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## RELIGIOSITY AS A COPING STRATEGY FOR GENERATION Z IN DEALING WITH ANXIETY: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY

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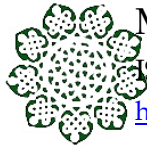
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**ABSTRACT:** *Mental health is a critical issue for Generation Z, particularly college students who face academic pressures, social demands, and rapid advancements in digital technology. These conditions often trigger anxiety, which impacts psychological well-being. This study aims to understand Generation Z students' experiences with anxiety and how religiosity is utilized as a coping strategy. This study employs a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design involving five students from the State Islamic University of Palangka Raya through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The results indicate that anxiety is experienced in three main forms: academic anxiety, social anxiety, and anxiety about the future. Students utilize religiosity through religious practices (prayer, salat, and reading the Qur'an) as well as spiritual approaches (belief, surrender, and meaning-making). The novelty of this study lies in revealing religiosity as an active, contextual, and experience-*



*based coping process, rather than merely a measured variable. The findings indicate that religiosity serves as a means of emotional regulation, meaning-making, and a source of optimism in coping with anxiety. In practical terms, this study highlights the importance of integrating spiritual approaches into mental health support programs for college students. Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of the psychology of religion by shedding light on religious coping among Generation Z.*

**Keywords:** *Anxiety, Generation Z, Religiosity, Coping Strategies*

**ABSTRAK:** Kesehatan mental menjadi isu penting pada Generasi Z, khususnya mahasiswa yang menghadapi tekanan akademik, tuntutan sosial, serta perkembangan teknologi digital yang pesat. Kondisi tersebut sering memicu kecemasan (anxiety) yang berdampak pada kesejahteraan psikologis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami pengalaman kecemasan mahasiswa Generasi Z serta bagaimana religiusitas dimanfaatkan sebagai strategi coping. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain fenomenologi yang melibatkan lima mahasiswa Universitas Islam Negeri Palangka Raya melalui teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kecemasan dialami dalam tiga bentuk utama, yaitu kecemasan akademik, kecemasan sosial, dan kecemasan terhadap masa depan. Mahasiswa memanfaatkan religiusitas melalui praktik ibadah (doa, shalat, membaca Al-Qur'an) serta pendekatan spiritual (keyakinan, penyerahan diri, dan pemaknaan). Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada pengungkapan religiusitas sebagai proses coping yang aktif, kontekstual, dan berbasis pengalaman, bukan sekadar variabel yang diukur. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa religiusitas berfungsi sebagai regulasi emosi, pembentukan makna, serta sumber optimisme dalam menghadapi kecemasan. Secara praktis, penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya integrasi pendekatan spiritual dalam program dukungan kesehatan mental mahasiswa. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini memperkaya kajian psikologi agama dalam memahami coping religius pada Generasi Z.

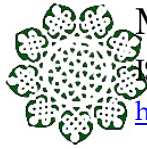
**Kata Kunci:** *Anxiety, Generasi Z, Religiusitas, Strategi Coping*

## INTRODUCTION

Mental health has become a major concern for Generation Z, who are growing up amid rapid technological advancements and increasingly complex social demands<sup>1</sup>. This generation has grown up in a fast-paced environment, connected through digital media, and faced with various expectations in the areas of education, social life, and personal development<sup>2</sup>. These conditions mean that Generation Z has a different life dynamic compared to previous generations,

<sup>1</sup> Fatiha Arrahmi Thahir et al., "PT. Media Akademik Publisher Kesehatan Mental Di Era Generasi Z Dalam Studi Kasus Smp Negeri 36 MEDAN," *Jma* 1, no. 1 (2023): 223–31.

<sup>2</sup> Mutia Sari, Fajri Ismail, and Muhammad Win Afgani, "Pembiasaan Nilai-Nilai Keagamaan Sebagai Kunci Pembentukan Karakter Religius," *Adiba: Journal of Education* 3, no. 3 (2023): 380–88.



making mental health an increasingly discussed topic in both academic studies and daily life<sup>3</sup>.

In reality, many individuals from Generation Z experience anxiety due to various factors they face in daily life. Academic pressure, demands to excel, and the influence of social environments and digital media often serve as sources of stress for this generation<sup>4</sup>. Constant exposure to information through social media can also trigger feelings of insecurity, social comparison, and excessive worry about the future<sup>5</sup>. These conditions can lead to psychological impacts such as excessive worry, emotional instability, and difficulty managing the pressures faced. If not properly addressed, anxiety can affect an individual's psychological well-being and hinder daily activities. Therefore, coping strategies are needed to help individuals manage anxiety in a more positive and constructive manner<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, coping strategies are needed to help individuals manage anxiety in a more positive and constructive manner<sup>7</sup>.

One approach that can be used in addressing such conditions is through religiosity as a coping strategy for dealing with anxiety<sup>8</sup>. In the field of religious psychology, religiosity is not merely understood as ritualistic worship practices but also as a source of inner strength that can assist individuals in facing various life challenges<sup>9</sup>. Religious values can provide life direction, foster hope, and strengthen inner peace when a person faces difficulties<sup>10</sup>. Religious values are also believed to provide deeper meaning to the life experiences one undergoes. When individuals face problems, spiritual beliefs can serve as a foundation for maintaining a positive mindset and avoiding despair<sup>11</sup>. In this context, religiosity functions not only as a form of practicing religious teachings but also as a means to strengthen resilience in the face of life's pressures (Ramadhani et al. 2025). Religious practices such as

<sup>3</sup> Ken Ayuthaya Purnama and Noufal Alif Farhannaya, "Komunikasi Gen Z Dan Mental Health," *Arunika* 2, no. 1 (2024): 57-65.

<sup>4</sup> Aisya Farah Sayyidah et al., "Peran Religiusitas Islam Dalam Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan Psikologis," *Al-Qalb: Jurnal Psikologi Islam* 13, no. 2 (2022): 103-15, <https://doi.org/10.15548/alqalb.v13i2.4274>.

<sup>5</sup> Wui San Taslim, "Overwork Dan Burnout Pada Generasi Z Mahasiswa: Peran Stres Akademik Dan Resiliensi" 7, no. 2 (2025): 29-40.

<sup>6</sup> Dimas Wahyu Rozaki Nisa, Syasya Khoirin, "Strategi Mengatasi Overthinking Dan Financial Anxiety Melalui Penguatan Regulasi Emosi Berbasis Prinsip Syariah" 6, no. 1 (2026): 7-14.

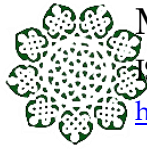
<sup>7</sup> Nisrina Farida Ramadhanti, Najwa Rizki Amalia, and Surawan Surawan, "Religious Coping (Rcope) Dalam Mengatasi Burnout Akademik Mahasiswa Generasi Z," *Al-Qalam: Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Pendidikan* 17, no. 2 (2025): 574-83, <https://doi.org/10.47435/al-qalam.v17i2.4264>.

<sup>8</sup> Safira Ramadhani et al., "Makna Religiusitas Terhadap Kesejahteraan Psikologis Anggota IRMA Masjid Agung Palembang" 4 (2025): 768-81.

<sup>9</sup> Ramdhani Febriansyah and Sheila Hariry, "Peran Agama Dalam Pembentukan Identitas Diri Remaja Muslim : Tinjauan Psikologi Agama" 03, no. 03 (2025): 1631-41.

<sup>10</sup> Andi Muhammad Quljalal and Maya Tsuroya Alfadla, "Studi Kasus Anxiety Disorders Pada Mahasiswa Gen Z," *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Journal* 1, no. 1 (2025): 14-18, <https://doi.org/10.64595/yaq9yq37>.

<sup>11</sup> Eko Giono and Surawan, "Coping Religius Sebagai Strategi Penanggulangan Stress Dan Kecemasan Pada Mahasiswa Tingkat Akhir," *Juperan* 04, no. 02 (2025): 393-400.



praying, reciting prayers, reading sacred texts, and drawing closer to God can provide inner peace and help individuals make sense of the life experiences they face. Through religiosity, a person can gain a sense of optimism, patience, and the conviction that every problem has a solution<sup>12</sup>.

Previous research has shown that religiosity is associated with mental health and an individual's ability to manage stress<sup>13</sup>. Other studies also demonstrate a relationship between religiosity and an individual's psychological well-being<sup>14</sup>. However, the study<sup>15</sup> focuses more on the relationships between variables and has not specifically addressed the experience of religiosity as a coping strategy for anxiety among Generation Z. Additionally, the study<sup>16</sup> discusses the psychology of religion in general but has not examined the subjective experiences of Generation Z. It discusses the psychology of religion in general but has not examined the subjective experiences of Generation Z. The study<sup>17</sup> also has not used a phenomenological approach to understand the meaning of religious experiences in coping with anxiety.

Based on the above discussion, it is evident that there remains a research gap in the form of a lack of studies specifically exploring Generation Z's religious experiences in utilizing religiosity as a coping strategy for anxiety through a phenomenological approach in the psychology of religion. Therefore, this study was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of Generation Z's religious experiences in coping with anxiety. The research questions for this study are: (1) What are the experiences of anxiety among Generation Z? (2) What forms of religiosity are used as coping strategies for anxiety? (3) How do religious experiences help Generation Z manage anxiety?

This study is expected to provide insights into the role of religiosity in helping individuals manage anxiety and to enrich the field of religious psychology regarding the mental health of the younger generation.

<sup>12</sup> et al. Isro'i, Moch Zadit Taqwa Al, "Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Pemahaman Pendidikan Agama Islam Pada Gen Z" 13, no. 2 (2022): 499-520, <https://doi.org/10.34005/alrisalah.v13i1.2009>.

<sup>13</sup> Sri. Setiawan, Mei, Shinta; Eva, Nur & Andayani, "Religiusitas Dan Kesejahteraan Psikologis Mahasiswa Pengajar Bimbingan Belajar Al-Qur'an Di Universitas Negeri Malang," *Psikoislamedia Jurnal Psikologi* 6 (1) (2021): 94-107.

<sup>14</sup> Shilpa Aggarwal et al., "Religiosity and Spirituality in the Prevention and Management of Depression and Anxiety in Young People: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *BMC Psychiatry* 23, no. 1 (2023): 1-33, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-023-05091-2>.

<sup>15</sup> Surawan Ariska, Serli, Fitriyah, Najwa Amalia, "The Role Of Religious Practices In Maintaining The Mental Health Of Generation Z Students In The Digital Era," *International Journal of Islamic Psychology* 2, no. 1 (2026): 45-56.

<sup>16</sup> Uun Kurnaesih Hartono, Rudi, "Studi Fenomenologis Tentang Kecemasan Akademik Mahasiswa Tingkat Akhir STIT Al-Khairiyah Cilegon," 2025, 73-77.

<sup>17</sup> Mu Ida and Nur Fadhilah, "Inner Peace Dalam Hadis Nabi ( Reaktualisasi Nilai Spiritualitas Islam Bagi Generasi Z Perspektif Spiritual-Psikologi)," *DIRAYAH : Jurnal Ilmu Hadis P-ISSN: 6*, no. 1 (2025): 120.



## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically a phenomenological approach, to understand Generation Z's subjective experiences in utilizing religiosity as a coping strategy for dealing with anxiety<sup>18</sup>. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it is capable of deeply exploring the meaning of an individual's life experiences, particularly regarding students' religious experiences when facing emotional and academic pressures<sup>19</sup>.

This study was conducted on the campus of the State Islamic University (UIN) Palangka Raya from February to March 2026. The research subjects consisted of five Generation Z students selected using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) aged 18–23 years, (2) active students, (3) having experienced anxiety in both academic and personal contexts, and (4) using religious practices as a strategy to cope with anxiety. The sample size of five participants was deemed sufficient as it reached data saturation, indicated by the absence of new codes or themes in the fourth and fifth interviews<sup>20</sup>.

The participants consisted of three women and two men, ranging from their second to eighth semesters. The participants' level of religiosity fell into the moderate to high category, as indicated by the frequency of worship, involvement in religious activities, and daily spiritual practices. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide<sup>21</sup>. The interview guide covered several key aspects, namely: (1) experiences of anxiety, (2) forms of religious practice (such as prayer, supplication, dhikr, and reading the Qur'an), (3) the meaning of religiosity for participants, and (4) emotional changes following religious practice. Examples of questions used include: "What do you feel when you experience anxiety?" and "How do religious practices help you cope with those feelings?" Each interview lasted 30–60 minutes and was conducted one to two times per participant to obtain in-depth data.

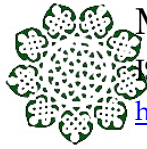
Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis through several systematic stages, namely: (1) verbatim transcription of interview results, (2) open coding to identify initial concepts, (3) axial coding to group codes into interrelated categories, and (4) selective coding to identify and formulate main themes representing participants' experiences. The analysis process was conducted in two cycles to ensure the depth and consistency of data interpretation. The analysis was conducted independently by the researcher, with peer debriefing to maintain the consistency and credibility of the coding results.

<sup>18</sup> Fahmi Ainun Diana Lating, "Eksplorasi Pengalaman Psikologis Mahasiswa Dalam Penyusunan Skripsi: Studi Fenomenologi Religiusitas Dan Relasi Dosen" 13, no. 3 (2025).

<sup>19</sup> Abdul Nasir et al., "Pendekatan Fenomenologi Dalam Penelitian Kualitatif," *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research* 3, no. 5 (2023): 4445–51.

<sup>20</sup> Dede Firmansyah, Deri, "Teknik Pengambilan Sampel Umum Dalam Metodologi Penelitian: Literature Review," *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Holistik (JIPH)* 1, no. 2 (2022): 85–114.

<sup>21</sup> Al. Nur Intifada Zahroh, et, "Strategi Pengumpulan Data Dalam Penelitian Kualitatif : Teknik, Tantangan Dan Solusinya" 3, no. 6 (2025): 107–18.



To ensure the validity of the data, this study employed triangulation and member checking. The triangulation methods used included source triangulation – comparing data across participants – and theoretical triangulation – linking the research findings to concepts of religiosity and coping strategies in the relevant literature<sup>22</sup>. Additionally, member checking was conducted by confirming the interview results and the researcher’s interpretations with the participants to ensure consistency between the data obtained and the experiences intended by the participants.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Anxiety Experiences Among Generation Z

The research findings indicate that anxiety experiences among Generation Z college students manifest in diverse and subjective forms, yet can be categorized into three main patterns: academic anxiety, social anxiety, and anxiety about the future. Academic anxiety was the most dominant experience. Participants described anxiety as feelings of restlessness, difficulty focusing, and even sleep disturbances when facing academic tasks and pressures. This finding aligns with research<sup>23</sup> stating that academic pressure is the primary factor contributing to anxiety among students.

However, this study expands on these findings by showing that anxiety is not merely external pressure but also internal experiences such as overthinking and feelings of inadequacy in meeting expectations. Social anxiety manifests as a lack of self-confidence when interacting or expressing opinions. This study also identified social anxiety among Generation Z, who tend to compare themselves with others, particularly in academic contexts.

Meanwhile, anxiety about the future is characterized by concerns regarding graduation and employment. These findings support<sup>24</sup> who note that future anxiety affects students’ psychological well-being. However, this study indicates that such anxiety is more influenced by the pressure of self-expectations and environmental expectations than by objective factors alone. Therefore, the experience of anxiety among Generation Z is not isolated but rather a combination of interrelated academic, social, and existential pressures.

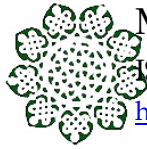
### Forms of Religiosity as Coping Strategies for Anxiety

Furthermore, regarding forms of religiosity as a coping strategy, the research findings indicate that students utilize various forms of religiosity as coping

<sup>22</sup> Yuli Asmi Rozali, “Penggunaan Analisis Konten Dan Analisis Tematik,” in *Penggunaan Analisis Konten Dan Analisis Tematik Forum Ilmiah*, vol. 19, 2022, 68.

<sup>23</sup> Fajlay Rabbi and Sefatul Islam, “The Effect of Academic Stress and Mental Anxiety among the Students of Khulna University” 3, no. 3 (2024): 280–99, <https://doi.org/10.56916/ejip.v3i3.723>.

<sup>24</sup> Umi Laela Mukaromah and Prinska Damara Sastri, “The Role Of Future Anxiety And Self-Efficacy On Final-Year Students’ Psychological Well-Being,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia* 6, no. 7 (2025): 3133–43, <https://doi.org/10.59141/japendi.v6i7.8425>.



strategies, which can be classified into two main categories: ritual practices and spiritual approaches.

First, religious practices such as prayer, salat, and reading the Qur'an are the most frequently used strategies. These activities are performed consciously when anxiety arises, with the aim of calming oneself. This finding aligns with research (Marhamah 2025) indicating that religious practices are effective in reducing academic stress.

Second, a spiritual approach, involving faith in God and an attitude of surrender is also an important part of coping. Participants not only engage in worship but also interpret their problems as part of God's plan. This supports the concept of spiritual well-being<sup>25</sup>, in which spiritual faith helps individuals accept the circumstances they face. Unlike previous studies that tend to view religiosity as a variable, this study demonstrates that religiosity functions as an active and contextual way of life, directly employed in addressing anxiety.

### **The Role of Religiosity in Helping Generation Z Manage Anxiety**

The research findings indicate that religiosity is not merely used as a coping mechanism but also plays a deeper role in the anxiety management process. First, religiosity functions as emotional regulation, where religious practices help calm the mind and reduce the intensity of anxiety. This aligns with findings<sup>26</sup> showing a link between religiosity and reduced anxiety.

Second, religiosity aids in meaning-making. Participants view problems as tests or part of God's plan, so anxiety is no longer perceived as a mere threat. These findings reinforce the perspective of the psychology of religion<sup>27</sup>, but this study provides empirical evidence based on students' direct experiences.

Third, religiosity fosters an optimistic attitude and self-acceptance. The belief that every problem has a solution makes students better able to cope with uncertainty, particularly regarding the future<sup>28</sup>.

However, this study also found that not all coping strategies are adaptive. Some students still use strategies such as distraction or even avoiding tasks (avoidance coping), which provide only temporary relief. This indicates that religiosity is more effective when used actively (positive religious coping), rather than merely as rituals devoid of meaning. Therefore, religiosity functions as a coping system that is not only emotional but also cognitive and existential in helping students manage anxiety.

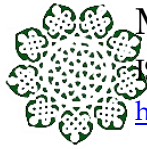
The findings of this study reinforce the perspective that religiosity serves as a dynamic and multidimensional coping system for Generation Z, not merely a

<sup>25</sup> Devi Jati Septyningtyas et al., *Konseling Islam: Pendekatan Spiritual Untuk Mengatasi Masalah Psiko-Sosial* (Star Digital Publishing, Yogyakarta-Indonesia, 2025).

<sup>26</sup> Aggarwal et al., "Religiosity and Spirituality in the Prevention and Management of Depression and Anxiety in Young People: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis."

<sup>27</sup> A Dani Dimas Ramadhan et al., *Psikologis Agama Pada Remaja* (Penerbit: Kramantara JS, 2025).

<sup>28</sup> Anwar Sutoyo Zahwa Arbiani Fitrianti, Muslikah, "Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling Ar-Rahman" 11 (2025): 155-68, <https://doi.org/10.31602/jbkr.v11.i1.18763>.



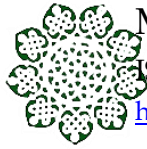
passive variable. The three patterns of anxiety academic, social, and future-oriented demonstrate that Gen Z students experience interconnected pressures. Unlike previous studies that often isolate these anxieties, this research reveals their cumulative nature. The use of ritual practices (e.g., prayer, salat, Qur'anic recitation) and spiritual approaches (e.g., tawakkul or surrender to God) highlights that religiosity operates on emotional, cognitive, and existential levels. This supports the positive religious coping framework as Pargament, 1997 said, where individuals actively collaborate with the divine to manage distress.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the phenomenological design, while rich in depth, limits generalizability. The findings are based on a relatively small sample of Gen Z college students from specific Islamic educational contexts in Indonesia. Cultural and religious homogeneity may influence how religiosity is expressed; students from other religious backgrounds or secular environments might demonstrate different coping patterns. Second, self-reported data are susceptible to social desirability bias. Participants may overreport religious practices due to normative expectations within their communities. Third, the study did not differentiate between types of anxiety disorders, which may affect the effectiveness of specific religious coping strategies. Fourth, the cross-sectional nature captures anxiety and coping at a single point in time, whereas both are dynamic processes. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine how religious coping evolves alongside changing anxiety levels. Finally, the finding that some students resort to avoidance coping suggests that religiosity is not a panacea; its effectiveness depends on meaningful engagement rather than superficial ritual performance. Future research should include quantitative measures and diverse samples to validate and extend these qualitative insights.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the experience of anxiety among Generation Z college students is complex and multidimensional, encompassing academic anxiety, social anxiety, and anxiety about the future. Academic anxiety emerged as the most dominant form, triggered by assignment pressure, achievement demands, as well as self- and environmental expectations. Furthermore, anxiety stems not only from external factors but is also reinforced by internal processes such as overthinking, social comparison, and uncertainty about the future.

In coping with these conditions, students utilize religiosity as a coping strategy manifested in two main forms: religious practices (such as prayer, salat, and reading the Qur'an) and a spiritual approach involving faith and a mindset of surrender to God. Religiosity is not merely practiced as a ritual obligation but is also interpreted as an active means of calming oneself and confronting the pressures experienced. Religiosity has been shown to play a significant role in helping students manage anxiety; it functions as a coping mechanism that is emotional, cognitive, and existential in nature.



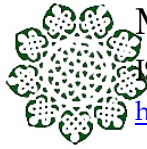
However, this study also found that not all coping strategies used are adaptive. Some students still rely on non-religious coping strategies such as distraction and avoidance, which provide only temporary relief and may actually exacerbate anxiety if used repeatedly. This study confirms that religiosity serves as an effective and meaningful coping strategy in helping Generation Z students manage anxiety, particularly when actively practiced and accompanied by deep spiritual reflection.

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