



Integration of Modern Psychological Coping Theory and the Concepts of Tawaduk-Izzah: Educators' Coping Strategies in Facing Workplace Relationship Dynamics within Islamic Educational Environments

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Abstract: Teachers in Islamic educational environments face complex psychological pressures arising from workplace relationship dynamics, professional demands, and social expectations. Although previous studies have examined teacher stress, burnout, and coping strategies, limited research has explored how Islamic moral values function as psychological resources in educators' coping processes. This study aims to examine educators' coping strategies by integrating modern psychological coping theory with the Islamic values of tawaduk (humility) and izzah (dignity and self-respect). This study employed an interpretive qualitative approach with a field-based conceptual design. Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis to identify patterns of workplace pressure, psychological responses, coping strategies, and the role of Islamic values in adaptation processes. The findings indicate that workplace relationship pressures are mediated by cognitive appraisal and managed through problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and meaning-focused coping. Furthermore, tawaduk and izzah function as complementary psychological resources: tawaduk supports humility, emotional regulation, and ethical conduct, while izzah strengthens professional dignity, boundaries, and respectful assertiveness. This study proposes an integrative coping model showing that educators' resilience is developed through the interaction between psychological mechanisms and Islamic moral values. The findings contribute to Islamic psychology and provide practical implications for strengthening educators' mental health and sustainable professionalism.

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INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession today involves not only knowledge transfer but also psychological pressures arising from workplace dynamics, professional demands, policy changes, and social expectations (Azis et al., 2026; Musonif, Romadona, et al., 2026; Ramadona et al., 2026; Saifudin et al., 2026). Teacher stress and burnout have become global concerns because of their implications for teaching quality and career sustainability. A meta-analysis study by Madigan & Kim (2021) found that burnout, low job satisfaction, and

psychological distress contribute significantly to teachers' intentions to leave the profession, while Reinke et al. (2025) identified work-related stress, ineffective coping, and post-pandemic burnout as continuing challenges to teachers' career sustainability. Thus, teachers' capacity to manage psychological pressure is not merely an individual concern but also an issue for educational sustainability.

In Islamic education, these challenges have an additional moral dimension because teachers are expected to function as both professionals and role models (Fahrezi, Athoillah, et al., 2026; Musonif & Azis, 2026). They must maintain educational quality while navigating differences with leaders and colleagues, administrative demands, and social pressures. Research by Tengku Kasim & Abdul Majid (2020) reported that Islamic education teachers experience stress related to professional adaptation, workload, and role demands, while Zakaria et al. (2022) found that Islamic religious education teachers are also vulnerable to burnout associated with job satisfaction and workplace conditions.

From a psychological perspective, coping is central to how individuals respond to pressure. Lazarus (2000) argued that stress depends not only on the presence of problems but also on how individuals cognitively appraise situations and select coping responses. Folkman & Moskowitz (2004) further conceptualized coping as a dynamic process involving emotional regulation, problem-solving, and the mobilization of internal and external resources. Consistent with this perspective, Herman et al. (2020) through the Coping-Competence-Context theory, emphasized that teacher stress emerges from interactions among individual coping capacities, professional competence, and the work environment. Previous research has also linked emotional regulation, social support, mindfulness, resilience, and empathy to teacher well-being and reduced burnout (Agyapong et al., 2023; Brandão et al., 2025). However, these studies have largely approached teacher coping from general psychological perspectives, with limited attention to Islamic values as resources for managing workplace pressures (Musonif et al., 2026; Rizal et al., 2026).

Religious coping offers a complementary perspective by positioning spirituality as a source of meaning, hope, and psychological strength. Muslim individuals may employ strategies such as *tawakkul*, prayer, and religious meaning-making when facing psychological difficulties (Hodge et al., 2025). In Islamic education, such coping can be connected to moral values, particularly *tawaduk* (humility and awareness of personal limitations) and *izzah* (dignity and self-worth grounded in moral principles). Research on Islamic workplace spirituality has associated spirituality with psychological well-being, meaningful work, organizational engagement, professional commitment, career success, and teachers' career commitment (Bashori et al., 2026; Dwiyantri et al., 2025 ; Syahir et al., 2025). Nevertheless, these studies have not specifically examined how *tawaduk* and *izzah* operate as coping resources in workplace relationship dynamics.

This limitation reveals three research gaps. First, teacher coping research remains predominantly grounded in psychological constructs such as stress, burnout, resilience, and emotional regulation, with limited integration of Islamic moral values. Second, studies of Islamic workplace spirituality have mainly examined outcomes such as well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment rather than the psychological mechanisms through which religious values shape responses to workplace pressures. Third, *tawaduk* and *izzah* have rarely been conceptualized as complementary psychological resources that enable

educators to balance humility, openness to criticism, self-respect, and professional dignity (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Byrne, 2022; Busetto et al., 2020).

Therefore, this study integrates contemporary coping theory with the Islamic values of *tawaduk* and *izzah* to examine educators' adaptive responses to workplace relationship pressures in Islamic educational environments. Its novelty lies in positioning these values not merely as ethical ideals but as active psychological resources that shape cognitive appraisal, emotional regulation, problem-solving, and meaning-making. Through this integration, the study develops a conceptual understanding of how educators can transform workplace pressures into psychological resilience while maintaining moral identity and professional integrity. The findings are expected to contribute to Islamic psychology and Islamic education and provide practical implications for developing supportive workplace environments that promote educators' well-being, resilience, and sustainable professionalism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Workplace Relationship Dynamics and the Emergence of Professional Pressures Among Educators

The analysis of field data indicates that workplace relationship dynamics represent one of the dominant experiences in educators' professional lives. The pressures experienced do not always originate from teaching responsibilities, administrative demands, or academic obligations, but also emerge from patterns of social interaction within the workplace environment. Relationships among individuals, which should ideally serve as a space for collaboration, may become challenging when differences arise in communication styles, personal characteristics, and understandings of professional boundaries.

One educator's experience notes indicate that the greatest challenges do not necessarily lie in the tasks that must be completed, but rather in how individuals treat and communicate with one another. An educator described:

"Work-related problems can actually still be handled. What makes it difficult is when communication begins to affect emotions, when we feel that we are no longer appreciated as educators."

This experience demonstrates that interpersonal relationships have a significant influence on educators' psychological conditions. Interactions that may appear simple to some individuals can become stressful experiences when they are perceived as diminishing recognition and respect toward one's professional position.

Furthermore, the findings reveal differences in communication cultures between educators and other parties within the educational environment. These differences can be observed in the ways criticism is delivered, instructions are provided, and problems are resolved. One educator stated:

"Sometimes someone's intention may only be to joke or give a reminder, but the way it is delivered makes others feel uncomfortable. So, the problem is not only the content of the conversation but also how it is communicated."

This condition indicates that workplace conflicts often emerge through everyday communication rather than through formal disputes. Small matters such as word choices, tone of voice, or forms of humor can become sources of pressure when they occur repeatedly.

Several educators also experienced the influence of informal power relations that affected their comfort in the workplace. These relationships do not always emerge through formal regulations but rather through social status, seniority, or certain forms of closeness that allow some individuals to feel more dominant than others. One field note stated:

“There are situations where someone feels that they have greater influence, causing the way they speak and treat others to be different. We must learn how to respond to such situations so they do not create conflict.”

These findings demonstrate that workplace relationship dynamics within educational settings have complex social and emotional dimensions. Educators are not only required to fulfill professional responsibilities but must also manage interpersonal relationships in order to perform their roles effectively.

Psychological Impacts on Educators in Facing Workplace Relationship Pressures

The workplace relationship dynamics experienced by educators have impacts on their emotional and psychological conditions. Based on field data, various responses emerged, including feelings of disappointment, sadness, loss of comfort, and the desire to reduce interaction with certain individuals. These responses indicate that workplace relationship experiences can influence an individual's internal condition, particularly when they involve recognition of personal and professional worth.

One educator described the emotional experience they encountered:

“There is a feeling of sadness when what we do with good intentions is not always understood well by others. Sometimes we begin to question whether our efforts have been appreciated or not.”

This feeling reflects a gap between professional expectations and the reality of workplace relationships. Educators expect to work within an environment characterized by mutual respect; however, when they encounter different experiences, emotional pressure emerges and requires an adaptation process.

Another impact identified was a temporary decline in motivation when carrying out professional activities. One educator explained:

“There was a period when my enthusiasm decreased slightly. It was not because I no longer wanted to teach, but because my emotional condition was affected by relationship problems with others.”

However, this condition did not lead educators to abandon their responsibilities. Instead, such experiences became opportunities for reflection regarding the meaning of the profession and the reasons why individuals choose to become educators. One educator stated:

“I try to remind myself that the main goal is not to seek human recognition, but to ensure that knowledge remains beneficial. That is what helps me continue.”

These data demonstrate a process of shifting perspectives, moving from focusing on interpersonal problems toward a broader understanding of dedication and service as an educator.

Furthermore, educators also demonstrated an awareness of the importance of maintaining mental health so that experienced pressures would not negatively affect the quality of learning. This awareness was reflected in the following statement:

“We also need to take care of ourselves. If our emotional condition is unstable, the impact will not only affect us but also our students.”

Thus, workplace relationship pressures become experiences that encourage educators to pay greater attention to psychological balance between their professional responsibilities and personal conditions.

Educators’ Coping Strategies in Facing Workplace Pressures

Based on the analysis of field data, the study found that educators employ several coping strategies to deal with workplace relationship pressures. These strategies are not limited to direct actions toward problems but also involve emotional management processes and the construction of meaning from the experiences encountered.

The first strategy identified is problem-focused coping, which refers to efforts to directly address the sources of problems. One form of this strategy is establishing professional boundaries within workplace relationships. Educators begin to understand that not every issue needs to be responded to emotionally and that not all relationships must be maintained at a close personal level.

One educator explained:

“I have learned to distinguish which matters need to be addressed and which ones are better to let go. Not every statement needs to be taken personally, but there still need to be boundaries so that work can continue properly.”

In addition to establishing professional boundaries, educators also choose to focus their attention on their primary responsibilities as teachers. One educator stated:

“Rather than spending energy thinking about things that cause disappointment, it is better to use that energy to improve learning and guide students.”

The second strategy is emotion-focused coping, which involves efforts to regulate emotional responses toward stressful situations. Educators do not immediately make decisions when experiencing intense emotions but instead provide themselves with time to calm down.

One educator stated:

“When I feel offended, I choose to remain silent first. After my emotions become calmer, I think about how the issue should be resolved.”

The third strategy is meaning-focused coping, which refers to the ability to develop new meanings from difficult experiences. The pressures experienced are not merely viewed as problems but also as opportunities for personal growth and learning.

One educator expressed:

“Experiences like this actually teach us many things. We learn patience, learn to understand human character, and learn to become more mature educators.”

In addition, some negative experiences were transformed into productive activities such as conducting research, reading, and self-development. One educator stated:

“Instead of allowing the experience to become a burden, it is better to use it as material for learning and producing something beneficial.”

Integration of Tawaduk and Izzah Values as Islamic Coping Strategies

The findings indicate that educators’ coping strategies are influenced not only by psychological considerations but also by Islamic spiritual values that serve as guidelines for

their attitudes and behaviors. Two values that emerged prominently are tawaduk and izzah. These concepts function as balancing mechanisms in dealing with workplace relationship pressures.

The value of tawaduk is reflected in educators' efforts to maintain proper manners and respect toward others despite experiencing unpleasant situations. Tawaduk helps educators regulate their ego and avoid emotional responses driven by anger or retaliation.

One educator stated:

"As educators, we must continue to maintain good manners. If others do something inappropriate, it does not mean that we should respond in the same way."

This attitude demonstrates that educators attempt to preserve moral values within workplace relationships. Conflicts are not used as reasons to eliminate respect toward others.

However, tawaduk does not mean accepting all forms of treatment without limitations. This is where the concept of izzah plays a role in maintaining self-respect and professional dignity.

One educator explained:

"Being humble does not mean lowering ourselves. We still have to respect ourselves and maintain our dignity as teachers."

The value of izzah encourages educators to establish professional boundaries, express opinions respectfully, and preserve the dignity of their profession. One educator stated:

"If there is something that is genuinely inappropriate, it should be communicated. However, the way it is delivered must remain good so that it does not become a conflict."

Based on these findings, the integration of tawaduk and izzah creates a distinctive coping pattern. Tawaduk provides the ability to accept, remain patient, and maintain social relationships, while izzah provides the courage to preserve professional boundaries and self-respect.

Therefore, educators' coping strategies within the context of Islamic education are not merely aimed at reducing stress but also at maintaining their moral identity as educators. Educators strive to remain productive, preserve the quality of learning, and transform difficult experiences into parts of their personal development process and the strengthening of professional commitment.

DISCUSSION

Workplace Relationship Pressure as a Psychological Process: From External Events to Educators' Internal Experiences

From the perspective of stress psychology, the pressures experienced by individuals in the workplace cannot be understood merely as direct consequences of conflicts or professional demands, but rather as the result of interactions between external conditions and individuals' internal interpretation processes. In the context of educators, workplace relationship dynamics represent a complex social environment because they simultaneously involve professional, emotional, and moral dimensions. Relationships between educators and colleagues, leaders, or organizational environments not only determine work effectiveness but also influence how educators perceive themselves as professionals.

Lazarus (2000), through the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, explains that stress emerges through a process of cognitive appraisal, in which individuals evaluate an event

based on their perception of threats, their ability to cope with the situation, and the resources available to them. Therefore, workplace relationship pressures do not automatically result in psychological stress. A criticism, disagreement, or particular form of communication may be perceived as a challenge that encourages personal growth, but it may also be interpreted as a threat to self-esteem and professional identity when individuals feel that they have lost appreciation or control over the situation.

This understanding is essential in explaining educators' experiences within Islamic educational environments. Unlike general organizational settings, Islamic educational institutions possess a stronger value-based dimension because educators are not only required to demonstrate academic competence but also serve as moral representatives for students. Therefore, interpersonal pressures have more complex psychological consequences. Educators are not only faced with questions regarding how to solve work-related problems but also how to maintain *adab* (proper conduct), integrity, and moral identity when encountering situations that do not align with their expectations.

This perspective expands previous understandings of teacher stress, which have often been associated primarily with workload, administrative demands, and burnout risks (Fahrezi et al., 2026; Madigan & Kim, 2021; Musonif et al., 2026; Reinke et al., 2025). This study demonstrates that relational aspects within the workplace require equal attention because interpersonal relationships constitute an essential part of the work context that directly shapes educators' psychological experiences. This finding is consistent with (Herman et al., 2020) Coping-Competence-Context Theory, which emphasizes that teacher stress results from the interaction between individual coping capacities and characteristics of the professional environment.

Thus, workplace relationship pressure is not merely a matter of interpersonal communication but rather a psychological process involving interpretations of appreciation, identity, and one's position within the professional environment. How educators interpret these pressures becomes the initial point that determines the development of their coping strategies.

Strategic Coping as a Self-Regulation Process in Facing Professional Pressures

After undergoing the appraisal process, individuals enter the coping stage as an effort to maintain psychological balance. According to Lazarus and Folkman's theory, coping is not merely an action aimed at eliminating problems but an adaptive process that enables individuals to manage demands perceived as exceeding their capacities. Therefore, successful coping is not always determined by the disappearance of stressors but by individuals' ability to constructively respond to stressful experiences.

In the context of educators, coping becomes a self-regulation process that allows them to continue fulfilling their professional responsibilities despite being in workplace relationship situations that are not always ideal. This study shows that coping strategies do not operate separately but instead form an interconnected adaptation process.

Problem-focused coping represents an active dimension in dealing with pressures. Through this strategy, individuals attempt to identify aspects of the problem that remain controllable and then take appropriate steps to address them. Within workplace relationships, this approach does not necessarily involve direct confrontation but may include establishing

professional boundaries, improving communication, or redirecting energy toward more productive aspects of work.

This finding indicates that adaptive coping does not always mean changing external circumstances because social relationships involve many factors beyond individual control. Instead, adaptive coping includes the ability to determine which aspects require improvement and which aspects need to be rationally accepted.

Furthermore, emotion-focused coping demonstrates that emotional management is an important aspect of maintaining educators' professionalism. In a profession that requires intensive interaction with people, the inability to regulate emotions may affect both workplace relationships and the learning process. This finding supports (Brandão et al., 2025; Musonif et al., 2026), who emphasized that emotional regulation is an important factor in reducing burnout risks and maintaining teacher well-being.

However, the most distinctive dimension of coping identified in this study is the emergence of meaning-focused coping. Unlike the previous two strategies, which focus on problems and emotions, this strategy emphasizes meaning transformation. Individuals do not only ask, "How can I deal with this problem?" but also, "What values can I gain from this experience?" This process allows professional pressures to be reconstructed as learning experiences, opportunities for maturity, and reinforcement of educators' purposes.

This finding indicates that, within the context of Islamic education, coping is not only psychological but also existential. Pressure is not merely managed to reduce its intensity but is interpreted as part of the journey of dedication and character development as an educator.

Tawaduk and Izzah as Moral Regulation Mechanisms in Islamic Coping

The main contribution of this study lies in understanding how Islamic values function not merely as cultural backgrounds but as active psychological mechanisms in the coping process. In this study, tawaduk and izzah are understood as two complementary values that shape adaptive responses toward workplace relationship pressures.

Tawaduk functions as a self-control mechanism that encourages individuals not to respond to pressure based on ego-driven impulses. In interpersonal conflicts, tawaduk helps individuals maintain a proportional attitude by recognizing personal limitations, accepting the possibility of mistakes, and preserving proper manners in interactions.

From a psychological perspective, tawaduk is related to self-regulation, namely the individual's capacity to manage thoughts, emotions, and behaviors so that they remain consistent with their internalized values. Individuals with tawaduk do not lose the ability to express opinions or defend their perspectives; rather, they are able to distinguish between defending principles and defending ego.

This becomes important because one of the risks in workplace conflicts is the emergence of defensive responses, such as the desire to retaliate, excessive self-defense, or emotional withdrawal. Tawaduk provides space for individuals to reduce these reactions so that conflicts do not develop into damage to professional relationships.

However, this study also demonstrates that tawaduk requires balance with izzah. Without izzah, tawaduk may be misunderstood as passively accepting degrading treatment or neglecting one's professional rights. Therefore, izzah functions as a mechanism for protecting self-respect and professional identity.

In this context, izzah does not refer to arrogance (*kibr*), but rather to awareness of personal value and dignity derived from moral principles. Educators with izzah are able to express disagreement, establish professional boundaries, and reject inappropriate treatment while maintaining politeness and respect.

The integration of *tawaduk* and izzah produces a unique form of psychological balance. *Tawaduk* maintains humility in social relationships, while izzah maintains firmness in preserving values and professional dignity. Thus, both values form the principle: "Humble in attitude, but firm in principles."

This concept contributes a new perspective to the study of religious coping. Previous studies have shown that religion can serve as a source of meaning and psychological resilience in facing difficulties (Hodge et al., 2025). However, this study further clarifies the specific mechanisms through which Islamic values operate in the coping process, namely through ego regulation, emotional management, professional boundary formation, and preservation of educators' identity (Pirutinsky, 2024).

Integrative Model of Islamic Educators' Coping: From Psychological Resilience to Sustainable Professionalism

Based on the integration between modern coping theories and the values of *tawaduk-izzah*, this study proposes a conceptual model explaining how educators in Islamic environments deal with workplace relationship pressures. The model demonstrates that professional pressure does not directly determine an individual's mental health but is influenced by the process of interpretation, coping strategies, and value systems used to provide meaning to experiences.

At the initial stage, workplace relationship pressures become external stimuli requiring cognitive evaluation. The appraisal process determines whether an experience is perceived as a threat that weakens the individual or as a challenge that develops personal capacity. Subsequently, individuals employ psychological coping strategies to manage these situations through problem-solving, emotional regulation, and meaning-making.

Within Islamic educational contexts, this process is further strengthened through the internalization of *tawaduk* and izzah. These two values provide moral direction for coping strategies so that individual responses are not only psychologically effective but also aligned with Islamic ethical principles (Syahir et al., 2025).

Therefore, ideal coping for educators is not merely the ability to survive (survival), but the ability to grow (growth) through experienced pressures. Educators who integrate psychological coping and Islamic values are able to maintain emotional stability, preserve spiritual well-being, and establish healthier professional relationships (Dwiyanti et al., 2025).

This model also provides practical implications for Islamic educational institutions. Efforts to improve educators' well-being should not only focus on stress reduction programs or emotional management training but should also incorporate the strengthening of moral-spiritual values as part of educators' professional development. This approach aligns with research on Islamic workplace spirituality, which demonstrates the relationship between spiritual values, psychological well-being, and educators' professional commitment (Bashori et al., 2026).

Ultimately, the integration of modern psychological coping with the values of *tawaduk* and izzah produces a paradigm in which psychologically healthy educators are not merely

those who are able to avoid pressure, but those who are able to transform pressure into a process of self-maturity, character strengthening, and improvement of professional dedication.

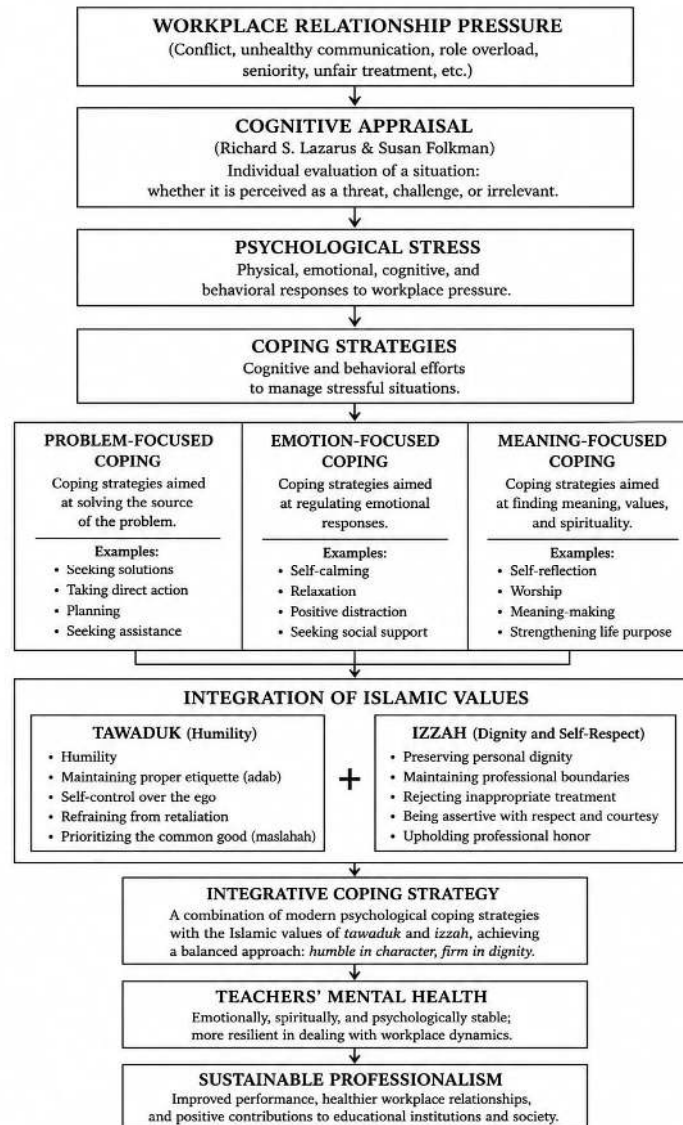


Figure 1. Integrative Model of Islamic Psychological Coping among Educators: The Interaction between Workplace Pressure, Coping Strategies, and Tawaduk-Izzah Values

Figure 1 illustrates the integrative model developed in this study, which explains that educators' psychological adaptation to workplace pressures occurs through a sequential and interconnected process. Workplace relationship pressures do not directly determine psychological outcomes; rather, they are mediated by cognitive appraisal, coping strategies, and the internalization of Islamic moral values. This model extends the transactional theory of stress and coping by demonstrating that coping processes among educators in Islamic educational settings are not only psychological but also ethical and spiritual.

The model highlights that modern coping strategies, including problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and meaning-focused coping, provide psychological mechanisms for managing stressful situations. However, these mechanisms are strengthened through the integration of tawaduk and izzah. Tawaduk contributes to emotional regulation, humility, and the prevention of ego-driven responses, while izzah supports professional dignity, self-respect, and appropriate boundary-setting. The interaction between these values produces an integrative coping approach characterized by humility in interpersonal relationships and firmness in maintaining professional integrity.

Therefore, the proposed model suggests that educators' mental health and sustainable professionalism are not achieved merely through the reduction of workplace stressors but through the development of adaptive psychological capacities supported by moral and spiritual values. This perspective contributes to the broader discussion of Islamic psychology by positioning religious values as active psychological resources that shape how educators interpret, respond to, and transform workplace challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that educators' workplace relationship pressures are not determined solely by external conditions but by the cognitive appraisal through which individuals interpret workplace experiences. Consistent with the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, workplace dynamics trigger psychological stress that is subsequently managed through problem-focused, emotion-focused, and meaning-focused coping strategies. Within Islamic educational environments, however, these coping processes are strengthened by the internalization of the Islamic values of tawaduk and izzah. Tawaduk promotes humility, emotional self-regulation, and ethical interpersonal conduct, while izzah preserves professional dignity, healthy boundaries, and respectful assertiveness. Together, these values create an integrative coping strategy that enables educators to remain psychologically resilient without compromising their moral identity or professional integrity.

The principal contribution of this study is the development of an integrative conceptual model that synthesizes modern psychological coping theory with the Islamic values of tawaduk and izzah. The model proposes that sustainable professionalism is achieved through a dynamic process in which workplace pressures are cognitively appraised, managed through adaptive coping strategies, and transformed into psychological resilience through Islamic moral values. This framework enriches the literature on teacher coping by positioning tawaduk and izzah as active psychological resources and provides a theoretical as well as practical foundation for promoting educators' mental health and sustainable professionalism in Islamic educational institutions.

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