

# Spiritual leadership training for improved well-being students of Islamic Boarding School

*Mutimmatul Faidah*<sup>1\*</sup>, *Dina Rahmawati*<sup>2</sup>, *Wiryo Nuryono*<sup>3</sup>, *Aghus Sifaq*<sup>4</sup> and *Safana Nejat Muntazeri*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cosmetology Education, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Communication Science, Faculty of Social Science and Political Science, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Counseling Guidance, Faculty of Science Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup>Sport Coaching Education, Faculty of Sport and Health Science, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

<sup>5</sup>Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya

**Abstract.** This study aims to (1) describe the needs analysis of Spiritual Leadership Training, (2) formulate the planning and implementation of Spiritual Leadership Training, and (3) describe the training evaluation. This research can contribute to the achievement of SDGs in the field of Quality Education. This research is a qualitative descriptive research. Data collection techniques were participant observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Key informants were boarding school caregivers, teachers, and boarding school administrators. The research subjects were 45 students from May to June 2024 in Surabaya and Batu, East Java. The results of this study are: (1) students need to strengthen self-awareness to be able to carry out the dual role as students and Islamic boarding school students; (2) the training is designed with dynamic and humanist package with five topics that lead to strengthening mental health to be able to become a wise leader and be based on spiritual values; and (3) evaluation of training results through three domains, implementation evaluation, group dynamics report, and Personal Action Plan (PAP). This study implies that mental health needs to be provided in learning in Islamic boarding schools. This is to strengthen the achievement of SDGs Quality education.

## 1 Introduction

Student Islamic boarding schools became a new phenomenon in the 90s to answer public anxiety about the student community who tended to keep their distance from religious life. On the one hand, universities produce intelligent people, but they need to be strengthened with morality and spirituality through education in boarding schools. Student Islamic boarding schools facilitate students who are developing their potential in general universities; at the same time, they are also equipped with an understanding and actualization of religion in student Islamic boarding schools. Students are individuals who live and study religious knowledge in a boarding school environment and also study in college at the same time [1].

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\* Corresponding author: [mutimmatulfaidah@unesa.ac.id](mailto:mutimmatulfaidah@unesa.ac.id)

The average student age is 18-22 years. This age is an age that is vulnerable to psychological problems because it is in the transition period from late adolescence to early adulthood. Student students have the responsibility to carry out lectures and boarding school activities, so there is a double burden when compared to non-student students.

Referring to its history, boarding school is a unique form of "community" environment and has a cheerful life value system with five elements that support it, namely: *Kyai* (religious leader), student, dormitories, prayer room/place of worship, and Islamic classic book in contrast to boarding school in general, which apply these five elements rigidly and structurally. Student boarding schools are transformed through adjustments to the lecture system, student organization patterns, and the digitalization of life. Students are not prohibited from carrying and using laptops and smartphones like students outside the boarding school. Students are allowed to do activities outside for self-development by instilling the value of trust and responsibility to be a filter for negative behavior outside the limits of norms and ethics.

Boarding school Student is a place where prospective state trustees grow and learn to equip themselves by balancing material and spiritual needs to be ready to take part in the hustle and bustle of an increasingly competitive world. The strength of boarding school-based students is undoubtedly an integral part of the agent of change that is expected to contribute to the enlightenment of society.

Research related to Student well-being has been conducted. Research by [2] found that 38% of students at the Indonesian Education University had low psychological well-being, and 16% were in the high category. Furthermore, research conducted on 100 psychology students by [3], located at Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, showed that 72% of students had moderate psychological well-being, 13% in the low category, and 15% in the high category. In [4], her research on 131 student students in Yogyakarta, showed that the categorization of psychological well-being in subjects was at a very low level, as much as 14.6%, then psychological well-being in subjects with low levels was 24.4%, and psychological well-being in subjects with moderate levels was 13%, and 48% of subjects had high and very high levels on psychological well-being variables.

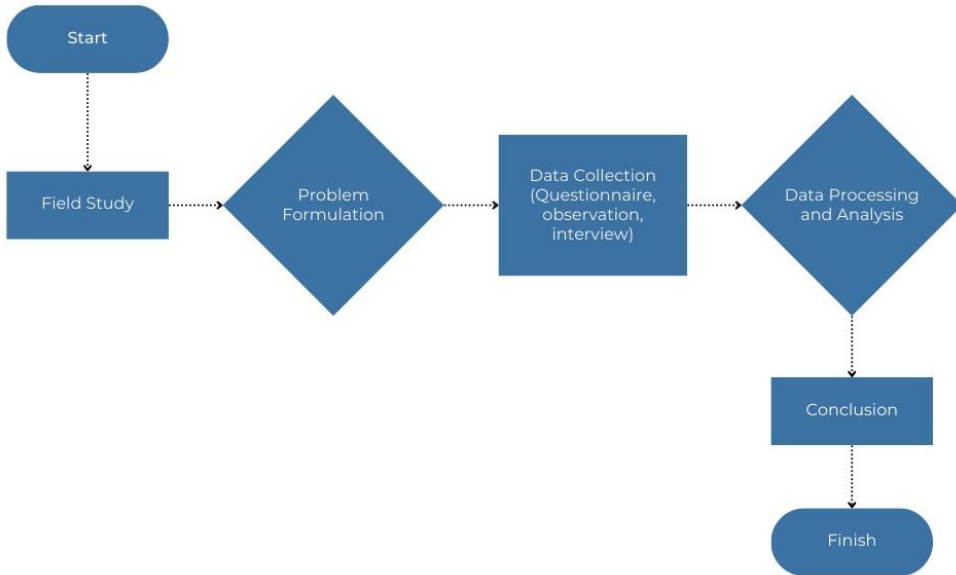
In contrast to the above research, this study discusses the relationship between the level of well-being and spiritual leadership training. Specifically, the formulation of the research is as follows: (1) How is the analysis of the needs of the Spiritual Leadership Training program?; (2) how is the planning and implementation of the Spiritual Leadership Training program?; and (3) how is the program evaluated?

This study aims to (1) explain the needs analysis of the Spiritual Leadership Training program, (2) describe the planning and implementation of the Spiritual Leadership Training program, and (3) describe the training evaluation.

## 2 Methods

This research is descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive research aims to describe a certain condition or phenomenon without sorting out certain factors or variables. The qualitative approach was chosen because it involves a deep understanding of human behavior. This research describes the needs of students and the efforts made by student boarding schools to increase the capacity of cadres. Data collection techniques through participant observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Key informants were boarding school caregivers, teachers, and boarding school administrators. The research subjects were 49 students. The research was conducted in May and June 2024 in Surabaya and Batu, East Java.

The data analysis technique follows the Miles and Huberman model: data reduction, data display or presentation, and data verification or conclusions [5]. The validity of the data is checked by triangulating methods and sources.



**Fig. 1.** Research Methods

## 3 Result and Discussion

### 3.1 Training needs analysis

The student self-evaluation questionnaire is the initial data on the importance of this training being carried out with a focus on increasing self-awareness. From the questionnaires distributed, four groups of conditions were identified, namely (1) well-being; some students are insecure about themselves, choose to be silent if there is a problem, keep their problems, and feel that life is worthless; (2) social, some students choose to keep their distance if they do not get along with fellow students, there are students who rarely communicate with other students, friendship conflicts, and are in a circle of friends outside the boarding school; (3) worship, performing compulsory worship, some add to *sunnah* (worship that is done will be rewarded and if abandoned will not get punishment), are not accustomed to waking up at night for *Tahajud* (sunnah prayer which is performed at night after sleeping), and need to be awakened for *Shubuh* worship; and (4) physical health, overall can maintain personal and environmental hygiene. Based on these data, the personality aspect that needs to be developed is self-awareness. Selection of Self-awareness expected that participants have the ability of two things: self-evaluation so that they can know their strengths, weaknesses, drives, and values that occur to them and reading social situations by understanding other people and other people's expectations of them so that they can self-reflect, observe and explore experiences, including controlling emotions.

### **3.2 Training planning and implementation**

The planning of this training starts with conceptualizing.

- a. The purpose of the Spiritual Leadership Training program is to produce leaders who are broad-minded, inclusive, and able to face the dynamics of life in the global era based on spiritual values.
- b. The conceptualization of Spiritual Leadership is based on the character of a leader who brings the worldly dimension to the spiritual dimension, such as the ability to inspire, arouse, influence, and move through exemplary service, compassion, and implementation of values and other divine traits to bring up attitudes such as mutual respect, mutual respect, honesty, and mutual assistance to one another. In addition, spiritual leadership is the act of a leader who can apply spiritual values to daily leadership practices.
- c. The training method chosen is Experiential Learning with four stages: (1) (Concrete Experience), such as simulation or role-play; (2) (Reflective Observation), reflecting on what has been experienced; (3) (Abstract Conceptualization), connecting the reflected experience with theoretical knowledge; and (4) (Active Experimentation), applying understood concepts to new situations. The training program is based on applying experiential dynamics, which includes six important elements that influence the success of experiential learning.
- d. The training stages include a series of self-discovery, self-knowledge, and re-programming. First, Self-Discovery invites participants to undergo a process of deeper understanding of themselves as individuals. Participants are invited to reflect on their values, strengths, weaknesses, interests, and life goals. Through this reflection, participants can better understand who they are and what motivates them to become better leaders. Second, Self-Knowledge in this stage helps participants to be more honest with themselves, strengthen their confidence, and understand ways to develop themselves as quality leaders. Third, re-programming involves changes in mindsets and paradigms that may have become obstacles. Participants are invited to identify unproductive or limiting mindsets and replace them with more positive and constructive ones. This process can open participants' minds to think more creatively, adaptively, and innovatively when facing leadership challenges.
- e. Training Strategy, training packaging also applies various dynamics, namely:
  - 1) Place Dynamics: Participants are conditioned to be in a variety of different conditions and environments, both indoors and outdoors, to develop adaptability in different situations.
  - 2) Group Dynamics: Participants participate in various group tasks whose members are always changed to build adaptability with various types of people and build effective cooperative relationships.
  - 3) Activity Dynamics involves participants being exposed to physically, mentally, sensory, and cognitively challenging tasks. These activities can be light or heavy physical challenges and tasks that test critical and creative thinking skills. Participants will face diverse experiences, which help them develop skills, resilience, and confidence.
  - 4) The Dynamics of Success and Failure: In the dynamics of success and failure, participants will experience the balance between achieving success and facing failure in completing a given task. This experience will enrich and expand the complexity of learning as participants learn from successes and take valuable lessons from failures.

Applying these five elements of dynamics provides a deep, meaningful, and long-lasting experience for participants. Participants will experience meaningful personal growth and

leadership development to be ready to face challenges and become visionary and effective leaders in the business world and organizations.

The spiritual leadership training was conducted in Batu City on May 26 and 27, 2024. The activity with the theme 'Recognizing Yourself: From Zero to Hero' was attended by 45 students. The training was developed using group dynamics. There were seven groups, with 6 - 7 members in each group. The group division system is random, which allows each group to be from various college classes and study programs. Dynamics were raised through intergroup competitions and study cases in each session. The material presented, namely:

- a. How do we maintain our mental health?
- b. Knowing Yourself
- c. Self-reflection
- d. Freedom from Insecurity
- e. Islamic Positive Affirmations

The presentation of the material was opened with an explanation of a healthy mental state. The speaker explained that a healthy mental state can be characterized by calmness, serenity, the ability to be active or productive, the ability to enjoy life, and happiness. This explanation aims to give participants a basic understanding of the importance of maintaining mental health in everyday life. By doing so, participants can adopt habits and attitudes that support spiritual well-being. In addition, mental health education can reduce the prevalence and severity of mental illness [6]. Research by [7] also found that mental health education can provide basic skills to promote healthy behaviors and prevent risky behaviors, such as violence (including bullying), smoking, and alcohol and drug abuse, through behavior change for the better. Individuals with mental health awareness will develop healthy coping skills to manage stress, anxiety, and negative emotions. Without proper coping skills, individuals are likely to turn to risky behaviors as a way to escape rather than face their problems.

Next, the resource person provided material on mental disorders divided into three categories: mild, moderate, and severe. Mild mental disorders include feelings of anxiety, lack of self-confidence, difficulty concentrating, irritability, and stress that can be overcome with relaxation techniques or social support. Moderate psychiatric disorders may include persistent mood disorders that require more serious interventions such as counseling or therapy. At the same time, severe psychiatric disorders require intensive medical treatment and therapy.

Participants are also invited to do self-recognition activities. -**Self-concept**. Self-concept is the picture that people have of themselves. It is a composite of individuals' beliefs about themselves (physical, psychological, social, and emotional characteristics). - **Self-esteem**. Self-esteem is the basis for building positive human relationships, learning, creativity, and a sense of personal responsibility. Self-esteem is the cement that holds an individual's personality together into a positive, whole, and effective structure. At each stage of an individual's life, this self-esteem determines the level of ability to cultivate the resources or potential that he or she is born with. - **Individuals' multiple selves**. Different identities or multiple selves are when individuals carry out various activities, interests, and social relationships. When the individual is involved in an interpersonal relationship, he or she has two self-concepts. Firstly, the perception of oneself and the perception of others towards oneself. Secondly, different identities can also be seen in how individuals perceive their ideal selves. That is when part of the self-concept shows who the individual is, and the other part shows what they want to be (idealized self). This identity is also called private self-awareness and public self-awareness.

In order to achieve awareness and understanding of oneself, participants are asked to write down:

1. Three strengths you have. This allows participants to reflect on their experiences, achievements, challenges, and how they cope with various situations. Thus, participants' confidence will increase after realizing their strengths.
2. Three weaknesses. Writing about negative emotions such as anxiety or fear can reduce the emotional burden. By writing about negative feelings and thoughts, participants can see from a different perspective and find ways to overcome these feelings. This certainly helps them feel calmer and more confident in dealing with everyday situations.
3. Three things that make you emotional. By writing down what makes them emotional, participants will gain a deeper understanding of themselves and learn how to control emotional responses. This helps in reducing impulsive reactions and improving self-control.
4. Three favorite compliments. Writing down favorite compliments can improve mental health by reinforcing positive self-identity, increasing self-confidence, and strengthening social relationships by recalling positive interactions with others.
5. Three things you want to do. This helps participants to set clear goals, increase motivation, and improve productivity with good planning.

After the participants wrote some of the above, the resource person appointed some participants to read out their answers. The activity was very warm, with participants sharing their experiences and feelings. The resource person then explored the problems faced by the participants and validated their feelings, showing that what they felt was normal and could be managed well. Often, the participants felt that their answers were relatable to each other. This created a sense of community and understanding that they are not alone in facing problems. This activity made the participants know themselves better, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and how to manage emotions better.

In [8] states that adolescents are more likely to think emotionally than rationally. As a result, they often behave aggressively because they have difficulty dealing with their frustrations. When experiencing emotional disturbances such as anger or upset, adolescents tend to vent it through negative behavior. These problems can be addressed with a journaling program that focuses on emotion regulation. Journal writing is effective in managing emotions and improving mental well-being [9]. Writing therapy was first introduced by Pennebaker in 1989 as a means to improve the ability to express emotions. In its implementation, writing therapy provides opportunities for individuals to reflect feelings through words, increase creativity in self-expression, strengthen communication and interpersonal skills, reduce tension, and improve problem-solving and adaptability [8]. In [10], it is explained that expressing emotional experiences through writing can reduce stress, clear the mind, stabilize emotions, and improve physical health.

Before continuing the presentation of the material, the speakers invited participants to sing two songs related to mental health, namely '*Manusia Kuat*' from Tulus and '*Jiwa yang Bersedih*' from Ghea Indrawari. These two songs were chosen because they have inspiring lyrics and are relevant to the theme of mental health. Tulus' '*Manusia Kuat*' has many meanings in each of its lyrics. The song holds motivational values related to a healthy soul and mentality, strong determination, never giving up, optimism, confidence, not easily sad, and religion [11]. The song '*Jiwa yang Bersedih*' from Ghea Indrawari describes feelings of sadness, confusion, fatigue, and a sense of not being recognized. However, it also contains a message of optimism to face a challenging life journey [12]. Singing mental health-related songs together is expected to boost morale, provide positive energy, and help participants understand and accept their emotions, which is the first step in the process of improving mental health.

The resource person continued the material by discussing ways to avoid feeling insecure. Insecure is a condition where a person feels insecure, rejected, isolated, anxious, and hostile [13]. The first way is to be your own best friend. This means talking to yourself positively and lovingly, like talking to your closest friend, to reduce feelings of insecurity and increase self-confidence. Second, stay away from toxic people and surround yourself with supportive people. Third, do not compare yourself with others because everyone has a unique and different life journey. Fourth, it is important to recognize oneself, including strengths, weaknesses, and personal values. Fifth, finding happiness in small things and being grateful for what one has. Gratitude can help individuals see the positive side of life, reduce feelings of insecurity, and improve mental health. Finally, the speakers reminded participants to be wise when using social media. In [13], it was mentioned that social media content, such as photos or videos, as well as achievements uploaded by other users, can cause insecurity [13]. Individuals can maintain their mental health by limiting time on social media and following accounts that provide positive inspiration and support.

After the presentation of the material, the resource person invited participants to conduct a reflection and positive affirmation session. In this session, participants were guided to find a comfortable and calming sitting position. The resource person then guided them through a series of positive affirmations that were spoken gently and lovingly. Participants are asked to silently mimic the affirmations, reflecting on the meaning and power of the positive words they are repeating. The positive affirmations included statements such as "I am valuable and worthy of love", "I forgive myself for past mistakes", and "I am grateful for all that I have". Many participants felt emotional, even shedding tears during this session. This moment of reflection provides an opportunity for participants to truly connect with themselves, recognize their strengths and values, and shed doubts and insecurities.

To conclude the Spiritual Leadership training with the material "Know Yourself from Zero to Hero", participants were invited to write down their hopes. Each participant was given a small piece of paper and then asked to write down their hopes or things they wanted to achieve. After that, the participants could hang their hope paper on the hope tree provided by the committee. By writing and hanging their hopes, the participants have indirectly made the first step towards the realization of these aspirations. This activity not only provided a warm and energizing ending but also created a sense of optimism and strengthened personal resolve and commitment to positive change.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is still a major problem in achieving well-being. WHO notes that 450 million people worldwide suffer from mental health disorders [14]. Mentally healthy individuals can face life's challenges and build positive relationships with others. Meanwhile, individuals who experience mental health disorders will have difficulty controlling emotions and moods, which can ultimately lead to bad behavior. Good mental health is the foundation for a happy and productive life. This does not mean being free from mental disorders but also the ability to enjoy life, manage stress well and make positive contributions to society. Therefore, it is important to continue educating ourselves and others about mental health, especially teenagers who will become the next generation in building the future of the nation and state.

### **3.3 Evaluation of training**

The evaluation of the training through three domains, namely: First, evaluate the implementation by providing program input and feedback. Based on the response questionnaire provided, 100% of participants rated the training materials, instructors, facilitators, and training methods as excellent. 65% of participants gave input on the venue or training area that was not large enough.

Second, the group dynamics report through various sharing or discussions on experiences during the activities. The dynamics report provides a deeper understanding of the learning outcomes and team dynamics during the training. Based on the observation, it was found that each group consisted of 7 participants. Each group received a problem-solving assignment to be discussed together. This pattern allows each participant to have an opinion and dialogue to find alternative solutions.

Third, the Personal Action Plan (PAP) is a personal action plan made by each participant as a form of implementation of the learning received during the training. The PAP contains concrete steps that participants will take to apply the knowledge and skills learned during the training program in real situations, both in work and personal life. This plan helps participants to identify achievement targets and strategic steps to achieve them after the training is completed.

Based on the results of the study, it is known that students have greater demands than general students, especially in activity patterns. First, activeness in lecture activities includes doing coursework, fulfilling test scores, and other campus activities. Meanwhile, activities in the boarding school include studies, memorization activities, memorization deposits, activities on certain days such as Friday nights, *sorogan*, daily or weekly pickets, activities that require students to queue and celebrate Islamic holidays, and several other boarding school activities [4]. The density of activities and the desire to achieve academic achievement are indications of the pressure students face [4]. This can affect the well-being of student students.

Individuals with the ability to manage and control themselves and the social environment and fulfill aspects of psychological well-being are said to be in a state of psychological well-being [15]. According to Ryff, there are six components of psychological well-being, including (1) individuals accept themselves as they are; (2) individuals can make goals in their lives; (3) individuals can maximize their potential; (4) individuals can build healthy relationships with others. (5) individuals can act independently in various circumstances, and (6) individuals have power over their environment [15]. Every individual needs to have good psychological health because good self-quality results from high psychological well-being. It can increase life expectancy and enable individuals to improve their functioning and quality of life [16]. The designed training can improve the well-being of students.

## 4 Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that (1) students need to strengthen self-awareness to be able to carry out the dual role as students and also students; (2) the training is designed with dynamic and humanist packaging. Five issues that are trained that lead to strengthening mental health to be able to take on the role of a wise leader and become a role model based on spiritual values; and (3) Evaluation of training results through three domains, implementation evaluation, group dynamics report, and Personal Action Plan (PAP). This training can increase Student self-awareness, self-confidence, and courage to take a more significant role in social life. The commitment of the best human being is the most useful to other human beings, and it is built into this training through real work in organizational leadership both inside and outside the boarding school.

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