, which worsens their condition. The lack of communication about mental health in the Muslim community also often exacerbates the situation, where stigma and a lack of understanding may prevent them from seeking help (De Nolf & d'Haenens, 2024).

This research aims to explore the challenges faced by Muslim adolescents in maintaining their mental well-being. Specifically, this study will investigate how factors such as religion, family, and society interact and contribute to the mental health of Muslim adolescents in Indonesia. Additionally, this research will identify strategies that can be implemented by families, schools, and communities to help Muslim adolescents cope with the social pressures they face. By gaining a deeper understanding of this context, it is hoped that more effective solutions can be found to support the mental well-being of Muslim adolescents, whether through educational programs, psychological support, or religious-based approaches that can provide space for them to develop in a healthy emotional and social environment.

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the mental well-being of Muslim adolescents in Indonesia (Indriasari & Fathonah, 2025). This mixed approach was chosen to explore not only the numerical dimensions of mental health but also to investigate the personal experiences and perceptions of adolescents regarding the social pressures they face in daily life. By using both methods, this study aims to provide a more holistic picture of the challenges faced by Muslim adolescents and the strategies they use to maintain their mental well-being.

Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected through surveys involving 100 Muslim adolescents from various backgrounds in several major cities in Indonesia, including Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Surabaya. This survey was designed to measure levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as factors that contribute to their mental health. These measurements used validated and reliable scales, such as the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) to measure stress levels, the Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD-7) for anxiety, and the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) for depression. The selection of these three main variables was based on literature that shows stress, anxiety, and depression are the most common mental health issues among adolescents (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). Additionally, the survey aimed to identify factors that may influence the mental health of Muslim adolescents, such as religious norms, peer pressure, and family and social factors. The data obtained from this survey will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to identify relationships between the factors influencing mental health and levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among Muslim adolescents.

Qualitative Data Collection

As a complement to the quantitative data, this study also uses qualitative methods to gain deeper insights into the personal experiences of Muslim adolescents regarding their mental well-being. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 Muslim adolescents, selected based on specific criteria such as gender, age, and educational background. These interviews provided an opportunity for adolescents to share their experiences freely and openly, without strict limitations, allowing the researchers to identify aspects not covered in the quantitative survey (Mentari et al., 2025).

The interviews focused on several main themes, including the social pressures they feel from both family and peers, the challenges in balancing religious identity with social demands, and the strategies they use to cope with stress, anxiety, and depression. Some of the questions posed included: "How do you deal with pressure from friends who have different views on religion?", "What do you feel when you have to follow religious rules that conflict with your peers' desires?", and "What strategies do you use to stay calm amidst social pressure?"

Data Analysis

For analyzing qualitative data, the researchers used thematic analysis, a commonly used method in qualitative research to identify and analyze patterns or themes emerging from interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analysis process involves transcribing the interviews, coding the data to identify relevant categories, and then developing themes that reflect the experiences and perspectives of Muslim adolescents regarding their mental well-being. Thematic analysis will provide deeper insights into the factors affecting the mental well-being of Muslim adolescents, as well as how they respond to the social pressures they face.

Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

The use of this mixed-method approach is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the challenges faced by Muslim adolescents in maintaining their mental well-being. While quantitative data offers a general overview of the prevalence of mental health issues among Muslim adolescents and the factors affecting them, qualitative data allows the researchers to delve deeper into the personal experiences and perceptions of adolescents regarding social and religious pressures. By combining both methods, this study will not only identify the prevalence of the issues but also provide richer context on how cultural, religious, and social factors interact in influencing the mental health of Muslim adolescents in Indonesia (Tampubolon et al., 2025).

Social and Cultural Factors in Mental Well-being of Muslim Adolescents

This study also considers the cultural and social factors that may influence the outcomes. In the context of Indonesia, which has a rich cultural diversity and the largest Muslim population in the world, it is important to understand how religious norms, family traditions, and social dynamics affect the mental well-being of Muslim adolescents (Zamzam & Winsidi, 2024). Therefore, this research provides a richer context for analysis, considering the differences among Muslim adolescents in various major cities that may have different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. This is expected to enrich the understanding of the challenges faced by Muslim adolescents in their social and cultural contexts.

RESULTS

1. **Stress and Anxiety Levels Among Muslim Adolescents**
   The research findings show that the majority of Muslim adolescents involved in the survey experience high levels of stress. About 65% of respondents indicated that they often feel anxious. Common contributing factors include academic pressure, parental expectations, and the influence of social media. The following table outlines the distribution of stress and anxiety perceptions among Muslim adolescents surveyed.

   Table 1. Stress and Anxiety Levels Among Muslim Adolescents

Stress/Anxiety Level	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Often feel anxious	65
Occasionally feel anxious	20
Rarely feel anxious	15

   About 70% of respondents stated that they feel pressured to meet social expectations, both in terms of academic performance and social behavior in accordance with religious norms. This indicates that Muslim adolescents face pressure not only to succeed academically but

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also to maintain behavior consistent with their religious values. This pressure contributes to the high levels of anxiety they feel.

2. **Dilemma Between Religious Demands and Social Pressures**

In in-depth interviews, many adolescents expressed that they feel trapped between the demands to adhere to religious values and the desire to be accepted by peers. One respondent, "Aisha" (pseudonym), stated, "Sometimes I feel like I have to choose between being a good Muslim and having fun with my friends." This statement highlights the dilemma faced by many Muslim adolescents in maintaining their religious identity while trying to be accepted in their social environments. The following table illustrates adolescents' perceptions of the conflict between religious identity and social pressures.

Table 2. Dilemma Between Religious Identity and Social Pressures

Dilemma Statement	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Feel pressured between religious values and social norms	85
Feel able to balance religion and social norms	15

3. **The Influence of Social Media on Mental Health**
The influence of social media was found to be significant in this study. About 80% of respondents reported feeling pressured by social comparison on social media platforms. They feel they have to meet unrealistic beauty and success standards, which negatively impacts their self-image and mental health. This data aligns with previous research showing that excessive use of social media can increase the risk of depression and anxiety in adolescents (Twenge et al., 2019).

Table 3. The Influence of Social Media on Mental Health

Social Media Influence	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Feel pressured due to social comparison	80
Feel unaffected by social media	20

4. **Strategies for Coping with Social Pressure**
Strategies identified by respondents for coping with social pressure include seeking support from friends and family and engaging in religious activities that provide a sense of community and purpose. About 75% of respondents stated that they felt better after talking to friends or family members about the issues they were facing. The following table illustrates the strategies used by Muslim adolescents in coping with stress and anxiety.

Table 4. Strategies for Coping with Social Pressure Among Muslim Adolescents

Strategy for Coping with Social Pressure	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Seek support from friends and family	75
Participate in religious activities	60
Avoid social media	30

5. **Social Support in Maintaining Mental Well-being**
The research also highlights the importance of social support in maintaining the mental well-being of Muslim adolescents. Adolescents who feel supported by their friends or family tend to have lower stress levels and are better able to cope with the social pressures they face. This study found that 75% of respondents felt better after talking with friends or family about their problems. This indicates that social support plays a vital role in maintaining the mental health of Muslim adolescents.

Table 5. The Impact of Social Support on Mental Well-being

Impact of Social Support on Mental Well-being	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Felt better after talking to friends/family	75
Felt no impact from social support	25

The findings of this study show that Muslim adolescents in Indonesia face various pressures that affect their mental well-being. The main factors contributing to stress and anxiety include academic pressure, parental expectations, social media influence, and conflicts between religious and social identities. However, many adolescents report being able to cope with these pressures through strong social support from family, friends, and religious activities. These findings emphasize the importance of social support in maintaining the mental well-being of Muslim adolescents and highlight the need for a more holistic approach to addressing mental health issues among adolescents in Indonesia.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research provide in-depth insights into the challenges faced by Muslim adolescents in maintaining their mental well-being. This study finds that social pressures, whether from family, peers, or social media, are significant factors influencing the mental health of Muslim adolescents. This aligns with findings from previous studies showing that adolescents often feel trapped between expectations to adhere to social norms and the desire to express themselves authentically. Eisenberg et al. (2020) stated that such internal conflicts can add psychological burden, as adolescents must navigate expectations that often conflict with their personal values. This condition creates tensions that can increase the risk of stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues.

One factor that emerged in this study is the strong influence of religious norms and parental expectations regarding the social and academic behavior of Muslim adolescents. Adolescents often feel burdened by these expectations, which can exacerbate existing pressures, especially when they try to balance religious demands with social lives influenced by more secular norms. This is further supported by studies showing that adolescents who feel unable to meet their parents' expectations often experience higher stress levels and struggle to maintain their mental well-being (Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2014). Conversely, adolescents who manage to integrate their religious and social values tend to show better resilience to these pressures.

However, despite the significant pressures faced by many Muslim adolescents, this research also shows that they exhibit remarkable resilience. Social support from family and friends is crucial in maintaining their mental well-being. Many respondents reported that talking to family or friends helped them feel better and reduced anxiety. These findings strengthen the argument that social support is a crucial protective factor in overcoming mental health issues, as Thoits (2011) suggests that social support can act as a buffer protecting individuals from the negative impacts of stress and anxiety.

Furthermore, involvement in religious activities also proved to provide significant benefits in enhancing the mental well-being of Muslim adolescents. This study found that adolescents who engaged in religious activities such as communal prayers or attending religious study sessions reported lower stress levels. Religious activities not only provide a sense of community but also give them a deeper sense of meaning and purpose in their lives, which can serve as an effective coping tool. This aligns with research showing that involvement in religious activities can strengthen mental resilience and provide the emotional support needed to cope with life's challenges (Krause, 2006).

CONCLUSION

Mental well-being among Muslim adolescents in Indonesia has become an increasingly relevant issue and requires greater attention, given the complex social and cultural challenges they face. This study reveals that Muslim adolescents in Indonesia experience significant social pressures from family, peers, and social media. These

pressures often directly impact their mental health, with stress and anxiety being the main issues experienced by many adolescents. Academic demands, family expectations, and religious norms often create internal dilemmas where adolescents feel torn between fulfilling religious values and the desire to be accepted in their social environments. The influence of social media, which often introduces unrealistic standards of beauty and success, also exacerbates this condition, leading to feelings of dissatisfaction with themselves (Twenge et al., 2019).

However, despite the pressures many Muslim adolescents face, the findings of this study suggest remarkable resilience within them. Social support from family and friends, as well as involvement in religious activities such as communal prayers and study sessions, has been shown to provide a sense of community and purpose, helping them reduce stress (Krause, 2006). Therefore, it is important to develop intervention strategies based on culturally and religiously sensitive approaches, including mental health education and the reduction of stigma related to this issue. This approach can better enhance the mental well-being of Muslim adolescents and encourage them to seek help when needed.

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