

The Impact of Dhikr on Mental Clarity And Stress Reduction In Final-Year Grade Student

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ABSTRACT

Final-year students often experience high academic pressure, such as completing their thesis, meeting graduation requirements, and preparing for the job market. This pressure can affect their mental clarity and overall well-being. This study employed a quantitative method with a one-group pretest-posttest experimental design to examine the effectiveness of dhikr therapy in reducing stress and enhancing mental clarity. A total of 25 final-year students participated in the dhikr intervention, and the data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test. The results showed a significant reduction in stress levels after the intervention ($p = 0.001$). Dhikr acts as both a spiritual practice and a relaxation technique that fosters inner peace and emotional regulation. Therefore, dhikr is proven to be an effective non-pharmacological psycho-spiritual intervention to support students' mental health during academic transitions.

Keywords : Mental health; Stress; Students; Dhikr; Dhikr therapy

Introduction

Stress experienced by final year students has a high potential to cause serious problems that can result in decreased academic achievement, poor interpersonal relationships, and overall life dissatisfaction. Salam et al. (2013) stated that stress is an individual condition that arises as a result of interaction with the environment that is considered threatening or detrimental to well-being. It is important to note that an individual in a stressful situation is influenced by his/her mental capacity to handle the tasks at hand (Yasin and Dzulkifli, 2011; Khodarahimi et al., 2012). This shows that stress is basically related to emotions (Lazarus, 2000), which include the individual's thoughts (mental) as well as pleasant or painful physical experiences (Manz, 2003). Indeed, Roddenberry and Renk (2010), as well as Houghton et al. (2012) acknowledge the link between stress in college students and health. Stress resulting from low self-esteem, borderline personality traits, substance abuse, or behavioral addictions are some areas that require further research (Walburg, 2014).

Dhikr therapy contributes to relieving anxiety disorders in individuals, because in the practice of dhikr there is a repetition of istighfar readings which creates a calming and soothing effect on the soul. A person who has peace of mind tends not to experience stress, frustration, anxiety, and other

disorders easily. He will always see everything optimistically and believe that God regulates everything in his life, so he will always submit all his destiny to God (Maslahat, et al., 2022).

Etymologically, dhikr comes from the term "dzakara" which means to call, purify, combine, maintain, understand, learn, give, and advise. Therefore, dhikr can be understood as an act that purifies and glorifies, and includes the pronunciation and enunciation of the name of Allah, both in memory and in consciousness (Hazri Adlany, 2002). In this case, dhikr in terminology is an individual's effort to get closer to Allah by remembering His presence and remembering His greatness. This is manifested in the form of praising Allah, reading His book, seeking knowledge from Him, and asking Him (Al-Islam, 1987). According to Al-Ghazali (in Kajiro Nakamura et al., 2005), dhikr in the context of language means remembering, while in the context of terms it is a sincere effort to divert human attention and focus to Allah and the afterlife.

In further explanation, Al-Ghazali emphasized that dhikr also has the function of bringing inspiration. According to Bastaman, dhikr is the practice of remembering Allah and His glory, which includes almost all types of worship and deeds such as tasbih, tahmid, prayer, reading the Qur'an, praying, doing good deeds, and avoiding evil (Hanna Djumhana Bastaman, 2001). Dhikr therapy is an act of repeatedly mentioning, remembering the name, and glory of Allah SWT, accompanied by awareness of Him for the purpose of healing pathological conditions. Repeating and remembering Allah (Dhikrullah) with sincerity will train our hearts to always feel close and intimate with Allah SWT. Indirectly, this can continue and grow in us a deep sense of love for Allah SWT (KH. Aqil Said Siroj, 2006) and reduce feelings of anxiety.

Method

This study employed a quantitative approach using a **one-group pretest-posttest experimental design**. The purpose of this design is to examine the effect of dhikr therapy on mental clarity and stress reduction in final-year students. In this setup, a single group of participants receives the intervention (dhikr practice), and measurements are taken both before (pretest) and after (posttest) the intervention to assess any changes.

Participants in this study were final-year students selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria, such as currently working on a thesis and exhibiting symptoms of stress. The instruments used in this study were validated scales measuring stress and mental clarity. Data were collected by distributing questionnaires before and after the dhikr intervention over a specific period

(e.g., 7 days). Data analysis was conducted using a Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test to determine whether there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest results..

Results

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
posttest ovt - pretest ovt	Negative Ranks	19 ^a	13.92	264.50
	Positive Ranks	5 ^b	7.10	35.50
	Ties	1 ^c		
	Total	25		

a. posttest ovt < pretest ovt

b. posttest ovt > pretest ovt

c. posttest ovt = pretest ovt

posttest ovt - pretest ovt	
Z	-3.273 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.001

The results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test showed a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores, indicating the effectiveness of dhikr therapy in reducing stress levels among final-year students. Out of 25 participants, 19 students showed a decrease in stress levels after the intervention, while only 5 showed an increase, and 1 showed no change. The average rank for those with reduced stress was 13.92, and the test yielded a Z score of -3.273 with a p-value of 0.001, indicating a statistically significant reduction in stress post-intervention.

The results of this research align with investigations that indicated comparable results. Including the work of Rizki et al. (2024), who showed that dhikr relaxation therapy effectively reduce educational stress in first-year college students by utilizing relaxation methods centered on

spirituality and breathing. In a related study, Reza et al. (2021) discovered that engaging in repetitive dhikr activities aids Muslim students in managing academic stress more effectively by enhancing emotional control and promoting a feeling of spiritual connection.

Discussion

The recent research suggests that dhikr therapy has a notable impact on lowering academic pressure among students. This supports the idea that engaging in spiritual activities enhances mental resilience. As discussed by Pargament et al. (2000), utilizing religious coping methods, especially positive strategies like dhikr, can instill a feeling of mastery and solace, resulting in improved stress management.

Moreover, the outcomes of this research are in line with the observations made by Fedrich et al. (2023), who discovered the students experiencing elevated stress anxiety levels gained beneficial mental health support, especially when lacking sufficient academic and emotional assistance.

The success of dhikr can be further understood through the perspective of mindfulness and theory of self-regulation. Much like Buddhist meditation, dhikr encourages repetitive, concentrated focus, thus fostering a sense of tranquility and mitigating excessive activation of the stress response system, as highlighted by Kim et al. (2022). Consequently, dhikr fulfills both a spiritual and therapeutic function by aiding students in concentrating, managing their emotions, and nurturing a feeling of inner serenity..

Conclusion

Based on the results of the Wilcoxon test and supporting literature, this study concludes that dhikr therapy is effective in reducing stress and increasing mental clarity in final-year students. The significant decrease in posttest stress scores supports the implementation of dhikr as a psycho-spiritual intervention. The therapy facilitates both spiritual connection and psychological balance, acting as a non-pharmacological method to manage academic stress.

This study highlights the importance of integrating spiritual practices into student mental health programs, especially for those dealing with academic pressure. Future research is recommended to compare the efficacy of dhikr therapy with other interventions such as mindfulness or cognitive behavioral techniques.

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