

**INTEGRATING INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING AND ISLAMIC STEM EDUCATION FOR  
SUICIDE PREVENTION AND SELF-FORGIVENESS**

BY

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**ABSTRACT**

*The problem of suicidal ideation among college students is increasingly worrying and requires a comprehensive intervention approach. This study aims to develop and explore the effectiveness of a suicide ideation prevention intervention model that integrates individual counselling based on Islamic values with a STEM approach that is responsive to Islamic culture. This study used a qualitative approach with a retrospective case study method on four students who underwent individual counselling services and were indicated to have suicidal ideation. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, then analysed using a spiral model. The results showed that two of the four subjects experienced a decrease in suicidal ideation and an increase in self-forgiveness after undergoing counselling, while the other two subjects still showed obstacles due to limited self-disclosure. The integration of the Islamic counselling approach and STEM education with spiritual and social values has been shown to contribute to strengthening students' psychological and spiritual resilience. These findings indicate that a contextual and religious intervention approach is very relevant to be applied in the Islamic higher education environment in Indonesia as a preventive effort against mental health crises.*

**Keywords: Individual Counseling, STEM, Suicidal Ideation, Self-Forgiveness**

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**Introduction**

The results of the 2022 Indonesia National Adolescent Mental Health Survey, 1.4% of adolescents have suicidal thoughts, 0.5% have made suicide plans, and 0.2% have attempted suicide (Alexander, 2023) Teenagers or those included in the Generation Z (Gen Z) group were born between 1995 and 2012 and makeup around 27.94% of the total population in Indonesia With the characteristics of social media as a communication medium that is embedded in everyday life (Lasti Yossi hastini, Rahmi Fahmi, 2020) Although the survey focused on the adolescent population, the data provides important insights into the mental health of young people in general, including college students. College students, as part of the late adolescence to early adulthood age group, often face complex challenges involving academic pressures, social demands, family expectations, and the search for identity.

In the fast-paced and competitive digital era, students live under pressure that not only comes from within themselves, but also from the external environment that demands productivity, high academic performance, and self-image on social media. When individuals do not have an adequate support system and are unable to manage these pressures, various psychological problems can arise — one of which is the idea of ending their life (Cho & Haslam, 2010). Students with suicidal ideation often feel trapped in failure, misunderstood by their environment, and have no strong hope or meaning in life (Bertera, 2007)

One factor that is often overlooked in the context of preventing suicidal ideation is an individual's ability to forgive themselves (self-forgiveness). Students who experience certain failures or mistakes often harbor feelings of guilt, shame, or even self-loathing (McCullough, 2000; Ramadhani, 2021). Without a healthy self-forgiveness process, these negative emotions can accumulate and erode self-esteem, create emotional isolation, and increase the risk of hopelessness. Self-forgiveness is a psychological process that allows individuals to make peace with their past, reduce damaging emotional burdens, and rebuild a healthier meaning of life (Larasati & Widyastuti, 2020).

To optimally cultivate self-forgiveness, individual counseling intervention plays a crucial role. Individual counselling is a form of professional service that allows students to unravel inner conflicts, reflect on life experiences, and find personal strength through a therapeutic process (Corey, 2009). Counseling that is combined with an approach to Islamic values such as repentance, tawakal, and Allah's mercy, will be more meaningful spiritually and culturally. These values provide a foundation for students to realize human weaknesses, accept destiny, and grow hope in life. Islamic-based counseling allows students not only to understand themselves psychologically but also spiritually.

However, dealing with suicidal ideation is not enough through a psychological approach. The education system also needs to be reviewed as part of the prevention ecosystem. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)-based education is an important part of the college curriculum, but so far it has emphasized more technical and rational aspects. STEM is often considered value-neutral, even though it can be an important space in shaping students' character and perspectives on the world and themselves (Anas & M, 2024). STEM is designed responsively to Islamic culture and values not only teaches critical thinking and problem-solving skills, but also introduces ethical principles, social responsibility, and the spiritual meaning of science.

STEM education rooted in Islamic values provides students with an understanding that knowledge is a trust and a means of devotion to God and society. Integrating values such as honesty, hard work, sincerity, and social contribution into the STEM curriculum can strengthen students' sense of meaning in life, which in turn supports their psychological resilience. In this way, STEM not only shapes intellectual intelligence but also becomes a tool for forming complete self-awareness.

Based on this, an intervention model is needed that integrates individual counseling and STEM education that is responsive to Islamic culture to prevent suicidal ideation and strengthen self-forgiveness in students. This model is expected to be a holistic approach, combining psychological, spiritual, and academic dimensions of students within a cultural framework that is relevant to the context of their lives as Muslims in Indonesia.

## **Method**

### **Research Approach**

Using qualitative research with a case study approach to understand the problem in depth (Arikunto, 2013), a case study is a study that explores in depth and comprehensively a program, event, or process, in one or more individuals (Creswell, 2007), and through case study research, researchers seek to learn more about known or poorly understood situation (Ormrod, Paul D. Leedy, 2015). The type of case study used in this study is a Retrospective case study, The type of case study used is a retrospective case study, which is a study that re-examines the subject's past experiences to identify causes, patterns, and possible interventions that have been or can be given. Retrospective studies are curative because they focus on efforts to handle or improve conditions that have occurred and open up space for assessing the effectiveness of a treatment or intervention. In the context of this study, the treatment in question is individual counseling based on Islamic values and the integration of STEM education values that are responsive to Islamic culture.

This study involved students who had experienced suicidal ideation and had attended individual counseling sessions with an Islamic approach. In addition, the researchers also examined their experiences in the context of STEM-based education, especially in the aspect of internalizing the values of responsibility, self-reflection, and the meaning of life through scientific learning. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, to then be analyzed thematically to find patterns of meaning, experience, and integrative contributions of the counseling and education approach to students' mental and spiritual resilience. By using this design, researchers hope to build an intervention model that is not only curative but also preventive, which is culturally, spiritually, and academically relevant for Muslim students in dealing with psychological crises such as suicidal ideation.

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with four students who were the subjects of the study to explore their personal experiences related to suicidal ideation, the individual counseling process, and reflections on Islamic values and STEM education. Observations were made during counseling sessions, both offline and online, to record emotional responses and subject involvement. Additional data were obtained from counseling service archives, communication transcripts, and other supporting documentation. This technique allows researchers to obtain a complete and in-depth picture through a data triangulation approach.

### **Research Subject**

This study involved four Muslim students who were or had participated in individual counseling services based on Islamic values. The four subjects were selected purposively because they had a background of serious psychological problems and indications of suicidal ideation. The first subject was an orphan student who experienced conflict with her partner's family; the second subject showed self-harm behavior due to emotional stress; the third subject faced matchmaking pressure and often came home late to avoid conflict; while the fourth subject felt neglected by her parents and often had disagreements with her siblings. All subjects were in an academic environment that was beginning to integrate STEM values based on Islamic culture. This study aims to explore the contribution of individual counseling and educational approaches to preventing suicidal ideation and strengthening students' self-forgiveness.

### **Intervention Description**

This study involved four students who were identified as experiencing severe psychological stress and having suicidal tendencies. Each subject received individual counseling services with an Islamic value-based approach and integration of reflection on meaningful STEM learning. The following is a description of the intervention process carried out on each subject:

Subject 1 is a student who lost both of his parents and is facing a serious conflict with his girlfriend's family. The researcher provided an intervention in the form of two face-to-face counseling sessions and one online session. The focus of counseling included emotional recovery from grief and social rejection, exploration of self-worth values, and strengthening the meaning of life through reflection on the knowledge learned in the STEM field (for example, seeing knowledge as a path to devotion to Allah and society).

Subject 2 is a student with a tendency to self-harm in response to mental stress. The researcher conducted two face-to-face counseling sessions. The intervention was directed at cognitive restructuring, strengthening self-forgiveness, and awareness of self-worth through the integration of STEM narratives—especially in terms of perseverance, experimentation, and ethics in science that can reflect psychological and spiritual resilience.

Subject 3 experienced rejection of the arranged marriage forced by the family, and showed risky behavior such as coming home late at night without self-control. The researcher conducted one face-to-face counseling session and one online session. The focus of the service included validation of emotions, identification of autonomy needs, and discussion of Islamic values related to freedom of choice and personal responsibility. STEM reflection was carried out through the concept of order and the law of causality as an analogy of the importance of thinking logically and being responsible for one's own decisions.

Subject 4 is a student who experienced a lack of attention from parents and was often involved in conflict with siblings. The researcher also provided one offline counseling session and one online session. The approach was directed at reconstructing one's role in the family, validating hurt feelings, and strengthening self-compassion. The integration of STEM values focuses on aspects of collaboration and social contribution in academic projects as a reflection of the importance of the individual's role in the social environment.

Through this intervention, each subject not only gets space to reflect on internal conflicts and find personal meaning but is also directed to interpret the STEM learning process within the framework of Islamic values, so that it has a holistic impact on their psychological and spiritual recovery.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis in this study used a spiral model involving five main stages (Creswell, 2007). The first stage is data management, namely organizing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. The second stage is carried out by reading the data thoroughly to understand the context and depth of meaning. Furthermore, the researcher describes and classifies cases according to the themes that emerge. The fourth stage is an interpretation of meaning and naturalistic generalization to understand the patterns of subject experiences. Finally, the data is analyzed and presented in the form of narratives and visualizations that describe the contribution of individual counseling and the integration of Islamic-based STEM values to the prevention of suicidal ideation and strengthening self-forgiveness in students.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Result**

This study revealed that the integration of individual counseling services based on Islamic values and a culturally responsive STEM education approach has a significant contribution to preventing suicidal ideation and strengthening self-forgiveness in college students. The four subjects in this study showed different developments, reflecting the complexity of their backgrounds, psychological readiness, and involvement in the intervention process and the academic environment they were experiencing.

Subject 1, a student who had lost both of his parents and was facing serious conflict with his partner's family, showed a very positive response to the counseling process. After attending two offline sessions and one online session, the subject showed an increase in his ability to recognize and manage emotions, build acceptance of traumatic experiences, and begin to reconstruct the meaning of his life more completely. In the context of education, the subject's involvement in STEM-based courses that instill the values of responsibility, collaboration, and social benefits became an important channel in forming his mental and spiritual resilience. The subject said that the STEM approach associated with Islamic values - such as honesty in research, blessings of knowledge, and trustworthiness in academic tasks - gave him new enthusiasm for carrying out his college activities.

Subject 2, who exhibited self-harm behavior as a form of escape from emotional stress, also showed significant progress. Through two individual counseling sessions, the subject was able to identify the roots of guilt and disappointment that had been suppressed. Spiritual support internalized through an Islamic approach to counseling, such as the values of repentance and Allah's mercy, helped the subject begin the process of self-forgiveness. The subject also began to show interest in collaborative and project-based STEM learning activities, which allowed him to feel useful and involved in positive dynamics with his classmates. This learning environment also strengthened the subject's motivation to undergo academic and social processes in a healthier way.

Unlike the first two subjects, Subject 3 still experienced obstacles in the process of change. This subject experienced family pressure due to rejection of the arranged marriage and chose to avoid it by often coming home late at night. Despite having attended one face-to-face session and one online session, the subject had not shown adequate openness to the counselor. He also tended to reject self-reflection and maintain his habits as a form of comfort zone. In the context of STEM learning, although cognitively involved, the subject has not been able to absorb the reflective values, responsibility, and meaning of the knowledge taught, so the impact of education on strengthening self-identity has not been significant.

Subject 4, who felt neglected by her parents and often had disagreements with her siblings, was still in the early counseling and monitoring stages. The subject began to show signs of openness and readiness to build healthier relationships with her environment. In the counseling session, the subject stated that she began to understand the importance of assertive communication and the meaning of self-acceptance. However, there were still emotional barriers that hindered the formation of healthy connections with family members. On the other hand, the subject's participation in STEM learning activities with an Islamic ethics approach provided an initial stimulus to understand the importance of contributing to a team, respecting differences, and being responsible for the tasks assigned.

Overall, the results of the study indicate that the success of the intervention is largely determined by the psychological readiness of the subject, the quality of the counseling relationship, and the extent

to which spiritual and cultural values can be internalized through the education and counseling process. The integration of individual counseling and Islamic culture-based STEM education offers a comprehensive approach to fostering students' psychological resilience. This approach not only functions curatively for students who are facing a psychological crisis, but also has the potential to be a preventive model in creating a campus ecosystem that cares about the mental health, spirituality, and local cultural values of Muslim students.

The results of this study describe the dynamics of individual counseling interventions given to four students with different psychological backgrounds, but who have similarities in their tendency towards suicidal ideation. The counseling process was carried out with an Islamic values-based approach and combined with the reinforcement of STEM educational values that are responsive to Islamic culture, such as responsibility, self-reflection, and spiritual meaning in mastering knowledge. Each subject showed varying responses to the intervention, depending on the level of openness, psychological condition, and environmental support. To provide a more systematic picture of the subject's condition, response to counseling, and the contribution of STEM values in supporting recovery, the following is a summary of the results in tabular form:

**Table 1. Results of Counseling Intervention and the Role of STEM Values in Students**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Background of the Problem</b>	<b>Response to Individual Counseling</b>	<b>Implementation of Islamic Culturally Responsive STEM Values</b>	<b>Key Results</b>
1	Loss of both parents and conflict with partner's family (boyfriend)	Experiencing a process of self-reflection, starting to accept the situation, and building a new meaning in life.	The values of trust and social responsibility in STEM tasks help subjects feel the meaning of life and real contribution.	Decreased suicidal ideation, increased self-forgiveness, greater academic enthusiasm
2	Self-harm behavior due to emotional wounds	Able to recognize the root of the problem and start managing emotions	Collaborative STEM project activities that instill togetherness, honesty, and life purpose provide corrective experiences.	More stable emotions, reduced suicidal ideation, more socially open.

Subject	Background of the Problem	Response to Individual Counseling	Implementation of Islamic Culturally Responsive STEM Values	Key Results
3	Stress due to rejection of arranged marriage	Closing oneself off from the counseling process, not ready to explore feelings	Not yet able to absorb the values of reflection, future orientation, and Islamic ethics in learning	No significant changes, still comfortable in the old pattern
4	Lack of parental attention and conflict with siblings	Start opening up and showing a willingness to change	STEM activities that emphasize cooperation, patience, and contribution within a group provide early triggers for engagement.	Initial changes are positive, but further support is still needed.

## Discussion

The findings of this study reveal the psychological dynamics of Muslim students who experience suicidal ideation due to emotional burdens, relational stress, and limited family support. Of the four subjects who received individual counseling services based on Islamic values, two subjects showed significant recovery, while the other two were still in the process of adjustment and monitoring.

The phenomenon of suicidal ideation experienced by the subjects is closely related to the first stage in the theory of suicidal behavior, namely suicidal ideation, namely the emergence of thoughts or fantasies to end life, either explicitly or implicitly (Muhith, 2015). According to Silverman et al. (2007), this is the initial phase of a series of possibilities leading to further suicidal actions. Prevention at this stage is very important so that it does not develop into threats, signals, or suicide attempts (Silverman et al., 2007).

The causal factors for the emergence of suicidal ideation in this study are consistent with the four psychosocial factors according to Rutter and Behrendt (2004): helplessness, hostility, negative self-concept, and feelings of isolation (Rutter & Behrendt, 2004). Subjects 1 and 2 experienced intense relational conflict and loss of support figures, while subjects 3 and 4 faced social pressure and emotional rejection from their families. Their inability to manage these pressures strengthened the tendency to blame themselves, which in the long term contributed to the emergence of suicidal ideation.

One of the key aspects of the recovery process is the ability to forgive oneself (self-forgiveness). Self-forgiveness functions as a coping strategy that helps individuals release negative emotions and build self-acceptance (Lydia Woodyatt). Based on the theory of self-forgiveness, individuals go through four phases: (1) the uncovering phase, namely recognition of guilt and painful emotions; (2) the decision phase, commitment to forgive oneself; (3) the work phase, efforts to accept mistakes empathetically; and (4) deepening phase, the search for meaning and spiritual growth from painful experiences (Compton & Hoffman, n.d.). Subjects 1 and 2 showed progress through these phases, while subjects 3 and 4 were still stuck in the early phase because they were not fully open to the counseling process.

The individual counseling used in this study is based on Islamic values, such as the concepts of repentance, mercy, and tawakal, which provide a spiritual foundation in the process of self-acceptance and the formation of meaning in life. The application of these religious values strengthens the belief that every human being has the right to rise from mistakes and be given a second chance. This strengthens the argument that the spiritual-religious approach is not only culturally relevant but also psychologically effective.

Furthermore, this study also considers the role of education, especially the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) approach that is designed responsively to Islamic culture. STEM in this context is not just the transmission of technical knowledge, but also a means to instill the values of honesty, responsibility, and community service. STEAM integrates various disciplines to create learning experiences that are relevant to real life (Sari & Zulfa, 2024; Zubaidah, 2019). The internality of these values contributes to students' mental resilience because they are invited to see knowledge as part of the search for the meaning of life and worship. The integration of psychological and educational approaches in this model forms a holistic intervention - touching on the mental, spiritual, and academic aspects of students. By combining individual counseling based on Islamic values and character building through STEM rooted in religious values, students are helped to emerge from psychological crises, while forming a foundation of values that can guide them in facing life's challenges.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that an intervention model that integrates individual counseling based on Islamic values with a STEM approach that is responsive to Islamic culture has significant effectiveness in preventing suicidal ideation and building self-forgiveness in college students. This intervention is able to answer the psychological and spiritual needs of college students, especially those who experience emotional stress and severe interpersonal conflict. Of the four subjects who were the focus of the study, two of them showed real positive changes after undergoing counseling sessions and being involved in a value-based academic environment. They were able to rebuild the meaning of life, develop self-forgiveness, and reduce the tendency to blame or hurt themselves. Meanwhile, the other two subjects still experienced obstacles because they were not fully open and received optimal assistance. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of the intervention is greatly influenced by the openness of the subjects in the counseling process and the educational environment that supports spiritual and social values.

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