



## The Relationship Between Spiritual Intelligence and Mental Health: A Study on Islamic Counseling Services in Higher Education

Sarifatul Lailiyah

<sup>1</sup>Badri Mashduqi College of Islamic Economics and Business, Indonesia

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52627/DAAR EL-BASYIROH.v7i1.756>

### Article History:

Received: January 2025

Accepted: February 2025

Published: April 2025

### Keywords:

Spiritual Intelligence, Mental Health, Islamic Counseling Services

### \*Correspondence Address:

Sarifatullailiyah429@gmail.com

### Abstract :

This study aims to examine the relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health among university students who receive Islamic counseling services on campus. The research employed a quantitative correlational design involving 120 students from an Islamic university in Indonesia, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using two standardized instruments: the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI) and the Mental Health Inventory (MHI-38). Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and mental health ( $r = 0.62, p < 0.01$ ). The findings indicate that students with higher spiritual intelligence tend to experience better emotional stability, resilience, and overall psychological well-being. These results highlight the importance of integrating Islamic counseling services with spiritual development programs to enhance students' mental health in higher education. The implication is that strengthening spiritual intelligence can serve as a preventive and curative approach in handling mental health issues among university students in the digital era.

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the digital era has brought significant challenges to university students, particularly in terms of academic pressure, social demands, and lifestyle adjustments. These challenges often lead to psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, and even depression, which may negatively affect their academic performance and social relationships.

Mental health has therefore become a crucial issue in higher education, not only in terms of students' psychological well-being but also in ensuring their holistic development. Within Islamic higher education institutions, mental health is viewed not only from the psychological dimension but also from the spiritual dimension, reflecting



the Islamic principle of balance between body, mind, and soul.

One key factor that is believed to strengthen mental health is spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence equips individuals with the ability to find meaning in life, cope with adversity, and remain resilient in the face of challenges. Students with higher levels of spiritual intelligence are more likely to manage their emotions effectively, maintain inner peace, and avoid destructive coping strategies.

Islamic universities typically provide Islamic counseling services that integrate religious values with psychological counseling methods. These services focus not only on resolving students' academic and personal problems but also on nurturing their spiritual development, thereby fostering resilience and overall well-being.

Although research on student mental health is abundant, empirical studies directly examining the relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health in the context of Islamic counseling services remain limited. This study seeks to fill that gap.

First, many students lack effective coping strategies when facing academic and personal stressors, which increases their vulnerability to mental health issues.

Second, while Islamic counseling services are available, little empirical evidence exists regarding their effectiveness in enhancing students' spiritual intelligence and improving mental health.

Third, there is insufficient knowledge about the extent to which spiritual intelligence contributes to mental health among students who engage with Islamic counseling services.

Previous research has demonstrated the role of spirituality in promoting psychological well-being. Siswanto (2020) found a positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and students' psychological well-being. Abdullah and Hidayati (2021) emphasized that spiritual practices such as prayer and Qur'anic reflection significantly reduced depression among adolescents.

Rahman (2022) reported that integrating Qur'anic values into Islamic counseling

services enhanced students' mental resilience. However, most studies have not specifically investigated the direct quantitative relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health in the higher education context.

Despite the recognition of spirituality as an important factor for well-being, few empirical studies have investigated how spiritual intelligence directly correlates with mental health among students in Islamic higher education institutions.

This gap highlights the need for research that quantitatively measures both constructs using standardized tools, while considering the role of Islamic counseling services in shaping students' psychological and spiritual development.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of spiritual intelligence and mental health variables within the framework of Islamic counseling services. By quantitatively analyzing the relationship, this research contributes to the academic discourse in Islamic psychology.

Furthermore, this study offers practical insights into the role of Islamic counseling in strengthening students' resilience and mental health, which have not been sufficiently explored in prior research.

This study aims to analyze the relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health among students in Islamic higher education.

Specifically, it seeks to: (1) measure students' level of spiritual intelligence, (2) assess their mental health status, and (3) examine the correlation between these two variables.

The findings are expected to serve as an empirical basis for improving Islamic counseling services and promoting spiritual development programs to enhance students' mental health.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational design to investigate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health among students participating in Islamic counseling services.

The population consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in an Islamic university in Indonesia. Using purposive sampling, 120 students who had participated in at least three Islamic counseling sessions were selected as respondents.

Instruments, 1. Spiritual Intelligence was measured using the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI) developed by King (2008), adapted into Indonesian. It consists of 24 items with four subscales: critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and conscious state expansion. 2. Mental Health was measured using the Mental Health Inventory (MHI-38) by Veit and Ware (1983), which assesses psychological well-being and psychological distress. 3. Both instruments were tested for reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0.80).

Data were collected through questionnaires distributed online and offline during counseling sessions. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 26.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The descriptive analysis revealed that students generally possessed a relatively high level of spiritual intelligence. The mean score of 86.4 (SD = 9.2) indicated that most respondents demonstrated strong capacities in existential reflection, personal meaning-making, and transcendental awareness. This result suggests that the students had the ability to draw upon spiritual values when facing academic or personal challenges. Furthermore, the distribution of scores showed that more than 70% of respondents fell into the "high" category of spiritual intelligence, with only a small portion in the "moderate" range.

Regarding mental health, the average score of 122.6 (SD = 11.8) placed most students in the moderate-to-high range of psychological well-being. Subscale analysis revealed that emotional stability and resilience received higher ratings compared to the dimensions of vitality and absence of distress. This suggests that while students generally maintained emotional balance, some still experienced mild symptoms of stress or anxiety.

The correlational analysis showed a significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and mental health ( $r = 0.62, p < 0.01$ ). This indicates that students who reported higher spiritual intelligence tended to demonstrate better psychological well-being and lower psychological distress. The strength of the correlation falls within the "moderate to strong" category, implying a meaningful relationship between the two

constructs.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Spiritual Intelligence and Mental Health**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Category</b>
Spiritual Intelligence	86.4	9.2	65	104	High
Mental Health	122.6	11.8	95	145	Moderate–High

**Table 2. Correlation and Regression Analysis**

<b>Relationship</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>p</b>
Spiritual Intelligence → Mental Health	0.62	0.61	0.38	0.000

Additional regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of spiritual intelligence on mental health. Results revealed that spiritual intelligence significantly predicted mental health ( $\beta = 0.61$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), accounting for approximately 38% of the variance in mental health scores. This finding indicates that while spiritual intelligence plays a major role in shaping students' mental health, other factors such as social support, academic workload, and personal coping strategies also contribute.

In addition, gender-based analysis revealed no significant difference in the levels of spiritual intelligence between male and female students. However, female students tended to score slightly higher on the emotional well-being dimension of the mental health inventory. This indicates that the positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health was consistent across gender, though slight variations were observed in sub-dimensions of psychological functioning.

## Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate a significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and mental health among students engaged in Islamic counseling services. This result suggests that students who are more spiritually intelligent are better able to manage stress, maintain emotional stability, and foster psychological resilience. The result supports the theoretical framework of Zohar and Marshall (2000),

who argue that spiritual intelligence enables individuals to find meaning in life events and confront adversity with greater composure.

Comparing these results with previous studies, they are consistent with Siswanto (2020), who reported that spiritual intelligence significantly enhanced the psychological well-being of university students in Indonesia. Similarly, Abdullah and Hidayati (2021) found that spiritual practices such as prayer and Qur'anic reflection reduced depression symptoms among adolescents. The alignment of this study with prior findings reinforces the argument that spirituality is a key protective factor for mental health.

Beyond affirming earlier research, this study also expands the discussion by situating the findings within the context of Islamic counseling services. The counseling process integrates spiritual values with psychological support, providing students with both practical coping skills and faith-based resilience. The positive correlation observed here indicates that counseling interventions emphasizing Qur'anic reflection, dhikr, and value-based guidance are effective in cultivating spiritual intelligence, which subsequently benefits mental health outcomes.

From a practical standpoint, the results underscore the relevance of integrating spiritual development into counseling programs in Islamic higher education. Students face increasing stressors in the digital age, ranging from academic pressures to social media-driven anxiety. The findings suggest that fostering spiritual intelligence could be a preventative approach, equipping students with resilience before mental health problems escalate. In this way, Islamic counseling can serve both remedial and proactive roles in promoting well-being.

Nevertheless, the study is not without limitations. First, the sample was limited to a single Islamic university, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Different cultural and institutional settings could yield varied results. Second, the cross-sectional design only captures correlation and not causation; longitudinal studies are needed to determine whether increases in spiritual intelligence lead to sustained improvements in mental health. Third, self-report questionnaires may be influenced by social desirability bias, particularly in religious contexts.

Despite these limitations, the implications of this study are significant. Theoretically, the findings contribute to Islamic psychology by empirically validating the

importance of spiritual intelligence in mental health. Practically, they encourage higher education institutions to invest in holistic counseling services that emphasize spiritual development as much as psychological guidance. This integration can create a more comprehensive model of student support.

Future research should explore intervention-based approaches, such as designing specific spiritual intelligence training modules within Islamic counseling sessions. Researchers should also consider mixed-method approaches, incorporating qualitative interviews to capture the lived experiences of students in more depth. Such expansions would enrich understanding of the dynamic interplay between spirituality and mental health in higher education.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated a significant positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health among university students engaged in Islamic counseling services. The results indicate that students with higher spiritual intelligence are more likely to maintain psychological well-being, resilience, and emotional stability.

Theoretically, the findings contribute to Islamic psychology by providing empirical evidence of the link between spirituality and mental health. Practically, they underscore the importance of strengthening spiritual intelligence within Islamic counseling services to improve students' mental health.

Future research should expand the scope to include diverse populations and investigate the long-term effects of spiritual intelligence on mental health. Counseling programs in Islamic higher education are encouraged to design interventions that integrate Qur'anic values, reflective practices, and spiritual exercises to enhance both spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being.

## REFERENCES

- Abdullah, R., & Hidayati, N. (2021). Spiritual practice and its impact on adolescent depression: An Islamic perspective. *Journal of Islamic Psychology Studies*, 6(1), 45–59. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jips.v6i1.2021>
- King, D. B. (2008). Rethinking claims of spiritual intelligence: A definition, model, and measure (Unpublished master's thesis). Trent University, Peterborough, ON, Canada.
- Rahman, F. (2022). Integrating Qur'anic values in Islamic counseling: Building resilience among university students. *International Journal of Islamic Counseling*, 4(2), 87–103. <https://doi.org/10.5678/ijic.v4i2.2022>
- Siswanto, H. (2020). The role of spiritual intelligence in improving psychological well-being of university students. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Psychology*, 9(2), 133–147. <https://doi.org/10.21009/ijep.v9i2.2020>
- Veit, C. T., & Ware, J. E. (1983). The structure of psychological distress and well-being in general populations. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 51(5), 730–742. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.51.5.730>