

Review Article

An Analysis: The Potential Role of Spirituality in Resilience of Gap Year Students

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ABSTRACT

A gap year is a term for students who postpone continuing their higher education in a structured time period. Some problems in gap year students are fear of competition, lack of confidence in their abilities, and not daring to meet people. Therefore, resilience is vital for gap-year students. Resilience is a positive behavioral pattern during or while experiencing difficulties. The method used for this study is the Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The SLR method collects appropriate research and then evaluates it to answer predetermined questions/topics. A literature data search found 410 articles (PubMed=4; Scopus=315; Google Scholar=52; manual search=39) which were then identified. The articles obtained for use as discussion material were 15 articles. The analysis results were then overviewed through the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). So, we can conclude, based on the systematic literature review (SLR) that has been discussed, that spirituality plays an important role in increasing the resilience of gap year students.

Keywords: Spirituality; Resilience; Student; Gap-Year

1. INTRODUCTION

Education, significantly higher education, is vital in increasing individual capacity to contribute to national development (Omonijo et al., 2020). Increasing individual capacity must be accompanied by individual awareness of continuing education at a higher level, namely higher education (Dewi et al., 2024). However, not all Indonesian students can continue their education to higher education. This is obtained from data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2023), which shows that there are 3.7 million students who graduate as high school students and that the number of students who continue to higher education is only 1.8 million. Several factors cause the lack of interest in continuing higher education: wanting to work independently, economic factors, and lack of motivation (Lestari, Zakso, Hidayah, 2019; Salise & Trubus, 2024). In addition to these factors, factors that may have an influence are delays in continuing education, referred to as gap year students.

A gap year is a term for students who postpone continuing their higher education in a structured time period (Cahyono & Hanifuddin, 2021). One of the reasons students choose a gap year is that they have not been able to enter the desired major successfully, so they choose to postpone and study harder (Nuryati, Sandi, Hidayah, 2022). People's willingness to choose a gap year is not easy because society has negative views towards gap year students (Dewi et al., 2024). The opposing view of society regarding gap year students is that they are students whose success is hampered and will face a gap with their peers. In addition, according to society, gap-year students are those who cannot enter college (Ardine & Rahmasari, 2024). Some of these opposing views can have dire consequences for the physical and psychological aspects, including the loss of motivation in gap year students. Some problems in gap year students are fear of competition, lack of confidence in their abilities, and not daring to meet people (Ardine & Rahmasari, 2024). Therefore, resilience is very necessary for gap year students.

Resilience is a positive behavioral pattern during or while experiencing difficulties. Resilience is a person's ability to survive or recover from the difficulties experienced (Utami & Helmi, 2017). The positive impact of increasing resilience is an increase in the ability to plan life, communicate, and take advantage of opportunities to form a better person. One aspect that can be used for resilience is spiritual influence (Dewi et al., 2024). Spirituality is an important aspect of humans that can positively impact how humans think and act (Hidayah & Munawaroh, 2024). Through spiritual abilities,

a person can also rediscover their purpose in life, which can be used to increase self-awareness, balance, empathy, and concern for others (Lih, Kim, Conn, 2024). So, spirituality can be used for the resilience of gap year students who are not confident in continuing to higher education.

Previous research conducted by Dewi et al. (2024) showed that spirituality positively affects the resilience of gap-year students. Similar results were found in Salianto's (2025) study, which showed that religiosity has a significant influence on students' academic resilience. This data is an indication that more religious students become more resilient. This is supported by the results that Hidayah and Munawaroh (2024) obtained from their research showing that the academic progress of MTsN 7 Nganjuk students was not due to their resilience but was affected by religiosity, the learning achievement of MTsN 7 Nganjuk students was not influenced by resilience, but student resilience was influenced by religiosity. The main cause of the results of Hidayah and Munawaroh's research was the absence of religious programs at MTsN 7 Nganjuk, thus the foundation for student resilience had not been laid. According to the introduction given, the aim of this research was to assess the potential role of spirituality in the resilience of gap-year students.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) technique is applied for this type of study. The SLR is a model of research that is made by gathering research, then analyzing it to provide answers for certain questions/topics (Nuha et al., 2024). The SLR approach can be employed to assess the extent of spirituality in the resilience of gap year students by formulating several topics such as the definition and concept of spirituality, the definition and concept of resilience, the definition and concept of gap year students, the role of spirituality in resilience, the role of spirituality in students, resilience in gap year students, and the role of spirituality in the resilience of gap year students. The inclusion criteria established is articles published within the last five years and are relevant to the keywords provided. The SLR method contains the following steps: formulation of research questions or topics, the search strategy, criteria for acceptance and rejection, evaluation of the quality, and collection of data (Nuha et al., 2024). The literature was collected using the Harzing search engine to find journals in Scopus, Google Scholar, and PubMed. After obtaining the article, the data from Harzing was analyzed with the website Covidence to get systematic article filters. Article analysis from Covidence is then analyzed using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

A comprehensive literature data search was conducted, yielding a total of 410 articles from various databases and sources. These included PubMed (4 articles), Scopus (315 articles), Google Scholar (52 articles), and manual searches (39 articles). Following the identification process, the first step in managing these articles involved an initial screening phase. During this stage, Covidence, a systematic review management tool, automatically detected and eliminated one duplicate article. Additionally, three other articles were excluded through Covidence due to redundancy, and one article was removed because it fell outside the specified inclusion year range (2020–2025). After this initial screening, the total number of articles remaining for further evaluation was 405.

The next phase involved a thorough assessment of the titles against predetermined keywords to ensure relevance. This process led to the exclusion of 342 articles, as their titles did not align with the study's focus or keywords. As a result, 63 articles were retained for further consideration. However, two additional reports were deemed unacceptable due to issues such as incomplete data or lack of alignment with the research objectives. This left a total of 61 articles that met the preliminary eligibility criteria.

At the final stage of the selection process, the articles underwent a rigorous evaluation to determine their suitability for the study. This involved scrutinizing each article based on specific parameters, including alignment with the research topic, consistency in dependent and independent variables, appropriateness of the research subjects, and adherence to the source inclusion criteria. During this phase, 25 articles were excluded due to inconsistencies in the dependent or independent variables, six articles were discarded because of mismatches in the research subjects, and 15 articles were removed for not meeting the required source standards. Ultimately, this meticulous filtering process resulted in 15 high-quality articles that were deemed suitable for use as discussion material in the study. To provide a clear and structured overview of the selection process, the results were presented using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework. The PRISMA flow diagram, illustrated in Figure 1, visually summarized the sequential stages of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion. This approach ensured

transparency and facilitated a comprehensive understanding of how the final set of articles was derived, reinforcing the robustness and reliability of the systematic review process.

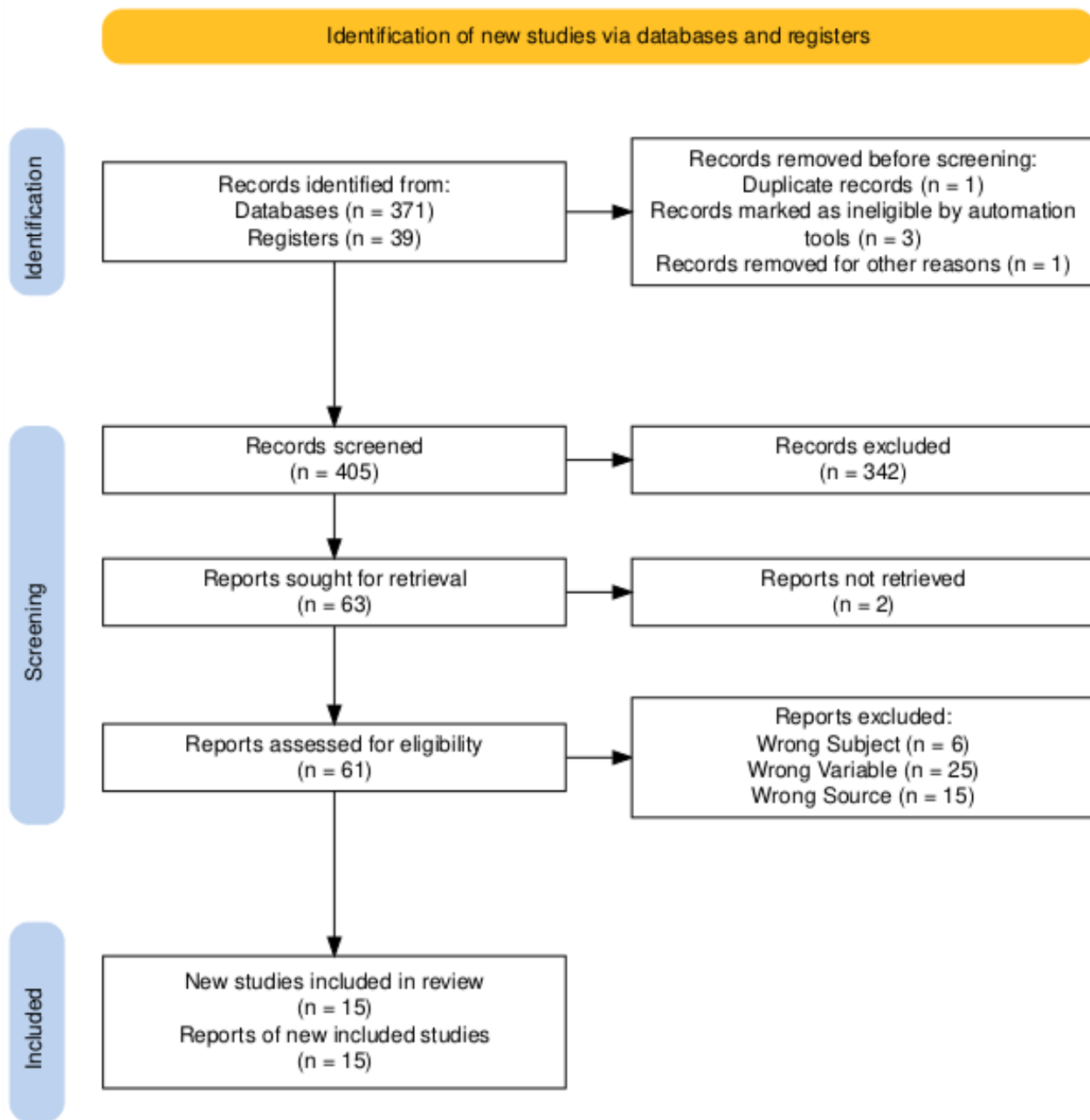


Figure 1. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)

The following 15 articles are following the results of the PRISMA analysis and the inclusion criteria.

No.	Title	Authors	Results of Research
1.	The influence of religiosity on resilience in gap year students	Nur Azizah Kumala Dewi, Munatul Fuadah, Saanei An Nasywa Disastra, Zahra Aulia Ramadhani, Zyanne Tria Nalita	This study shows a positive influence between religiosity and resilience in Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University Bandung students who choose to take a gap year. It can be concluded that the higher a person's level of religiosity, the higher their level of resilience.
2.	A correlational study of spiritual intelligence,	Sommaya Khan, Syeda Nadia Shah, Aman	Spiritual intelligence and resilience correlate positively, while perceived stress negatively correlates with spiritual

	resilience, and perceived stress among university students of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Ullah	intelligence.
3.	Academic stress coping strategies using spiritual approaches to improve student resilience	The Goddess of Purnama Sari, Sutarto	Based on the research results, students overcome academic stress by using three coping mechanisms related to spiritual elements. The first is positive thinking, which involves always hoping for every difficulty and believing that every problem must have wisdom and a solution. The second is positive action: trying to solve problems by doing various valuable activities. Third, is praying, which involves always hoping for and asking Allah SWT to give strength, ease, and guidance in facing problems.
4.	Academic resilience skills: a systematic literature review	Moch. Syihabudin Nuha, Muslihati, Zamroni	Based on a comprehensive analysis of evidence, it can be concluded that self-esteem, peer support, family social support, and emotional control significantly affect students' academic resilience. Prevention strategies can be carried out through peer counseling programs implemented among peers. In contrast, resilience strategies can be implemented through group counseling guidance with a mindfulness approach, cognitive restructuring, and peer counseling so that students can live their academic lives well and independently improve and develop their academic resilience.
5.	Literature review: the concept of religiosity and spirituality in psychological research in Indonesia	Muhammad Anjar Gagahriyanto	The concept of spirituality tends to have various meanings that may or may not involve the presence of religion. In general, spirituality can be understood as a way of life, perception, and awareness of an individual towards something transcendent or beyond their existence as a human being, thus encouraging the search for meaning and understanding of life.
6.	Resilience in high school graduates undergoing a gap year: a review of internal locus of control and emotion regulation	Savitri Salsa Salisa and Trubus Raharjo	Based on the results of the study and discussion, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between internal locus of control and emotional regulation with resilience in high school graduates who take a gap year. In more detail, the three variables have a significant positive relationship, both between resilience and internal locus of control and emotional regulation.
7.	Surviving academic adversity: Spirituality and its relationship to resilience in final year students living away from home	Terryzoza Demas Pinasthika, Krismi Diah Ambarwati	The results of this study indicate that there is a positive relationship between spirituality and resilience in students who are working on their thesis. This means that the higher a person's level of spirituality, the higher their resilience.
8.	The role of spiritual well-being and academic resilience in predicting students' psychological health	Mohammad Deymevar, Minoo Miri, Ali Tayarani Rad, Seyed Alireza Ghasemi	Spiritual well-being and academic resilience can predict students' psychological health, so university administrators must consider these components.
9.	Academic insecurity in	Khansa Reggina Ardine	Insecurity in gap year students can trigger various negative

	gap year students	and Diana Rahmasari	emotions, such as feelings of lack of self-confidence, overthinking, and the tendency to compare oneself to others. These feelings of academic insecurity further exacerbate them and impact their learning performance. This study also revealed various coping strategies used by subjects to overcome the academic insecurity they face.
10.	Is there a relationship between spirituality/religiosity and resilience? A systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies	Fábio Duarte Schwalm, Rafaela Brugalli Zandavalli, Eno Dias de Castro Filho and Giancarlo Lucchetti	There are findings of a reasonably positive relationship between spiritual/religious and resilience.
11.	Resilience and spirituality: a mixed methods exploration of executive stress	Charlotte D. Shelton, Sascha Hein, Kelly A. Phipps	The findings demonstrated a link between spirituality, resilience, and overall life satisfaction. Respondents who meditated showed considerably higher overall resilience scores than non-meditators.
12.	The influence of religiosity on academic achievement with resilience as an intervening variable	Noer Hidayah, Munawaroh	According to the study's findings, (1) the religiosity variable has a direct influence on the resilience variable at MTsN 7 Nganjuk, (2) the resilience variable has no direct influence on the learning achievement variable at MTsN 7 Nganjuk, and (3) the religiosity variable has a direct influence on the learning achievement variable. Resilience is a vital asset for students as they navigate life, and it may be reinforced by improving their religious values. As a result, the school might develop programs or activities to promote student religiosity.
13.	Religiosity and spirituality in the prevention and management of depression and anxiety in young people: a systematic review and meta-analysis	Shilpa Aggarwal, Judith Wright, Amy Morgan, George Patton and Nicola Reavley	Interventions involving religious and spiritual practices to address depression and anxiety in young people are generally effective, although the quality of existing studies tends to be low, and differences in study design make meta-analysis impossible. Lived experience counselors described spirituality and religious involvement as central to their way of life and highly valued the feeling of being cared for during difficult times.
14.	Religious/spiritual struggles and spiritual resilience in marginalized older adults	Holly Nelson-Becker and Michael Thomas	Spiritual resilience will continue to strengthen as individuals push beyond their limits and demonstrate steadfastness in their commitment to a life full of transformational potential.
15.	The interplay of spiritual health, resilience, and happiness: An evaluation among a group of dental students at a state university in Turkey	Meltem Karahan, Bahar Basak Kiziltan Eliacik, Kursad Nuri Baydili	This study concluded that increasing spiritual well-being and resilience among dental students can increase their happiness levels.

3.2 Discussion

3.1.1 Definition: Spirituality, Resilience, Gap Year

Based on the literature review conducted, the definition of spirituality is still quite broad. It can include all religions, communities, or belief systems so that a person can feel himself as a spiritual individual without being tied to a particular form of religious practice (Gagahriyanto, 2023). According to Chairunnisa and Fourianalistyawati (2019), spirituality can be interpreted as the way individuals view and feel the existence and involvement of transcendent elements in their lives. Another view, according to Saputra (2020), spirituality is a way of living life and feeling every experience that arises from an awareness of dimensions that transcend the physical world. This is characterized by specific values or goals related to oneself, others, the environment, life, and everything that is considered sacred or noble (Khan et al., 2023). On the one hand, spirituality is the process by which an individual constructs a framework of significance that not only agrees with him or her but also with his or her calling and character. This allows the person to develop without detaching themselves from their historical, cultural, and social contexts. On the other hand, spirituality is the mingling of meaning that is both consistent, flexible, and emergent to facilitate acceptance when circumstances change drastically (Reisinger, 2025). Spirituality is the construct of the meaning system that is antifragile, the students are enabled to pursue their life journey, and meaning can be found in each of the most unexpected life situations.

Based on the literature review conducted, resilience comes from the Latin word *resilire*, which means to jump back. This term can be interpreted as the ability to survive or recover quickly from difficult situations (Nuha, Muslihata, Zamroni, 2024). Resilience is the ability to succeed in education and other aspects of life despite facing obstacles or challenges caused by the environment, conditions, and early experiences (Hunsu, 2023). Another statement states that resilience is the ability and dynamic process of adapting to overcome stress and difficulties while maintaining normal psychological and physical functions (Wu et al., 2013; Alexopoulou et al., 2019; Trigueros et al., 2020; Van Hoek et al., 2019). A gap year is a period of rest in the educational journey that usually occurs after completing school before starting college (Dewi et al., 2024). This term also refers to the time gap between high school and college and sometimes takes place during college (Hamid, Shokoty & Awang, 2019). A gap year is a period when students move from formal education in high school to higher education or take a break during their studies in college before returning to continue their education (Nieman, 2013). A gap year is a structured period where students take a break from their formal education to increase self-awareness, learn about different cultures, and explore various career opportunities (Ardine & Rahmasari, 2024).

3.1.2 Spirituality Potential In Resilience of Gap Year Students

A gap year is often a period of reflection and meaning-seeking for students who experience it (Ardine & Rahmasari, 2024). In this context, spirituality can act as a protective factor against stress, anxiety, and uncertainty that may arise during this transition (Aggarwal et al., 2023). Students who face emotional challenges, such as feelings of failure or loss of direction, can find meaning in their lives and their environment through spiritual beliefs (Phenwan et al., 2019). However, the experience of depression in adolescence can weaken one's relationship with spirituality, creating feelings of doubt or alienation (Aggarwal et al., 2023). If not managed properly, this condition can reduce resilience and increase vulnerability to anxiety, alienation, and depression later in life (Karahana et al., 2024). Some of the main factors that can trigger a decrease in resilience include anxiety, depression, maladaptive behavior, family conflict, and detachment from the social environment (Nuha, Muslihata, & Zamroni, 2024). However, resilience is not a fixed trait; this ability can develop because humans have the potential to face difficulties, survive, and adapt to situations, especially with the support of spirituality (Hidayah & Munawaroh, 2024).

Gap-year students adopt a spiritual well-being-based approach, such as implementing the values of forgiveness, gratitude, compassion, and acceptance, so they can more easily cope with mental stress during the transition period (Mohaved et al., 2021). Thus, spirituality can significantly increase mental resilience because it helps individuals find meaning, purpose, and inner peace when facing uncertainty (Ghasemi et al., 2023; Deymevar et al., 2024). A person with intense spirituality will understand that life is a struggle that must be endured despite various challenges (Becker & Thomas, 2020). Every test and difficulty is seen as part of forming a better self so that individuals are encouraged to solve each problem more maturely (Pinasthika & Ambarwati, 2024). The relationship between spirituality and resilience has been studied in various studies. One study found a positive and statistically significant correlation between spiritual well-being and resilience in individuals diagnosed with psoriasis (Rahim et al., 2021). Other studies also support a positive relationship between spirituality and mental resilience, including in various groups of individuals (Hasanah, 2018;

Suprpto, 2020; Pramintari et al., 2022; Azizah et al., 2024).

To improve spiritual resilience, gap year students can apply several strategies. According to Sari & Sutarto (2023), there are three main stages in managing academic stress through a spiritual approach, namely (1) building a positive mindset towards the problems faced, (2) taking positive actions to solve challenges, and (3) having positive expectations for the future. In addition, according to Smith et al. (2012), spirituality can strengthen resilience through four main aspects: social relationships, life values, personal meaning, and coping mechanisms. Meanwhile, research by Shelton et al. (2020) shows that meditation and mindfulness can also be effective methods for increasing mental resilience. This means that to increase the resilience of gap year students with spirituality can be assisted by support and guidance from the family, as well as individual character, which includes an optimistic attitude, persistence, and motivation in facing academic challenges (Rini & Muslikah, 2020; Meiranti & Sutoyo, 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the systematic literature review (SLR) that has been discussed, spirituality plays an important role in increasing the resilience of gap-year students. Spiritual beliefs can help them cope better with stress, anxiety, and uncertainty, especially when experiencing emotional challenges. Thus, spirituality not only functions as a coping mechanism but also as a foundation for building stronger mental resilience for gap-year students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study can be used as a reference for further research to apply or raise complex issues on the resilience of gap year students with variable factors other than spirituality.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors discussed the results and contributed from the start to the final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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