

DEVELOPING RESILIENCE AND INDEPENDENCE AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS IN A PESANTREN-BASED UNIVERSITY: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi pengembangan resiliensi dan kemandirian mahasiswi di Universitas Darussalam Gontor sebagai perguruan tinggi berbasis pesantren. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif yang melibatkan 18 partisipan, terdiri atas pimpinan, dosen, musyrifah, dan mahasiswi. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan reflexive thematic analysis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengembangan resiliensi dan kemandirian dibentuk melalui lima dimensi yang saling berkaitan, yaitu spiritualitas, kedisiplinan, keterlibatan dalam organisasi, kehidupan berasrama, dan dukungan sosial. Spiritualitas dan disiplin berperan dalam memperkuat regulasi emosi, ketekunan, serta kemampuan menghadapi tekanan sebagai fondasi resiliensi. Sementara itu, keterlibatan dalam organisasi dan kehidupan berasrama mendorong berkembangnya kemandirian melalui peningkatan tanggung jawab, kepemimpinan, komunikasi, dan kemampuan mengambil keputusan. Dukungan dari dosen, musyrifah, dan teman sebaya turut menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang aman secara psikologis sehingga memperkuat kedua aspek tersebut. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa, dalam konteks Universitas Darussalam Gontor, integrasi nilai-nilai keislaman, pendidikan karakter, dan kehidupan komunal berkontribusi terhadap pengembangan resiliensi dan kemandirian mahasiswi.

Kata kunci: *Resiliensi; Mahasiswi; Pesantren; Pendidikan Tinggi; Spiritualitas*

Abstract

This study explores the development of resilience and independence among female students at Universitas Darussalam Gontor, a pesantren-based higher education institution. A qualitative case study approach was employed involving 18 participants, including institutional leaders, lecturers, dormitory supervisors, and female students. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis and were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis. The findings indicate that resilience and independence are developed through five interconnected dimensions: spirituality, discipline, organizational engagement, dormitory life, and social support. Spirituality and discipline strengthen emotional regulation, perseverance, and adaptive coping, which support students' resilience. Meanwhile, organizational participation and dormitory life foster independence by enhancing responsibility, leadership, communication, and decision-making skills. Supportive relationships among lecturers, dormitory supervisors, and peers further create a psychologically safe learning environment that reinforces both resilience and independence. The findings suggest that, within the context of Universitas Darussalam Gontor, the integration of Islamic values, character education, and communal living contributes to the development of female students' resilience and independence.

Keywords: *Resilience; Female Students; Pesantren; Higher Education; Spirituality.*

INTRODUCTION

The role of higher education in the twenty-first century extends beyond developing students' academic competence to fostering their ability to adapt, cope with challenges, and become independent lifelong learners (Adnan, N. S. M., et al., 2025). In this context, resilience, defined as the capacity to adapt positively and recover from adversity, has become an essential competency for university students facing rapid technological advancement, increasing

academic demands, and the complexity of contemporary social environments (Ulya, V. F., et al., 2026). Resilience enables students to maintain psychological well-being, regulate emotions effectively, and persist in achieving academic goals despite personal and environmental challenges (Ramadhan, A. F., et al., 2025). Likewise, independence refers to students' ability to regulate their own learning, make responsible decisions, solve problems autonomously, and manage both academic and personal responsibilities effectively. The development of independence is closely associated with self-regulated learning, critical thinking, and lifelong learning competencies that prepare graduates for increasingly dynamic professional and social contexts (Syarifah, et al., 2026; Mufaridah, H., et al., 2023).

Together, resilience and independence have become fundamental competencies that support holistic student development in contemporary higher education. One educational environment that provides a comprehensive framework for fostering both resilience and independence is the *Islamic boarding school* educational system. Unlike conventional higher education institutions, the *Islamic boarding school* system integrates academic learning with residential life, religious formation, character education, organizational involvement, and continuous social interaction within a twenty-four-hour educational environment. Through daily habituation, discipline, mentorship, communal living, and spiritual practices, this integrated educational model creates authentic learning experiences that contribute to students' character formation and personal development (Ali Musa Harahap, 2025).

Female students constitute an important population in this study because they experience the simultaneous demands of academic responsibilities, residential life, organizational participation, and religious activities within the *Islamic boarding school* environment. These multiple roles require them to develop resilience in coping with academic and personal challenges while cultivating independence in managing their daily responsibilities and decision-making. Examining these educational experiences is therefore important for understanding how *Islamic boarding school* based higher education supports the holistic development of female students.

Previous studies have extensively examined resilience, self-regulated learning, and character education in higher education. However, most studies have focused on psychological variables, academic achievement, or general character development within formal educational settings. Comparatively fewer studies have investigated how the *Islamic boarding school* educational system simultaneously develops resilience and independence among female university students. Existing research also tends to examine these constructs separately rather than explaining how institutional culture, religious values, organizational experiences, and residential life interact to foster students' holistic development (Ulya, V. F., Hilmi, M. A., Zuhri, A. M., et al., 2026). This gap highlights the need for empirical research that explains the educational processes through which *Islamic boarding* based university higher education cultivates both resilience and independence within an integrated educational setting.

Therefore, this study explores how the Islamic boarding school educational system at Universitas Darussalam Gontor develops resilience and independence among female students through integrated educational experiences. The study seeks to examine how the educational environment contributes to the development of students' resilience and how it fosters their independence within the context of a Islamic boarding based university. By addressing these questions, this study contributes to the literature on Islamic higher education, character education, and student development by providing contextual evidence from Universitas

Darussalam Gontor regarding the integrated development of resilience and independence among female students, rather than making broad claims beyond this single-institution case study (Ang, W. H. D., Shorey, S., et al., 2021).

Literature Review

Resilience among University Students

Resilience has become one of the most important competencies expected of university students in the twenty-first century, particularly in response to increasingly complex academic, psychological, and social demands. The transition to higher education often exposes students to various stressors, including academic workload, adaptation to new learning environments, financial pressures, interpersonal relationships, and uncertainty regarding future careers. These challenges require students to possess the capacity to recover from adversity, regulate emotions, and maintain positive functioning despite experiencing setbacks. Consequently, resilience is widely understood as a dynamic process that enables individuals to adapt successfully to stressful circumstances while sustaining their psychological well-being and academic engagement (Hofhuis, J., Jongerling, J., & Jansz, J. 2024).

Recent studies have demonstrated that resilience contributes significantly to students' academic success, emotional stability, and overall well-being. Students with higher levels of resilience tend to exhibit stronger learning motivation, greater academic persistence, effective coping strategies, and lower levels of anxiety and psychological distress (Brewer et al., 2022). Moreover, resilience has been identified as a protective factor that enables students to manage academic failure, adapt to changing educational contexts, and maintain positive interpersonal relationships. Contemporary perspectives also emphasize that resilience should not be viewed solely as an inherent personal characteristic but rather as a developmental capacity shaped through continuous interactions between individuals and their educational, social, and cultural environments (Wang, Y., & colleagues. 2023).

Within higher education, the development of resilience increasingly depends on the quality of learning environments that provide emotional support, meaningful educational experiences, positive peer relationships, and opportunities for personal growth. Educational institutions play a crucial role in fostering resilience by creating environments that encourage self-reflection, collaborative learning, leadership development, and character formation (Ang et al., 2021). In Islamic higher education institutions adopting the Islamic boarding school educational system, resilience is cultivated not only through academic instruction but also through structured religious activities, communal living, disciplined daily routines, mentoring relationships, and organizational participation. These integrated educational experiences enable students to strengthen their emotional maturity, adaptability, self-confidence, and perseverance while preparing them to face academic and societal challenges more effectively (Quinlan, K. M., Thomas, D. S. P., Hayton, A., et al. 2024).

Student Independence in Higher Education

Student independence is widely recognized as a fundamental outcome of higher education, reflecting learners' capacity to regulate their own learning, make responsible decisions, solve problems autonomously, and assume responsibility for their academic and personal development. In contemporary higher education, independent students are expected to demonstrate initiative, self-management, critical thinking, and reflective decision-making

while navigating increasingly complex learning environments. Rather than depending solely on instructors, independent learners actively set learning goals, monitor their progress, evaluate their performance, and adapt their learning strategies according to changing academic demands. Consequently, student independence has become an essential component of lifelong learning, enabling graduates to remain adaptive and self-directed in rapidly changing professional and social contexts (Broadbent & de Barba, 2023; Higgins et al., 2021).

The development of student independence is closely associated with the concept of self-regulated learning (SRL), which emphasizes learners' active involvement in planning, monitoring, controlling, and evaluating their own learning processes. Self-regulated learners exhibit greater intrinsic motivation, persistence, and responsibility because they are capable of selecting appropriate cognitive, metacognitive, and behavioral strategies to achieve academic goals. Recent studies have shown that students with stronger self-regulation demonstrate higher academic performance, improved learning engagement, effective time management, and greater resilience when facing academic challenges. Moreover, autonomy-supportive learning environments encourage students to take ownership of their learning, thereby strengthening both independent learning behaviors and long-term academic success (Santos Urbina et al., 2021; Broadbent & de Barba, 2023).

Educational environments play a decisive role in cultivating student independence by providing authentic learning experiences that encourage responsibility, collaboration, leadership, and self-reflection. Institutions that promote autonomy through experiential learning, organizational participation, mentoring, and collaborative problem-solving create opportunities for students to develop confidence and decision-making skills beyond classroom instruction. Within the context of Islamic higher education, the Islamic boarding school educational system offers a distinctive environment for nurturing independence through structured residential life, disciplined daily routines, religious practices, leadership responsibilities, and communal learning experiences. These integrated educational practices enable students to internalize responsibility, develop self-discipline, and strengthen their capacity for autonomous decision-making while maintaining moral and spiritual values. Such experiences contribute not only to students' academic independence but also to their holistic personal development as responsible members of society (Schweder & Raufelder, 2022; Higgins et al., 2021).

The Pesantren Educational System and Character Development

The Islamic boarding school educational system represents one of Indonesia's oldest and most distinctive educational traditions, integrating academic learning with Islamic values, residential life, character formation, and community engagement. Unlike conventional higher education institutions, Islamic boarding-based universities provide a holistic educational environment in which students participate in structured religious activities, communal living, leadership training, and disciplined daily routines alongside formal academic instruction. This educational model emphasizes the integration of cognitive, affective, spiritual, and social dimensions of learning, enabling students to internalize values through continuous practice rather than through classroom instruction alone. Consequently, Islamic boarding school education has been widely recognized as an educational system that promotes comprehensive character development by combining knowledge acquisition with moral cultivation and spiritual growth (Tan, 2023; Hidayatullah et al., 2024).

Character development within the Islamic boarding school educational system is achieved through continuous habituation, exemplary leadership (*uswah hasanah*), mentoring, collective responsibility, and participation in religious and social activities. Living together in a residential environment encourages students to develop discipline, empathy, cooperation, accountability, and mutual respect while strengthening their commitment to Islamic ethical values. Rather than treating character education as a separate curricular component, Islamic boarding school integrates moral education into students' everyday experiences through structured routines such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic studies, community service, organizational activities, and peer interaction. This educational process reflects the principle that character is cultivated through sustained practice, reflection, and social engagement within a supportive learning community (Isbah, 2020; Tan, 2023).

Recent studies have further highlighted the contribution of the Islamic boarding school educational system to developing students' resilience, leadership, adaptability, and independence in response to contemporary educational and societal challenges. The integration of spiritual education, organizational participation, residential learning, and community life provides authentic learning experiences that strengthen students' emotional maturity, problem-solving skills, and self-regulation. These educational experiences not only prepare students for academic success but also foster responsible citizenship and lifelong character development. Within the context of Islamic higher education, the Islamic boarding school educational system therefore offers a distinctive educational framework for nurturing resilient, independent, and morally responsible graduates who are capable of contributing positively to society while maintaining strong religious and ethical commitments (Arifin, 2022; Hidayatullah et al., 2024).

Developing Resilience and Independence through Integrated Educational Experiences

Contemporary educational theories emphasize that resilience and independence are not innate characteristics but developmental capacities that emerge through meaningful educational experiences and sustained interaction with supportive learning environments. Experiential learning enables students to transform knowledge into practical competencies by actively engaging in authentic situations, reflecting on their experiences, and applying new understandings to subsequent challenges. Such learning processes strengthen students' adaptive capacities, emotional regulation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills while fostering self-confidence and perseverance. Likewise, educational environments that encourage student autonomy and active participation contribute significantly to the development of self-directed learners who are capable of managing academic demands and responding effectively to personal and social challenges (Kolb, 2023; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

The development of resilience and independence is also strongly influenced by students' social learning experiences. Previous studies have demonstrated that peer interaction, mentoring relationships, organizational engagement, and collaborative learning provide valuable opportunities for students to strengthen leadership skills, interpersonal competence, and personal responsibility. Through participation in student organizations and leadership activities, students learn to manage conflict, negotiate diverse perspectives, regulate emotions, and make responsible decisions under real-life conditions. Furthermore, supportive relationships with lecturers, mentors, and peers foster a sense of belonging and psychological safety, both of which are recognized as protective factors that enhance resilience and facilitate independent learning. These educational experiences encourage students to become active

agents in their own development rather than passive recipients of knowledge (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Broadbent & de Barba, 2023).

Within the Islamic boarding school educational system, these educational experiences are integrated into students' daily lives through the combination of academic instruction, residential education, religious practices, organizational participation, and community engagement. Unlike conventional higher education settings, the Islamic boarding school environment provides continuous opportunities for students to internalize discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and leadership through structured daily routines and communal living. Spiritual activities, dormitory life, student organizations, mentoring by *musyrifah*, and collective religious practices create an educational ecosystem in which resilience and independence develop simultaneously through habitual practice and reflective experience. Such an integrated educational model promotes holistic student development by connecting intellectual growth with spiritual maturity, emotional resilience, moral responsibility, and social competence, thereby preparing students to become adaptive, independent, and ethically responsible graduates (Tan, 2023; Hidayatullah et al., 2024).

Table 1. Summary of Previous Studies

No.	Authors (Year)	Research Focus	Method	Main Findings	Research Gap
1	Smith et al. (2022)	Spirituality and psychological resilience among university students	Systematic Review	Spirituality positively contributes to resilience, emotional regulation, and psychological well-being among university students.	The study focuses on general university students and does not examine resilience within Islamic boarding school (<i>pesantren</i>)-based higher education.
2	Ye et al. (2022)	Social support, resilience, and mental health among college students	Cross-sectional Survey	Social support significantly predicts resilience and reduces psychological distress.	The study emphasizes psychological variables without exploring institutional culture and religious education.
3	Duckworth et al. (2021)	Self-control and academic achievement	Literature Review	Self-discipline improves academic performance, persistence, and adaptive behavior.	The study does not investigate how institutional discipline contributes to resilience in residential Islamic education.
4	Bennett et al. (2021)	Extracurricular engagement and student resilience	Mixed Methods	Student organizational involvement enhances leadership, confidence, and resilience.	The research is conducted in secular universities and does not include <i>pesantren</i> organizational culture.

5	Koenig (2023)	Religion, spirituality, and mental health	Narrative Review	Religious involvement strengthens coping strategies, optimism, and psychological well-being.	The study discusses spirituality broadly without examining integrated educational practices in Islamic higher education.
6	Present Study (2026)	Resilience development among female students in pesantren-based higher education	Qualitative Case Study (Interviews, Observation, Documentation)	Resilience is developed through the integration of spirituality, discipline, organizational engagement, independent living, and social support within a holistic pesantren educational ecosystem.	This study provides a comprehensive institutional model of resilience in pesantren-based higher education, emphasizing the interaction between religious values, character education, communal living, and student development.

Research Gap and Conceptual Framework

Although previous studies have extensively investigated student resilience, self-regulated learning, and character education, these research streams have generally developed independently with limited conceptual integration. Research on resilience in higher education has predominantly examined psychological well-being, academic stress, coping strategies, and learning persistence, whereas studies on self-regulated learning have primarily focused on students' cognitive and metacognitive strategies for improving academic performance. Likewise, research on Islamic boarding school education has largely emphasized Islamic values, religious instruction, and character formation without explicitly examining how the educational ecosystem systematically develops resilience and independence among university students. Consequently, the relationship between institutional culture, educational experiences, and students' personal development remains insufficiently understood (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Broadbent & de Barba, 2023).

Another limitation identified in the existing literature concerns the tendency to examine educational components in isolation rather than as interconnected elements within a holistic learning environment. Previous studies frequently investigate leadership development, residential education, spiritual formation, organizational participation, or mentoring as separate educational practices. However, few studies explain how these experiences collectively interact to strengthen students' resilience, independence, emotional maturity, and adaptive capacity within a single educational system. This limitation is particularly evident in the context of Islamic higher education, where the integration of academic learning, residential life, religious practices, and student organizations represents a distinctive educational ecosystem that differs substantially from conventional university settings (Tan, 2023; Kolb & Kolb, 2023).

Furthermore, empirical evidence regarding female university students in Islamic boarding-based higher education remains relatively limited. Most previous studies focus on Islamic boarding school students in secondary education or investigate university students without considering the unique educational experiences of female students living within a residential Islamic educational environment. This study therefore seeks to address these gaps by exploring how the Islamic boarding school educational system at Universitas Darussalam Gontor develops resilience and independence among female students through integrated educational experiences. Rather than examining isolated psychological variables, this study identifies the major themes emerging from students' lived educational experiences, thereby

providing a contextual understanding of how institutional culture, spiritual development, organizational engagement, residential education, and social interaction collectively contribute to holistic student development. The findings are expected to extend the literature on Islamic higher education by offering a thematic framework that explains the educational processes underlying the development of resilient and independent female graduates.

Based on the reviewed literature, this study proposes that the Islamic boarding school educational system functions as an integrated educational ecosystem in which several interconnected learning experiences contribute to the development of students' resilience and independence. The framework assumes that academic learning, spiritual formation, residential education, organizational participation, mentoring, and peer interaction constitute educational inputs that shape students' emotional regulation, self-discipline, leadership, responsibility, and self-regulated learning. These developmental processes ultimately foster resilient and independent female students who are capable of adapting to academic, personal, and social challenges. Guided by this conceptual perspective, the present study employs qualitative descriptive research and reflexive thematic analysis to identify the major themes explaining how the pesantren educational system facilitates holistic student development.

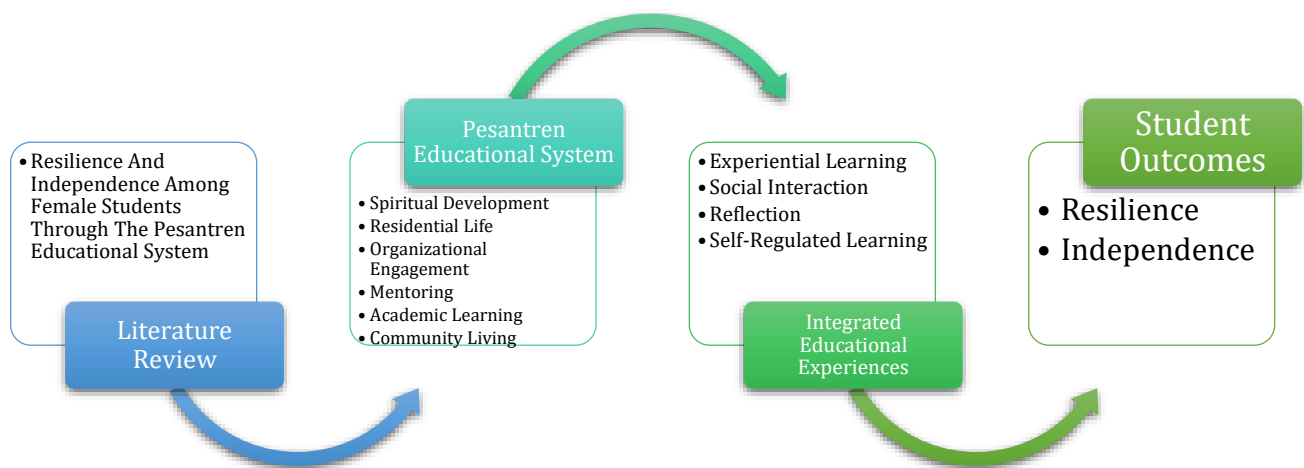


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Of Resilience And Independence Development Through The Pesantren Educational System

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore how the Islamic boarding school educational system fosters resilience and independence among female students at Universitas Darussalam Gontor. A qualitative descriptive approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to obtain an in-depth understanding of educational practices and participants' experiences within their natural setting without attempting to generate a new theory. This approach allows researchers to provide a rich and contextual description of social phenomena while remaining close to participants' perspectives and lived experiences (Byrne, 2022).

The study was conducted at Universitas Darussalam Gontor, an Islamic higher education institution that integrates university education with a Islamic boarding-based residential system. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, as this technique enables researchers to recruit information-rich participants who possess direct knowledge and experience related to the research phenomenon (Campbell et al., 2021). The study involved 18 participants, consisting of one Director of Islamic boarding school Affairs, two female student

supervisors, three dormitory supervisors, four members of the Student Executive Board (DEMA), and eight active female students from the third to the eighth semester. The inclusion criteria required participants to have actively participated in the Islamic boarding school educational system for at least one academic year and to be willing to share their experiences voluntarily.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' perceptions and experiences regarding the development of resilience and independence within the Islamic boarding school educational system. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes, was conducted face-to-face, audio-recorded with participants' consent, and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis. Participant observation was carried out during daily religious activities, dormitory life, leadership programs, organizational meetings, academic activities, and character-building programs to capture authentic educational practices. In addition, institutional documents, including student regulations, dormitory guidelines, organizational manuals, and university policy documents, were reviewed to enrich and corroborate the empirical findings.

Table 2. Summary Of Informant Characteristics

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Data Collecting Tecnic</i>
<i>P1</i>	Director of Pesantren Affairs	1	interviews, observation
<i>P2–P3</i>	Female Student Supervisors	2	interviews, observation
<i>P4–P6</i>	Dormitory Supervisors (<i>Musyrifah</i>)	3	interviews, observation
<i>P7–P10</i>	Student Executive Board (DEMA) Members	4	interviews, observation
<i>P11–P18</i>	Active Female Students (Semester 3–8)	8	interviews, observation
<i>Total</i>		18	

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed methodological triangulation by integrating interview data, participant observation, and documentary evidence throughout the analytical process. An audit trail documenting coding decisions and theme development was maintained to ensure transparency during analysis. Preliminary interpretations were discussed with several participants to clarify whether the researchers had accurately understood their experiences. In accordance with Reflexive Thematic Analysis, member checking was used to enhance the interpretation of participants' accounts rather than to validate the themes, as the final interpretation remained the responsibility of the researcher (Campbell et al., 2021).

The collected data were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) developed by Braun and Clarke (2021). This study adopted a constructivist-interpretivist perspective, which assumes that themes are actively generated through researchers' engagement with the data rather than objectively emerging from participants' accounts. The analysis followed six

recursive phases: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts, observation field notes, and institutional documents; (2) generating initial codes; (3) constructing candidate themes; (4) reviewing and refining themes; (5) defining and naming themes; and (6) producing the final analytical report (Byrne, 2022).

Coding was conducted manually using an inductive approach without qualitative data analysis software. Instead of applying predetermined categories, the researchers developed codes directly from participants' narratives and continuously refined, merged, and reorganized them throughout the analytical process. Reflexive practices were maintained by documenting analytical reflections and discussing emerging interpretations among the research team to critically examine how researchers' perspectives influenced the development of themes. This iterative process enabled the researchers to generate coherent themes explaining how the Islamic boarding school educational system contributes to the development of resilience and independence among female students while preserving the contextual richness of participants' experiences

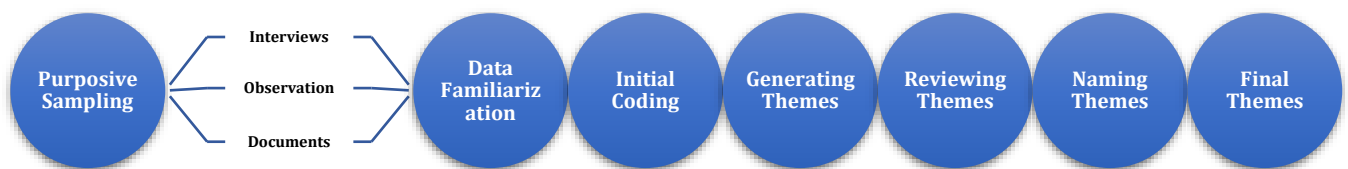


Figure 2. Research Process

Prior to data collection, participants received information regarding the objectives of the study and voluntarily agreed to participate by providing informed consent. The confidentiality of participants' identities was maintained throughout the research process by using pseudonyms and removing personally identifiable information from the interview transcripts. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants retained the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences.

Results and Discussion

Spirituality as the Foundation of Resilience

Reflexive thematic analysis identified Spiritual Development as the central theme explaining how resilience was constructed within the pesantren educational system. This theme emerged through iterative coding of interview transcripts, observation field notes, and documentary evidence the primary source of resilience among female students in the Islamic boarding school educational system. The Director of the Directorate of Islamic boarding school Affairs explained that daily religious practices are intentionally designed not only to strengthen students' faith but also to develop their psychological endurance when facing academic and organizational challenges.

"We do not merely educate students to perform religious rituals; we cultivate inner strength through worship. Daily prayers, Qur'anic recitation, and remembrance of Allah help students

remain emotionally stable and optimistic when facing difficulties." (Interview, Director of the Directorate of Pesantren Affairs, P1).

These findings were supported by participant observation, which showed that congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, Islamic study circles (halaqah), and dhikr were conducted consistently according to the daily schedule. During these activities, students demonstrated calmness, discipline, and positive social interactions. Documentary evidence, including the Islamic boarding school daily schedule and student handbook, further confirmed that spiritual activities constitute a core component of the institutional educational system. Collectively, these data indicate that spirituality functions as the primary foundation for strengthening students' resilience.

Table 3. Themes Generated from Thematic Analysis

<i>Main Theme</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>
<i>Spiritual Development</i>	Worship, Qur'an Recitation, Reflection
<i>Discipline</i>	Time Management, Responsibility
<i>Organizational Engagement</i>	Leadership, Decision Making
<i>Independent Living</i>	Self-management, Accountability
<i>Social Support</i>	Peer Support, Musyrifah
<i>Experiential Learning</i>	Daily Practice
<i>Self-regulated Learning</i>	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation

Discipline Strengthens Students' Adaptive Capacity

The theme of Discipline emerged from recurring codes related to structured routines, time management, responsibility, and behavioural consistency across the three data sources. Interview data indicated that discipline is developed through continuous habituation within the pesantren environment. A dormitory supervisor (musyrifah) explained that although students initially struggled to adapt to the structured daily routines, they gradually became more responsible and resilient.

"Many students initially find it difficult to adjust to the strict daily schedule. However, after several months, they become more disciplined, better at managing their time, and more capable of overcoming challenges independently." (Interview, Dormitory Supervisor, P5).

Observational data demonstrated that students consistently followed structured daily activities beginning with early morning worship, academic classes, organizational meetings, evening study sessions, and dormitory responsibilities. Documentary analysis of dormitory regulations and the official daily timetable also confirmed the existence of a comprehensive disciplinary system operating throughout the twenty-four-hour educational environment. These findings suggest that continuous discipline contributes significantly to students' adaptive capacity and psychological resilience.



Figure 3. Final Thematic Model

Organizational Engagement Develops Leadership and Resilience

Organizational Engagement was generated through the interpretation of codes concerning leadership experiences, teamwork, communication, and decision-making during students' participation in campus organizations. Interviews with members of the Female Student Council (DEMA) indicated that organizational involvement provides authentic opportunities to develop leadership, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. *"Serving in DEMA has taught us how to manage conflicts, coordinate programs, and make decisions under pressure. These experiences have made us more confident and resilient."* (Interview, DEMA Member, P8).

Participant observation during organizational meetings and student activities revealed active collaboration, democratic decision-making, and collective responsibility among students. Documentary evidence, including organizational structures, annual work programs, and activity reports, also demonstrated that leadership development is systematically integrated into the pesantren educational system. These findings indicate that organizational engagement serves as an important mechanism for strengthening resilience through experiential learning and leadership practice.

Dormitory Life Fosters Students' Independence

The theme Independent Living developed from repeated references to self-management, personal responsibility, and autonomous decision-making in students' everyday dormitory experience. Interview findings showed that living in the dormitory plays a significant role in cultivating students' independence through daily responsibilities and autonomous decision-making.

"Living in the dormitory has taught me to manage my own schedule, take responsibility for my personal needs, and solve problems without depending on my parents." (Interview, Female Student, P14).

Participant observation confirmed that students independently managed their personal routines, maintained room cleanliness, organized study schedules, and completed communal responsibilities. Documentary evidence from dormitory regulations further emphasized that students are expected to develop responsibility, self-discipline, and accountability through everyday practices. These findings suggest that independent living within the pesantren environment gradually develops students' self-reliance through continuous experiential learning rather than formal classroom instruction.

Social Support Enhances Psychological Resilience

The final theme, Social Support, was developed from codes reflecting emotional assistance, peer relationships, mentoring, and institutional guidance that collectively contributed to students' resilience. Interview data revealed that social support from lecturers, dormitory supervisors, peers, and institutional leaders plays an essential role in helping students cope with academic and personal challenges.

"Whenever I experience difficulties, I never feel alone because my friends, musyrifah, and lecturers are always willing to listen and help me find solutions." (Interview, Female Student, P16).

Participant observation showed strong interpersonal relationships characterized by cooperation, mutual respect, and emotional support during academic, religious, and extracurricular activities. Documentary evidence from mentoring programs and dormitory guidance records further confirmed that structured mentoring forms an integral part of the pesantren educational system. These findings demonstrate that resilience is developed not only through individual capacities but also through supportive social relationships and a strong sense of community.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that spirituality constitutes the primary foundation for strengthening the resilience of female students in the pesantren-based higher education environment. Daily religious practices, including congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation, dhikr, and Islamic learning circles, function not only as ritual obligations but also as psychological coping mechanisms that enable students to regulate emotions and respond positively to academic and personal challenges. This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that spirituality enhances psychological resilience by fostering meaning-making, emotional regulation, optimism, and adaptive coping strategies (Smith et al., 2022; Koenig, 2023). In the context of Islamic boarding schools, spirituality becomes embedded in students' daily routines, thereby creating a supportive environment that nurtures both religious commitment and psychological well-being. These findings reinforce the proposition that resilience is cultivated not solely through individual characteristics but also through sustained spiritual practices within educational institutions.

While these findings support previous research emphasizing the role of spirituality in fostering resilience, they also extend existing literature by demonstrating that spirituality alone does not sufficiently explain students' resilience within the pesantren context. Rather, spirituality serves as the foundational dimension that strengthens other developmental processes, including discipline, organizational engagement, independent living, and social support. This finding contrasts with studies conducted in non-residential educational settings, where resilience is often explained primarily by individual psychological resources. In the present study, resilience emerged through the interaction between personal spiritual development and the institutional educational environment.

Furthermore, the present study found that institutional discipline contributes substantially to students' adaptive capacity and resilience. The structured daily routines implemented in the pesantren require students to manage time effectively, fulfill responsibilities consistently, and maintain self-control despite academic pressures. Such continuous habituation gradually develops self-regulation and persistence, two essential components of resilience. These findings support the argument that structured educational environments enhance students' executive functioning, self-discipline, and psychological adjustment (Duckworth et al., 2021; Zimmerman, 2022). The results also extend previous research by demonstrating that discipline in pesantren education is not merely regulatory but functions as a developmental strategy that prepares students to cope effectively with future challenges.

A distinctive characteristic of the pesantren system is its twenty-four-hour residential educational environment, where discipline is continuously reinforced through daily routines rather than limited to classroom regulations. Religious activities, academic learning, organizational responsibilities, and dormitory life are integrated into students' everyday experiences, creating repeated opportunities to develop self-regulation and resilience. Unlike conventional universities, where students generally exercise greater autonomy outside class hours, the pesantren educational model facilitates continuous character formation through structured daily practice

Another important finding concerns the role of organizational engagement in fostering resilience. Participation in student organizations provides opportunities for students to develop leadership skills, collaborative problem-solving, communication competence, and emotional maturity through authentic experiences. Students who actively engage in organizational activities demonstrate greater confidence when dealing with interpersonal conflicts and decision-making responsibilities. This finding is consistent with Astin's theory of student involvement, which emphasizes that active engagement in campus life contributes significantly to students' cognitive and psychosocial development (Astin, 1999). More recent studies also indicate that extracurricular participation strengthens resilience through increased social competence, leadership experience, and self-efficacy (Bennett et al., 2021; Martin & Marsh, 2023). Therefore, resilience in higher education should be understood as a multidimensional construct shaped by meaningful experiential learning beyond formal classroom instruction.

The findings also highlight the importance of dormitory life in promoting students' independence. Living away from their families requires students to manage personal responsibilities, solve daily problems independently, and adapt to communal living arrangements. These experiences gradually strengthen students' autonomy, responsibility, and decision-making abilities. This finding supports previous studies suggesting that residential educational environments promote self-regulated learning, emotional independence, and resilience through continuous experiential learning (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Credé et al., 2021). Within the pesantren context, dormitory life provides a unique educational ecosystem where academic learning is continuously integrated with character formation and independent living skills.

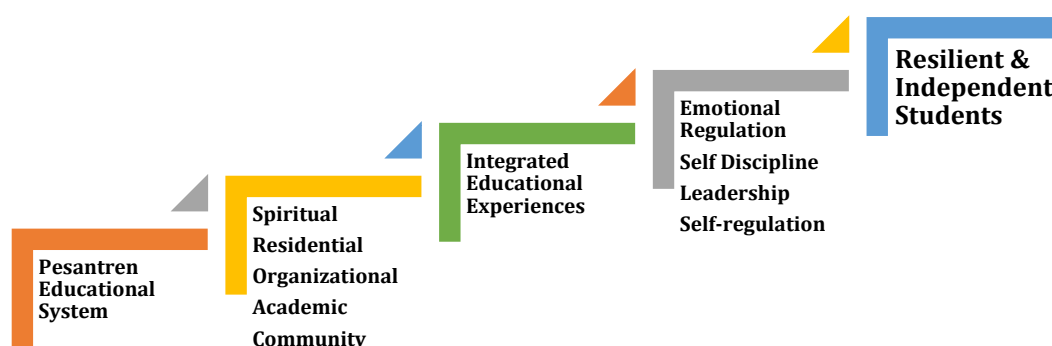


Figure 4. Integrated Model of Student Development

Finally, social support emerged as another significant contributor to resilience. Supportive relationships among lecturers, dormitory supervisors, peers, and institutional

leaders create a psychologically safe environment that encourages students to seek assistance during stressful situations. Consistent with the social support theory proposed by Cohen and Wills (1985), emotional and instrumental support functions as a protective factor against psychological distress. Recent empirical studies similarly demonstrate that peer support, mentoring, and positive institutional climates significantly enhance students' resilience, academic engagement, and mental well-being (Ye et al., 2022; Hartley, 2023). Accordingly, resilience should be viewed as a dynamic interaction between individual capacities and supportive educational environments that collectively facilitate positive adaptation.

Rather than operating independently, the five dimensions identified in this study interact dynamically throughout students' educational experiences. Spirituality provides the value foundation that encourages students to internalize discipline as a meaningful commitment rather than institutional obligation. Discipline subsequently supports independent living by fostering responsibility and self-regulation, while organizational engagement strengthens leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills that are reinforced through supportive relationships with peers, lecturers, and dormitory supervisors. This continuous interaction demonstrates that resilience is developed through an integrated educational process rather than through isolated institutional programs.

Despite these benefits, several potential limitations of the structured residential system should also be acknowledged. Students entering the pesantren environment may initially experience psychological adjustment challenges due to strict schedules and institutional regulations. Furthermore, highly structured environments may reduce opportunities for autonomous decision-making if students become overly dependent on institutional guidance. Therefore, maintaining an appropriate balance between structured discipline and opportunities for independent reflection is essential to ensure that resilience develops as an internalized personal capacity rather than merely as compliance with institutional expectations. Overall, this study extends the literature by demonstrating that resilience among female students in pesantren-based higher education is not produced by a single educational component but emerges through the dynamic interaction of spirituality, discipline, organizational engagement, independent living, and social support within a holistic twenty-four-hour educational ecosystem. These dimensions reinforce one another by integrating religious values, structured routines, experiential learning, autonomous responsibility, and supportive interpersonal relationships into students' everyday lives. Consequently, the pesantren educational system contributes to resilience development not only by strengthening individual psychological capacities but also by creating an institutional environment that continuously supports positive adaptation, leadership development, and long-term character formation.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that resilience among female students at Universitas Darussalam Gontor is developed through the interaction of spirituality, discipline, organizational engagement, independent living, and social support within an integrated pesantren educational environment.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of resilience by demonstrating that resilience is constructed through the interaction between individual capacities and

institutional educational practices in a residential Islamic higher education setting. Practically, the findings suggest that integrating spiritual development, structured discipline, leadership experiences, independent living, and supportive mentoring may strengthen students' resilience in similar educational contexts.

This study was conducted in a single pesantren-based university; therefore, the findings should be interpreted within this institutional context and should not be generalized to all pesantren-based higher education institutions. Future research involving multiple institutions and different educational settings is recommended to examine the transferability of these findings and further refine the proposed model of resilience development.

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