

## The Role of Religious Coping on Islamic Spiritual Well-being in College Students

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**Abstract.** The exploration of religious coping and spiritual well-being among the youth in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, is of particular significance due to its unique socio-cultural and religious landscape. College students in Indonesia face significant academic and developmental pressures, yet a comprehensive understanding of how religious coping specifically influences Islamic spiritual well-being in this demographic remains underexplored. This study aimed to systematically investigate the relationship between religious coping and Islamic spiritual well-being among Indonesian Muslim college students. A quantitative, correlational design was employed. A convenience sample of 398 Muslim college students in Indonesia was recruited. Participants completed self-report measures assessing their use of religious coping strategies and their level of Islamic spiritual well-being. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation to examine the relationship between the two primary variables. The analysis revealed a statistically significant, strong positive correlation between religious coping and Islamic spiritual well-being,  $r(396) = .763, p < .001$ . This indicates that higher levels of religious coping were strongly associated with greater reported Islamic spiritual well-being among the participants. The findings underscore the pivotal role of religious coping as a significant factor associated with the spiritual well-being of Muslim college students in Indonesia. This suggests that culturally sensitive interventions and support systems within higher education that foster positive religious coping mechanisms may be highly effective in promoting holistic student development. To further enhance our understanding, future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine causality and investigate the potential mediating role of specific coping strategies in well-being outcomes.

**Keywords:** Positive Religious Coping, Spiritual Health, Islamic Spiritual Well-being, Faith-Based Coping

### 1. Introduction

Islamic spiritual well-being, with its transformative practices such as prayer, trust in God, recitation of the Qur'an, and remembrance of God, serves as a catalyst for

change in the face of life stressors (Achour et al., 2016). These practices, deeply ingrained in the daily lives of Muslim individuals, have a transformative impact on their mental health and overall quality of life. For instance, Muslim students who embrace these transformative religious coping methods often report a higher quality of life and lower stress levels (Gardner et al., 2014). Moreover, the use of these transformative religious coping strategies has been associated with better academic resilience, suggesting that students who draw strength from their faith are better equipped to handle academic challenges (Sajodin et al., 2023).

Religious coping, the use of religious beliefs or practices to manage stress and life challenges, is a topic of global significance in psychological and educational research. This is particularly true in Muslim-majority societies. A robust body of literature from around the world shows that positive religious coping – such as prayer, seeking spiritual support, and reframing adversity through faith – correlates with enhanced spiritual well-being, reduced psychological distress, and greater resilience. Conversely, negative religious coping, characterized by spiritual discontent or feelings of abandonment by God, is associated with increased stress and poorer mental health outcomes. These patterns are evident across diverse populations, including Muslims, where religious and cultural contexts play a significant role in shaping coping mechanisms and their outcomes on well-being (Cohen et al., 2025; Harlianty et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, the intersection of religious coping and Islamic spiritual well-being is particularly salient among college students. This demographic navigates a complex landscape of academic pressures, identity formation, and socio-cultural transitions. While research in Indonesia has established the general benefits of religious coping and spiritual well-being – such as improved mental health, academic resilience, and social adjustment – most studies have focused on broader or different populations, including adolescents, religious educators, or healthcare workers. Notably, interventions integrating religious literacy and Islamic values into educational settings have shown promise in fostering holistic development and psychosocial support. However, the specific mechanisms and outcomes for college students remain underexplored (Chanifah et al., 2021; French et al., 2022; Hamka et al., 2022; Hamka et al., 2025; Zuhdi & Dobson, 2025; Zuhdi & Syarief, 2023).

Despite the aforementioned developments, a substantial knowledge gap persists regarding the comprehensive relationship between religious coping and Islamic spiritual well-being among Indonesian college students. This research has the potential to significantly impact the academic community, as it aims to fill this gap and provide a more culturally accurate understanding of Islamic spiritual well-being among Indonesian Muslim youth. Although previous measurements have been validated in Indonesia, most demonstrate only limited cultural accuracy and low applicability to an academic setting. Another factor is the contextual dynamics of defining Islamic spiritual well-being, which require further research to explore additional dimensions relative to the lived experiences of Indonesian Muslim students. Overall, it emphasizes the existing gap in the need to integrate culturally oriented approaches into support systems for Indonesian Muslim youth (Kholis et al., 2022).

This study seeks to address these gaps by systematically examining the role of religious coping in shaping Islamic spiritual well-being among Indonesian college students. By synthesizing existing literature and contextual insights, the research aims to generate culturally relevant knowledge that can inform the development of targeted

educational and mental health interventions. Ultimately, this work aspires to deepen our understanding of how religious coping functions as both a protective factor and a catalyst for holistic well-being in the unique and intriguing context of Indonesian higher education (Ghufron et al., 2024; Hilmi et al., 2020).

## 2. Method

To assess the study's core constructs, participants completed two established self-report measures. The Religious Coping scale (Adam & Ward, 2016) was administered to evaluate the application of religious beliefs and behaviours in managing stressors, utilizing a multi-item Likert-type format. Concurrently, the Islamic Spiritual Well-Being scale (Bagis et al., 2024) was used to assess spiritual well-being from an Islamic perspective, including facets such as connection with the Divine and life purpose. Both instruments possess established psychometric validity. Recruitment was conducted through a multifaceted approach, using both online announcements and in-class invitations across several universities to ensure a diverse participant pool, representing a wide range of perspectives. Eligible individuals who provided digital informed consent completed a comprehensive survey on a secure, web-based platform that included a demographic section alongside the two primary scales. The data collection process, which was both voluntary and anonymous, required approximately 15-20 minutes per participant and continued until the predetermined sample size was met. Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 28). The initial analysis involved generating descriptive statistics to characterise the sample and the primary variables. This was followed by a Pearson product-moment correlation analysis to examine the linear relationship between the total scores for religious coping and Islamic spiritual well-being, after verifying the linearity assumption. A two-tailed test with a significance level of  $p < .05$  was applied for this analysis.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Our study aimed to investigate the relationship between religious coping and Islamic spiritual well-being. The preliminary analyses examined the statistical assumptions underlying the planned parametric analyses. The normality assumption was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with Lilliefors' correction (Table 1). Results indicated that both Religious Coping ( $D = 0.086$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and Islamic Spiritual Well-Being ( $D = 0.079$ ,  $p < .001$ ) significantly deviated from normal distribution. However, given the substantial sample size ( $N = 398$ ) and the robustness of parametric tests to normality violations with large samples, proceeding with parametric analyses was deemed appropriate (DeGhett, 2014).

**Table 1.** Test of Statistical Assumptions for Religious Coping and Islamic Spiritual Well-being

Assumption	Test Used	Variable (s)	Test Statistic	<i>P</i> value	Conclusion
Normality	Komogorov-Smirnov	Religious Coping	$D = 0.086$	$< .001$	Violated
Normality	Komogorov-Smirnov	Islamic Spiritual Well-being	$D = 0.079$	$< .001$	Violated

Linearity	ANOVA Deviation from Linearity	Religious Coping x ISWB	F(31, 365) = 0.920	.593	Met
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The linearity assumption between religious coping and Islamic Spiritual Well-Being was examined using an ANOVA with a deviation-from-linearity component. The non-significant deviation from linearity ( $F(31, 365) = 0.920, p = .593$ ) provides strong support for the use of linear-based statistical analyses, as it confirms that a linear function adequately represents the relationship between these variables. This finding is particularly significant as it supports the use of correlation and regression techniques in the subsequent analyses. Despite the violation of normality assumptions, the combination of a large sample size and confirmed linearity provides a robust and sufficient justification for employing parametric analyses in subsequent investigations of the relationship between religious coping and Islamic spiritual well-being. This well-founded decision ensures the validity and reliability of the analysis.

**Table 2.** Bivariate Correlation between Religious Coping and Islamic Spiritual Well-being

Variable	M	SD	1	2
Religious Coping	67.92	7.75	-	
Islamic Spiritual Well-being	93.96	9.92	.763**	-

Note. N = 398. \*\*p < .001 (two-tailed). Pearson correlation coefficients are reported.

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between religious coping and Islamic spiritual well-being among university students (Table 2). The results revealed a strong, statistically significant positive correlation between religious coping and Islamic spiritual well-being ( $r(396) = .763, p < .001$ ). According to conventional effect size guidelines (Cohen, 1988), this correlation represents a large effect size, indicating that approximately 58.2% of the variance in Islamic spiritual well-being scores can be explained by religious coping. This substantial relationship suggests that students who employ religious coping strategies tend to report higher levels of Islamic spiritual well-being.

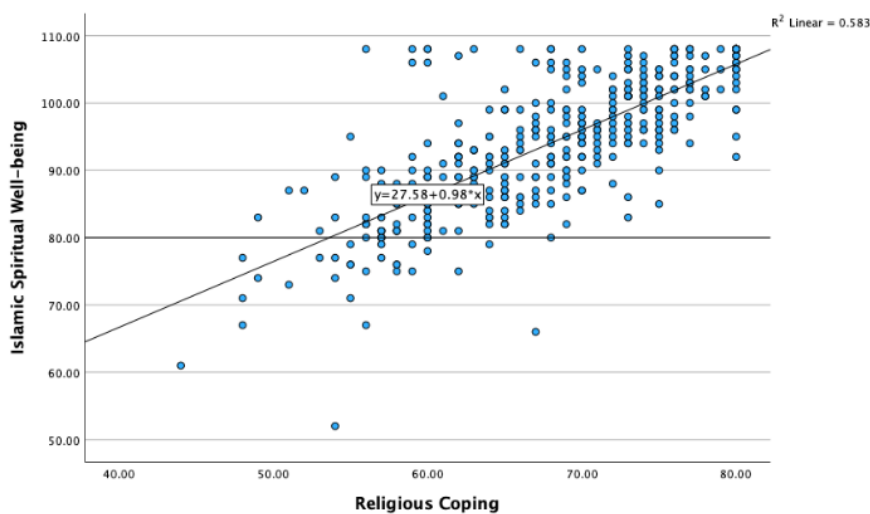
The positive correlation indicates that as religious coping increases, Islamic spiritual well-being increases correspondingly. This finding aligns with theoretical expectations that religious coping mechanisms—such as seeking spiritual support, religious purification, and positive religious reappraisal—significantly contribute to Muslims' overall spiritual well-being by providing meaning, comfort, and a sense of connection to the Divine during challenging circumstances. The large sample size ( $N = 398$ ) enhances the reliability of this finding. At the same time, the exceptionally small p-value ( $p < .001$ ) indicates that the probability of obtaining this result by chance alone is less than 0.1%, providing strong evidence for a genuine relationship between these constructs in the population.

The results revealed a significant positive correlation between these two variables. This aligns with the broader literature that highlights the beneficial role of positive religious coping in promoting mental health and resilience among Muslims (Skalisky et al., 2022). This indicates a strong, statistically significant relationship, suggesting that

higher levels of religious coping are associated with greater Islamic spiritual well-being. The findings are consistent with previous research indicating that positive religious coping is associated with better psychological outcomes and higher well-being among Muslims. For instance, positive religious coping has been associated with increased life satisfaction and positive affect (Khan et al., 2012; Abu-Raiya & Jamal, 2021). Conversely, negative religious coping has been linked to poorer psychological outcomes, such as increased stress and lower quality of life (Ghorbani et al., 2021).

Positive religious coping, which includes seeking spiritual support and reframing stressful events in a religious context, is generally associated with better psychological outcomes, such as higher life satisfaction and positive affect (Merrill et al., 2009). Negative religious coping, such as feeling punished by a higher power or spiritual discontent, tends to correlate with poorer mental health outcomes, including increased stress and negative affect (Ghorbani et al., 2016). The impact of religious coping on well-being can differ significantly across cultural contexts. For instance, international Muslim students in New Zealand exhibited higher levels of spirituality and used more religious coping strategies compared to domestic students (Gardner et al., 2014). Positive religious coping was linked to better quality of life and lower stress levels among international students, whereas negative religious coping was associated with poorer outcomes for domestic students. In a study of South African Muslims during the COVID-19 pandemic, positive religious coping was a strong predictor of psychological well-being, highlighting the role of cultural and situational factors in shaping coping mechanisms.

Figure 1., serves as a strong visual confirmation of the prior correlation analysis, illustrating the strong positive linear relationship between religious coping and Islamic Spiritual Well-Being. The regression line, a powerful tool, is plotted through the data points, showcasing the predictive nature of this relationship. The coefficient of determination,  $R^2 = 0.583$ , solidifies that approximately 58.3% of the variance in Islamic Spiritual Well-Being scores can be statistically explained by its linear relationship with religious coping. This leaves about 41.7% of the variance unaccounted for by other factors not measured in this model. The high  $R^2$  value indicates a robust model and suggests that religious coping is a major predictor of Islamic Spiritual Well-Being in the studied sample.



**Figure 1.** The Relationship Between Religious Coping and Islamic Spiritual Well-Being.

#### 4. Conclusion

The strong positive correlation found in our study underscores the importance of religious coping as a significant factor in enhancing Islamic spiritual well-being. Importantly, our findings suggest that interventions aimed at enhancing positive religious coping strategies could be a practical and effective way to improve spiritual well-being among Muslim populations. In conclusion, our study contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the positive impact of religious coping on Islamic spiritual well-being. It is crucial that future research continues to explore this relationship across diverse Muslim populations, as this will help us better understand the underlying mechanisms and potential cultural variations, and potentially broaden the applicability of our findings.

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