

## Husnudzon Therapy to Reduce Anxiety Among University Students

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of husnudzon therapy in reducing anxiety levels among university students. The research employed a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group pre-test and post-test. A total of 40 undergraduate students were selected using purposive sampling and divided into an experimental group (n = 20) and a control group (n = 20). The experimental group received a 7-day self-guided husnudzon therapy intervention that included morning affirmations, cognitive reframing of negative thoughts, and gratitude journaling, while the control group received no treatment. Anxiety levels were measured using the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) scale. Data were analyzed using Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test and Mann-Whitney U Test. Results showed a significant reduction in anxiety scores within the experimental group ( $Z = -2.943$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), while no significant change was observed in the control group ( $Z = -0.869$ ,  $p = 0.385$ ). However, the between-group comparison revealed no significant difference ( $U = 181.5$ ,  $p = 0.615$ ), likely due to the small sample size. These findings suggest that husnudzon therapy is a promising and culturally relevant approach to managing anxiety in students. Future studies with larger samples and extended intervention periods are recommended to validate these results.

**Keywords:** Husnudzon, anxiety, spiritual therapy, university students

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji efektivitas terapi husnudzon dalam mengurangi tingkat kecemasan di kalangan mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuasi-eksperimental dengan pre-test dan post-test kelompok kontrol non-ekuivalen. Sebanyak 40 mahasiswa dipilih menggunakan purposive sampling dan dibagi menjadi kelompok eksperimen (n = 20) dan kelompok kontrol (n = 20). Kelompok eksperimen menerima intervensi terapi husnudzon selama 7 hari yang meliputi afirmasi pagi, pembiasaan ulang kognitif pikiran negatif, dan jurnal syukur, sedangkan kelompok kontrol tidak menerima perlakuan. Tingkat kecemasan diukur dengan menggunakan skala Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7). Data dianalisis menggunakan Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test dan Mann-Whitney U Test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan penurunan yang signifikan dalam skor kecemasan dalam kelompok eksperimen ( $Z = -2.943$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), sementara tidak ada perubahan signifikan yang diamati pada kelompok kontrol ( $Z = -0.869$ ,  $p = 0.385$ ). Namun, perbandingan antar kelompok tidak menunjukkan perbedaan yang signifikan ( $U = 181,5$ ,  $p = 0,615$ ), kemungkinan disebabkan oleh ukuran sampel yang kecil. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa terapi husnudzon adalah pendekatan yang menjanjikan dan relevan secara budaya untuk mengelola kecemasan pada siswa. Penelitian selanjutnya dengan sampel yang lebih besar dan periode intervensi yang lebih lama direkomendasikan untuk memvalidasi hasil ini.

**Kata kunci:** Husnudzon, kecemasan, terapi spiritual, mahasiswa

## **Introduction**

Anxiety is one of the most common psychological problems experienced by university students, mainly due to academic pressures, social demands, and life transitions in early adulthood (Pedrelli et al., 2015). Data from the National Institute of Mental Health (2023) shows that 31.1% of young adults (aged 18-25 years) in the United States experienced an anxiety disorder in the past year, making this age group the most vulnerable population. Anxiety is actually a natural response to stressors that can motivate individuals to face challenges (Hartley & Phelps in Singh & Jha, 2013). Anxiety is something that is natural and has been experienced by humans and has been considered as part of everyday life. Anxiety arises during an emotional state when someone is experiencing stress, and is characterized by feelings of tension, worrying thoughts, a racing heart, and increased blood pressure (Pertiwi et al., 2021). However, when anxiety becomes excessive, it can interfere with cognitive, emotional, and social functioning (Nevid, et al., 2005). On the grounds that it is proven that the higher the level of anxiety, it will affect learning achievement (Andyani et al., 2021). Symptoms of anxiety include physiological tension, persistent feelings of discomfort, and excessive worry about bad events in the future (American Psychological Association, 2013).

Anxiety symptoms in university students showed an increasing trend from 2007-2017 (Lipson et al., 2019). In the context of university students, unmanaged anxiety can negatively impact academic performance, psychological well-being, and even increase the risk of depression (Dyrbye et al., 2006). Academic and emotional demands on students can cause mental health problems, one of which is anxiety. Students who experience anxiety will withdraw from the social environment, irritability, difficulty sleeping. These things can interfere with the activities of students and the academic results that will be obtained by students. Therefore, effective, accessible, and culturally appropriate interventions are needed. One promising approach is spiritual-based interventions, such as the concept of husnudzon in Islam.

Husnudzon is a positive mental attitude that encourages individuals to interpret situations with optimism and trust in God, which aligns with the principles of Islamic positive psychology (Yucel, 2014). This concept comes from Arabic, namely husnu (good) and az-zan (prejudice), which in terms is defined as a positive perspective on life (Rusydi, 2012). According to Pinandito (in Rusydi, 2012), husnudzon is the foundation for humans to respond to various events with constructive thoughts, free from negative prejudice, hatred, and other destructive emotions. Furthermore, Yucel (2014) explains that a positive mindset such as husnudzon can encourage adaptive behavior and increase mental resilience. Husnudzon therapy focuses on the individual's cognition. Husnudzon therapy is applied to recognize negative thought patterns and view them and

use new thought patterns to face the upcoming destiny of life. In Islamic teachings, husnudzon means maintaining positive assumptions in all situations, especially toward Allah, oneself, and others. The Qur'an (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:286) reminds that Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity, indicating that every hardship contains goodness and wisdom. This aligns with the notion that husnudzon does not only positively affect individual mental health but also increases spiritual resilience and faith in divine decree (Pohan et al., 2024). Furthermore, Rochmah (2019) explains that husnudzon therapy acts as a natural healing method for mental and psychological disorders by altering negative thought patterns. The therapy consists of three core elements: positive thinking toward Allah (QS. As-Saba [34]:13, Ali Imran [3]:191), toward oneself (QS. Ad-Dhuha [93]:3), and toward others (QS. Al-Hujurat [49]:12).

Supporting studies also reveal that a high level of husnudzon is associated with increased inner calmness and reduced anxiety symptoms (Agnia et al., 2024). Azzahra (2023) confirmed that husnudzon can be an effective coping strategy for university students facing academic and social stressors. The unique aspect of husnudzon therapy lies in its integration of cognitive restructuring and spiritual values, where positive assumptions about life and the future are grounded in Islamic faith (Elfiky, 2005; Fairuzzahra et al., 2018). In the realm of positive psychology, practices such as gratitude journaling and reflective writing, as promoted by Seligman (2011), have been found to increase happiness and reduce anxiety, principles that are also reflected in husnudzon therapy (Setia Wati, 2024).

Furthermore, this therapy overlaps with CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) techniques, particularly cognitive restructuring, where individuals are trained to replace negative automatic thoughts with more rational and positive ones (Beck, 2011). This indicates that husnudzon therapy not only has a religious foundation but is also supported by evidence-based psychological theories and practices (Hanggari et al., 2020; Machmudati & Diana, 2017).

Several empirical studies have proven the effectiveness of husnudzon in reducing anxiety. For example, a quantitative study at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung found that husnudzon contributed 19% in reducing the anxiety level of final year students (Nurhabibah, 2023). Similar findings were reinforced by experimental research showing that husnudzon therapy-through positive affirmation exercises, cognitive restructuring, and daily reflection-significantly reduced anxiety symptoms (Nurhabibah, 2023). This is also supported by research (Alaska et al., 2024) which shows that husnudzon and social comparison have an influence on social anxiety in emerging adulthood social media users. Given the high prevalence of anxiety among university students and the potential of husnudzon as a spiritual value-based intervention, this study aimed to examine the

effectiveness of husnudzon therapy in reducing anxiety. It is hoped that the results of this study can make a scientific contribution to the development of psychological interventions that are relevant to Indonesian culture, as well as being an alternative solution in mental health promotion in higher education.

### **Method**

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design with a non-equivalent control group pre-test and post-test design. Participants were 40 undergraduate students recruited from a public university in Indonesia using purposive sampling. They were assigned into two groups: the experimental group ( $n = 20$ ), which received the husnudzon therapy intervention, and the control group ( $n = 20$ ), which did not receive any intervention.

Participants met specific inclusion criteria, including being an active undergraduate student, scoring within the moderate to high range on the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) scale during the pre-test, and providing informed consent. Individuals who were undergoing concurrent psychological treatment were excluded from the study.

The GAD-7 scale, developed by Spitzer et al. (2006), was used to measure the level of anxiety experienced by participants. Comprising seven items, the scale assesses symptoms over the past two weeks, with total scores ranging from 0 to 21; higher scores indicate greater anxiety. This instrument has demonstrated high validity and reliability in various clinical psychology studies and employs a 4-point Likert scale: 0 = Not at all, 1 = Several days, 2 = More than half the days, and 3 = Nearly every day. The internal consistency of the GAD-7 is high, with a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.89.

The intervention consisted of a structured husnudzon therapy protocol carried out over seven days. The first component was a morning affirmation exercise, encouraging participants to begin their day with positive, faith-based statements such as "I begin this day with trust in Allah" or "Whatever happens today is part of Allah's best plan." These affirmations could be adapted to personal contexts. The second component involved challenging negative thoughts by consciously replacing them with husnudzon-based interpretations whenever anxiety arose. For example, a thought like "I'm definitely going to fail this exam" would be reframed as "I've done my best. Allah sees my effort." The third component was a nightly husnudzon journal, in which participants wrote down three positive things that occurred during the day, reflecting on husnudzon toward Allah, oneself, and others. Examples included reinterpreting daily setbacks or interpersonal challenges with a positive, trusting mindset.

Throughout the intervention period, participants implemented these exercises independently in a comfortable environment such as their homes. The researcher monitored participants' engagement and sent daily reminders via private messages to help maintain consistency.

In terms of implementation procedure, both groups first completed the GAD-7 scale as a pre-test. The experimental group then attended a psychoeducational webinar that introduced the concept of anxiety and the principles of husnudzon, along with practical strategies for applying the therapy. Over the following week, this group practiced the therapy protocol as outlined above. At the end of the intervention period, all participants completed the GAD-7 again as a post-test.

To evaluate the results, statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess data normality. Due to non-normal distribution in the post-test scores of the control group, non-parametric tests were applied: the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for within-group comparisons and the Mann-Whitney U Test for between-group comparisons.

### **Results**

This study used the GAD-7 (Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7) as an instrument to measure students' anxiety levels before and after the husnuzon therapy intervention. Before proceeding with further analysis, a reliability test was conducted to assess the extent to which the instrument produces consistent, accurate, and stable results in measuring the intended construct. An instrument is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.70 (Chin, 1998).

**Table 1. Reliability Test Results**

Kelompok	Cronbach's Alpha
Pre-test (Eksperimen)	.718
Post-test (Eksperimen)	.766
Pre-test (Kontrol)	.830
Pre-test (Kontrol)	.889

Based on the results of the reliability test, the Cronbach's Alpha value ranges from 0.718 to 0.889, which indicates that the instrument has good to excellent internal consistency. This indicates that the GAD-7 is a reliable measurement tool in measuring anxiety levels in college students.

**Table 2. Normality Test Results**

Group	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test (Experiment)	.953	20	.420
Post-test (Experiment)	.937	20	.209
Pre-test (Control)	.905	20	.050
Post-test (Control)	.887	20	.023

The normality test was conducted using Shapiro-Wilk, because the number of samples in this study was less than 50. The analysis results showed that the pre-test and post-test data in the experimental group were normally distributed ( $p > 0.05$ ). Meanwhile, in the control group, the pre-test value showed  $p = 0.050$ , which is right at the limit of significance. Although it can technically be categorized as normal, this value shows that there is a tendency for the distribution to not be completely normal. Moreover, the post-test data in the control group showed a non-normal distribution ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, to maintain validity and caution in the analysis, non-parametric tests were used for further analysis.

**Table 3. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results**

	Pre-test Eksperimen – Post-test Eksperimen	Pre-test Kontrol – Post- test Kontrol
Z	-2.943	-.869
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.385

The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used to examine changes in anxiety scores in each group. In the experimental group, there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test with a value of  $Z = -2.943$  and  $p = 0.003$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). These results indicate that husnuzon therapy is effective in reducing student anxiety levels, because there is a significant decrease in anxiety scores after the intervention. Husnuzon therapy, which emphasizes positive thinking and good prejudice towards self, others, and the situation at hand, is proven to be able to help students manage their psychological pressure. Meanwhile, in the control group, no significant difference was found between the pre-test and post-test scores ( $Z = -0.869$ ;  $p = 0.385$ ), indicating that there was no significant change in their anxiety level.

**Table 4. Mann-Whitney U Test Results**

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Mann-Whitney U	181.500
Wilcoxon W	391.500
Z	-.502
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.615
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.620

The Mann-Whitney U Test was conducted to compare the anxiety scores between the experimental and control groups at post-test. Results showed a value of  $U = 181.5$ ,  $Z = -0.502$ , and  $p = 0.615$ , meaning there was no significant difference between the two groups after the intervention. Although statistically insignificant, this result does not erase the effectiveness of the therapy. Instead, the positive impact of husnuzon therapy was evident in the experimental group internally. The insignificance of the difference between the groups is likely due to the small sample size ( $n = 20$  per group), which limits the statistical power to detect differences between groups. In addition, the variation in scores within the experimental group and the mild natural decline in the control group may also have affected the results.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that husnuzon therapy has a positive impact on reducing student anxiety, although its effectiveness has not been fully reflected in statistical intergroup comparisons. Further research with a larger sample size, longer intervention duration, and control of external factors may provide more in-depth results regarding the effectiveness of this therapy.

### Discussion

The results of this study indicate that husnuzon therapy significantly reduces the anxiety level of students in the experimental group. Based on Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, there was a significant decrease in anxiety score after seven days of husnuzon therapy intervention ( $Z = -2.943$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ). In contrast, the control group that did not receive the intervention showed no significant change in anxiety levels ( $Z = -0.869$ ,  $p = 0.385$ ). This reinforces the finding that the decrease in anxiety in the experimental group was indeed the result of the application of husnuzon



therapy, not solely due to external factors or time. However, the Mann-Whitney U Test between the experimental and control groups at post-test did not show a statistically significant difference ( $U = 181.5$ ,  $p = 0.615$ ). This result could be due to the limited sample size and considerable variation in individual anxiety scores. However, in practical terms, these findings still indicate that the application of husnudzon therapy independently is effective in helping university students manage and reduce their anxiety. This finding is in line with the literature which confirms that anxiety in students is often triggered by negative perceptions of self-ability and fears of failure, especially in the face of evaluation situations such as national exams or final assignments (Shabrina & Rachmawati, 2019). Excessive anxiety can disrupt thinking patterns, concentration, and reduce students' academic performance and mental health (Pekrun et al., 2011). In this context, husnudzon positive thinking and prejudice towards Allah, self, and others act as cognitive and spiritual strategies that are able to change negative mindsets into more adaptive and optimistic ones (Rusydi, 2012). Shabrina and Rachmawati (2019) in their literature review emphasized that husnudzon is an important dimension in Islamic religiosity that can provide a sense of security, peace, and optimism in facing various challenges, including academic exams or pressures. By familiarizing good prejudice to Allah (husn al-zhann bi Allah), students can foster an attitude of tawakal, accept all results as part of God's best plan, and keep trying their best. In addition, husnudzon to oneself and others also reduces social pressure and increases self-confidence, so that students are better prepared to face academic challenges without being haunted by excessive fear. The concept of husnudzon thus serves not only as a theological value but also as a structured cognitive framework aligned with established psychological theories. According to Elfiky (2005), what distinguishes husnudzon from general positive thinking in modern psychology is its theological anchoring; believers trust that a Merciful God governs life events, thus reducing feelings of helplessness and anxiety. In this way, husnudzon offers both emotional support and spiritual grounding. Additionally, the structured daily reflection used in this study mirrors gratitude practices in positive psychology that are proven to enhance well-being (Seligman, 2011; Setia Wati, 2024).

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy emphasizes that anxiety is often rooted in distorted thinking, which can be countered through cognitive restructuring (Beck, 2011). The husnudzon therapy applied here shares a similar technique, recognizing and reframing negative thoughts into positive assumptions based on faith. This reflects the synergy between Islamic therapeutic models and contemporary psychological approaches (Machmudati & Diana, 2017; Hanggari et al., 2020). Research by Fairuzzahra, Aryandari, and Purwadi (2018) also supports these findings, where husnudzon is shown to have a negative relationship with anxiety. The higher the level of



husnudzon, the lower the level of anxiety felt by individuals. This is due to a positive mindset that encourages optimism, enthusiasm, and confidence in facing various situations (Rusydi, 2012; Yucel, 2014).

The husnudzon therapy applied in this study through three main steps of positive affirmations in the morning, replacing negative thoughts with good prejudices, and positive reflection journals in the evening was able to suppress symptoms of anxiety both cognitively, emotionally, and physically. The practice of affirmations and reflection journals strengthens positive self-talk, increases gratitude, and builds psychological resilience (Shabrina & Rachmawati, 2019; Nurhabibah, 2023). The limitations of this study include the limited sample size, the short duration of the intervention, and not controlling for other external factors that may affect student anxiety. Further research with a longitudinal design, larger sample, and control of external variables is highly recommended to strengthen the validity of the results. Overall, the results of this study make an important contribution to the development of spiritual value-based psychological interventions that are relevant to the context of university students in Indonesia. Husnudzon therapy proved to be effective, easy to implement independently, and can be an alternative solution in efforts to improve students' mental health, especially in dealing with academic and social pressures.

### **Conclusion**

This study concludes that *husnudzon* therapy is effective in reducing anxiety levels among university students. The 7-day self-guided intervention, which integrated morning affirmations, cognitive reframing, and gratitude journaling, significantly lowered anxiety symptoms within the experimental group. Although the difference between the experimental and control groups did not reach statistical significance, the internal improvement observed among participants suggests practical relevance and therapeutic potential. The integration of spiritual and cognitive components in *husnudzon* therapy offers a culturally meaningful and accessible method for managing psychological distress in student populations. Future research with larger sample sizes, longer intervention periods, and follow-up measurements is recommended to further validate and expand upon these findings.

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