

## The influence of dhikr quality on the level of academic stress among muslim university students

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**Abstract:** Academic pursuits undertaken by students can result in academic stress. Ramón-Arbués et al. (2020) found that out of 1074 students, 16.9% experienced moderate stress, and 8.4% experienced severe stress. According to Unicef (2024), stress is caused by pressure, feeling overburdened, or inability to handle situations that are universal to every individual. Dhikr/zikr can have a positive influence by reducing students' academic stress. This present study seeks to determine the extent to which dhikr quality influences academic stress. The sample for this study consisted of 102 students from every faculty at Universitas Islam Indonesia. This study used the Academic Stress Scale and the Zikr Quality Scale (ZQS) as questionnaires. The study found a significant effect between the two variables with a p-value of  $<.001$  (p-value  $<0.05$ ). The finding indicated a significant negative correlation between the quality of dhikr and academic stress, in which students with high dhikr quality also had lower academic stress levels. This result is consistent with earlier research, which found that dhikr can reduce academic stress levels in students. It is recommended that students improve the quality of dhikr to regulate academic stress.

### Keywords:

Academic stress,  
quality of dhikr,  
stress

### DOI:

[10.20885/iscip.vol1.art11](https://doi.org/10.20885/iscip.vol1.art11)



Academic stress is the term used to describe stress that people experience in an academic context. Academic stress is a feeling of pressure resulting from the need to demonstrate achievements in an increasingly competitive academic environment (Sandra & Ifdil, 2015). Nanwani (Aryani, 2016) defines academic stress as stress associated with education, particularly in the context of individual learning experiences. Rahmawati (Barseli et al., 2017) identifies academic stress as a state or condition in which students' actual resources and environmental demands do not match, causing them to be increasingly burdened by various pressures and demands. According to Mulya and Indrawati (Tasalim & Cahyani, 2021), academic stress is a physical and emotional pressure felt by students as a result of academic demands from lecturers and parents to achieve satisfactory learning results.

Unicef (2024) states that excessive academic or general stress can negatively impact an individual's emotions, thoughts, interpersonal relationships, and physical health. Every individual responds to stress differently (World Health Organization, 2023). Furthermore, academic stress has several impacts on students, including decreased academic performance (Deng et al., 2022) and higher levels of depression (Deng et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). Goff (B & Hamzah, 2020) asserts that a higher level of academic stress will result in lower academic ability, affecting the achievement index. Furthermore, academic stress can have psychological effects, such as poor sleep quality (Norma et al., 2021).

Academic activities are identical to those of students in higher education. Students must participate in academic activities for four years to obtain a bachelor's degree. However, academic activities can lead to academic stress in students. Ramón-Arbués et al. (2020) identified that out of 1074 students, 16.9% experienced moderate stress, and 8.4% experienced severe stress. Zamroni (2015) found that 70.5% of students had moderate stress levels, while 16.2% had high ones. Another finding by Nurmala et al. (2020) revealed that 96.4% (108 out of 112 students) experienced moderate stress. Furthermore, Sari (2020) showed that out of 70 students, 38.75% experienced moderate stress, and 28.57% experienced severe stress.

Academic stress is influenced by several factors, such as self-confidence, drive to achieve, optimism, and social support (Yusuf & Yusuf, 2020). In addition, religiosity factors can also affect academic stress (Amalia & Nashori, 2021; Bataineh, 2013). One of the practices of religiosity in Islam is dhikr. Dhikr itself comes from the word ذَكَرَ - يَذْكُرُ - ذِكْرًا, which means remembering, mentioning, and remembering. In the context of Islamic teachings, dhikr is remembering and reciting the name of Allah Swt. According to Imam Al-Ghazali, dhikr is a serious effort to focus one's thoughts, ideas, and attention towards Allah and the hereafter.

Dhikr is a form of worship that brings oneself closer to Allah Swt (Latif, 2022). Dhikr is also defined as the behavior of mentioning and remembering Allah Swt, which positively impacts individuals (Latif, 2022). According to Shihab (Latif, 2022), dhikr makes the heart peaceful, the soul becomes alive, and life is always shaded by happiness. Remembering Allah through the practice of dhikr will bring peace to the heart because you feel the presence of God within you. There is also dhikr by saying and remembering, which is stated in Surah al-Ahzab verse 41, meaning, *"O you who believe, recite (by mentioning the name) Allah, dhikr as many as possible."*

According to Latif (2022), dhikr is an urgent type of worship in Islamic teachings. This is because dhikr is a way for individuals to get closer to Allah Swt. Psychologically, remembering Allah through the practice of dhikr in the realm of consciousness will develop an appreciation of the presence of Allah, who is Most Gracious and Most Merciful. Someone who always remembers

Allah will not feel alone in this world; he feels that he has Allah, the All-Hearing Being, who listens to complaints that may not be expressed to anyone.

According to research by Seyedfatemi et al. (2007), techniques to reduce stress in nursing students in Iran include social support, maintaining friendships or finding new friends, humor strategies, and spiritual strategies such as dhikr and prayer. Research conducted by Al-Kasih and Munawaroh (2023) showed the effect of dhikr on the stress levels of final-year students. Students who diligently do dhikr have lower stress levels and better mental health. Thus, from this study, dhikr can be used as a medium for mental health therapy for final-year students who have high-stress levels caused by pressure in completing final assignments. According to Mutmainah et al. (2024), this dhikr practice has significant potential to reduce students' stress levels at Universitas Lambung Mangkurat. The result of this study stated that more than half of the respondents agreed that dhikr can reduce stress levels and provide a calmer feeling to the respondents.

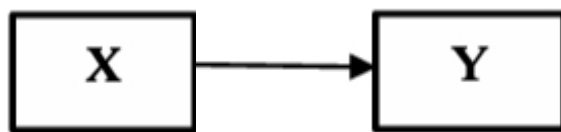
There are differences between this study and previous studies. Sucinindyasputeri (2017) study was conducted using a *quasi-experimental method* consisting of a control group, an experimental group, and a measuring instrument in the form of a *depression scale, anxiety, and stress scale*. This study uses a quantitative correlational method using a measuring instrument: a *Zikr quality scale* (ZQS) and an academic stress scale. This study aims to determine how much influence the quality of dhikr has on academic stress. This study hypothesizes that the dhikr variable significantly and negatively affects academic stress. The higher the level of dhikr, the lower the level of academic stress.

## METHODS

### *Research Design*

This study uses a quantitative research design with a correlational design to determine the relationship between the quality of dhikr and academic stress in students of Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII). The data collection method uses a *non-probability sampling technique* in the form of *purposive sampling*. Researchers took samples through questionnaires distributed with *Google form links* via *WhatsApp groups*. and other social media, such as Instagram, to reach the population. Then, the population that meets the research characteristics can fill out the questionnaire.

The research design can be described as follows:



Information:

X: Quality of Dhikr

Y: Academic Stress

### *Research Participants*

Participants in this study were Muslim students registered as students of Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII). Sampling was carried out using the purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling is sampling based on certain characteristics that have been determined by the

researcher (Azwar, 2010). The sample criteria in this study were active students of Universitas Islam Indonesia, Muslim, male and female aged 18 to 25g. The sample was based on certain characteristics that were determined by the researcher (Azwar, 2010). The sample criteria in this study were active students of Universitas Islam Indonesia, Muslim, male and female aged 18 to 25 years, and willing to be respondents. The sampling taken from the population in this study amounted to 102 people.

#### *Research Instruments*

The data collection technique in this study was carried out using a questionnaire that presents questions relevant to the research topic and question items that have been adapted using a one-way translation process to ensure that each respondent can understand the items without changing the structure or content of the questions. There are two types of scales used in the study, namely the *Zikr Quality Scale (ZQS)*, the ZQS scale compiled by Rusdi (2018) to measure the quality of dhikr, and the Academic Stress Scale compiled by Wulandari and Rachmawati (2014) which aims to measure stress levels.

*Zikr Quality Scale (ZQS)* was once used to measure the quality of dhikr of university students. This scale consists of 11 *favorable items* based on *quantity, connectivity, duration, and solemnity*. The scoring of the ZQS scale is based on the *Likert scale method*, starting from number 1 (very often) to number 7 (never), and some items use numbers 1 (very inappropriate) to number 7 (very appropriate) with an *alpha reliability coefficient* of 0.826. This scale does not have *unfavorable items*, so *unfavorable items* are 0, and *favorable items* total 11.

The Academic Stress Scale was compiled by Wulandari and Rachmawati (2014) based on aspects of academic stress from Sarafino and Smith (2012). Academic stress is divided into biological and psychosocial aspects (including cognitive, emotional, and social-behavioral). This scale also consists of 31 *favorable items* and has 4 alternative answers, namely Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS). The answer scores in *favorable items* are as follows: SS = 4, S = 3, TS = 2, STS = 1. The score on this scale is 40, and the maximum score is 160. Based on the results of Spearman's Rho correlation test analysis, the correlation coefficient value ( $r$ ) = -0.083 with a significance value of 0.399 ( $p > 0.05$ ) is obtained. The trial results found that the academic stress scale had a validity score that ranged between 0.311 and 0.732, with a *Cronbach's alpha internal consistency* of the scale of 0.933.

#### *Research Procedures*

In order for this research to be able to answer the research objectives validly, the research was conducted through several stages as follows.

First, finding Research Problems. This study starts from the general problem that academic activities can cause stress in students. Based on previous studies, such as those conducted by Nurmala et al. (2020); Ramón-Arbués et al. (2020); Zamroni (2015), the level of academic stress in students was found to be relatively high. For example, Ramón-Arbués' study found that 8.4% experienced severe stress. Another study by Zamroni (2015) found that 16.2% of students had high stress levels. Furthermore, Sari (2020) found that out of 70 students, 28.57% of students experienced severe stress. Given the importance of maintaining students' mental health, this study aims to investigate the effect of the quality of dhikr on the level of academic stress in Muslim students at Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII).

Second, compiling a Proposal. A research proposal includes the background of the problem, objectives, and benefits of the research, as well as a review of relevant literature. The

proposal also provides research methodology using quantitative methods, sample selection, measuring instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

Third, preparing Participants and Measuring Instruments. The research participants were 102 UII students from various faculties selected through *non-probability sampling techniques*. To measure the quality of dhikr, *the Zikr Quality Scale (ZQS)* was used, while the level of academic stress was measured by *the Academic Stress Scale (ASS)*. Both of these measuring instruments have been tested for validity and reliability.

Fourth, conducting Data Collection: *Online/Offline*. Data collection was conducted online on June 23-27. The questionnaire was distributed via *Google Forms*, whose *link* was shared via *WhatsApp*, Instagram, Twitter, and other online platforms. Respondents who participated in this study will receive a reward of Rp150,000. The *online approach* was chosen to reach more respondents and facilitate efficient data collection.

Fifth, data Analysis. The collected data were analyzed using a regression test. A regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of the quality of dhikr on the level of academic stress. Hypothesis testing is seen at  $p\text{-value} < .001$  because the  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$  indicates a significant impact and has a negative direction.

Sixth, report Preparation. The research report is prepared systematically and includes an introduction, methodology, results, and discussion. The research results show a significant negative correlation between the quality of dhikr and academic stress, which are described in depth and accompanied by an interpretation of the results and practical implications for students. This report also includes suggestions for further research and practical applications of the research findings.

Seventh, dissemination. The research results were presented at *The 4th International Student Conference on Islamic Psychology (ISCIP) 2024*. The presentation includes the background of the problem, methodology, analysis results, and research conclusions. Interactive discussions with conference participants are expected to provide constructive input and broaden insights regarding the practical application of dhikr in reducing academic stress in students.

#### *Analysis Techniques*

This study used regression analysis to test whether there is an influence between the independent and dependent variables. Before conducting a regression test, normality and linearity assumption tests should be conducted. The normality and linearity assumption test is very important in regression analysis to ensure that the data meets the requirements. Data analysis using the Jamovi application version 2.3.28.

## **RESULTS**

### **Assumption Testing**

To see the normality test, look at the *skewness value*, which meets the requirements  $-2 < x < 2$ . The results of the data analysis show the *skewness value residual* is -0.703; the ZQS *skewness value* is 0.130, the *academic stress skewness value* is -0.665, the value is in the range  $-2 < x < 2$ , so the data can be said to be normal and the *kurtosis value* that meets the requirements is  $-7 < x < 7$ . The data results show that the *residual kurtosis value* is 1.38, the ZQS *kurtosis value* is -0.187, the *academic stress kurtosis value* is 0.917, and the value is in the range  $-7 < x < 7$ , so

the data can be said to be normal. For the linearity test, the graph results show a shadow line following the direction of the line movement, so it is concluded that the data obtained is linear.

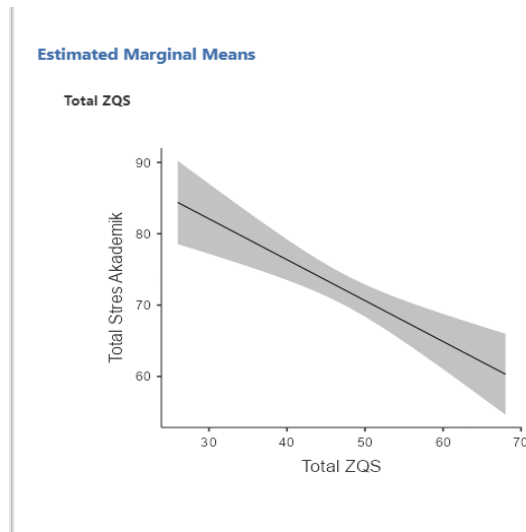
**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics and Normality Tests for Dhikr Quality, Academic Stress, and Residuals*

	Residuals	Total ZQS	Total Stres Akademik
N	101	101	102
Mean	-2.19e-16	47.3	72.1
Standard deviation	10.8	8.47	11.8
Minimum	-41.5	26	32
Maximum	23.1	68	97
Skewness	-0.722	0.135	-0.665
Std. error skewness	0.240	0.240	0.239
Kurtosis	1.39	-0.212	0.917
Std. error kurtosis	0.476	0.476	0.474
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.971	0.988	0.971
Shapiro-Wilk p	0.024	0.478	0.022

**Figure 1**

*Estimated Marginal Means: Relationship Between Dhikr Quality (ZQS) and Academic Stress*



### Hypothesis Testing

In linear regression analysis, the data results in *the coefficient model* show a p-value < .001. Because the p-value < 0.05, there is a significant correlation between the two variables with *a standard estimate of* -0.410. The negative direction indicates that the higher the level of dhikr, the lower the level of academic stress. The *fit measures model* shows an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.168, where the ZQS variable can explain 16.8% of the score variation in academic stress.



**Figure 2**

*Linear Regression Analysis of Dhikr Quality (ZQS) and Academic Stress*

## Linear Regression

Model Fit Measures		
Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>
1	0.410	0.168

Model Coefficients - Total Stres Akademik					
Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	Stand. Estimate
Intercept	99.302	6.169	16.10	< .001	
Total ZQS	-0.573	0.128	-4.47	< .001	-0.410

## DISCUSSION

This study examines the effect of dhikr quality on academic stress levels in Muslim students. The results indicate that the *standard estimate model coefficients* have a negative direction, so students with high dhikr quality have low academic stress levels. Conversely, students who have low dhikr quality show high academic stress.

This finding aligns with previous opinions and studies that state that the practice of dhikr can reduce academic stress levels in students. The findings in this study follow Surah Ar-Ra'd verse 28, which reads: "(namely) those who believe and whose hearts are at peace with the remembrance of Allah. Remember, only by remembering Allah do hearts become at peace." Some of the supported research results are from Al-Kasih and Munawaroh (2023); Mutmainah et al. (2024); Sucinindyasputeri (2017). Their studies show that students who diligently remember dhikr have low-stress levels and good mental health. Nadiaskara et al. (2022) also found that dhikr can reduce levels of depression, anxiety, and stress in students.

The explanation that can be given to explain these findings is as follows. This peace of mind provides relaxation to Muslims so that when facing stress, they do not feel overwhelmed by the pressures of life, including academic pressure. Dhikr makes a Muslim remember the greatness of Allah so that he/she views the problems he/she faces as more diminutive than he/she initially thought. Dhikr also helps Muslims remain optimistic about Allah's help, which will come so they can overcome all the pressures they face. In addition, according to Faridz (2018), intense dhikr behavior can also increase happiness in individuals.

From the measurement of the ZQS scale in this study, the ZQS scale contains items related to the frequency of dhikr, building connectivity with Allah, absorbing the meaning of the dhikr sentence, remembering Allah in every action, and feeling connected to Allah. From the results of these measurements, students with a high level of dhikr have low academic stress. The more

students increase the frequency of dhikr, genuinely absorb the meaning of the dhikr sentence, always remember Allah in every action, and always try to be solemn when dhikr, the more peace it will provide students. This is reinforced by the view of Shihab (Latif, 2022) that dhikr, mentioning and remembering the promises and greatness of Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala makes the heart calm, the soul becomes alive, and life is always covered by happiness. This study also shows that dhikr significantly reduces academic stress, where the direction of the influence is negative; namely, the higher the level of dhikr, the lower the level of academic stress.

This study has several differences compared to previous studies. The previous study used experiments with control and experimental groups and used *depression, anxiety, and stress scales*. The update in this study is the use of *the Zikr Quality Scale (ZQS)*, which is valid and reliable and provides a comprehensive understanding of the quality of dhikr. In addition, this study uses a quantitative design with an objective correlational approach and *purposive sampling technique* that allows researchers to select more specific and relevant samples. However, this study has several limitations. The sample used is relatively small (102 students), which limits the generalization of the research results to a broader population and is less representative of the sample per faculty. In addition, this study did not consider other factors that might influence academic stress, such as social support and academic burden.

## CONCLUSION

From the results of the research that has been carried out, the two variables, namely the quality of dhikr, significantly influence academic stress. In addition, the *standard estimate* shows a score of -0.410. Hence, ZQS influences 41% on academic stress and has a negative direction where the higher the level of dhikr, the lower the level of academic stress. With the evidence of a significant influence between the quality of dhikr and academic stress, researchers emphasize the importance of dhikr in daily life in supporting students' mental health.

## SUGESSTION

Based on conclusions of this research, the study recommends the importance of educational institutions, particularly at the university level, should consider incorporating dhikr or mindfulness-based spiritual practices into student support programs. This could be done through regular guided sessions, workshops, or integrating dhikr practices into counseling services. By promoting and facilitating high-quality dhikr among students, institutions can proactively contribute to reducing academic stress and enhancing overall student mental well-being

For further research, it is recommended to use a larger sample and consider additional factors that may influence academic stress. Longitudinal research is also recommended to see changes in academic stress and the quality of dhikr over time. With these improvements, this study can significantly contribute to Islamic Psychology and academic stress.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to Dwi Yan Nugraha, a master's student of psychology UGM majoring in psychometrics and a master's student of profession UII majoring in clinical psychology, for their invaluable technical support and expertise during the research process. Thanks also to fellow



researchers who have accompanied this research process from beginning to end. Lastly, thanks to the respondents willing to take the time and thought to complete this research questionnaire.

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