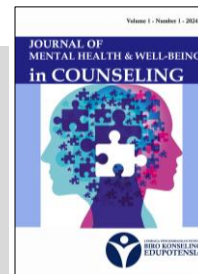


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Psychological Hardiness Among Adolescents in Islamic Boarding School Settings

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide an overview of the level of hardiness among senior high school students (*santri*) at islamic boarding school miftahul ulum ciamis. Hardiness is understood as a personality characteristic that helps individuals remain stable and adaptive when facing pressure. The research employed a descriptive quantitative approach involving one hundred senior high school students using a saturated sampling technique. Data were collected through the fifteen-item Dispositional Resilience Scale, which assesses three dimensions of hardiness: commitment, control, and challenge. The findings indicate that most students fall into the high and moderate hardiness categories, while a smaller portion belongs to the low category. In the commitment dimension, the majority of students are classified in the moderate category, whereas in the control and challenge dimensions, more students are categorized as high. The study concludes that the adaptive ability of students in responding to pressure is relatively good, although the commitment dimension still requires strengthening to maintain motivation and engagement during *pesantren* activities.



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Introduction

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) are educational institutions that require students (*santri*) to reside in dormitories, comply with strict regulations, and live under a highly disciplined system through intensive academic and religious activities. This educational environment plays a significant role in shaping students' character; however, it also has the potential to generate psychological pressure. Such pressure may arise from densely structured daily schedules, continuous academic evaluations, restrictions on the use of technology and communication facilities, as well as the demands of adapting to a collective culture within dormitory life. Educational environments characterized by high academic and structural demands are known to increase individuals' vulnerability to stress and may hinder adaptive capacity when not supported by adequate psychological resources (Jianping *et al.*, 2023). In line with this, stress among students often emerges as a result of difficulties related to the learning process and the living conditions they encounter, highlighting the need for specific psychological capacities that enable individuals to respond adaptively to stressful situations (Albakova *et al.*, 2020). During adolescence, these conditions coincide with a developmental stage marked by identity exploration, a growing need for autonomy, and emotional instability. Consequently, the pressures of life in *pesantren* may have significant impacts if not balanced by effective self-regulation abilities (Maddi, 2013).

Although all students are exposed to similar demands and situations, their responses are not uniform. Some students are able to remain emotionally stable, resilient, and actively engaged in learning, while others exhibit signs of academic exhaustion, decreased motivation, and withdrawal from social activities. These differences in responses to stress are closely related to levels of hardiness or psychological resilience (Kobasa,

1979). Hardiness is conceptualized as a personality characteristic that enables individuals to tolerate stress, persist in the face of adversity, and perceive environmental demands as part of a personal growth process (Kobasa, 1982; Harefa, 2018). Individuals with high levels of hardiness tend to approach challenging situations constructively, whereas those with low hardiness are more vulnerable to stress and burnout. Variations in hardiness levels indicate that individuals' capacity to respond to pressures within educational environments is strongly influenced by their psychological resources, with hardiness playing a crucial role in helping individuals manage stress and maintain adaptive functioning (Albakova *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, hardiness is also understood as a psychological resource that enables individuals to preserve internal balance and adaptive functioning when confronted with highly stressful environmental conditions (Osadchyi *et al.*, 2021).

The concept of hardiness consists of three main components, namely commitment, control, and challenge, commonly referred to as the 3Cs (Kobasa *et al.*, 1982). Commitment is defined as a high level of psychological involvement in one's activities, enabling individuals to remain responsible and connected to their environment despite experiencing pressure. Control refers to the belief that individuals are able to influence situations through their own decisions and actions, thereby preventing feelings of helplessness or victimization by circumstances. Meanwhile, challenge reflects the perspective that change, difficulty, and uncertainty are not threats but opportunities for learning and personal growth (Maddi, 2013). These three components work synergistically to shape individuals' psychological hardiness when confronting problems. Such characteristics help individuals manage stress more adaptively and maintain their capacity for adjustment when facing environmental demands, particularly within educational contexts characterized by high academic pressure (Kamtsios & Bartone, 2021). Furthermore, hardiness has been shown to function as a protective factor that mitigates the impact of stress on the development of anxiety and depression, allowing individuals with high levels of hardiness to maintain psychological well-being even under stressful conditions (Bartone, *et al.*, 2022). Hardiness functions as a protective factor against psychological disorders. Individuals with high levels of hardiness have been shown to possess greater resistance to stress, more stable psychological well-being, and optimal adjustment capabilities within both school and dormitory environments (Nurzakiah *et al.*, 2023; Suri *et al.*, 2024). Consistent with these findings, (Senewiratne *et al.*, 2025) emphasize that cognitive hardiness constitutes a psychological resource that enables individuals to cognitively appraise stressors through the dimensions of commitment, control, and challenge, thereby determining adaptive coping strategies and enhancing psychological well-being.

Hardiness is regarded as a psychological resource that helps individuals endure and function adaptively amid prolonged demands and pressures (Bartone, *et al.*, 2022). Research by (Andronnikova, 2021) demonstrates that hardiness has a significant positive relationship with tolerance for uncertainty among adolescents, thereby enabling them to face stressful situations with greater confidence, reducing anxiety levels, and enhancing adaptive capacities. Within the context of Islamic boarding school education (*pesantren*), these findings are particularly relevant, as students frequently encounter various demands and uncertainties across academic, social, and spiritual domains. Consequently, hardiness becomes a crucial factor in sustaining students' learning motivation, discipline, and commitment to religious practices. In line with this perspective, (Hosseini *et al.*, 2022) emphasize that hardiness functions as a psychological protective factor in assisting individuals to manage prolonged stress. Conceptually, hardiness is understood as a personality characteristic that enables individuals to maintain commitment, regulate responses to pressure, and interpret challenges in an adaptive manner (Buheji, 2023). Furthermore, hardiness is regarded as a psychological resource that helps students maintain psychological resilience when facing academic pressure and diverse environmental demands. This role is reinforced by empirical findings indicating that hardiness contributes to individuals' ability to manage academic demands more adaptively (Agustina & Deastuti, 2023), although studies that specifically describe the hardiness profile of senior high school students (*santri*) in Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) settings remain limited. In addition, hardiness is understood as a three-dimensional psychological construct encompassing commitment, control, and challenge, which synergistically shape individuals' resilience in dealing with environmental pressures (Vagni *et al.*, 2022). The protective role of hardiness is also evident in its ability to reduce the impact of emotional demands on psychological exhaustion, thereby enabling individuals to continue functioning adaptively in highly stressful situations (Mazzetti *et al.*, 2020). These findings are consistent with research demonstrating that individuals with higher levels of hardiness tend to exhibit better psychological well-being when confronted with academic demands and environmental stressors (Anjum, 2022).

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study was conducted to provide an overview of hardiness among senior high school students (*santri*) at Pondok Pesantren Miftahul Ulum Ciamis through a descriptive analysis of the three dimensions of hardiness, namely commitment, control, and challenge. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a foundation for the development of mental development programs and educational services that support students' psychological resilience during their life in the Islamic boarding school.

Method

Research Design

The research design describes the type of approach used in accordance with the research objectives. This study employs a descriptive quantitative design because it aims to portray psychological phenomena as they are based on numerical measurement. A descriptive quantitative design is typically used when the researcher intends to identify an overview of a variable without providing treatment or manipulation, and without examining relationships or the effectiveness of an intervention (Sugiyono, 2013). In this study, the design is applied to describe the level of hardiness among high school students at the Islamic boarding school Miftahul Ulum Ciamis, allowing the distribution of scores across high, moderate, and low categories to be clearly identified.

Population and Sample

The population refers to the group of subjects targeted in the study, while the sample represents a portion of that population that is analyzed. The population in this research consists of all Islamic senior high school students at the Islamic boarding school Miftahul Ulum Ciamis. The boarding school environment, with its intensive activities and strict regulations, can potentially become a source of psychological pressure for students, making the mapping of hardiness an important focus (Maddi, 2013). All members of the population were included as the research sample, totaling 100 respondents, to obtain a holistic picture of variations in psychological hardiness, both among students with high, moderate, and low levels of hardiness. The use of a full sample also increases the accuracy of the psychological profile of the group because every element of the population is represented.

Setting or Research Context

Sampling technique is used to explain how the researcher determined the research sample. This study employed a saturated sampling technique, which is a sampling method that involves all members of the population when the population size is relatively small or still manageable to be fully included (Sugiyono, 2013). The use of saturated sampling ensures that all students have equal opportunities to become respondents and eliminates the risk of sample selection bias. This technique is also in line with the purpose of descriptive research, which aims to provide an objective overview of the psychological condition of the group as a whole.

Instruments or Data Collection Techniques

The research instrument functions as a tool to collect data in accordance with the variables being studied. In this study, the researcher used the Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS-15), developed by (Bartone, 2007), to measure the level of hardiness among students. This scale was chosen because it has been widely applied in academic research as well as in environments with high psychological pressure. DRS-15 consists of three main components of hardiness, namely commitment, control, and challenge. The commitment component refers to the extent to which individuals remain engaged in the activities they undertake; control relates to an individual's belief in their ability to influence situations or outcomes; while challenge describes how individuals view changes as opportunities for growth (Maddi, 2013). In general, the higher the score on these three components, the higher the individual's level of hardiness. The validity and reliability testing of the instrument was carried out using Winsteps software with the Rasch Model approach. The analysis results showed that 27 items were declared valid and 16 items were invalid. Furthermore, the Person Reliability value of 0.87 and the Item Reliability value of 0.98 indicate that the instrument has a good level of reliability and is suitable for use in this study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the methods used to process collected data in order to answer the research objectives. In quantitative research, analysis techniques may include descriptive statistics to depict the trends of a phenomenon, or significance tests to examine changes before and after an intervention. In qualitative research, data analysis can involve thematic analysis to understand participants' subjective experiences based on patterns of meaning emerging from interviews or observations. The choice of analysis technique should align with the research design and the intended objectives, ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the phenomenon within the research context (Sugiyono, 2013).

In this study, data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, specifically calculating frequencies and percentages for each category of hardiness scores obtained through the Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS-15). This scale, developed by (Bartone, 2007), has been widely used to assess psychological hardiness based on the three main components of hardiness. This technique was chosen because the aim of the study was to empirically determine the level of hardiness among senior high school students at Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in Ciamis, without examining relationships or effects between variables. The analysis process began with scoring according to the instrument guidelines, followed by grouping the scores into three categories

high, moderate, and low based on the predetermined score ranges. Using descriptive statistics, the distribution of scores for each aspect of commitment, control, and challenge could be analyzed in depth, consistent with the foundational concept of hardiness as described by Kobasa & Maddi (1982) and further emphasized by (Maddi, 2013), which states that psychological hardiness is shaped through engagement, self-control, and the perception of challenges. Thus, the hardiness characteristics of the students can be comprehensively summarized based on the trends observed in these three aspects.

Results

This study aimed to describe the level of hardiness among high school students at the Islamic boarding school Miftahul Ulum Ciamis. Data were collected from 100 participants using a hardiness instrument consisting of three core dimensions: commitment, control, and challenge. The scores obtained from the respondents were then categorized into three levels high, moderate, and low based on the predetermined scoring ranges. The overall distribution of hardiness scores is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Overall Description of Hardiness Among High School Students

Score Range	Score Range	Frequency (f)	Percentage
140 – 174	High	41	41,00%
99 – 139	Moderate	43	43,00%
64 – 98	Low	16	16,00%
Total		100	100%

Based on the results presented in Table 1, the moderate category had the highest number of respondents, accounting for 43.00%. The high category followed with 41.00%, while the low category represented 16.00% of the respondents. These findings indicate that the majority of students fall within the moderate to high hardiness range. In addition to examining the total scores, this study also described the distribution of hardiness across its three main dimensions. The score distribution for each dimension is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Hardiness Based on Its Dimensions Among High School Students

No	Dimension	High		Moderate		Low	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	<i>Commitment</i>	24	24,00%	57	57,00%	19	19,00%
2.	<i>Control</i>	50	50,00%	41	41,00%	9	9,00%
3.	<i>Challenge</i>	51	51,00%	38	38,00%	11	11,00%

Based on the data presented in the table, the distribution of hardiness levels across the three dimensions commitment, control, and challenge can be clearly observed. In the commitment dimension, 24 students (24.00%) fall into the high category, 57 students (57.00%) are in the moderate category, and 19 students (19.00%) are categorized as low. These results indicate that most students demonstrate a moderate level of commitment. In the control dimension, 50 students (50.00%) are classified in the high category, followed by 41 students (41.00%) in the moderate category, and 9 students (9.00%) in the low category. Thus, the largest proportion in this dimension is found in the high category. Similarly, in the challenge dimension, 51 students (51.00%) are in the high category, 38 students (38.00%) are in the moderate category, and 11 students (11.00%) fall into the low category. This shows that the challenge dimension also has the highest proportion in the high category.

Overall, the distribution across the three dimensions reveals variation in the levels of hardiness among students. The control and challenge dimensions are dominated by the high category, whereas the commitment dimension is dominated by the moderate category. These findings illustrate the differing levels of hardiness expressed in each dimension, as reflected in the frequency and percentage distribution.

Discussions

The results of the study indicate that the level of hardiness among senior high school students (*santri*) at Pondok Pesantren Miftahul Ulum Ciamis is predominantly in the moderate to high categories. These findings suggest that the majority of students possess adequate capabilities to cope with pressure, adapt to the demanding routines of pesantren life, and maintain consistency in fulfilling both academic and religious responsibilities. The disciplined environment and intensive activities characteristic of pesantren are presumed to contribute to the development of these adaptive capacities. This finding is consistent with the study by (Nastasia *et al.*, 2023), which states that hardiness is a personality characteristic that plays a crucial role in helping students manage

academic pressure. In addition, (Cropley *et al.*, 2020) found that hardiness can be optimally developed through individuals' engagement in environments characterized by high demands and structured activities. In line with these findings, (Totskiy *et al.*, 2021) also demonstrated that hardiness functions as a psychological resource that helps students cope with stressful conditions, enhances self-control, and supports individuals' adaptive capacities in situations marked by high demands and uncertainty.

When viewed from the perspective of hardiness theory, individuals with psychological hardiness generally demonstrate high involvement in activities (*commitment*), the ability to regulate themselves and influence situations (*control*), and a tendency to perceive challenges as opportunities for growth (*challenge*). This pattern is evident in the findings of the present study. Most students showed a relatively strong commitment to pesantren activities, were able to maintain self-control when facing pressure, and tended to interpret challenging situations as part of the learning process. These findings indicate that, overall, students possess sufficient mental readiness to cope with difficulties and are not easily discouraged despite being in an environment characterized by high demands. This is in line with (Rasool, 2020) view that individuals with high levels of hardiness are actively engaged in life, capable of exerting control over situations, and perceive pressure as an opportunity for personal growth. These findings are further supported by (Londo *et al.*, 2023), who emphasized that hardiness functions as a psychological resource that helps individuals maintain adaptive functioning and psychological resilience under stressful conditions. They are also consistent with the findings of (Desiningrum & Kurniawati, 2023), which demonstrate that hardiness plays a role in supporting individuals' psychological adaptation when facing stressful and challenging situations. Similarly, (Antika *et al.*, 2020) found that hardiness, through the dimensions of commitment, control, and challenge, helps individuals cope with stress and demands in an adaptive manner. Hardiness serves as an important psychological resource in helping students manage the various demands and pressures encountered during life in Islamic boarding schools. It encompasses a commitment to remain engaged, the ability to regulate oneself, and a tendency to interpret difficulties as opportunities for learning and personal development. This is consistent with the findings of (Dymecka *et al.*, 2020), which indicate that hardiness functions as a protective factor against stress and is associated with better adaptive capacity in stressful situations. Therefore, hardiness represents a form of psychological capital that supports students' mental resilience and positive adaptation to environments characterized by high demands.

Nevertheless, this study also found that a proportion of students fell into the low hardiness category. This condition indicates potential difficulties in emotion regulation, lower self-confidence, and a tendency to avoid challenging situations. These findings are consistent with (Azadi *et al.*, 2021) who reported that individuals with low levels of hardiness tend to have lower stress tolerance and employ less adaptive coping strategies when facing psychological pressure. In addition, (Liu Chen, 2024) suggested that low hardiness is associated with increased vulnerability to mental health problems and greater difficulty in coping with psychological demands. These findings are further supported by (Dorodnov *et al.*, 2021) who demonstrated that low levels of commitment and control as components of hardiness are associated with individuals' inability to respond effectively to stress, thereby increasing the need for targeted psychological interventions and support. This variation indicates that psychological hardiness has not developed uniformly among students, highlighting the need for more targeted support and guidance for individuals with higher levels of vulnerability.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study may serve as a consideration for school counselors, pesantren supervisors, and school administrators in designing developmental programs aimed at strengthening students' hardiness. This is consistent with (Febrianingrum *et al.*, 2021), who stated that hardiness plays a crucial role in helping individuals cope with stressful conditions, reduce negative emotional responses, and encourage persistence and growth in challenging situations. These findings are further supported by (Risan *et al.*, 2022), who explained that hardiness represents a coping style involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes that functions as a buffer against stress and helps individuals appraise challenging situations more adaptively, engage proactively in tasks, and manage pressure effectively, thereby supporting personal growth. Furthermore, (Hu *et al.*, 2022) emphasized that hardiness serves as a psychological resource that contributes to psychological adjustment and improvements in individuals' quality of life, particularly when facing role-related pressures and daily life demands. Therefore, strengthening hardiness through structured developmental programs represents a strategic approach to supporting students' well-being and resilience.

This study has several limitations. Data collection was conducted in only one Islamic boarding school, making the findings highly influenced by the culture, regulations, and educational system specific to that environment. In addition, the descriptive research design does not allow for the identification of factors underlying variations in students' levels of hardiness. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve Islamic boarding schools from different regions, incorporate additional psychological variables such as social support, coping strategies, or motivation, and employ research designs capable of examining determinant factors as well as the effectiveness of interventions aimed at enhancing hardiness.

Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for the development of educational services and student guidance within the the Islamic boarding school environment. The fact that most students fall within the moderate to high categories of hardiness indicates that their psychological resilience is fairly well established. This condition can serve as an essential asset for students in coping with academic pressures and the demands of living in a boarding school setting. These results also provide an opportunity for the the Islamic boarding school to maintain and strengthen its existing guidance programs, particularly activities that emphasize discipline, responsibility, and the ability to view challenges in a positive manner. However, the presence of students in the low-hardiness category shows that psychological resilience is not evenly distributed among all students. This group requires special attention and more intensive support. In practical terms, schools and the Islamic boarding school can develop preventive and promotive programs such as emotional regulation training, stress management workshops, group counseling, and constructive problem-solving activities. Such programs can help strengthen the commitment, control, and challenge components of hardiness, enabling students to become more prepared in dealing with various academic and daily life demands. The implementation of these interventions is expected not only to improve psychological resilience but also to support students' well-being and adjustment within the the Islamic boarding school setting.

From a scientific standpoint, the findings of this study affirm that hardiness is a relevant construct to examine within dormitory-based educational contexts. These results may serve as a foundation for future research exploring factors that contribute to hardiness, such as social support, religiosity, parenting patterns, and coping styles. Further studies may also focus on evaluating the effectiveness of interventions designed to enhance hardiness, whether through guidance and counseling approaches or life-skills development programs. Such evaluations are important to determine the extent to which interventions can strengthen the components of commitment, control, and challenge in both the short and long term. In addition, future research has the potential to produce the Islamic boarding school -based psychological guidance model that can serve as a reference for similar educational institutions in fostering students' psychological resilience in a systematic and measurable manner.

Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate that most high school students at the Islamic boarding school miftahul ulum ciamis possess hardiness levels within the moderate to high categories. This suggests that the majority of students are able to adapt to the academic, social, and spiritual demands of the the Islamic boarding school environment; remain committed to their daily activities; and view challenges as opportunities for growth. However, the presence of a small group of students with low hardiness levels shows that psychological resilience is not yet evenly developed and still requires targeted support. These findings are significant because they highlight hardiness as a psychological resource that helps students manage pressure and maintain psychological well-being amidst the structured and intensive routines of the Islamic boarding school life. The study contributes to the scientific literature by providing empirical evidence within the Islamic boarding school -based educational context a setting that remains relatively underexplored in hardiness research. The unique characteristics of the Islamic boarding school life, including strict discipline, spiritual routines, and strong social dynamics, offer a new perspective for understanding the development of psychological resilience in adolescents. Based on these findings, strengthening hardiness among students should become one of the key areas of development within the Islamic boarding school. Interventions aimed at improving emotional regulation, self-control, problem-solving abilities, and positive thinking have the potential to help students cope with pressure more adaptively. Future research is recommended to explore the factors influencing hardiness in greater depth and to examine the effectiveness of intervention programs designed for students with lower levels of hardiness.

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