The Influence of School Climate on the Mental Health of Islamic Boarding School Students

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Abstract: This study aims to determine the influence of school climate on the mental health of Islamic boarding school students. The population in this study is Islamic boarding school students with a range of adolescents who live in Islamic boarding schools. The number of research samples was 320 students who were selected using the Convenience sampling technique. Data collection was carried out using the school climate scale and the mental health scale of students. The data analysis method used was Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) analysis with the help of SmartPLS software. The results of the study show that the school climate has a positive and significant effect on the mental health of Islamic boarding school students, which means that the more positive the school climate felt by the students, the better their mental health will be.

Keywords: Mental Health, School Climate.

I. INTRODUCTION

Modern Islamic boarding schools are educational institutions that integrate general and religious education curricula in one learning system. This educational model provides advantages in the form of expanding the academic and religious horizons of students, but also brings the consequences of increasing academic load, learning duration, and high disciplinary demands. This condition requires students to balance academic achievement, spiritual discipline, and social adjustment in a structured pesantren environment.

These multidimensional demands place students under academic, spiritual, and social pressure that has the potential to trigger stress and psychological problems (Khofifah & Khadijah, 2025). Tight schedules, strict rules, separation from family, and the dynamics of relationships with peers can interfere with the psychological well-being of students (Ambarwati, 2016; Nurahman & Asy'ari, 2019). Previous research has shown that academic stress in pesantren students tends to be in the high category and is related to the many learning demands and social problems (Renata et al., 2023). This condition can have an impact on non-adaptive behavior, decreased academic achievement, and violation of pesantren rules (Pritaningrum & Hendriani, 2013; Revelia, 2019).

This problem shows the importance of attention to the mental health of students, considering that students are in the adolescent phase who are vulnerable to mental disorders. Adolescents living in pesantren are required to be independent and adapt to a new disciplined environment, thus potentially increasing psychological pressure (Mulyanti et al., 2025). Nationally, around 34.9% of adolescents in Indonesia reported experiencing mental health problems in the past year (Gloriabarus, 2022). Mental health not only reflects the absence of mental disorders, but also includes optimal emotional, psychological, and social functioning (Keyes, 2007). Individuals with good mental health can realize their abilities, can overcome the pressures of life that occur, are able to work productively and are able to contribute to their community (WHO, 2004). Mental health is very important considering that a healthy

mentality is very important and a person with a healthy mentality will be able to live their lives productively and optimally (Sukmawati et al., 2023).

One effective approach in supporting adolescent mental health is through the creation of a positive school climate. A conducive school environment is seen as a key developmental context that plays an important role in shaping the psychological well-being of students (Atkins et al., 2010; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Aldridge & McChesney, 2018; Kidger et al., 2012). Wang and Degol (2016) define the school climate as a systemic pattern that includes academic, community, security, and institutional environment dimensions, which collectively affect students' cognitive, behavioral, and psychological development.

Various studies show that a positive school climate, characterized by supportive student-teacher relationships, peer support, a sense of connectedness, and a quality learning process, is related to reduced stress and depression symptoms, increased self-esteem, and better academic achievement (Nie et al., 2020; Podiya et al., 2025). Adolescents who perceive the school climate positively also tend to show higher well-being and have fewer behavioral and emotional problems, while negative perceptions of the school climate are related to insecurity and discomfort (Espelage et al., 2014; Smith, 2021).

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the school climate has an equally important role. Research shows that students who feel positive relationships in the pesantren community tend to have better self-adjustment and subjective well-being (Hasanah et al., 2021). A conducive school climate has also been proven to be able to predict the subjective well-being of students, which is one of the indicators of overall mental health (Husaini et al., 2023). These findings confirm that school climate is an important contextual factor that affects the mental health of students in a dormitory-based education environment.

II. METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational survey design to examine the relationship between school climate and the mental health of students in Islamic boarding schools. The subjects of the study were students who lived in Islamic boarding schools, with a sample of 320 students who were selected using *non-probability sampling* and *convenience sampling* techniques were chosen as sampling methods. *Convenience sampling* is a sampling technique that allows researchers to access subjects easily and is relatively cost-effective, time-saving and convenient.

Data were collected using psychological scale instruments in the form of school climate scale and mental health scale. The school climate scale was compiled based on the school climate theory of Wang and Degol (2016) which included the academic, community, security, and institutional environment dimensions then added by the dimensions of educational and cultural orientation by Dadeh (2021). Meanwhile, mental health is measured using a scale that refers to the concept of mental well-being which includes aspects of emotional, psychological, and social well-being (Keyes, 2007). All instruments use the Likert scale and have gone through validity and reliability tests before being used in research.

Data analysis was carried out using *the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares* (SEM-PLS) approach with the help of SmartPLS software version 4. The analysis includes testing the measurement model *(outer model)* to assess the validity and reliability of the construct, as well as testing the structural model *(inner model)* to test the relationship between research variables. Hypothesis testing was carried out using *the bootstrapping technique* at a significance level of 0.05 and a statistical t-value of > 1.96.

III. RESULT

The demographics of the subjects in this study were reviewed based on gender, age and class. In terms of gender, the majority of subjects were females with 227 people (71%), while males amounted to 93 people (29%). The data can be seen in the table below.

Research Subjects by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Men – men	93	29%
Women	227	71%
Total	**320**	**100%**

In the age demographics of the research subjects, the age range of the subjects is 14-17 years. The majority of respondents were in the age group of 16 years with a total of 152 (47.5%), followed by 14 years old with a total of 137 (42.81%), 15 years with a total of 12 (3.75%), and 17 years with a total of 19 (5.94%). The data can be seen in the table below.

Research Subjects by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
14 years	137	42,81%
15 years	12	3,75%
16 years old	152	47,5%
17 years	19	5,94%
Total	**320**	**100%**

In the demographics of the research subject class, the class used as the subject of the study was class VIII Madrasah Tsanawiyah with a total of 149 (46.56%) and class X of Madrasah Aliyah with a total of 171 (53.44%). The data can be seen in the table below.

Research Subjects by Class

Classes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
VIII (MTS)	149	46,56%
X (MA)	171	53,44%
Total	**320**	**100%**

Categorization aims to group research samples into different levels based on attributes that are measured hierarchically (Azwar, 2017). In this study, the categorization of the three scales was used by referring to the ideal score value that had been previously determined in the instrument (Azwar, 2017).

Categorization norms

Value Range	Category
$X < M - 1SD$	Low
$M - SD \leq X < M+SD$	Medium
$X \geq M + SD$	**Height**

The table above provides the categorization norms used in this study. There are three intervals, namely, the low category, the medium category, and the high category. The following will be presented the results of hypothetical data and empirical data for each variable (mental health and school climate, which are as follows:

Empirical Data and Hypothetical Data of Research Variables

Variabel	Empirical				From the hypothetical			
	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Mental Health	14	70	54.34	11.154	0	70	35	11.666
School Climate	47	90	73.49	12.441	18	90	54	12

Based on the table above, a categorization of norms can be formed as described in the table below:

Mental Health Categorization

Shoes	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
$X < 43.186$	Low	52	16.3%
$43.186 \leq X < 65.494$	Medium	194	60.6%
$X \geq 65.494$	Height	74	23.1%

Based on the table above, information was obtained that 52 subjects with low mental health criteria were 52 subjects with a percentage of 16.3%, subjects with moderate criteria were 194 subjects with a percentage of 60.6% and subjects with high criteria were 74 subjects with a percentage of 23.1%.

School Climate Categorization

Shoes	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
X < 61.049	Low	61	19.1%
61.049 ≤ X < 85.931	Medium	166	51.9%
X ≥ 85,931	Height	93	29%

Based on the table above, information was obtained that 61 subjects with low school climate criteria with a percentage of 19.1%, subjects with medium school climate criteria were 166 subjects with a percentage of 51.9% and 93 subjects with high criteria with a percentage of 29.1%

Hypothesis Test Results

To determine the acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis, this study refers to two main indicators, namely *t-statistic* and *p-value*. A hypothesis is declared acceptable if the *t-statistic* value exceeds 1.96 at the 95% confidence level and *the p-value* is below 0.05, as stated by Hair et al. (2017). Conversely, if *the t-statistic* does not reach the number of 1.96 and *the p-value* is greater than 0.05, then the hypothesis is rejected.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
School Climate -> Mental Health	0,354	0,351	0,062	5,726	0,000

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): School climate has a positive and significant influence on mental health

Based on the table above, information was obtained that school climate had a positive and significant effect on mental health, with a coefficient value of 0.354, a statistical t-value of 5.726 > 1.967 and a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05, so that H1 was accepted.

IV. DISCUSSION

The hypothesis in this study states that the school climate affects the mental health of Islamic boarding school students. The results of the analysis showed that the school climate has a positive and significant influence on the mental health of students. This explains that the more positive the school climate felt by students, the better their mental health condition will be. On the contrary, a negative school climate tends to be related to the decline in the mental health of Islamic boarding school students.

These findings support the idea that school climate plays an important role in supporting a positive school experience for students. School climate is generally seen as a multidimensional construct that includes security, academics, institutional environment, community, culture, and educational orientation (Wang and Degol, 2016; Dadeh, 2021).

The peculiarity of this research lies in the study of school climate which focuses on Islamic boarding schools as a form of education typical of Indonesia. This study develops the theory of school climate by adding the dimensions of educational orientation and school culture as stated by Dadeh (2021). If the research only refers to the theory of Wang and Degol (2016) which includes four dimensions, namely security, academic, community, and institutional environment, then the local characteristics of Indonesian education, especially Islamic boarding schools, have not been fully fulfilled. The framework still depicts a western educational perspective and does not yet display the characteristics of value-based education and local culture. Therefore, the dimensions of educational orientation and school culture in Islamic boarding schools are considered important in this study.

In the dimension of educational orientation, Islamic boarding schools do not only focus on academic achievements or exam scores but also strongly emphasize the formation of morals, manners, and morals of students. This is the main characteristic of Islamic boarding school education in Indonesia. Regulation of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia Number 31 of 2020 emphasizes that the purpose of Islamic boarding school education is to form superior students, with achievements including noble character, in-depth mastery of Islamic religious knowledge, exemplary, love for the homeland, independence, skills, and global insight (Ministry of Religion, 2020). The placement of noble morals as the main achievement shows that the orientation of pesantren education strongly upholds the moral aspect, without ruling out the development of academic abilities that are relevant to the demands of today's education.

The cultural dimension of Islamic boarding schools or the typical culture of students has been firmly embedded in all aspects of daily life in Islamic boarding schools. There is a culture of togetherness, where the atmosphere in the pesantren makes students must be willing to share with each other. Students also practice the culture of helping each other, as well as cleaning the room. When a student chooses to "mondok" at a pesantren, then the culture of independence is inherent in him. Then, family culture, where being away from family makes the students have a new family when they are in the Islamic boarding school, with caregivers, teachers, and many friends from different backgrounds. The interaction of students with friends from various regions makes students feel a close family bond.

The research shows that school climate is a multidimensional determinant that plays an important role in shaping students' mental health. The concept of school climate cannot be understood as limited to physical conditions or formal policies, but encompasses students' psychological experiences of safety, connectedness, inclusivity, and interpersonal relationships (Long et al., 2021). In addition, Högberg et al., (2020) and Patalay et al., (2020) assert that students who feel safe and emotionally connected to school show better mental health. This is in line with the developmental ecological model, in which the school environment serves as a proximal context that mediates psychological well-being. When school is perceived as inclusive, students who are in the adolescent development stage have a more positive learning experience, feel accepted, and avoid social isolation, then this will strengthen mental health in schools (Freska & Windy, 2023).

The quality of good social relations in the school environment with the absence of bullying, mutual respect, and support between school residents are important foundations for the creation of optimal mental health. This environment makes students feel accepted, valued, and protected, so they are better able to develop confidence, manage emotions healthily, and interact without fear or pressure.

Miller-Lewis et al., (2014) show that teacher support creates a sense of self-worth and facilitates the formation of positive identities in adolescents, which serves as a protector against academic and social stress. On the other hand, when schools emphasize performance orientation and exam pressure excessively, it will show an increase in psychological distress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. This confirms that the school climate not only serves as a learning context, but also as an emotional arena that can strengthen or weaken mental resilience.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a study involving 320 students of Islamic boarding schools, it can be concluded that the school climate has a significant role in the mental health of Islamic boarding school students. These findings show that the more positive the school climate that students feel, the better their mental health condition will be. A conducive school climate is able to create a learning environment that supports the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of students.

The implications of these findings affirm the importance of the role of Islamic boarding schools in creating a positive school climate as a strategic effort to support the learning process and the achievement of educational targets. A safe, supportive, and relational pesantren environment is the closest context that affects the ability of students to regulate emotions and maintain their mental well-being. Therefore, strengthening a positive school climate in Islamic boarding schools is an important step in supporting the optimal development of students, both academically and psychologically.

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