

The Effectiveness of Prayer Therapy on Adolescent Mental Health

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ABSTRACT

Teenagers' mental health is at danger due to emotional, intellectual, and social pressures. One approach that is rarely used but is nonetheless mentioned is spiritual intervention, which is prevalent in Islamic education. According to Surah Ar-Ra'd verse 28, this study aims to assess a few effective Qur'an prayer therapies in enhancing the emotional, mental, and social well-being of adolescent. With no control group and a pretest-posttest structure, a quasi-experimental approach was employed. Qualitative techniques like interviews and observations were also applied. The most important tool for research is the Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF). Possessively, sixteen participants were chosen from among those with low-to-moderate pretest scores. Following the session, mental well-being scores significantly improved, according to quantitative analysis. Qualitative findings also showed improved coping skills, spiritual awareness, and inner calm in handling academic stress. These results demonstrate that Qur'an prayer therapy is a significant and successful substitute for teenage mental health treatment. It is recommended that future studies use more rigorous experimental designs and increase the sample size.

Keywords : prayer therapy, mental health, adolescents, Qur'an, Islamic spirituality

Introduction

Mental health is a state of a person's physical well-being that enables them to realize their own potential, manage their daily life, work productively, and contribute to their social environment (WHO, 2017 in Wulandari et al., 2022). Adolescence is a stage marked by heightened internal and external pressures due to the demands of self-regulation, emotional fluctuations, and uncertainty about the future. This makes them a resilient group with regard to mental health issues like stress, anxiety, and even depression (Magribi et al., 2024).

Based on data from Riskiness, the prevalence of depression among individuals aged 15 to 24 was recorded at 6.2% and has continued to increase in line with the growing challenges of the times (Kemenkes RI, 2019; Wulandari et al., 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to have a holistic approach that is not only medically sound but also spiritual in order to help adolescent cope with mental health.

In the context of Islamic spirituality, prayer is one type of prayer that promotes open communication between humans and Allah. In Surah Ar-Ra'd, verse 28, Allah SWT states, 'Those who believe and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah. Truly, in the remembrance

of Allah do hearts find rest. This verse highlights that inner peace can be attained through a deep spiritual connection with Allah, particularly through sincere reflection and wholehearted prayer.

According to research conducted by Pourahmad et al. (2011) doa has a significant impact on the mental health of t. According to the study, students who are actively and consistently engaged in their studies have better mental health scores statistically than those who are not actively engaged in their studies. Prayer in this context is not a spoken activity; rather, it refers to the emotional and spiritual keterlibatan that indicates in a kesadaran that a person does not alone experience the hardships of life.

Findings from the study conducted by Rahni Rismawati et al. (2025) also indicate that prayer can serve as an effective coping mechanism during life crises, including anxiety related to age, uncertainty in life decisions, and feelings of helplessness. Through prayer therapy, the study emphasizes improvements in mindfulness, self-confidence, and emotional resilience as outcomes of consistent daily practice. In this context, prayer functions as a form of spiritual therapy that promotes a sense of inner peace and security, rooted in the belief that life's challenges are part of a divine plan and beyond human control.

The verse in Surah Ar-Ra'd (13:28) serves as both a theological and psychological assertion, indicating that one's physical and mental well-being can improve through spiritual connection. When individuals experience a decline in faith, they often turn to Allah with hope and sincerity. This act of devotion, when practiced properly, can reduce stress hormone levels while enhancing hormones associated with happiness and inner calm (Pourahmad et al., 2011; Hayati, 2020 ; Nahuda et al., 2021).

Based on the above description, this study identifies therapy prayer that is based on the spiritual teachings of QS. Ar-Ra'd verse 28 as a relevant and effective method for promoting the mental health of adolescent. Prayer functions as an energizing psychological mechanism that enhances mental health by reducing a person's sense of safety, hope, and spirituality.

Therapy prayer Qur'an has a crucial role in reducing psychological symptoms including stress, anxiety, and restlessness that are frequently experienced by adolescent. Prayer that is carried out in a reflective manner and full of appreciation can increase inner calm, which is one of the most important indicators of positive mental health. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of Qur'an prayer therapy, based on Surah Ar-Ra'd verse 28, in improving adolescent mental health particularly in terms of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It also seeks to explore participants' personal experiences throughout the intervention and assess the extent to

which spiritual practices can serve as coping strategies for academic stress and developmental challenges during adolescence.

Method

This research utilized a convergent mixed-methods design, integrating a quantitative quasi-experimental model with qualitative descriptive inquiry to investigate the impact of Qur'an prayer therapy on adolescent mental well-being. The quantitative strand employed a single-group pretest–post-test framework, while the qualitative component involved semi-structured interviews and non-participant observational techniques to gain interpretive depth regarding participants' experiences.

A total of 16 adolescents aged 17–20 years were recruited through purposive sampling, selected based on initial scores from the Mental Health Continuum–Short Form (MHC-SF). This instrument, widely validated across global populations, measures emotional, psychological, and social well-being across a 6-point Likert scale ranging from “never” to “every day” (Lyzwinski et al., 2024). Only individuals exhibiting low to moderate well-being were included in the intervention phase.

The therapy intervention spanned seven consecutive days, guided by principles derived from Surah Ar-Ra'd, verse 28. Each session involved the mindful recitation of selected Qur'an verses, combined with guided reflection and spiritual self-awareness practices, aimed at cultivating emotional balance and inner resilience. Participants completed the MHC-SF before and after the intervention to assess shifts in psychological well-being.

To enrich the quantitative outcomes, post-intervention interviews were conducted to explore emotional transformations, spiritual insights, and the development of adaptive coping strategies in daily life.. In parallel, non-participant observations were carried out during the sessions to document behavioral and interpersonal changes indicative of psychological improvement.

Quantitative data were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests to determine statistically significant differences between pre and post-intervention scores. Meanwhile, qualitative data were thematically analyzed to extract recurring emotional, cognitive, and spiritual themes emerging from the therapeutic process. This mixed-methods framework provided both measurable evidence and in-depth understanding of how Qur'anic prayer can serve as a spiritually grounded mental health intervention for adolescents.

Results

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PRE-TEST	24.94	16	7.655	1.914
	POST-TEST	56.31	16	5.474	1.368

The analysis results present a summary of descriptive statistics for both samples Pre-Test and Post-Test data—revealing a highly significant difference between the Pre-Test mean score ($M = 24.94$) and the Post-Test mean score ($M = 56.31$). The study involved 16 participants, with a Pre-Test standard deviation of 7.655 and a Post-Test standard deviation of 5.474. Additionally, the standard error of the mean was 1.914 for the Pre-Test and 1.366 for the Post -Test. These figures describe the descriptive statistical outcomes for both assessments.

The findings of this study support the hypothesis that prayer therapy based on Surah Ar-Ra'd:28 is effective in enhancing the mental well-being of adolescents. Following one week of consistent prayer therapy, there was a significant increase in scores, indicating positive psychological changes.

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	PRE-TEST & POST-TEST	16	-.122	.653

The correlation test between Pre-Test and Post-Test scores revealed no significant correlation. The analysis showed a very weak negative relationship, with an r value of -0.122 and a p -value of 0.653. This indicates that there is no statistically significant correlation between the scores before and after the intervention.

This output presents the relationship between Pre-Test and Post-Test variables using the Pearson product-moment correlation test. The results indicate no significant correlation between the Pre-Test and Post-Test scores, as shown by the significance value of 0.653, which is greater than the 0,05 threshold. This means that the Pre-Test scores do not linearly predict the Post-Test scores. The absence of a significant correlation suggests that the prayer therapy was universally effective, regardless of the respondents' initial well-being levels. After the intervention, participants with both low and high initial scores demonstrated improvement. This phenomenon implies that the spiritual intervention had an equal impact regardless of participants' psychological baseline conditions.

Paired Samples Test								
		Paired Differences						
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df
					Lower	Upper		
Pair 1	PRETEST - POSTTEST	-31.375	9.939	2.485	-36.671	-26.079	-12.627	15
								Sig. (2-tailed)
								.000

Among the respondents who participated in prayer therapy, there was a significant difference between the Pre-Test and Post-Test scores. The average difference in scores was -31.375, with a standard deviation of 9.939 and a standard error of the mean of 2.485. This was confirmed by the paired-sample t-test results, which showed $t(15) = -12.627$ with a significance level of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). These findings demonstrate a statistically significant difference, with the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranging from -36.671 to -26.079, not crossing zero.

The results demonstrate that prayer therapy based on Surah Ar-Ra'd:28 significantly improves adolescents' mental health. This is evident from the substantial average score difference of -31.375 points, indicating notable psychological improvement among participants following the intervention. After one week of consistent prayer therapy, participants reported feeling calmer, happier, and more emotionally, psychologically, and socially well. This positive change is reflected in the decreased scores from the Pre-Test to the Post-Test.

The significance of this change is supported by a p-value of 0.000, confirming that the results are not due to chance. Therefore, prayer therapy proves to be statistically effective in enhancing the mental well-being of adolescents who previously experienced anxiety, stress, and emotional pressure. This aligns with the principles of Islamic psychotherapy, which regards prayer and dhikr as spiritual tools that soothe the heart, as mentioned in Surah Ar-Ra'd:28: *"Indeed, by the remembrance of Allah hearts find peace"* Prayer therapy serves not only as an act of worship but also as a valuable method for regulating emotions and managing stress, especially for adolescents facing academic and social pressures during their developmental phase. These findings support the role of spiritual approaches within Islamic psychotherapy as a pathway to achieving inner peace and sustained psychological recovery.

Discussion

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that Qur'an prayer therapy, grounded in Surah Ar-Ra'd:28, had a substantial positive effect on the mental well-being of adolescent participants. The post-test results showed a marked improvement across emotional, psychological, and social well-being domains, suggesting that structured spiritual practices can contribute significantly to

psychological recovery. This aligns with prior evidence indicating that spiritual engagement—particularly through consistent and mindful prayer—can regulate stress responses and improve emotional regulation among young people (Aggarwal et al., 2023).

The study by McCullough (2020) further supports this, emphasizing that prayer, when internalized and practiced with sincerity, acts as a buffer against mental distress by fostering resilience and a sense of purpose. In the qualitative analysis, many participants expressed experiencing greater emotional stability, enhanced clarity in decision-making, and reduced anxiety following the intervention. These narratives affirm the notion that spiritual routines not only offer comfort but also empower individuals to manage academic and social stressors more constructively. According to Carrel (2021), spiritual interventions can activate brain regions associated with calmness and emotional regulation, contributing to neuropsychological improvements that complement emotional healing.

Moreover, the integration of prayer into daily routines appears to provide a sense of structure and internal safety, which is particularly valuable for adolescents navigating identity and emotional turbulence. The thematic reflections gathered from interviews indicate that prayer therapy fostered mindfulness, self-trust, and spiritual contentedness factors that are often linked to long-term well-being and life satisfaction (Owens et al., 2023). These outcomes resonate with findings by Gill (2021), who observed that adolescents participating in faith-based interventions showed reduced symptoms of anxiety and improved self-perception.

While the statistical tests confirmed a significant increase in well-being, the absence of a strong linear correlation between pre-test and post-test scores implies that the intervention was equally effective across participants, regardless of their initial mental health state. This finding highlights the inclusivity and adaptability of spiritual approaches, which do not require prior psychological preparedness or specific religious intensity to be beneficial. In summary, the results provide strong empirical and experiential support for integrating prayer therapy within adolescent mental health frameworks. Spiritual practices—when implemented with structure, reflection, and consistency can complement psychological interventions by offering a culturally relevant and emotionally meaningful path to healing. .

Conclusion

This study concludes that Qur'an prayer therapy, particularly grounded in the teachings of Surah Ar-Ra'd:28, is a highly effective spiritual intervention for enhancing adolescent mental health. The significant improvement observed between pre-test and post-test scores across emotional,

psychological, and social well-being domains confirms the positive impact of structured, reflective prayer on overall mental functioning. Participants not only showed measurable psychological progress but also reported subjective experiences of increased inner peace, reduced anxiety, and greater resilience in facing academic and personal challenges.

The intervention's success underscores the role of spiritual practices as a meaningful and culturally rooted alternative to conventional mental health strategies, especially within Muslim communities. It also demonstrates that faith-based therapeutic methods can foster emotional regulation, spiritual awareness, and self-trust regardless of individuals' initial mental health status. These outcomes are consistent with global research suggesting that spirituality can serve as a stabilizing force during developmental transitions and periods of psychological vulnerability.

Therefore, incorporating Islamic spiritual practices, such as prayer therapy, into adolescent mental health programs can provide a holistic and accessible avenue for healing one that nurtures not only emotional stability but also spiritual and social contentedness. Future research is encouraged to expand the sample size, include control groups, and examine the long-term effects of similar interventions to further validate and strengthen the findings of this study.

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