

Husnuzan and mental health among undergraduate student

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the relationship between husnuzan (Islamic positive thinking) and mental health among undergraduate students. Husnuzan is defined as a positive mental attitude that directs individuals to maintain a good perception of themselves, others, and life events. This study involved 61 undergraduate students aged 18-24 years, selected randomly as samples. Data were collected using the Mental Health Scale-12 (SKM-12) and the Positive Thinking Measuring Tool for Young Indonesian Muslims, specifically designed to measure mental health and husnuzan levels among Indonesian youth. The analysis results indicate a significant positive relationship between husnuzan levels and mental health, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.641$ ($p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that students with a higher level of husnuzan tend to have better mental health. These findings indicate that developing husnuzan could be an effective intervention in improving university students' mental health.

Keywords:

Husnuzan, mental health, undergraduate students

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Mental health, particularly among university students, has emerged as a critical issue in the field of education. The state of mental health significantly impacts students' academic performance, emotional stability, and overall well-being. University students often face various academic and social pressures throughout their educational journey. To succeed, they are expected to maintain good mental health, demonstrate optimism, actively engage in problem-solving, exhibit strong motivation, and achieve optimal academic performance (Misra & Mckean, 2000).

According to the World Health Organization (2013), mental health is defined as an individual's ability to recognize their potential, cope with daily stressors, work productively, and contribute to their community. Aziz and Zamroni (2020) further explain that mentally healthy individuals experience a sense of well-being, effectively integrate psychological functions, and successfully adapt to their environment, allowing them to remain productive and contribute positively to society. However, in reality, many students experience mental health issues during their studies. Wahyuni & Bariyyah (2019) found that 14.6% of university students suffer from poor mental health. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2018) indicates that the prevalence of depression among Indonesians aged 15 years and older is 6.15%. Furthermore, between 2013 and 2018, the prevalence of emotional mental disorders among individuals aged 15–24 years increased more than in any other age group. University students fall within this age range, making them particularly vulnerable to mental health challenges.

Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2020) suggests that the average undergraduate student is between 18 and 24 years old, a developmental stage categorized as emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2014). Erikson's psychosocial theory (Santrock, 2003) classifies university students within the late adolescent (ages 10–20) and early adulthood (ages 20–30) stages. This phase is characterized by emotional instability, mood fluctuations, increasing responsibilities, and interpersonal conflicts. If individuals fail to effectively manage these challenges, their mental health may deteriorate.

A study conducted by the American College Health Association (ACHA, 2021) revealed a significant increase in the number of undergraduate students reporting mental health problems. Approximately 60% of university students in the United States reported experiencing high levels of anxiety, while nearly 40% had been diagnosed with clinical depression within the past 12 months. These findings are consistent with results from the National College Health Assessment (NCHA, 2021), which found that 30% of undergraduate students reported that their mental health had significantly affected their academic performance. These studies underscore the importance of addressing mental health issues in university students to ensure their academic and personal success.

According to World Health Organization (2022), mental health disorders frequently occur among individuals aged 15 to 24 years. Pedrelli et al. (2015) highlighted that university students commonly experience mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and substance abuse, with anxiety being the most prevalent issue. Additionally, Law No. 18 of 2014 on Mental Health in Indonesia defines mental health as a state in which individuals can develop physically, spiritually, socially, and mentally, enabling them to cope with stress, work productively, and contribute to their communities.

Cognitive processes play a pivotal role in mental health, as they influence an individual's ability to manage happiness and anxiety (Butler & Mathews, 1983). Negative thinking patterns may lead to feelings of hopelessness, which can, in extreme cases, result in suicidal ideation (MacLeod et al., 2005). Alvarez-Saavedra et al. (2007) emphasize that life satisfaction is a key mental health factor, as individuals with stable mental conditions tend to experience greater life fulfillment.

Daradjat (2001) identified two major factors influencing mental health. First, internal factors, including personality, physical condition, psychological development and maturity, religious beliefs, coping skills, life purpose, and cognitive balance. Second, external factors, such as social environment, economic status, political climate, cultural traditions, and other contextual variables.

Gloria & Steinhardt (2016) argue that positive thinking is a crucial skill that enhances mental well-being. Their study found that positive thinking fosters happiness, triggers positive emotions, and directly contributes to improved mental health. Similarly, Peale (1952) suggests that positive thinking is the ability to evaluate life experiences and cultivate optimistic emotions. By transforming negative thoughts into positive and realistic ones, individuals can achieve better mental stability.

Yucel (2014) describes positive thinking as a psychological construct that has a strong connection to mental health. This concept aligns with *husnuzan*, or Islamic positive thinking, which encourages individuals to reframe negative thoughts into positive ones by controlling their mindset, focusing on constructive aspects, and practicing patience, tolerance, and kindness. *Husnuzan* enables individuals to navigate stressful situations more effectively, improving their resilience and problem-solving abilities. Unlike general positive thinking, *husnuzan* extends beyond social interactions to include a transcendental relationship with Allah.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that *husnuzan* plays a vital role in mental health. Rusydi (2012) found a significant correlation between *husnuzan* and mental health, suggesting that individuals who adopt Islamic positive thinking tend to experience greater psychological well-being.

The Quran strongly encourages *husnuzan*. Surah Al-Baqarah (2: 216) states, "*But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you, and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you do not know.*" This verse teaches believers to maintain a positive perspective on Allah's decisions, even in unfavorable circumstances. It aligns with Islamic positive thinking, which encourages individuals to find wisdom and purpose in every life event.

Khan (2011) explains that *husnuzan* in Islam is a way of thinking that is free from complexity, hatred, prejudice, and other negative emotions. In Islamic theology, *husnuzan* is an act of worship, as stated in a hadith narrated by Al-Haakim, which declares that having good assumptions about Allah is a form of devotion (Uyun & Siddik, 2018). Yucel (2015) highlights that Islamic positive thinking differs from modern psychology's concept of positive thinking, as *husnuzan* is deeply intertwined with religious faith and belief in Allah's mercy and wisdom.

Umma (2021) emphasizes that *husnuzan* can serve as a therapy for negative emotions, such as stress. This perspective is supported by Sarinah & Haerani Nur (2023), who found that *husnuzan* fosters positive perspectives, enhances happiness, and reduces negative emotions, thereby preventing stress-related mental health issues.

Without positive thinking, students may struggle with psychological distress, potentially leading to deteriorating mental health. Jackson et al. (2002) assert that a pessimistic outlook increases stress vulnerability and contributes to mental health disorders. Likewise, Brown et al. (1990) found that individuals who hold negative assumptions about themselves and their social environment are more prone to depression and physical illness.

Given these concerns, this study seeks to examine the relationship between mental health and Islamic positive thinking (*husnuzan*) among undergraduate students. The research question is "What is the relationship between mental health and Islamic positive thinking (*husnuzan*) among undergraduate students?"

The study hypothesizes that there is a positive correlation between mental health and *husnuzan*, meaning that students who demonstrate greater Islamic positive thinking are likely to experience better mental health. In this context, *husnuzan* functions as an independent variable that influences students' mental well-being.

METHOD

Participants

This study used non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling technique. Non-probability sampling is a method in which not all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected as samples, while purposive sampling refers to the selection of participants based on specific criteria (Sugiyono, 2013). The research population consisted of undergraduate students, with the following inclusion criteria: currently enrolled in an undergraduate program; identifies as Muslim; aged between 18 and 24 years.

A total of 62 respondents participated in the study. However, one did not meet the criteria as they were not an undergraduate student. Consequently, the final sample size was 61 respondents, consisting of 20 male and 41 female students, all identifying as Muslim and currently pursuing an undergraduate degree.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected using Google Forms, which were disseminated online through social media platforms and direct messaging from June 10, 2024, to June 18, 2024. The questionnaire used in this research had undergone prior validation and reliability testing to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the measurement tools. Before completing the questionnaire, participants were provided with detailed information regarding the study's objectives and were required to give informed consent. To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, respondents' identities were kept anonymous, and only initials or pseudonyms were used when necessary.

Mental Health Scale

This study employed the Mental Health Scale-12 (SKM-12) developed by Aziz & Zamroni (2020) to assess undergraduate students' mental health status. The SKM-12 measures two key dimensions: Psychological distress (e.g., depression, loss of control, and anxiety) and Psychological well-being (e.g., love, positive emotions, and life satisfaction). Each dimension consists of six items, making a total of 12 items in the instrument. The scale follows a Likert-type response format with five options: Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), and Very often (5). For psychological well-being items, higher scores indicate better mental health (favorable

items). Conversely, for psychological distress items, the scoring is reversed (unfavorable items) where higher scores reflect greater distress. The SKM-12 demonstrated high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.824, and item correlations ranging from 0.585 to 0.886.

Husnuzan instrument

To assess Islamic positive thinking (*husnuzan*), this study utilized the Positive Thinking Measuring Tool for Young Indonesian Muslims developed by Na'imah et al. (2023). This instrument evaluates positive thinking behaviors in Indonesian youth, including university students, based on five key dimensions: Critical Thinking, Objective Thinking, Cognitive Control (Controlling Thoughts), *Husnuzan* Toward Allah, and *Husnuzan* Toward Life Events. Originally designed in English, the instrument was translated into Indonesian for this study to ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness. The scale consists of 23 items and has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.702, with item correlations ranging from 0.509 to 0.865. The instrument uses a five-point Likert scale, where respondents rate their agreement with each statement: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5). For favorable items, higher scores indicate stronger Islamic positive thinking (*husnuzan*). In contrast, unfavorable items are reverse-scored to maintain consistency in interpretation.

Data Analysis

This study employed quantitative data analysis using the Pearson correlation method with the Jamovi statistical software.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The final sample consisted of 61 undergraduate students, comprising 20 males and 41 females, all identified as Muslim and enrolled in undergraduate (S1) programs. The age distribution of respondents was as follows: 18 years old (4 participants), 19 years old (12 participants), 20 years old (22 participants), 21 years old (14 participants), 22 years old (5 participants), 23 years old (3 participants), 24 years old (1 participant).

Table 1

Frequencies of Participants in Gender

Gender	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Male	20	32.8%	32.8%
Female	41	67.2%	100.0%

Table 2

Frequency of Participants of Age

Age	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
18	4	6.6%	6.6%
19	12	19.7%	26.2%
20	22	36.1%	62.3%
21	14	23.0%	85.2%
22	5	8.2%	93.4%
23	3	4.9%	98.4%
24	1	1.6%	100.0%

Statistical analysis confirmed that the data were normally distributed and met the assumptions for parametric testing. The normality test results for *husnuzan* (Islamic positive thinking) and mental health yielded a p-value of 0.596. Since $p > 0.05$, the data were considered normally distributed. Additionally, the Q-Q plot analysis indicated that the data followed a linear distribution, aligning closely with the diagonal line. The homogeneity test results for *husnuzan* ($p = 0.051$) and mental health ($p = 0.949$) confirmed that both variables were homogeneous ($p > 0.05$), indicating that variance across the sample was consistent.

Table 3

Statistical test

- Normality test

Test	Statistic	p-value
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.0984	0.596

- Homogeneity of Variances Tests

Variable	Test	F	df1	df2 / p
Mental Health	Levene's	0.00418	1	59 / 0.949
Husnuzan	Levene's	3.95562	1	59 / 0.051

Note. Additional results provided by more tests.

Since the data were normally distributed and homogeneous, the study employed Pearson's correlation analysis to examine the relationship between *husnuzan* and mental health. The Pearson correlation test revealed a significant positive relationship between *husnuzan* and mental health ($r = 0.641$, $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that students with higher Islamic positive thinking (*husnuzan*) levels tend to experience better mental health outcomes.

Table 4

Pearson Correlation Between Positive Thinking (*Husnuzan*) and Mental Health

Variable	Pearson's r	df	p-value
Husnuzan	0.641 ***	59	<.001
Kesehatan Mental	-	-	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The correlation matrix above presents the relationship between *husnuzan* (positive thinking) and mental health. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is reported as 0.641, with a p-value less than 0.001, based on a sample of 59 participants. This result is statistically significant at the 0.001 level, indicating a strong and positive correlation between the two variables.

Further analysis indicated that *husnuzan* accounted for 41% of the variance in mental health, with the remaining 59% influenced by other factors. To explore the relationship between *husnuzan*'s sub-dimensions and mental health, a separate correlation analysis was conducted. The findings indicated that the controlling mind sub-dimension exhibited the strongest positive correlation with mental health ($r = 0.623$, $p < 0.001$). This dimension reflects an individual's ability to regulate thoughts, manage negative thinking, and maintain focus on constructive aspects of life, which plays a crucial role in mental and emotional well-being. The other sub-dimensions of *husnuzan* also showed significant positive correlations with mental health, as follows:

- *Husnuzan* toward Allah ($r = 0.510$, $p < 0.001$). This dimension measures faith in Allah's divine plan and the belief that all occurrences serve a greater purpose.
- *Husnuzan* toward life events ($r = 0.444$, $p < 0.001$). This aspect assesses an individual's ability to perceive positive lessons in every situation, whether favorable or unfavorable.
- Objective thinking ($r = 0.443$, $p < 0.001$). This sub-dimension evaluates the extent to which individuals analyze situations rationally and without emotional bias.
- Critical thinking ($r = 0.318$, $p < 0.05$). This dimension measures individuals' logical reasoning and ability to assess situations analytically.

Tabel 5

Correlation Matrix of Cognitive and Spiritual Variables with Mental Health

Variable	Pearson's r	df	p-value
Critical Thinking	0.318 *	59	0.013
Controlling Mind	0.623 ***	59	<.001
Objective Thinking	0.443 ***	59	<.001
Husnuzan towards Allah	0.510 ***	59	<.001
Husnuzan towards Occurrence	0.444 ***	59	<.001

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

All sub-dimensions of *husnuzan* were significantly related to mental health, underscoring the role of Islamic positive thinking in promoting psychological well-being. These findings emphasize that fostering Islamic positive thinking (*husnuzan*) may serve as a valuable intervention strategy to enhance mental health among university students.

Gender Differences in Mental Health and *Husnuzan*

Since the data were normally distributed and homogeneous, an independent samples t-test was conducted to examine gender differences in mental health and Islamic positive thinking (*husnuzan*) among male and female students. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in both mental health and *husnuzan* scores between male and female students. This

research showed that male students reported higher mental health scores ($M = 48.8$) compared to female students ($M = 46.3$). Similarly, male students exhibited higher *husnuzan* scores ($M = 94.2$) than female students ($M = 91.2$).

Tabel 6

Descriptive Statistics of Mental Health and *Husnuzan* by Gender

- Independent Samples T-Test

Variable	t-statistic	df	p-value
Mental Health	1.25	59	0.215
Husnuzan	1.15	59	0.255

Note. $H_a: \mu$ (Male) $\neq \mu$ (Female)

- Group Descriptives

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	SE
Mental Health	Male	20	48.8	6.87	1.54
Mental Health	Female	41	46.3	7.44	1.16
Husnuzan	Male	20	94.3	12.47	2.79
Husnuzan	Female	41	91.2	8.25	1.29

These findings suggest that male students tend to have better mental health and stronger Islamic positive thinking (*husnuzan*) than their female counterparts. Further research is needed to explore the underlying factors contributing to these gender differences.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the relationship between mental health and Islamic positive thinking (*husnuzan*) among undergraduate students. The findings confirmed the research hypothesis, indicating that *husnuzan* has a significant positive relationship with mental health among university students. These results are consistent with previous studies highlighting the crucial role of *husnuzan* in improving mental health. For instance, Rusydi (2012) found a significant correlation between *husnuzan* and mental well-being, reinforcing the idea that adopting a positive mindset from an Islamic perspective can enhance psychological resilience. Similarly, Kurniawan (2019) reported that students who practice positive thinking exhibit higher levels of optimism, particularly in academic settings. This positive association suggests that fostering Islamic positive thinking (*husnuzan*) may contribute to both academic success and emotional stability.

The acceptance of the research hypothesis aligns with cognitive theory, which posits that an individual's thought patterns significantly influence their emotions and behaviors. *Husnuzan*,

as a form of positive attribution, helps reduce stress and anxiety that often stem from negative thought processes. By practicing *husnuzan*, individuals can develop constructive coping mechanisms to manage mental burdens effectively. The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions proposed by Fredrickson (2009) further supports these findings, suggesting that positive emotions expand an individual's perspective and strengthen psychological resources, ultimately fostering resilience and optimism. Additionally, self-compassion theory by Neff (2011) suggests that having a positive perception of oneself (a key element of *husnuzan*) allows individuals to reduce self-criticism, thereby promoting greater emotional regulation and self-acceptance. Furthermore, positive psychology, as pioneered by Seligman (2002), emphasizes that optimism and happiness—both outcomes of *husnuzan*—are fundamental to overall well-being.

From an interpersonal perspective, *husnuzan* plays a critical role in fostering healthy social relationships by promoting trust and reducing interpersonal conflicts, which contribute to better mental health. Thus, from multiple psychological perspectives, practicing *husnuzan* can serve as a protective factor for mental health.

In Islamic teachings, *husnuzan* (positive thinking) is a highly encouraged virtue that has a strong foundation in the Quran. Surah Al-Hujurat (49:12) warns against negative assumptions, which can lead to sin: *"O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin..."*. This verse aligns with the concept that eliminating negative thoughts can prevent mental distress. Surah At-Tawbah (9:51) encourages faith in divine wisdom, *"Say, 'Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us; He is our protector.' And upon Allah let the believers rely."*

This verse promotes optimism and reliance on Allah, reinforcing that a strong faith-based perspective can alleviate stress and enhance mental well-being. Surah Al-Imran (3:159) highlights the importance of gentleness in social interactions, *"And by the mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And if you had been rude [and] harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you."* This verse emphasizes kindness and positive assumptions in interpersonal relationships, which help reduce conflict and promote emotional stability. Surah Al-Baqarah (2: 286) states, *"Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear..."* This verse supports the idea that every difficulty has a purpose and can be overcome, reinforcing a growth mindset that reduces anxiety and hopelessness.

From an Islamic perspective, *husnuzan* encourages individuals to reframe negative experiences positively, thereby promoting mental resilience. The findings of this study align with this perspective, emphasizing *husnuzan* as an essential element for maintaining psychological well-being.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be considered in future research. Firstly, The study only included 61 participants, which limits the generalizability of the findings. A larger sample size is recommended in future studies to enhance the reliability and validity of the results. Secondly, Lack of Institutional Context. The study did not specify the universities or faculties of the respondents, which could have provided a clearer understanding of contextual influences on mental health and *husnuzan*. Future research should incorporate institutional data to allow for comparisons across different academic environments.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that husnuzan (Islamic positive thinking) and mental health are positively correlated. Students who exhibit higher levels of husnuzan tend to have better mental health, underscoring the importance of fostering positive thinking as a protective factor against psychological distress. These findings suggest that practicing husnuzan can serve as an effective strategy for improving students' psychological well-being. Educators and mental health practitioners should consider integrating Islamic positive thinking approaches into mental health programs for university students. Future research should expand the sample size and diversity while incorporating contextual variables such as university background to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between husnuzan and mental health.

SUGGESTION

This study suggests that future research should involve a larger and more demographically diverse sample, encompassing students from various universities, regions, and academic disciplines. This would enhance the generalizability of the findings and offer a more nuanced understanding of how husnuzan relates to mental health across different student populations. Given its positive correlation with mental health, future research should also examine the effectiveness of structured interventions or psychoeducational programs that promote husnuzan. Experimental or longitudinal designs could assess whether such interventions lead to sustained improvements in mental health outcomes.

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