

Both Balm and Burden: Religiosity as a Double-Edged Resource in Learning Burnout at Indonesian Islamic Boarding Schools

Nurussakinah Daulay

Pascasarjana UIN Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

nurussakinahdaulay@uinsu.ac.id

Rusydi Ananda

Pascasarjana UIN Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

rusydiananda@uinsu.ac.id

Annisa Riftah Andreani

Pascasarjana UIN Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

annisarifтахandreani@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: Nurussakinah Daulay

Article history: Received: July 10, 2026 | Revised: August 25, 2026 | Available Online: September 01, 2026

Abstract

Studies on adolescent learning burnout draw mainly on a demands-resources lens that treats religiosity, when considered at all, as a protective resource, and most evidence on it comes from single-vantage-point, quantitative designs that leave burnout's lived, ecological texture unexamined. This qualitative study investigated how learning burnout is generated, mitigated, and managed within two Islamic "Plus" boarding senior high schools in Medan, Indonesia, drawing on convergent accounts from guidance counselors, dormitory supervisors, teachers, and students. Sixteen participants took part in semi-structured interviews, supplemented by document review and field observation; the analysis followed reflexive thematic analysis and the COREQ reporting standard. Findings showed that burnout arose from a compounded academic-religious load under an unbroken schedule, intensified by continuous peer comparison, parental expectation, and poor heat and sanitation conditions. Teachers mobilized relational and spiritual resources, but the same disciplinary authority that enforced dormitory rules bounded students' willingness to disclose distress. The most distinctive finding was that religiosity operated as a dual-function element: devotional practices that consoled students could also stigmatize their exhaustion as ingratitude or spiritual deficiency once they hardened into a performance standard. Students countered this through peer solidarity, reframing fatigue as human rather than a sign of weak faith. These findings extend the study's demands-resources model by showing that an internalized institutional ideal can migrate between the demand and resource functions, with implications for counseling practice, workload design, and teacher preparation in faith-based residential schools.

Keywords: learning burnout; religiosity; Islamic boarding school; demands-resources model.

Introduction

Learning burnout has moved from the margins of educational psychology to the center of contemporary concern about adolescent well-being. Conceptualized as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, cynicism toward schoolwork, and a corroding sense of inadequacy as a student, school burnout is not ordinary tiredness but a chronic response to sustained academic demands that outstrip a student's resources.¹ The consequences reach well beyond the classroom. Longitudinal evidence links school-related burnout to later depressive symptoms and to disengagement that shapes subsequent educational and occupational trajectories.² Academic stress in young people also carries somatic correlates: functional abdominal pain, for instance, tracks stress rather than academic performance.³ Burnout is therefore a developmental risk. The demands-resources logic that frames it points to both sides of the ledger: the load students carry, and the personal, social, and institutional resources available to help them carry it.⁴

This study is organized around the study demands–resources (SD-R) model, the educational adaptation of the broader job demands–resources (JD-R) tradition that Salmela-Aro and colleagues have used to theorize school burnout.⁵ The model rests on a simple yet generative assumption: any learning environment can be described in terms of two broad classes of conditions. Demands are features of schooling that require sustained cognitive and emotional effort and therefore entail physiological or psychological costs: heavy workloads, time pressure, high-stakes assessment, and disciplinary control.⁶

¹ K Salmela-Aro, "School Burnout and Engagement: Lessons from a Longitudinal Study in Finland," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd ed. (Elsevier, 2015), 59–64, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.26072-8>.

² K Salmela-Aro, "School-Related Burnout during Educational Tracks: Antecedents and Consequences," in *Transitions from School to Work: Globalization, Individualization, and Patterns of Diversity*, ed. I Schoon and R K Silbereisen (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 293–311; X Tang, K Upadyaya, and K Salmela-Aro, "School Burnout and Psychosocial Problems among Adolescents: Grit as a Resilience Factor," *Journal of Adolescence* 86 (2021): 77–89, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2020.12.002>.

³ X Bao et al., "Functional Abdominal Pain Disorders in Children in Southern Anhui Province, China Are Related to Academic Stress Rather than Academic Performance," *BMC Pediatrics* 23, no. 1 (2023): 333, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12887-023-04154-3>.

⁴ B Kim et al., "Relationships between Social Support and Student Burnout: A Meta-Analytic Approach," *Stress and Health* 34, no. 1 (2018): 127–34, <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.2771>; Salmela-Aro, "School Burnout and Engagement: Lessons from a Longitudinal Study in Finland."

⁵ K Salmela-Aro and K Upadyaya, "School Burnout and Engagement in the Context of Demands–Resources Model," *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 84, no. 1 (2014): 137–51, <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12018>.

⁶ Yovie Djundjuran, Moh Ali, and Saefudin Zuhri, "Islamic Religious Education and Student Academic Achievement and Motivation: A Systematic Review of Pedagogical Strategies and Value Internalization Mechanisms," *FIKROTUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Manajemen Islam* 15, no. 01 (2026): 58–78.

Resources are the features that help students meet goals, offset demands, or fuel motivation and growth: supportive teachers and peers, a sense of competence and autonomy, and, as this study argues, spiritual and communal meaning.⁷ The model theorizes an energy-depletion pathway: when demands are chronically high, and the resources needed to meet them are lacking, the effort of coping erodes a student's reserves, and the depletion surfaces as the three-dimensional syndrome of exhaustion, cynicism, and inadequacy.⁸ A parallel motivational pathway runs in the opposite direction, in which abundant resources cultivate engagement rather than exhaustion. The balance between demands and the resources available to absorb them predicts burnout, not the level of demand alone.⁹ This balance logic makes the residential Islamic school analytically useful: demands and resources concentrate unusually tightly there, and one element, religiosity, can sit on both sides of the ledger at once.

Residential schooling intensifies both sides of that ledger. Boarding students study for longer hours, live in continuous proximity to the same peers, surrender much of their daily autonomy to an institutional timetable, and absorb the emotional cost of separation from family. In the Indonesian context, research on pondok pesantren has shown that these very features leave boarding students more exposed to boredom and to depressive symptoms than their day-schooling counterparts, even as peer attachment and academic self-efficacy operate as protective resources within the same setting.¹⁰ The residential environment is not a neutral backdrop. It concentrates demands and resources in the same physical and social space, which makes the boarding school an informative site for studying how burnout is generated and managed.¹¹

The Islamic "Plus" boarding school sharpens this picture. Institutions of this kind pair a demanding national academic curriculum with an equally demanding religious program, including Qur'anic memorization (*tahfidz*), language targets, and a densely scheduled devotional routine that begins before dawn and continues into the evening. The

⁷ Faisol Faisol, Budi Santoso, and Nailah Amaliya, "Implemetasi Full Day School Terhadap Pembentukan Moral Siswa SMP Plus Nurul Hikmah Pamekasan," *Molang: Journal Of Islamic Education* 1, no. 01 (2023): 10–26.

⁸ Salmela-Aro, "School Burnout and Engagement: Lessons from a Longitudinal Study in Finland."

⁹ Kim et al., "Relationships between Social Support and Student Burnout: A Meta-Analytic Approach."

¹⁰ L Mudzkiyyah, A Wahib, and S Bulut, "Well-Being among Boarding School Students: Academic Self-Efficacy and Peer Attachment as Predictors," *Psikohumaniora* 7, no. 1 (2022): 27–38, <https://doi.org/10.21580/pjpp.v7i1.10374>.

¹¹ Nur Pangesti Apriliyana, "Transforming Education through Deep Learning Design: Integrating Four Key Elements in School Practice," *Molang: Journal Islamic Education* 3, no. 1 (2025): 19–27.

school asks students to excel academically and meet religious and character-formation targets simultaneously, under close disciplinary supervision. Recent scholarship characterizes academic stress in Islamic boarding schools as a growing problem, driven by intense academic pressure, strict institutional discipline, and social-adaptation demands converging at once. This scholarship also warns that prevailing explanations lean heavily on Western psychological models that may not travel cleanly into non-Western, faith-saturated educational cultures.¹² The pesantren-type school interweaves learning with religious growth and communal life: the same institution that imposes the load also supplies a repertoire of spiritual and communal meanings through which students interpret and endure it.¹³

That repertoire is double-edged, and the coping literature has only partly reckoned with it. On the resource side, spirituality and religious coping help students manage academic stress across a range of settings. Qualitative accounts describe college students drawing on prayer and meaning-making;¹⁴ other studies link religiosity and positive religious coping to better psychological well-being among Muslim university students;¹⁵ and faith-based practices such as dhikr appear in Indonesian therapeutic settings.¹⁶ Structured affective interventions, including gratitude programs, have reduced academic stress among high school students in Muslim-majority contexts, likewise.¹⁷ On the demand side, however, religious framing can also weigh on students. Negative religious

¹² A N Aziz et al., “Managing Academic Stress in Islamic Boarding Schools: Toward a Value-Based Framework Rooted in Panca Jiwa Pondok,” *Multidisciplinary Reviews* 9, no. 7 (2026): e2026360, <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2026360>.

¹³ Khamida et al., “The Role of Motivation and Spiritual Meaning in Predicting Bullying Behavior among Islamic Boarding School Students,” *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (2026): 312–29, <https://doi.org/10.31538/NZH.V9I2.153>.

¹⁴ A U Ekwonye, N Sheikhomar, and V Phung, “Spirituality: A Psychological Resource for Managing Academic-Related Stressors,” *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 23, no. 9 (2020): 826–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2020.1823951>; M Wnuk, “Bond with God as a Moderator of the Relationship between Prayer and Stress of Chilean Students,” *Religions* 14, no. 3 (2023): 345, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14030345>.

¹⁵ A Che Rahimi, R S Bakar, and M A Mohd Yasin, “Psychological Well-Being of Malaysian University Students during COVID-19 Pandemic: Do Religiosity and Religious Coping Matter?,” *Healthcare (Switzerland)* 9, no. 11 (2021): 1535, <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare9111535>.

¹⁶ M A Subandi, L Chizanah, and S Subhan, “Psychotherapeutic Dimensions of an Islamic-Sufi-Based Rehabilitation Center: A Case Study,” *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 46, no. 2 (2022): 582–601, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-021-09738-1>.

¹⁷ N us Sahar, D L Baranovich, and I H A Tharbe, “Does Gratitude Work at School? Piloting the Modified Interventions for Managing Academic Stress in Pakistani High Schools,” *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 16, no. 2 (2022): 73–90, <https://doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.430>.

coping links to heightened, not reduced, academic burnout among adolescents,¹⁸ and in tightly disciplined religious institutions, the expectation to appear devout and grateful can turn chronic exhaustion into a source of guilt rather than a signal for support. Religiosity, then, may function simultaneously as a buffer and as an additional performance demand, with the same institutional element occupying both sides of the demands–resources ledger; yet this possibility remains under-theorized in the burnout literature.

Against this backdrop, three limitations in the existing evidence base define the gap this study addresses. First, the field is dominated by quantitative, variable-centered designs that measure burnout and its correlates at scale but rarely capture how burnout is experienced, interpreted, and managed from the inside. Large-sample survey studies have clarified, for instance, how parental involvement and school climate jointly predict adolescent academic burnout,¹⁹ and reviews of Islamic boarding schools have begun to map the terrain conceptually.²⁰ Thick, context-sensitive qualitative evidence from within Indonesian Islamic boarding schools themselves remains scarce. Second, most studies privilege a single vantage point, typically the student reporting on a questionnaire, leaving the school's ecology visible only in fragments. The counselor, the classroom teacher, and the dormitory supervisor each see a different face of the same phenomenon, and researchers seldom bring their perspectives together in one account. Third, studies tend to treat spiritual and religious coping as a measured trait or discrete strategy, not as an institutionally embedded practice woven into the daily rhythm of a residential religious school. Few studies examine directly the possibility that religiosity operates as both a stressor and a resource.

This study responds to those gaps through an in-depth qualitative inquiry conducted at two Islamic "Plus" boarding senior high schools in Medan, Indonesia. Rather than estimating the prevalence of burnout, it seeks to understand the phenomenon as lived and managed within a specific high-demand, religiously saturated educational ecology, drawing on convergent accounts from guidance counselors, teachers, dormitory

¹⁸ H Noh et al., "Suppressor Effects of Positive and Negative Religious Coping on Academic Burnout among Korean Middle School Students," *Journal of Religion and Health* 55, no. 1 (2016): 135–46, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-015-0007-8>.

¹⁹ W Li, M Chen, and X Zeng, "Family–School Cooperation: The Impact of Parental Involvement and Perceived School Climate on High School Students' Academic Burnout," *School Mental Health* 16, no. 4 (2024): 1360–74, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-024-09708-z>.

²⁰ Aziz et al., "Managing Academic Stress in Islamic Boarding Schools: Toward a Value-Based Framework Rooted in Panca Jiwa Pondok."

supervisors, and students across grade levels. Three questions guide the analysis. First, what factors do teachers and students identify as driving learning burnout in this boarding setting? Second, what efforts do teachers make to prevent and mitigate it? Third, what independent strategies do students themselves use to cope with it? These three complementary questions let the study treat burnout not as an isolated student attribute but as an outcome negotiated among the actors who together constitute the residential school.

The intended contribution is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study extends the study demands, resources, and ecological accounts of school burnout into a context they have rarely reached. It shows how spiritual and communal resources enter the flow of daily institutional life, and how religiosity can operate as a double-edged element that at once cushions and compounds academic demand, unsettling the clean demand–resource distinction the model normally assumes. In doing so, it responds directly to the call for culturally grounded, rather than imported, understandings of academic stress in Islamic boarding schools.²¹ Practically, the study surfaces the coping repertoires of both teachers and students, offering guidance for counseling provision, restorative scheduling, and workload design, and teacher preparation in schools that pursue academic and religious demands together. The methodology section details the qualitative design, the two research sites, the participants, and the analytic approach; the findings section follows the three guiding questions; and the discussion interprets these findings against the study's demands–resources framework and the dual function of religiosity, before turning to the study's implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative, multiple-case (collective case) design within an interpretive paradigm. It rests on the premise that learning burnout is constituted in the meanings participants attach to their daily experience, not read off from behavior alone. The design matches the study's analytic ambition, stated in the introduction: to show how a single religious-communal ecology produces both demand and resource, rather than to estimate how often burnout occurs. Two Islamic "Plus" boarding senior high schools

²¹ Aziz et al., "Managing Academic Stress in Islamic Boarding Schools: Toward a Value-Based Framework Rooted in Panca Jiwa Pondok."

served as an informative case of that ecology. Convergent accounts of four actor groups within them, guidance counselors, dormitory supervisors, teachers, and students, were assembled to show how the ecology functions as a working system. The study follows the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research.²²

Fieldwork took place at SMA Al-Azhar Plus and SMA Jabal Rahmah Mulia, two private Islamic "Plus" senior high schools operating a boarding (asrama) model in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Both schools exemplify the integrated Indonesian boarding-school design, which fuses the national academic curriculum with an intensive religious program under residential supervision.²³ This program includes Qur'anic memorization (*tahfidz*), language targets, and a tightly scheduled devotional routine. The two sites were selected purposively as instances of the high-demand, faith-saturated setting under study. Pairing them allows patterns to be examined across rather than within a single institution, which strengthens the basis for analytic rather than statistical generalization.

Participants were recruited through purposive, criterion-based sampling, with maximum variation sought across actor role, school, and grade level, to capture the ecology from complementary vantage points. Inclusion required direct, sustained involvement in the boarding school's academic or pastoral life for educators, or current enrolment and residence in the boarding program for students. The final sample comprised sixteen participants: eight educators and institutional agents and eight students in grades 10 through 12. Of the eight educators, four were women, and four were men; the eight students, however, comprised seven women and one man. The student sample was therefore heavily female-weighted: at SMA Jabal Rahmah Mulia, all participating students were female, whereas SMA Al-Azhar Plus contributed three female students and one male. This distribution reflects the gender-organized structure of residential life and the access the research team was granted at each site, rather than a deliberate analytic choice. Its implications for the findings on peer solidarity and spiritual coping are discussed in the Limitations section. The educator group deliberately spanned four institutional functions: guidance and counseling, dormitory supervision, subject and classroom teaching, and school leadership, so that burnout mitigation could be traced

²² A Tong, P Sainsbury, and J Craig, "Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ): A 32-Item Checklist for Interviews and Focus Groups," *International Journal for Quality in Health Care* 19, no. 6 (2007): 349–57, <https://doi.org/10.1093/intqhc/mzm042>.

²³ Agus Darwanto et al., "Transformation of Boarding School Management Models in Enhancing Student Accessibility and Educational Quality," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 21 (June 1, 2024): 145–64.

across the roles that enact it. The composition of the sample, including its gender distribution, is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1.
Participant profile

Group	Role	School	Gender (F / M)	n
Counselling	Guidance counselor (Guru BK)	Al-Azhar Plus; Jabal Rahmah Mulia	1 / 1	2
Dormitory	Dormitory supervisor (Pembina asrama)	Al-Azhar Plus; Jabal Rahmah Mulia	2 / 0	2
Teaching/leadership	Religious coordinator; classroom/subject teacher; principal	Al-Azhar Plus; Jabal Rahmah Mulia	1 / 3	4
Students	Grade 10	Al-Azhar Plus; Jabal Rahmah Mulia	2 / 1	3
Students	Grade 11	Jabal Rahmah Mulia	1 / 0	1
Students	Grade 12	Al-Azhar Plus; Jabal Rahmah Mulia	4 / 0	4
Total			11 / 5	16

Sample adequacy and rationale. Sample adequacy was judged not by numerical saturation but by the richness and depth of the accounts relative to the study's focused aims, an approach consistent with contemporary cautions against treating saturation as a mechanical stopping rule.²⁴ The multi-role composition of the sample was itself a deliberate source of analytic power, enabling direct examination of how students' experiences of burnout converged with and diverged from the ways adults around them perceived and managed it.

Data collection. Data were collected primarily through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, supplemented by a review of institutional documents and field observations; this combination allowed triangulation among data sources and methods. The interviews followed a role-specific protocol developed from the study's conceptual framework, covering the drivers of work-related fatigue, institutional and teacher responses, and students' own coping strategies. It began with general questions that prompted participants to share their experiences, and then used follow-up questions to explore meanings from their perspectives. Interviews were conducted in person in Indonesia by members of the research team at two school locations between August 2025 and February 2026, with the interview phase concentrated in January and February 2026. With

²⁴ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "To Saturate or Not to Saturate? Questioning Data Saturation as a Useful Concept for Thematic Analysis and Sample-Size Rationales," *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 13, no. 2 (2021): 201–16.

participants' prior consent, each interview was audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed; the average duration was 40–60 minutes. The document review covered institutional materials relevant to pastoral and extracurricular programs, while observational field notes documented the physical conditions and daily routines of dormitory life. Illustrative quotes presented in the findings were translated from Indonesian into English, taking care to preserve the meaning participants intended; the original wording was retained in the analytical notes.

Analysis. Interview transcripts, documents, and field notes were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis following the six-phase procedure of familiarisation, initial coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and reporting.²⁵ Analysis proceeded abductively rather than in a purely inductive or purely deductive fashion: coding remained open to meanings arising from the data, while the four sensitizing propositions and three research questions set out in the introduction served as interpretive lenses that organized the developing themes. In line with the study's framework, coding focused in particular on instances in which the school's religious and communal life operated as a resource, as a demand, or, most informatively, as both at once. Discrepant and negative cases, including accounts in which participants reported little burnout or experienced institutional structure as supportive rather than burdensome, were retained and examined rather than smoothed over, on the principle that such cases discipline and refine an emerging interpretation.

Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness was pursued against the established criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability Lincoln & Guba.²⁶ Credibility was supported by triangulation across four actor groups, two sites, and three data sources, so that no single vantage point determined the findings, and by the deliberate interrogation of negative cases. Transferability was supported by a thick description of the two settings and their routines, enabling readers to judge the applicability of the findings to comparable Islamic boarding contexts; the study claims analytic, not statistical, transfer. Dependability and confirmability were supported by maintaining an

²⁵ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Reflecting on Reflexive Thematic Analysis," *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 11, no. 4 (August 8, 2019): 589–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>.

²⁶ Yvonna Lincoln and Egon G Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage publications, 1985).

audit trail linking claims to coded extracts and by grounding interpretations in participants' own words rather than in the researchers' preconceptions.

Reflexivity. Following COREQ guidance, the research team reflected throughout on how its own position shaped data generation and interpretation. Familiarity with the Islamic boarding school context facilitated rapport and interpretive access. Still, it also posed the risk of normalizing demands that participants had come to take for granted, including the expectation of visible piety. The team treated this risk explicitly during analysis, using the interrogation of negative cases and the grounding of claims in participants' wording as checks against the imposition of prior assumptions.

Findings

Learning burnout was a recognized and recurring reality at both schools, described by one counselor as "a repeating curve of fatigue" (Guidance counselor, School A) and by a student as being "on a treadmill whose speed keeps increasing while your legs are already aching" (Student, grade 12, School A). The findings are organized around the three research questions: the drivers of burnout, the efforts of teachers and institutional agents to mitigate it, and the strategies students use on their own. Throughout, School A denotes SMA Al-Azhar Plus, and School B denotes SMA Jabal Rahmah Mulia. Quotations were translated from Bahasa Indonesia and are attributed by role, grade, and school to preserve anonymity.

Drivers of Learning Burnout (RQ1)

1. A compounded load under a schedule without pause

Participants attributed the origin of burnout less to the difficulty of any subject than to the accumulation of parallel academic and religious targets throughout the day, leaving almost no unstructured time. Students described a life partitioned by bells, "rise, mosque, class, until the sleep bell" (Student, grade 12, School A), beginning before dawn for tahajud and Qur'anic recitation and continuing through evening dormitory activities. The principal named the mechanism directly: "Because we are a 'Plus' school, students feel a double burden. On one side, they chase grades for university, on the other, there are memorization and language targets" (Principal, School B), adding that fatigue now appeared as a "mid-semester burnout" rather than only at term's end. The density itself, more than the content, was the strain. As a counselor put it, the dominant trigger was "a schedule without pause" (Guidance

counselor, School B). Daily assessment compounded this: "almost every subject has its own quiz. We feel there is no time to truly deepen knowledge, only to study for tomorrow's quiz" (Student, grade 12, School A), and unlike day-school peers, boarding students could not extend study into a quiet evening at home. One student captured the regime's overall cost in terms of feeling, describing the school as "a factory producing grades and memorization, not teenagers who are growing up" (Student, grade 12, School A).

2. Competition and social comparison as a continuous demand

Because students lived alongside those they were measured against, comparison operated without respite. "Competition here runs twenty-four hours," one student explained, "not only who scores highest in mathematics, but who wakes earliest for tahajud, whose memorization advances fastest" (Student, grade 12, School A). The visibility of a roommate's progress converted devotional effort into a source of guilt: seeing a peer still awake memorizing "makes me feel sinful if I have already slept" (Student, grade 12, School A). The principal framed the same dynamic institutionally as "social burnout," in which students "feel exhausted not because of the lessons but because they feel they have failed to match their friends' standard" (Principal, School B). A dormitory supervisor described peer relations as "a double-edged sword," at once "the most effective medicine for their stress" and, when strained, "a source of pressure far heavier than the lessons themselves" (Dormitory supervisor, School A), a weight intensified by the fact that in a residential setting, "there is no room to escape" a conflict.

3. Parental Expectation and the Pressure Not to Appear Weak

Expectation from home was experienced as both fuel and burden. Students were conscious of the financial and emotional investment their families had made: "Parents who send their child to an Islamic 'Plus' school have usually spent everything, in money and in prayer" (Student, grade 12, School A), and reframed that debt as motivation. Yet the same expectation constrained honest expression of distress. A younger student explained that families expected "a complete package, academically bright but also a hafiz," and that amid Medan's social prestige, "the pressure always to excel often makes me afraid to look weak or to seem bored" (Student, grade 10, School B). For some, even the monthly home visit became a source of anxiety rather than

relief: "the first question is usually about grades or memorization. If my marks have dropped even slightly, I feel I have disappointed their huge investment" (Student, grade 12, School B). Expectation was understood as love and experienced as strain in the same breath: "I feel I must keep running, not because I want to, but because I am afraid of disappointing them" (Student, grade 12, School B).

4. The double edge of religiosity: piety as demand and as stigma

The most distinctive driver concerned the institution's religious character. Devotion, elsewhere a resource, could function as an additional demand and, more corrosively, as a standard against which exhaustion was judged a moral failing. A counselor described the problem plainly: "In a faith-based environment, a chronically exhausted student is sometimes seen as lacking worship or lacking gratitude, because they have been sent to such a good place. This stigma makes students feel guilty about their own mental state" (Guidance counselor, School B), which turned the counselor's task into a double one of treating the student and re-educating the surrounding community. Students internalized this judgment precisely. One described maintaining "a mask of a strong face in front of teachers" and wishing simply for "a space to talk without it being tied to sin or discipline points" (Student, grade 10, School B). The expectation to express gratitude in a place where one was told to be grateful thus discouraged the very disclosure that might have relieved the strain.

5. Physical and environmental amplifiers

Participants consistently identified the material conditions of boarding life as amplifiers of the psychological load. The heat in Medan recurred across accounts: a supervisor observed that, in extreme heat, students "become more easily irritated, hard to focus, and apathetic," a phenomenon staff called "a short fuse" (Dormitory supervisor, School A). Everyday frictions of dense communal living, including "long bathing queues in the morning in humid weather," were named as "the student's first stress trigger before lessons even begin" (Dormitory supervisor, School B). Comfortable, cool, and clean facilities were correspondingly experienced as a resource that helped students "endure high academic pressure" (Guidance counselor, School B).

Teacher And Institutional Efforts to Mitigate Burnout (RQ2)

1. Relational, family-like support

The dominant institutional response was relational. Educators described occupying a role that exceeded teaching: "here a teacher is not merely an instructor but a substitute parent and a spiritual mentor" (Guidance counselor, School A). The near-continuous contact of residential life was mobilized as a diagnostic and supportive resource, so that a teacher "often knows a student's problem before the student speaks, just from a change in expression during recitation or meals," an interaction pitched "at the level of kinship (*ukhuwah*), not a formal transaction" (Guidance counselor, School A). Students recognized and valued this register. One described being approached gently when visibly drained, "they call me over quietly, invite me to sit with tea, and ask, 'How are you? Has something been heavy lately?'" which made her "feel valued as a human being, not just a memorizing machine" (Student, grade 12, School A). At School B, the counseling room was experienced as "a place to cool down when we are stressed," where confidentiality was trusted (Student, grade 10, School B).

2. Spiritual reframing as a resource

Educators actively mobilized the religious register as a source of relief rather than demand, reframing fatigue as spiritually meaningful. A supervisor reported using formulations such as "be patient, child, your fatigue in seeking knowledge is a form of *jihad*," which validated exhaustion as something of worshipful value (Dormitory supervisor, School A). This reframing recast the very effort that produced strain as significant, offering students an interpretation of their tiredness that dignified rather than pathologized it.

3. Pedagogical variation and emotional pedagogy

Teachers described deliberate variation to break monotony, particularly in religious instruction: replacing conventional lecturing with image-sequencing tasks for topics such as ablution and prayer movements, and with question-and-answer exchanges, so that "students are more enthusiastic in following the lesson" (Religious coordinator, School A). This was paired with an explicitly affective stance, "teaching with affection, giving attention to all, not discriminating between students," so that learners "feel comfortable and not discriminated against" (Religious coordinator, School A), and with practice-based religious learning enacted during congregational prayer (Teacher, School B).

4. Structural and institutional levers

Beyond individual practice, participants pointed to institutional mechanisms. The monthly home visit was described as "a highly effective safety valve" that prevented fatigue from accumulating into burnout, since students "know that at the end of each month they will go home" and adopt "the mentality of a marathon runner who knows where the water station is" (Guidance counselor, School B). Staff also proposed reforms they judged necessary: a scheduled "Golden Hour" of daily restorative downtime "with no academic activity, no memorisation deposit, and no supervision," to allow self-regulation (Dormitory supervisor, School A); a broadened definition of achievement that formally recognised leadership and soft skills so that less academically dominant students "retain high self-esteem and do not feel like failures" (Teacher, School B); and a formal workload-dispensation procedure for students showing burnout symptoms (Guidance counsellor, School B). Underlying these was a stated philosophy of shifting "from a policy of strict surveillance toward one of empowerment and balance" (Guidance counselor, School A).

5. The limits of institutional support: the two-faced role

Institutional support, however, was bounded by a tension the participants themselves named. Because the same adults enforced discipline and offered care, students often withheld disclosure. A counselor described "the two-faced teacher," the simultaneous role of "disciplinarian and empathetic listener," and acknowledged that students "hesitate to open up fully for fear the teacher will impose a sanction on a confidence that touches dormitory rules" (Guidance counselor, School B). Students confirmed the calculation: "I often feel unsafe being fully open. I am afraid that if I say I am bored and want to skip a dormitory activity, they will only tighten their supervision of me" (Student, grade 12, School A). Support was therefore experienced as genuine but conditional, and its reach was curtailed precisely where the institution's disciplinary function began.

Students' Independent Efforts to Cope (RQ3)

1. Spiritual self-regulation

Students mobilized the setting's devotional resources on their own terms. Several described a bodily-spiritual routine centered on the ablution area and the mosque: "the cold water is like dousing a fire in my head... then I sit leaning against a pillar in the

mosque, close my eyes, and think of nothing" (Student, grade 12, School A). A quiet sunset walk was used "to be grateful that I am still strong enough to get through this day" (Student, grade 11, School B). What is analytically significant here is not the activity but its ownership: the same devotional apparatus that operated as an imposed demand and moral yardstick in 4.1.4 was, when self-initiated and stripped of any performance or assessment, experienced as restorative. The decisive variable was therefore volition rather than the practice itself, and the religious environment functioned unambiguously as a self-directed resource, a means of regaining composure within the institution rather than as a means of escape from it.

2. Peer solidarity and humor

Peers were repeatedly named as the most effective source of relief, often more so than staff. "I am more comfortable confiding in my roommates," one student explained, "because we share the same fate, they will not judge... this peer support is what actually keeps me going, not guidance from teachers" (Student, grade 10, School B). Shared laughter functioned as deliberate recovery: gathering in a circle before lights-out to discuss "anything but memorization or assignments" was described as "the best healing," after which "the burden on my shoulders simply falls away" (Student, grade 12, School B). Some formalized this into a reciprocal pact with "one close friend on the same wavelength... when I am lazy, she pulls me to the mosque; when she is down, I encourage her" (Student, grade 12, School B). Staff read the same behavior, including minor rule-bending to relieve boredom, as "survival solidarity" (Guidance counselor, School B). The interpretive point is that the peer relations documented as a driver of comparison-based strain in 4.1.2 were here deliberately reconstituted as a horizontal resource. The mechanism turned on the removal of evaluation: the phrase "same fate... will not judge" locates the relief precisely in the suspension of the mutual visibility and ranking that produced the strain in the first place. That students privileged this horizontal support over the vertical support of staff is consequential in light of the disciplinary ambivalence set out in 4.2.5, since peers carried no sanctioning power and were therefore safe to approach where adults were not.

3. Restorative micro-practices and self-reward

Within the narrow margins of free time, students engaged in physical and sensory activities to relieve strain. Light, non-competitive sport, "basketball or futsal that is just laughter... we do not focus on the score" (Student, grade 10, School A), and shared food at the canteen was common. Others practised deliberate self-reward for meeting targets, "when I reach my weekly deposit, I buy my favourite cold drink... it is my way of telling myself, good job, you survived this week" (Student, grade 10, School B), or protected a private creative identity by "drawing or writing in a corner of the mosque, doing something creative with no demand for a grade... so that my personal identity is not lost amid the uniforms and rules" (Student, grade 10, School B). A recurring principle was to stop rather than force a depleted mind: "I do not force my brain to keep running when it has already hung" (Student, grade 12, School B). Read together, these practices amount to a rudimentary but coherent system of self-management: students monitored their own depletion, rationed effort against it, and administered contingent rewards to sustain motivation. Two features are theoretically notable. The insistence on activity "with no demand for a grade" suggests that the restorative value lies in the temporary suspension of evaluation rather than in rest itself. The explicit protection of a "personal identity" against the "uniforms and rules" reads as a direct defense against the depersonalization dimension of burnout, tying the coping repertoire to the specific symptom it was countering.

4. Temporal coping and the countdown

Students managed burnout by reorganizing their time into manageable units. Several kept a countdown to the monthly return, "a small calendar in my locker; each day I cross off a date. Seeing the visit approach is like seeing a finish line" (Student, grade 11, School B), or wrote a "return wishlist" of ordinary pleasures awaiting them at home, which "makes me realise this fatigue has an end" (Student, grade 12, School B). Others compressed the horizon to a single day at a time, a strategy also passed to juniors: "Do not think about next year's memorization or the national exam. Just get through today well, then sleep. Tomorrow is a new battle" (Student, grade 12, School A). Analytically, this is a strategy of cognitive restructuring that operates on the appraisal of the schedule rather than on the schedule itself. By converting an open-ended, apparently limitless demand into a bounded and segmented one, students

rendered it finite and therefore survivable. It is worth noting that this privatized, individual technique mirrors the institutional "safety valve" logic of the monthly visit described in 4.2.4; students had in effect internalized the school's own containment device and were operating a personal version of it, evidence that institutional resources and independent coping were not separate domains but continuous.

5. De-stigmatizing fatigue among peers

Notably, students actively countered the very stigma identified in 4.1.4 when supporting one another. Rather than offering heavy religious admonition, one described beginning with validation: "it is completely natural to feel like giving up. We wake before dawn, sleep late, our brains are forced to work hard. It is human to be tired", explicitly so that a struggling peer "does not feel guilty or feel that they lack faith" (Student, grade 10, School A). This is arguably the most theoretically salient of the student strategies because it does not merely deploy a resource against a demand but neutralizes it at its source. Where the other coping practices restored or protected the student who was already strained, this move intervened in the moral framing that had made fatigue costly in the first place: by substituting a naturalizing account of exhaustion for the moralized one, peers collectively renegotiated the meaning of tiredness itself. Peer support thus did more than comfort; it reframed exhaustion as legitimate, a form of bottom-up counter-framing that operated directly on the demand side of the ledger and resisted the moralization of burnout that the institutional environment could impose.

6. Summary in relation to the sensitizing propositions

Taken together, the accounts can be read against the four sensitizing propositions that guided the study. The first proposition held that burnout in this setting would be driven principally by the accumulation of parallel academic and religious loads under a relentless schedule, rather than by academic difficulty alone; the data broadly supported this, showing a density of demands, compounded by disciplinary structure and continuous social comparison, as the dominant trigger. The second and most distinctive proposition held that religiosity would operate as a dual-function factor, and the accounts substantiated this with unusual clarity, showing devotion serving on one side as a self-directed resource and, on the other, through the performance of piety and the stigmatization of fatigue as ingratitude, as a demand and a moral yardstick. The

third proposition held that teachers and institutional agents would mitigate burnout by mobilizing resources on students' behalf; it held but required qualification, because the disciplinary function of those same agents bounded the reach of the support they offered. The fourth proposition held that students would draw on their own resources within tight constraints; it was well supported, with students mobilizing spiritual, social, restorative, and temporal resources and, significantly, using peer support to contest the moralization of burnout itself. These patterns are interpreted in light of the theory in the following section.

Discussion

This study set out to understand how learning burnout is generated and managed within the high-demand, religiously saturated ecology of the Islamic “Plus” boarding school, reading the phenomenon through the convergent accounts of counselors, dormitory supervisors, teachers, and students. The central finding is that religiosity does not sit on one side of the demands–resources ledger but on both at once, and that the surrounding actors continually negotiate this duality. We read this finding through the study demands–resources (SD-R) model of school burnout,²⁷ The educational adaptation of the job demands–resources (JD-R) model, Demerouti²⁸ and argue that the dual-function pattern bears directly on one of that model’s founding assumptions. The discussion first develops the theoretical implications of that finding, then turns to practical implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

Religiosity as a dual-function resource–demand

In the demands-resources tradition, demands and resources form analytically distinct categories. Demands tax a student's energy and drive the exhaustion at the core of burnout; resources sustain motivation and engagement; the balance between the two predicts where a student settles.²⁹ The model's explanatory economy depends on keeping these categories apart, so that any feature of the environment falls on one side of the ledger. The present findings complicate that separation.

²⁷ Salmela-Aro and Upadaya, “School Burnout and Engagement in the Context of Demands–Resources Model.”

²⁸ E Demerouti et al., “The Job Demands–Resources Model of Burnout,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 86, no. 3 (2001): 499–512, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499>.

²⁹ Demerouti et al., “The Job Demands–Resources Model of Burnout”; Salmela-Aro and Upadaya, “School Burnout and Engagement in the Context of Demands–Resources Model.”

The same devotional and communal system supplied relief. Staff reframed fatigue as worshipful "jihad." Students found stillness at the mosque and in the cold water of ablution. The study itself became an ibadah. Yet this system also generated demand: it required students to perform piety and, most corrosively, it allowed others to stigmatize chronic exhaustion as ingratitude or spiritual deficiency. A single institutional element thus served both functions at once. The balance tipped toward demand, exactly where devotion turned into an evaluative standard for judging distress.

This extends the coping literature beyond mere confirmation. That literature consistently documents the protective value of spiritual and religious coping,³⁰ and Indonesian survey evidence even reports elevated well-being in madrasah settings.³¹ This work portrays religiosity as an almost unambiguous good.

Our findings align with the minority position established by Noh et al.³² They showed that negative religious coping increases rather than reduces academic burnout, signaling that the religious register can amplify strain. Yet the present study locates the source of that amplification differently. Noh et al. treated the demand as a property of the individual's coping style. Our data show it operating instead as an institutional and social expectation: students must perform gratitude in a place where they are told to be grateful, and peer comparison and communal labeling enforce that performance. The demand side of religiosity, on this reading, is not only intrapsychic but structural. This qualifies the conceptual optimism of value-based frameworks for Islamic boarding schools.³³ The values a framework mobilizes as protective (sincerity, gratitude, brotherhood) can harden into performance standards and become an added load.

Two implications follow, addressing a question the demands-resources account has not had to confront. The first concerns the permeability of the boundary between the two categories. Standard formulations assume that a resource and a demand are distinct things

³⁰ Che Rahimi, Bakar, and Mohd Yasin, "Psychological Well-Being of Malaysian University Students during COVID-19 Pandemic: Do Religiosity and Religious Coping Matter?"; Ekwonye, Sheikhomar, and Phung, "Spirituality: A Psychological Resource for Managing Academic-Related Stressors"; Subandi, Chizanah, and Subhan, "Psychotherapeutic Dimensions of an Islamic-Sufi-Based Rehabilitation Center: A Case Study."

³¹ B Patria, "Students Are Happier in Madrasah: The Results of Bayesian Analysis on Indonesian National Survey Data," *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal* 6, no. 2 (2023): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.25217/0020236406800>.

³² Noh et al., "Suppressor Effects of Positive and Negative Religious Coping on Academic Burnout among Korean Middle School Students."

³³ Aziz et al., "Managing Academic Stress in Islamic Boarding Schools: Toward a Value-Based Framework Rooted in Panca Jiwa Pondok."

that combine additively or interactively to produce an outcome. Our data instead suggest that a single internalized value can migrate across that boundary, occupying the resource or demand position depending on the function it serves at a given moment.

Devotion read as consolation was a resource: students steadied themselves at the ablution area and in the mosque, and staff dignified fatigue as jihad. The same devotion read as a comparative yardstick became a demand. A student who saw a roommate still awake at *murajaah* reported feeling "sinful" for having already slept. A counselor described a chronically exhausted student as liable to judgment for "lacking worship or lacking gratitude" in so favored a place. The construct did not change; its function did. Internalization moved it across the boundary. Because students had taken the ideal as their own, the value that consoled them could also indict them. The residential setting kept each student's devotional performance continuously in view, and that visibility supplied the comparison that tipped consolation into indictment.

This pattern's reach is a second, more speculative matter, and the data adjudicate it only in part. On a narrow reading, the effect is peculiar to institutions built around a moral or ideological ideal, because only there can distress be recoded as a spiritual or ethical failing. The moral content of the value allows exhaustion to be named as ingratitude rather than ordinary overload, and that naming turns a resource into a demand.

On a broader reading, the moral content supplies only the vocabulary of judgment. The underlying mechanism does not depend on religion: an internalized institutional ideal hardens into an evaluative standard under conditions of continuous visibility and comparison. Goffman calls a residential school of this kind a near-total institution: it encloses the whole round of daily life, and entrants undergo a "moral career" as the institution's standards become the measure of the self. An ideal internalized in that manner and rendered publicly comparable should produce the same double movement, whether the ideal is piety, athletic dedication, or academic distinction.³⁴

The present study cannot decide between these readings, having observed only one species of ideal. Instead, it offers a bounded claim: the moralization of distress that turned religiosity into a demand required both an internalized ideal and an institutional stage on

³⁴ E Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Anchor Books, 1961).

which conformity to that ideal remained perpetually on view. A comparative test should isolate those two conditions, not religiosity as such.

Stated as a transferable proposition to be tested and bounded elsewhere, the argument is this: in institutions organized around a moral or performance ideal, that ideal functions as a resource-demand hybrid. Its net effect shifts toward demand as the ideal converts from a source of meaning into a yardstick for evaluating distress, and this shift sharpens where residential or otherwise total conditions keep individual conformity continuously visible. This is an analytic generalization, a way of seeing that invites examination in comparable moral or total-institution settings, rather than a statistical claim about frequency.

A systemic view: conditional support and horizontal counter-resources

Assembling four actor perspectives revealed two features that single-actor, survey-based designs are poorly positioned to detect. The first concerns the conditional nature of institutional support. Consistent with evidence that social support and supportive teacher–student relationships buffer student burnout,³⁵ Educators in both schools mobilized a dense relational repertoire: family-like proximity, near-continuous contact that allowed staff to read distress from changes in expression, and spiritual encouragement. Yet the findings importantly qualify the social-support account. Because the same adults enacted both care and discipline, support was not a scalar quantity that students could draw down. The role from which support was issued conditioned whether a student could access it. The "two-faced teacher" tension led students to conceal their distress and, in their own words, present a mask of composure, for fear that a confidence touching on dormitory rules would invite sanction. This constraint bore on the helpers as much as on the helped. The counselor who named the stigma also described being caught between upholding strict boarding discipline and recognizing that a fragile student needed the rules eased; the disciplinary function limited the care the institution could provide, even where the will to do so existed. In a residential setting that fuses pastoral and disciplinary authority, social support is therefore role-conditioned rather than uniformly available, a refinement that matters wherever the same institutional agent holds both care and control.

³⁵ Kim et al., "Relationships between Social Support and Student Burnout: A Meta-Analytic Approach"; Z Teuber, F W Nussbeck, and E Wild, "School Burnout among Chinese High School Students: The Role of Teacher–Student Relationships and Personal Resources," *Educational Psychology* 41, no. 8 (2021): 985–1002, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2021.1917521>.

The second feature concerns the countervailing power of horizontal resources. Students repeatedly named peers as the most accessible source of relief, at times explicitly above staff, echoing the protective role of peer attachment and relatedness documented in boarding and general adolescent samples.³⁶ The present study adds that peer support did more than comfort: it actively contested the moralization of burnout. Students validated one another's exhaustion as "human" and legitimate, precisely so a struggling friend would "not feel that they lack faith." Here, a horizontal resource neutralized a vertical, institutional demand. This suggests a mechanism absent from resource-additive models: resources and demands are not only summed but can act on one another, and peer solidarity worked directly against the stigma that the religious environment could impose. The finding also nuances the parental-involvement literature:³⁷ students experienced home expectation in this setting as both motivational fuel and, through the prestige economy surrounding the "Plus" label, a stressor that discouraged the admission of fatigue.

Taken together, these systemic observations show why no single vantage point can capture this ecology. Institutional expectation, peer comparison, and family prestige together generated the demand that most distinguished this setting: the moralization of exhaustion. Students themselves countered it most effectively, laterally, not the institution.

Practical implications

The findings carry implications for how such schools might rebalance demand and resources. We present two kinds of proposals below, and the distinction between them matters. The first set follows from our own analysis. The second, which the participants themselves advanced, is reported here as a data-based recommendation rather than as a validated intervention.

Three implications follow from the analysis. First, because the moralization of fatigue emerged as the setting's most distinctive demand, schools would benefit from explicitly de-stigmatizing burnout. Staff needs training to read chronic exhaustion as a

³⁶ F Hoferichter et al., "Burnout among High School Students Is Linked to Their Telomere Length and Relatedness with Peers," *Stress* 26, no. 1 (2023): 2240909, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10253890.2023.2240909>; Mudzkiyyah, Wahib, and Bulut, "Well-Being among Boarding School Students: Academic Self-Efficacy and Peer Attachment as Predictors."

³⁷ Li, Chen, and Zeng, "Family-School Cooperation: The Impact of Parental Involvement and Perceived School Climate on High School Students' Academic Burnout."

legitimate signal of overload rather than a spiritual deficiency, and devotional meaning should be reframed as consolation without allowing it to consolidate into an additional performance standard. Second, because the disciplinary role bounds the reach of pastoral support, schools should partially decouple care from discipline, for instance, by protecting confidential counseling channels whose disclosures cannot trigger sanctions. The students' own wish for a space to talk that is not tied to sin or to discipline points is the demand side of the same problem. Third, because horizontal support proved the most effective counter to the moralization of fatigue, schools should strengthen peer-support structures as deliberate resources rather than tolerate them as informal ones.

A further set of measures originated with the informants and is reported as such. Staff proposed a scheduled period of protected, non-demanding time: a daily "restorative downtime" free of academic activity, memorization, and supervision. This responds directly to the finding that density without pause, rather than academic difficulty, drove burnout. Staff also proposed broadening the institutional definition of achievement to recognize leadership and soft skills, and establishing a formal procedure for temporary dispensation of workload or memorization requirements for students showing burnout symptoms. Both measures aim to relieve the compounded load and protect the self-esteem of students who are not academically dominant. They pointed to the monthly home visit, already working as a "safety valve," as a predictable respite worth safeguarding. And they identified teacher preparation in adolescent mental health, which they themselves sought, as the training that would underpin the rest. That these proposals come from practitioners lends them ecological credibility; that they remain untested marks them as hypotheses for the intervention research proposed below.

Limitations

Several limitations bound these claims. The study examined two private Islamic "Plus" boarding schools in a single city, and we offer its findings as analytic rather than statistical generalization; transfer to public schools, other regions, or non-boarding Islamic schools requires further inquiry. Because we developed the dual-function argument within a single institutional type, we advance the boundary conditions it proposes as hypotheses to test rather than as an already established scope.

The sample, while deliberately multi-role, was modest in size and skewed in gender composition: the upper-grade student voices were predominantly female. The coping

repertoires reported here, particularly the spiritual and peer-solidarity practices, may therefore be patterned by gender in ways this study could not disaggregate. The design was cross-sectional and relied on retrospective self-report. It did not track burnout trajectories over time, which longitudinal work has shown to be heterogeneous and developmentally consequential.³⁸

We researched as investigators familiar with the Islamic boarding context, and the topic addressed religiosity in a setting where piety is expected. Social-desirability pressures may therefore have led participants to understate religious ambivalence; interrogating negative cases mitigated the risk but could not eliminate it.

Finally, the study did not employ a standardized burnout measure, so the severity of burnout cannot be calibrated against quantitative benchmarks. The analysis also drew on interview material translated from Bahasa Indonesia, carrying the attendant interpretive risks of translation.

Future research

These limitations mark a research agenda. Researchers should test the dual-function resource-demand proposition beyond the Islamic boarding school in other institutions organized around demanding moral or performance ideals, such as military academies, elite sports academies, and faith schools of other traditions. Crucially, they should also test it in settings that vary the two conditions this study could not separate: the degree to which the institutional ideal is internalized, and the extent to which residential or total conditions keep individual conformity on view. Such variation would establish the boundary conditions under which an ideal tip shifts from resource to demand.

Mixed-methods designs that pair a validated school burnout inventory with qualitative inquiry would allow researchers to both quantify and interpret the demand side of religiosity and test whether its salience varies across grade, tenure in the boarding system, and gender. Longitudinal work could examine whether the double-edged nature shifts as students adapt, and whether the moralization of fatigue predicts later disengagement or depressive symptoms in this population specifically. Intervention research could evaluate the measures proposed here, in particular the effects of

³⁸ L Nadon et al., “Developmental Heterogeneity of School Burnout across the Transition from Upper Secondary School to Higher Education: A 9-Year Follow-up Study,” *Journal of School Psychology* 107 (2024): 101385, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2024.101385>; Tang, Upadyaya, and Salmela-Aro, “School Burnout and Psychosocial Problems among Adolescents: Grit as a Resilience Factor.”

decoupling confidential support from disciplinary authority and of protected restorative downtime on the accessibility of support and the incidence of burnout. Such work would move the field from documenting that religiosity is double-edged toward specifying when, for whom, and under what institutional conditions each edge prevails.

Conclusion

This study set out to understand how learning burnout arises and gets managed within the high-demand, religiously saturated ecology of the Islamic "Plus" boarding school. Its central contribution shows that religiosity functions not only as a resource but simultaneously as a demand. The same devotional and communal system consoled students by reframing fatigue as worshipful effort and the stillness of ritual practice; it also produced strain through the expectation of performing piety and the stigmatization of chronic exhaustion as ingratitude.

This dual function extends the demands-resources model. It shows that an internalized institutional ideal can migrate across the demand-resource boundary depending on whether it functions as a source of meaning or as a standard against which distress is judged, a movement the residential setting's continuous visibility of individual conformity makes possible. The study further showed that institutional support, however genuinely offered, ran up against the same authority enforcing discipline, and that horizontal peer solidarity, rather than institutional intervention, did the most to counter the moralization of fatigue.

These findings carry direct implications for practice: schools should de-stigmatize burnout as a legitimate signal of overload rather than spiritual failing, partially decouple confidential support from disciplinary authority, and deliberately strengthen peer-support structures alongside protected restorative time. The findings are bounded by their setting in two schools in one city, a modest and gender-skewed sample, and a cross-sectional design; we offer the dual-function proposition as an analytic generalization to test in other institutions organized around a demanding moral or performance ideal. Future research combining validated burnout measures with longitudinal and comparative qualitative designs would help establish when, for whom, and under what institutional conditions religiosity tips from resource toward demand.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (UINSU) Medan for institutional support throughout this research. The authors also thank the leadership, guidance counselors (*guru BK*), and student participants of SMA Al-Azhar Plus Medan and SMA Jabal Rahmah Mulia Medan for their cooperation and willingness to share their experiences, without which this study would not have been possible.

Ethical Statement

This study received institutional research permission from the Postgraduate School (Pascasarjana), Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan (Letter No. B.0497/PS.WD/PS.III/PP.00.9/5/2026), authorizing data collection at SMA Al-Azhar Plus Medan and SMA Jabal Rahmah Mulia Medan. Verbal informed consent was obtained from all participants (school counselors, teachers, boarding supervisors, principals, and students) before data collection. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, assured of confidentiality, and advised of their right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding

This research received no external funding.

Author Contributions

Nurussakinah Daulay: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Data curation, Writing original draft, Project administration. Rusydi Ananda: Methodology, Supervision. Annisa Riftah Andreani: Investigation, Writing – review and editing, Visualization. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Declaration of Generative AI in Scientific Writing

During the preparation of this work, the authors used the following AI-based tools and language assistants:

1. Claude (Anthropic, Claude Opus 4.8) was used during the manuscript drafting stage to help organize and structure the Literature Review in the Introduction section, as well as during the revision stage to refine the academic clarity and sentence structure in the Introduction, Discussion, and Conclusion sections. Claude was also used to match

reference details (author names, publication years, journal titles) against Scopus export records to verify citation accuracy.

2. Grammarly, used during the final proofreading stage to check grammar, spelling, and sentence structure throughout the manuscript.
3. Deep Translator, used during the initial drafting stage to help translate field notes and text drafts between Indonesian and English before the academic editing process.

After using these tools, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and assume full responsibility for its content.

.

.

Bibliography

- Apriliyana, Nur Pangesti. "Transforming Education through Deep Learning Design: Integrating Four Key Elements in School Practice." *Molang: Journal Islamic Education* 3, no. 1 (2025): 19–27.
- Aziz, A N, A Madjid, A Khilmiyah, R Partino, and M Azhar. "Managing Academic Stress in Islamic Boarding Schools: Toward a Value-Based Framework Rooted in Panca Jiwa Pondok." *Multidisciplinary Reviews* 9, no. 7 (2026): e2026360. <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2026360>.
- Bao, X, W Yu, Z Chu, J Gao, M Zhou, and Y Gu. "Functional Abdominal Pain Disorders in Children in Southern Anhui Province, China Are Related to Academic Stress Rather than Academic Performance." *BMC Pediatrics* 23, no. 1 (2023): 333. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12887-023-04154-3>.
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. "Reflecting on Reflexive Thematic Analysis." *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 11, no. 4 (August 8, 2019): 589–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>.
- . "To Saturate or Not to Saturate? Questioning Data Saturation as a Useful Concept for Thematic Analysis and Sample-Size Rationales." *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 13, no. 2 (2021): 201–16.
- Che Rahimi, A, R S Bakar, and M A Mohd Yasin. "Psychological Well-Being of Malaysian University Students during COVID-19 Pandemic: Do Religiosity and Religious Coping Matter?" *Healthcare (Switzerland)* 9, no. 11 (2021): 1535. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare9111535>.
- Darwanto, Agus, Rully Prahmana, Ani Susanti, and Ibrahim Khalil. "Transformation of Boarding School Management Models in Enhancing Student Accessibility and Educational Quality." *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 21 (June 1, 2024): 145–64.
- Demerouti, E, A B Bakker, F Nachreiner, and W B Schaufeli. "The Job Demands–Resources Model of Burnout." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 86, no. 3 (2001): 499–512. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499>.
- Djundjuran, Yovie, Moh Ali, and Saefudin Zuhri. "Islamic Religious Education and Student Academic Achievement and Motivation: A Systematic Review of Pedagogical Strategies and Value Internalization Mechanisms." *FIKROTUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Manajemen Islam* 15, no. 01 (2026): 58–78.
- Ekwonye, A U, N Sheikhomar, and V Phung. "Spirituality: A Psychological Resource for Managing Academic-Related Stressors." *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 23, no. 9 (2020): 826–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2020.1823951>.
- Faisol, Faisol, Budi Santoso, and Nailah Amaliya. "Implemetasi Full Day School Terhadap Pembentukan Moral Siswa SMP Plus Nurul Hikmah Pamekasan." *Molang: Journal Of Islamic Education* 1, no. 01 (2023): 10–26.
- Goffman, E. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. Anchor Books, 1961.
- Hoferichter, F, A Jentsch, L Maas, and G Hageman. "Burnout among High School

- Students Is Linked to Their Telomere Length and Relatedness with Peers.” *Stress* 26, no. 1 (2023): 2240909. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10253890.2023.2240909>.
- Khamida, F K Fitriyah, H Algristian, N Hidaayah, A Fitriasari, M M Chuma, and Iskandar. “The Role of Motivation and Spiritual Meaning in Predicting Bullying Behavior among Islamic Boarding School Students.” *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (2026): 312–29. <https://doi.org/10.31538/NZH.V9I2.153>.
- Kim, B, S Jee, J Lee, S An, and S M Lee. “Relationships between Social Support and Student Burnout: A Meta-Analytic Approach.” *Stress and Health* 34, no. 1 (2018): 127–34. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.2771>.
- Li, W, M Chen, and X Zeng. “Family–School Cooperation: The Impact of Parental Involvement and Perceived School Climate on High School Students’ Academic Burnout.” *School Mental Health* 16, no. 4 (2024): 1360–74. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-024-09708-z>.
- Lincoln, Yvonna, and Egon G Guba. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage publications, 1985.
- Mudzkiyyah, L, A Wahib, and S Bulut. “Well-Being among Boarding School Students: Academic Self-Efficacy and Peer Attachment as Predictors.” *Psikohumaniora* 7, no. 1 (2022): 27–38. <https://doi.org/10.21580/pjpp.v7i1.10374>.
- Nadon, L, A J S Morin, W Gilbert, E Olivier, and K Salmela-Aro. “Developmental Heterogeneity of School Burnout across the Transition from Upper Secondary School to Higher Education: A 9-Year Follow-up Study.” *Journal of School Psychology* 107 (2024): 101385. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2024.101385>.
- Noh, H, E Chang, Y Jang, J H Lee, and S M Lee. “Suppressor Effects of Positive and Negative Religious Coping on Academic Burnout among Korean Middle School Students.” *Journal of Religion and Health* 55, no. 1 (2016): 135–46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-015-0007-8>.
- Patria, B. “Students Are Happier in Madrasah: The Results of Bayesian Analysis on Indonesian National Survey Data.” *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal* 6, no. 2 (2023): 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.25217/0020236406800>.
- Salmela-Aro, K. “School-Related Burnout during Educational Tracks: Antecedents and Consequences.” In *Transitions from School to Work: Globalization, Individualization, and Patterns of Diversity*, edited by I Schoon and R K Silbereisen, 293–311. Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- . “School Burnout and Engagement: Lessons from a Longitudinal Study in Finland.” In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd ed., 59–64. Elsevier, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.26072-8>.
- Salmela-Aro, K, and K Upadyaya. “School Burnout and Engagement in the Context of Demands–Resources Model.” *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 84, no. 1 (2014): 137–51. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12018>.
- Subandi, M A, L Chizanah, and S Subhan. “Psychotherapeutic Dimensions of an Islamic-Sufi-Based Rehabilitation Center: A Case Study.” *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 46, no. 2 (2022): 582–601. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-021-09738-1>.

- Tang, X, K Upadyaya, and K Salmela-Aro. "School Burnout and Psychosocial Problems among Adolescents: Grit as a Resilience Factor." *Journal of Adolescence* 86 (2021): 77–89. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2020.12.002>.
- Teuber, Z, F W Nussbeck, and E Wild. "School Burnout among Chinese High School Students: The Role of Teacher–Student Relationships and Personal Resources." *Educational Psychology* 41, no. 8 (2021): 985–1002. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2021.1917521>.
- Tong, A, P Sainsbury, and J Craig. "Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ): A 32-Item Checklist for Interviews and Focus Groups." *International Journal for Quality in Health Care* 19, no. 6 (2007): 349–57. <https://doi.org/10.1093/intqhc/mzm042>.
- us Sahar, N, D L Baranovich, and I H A Tharbe. "Does Gratitude Work at School? Piloting the Modified Interventions for Managing Academic Stress in Pakistani High Schools." *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 16, no. 2 (2022): 73–90. <https://doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.430>.
- Wnuk, M. "Bond with God as a Moderator of the Relationship between Prayer and Stress of Chilean Students." *Religions* 14, no. 3 (2023): 345. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14030345>.