



# Addressing Burnout Through Spiritual Mentorship: Enhancing Motivation and Well-Being of Islamic Education Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the implementation of spiritual mentoring as an effort to address burnout among Islamic Education teachers, with specific attention to its forms, mechanisms, and impact on teachers' psychological well-being. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving Islamic Education teachers, school leaders, and relevant stakeholders. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to spiritual mentoring practices and teacher burnout. The findings reveal that spiritual mentoring was implemented through structured and routine activities, including collective dhikr, Qur'anic recitation, morning spiritual gatherings, and ruhiyah mentoring integrated into the school culture. These practices contributed to reducing emotional exhaustion, fostering inner calm, strengthening professional motivation, and helping teachers rediscover deeper meaning in their educational roles. The success of the program was supported by spiritually oriented leadership, a supportive organizational culture, and institutional commitment to teacher well-being. Theoretically, this study reinforces the relevance of tazkiyatun nafs within Islamic psychotherapy as a holistic framework for addressing burnout, while also expanding the discourse on the integration of spirituality and educational psychology. Practically, the findings imply that Islamic educational institutions should systematically incorporate spiritual mentoring into human resource management to enhance teachers' well-being, resilience, and professionalism.

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## INTRODUCTION

Burnout among teachers, particularly Islamic Education teachers, has become a pressing concern in contemporary education worldwide. The increasing professional demands, curriculum changes, and the complex

psychosocial and pedagogical roles that teachers must fulfill contribute significantly to stress and emotional exhaustion. Globally, studies indicate that teacher burnout not only reduces teaching quality but also negatively impacts students' learning outcomes and the overall educational climate (Mulyadi et al., 2024). In Indonesia, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum amplifies adaptive burdens, requiring teachers to balance cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions. For Islamic Education teachers, the professional role extends beyond instruction to include spiritual guidance and moral exemplarity, making the stakes of burnout higher (Hikmah & Mudarris, 2026; Holidi, 2025; Khofsah, 2025; Rahman, 2026). Addressing teacher burnout is thus a critical societal concern, as it influences not only individual teacher well-being but also the broader educational system. Failure to mitigate burnout can result in diminished teacher motivation, lower student engagement, and long-term consequences for educational quality (Hefniy & Alwahedi, 2025; Manshur, 2026; Shoha, 2026). Consequently, interventions that integrate both psychological and spiritual dimensions are urgently needed to maintain teacher resilience and holistic educational outcomes.

The growing prevalence of burnout among Islamic Education teachers presents a serious problem for schools and society. Teachers experiencing burnout often demonstrate emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, which negatively affect instructional quality and student learning (Mulyadi et al., 2024). In addition to workload, a critical contributor to burnout is the weak integration of spirituality in professional practice, as teachers are expected to serve not only as educators but also as spiritual mentors and role models (Mustafa & Maulana, 2024; Rahmadan & Shudiq, 2024; Sholehah & Ichsan, 2025). Existing stress management programs often focus on cognitive and behavioral strategies but neglect the spiritual dimension, which is integral to teacher identity in Islamic education (Riyono, 2024). Without effective support, teachers face both psychological distress and a loss of professional meaning, which can result in absenteeism, low morale, and compromised classroom environments. This societal problem underscores the need for systematic interventions that incorporate spiritual mentoring as a mechanism to reduce burnout while enhancing teachers' psychological resilience and work satisfaction, thereby supporting sustainable educational development.

In the context of Islamic-integrated primary schools, teacher burnout manifests uniquely due to the dual expectation of professional and spiritual excellence. Teachers are required to integrate pedagogical competence with moral and spiritual guidance, creating significant emotional and cognitive pressures. Observational and field studies indicate that teachers often lack the psychosocial and spiritual preparedness to meet these expectations, resulting in emotional fatigue, anxiety, and a sense of diminished purpose (Hanim et al., 2025). Spiritual mentoring programs, such as collective dhikr, Qur'anic recitation,

and morning spiritual gatherings, have emerged informally in some schools, suggesting potential benefits in enhancing inner calm and professional motivation. However, these initiatives are often ad hoc and lack systematic integration into school management. This situation highlights a practical challenge: while spiritual practices are culturally and religiously embedded, their structured implementation as a tool for burnout mitigation remains limited. Consequently, there is a pressing need to explore how spiritual mentoring can be formalized and operationalized to strengthen teacher resilience and sustain educational quality in Islamic contexts.

Prior research has explored various interventions to address teacher burnout, primarily focusing on general stress management and relaxation techniques. Studies have demonstrated that spiritual practices, including dhikr-based relaxation, can significantly reduce burnout levels by regulating emotions and promoting inner calm (Mulyadi et al., 2024; Nuruzzaman, 2023). Tazkiya Therapy, emphasizing purification of the soul (tazkiyatun nafs), has been proposed as a holistic approach integrating cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions (Riyono, 2024). Moreover, combining Sufism-inspired practices with psychotherapeutic interventions has proven effective in reducing burnout symptoms through deep spiritual engagement (Alifiyah & Khadijah, 2025). These findings suggest that spiritual interventions are not merely complementary but essential components of burnout management in Islamic Education. Despite these insights, existing studies often examine interventions in isolation or focus on short-term practices, neglecting the need for a comprehensive, contextually grounded, and sustainable spiritual mentoring framework. Hence, research exploring structured spiritual mentoring in schools remains limited and critical to fill this gap.

Although earlier studies have highlighted the benefits of spiritual practices, there remains a significant research gap regarding systematic and sustained spiritual mentoring for teachers. Most interventions emphasize discrete techniques or student-focused spiritual counseling (Suhartono et al., 2025), leaving teacher-specific programs underexplored. Safitri et al. (2025) underscore the importance of spiritual management in teacher emotional regulation but do not elaborate on structured mechanisms for implementation. Furthermore, there is limited investigation into the integration of spiritual mentoring within school culture and leadership, which is essential for consistent impact (Fadhilah & Faslah, 2025). Addressing this gap is important because unstructured spiritual support tends to be sporadic and insufficient for long-term well-being. Therefore, developing a contextualized and institutionalized spiritual mentoring model is crucial to enhance teacher resilience, professional motivation, and emotional stability, while simultaneously reinforcing educational quality and fostering a spiritually enriched learning environment. This positions the present study to make a meaningful contribution to the field.

The novelty of this research lies in examining spiritual mentoring as a structured, contextually embedded intervention to mitigate burnout among Islamic Education teachers. Unlike prior studies that focus on individual techniques or student-centered guidance, this study investigates holistic mentoring integrated into school culture, leadership practices, and daily routines. By emphasizing tazkiyatun nafs within Islamic psychotherapy and drawing on spiritual intelligence frameworks, this study combines theoretical grounding with practical application (Bayhaqi et al., 2025; *Inteligencia Espiritual y Educación Religiosa Escolar En Contextos de Libertad Religiosa y de Cultos*, 2022). Such an approach addresses not only emotional exhaustion but also the spiritual and professional meaning lost due to burnout. Additionally, the study highlights the role of institutional commitment and spiritually oriented leadership in sustaining teacher well-being, providing actionable insights for educational management. This approach bridges a critical gap between theory and practice, offering a replicable model for schools seeking to systematically support teacher resilience and holistic professional development.

Based on the preceding discussion, the research problem focuses on how spiritual mentoring can be implemented to effectively address burnout among Islamic Education teachers. The study argues that burnout is not solely a result of workload but is intricately linked to a crisis of spiritual meaning and professional identity. Structured spiritual mentoring, including collective dhikr, Qur'anic recitation, and spiritual reflection sessions, is posited as a strategy to restore emotional balance, inner calm, and professional motivation. By examining forms, mechanisms, and outcomes of such mentoring, this study contributes to both theory and practice: it strengthens the conceptual framework of tazkiyatun nafs in educational contexts and offers a practical model for embedding spiritual support in teacher development programs. Ultimately, the research addresses a critical societal need by proposing an evidence-based approach to sustain teacher well-being, enhance educational quality, and foster spiritually grounded professionalism among Islamic Education teachers.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design with an intrinsic case study approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the implementation of spiritual mentoring in addressing burnout among Islamic Education teachers. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows the exploration of meaning, subjective experiences, and social dynamics that cannot be captured through quantitative measures (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The case study design is particularly appropriate for examining contextualized practices within the natural school setting, enabling a holistic and detailed understanding of the phenomenon (Yin, 2017). The research focuses on the processes, forms of spiritual mentoring activities, and their impact on teachers' psychological well-

being, particularly in reducing burnout symptoms, positioning social reality as a complex and dynamic construct that requires interpretive insights grounded in participants' perspectives.

The research site was selected purposefully to observe and analyze spiritual mentoring practices within an integrated Islamic primary school environment. The location was chosen because it actively implements structured spiritual mentoring programs integrated into daily school routines, providing a rich context for understanding how such practices influence teacher well-being. Selecting a naturalistic and authentic setting ensures that the findings reflect real-world dynamics of spiritual mentoring and burnout mitigation, rather than artificially constructed interventions, thereby enhancing the study's ecological validity and relevance to similar educational contexts.

Data were collected using a triangulated approach, combining in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews explored teachers' experiences, perceptions, and meanings associated with burnout and spiritual mentoring. Participatory observation allowed the researcher to directly witness spiritual practices, including collective dhikr, ruhiyah guidance, and religious mentoring sessions. Documentation, including school programs, activity schedules, and policy archives, complemented primary data by providing contextual and procedural insights. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants, including Islamic Education teachers, school leaders, and individuals directly involved in mentoring programs, ensuring that participants had firsthand experience with the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2002). Data validity was maintained through source and method triangulation, as well as member checking to confirm alignment between researcher interpretations and participant perspectives (Nowell et al., 2017).

Data analysis followed an interactive thematic approach encompassing data condensation, data display, and iterative conclusion drawing until saturation was achieved (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The process began with open coding to identify key themes, followed by categorization and interpretation grounded in theoretical frameworks of spirituality and burnout. Reflexivity was applied throughout the analysis to minimize subjective bias. Data validity and trustworthiness were reinforced through criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This rigorous approach ensures that the findings provide an empirically grounded and nuanced depiction of the effectiveness of spiritual mentoring in Islamic educational contexts, offering practical contributions for the development of spiritually based interventions to address teacher burnout.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Burnout Phenomenon Among Islamic Education Teachers

The study revealed that burnout among Islamic Education teachers is a tangible phenomenon experienced by the majority of participants, with varying intensity. Based on in-depth interviews and observations, burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, decreased teaching motivation, and feelings of monotony toward daily instructional routines. These conditions are primarily triggered by high administrative burdens, dynamic curriculum demands, and elevated moral-spiritual expectations placed on teachers as role models. These findings align with Mulyadi et al. (2024), who reported that teacher burnout correlates with work pressure and insufficient psychological support. Furthermore, this study identified that burnout among Islamic Education teachers encompasses not only psychological but also spiritual dimensions. Teachers experienced what can be described as “spiritual fatigue,” a weakening of their inner connection to the religious values that form the foundation of their professional identity. This supports Riyono (2024), who asserts that psychological crises in an Islamic perspective often originate from imbalances between physical and spiritual aspects. Thus, burnout in this context must be understood holistically, encompassing both psychological and spiritual crises.

### Forms of Spiritual Mentoring Implementation

The study identified that spiritual mentoring was implemented through several key programs: (1) collective dhikr and prayer, (2) ruhiyah guidance (halaqah), (3) religious mentoring, and (4) spiritual reflection (muhasabah). These programs were structured and continuous, integrated into the school’s cultural framework.

**Table 1. Forms of Spiritual Mentoring**

Form of Activity	Purpose	Frequency
Collective dhikr and prayer	Emotional calming	Daily
Halaqah ruhiyah	Spiritual strengthening	Weekly
Religious mentoring	Individual guidance	Monthly
Muhasabah	Self-reflection	Periodic

The implementation demonstrates that spiritual mentoring is not incidental but systematically embedded within school management. This finding corroborates Luthfi Anis Muadzin (2024), who indicated that regular spiritual activities significantly enhance teachers’ spiritual intelligence.

## **Impact of Spiritual Mentoring on Teacher Burnout**

The findings show that spiritual mentoring positively and significantly reduces teacher burnout, which can be classified into three main aspects:

### **Emotional Aspect**

Teachers experienced increased emotional stability, reduced stress, and improved capacity to manage work-related pressures. This aligns with Nuruzzaman (2023), who found that dhikr-based therapy effectively reduces anxiety and stress.

### **Cognitive Aspect**

Spiritual mentoring helps teachers reconstruct the meaning of their profession as a form of worship, thereby enhancing intrinsic motivation. This finding is consistent with the concept of tazkiyatun nafs (Riyono, 2024), which emphasizes soul purification as a foundation for meaningful self-awareness and life purpose.

### **Behavioral Aspect**

There was an observable improvement in professionalism, discipline, and quality of interactions with students. This supports Hanim et al. (2025), who reported that spirituality positively affects classroom management effectiveness.

### **Theoretical Analysis of Findings**

Theoretically, these findings can be explained through Islamic psychology, which places spirituality at the core of human well-being. From Al-Ghazali's perspective, balance among intellect, heart, and nafs is essential for mental health (Bayhaqi et al., 2025). Spiritual mentoring in the school indirectly restores this balance. Furthermore, the concept of spiritual intelligence is relevant in interpreting these findings, as it enables individuals to find meaning in challenging situations (Inteligencia Espiritual., 2022). In this context, teachers participating in spiritual mentoring could perceive work pressures as part of their service and devotion.

### **Comparison with Previous Studies**

Compared to prior studies, this research reveals several significant differences. Mulyadi et al. (2024) emphasized relaxation-based interventions, whereas this study demonstrates that a sustained, spiritually grounded mentoring approach is more effective over the long term. Similarly, Alifiyah & Khadijah (2025) examined a combination of Sufism and psychotherapy in clinical settings, while this study applies it within the educational context. These differences highlight the high adaptability of spiritual approaches across various contexts, including Islamic primary education, and extend the scope of previous

research, which primarily focused on individual interventions rather than institutionalized programs.

### **Factors Influencing the Success of Spiritual Mentoring**

The success of spiritual mentoring in mitigating burnout among Islamic Education teachers is influenced by several interrelated factors. A key factor is spiritually oriented school leadership. Principals act as role models who provide not only administrative guidance but also exemplify religious practice and *ruhiyah* mentoring. Leadership grounded in Qur'anic values and the principle of *amanah* fosters a conducive work climate and increases teacher participation in spiritual activities (Yusli, 2025). In addition, an organizational culture that consistently integrates spiritual values into daily school life, including *dhikr* routines, collective prayer, and regular religious activities, contributes to a positive psychological climate. In this context, spirituality is not merely a normative discourse but a collective practice reinforcing solidarity and mental resilience, supporting Fadhilah & Faslah (2025) on the need for systemic integration of spiritual values. Another determinant is the individual teacher's commitment and preparedness; teachers with strong intrinsic awareness of spiritual importance are more active participants and benefit more significantly, while those less spiritually prepared show lower engagement, reducing program effectiveness.

### **Challenges in Implementing Spiritual Mentoring**

Despite its effectiveness, several challenges affect the implementation of spiritual mentoring. A primary constraint is teachers' limited time due to heavy workloads, particularly administrative and instructional demands, which often hinder consistent participation. This tension between professional responsibilities and spiritual needs reflects incomplete integration of spiritual support within work systems (Riyono, 2024). Another challenge is variability in individual teachers' spirituality. Teachers' responses to the mentoring program differ; some experience rapid positive change, while others require longer adaptation, consistent with Hidayah & Al Munir (2025), who noted that spiritually based psychosocial resilience is influenced by individual experience and religious understanding. Limited human resources competent in spiritual facilitation also pose a challenge, as not all mentors have backgrounds in spiritual counseling or Islamic psychology. Strengthening facilitator capacity through integrative training that combines psychology and spirituality, as advocated in the *tazkiyatun nafs* framework, is therefore essential (Riyono, 2024).

## **Implications and Contributions**

The findings offer significant theoretical and practical implications for Islamic education. Theoretically, the study reinforces that spirituality is an essential component for understanding and addressing teacher burnout, complementing conventional psychological approaches focused on cognitive and emotional aspects by integrating the spiritual dimension (Bayhaqi et al., 2025). Practically, the study contributes to developing a conceptual model of Islamic-based spiritual mentoring, integrating ritual activities, ruhiyah guidance, and self-reflection into a structured system. Spiritual mentoring thus becomes an integral part of school management rather than an ancillary activity. These findings expand the limited literature on partial interventions, such as short-term training or programs (Mulyadi et al., 2024). For practice, the study provides concrete recommendations for educational institutions to design effective, systematic, and sustainable spiritual mentoring programs, enhancing teacher well-being and overall teaching quality. Future research should consider quantitative studies to empirically measure effectiveness, examine implementation across educational levels, explore digital integration for accessibility, and analyze the role of educational policy in supporting sustainable spiritual mentoring programs.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study highlights that the implementation of spiritual mentoring serves as an effective and relevant strategy to address burnout among Islamic Education teachers, particularly within integrated Islamic school contexts. The key finding is that teacher burnout is not solely a consequence of high workload but is deeply rooted in unaddressed psychological and spiritual dimensions. Holistic approaches that integrate cognitive, emotional, and spiritual aspects are therefore essential for managing teacher well-being. Spiritual mentoring activities, including collective dhikr, Qur'anic recitation, ruhiyah mentoring, and the reinforcement of a religious school culture, were found to positively influence emotional stability, intrinsic motivation, and the perceived meaning of the teaching profession. Theoretically, the study reinforces the critical role of spirituality in Islamic educational psychology, supporting the tazkiyatun nafs framework in Islamic psychotherapy as an effective mechanism to alleviate psychological pressures such as burnout. Additionally, the findings underscore the relevance of spiritual intelligence theory, highlighting the importance of

transcendental awareness in fostering individual resilience to occupational stress, thereby contributing to interdisciplinary scholarship bridging Islamic education, psychology, and educational management.

From a practical perspective, the study provides strategic guidance for educational institutions in designing comprehensive professional development programs that integrate spiritual mentoring as a core component rather than a ceremonial add-on. This includes embedding spiritual practices within supervision programs, organizational culture, and leadership roles, with institutional support ensuring sustainability and preventive as well as curative benefits for teacher well-being and teaching quality. Nevertheless, the study is limited by its intrinsic case study design, restricting generalizability, and the lack of quantitative measures to empirically assess reductions in burnout, while variations in individual religiosity and spiritual preparedness may affect program outcomes. Future research is recommended to adopt mixed-method approaches with larger, diverse samples and validated instruments measuring both spiritual and burnout dimensions. Moreover, systematic collaboration with Islamic psychology experts and educational practitioners is suggested to strengthen the scientific foundation and practical implementation of sustainable spiritual mentoring programs.

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