

The Effectiveness of Dhikr Relaxation Therapy in Reducing Level of Academic Stress Among Students in The First Academic Semester of The Islamic Guidance Study Program

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ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by the researcher's attention to first-semester students who are prone to experiencing academic stress. This is due to changes in learning patterns from school to college, including differences in the difficulty level of assignments, adapting to new environments, and speaking in front of the class during presentations. Therefore, the aim of this study is to determine the effectiveness of dhikr relaxation therapy in reducing academic stress among students of the Islamic Counseling Guidance study program. The research approach used in this study is quantitative. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires and documentation methods. The research was conducted at the Islamic Counseling Guidance Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication Sciences, Mataram State Islamic University. The population of this study comprised 159 students who were enrolled in the study program. The sample for this study was randomly selected, consisting of 80 individuals, which represents 50% of the total population. The results of data processing in this study indicate a strong positive relationship between the variable of dhikr relaxation and the variable of academic stress among students, with an r-value of 0.799. The R Square (correlation coefficient) of 75.8% shows the contribution of dhikr relaxation in reducing academic stress. The F test conducted using SPSS shows that dhikr relaxation has a significant effect in reducing student academic stress, with a calculated F value of 43.540, exceeding the tabulated F value of 3.96. The significance probability (Sig.) is 0.00, which is less than the significance level (α) of 0.05. Therefore, the researchers concluded that dhikr relaxation plays an effective role in reducing academic stress among students.

Keywords: Dhikr Relaxation, Academic Stress, Students, Quantitative Research Approach, Islamic Counseling Guidance Study Program.

INTRODUCTION

In human life, individuals face various life problems that require resilience and strength. Some people are resilient and strong in the face of problems, while others lack confidence, easily get discouraged, and feel stressed (Soleh, 2016). Stress is the inability to deal with demands perceived as threatening to one's well-being, both internally and externally. Anyone can experience stress, including students who often face academic stress. Signs of academic stress in students include sleep disturbances, emotional instability, and self-isolation. Academic stress arises from the burden of tasks and demands that students must meet, and it can affect various aspects of life (Schrafer, 2007). The impact of stress can be positive or negative,

depending on the extent to which the pressure aligns with an individual's capacity. Symptoms of stress are divided into three aspects: physical, emotional, and behavioral. Therefore, it is important to recognize these symptoms and effectively cope with stress to prevent negative impacts on students' physical, mental, and academic health (Dahlin et al., 2005). Cognitive symptoms such as negative thinking, difficulty concentrating, and chaotic thoughts can indicate the presence of stress that needs to be addressed. Psychological treatment is necessary to prevent stress from progressing to depression or even suicide (Gamayanti et al., 2018).

One effective approach in coping with stress is relaxation, which involves engaging the body to create a state of relaxation. This technique helps individuals control themselves and focus their attention, enabling them to respond appropriately in stressful situations. Relaxation aims to reduce physiological reactivity that disrupts the balance of the body and mind. However, relaxation techniques that incorporate elements of spirituality are rarely researched (Perwitaningrum et al., 2016). Spirituality is an important factor in the healing process and psychological interventions, as mentioned by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1984. Several studies have shown that Islamic-based psychological therapies can help overcome psychological problems. Individuals of all religions can practice relaxation techniques that incorporate elements of faith.

In this study, the researcher utilized a relaxation technique involving dhikr, a form of spiritual practice. The research subjects were students with a strong spiritual background, such as graduates of madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools. By incorporating spirituality in this study, the researcher aims to help alleviate the academic stress experienced by university students.

Yazid (in Soleh, 2016) states that the remembrance of Allah is increasingly necessary with the advancement of science and technology. Dhikr is a form of worship introduced by Allah and His Messenger, which can eliminate heart anxiety, emotional anxiety, and stress. Through dhikr, a person can alleviate worries in their relationship with Allah. Dhikr also offers psychological benefits, nurtures the soul, and serves as a remedy for psychological and physical ailments. Surrendering to Allah through dhikr is an exercise for humans to combat worldly desires and foster a spirit of devotion. However, many people neglect their obligations to the Creator today, as they are enticed by material wealth, power, and worldly pleasures, which are not the main purpose of this life.

As time passes, human problems have become more complex, including personal, family, work, and general life issues (Latipun, 2003). This complexity often leads to conflicts, obstacles, and stress. A medium is needed to help overcome these daily problems. Mental health is crucial for individuals to navigate various life problems, especially for university students. Coursework, busy schedules, and problems outside of lectures can disrupt the academic balance. One way to reduce the burden and suffering of students is through dhikr. Dhikr creates peace of mind, security, and tranquility.

Allah created dhikr as a means to overcome human problems, but many fail to realize its benefits. Stress should not be allowed to persist, as it can lead to depression and mental disorders. One strategy for coping with stress is religious coping, which involves using religious practices to navigate stressful situations (Octarina & Fiatin, 2013; Puffer et al., 2012; Terreri & Glenwick, 2013). Research shows that religious coping is associated with better mental health. Dhikr, as a form of religious coping, makes one aware of God's presence and His support. People who are religiously observant tend to be psychologically healthier, and the healing process is often faster. Relaxation techniques coupled with faith in God can enhance the relaxation response (Dahlin et al., 2005).

Dhikr makes individuals feel under the protection of Allah, creating a sense of security, calmness, happiness, and increased self-confidence. Dhikr is used as a therapy to boost immunity through the psychoneuroendocrine network. Muslims believe that dhikr can heal the soul and alleviate ailments.

Research shows that dhikr relaxation can reduce stress levels in patients with essential hypertension (Anggraieni & Subandi, 2014). This method stretches the body's muscles and provides psychological calmness. Based on these findings, researchers are interested in examining the implications of dhikr relaxation in overcoming psychological problems, particularly in reducing academic stress among first-semester students of the Islamic Counseling Guidance Study Program. The title of this research is "The Effectiveness of Dhikr Relaxation Therapy in Reducing Academic Stress Levels among First Semester Students of the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program". The research hypothesis states that dhikr relaxation plays an effective role in reducing academic stress among students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes quantitative research methods. The analysis utilized the simple linear regression method to identify the relationship between two variables and to predict the value of the dependent variable based on the independent variable. Probability sampling techniques were employed in this study. The academic stress scale was developed based on aspects from (Sarafino & Smith, 2011), while the zikr relaxation scale, based on aspects from Ash-Shiddieqy (2010), was utilized for data collection. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 25, and the findings were presented in summary tables. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of dhikr relaxation in reducing academic stress among first-semester students in the Islamic Counseling Guidance Study Program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the study findings, the correlation between the variables "dhikr relaxation" and "academic stress" is calculated to be 0.799, indicating a strong positive correlation. This implies that there is indeed a significant relationship between the dhikr relaxation variable and the academic stress variable, with the correlation being strong. The correlation between dhikr relaxation and academic stress falls into the category of strong or high correlation. The positive value of 0.799 suggests that as the level of dhikr relaxation among students increases, the level of academic stress decreases.

TABLE I

MODEL SUMMARY

Model Summary ^b									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.799 ^a	.758	.750	1.816	.758	43.540	1	78	.000

R (correlation) of 0.799 shows the relationship between dhikr relaxation (X) and academic stress (Y) is very strongly positive. R Square (correlation coefficient) of 75.8% shows the contribution that X contributes to Y.

TABLE II

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Dhikr Relaxation	97.54	7.215	80
Academic Stress	80.23	10.944	80

Based on the table results, it can be concluded that the average score for dhikr relaxation is 97.54 with relatively small variations, as indicated by a standard deviation of 7.215. This data was obtained from a sample of 80 individuals. Additionally, the average score for academic stress is 80.23 with a standard deviation of 10.944, also based on the same sample of 80 individuals. This indicates a higher level of variation in the academic stress score compared to the dhikr relaxation score. In other words, there is a significant difference between the level of academic stress experienced by students and the intensity of dhikr relaxation practice.

GAMBAR I

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION

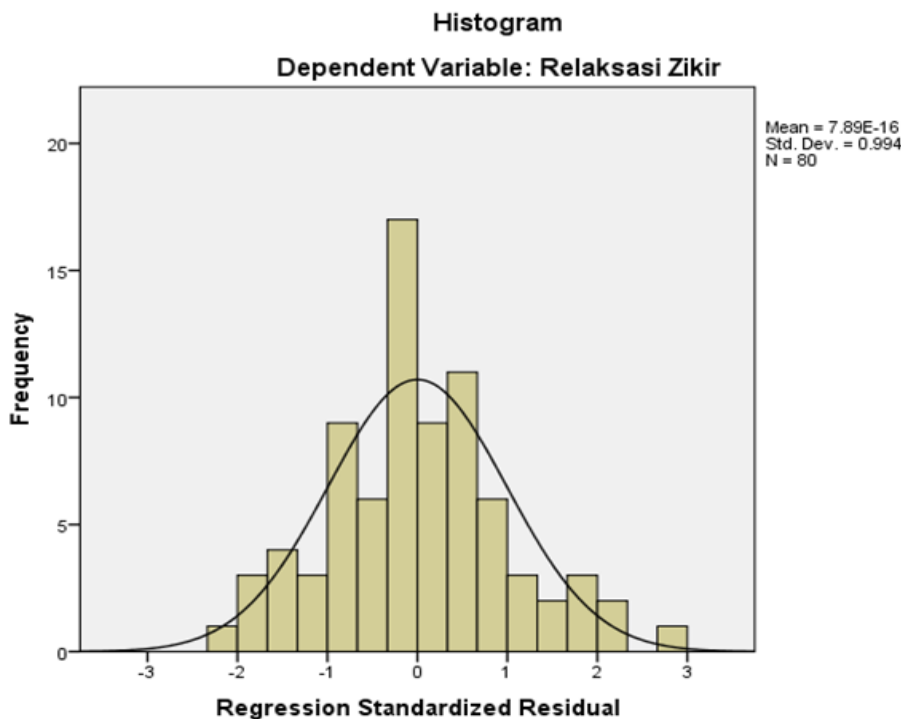


TABLE III

ANOVA TEST

ANOVA ^a				
Model	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression 1	1	1473.028	43.540	.000 ^b
Residual	2638.860	78	33.832	
Total	411.888	79		

Based on the table above, the calculated probability value is 0.000. Since this value is less than 0.05, it indicates a significant influence between dhikr relaxation and academic stress. Based on the statistical calculations above, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of dhikr relaxation therapy has a correlation with the reduction of academic stress among Islamic Guidance and Counseling students who participated in the study. This correlation aligns with the theory described in the study, particularly regarding the relationship between stress symptoms and the effects of dhikr. In this study, the focus was on the impact of

dhikr on stress symptoms. When individuals (students) experience stress, engaging in dhikr helps alleviate symptoms such as palpitations, muscle tension, restlessness, anxiety, lack of concentration, pessimism, loss of sense of humor, excessive daydreaming, and feelings of fear. Dhikr has the potential to bring forth positive emotions, such as happiness, calmness, tranquility, and to alleviate anxiety and unrest.

The findings of this study are supported by the research conducted by Terreri & Glenwick (2013), which demonstrates a significant relationship between religious coping and indicators of mental health. Additionally, the results align with the study conducted by (Auzan, 2018), which concludes that dhikr relaxation has a positive effect in reducing stress among patients with kidney failure. This is consistent with the research conducted by (Anwar, 2018), which reveals a positive correlation between dhikr intensity and student happiness. It suggests that a higher intensity of dhikr is associated with higher levels of happiness. The effectiveness of relaxation techniques is further supported by Sari dan Murtini (2015) who employed quantitative analysis to observe a weekly decrease in stress scores among participants undergoing relaxation therapy. These findings are substantiated by observations and interviews conducted during the therapy process and follow-up sessions.

Results of research showed a significant effect of providing spiritual relaxation on reducing the stress of chronic renal failure patients undergoing hemodialysis. The provision of spiritual relaxation is able to maintain psychological health (Anggraieni & Subandi, 2014; Khoirul & Reza, 2008; Suyono et al., 2016). Handoyo (Gamayanti et al., 2018) stress is described as being manifested in the form of various demands. These demands primarily pertain to academic requirements, such as handling different coursework from multiple lecturers, public speaking or class presentations, which may be unfamiliar to students who were not exposed to such activities during their school years. Additionally, the high academic standards further contribute to the stress experienced by students. Therefore, engaging in dhikr relaxation is recommended as a means to effectively reduce the stress they encounter.

CONCLUSIONS

Students who engage in intense dhikr relaxation are likely to experience reduced academic stress. In other words, students who experience academic stress may not be actively engaged in intense dhikr relaxation.

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