

## Ṣalāh and stress management among muslim students

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**Abstract:** Mental health concerns have become increasingly widespread across society, with university students representing a particularly vulnerable demographic. A notable rise in suicide cases has been linked to individuals' difficulties in coping with stress and depressive symptoms. This study examines the association between adherence to the five daily ṣalāh (ṣalāh) and stress management among Muslim university students. Participants included 55 students (22 men and 33 women) enrolled in an Islamic Psychology course at an Indonesian Islamic university. Correlation analyses, conducted using Jamovi for Windows, revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between ṣalāh regularity and stress management ( $r = 0.421$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Regression analysis further indicated that ṣalāh regularity was a significant predictor of improved stress management ( $F = 11.4$ ,  $t = 3.38$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.177$ ). These findings suggest that maintaining consistent engagement in ṣalāh may enhance psychological resilience, enabling Muslim students to navigate life challenges with greater emotional and cognitive stability. The study underscores the potential role of structured religious practices in mitigating stress and recommends further investigation into culturally grounded coping mechanisms.

**Keywords:**

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Mental health problems are increasingly common in all levels of society, including college students. An increasing number of suicide cases have been reported, mainly due to the inability of individuals to manage stress and depression. Idham et al. (2019) reported that 36 out of 62 student participants had high suicide ideation and suicide attempts, one of which was influenced by age. Suicidal ideation is also experienced by students due to frequent stress in life, high academic demands, long study hours, and other emotional challenges that interfere with their mental health (Khosravi & Kasaeiyan, 2020). This shows the weak stress management abilities experienced by students.

Based on the results of previous studies, it is known that study pressure and the many assignments faced during lectures are causes of stress in students (Iqbal & Pratama, 2020). Poor time management, delaying assignments, tight lecture schedules, many and piling up assignments, exams that clash with other activities, and social interaction problems are also reported to be causes of stress for students Rafid and Rahmadani (2023). The results of the study by Suhada and Fajrin (2021) added that various obstacles faced by final year students in working on their theses such as lack of experience in writing scientific papers, difficulty finding themes, titles, references, measuring tools, repeated revision processes, and limited research time are causes of stress for students.

Stress is a person's response to dangerous events and situations (Santrock, 2000). Stress in an academic context is a negative emotional experience accompanied by physiological, cognitive, and behavioral changes that are felt to be burdensome or even exceed the resources available to academics. Academic stress includes emotional experiences such as frustration, conflict, pressure, change, self-coercion, and reactions to pressure in the form of physiological, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral reactions (Pragholapati et al., 2021). Student stress management is the ability of students to manage themselves when under pressure and difficulty in facing a dangerous situation. When managed properly, stress not only has a negative impact, but to a certain extent it can also have a positive impact and motivate students to achieve a goal (Rafid & Rahmadani, 2023).

There are several ways to manage stress that are emphasized in this context through religious practices, especially prayer in the Islamic tradition. Prayer is seen as an important pillar in the pillars of Islam that not only reminds believers of God, but can also help manage stress and feelings of danger. The results of studies have shown that prayer can bring significant benefits such as helping individuals reappraise stressful events positively and calming the mind and body. People who pray have positive expectations about stress because they can reappraise stressful events in a positive way. Prayer can help individuals recover from stress by calming the body and soul. Prayer can also relieve anxiety and distress and bring a sense of peace. Prayer is a form of meditation that stimulates relaxation (Iqbal & Pratama, 2020).

Prayer is not only a religious obligation but also an effective coping strategy in improving the mental and physical health of individuals. Through dependence on the Creator, the practice of prayer in Islam encourages the prevention and healing of various psychological disorders, from neurosis to more serious depression. This reinforces the view that prayer is not just a religious ritual, but also a powerful spiritual means to face life's challenges, including stress in the academic and social environment of students. So by maintaining the regularity of prayer, of course, stress management in Muslim students is better. Maintaining the regularity of the five daily ṣalāh can help manage the stress experienced by Muslim students. The five daily ṣalāh have 6 therapeutic aspects, namely

exercise, meditation, auto-suggestion, muscle relaxation, relaxation of sensory awareness, and catharsis. These aspects can be therapy to manage stress experienced by Muslim students (Hayati, 2020). However, the regularity of performing the five daily ṣalāh has not yet received attention mainly for some Muslim students. To be consistent with the regular five-time ṣalāh, sometimes students are not able to do it. Previous studies have found that the regularity of performing ṣalāh is significantly negatively related to stress in students (Suhada & Fajrin, 2021). Descriptive analysis of the meaning and wisdom of prayer has also been reported to play a role in the stress levels of Muslim students (Iqbal & Pratama, 2020) and the ability to manage students' stress (Rafid & Rahmadani, 2023). Until now, there has been no quantitative correlational research that specifically examines the relationship and role between the regularity of performing the five-time ṣalāh and the ability to manage stress in Muslim students.

Based on the explanation that has been described, this study was conducted with the aim of determining the relationship and role of the regularity of performing the five daily ṣalāh on the ability of stress management in Muslim students. This study hypothesizes that regularly performing the five daily ṣalāh will be related to and play a positive role in stress management in Muslim students. The more regular the five daily ṣalāh are, the more the ability to manage stress in Muslim students will increase. Conversely, the more irregular the ṣalāh are five times, then the ability to manage stress in Muslim students will decrease. The regularity of performing the five daily ṣalāh will also be a positive predictor of stress management abilities in Muslim students.

## METHOD

This study was conducted using a quantitative approach with a correlation method. Participants who were willing to be involved in this study were 55 Muslim students (22 males and 33 females) who were taking Islamic Psychology courses at an Islamic college in Indonesia.

The measuring instruments used in this study were the five-time prayer regularity scale and the stress management scale. The five-time prayer regularity scale was compiled by modifying the five-time prayer regularity scale compiled by Ikhwanisifa (2008), consisting of ten favorable items that measure five aspects of prayer, namely Subuh, Dhuhur, Ashar, Maghrib, and Isha ṣalāh. Each aspect is represented by two items with answer choices ranging from 0 = Never to 4 = Always. The higher the score, the higher the regularity of performing the five-time ṣalāh, and vice versa. Modifications were made by focusing on items on regularity in performing ṣalāh and performing ṣalāh at the beginning of the time, not on the appreciation and meaning of the five-time ṣalāh. Examples of items include "I perform Subuh ṣalāh" and "I perform the Subuh prayer at the beginning of the time". The scale of the regularity of the five daily ṣalāh has a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.93.

The stress management scale was developed by modifying the Indonesian adaptation of the Student-Life Stress Inventory compiled by Praghlapati et al. (2021), consisting of nine favorable items that measure students' stress management. Modifications were made by focusing on two aspects, namely students' ability to manage frustration and students' cognitive assessment in stressful situations. Alternative answer choices range from 1 = Almost Never to 5 = Almost Always. The higher the score, the higher the stress management,

and vice versa. Examples of items include "I am able to overcome frustration due to delays in achieving goals" and "I have thought about and analyzed whether the strategy I am using is the most effective". This stress management scale has a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.87.

Data collection was carried out using a Google Form which was distributed via the WhatsApp group class. The data collection was in the form of a questionnaire scale divided into 5 parts, namely part 1 in the form of informed consent, part 2 in the form of participant demographic data, part 3 in the form of a prayer regularity scale, part 4 in the form of a stress management scale, and part 5 closing. Data analysis was carried out using the Jammovi application for windows (The Jamovi Project, 2022).

## RESULTS

The results of data analysis show that the average regularity of prayer and stress management of participants are in the high category. Table 1 shows the descriptive data of the research participants.

**Table 1**  
*Descriptive Data*

	Gender	Stress management	Ṣalāh	Fajr	Dhuhr	Ashr	Maghrib	Isha
N	Men	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
	Women	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Mean	Men	3.82	2.86	2.68	2.84	2.73	3.14	2.91
	Women	3.73	3.25	3.14	3.20	3.15	3.52	3.23
Median	Men	3.78	2.90	2.50	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
	Women	3.67	3.40	3.50	3.50	3.00	4.00	3.50
Standard deviation	Men	0.68	0.77	0.87	0.84	0.88	0.77	0.96
	Women	0.59	0.67	0.85	0.70	0.67	0.66	0.71
Minimum	Men	2.33	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Women	2.78	1.60	1.00	1.50	1.50	2.00	1.50
Maximum	Men	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
	Women	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

The normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov showed a statistical score = 0.11,  $p = 0.51$ , meaning that the research data was normally distributed. Correlation analysis with Pearson showed  $r = 0.421^{***}$ ,  $p\text{-value} < .001$ , one-tailed. Thus, it is known that the first hypothesis of the study that the regularity of performing the five daily ṣalāh will be positively related to stress management in Muslim students is accepted. The more regular Muslim students perform the five daily ṣalāh, the more their ability to manage stress increases.

Conversely, the more irregular the five daily ṣalāh, the more the ability to manage stress in Muslim students decreases. Regression analysis as seen in tables 2 and 3 shows that the regularity of the five daily ṣalāh is able to be a positive predictor for stress management in Muslim students ( $F = 11.4$ ,  $t = 3.38$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.177$ ).

**Table 2**  
*Model Fit Measures*

Overall Model Test							
Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	df1	df2	p
1	0.421	0.177	0.162	11.4	1	53	0.001

**Table 3**  
*Model Coefficients - Stress management*

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	2.654	0.338	.86	.001
ṣalāh	0.360	0.106	.38	.001

The analysis of each aspect of prayer regularity as shown in Table 4 shows that the regularity of Fajr prayer only, or Dhuhr, Ashr, Maghrib, or Isha only does not predict the stress management abilities of Muslim students.

**Tabel 4**

*Model Coefficients - Stress management*

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	2.318	0.379	6.113	< .001
Fajr	-0.205	0.156	-1.312	0.196
Dhuhr	0.281	0.283	0.992	0.326
Ashr	0.115	0.266	0.432	0.668
Maghrib	0.418	0.223	1.875	0.067
Isha	-0.178	0.203	-0.877	0.385

## DISCUSSION

Allah Swt created humans with the aim of worshiping Him. God too give tests, problems, and stress in life as a measure of human faith. These problems often cause disturbances to mental health, which ultimately have an impact on physical health and worsen their impact on social interactions (Ansori et al., 2019). A Muslim student needs good stress management skills to be able to overcome tests and problems . Stress management can be done in various ways, one of which is by maintaining the regularity of the five daily ṣalāh. Prayer is a Muslim worship that begins with takbiratul ihram and ends with greetings, which should be carried out regularly , solemnly, sincerely (Rifa'i, 2013) . Prayer is a pillar of religion and has a great influence on human life. Prayer that is carried out solemnly and correctly can strengthen the soul, heart, mind, and human body as a whole (Bahnasi, 2007). In one day Allah Swt commands his servants to perform obligatory ṣalāh five times a day, namely Fajr, Dhuhr, Ashr, Maghrib, and Isha. The five daily ṣalāh that are carried out properly and regularly can provide positive energy to humans. If applied to Muslim students, they can overcome various problems, tests, and stress.

Based on the results of the study, it is known that almost all Muslim student participants who maintain the regularity of their five daily ṣalāh have good stress management skills. Likewise, Muslim students who do not maintain the regularity of their ṣalāh have poor stress management skills. Muslim students can feel spiritual energy through prayer that makes them not feel alone and isolated and helps them feel closer to Allah SWT. In addition to providing a calming reaction to life's challenges, prayer can give someone a sense of effectiveness in dealing with these challenges. In addition, prayer can help someone take constructive action and develop a sense of personal responsibility for their activities. Prayer can provide constant strength for believers and foster resilience and self-control. Muslim students who regularly perform the five daily ṣalāh can feel a sense of calm and satisfaction that comes from spiritual energy.

The results of this study confirm the results Suhada and Fajrin (2021) research on nursing students who are working on their thesis found a relationship between the regularity of prayer and the level of stress experienced by the students. The study explains that students who have good prayer regularity have low stress levels. The results of the study strengthen empirical support from previous studies, including by Iqbal and Pratama, (2020); Rafid and Rahmadani (2023) regarding the influence of regularity in performing ṣalāh on stress levels and stress management abilities in Muslim students.

This study has limitations, including the relatively limited and homogeneous number of research participants, namely Muslim students at one particular higher education institution. This limits the generalization of the findings to a wider population, including Muslim students from different cultural, geographic, and institutional backgrounds.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that the regularity of performing the five daily ṣalāh was significantly positively related to stress management in Muslim students. The more regular Muslim students perform the five daily ṣalāh, the more their ability to manage stress increases. Conversely, the more irregular the five daily ṣalāh, the more the ability to manage stress in Muslim students decreases. The regularity of performing the five daily ṣalāh can be a positive predictor of stress management in Muslim students.

The practice of prayer among Muslim students serves not only as a spiritual ritual but also as a vital psychological resource. Regular performance of ṣalāh fosters a deepened sense of connection with Allah Swt, contributing to emotional stability, enhanced self-regulation, and resilience in confronting life's challenges. Moreover, prayer encourages constructive behavior and a heightened sense of personal accountability, ultimately supporting overall well-being and spiritual fulfillment.

## SUGGESTION

This study emphasizes the importance of maintaining the regularity of the five daily ṣalāh for Muslim students as an effective way to manage stress. Prayer is not only a religious obligation, but also a coping strategy that can provide peace of mind, heart, and soul. Muslim students are advised to be consistent in performing the five daily ṣalāh in order to better face life's challenges.

Further research is suggested to expand the study population to various educational institutions and different geographical areas so as to enrich the perspective and strengthen the relevance of the research results. Other aspects that are also worth exploring are the dimensions of spirituality and the quality of prayer implementation, and their relationship to the psychological dynamics of Muslim students in dealing with academic and social pressures.

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