

Husnudzon and academic stress among university students

Lulu Zarif Febrianti¹

Izahsiva Musti²

Zahwa Az Zahra³

Afifah Syahirah Simatupang⁴

Hariz Enggar Wijaya^{5*}

^{1,2,3,4,5}*Department of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Islam Indonesia, Yogyakarta*

*Corresponding author: 093200102@uii.ac.id

Abstract: Academic stress is prevalent among university students. Research has well documented the relationship between religiosity and academic stress. However, an empirical study that explores a subsequent aspect of religiosity, such as husnudzon, has received less attention. This study aims to investigate the relationship between husnudzon and academic stress among university students. A total number of 99 students from a private university in Jogjakarta participated in this study. They were undergraduate students aged 19-25 years (M= 21.4 years), consisting of 72 female and 27 male students. Data were obtained using the Husnudzon Scale and the Academic Stress Scale. Bivariate analysis showed that husnudzon and academic stress correlate significantly, where students with higher levels of husnudzon tend to experience lower levels of academic stress. Finding highlights the pivotal role of husnudzon as a psychological-spiritual strength in protecting students against academic stress.

Keywords:

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Learning is undoubtedly crucial for students' careers and development. However, many students experienced stress from various demands and pressures throughout their academic life. A recent systematic review indicated that 46.6% university students reported experiencing high academic stress (Hadi et al., 2025). In Greece, students with severe stress were 21.3% (Kavvadas et al., 2023). The prevalence of psychological distress among students is higher in medical or health science programs, at around 85 % (Al-Shahrani et al., 2023).

The prevalence of global academic stress was also confirmed in Indonesian university students. A recent study reported 64.5% undergraduate students at the University of Medan Area experienced moderate to high levels of academic stress (Yulina et al., 2025). Higher than that, around 86.7% student at the University of Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang reported having a moderate to high level of academic stress (Zamroni, 2015)

Academic stress arises from academic demands. It refers to a psychological state that arises when academic demands exceed a student's capacity to effectively cope. A recent study shows that the primary source of stress is excessive homework demands, pressure from assessments, and challenges in balancing academic responsibilities with personal life (Pérez-Jorge et al., 2025). Several studies reported that it has multiple impacts on university students. A study conducted in Kuwait reported that among undergraduate students, academic stress adversely impacts physical activity level, dietary behavior, and sleep quality (AlHamlan et al., 2025). Córdova Olivera et al., (2023) reported high academic stress among undergraduate students is associated with mental health problems. The negative impact on mental well-being was mediated by students' perceived stress (Slimmen et al., 2022). Academic stress also affects student learning performance, such as a low GPA (Frazier et al., 2019). Another study explained that the effect of academic stress on academic performance was mediated by a higher level of students' depression (Deng et al., 2022).

Students experiencing stress can be identified across multiple domains of functioning. This stress manifests in four main aspects: cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and physiological aspects (Attia et al., 2022). The cognitive domain is reflected in intrusive or distressing thoughts, impaired concentration, and reduced memory capacity. The emotional domain encompasses negative emotional states, including heightened anxiety, sadness, irritability, and difficulties in emotion regulation. The behavioral domain involves observable changes in actions or habits, such as social withdrawal in individuals who were previously socially engaged, insomnia, excessive sleeping, or smoking. Finally, the physiological domain includes somatic symptoms such as headaches, migraines, chronic fatigue, and back pain, representing the body's response to sustained psychological strain.

There are many factors that affect academic stress. Among them, religiosity is well-documented as being associated with academic stress (Cholili et al., 2024; Hamka et al., 2025; Novandri & Uyun, 2025; Sujadi, 2023). In the Islamic perspective, religion is not confined to a global construct; it is a source of various virtues that are beneficial to be cultivated. One of the Islamic grounded virtues is *husnudzon*. It is an act of worship that encourages individuals to maintain positive interpretations of all events and circumstances they encounter (Rusdi, 2012). From an Islamic perspective, *husnudzon* denotes cultivating a favorable attitude toward oneself, others, and God, constituting a core ethical principle.

Cultivating *husnudzon* is posited to enable students in responding to academic demands with greater composure, thereby mitigating levels of academic stress. Previous findings have shown that positive thinking correlates with academic stress (Al-Lafi & Juma, 2025; Chui & Chan, 2020; M. Suud & Na'imah, 2023). Even though positive thinking and *husnudzon* share a similar construct, they are not identical. An empirical study supports this argument, showing that both constructs correlate positively but share only a limited proportion of variance (Rusdi & Damri, 2024).

Husnudzon is a part of the worship dimension in religiosity, which represents a positive interpretation of events in life (Uyun & Siddik, 2018). It suggests that *husnudzon* is not confined to spiritual value, but also has a positive impact on student well-being. This Islamic-based cognitive orientation has a significant effect on mental health and the quality of social relationships (Rusydi, 2012). It is also beneficial in facilitating greater acceptance of difficult realities, which helps lower anxiety levels (Fairuzzahra et al., 2018).

According to Pargament et al. (1998) religion may serve as a coping mechanism when individual face stressful life. Among positive religious coping forms, there is a benevolent religious appraisal, which helps individuals perceive stressful experiences through a trusting belief in God's will. In this regard, *husnudzon* more likely to work and align with.

Research on how religiosity affects stress has been well documented. However, exploring a more specific religious construct, such as *husnudzon*, is still under-researched. By examining the association of *husnudzon* and academic stress among undergraduate students, we expect to gain a deeper understanding of how specific religious beliefs and practices can reduce student stress

METHOD

Participants

Participants in this study are undergraduate students in Indonesia, recruited with a convenience sample. We use an online survey to collect data. Participation is open to university students, Muslims, and those willing to complete the questionnaires. The total number of participants enrolled in this study is 99 undergraduate students. They are between 19 and 25 years ($M = 21.4$), with a dominantly female (72.7%) group.

Measurements

Two questionnaires were used in this study. First, to measure husnudzon, we employed the husnudzon scale developed by Rusdi (2012). The scale assesses two aspects: positive assumptions toward Allah and toward others, with 24 items total. Cronbach's alpha of the scale is 0.86. Second, to assess academic stress among students, we use the learning stress scale developed by Solikhah and Prawita (2024). The instrument has two aspects: physiological and psychosocial aspects, with 24 items. Overall internal consistency reliability is 0.856.

Data analysis

Bivariate analysis was employed to examine the correlation between variables. We perform a normality test to check the data distribution before continuing to the correlation test. As the data is normally distributed, we assign a Pearson analysis. All analyses were computed with JAMOV statistical software.

RESULT

Descriptive data showed that the mean score of the husnudzon scale is 90.5 and 52.3 for academic stress. Based on Table 1 below, participants reported relatively high levels of husnudzon ($M = 90.5$, $SD = 12.7$) and moderate levels of academic stress ($M = 52.3$, $SD = 13.2$).

Table 1

Descriptive data

Statistic	Husnudzon	Academic Stress
N (Sample Size)	99	99
Mean	90.5	52.3
Median	89.0	54.0
Standard Deviation	12.7	13.2
Minimum	61.0	29.0
Maximum	110	77.0

Table 2 illustrates the distribution of participants across the levels of husnudzon and academic stress. Most participants reported moderate levels of husnudzon (63.6%) and academic stress (57.6%). Meanwhile, 19.2% demonstrated high levels of husnudzon and 20.2% reported high levels of academic stress. Low levels of husnudzon and academic stress were detected in 17.2% and 22.2% participants, respectively.

Table 2

Frequency distribution of Husnudzon and Academic Stress Levels

Category	Husnudzon n (%)	Academic Stress n (%)
Low	17 (17.2)	22 (22.2)
Moderate	63 (63.6)	57 (57.6)
High	19 (19.2)	20 (20.2)
Total	99 (100)	99 (100)

Before conducting bivariate analysis, we assessed the normality of the data distribution using the Shapiro-Wilk. Based on Table 3, the analysis showed that both variables meet the normal distribution assumption ($p > .05$).

Table 3

Normality test

Variable	W	p
Academic Stress	.977	.081
Husnudzon	.975	.057

Since the data were normally distributed, we performed Pearson correlation analysis to examine the correlation between husnudzon and academic stress among students. Table 4 demonstrated that the correlation is negatively significant ($r = .697$, $p < .001$). It means the higher levels of husnudzon, the lower levels of academic stress, and the correlation magnitude is strong.

Table 4

Correlation between husnudzon and academic stress

Variable	Statistics	Academic Stress	Husnudzon
Academic Stress	Pearson	—	
	p-value	—	
Husnudzon	Pearson	-.697	—
	p-value	< .001	—

Based on gender analysis (see table 5), t-test analysis showed that there is a significant difference between males and females on both variables. Male participants reported higher levels of husnudzon than females ($t = 3.91$, $p < .001$), and female participants demonstrated higher levels of academic stress than males ($t = -4.81$, $p < .001$).

Table 5

Husnudzon and Academic Stress based on gender comparison

Variable	Male M (SD)	Female M (SD)	t	p
Husnudzon	98.0 (11.5)	87.7 (11.9)	3.91	< .001
Academic Stress	43.0 (11.9)	55.8 (12.0)	-4.81	< .001

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between husnudzon and academic stress among university students. Consistent with our predictions, we found that husnudzon negatively correlates with students' stress. The magnitude of the correlation is strong, suggesting that husnudzon is not merely a peripheral factor but may be a substantial protective factor against academic stress.

The findings of this study corroborate previous studies, which indicate that husnudzon can reduce stress levels and psychological pressure (Syahdiantary et al., 2025). This result is also in line with previous studies demonstrating that higher levels of religiosity are associated with lower levels of academic stress among students (Amalia & Nashori, 2021; Osman & Ahmed, 2021; Radisti et al., 2023; Siadari & Rosito, 2023; Sujadi, 2023). While religiosity encompasses a broad range of constructs such as beliefs, practices, and experiences, husnudzon represents a more specific religious construct characterized by positive assumptions toward God, others, and life circumstances. Therefore, the present findings move beyond the broad conceptualization of religiosity.

However, the result is in contrast with earlier findings that reported a non-significant relationship between these variables (Nurhasanah & Hawadi, 2022; Rizdanti & Akbar, 2022). One possible explanation for the discrepancy lies in the measurement approach. In Nurhasanah and Hawadi's study (2022), they use the Student-life Stress Inventory (SSI), differ with this present study. It may have captured a distinct aspect of students' stress experience. Similar to that, Rizdanti and Akbar's study (2022) assesses religiosity and academic stress. Consequently, it may have observed a more global measure of multidimensionality of human religious belief and experience. While husnudzon, reflects specifically on positive appraisal grounded in Islamic teaching as a proximal cognitive resource.

Another explanation may relate to the sample characteristic. In Nurhasanah and Hawadi's study (2022), participants were undergraduate students and, at the same time, living in the Islamic boarding school (pesantren). This may contribute to the different result since the exposure to Islamic teaching in the Islamic boarding school was more intensive. It may exhibit more homogeneous levels of husnudzon, thereby reducing variability and weakening the relationship between the variables. Furthermore, different educational environments and stressors may affect how husnudzon relates to student stress experience.

The mechanism of how husnudzon affects academic stress could be understood from Lazarus's Transactional Theory of Stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Accordingly, stress does not emerge automatically or directly as a consequence of a stressor condition, but it occurs depending on how the individual cognitively reappraises the situation and finds a coping strategy. In this context, higher levels of husnudzon students are more likely to evaluate academic challenges as manageable and meaningful rather than threatening. Such positive appraisal may reduce the perceived discrepancy between academic demands and available coping resources, which in turn lowers students' stress. This interpretation is in line with recent evidence underlining the central role of the appraisal process in determining stress responses (Obbarius et al., 2021; Spătaru et al., 2024).

Furthermore, based on Pargament's religious coping model, the influence of husnudzon in reducing academic stress could be explained. According to Pargament et al. (1998), religion is one alternative resource to cope with stressful situations, which has two forms: positive religious coping and negative religious coping. Husnudzon appears conceptually aligned with positive religious coping, particularly benevolent religious appraisal. It is characterized by trust in God's wisdom, positive expectation regarding future outcomes, and the tendency to perceive difficulties as meaningful. This is consistent with the meta-analysis conducted by Ano and Vasconcelles (2005), positive religious coping is associated with better psychological adjustment and lower psychological distress. Therefore, students with higher levels of husnudzon are more likely to perceive academic challenge as spiritually meaningful and manageable, thereby reducing their academic stress.

The findings of the present study should be interpreted in the light of several limitations. First, the sample size was relatively modest and consisted predominantly of female undergraduate students. This limitation may restrict the generalization of the findings to a broader student population. Also, the imbalanced proportion between male and female students may not adequately capture gender-related variations in the relationship between husnudzon and academic stress. Future research should employ a larger sample and be more demographically balanced to strengthen the robustness and external validity of the results. Second, the correlational nature of the study limits its interpretation regarding causality. The associations between husnudzon and academic stress restrict the conclusion whether husnudzon reduces academic stress, whether lower stress facilitates husnudzon, or both variables are determined by other unmeasured factors. Experimental and longitudinal studies are therefore needed to address these limitations in the future.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrated that husnudzon is significantly and negatively associated with academic stress among undergraduate students. Findings suggest that husnudzon could be a positive religious resource for university students coping with academic stress. From a theoretical perspective, this implies extending the literature on religious coping and psychological strength by highlighting the role of an Islamic-based cognitive orientation in student well-being. In practice, these findings underscore the urgency to promote student well-being by incorporating positive religious practice and belief in the university. Future research should employ experimental and longitudinal studies to clarify the

causal mechanism underlying the relationship between husnudzon and academic stress among students.

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