

Dhikr Intensity and Emotion Regulation among Muslim Students

Rahmita Niswah Mumtaz¹

Saima Anisa²

Triyani Febriyanti³

Fuad Nashori^{4*}

^{1,2,3,4}*Psychology Study Program, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Islam
Indonesia, Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

Corresponding author: fuadnashori@uii.ac.id

Abstract: This study examines the relationship between the intensity of dhikr and emotion regulation among Muslim students in Indonesia. This present study is driven by the understanding that university students frequently encounter academic and social stressors that necessitate effective emotional coping strategies. Employing a quantitative correlational design, the study sampled 100 Muslim students aged 18–25 through a purposive sampling technique. Data were elicited using the Dhikr Intensity Scale and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ). Statistical analysis demonstrated a significant positive correlation between the intensity of dhikr and emotion regulation ($r = .244$; $p = .014$), suggesting that increased religious practice is associated with improved emotion regulation. The findings indicate that dhikr serves as an effective religious coping mechanism, assisting students in regulating their emotions positively.

Keywords:

Dhikr intensity,
emotion regulation,
islamic psychology,
muslim students,
religious coping.

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University students, as individuals pursuing higher education, are consistently confronted with rigorous academic demands, primarily displayed through a sustained volume of coursework and assignments. On the other hand, university students frequently exhibit a proactive drive toward self-actualization and potential-seeking. This proactive pursuit of potential often manifests in high levels of extracurricular engagement, leading to the adoption of various roles in life. These multiple roles can inadvertently lead to role conflicts that result in negative emotions such as anger, guilt, disappointment, anxiety, and sadness. Corroborating this, observe that students who are involved in multiple roles in life often face role conflicts, which can cause a variety of emotions, including negative emotions. In such complex environments, the ability to manage emotions becomes a major factor in controlling and adjusting feelings to match personal expectations. The ability is defined as emotion regulation.

Empirical studies in Indonesia provide varying perspectives on the current state of student emotion regulation. indicated that among their participants, 29.1% (30 out of 103 students) fell into the "high" category and 12.6% (13 out of 103 students) into the "very high" category of emotion regulation. Conversely, found that 31 students (3.69%) exhibited high levels of regulation, while 76 students (9.04%) were in the moderate category.

Emotion regulation is an individual's ability to assess, deal with, control, and express their emotions honestly in order to achieve emotional stability. Emotion regulation is a strategy that a person uses to regulate and manage their emotional responses, whether conscious or unconscious, with the aim of increasing or reducing the emotional responses that arise. Effective regulation typically results in positive behavioral responses, whereas a lack of these skills can lead to negative behaviors. Consequently, identifying effective coping mechanisms is essential for mitigating the impact of low emotion regulation skills.

One significant coping mechanism is the practice of dhikr. define dhikr as a form of worship to Allah SWT which is done by mentioning and glorifying His name. This activity allows a person to focus their attention, get away from burdensome thoughts or problems, thus creating a state of inner tranquility. Through contemplation in dhikr, individuals can reduce negative emotions and direct them towards more positive emotional attitudes. Furthermore, emphasize that dhikr provides substantial psychological benefits by alleviating stress, anxiety, and depression. By reciting the names of Allah, dhikr can help individuals shift their focus from emotional pressures to more positive things, providing peace of mind and reducing anxiety. The Qur'an shows that peace of mind can be achieved through dhikr, which helps individuals face life with more calmness and spiritual awareness. This is in accordance with the words of Allah SWT in the Qur'an, Surah Ar-Ra'd, verse 28.

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

Meaning: "(That is) those who believe and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah. Remember, it is only in the remembrance of Allah that hearts find peace."

posit that positive emotions arising from religious experiences, such as the practice of dhikr, play a role in reducing the psychological burden of daily activities. Thus, individuals who are accustomed to dhikr tend to face their busy lives with greater emotional stability, thereby potentially reducing stress levels and maintaining optimal mental health.

Based on the theoretical framework, the present study seeks to address the following question: Is there a significant relationship between the intensity of dhikr and emotion regulation among Muslim students? The objective is to determine this relationship, with the hypothesis that a positive correlation exists between the intensity of dhikr and emotion regulation.

METHODS

This study utilized a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between the intensity of dhikr (independent variable) and emotion regulation (dependent variable). The research participants consisted of Muslim undergraduate students currently enrolled in various universities across Indonesia. The characteristics of participants for this study were defined as follows: (1) identifying as Muslim, (2) being between 18 and 25 years of age, and (3) currently pursuing an undergraduate degree. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which is the selection of participants based on certain predetermined criteria, namely, Muslim students who have experience or have practiced dhikr. A total of 100 participants were recruited to provide sufficient data and reduce the possibility of sampling errors. The demographic distribution of the sample, including age and gender, is detailed in the table below.

Table 1

Participants' demographic data (N=100)

Demographic Data	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Female	72	72
Male	28	28
Age		
18	16	16
19	14	14
20	31	31
21	8	8
22	20	20
23	9	9
24	1	1
25	1	1

Note. N = 100

The instrument used to measure the dependent variable is the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), which was first developed by James J. Gross and Oliver P. John in 2003. This scale has been adapted into Indonesian by . The ERQ measures two main aspects of emotion regulation: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. The assessment was conducted using a Likert scale with a range of 1 to 7, consisting of: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neutral, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, and 7 = strongly agree. Psychometric evaluation of the adapted scale yielded item-total correlation coefficients between .42 and .68, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .82, confirming that the instrument possesses adequate validity and reliability.

The independent variable was measured using the Dhikr Intensity Scale, originally developed by and further adapted by . This 36-item instrument is designed to quantify the intensity of a person's practice by examining three core dimensions: verbal dhikr, tadabbur, and tafakkur. The scale utilizes a 4-point frequency response format. For favorable items, scoring ranges from 4 (Always) to 1 (Never). Conversely, for unfavorable items, the scoring is reversed, ranging from 1 (Always) to 4 (Never). The scale demonstrated high internal reliability, with an alpha coefficient of .936.

RESULT

Data Description

Table 2

Description of Research Variable Data

	Dhikr Intensity	Emotion Regulation
N	100	100
Missing	0	0
Mean	110	54.3
Standard deviation	11.3	7.30
Minimum	84	33
Maximum	134	67
Skewness	0.0526	-0.540
Std. error skewness	0.241	0.241
Kurtosis	-0.474	-0.455
Std. error kurtosis	0.478	0.478

Note. $N = 100$

The descriptive statistics for both variables are summarized in Table 2 above. To provide a clearer understanding of the participants' profiles, both dhikr intensity and emotion regulation were classified into three categories: low, moderate, and high. The frequency distribution and categorization for each variable are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Categorization of Dhikr Intensity Variable Data

Category	%
Low	0%
Moderate	47%
High	53%

Based on the table above, it shows that out of 100 Muslim student participants in Indonesia, 53% have a high level of dhikr intensity, 47% have a moderate level, and 0% have a low level.

Table 4

Categorization of Emotion Regulation Variable Data

Category	%
Low	0%
Moderate	34%
High	66%

Based on Table 4, out of 100 Muslim students surveyed, 66% were categorized as high, 34% as moderate, and 0% as low.

Assumption Testing

The normality test in this study used the Shapiro-Wilk, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, and Anderson-Darling methods. It can be seen that data is considered normal if the significance value is $> .05$.

Table 5

Normality Testing

	Statistic	p
Shapiro-Wilk	.957	.002
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	.105	.224
Anderson-Darling	1.48	<.001

The normality of the data distribution was measured using three statistical tests. The Shapiro-Wilk test yielded a significance value of $p = .002$, while the Anderson-Darling test produced a value of $p < .001$. Both results fall below the .05 threshold, indicating a departure from a normal distribution. In contrast, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded a $p = .224$, which meets the requirements for normality. These results show that the data is not normally distributed.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is part of inferential statistics that aims to assess the validity of an assumption or statement based on statistical data analysis, so that a decision can be made regarding the acceptance or rejection of the statement. In this study, the hypothesis test used Spearman's rank correlation since the normality test results showed that the data were not normally distributed. According to, if the normality assumption is not met or the data used are not on an interval or ratio scale, then an alternative approach that can be used is a nonparametric correlation technique, such as Spearman's or Kendall's correlation.

Table 6
Hypothesis Testing

		Dhikr Intensity	Emotion Regulation
Dhikr Intensity	Spearman's rho	-	
	df	-	
	p-value	-	
Emotion Regulation	Spearman's rho	.244*	-
	df	98	-
	p-value	.014	-

Based on the data in Table 6, the correlation coefficient (r) value obtained was .244 with a significance value $p = .014$. Since the p is less than the .05 threshold, it is concluded that a significant positive relationship exists between the intensity of dhikr and emotion regulation. The positive direction of this relationship indicates that an increase in the intensity of dhikr is associated with enhanced emotion regulation abilities. Although the correlation coefficient of .244 suggests a modest relationship, the statistical significance remains clear. Thus, the hypothesis formulated in this study is accepted.

DISCUSSION

This study aims to determine the relationship between dhikr intensity and emotion regulation among Muslim students in Indonesia. Based on the results of statistical analysis, it is known that there is a positive and significant relationship between dhikr intensity and emotion regulation. This means that the higher the intensity of dhikr, the higher the level of emotion regulation in a person.

These findings align with the research of , which suggests that dhikr plays an important role in improving emotion regulation. Dhikr triggers a relaxation response and activates positive neural pathways that foster a sense of calm and inner satisfaction. Similarly, demonstrated the influence of dhikr on emotion regulation within a sample of Yasin reciters. The current results also resonate with prior studies identifying the impact of dhikr on inner peace and self-control .

According to , factors such as age, gender, personality, and religiosity significantly influence emotion regulation. Religiosity is one of the factors that influence emotion regulation. This is because in every religion, people are taught to control their emotions, including in Islam. A person's religiosity can be reflected in many things, for example, in the practice of dhikr, which Islam teaches is a form of worship that brings peace and tranquillity to the human soul.

states that emotions are dynamic because they involve changes in feelings that affect thought patterns and behavior. Individuals who experience excessive emotions usually find it difficult to think positively and are less aware of their actions. However, with good emotion regulation, individuals can control negative feelings more optimally. In line with this, argue that adequate emotion regulation allows individuals to be more accepting and appreciative of themselves. This ability also plays a role in helping individuals control their emotions, so that their behavior tends to be positive, especially when facing stressful situations or problems.

Within an Islamic framework, dhikr is a primary method for regulating emotions. The practice of remembering Allah is intended to be constant, regardless of time or circumstance. By doing dhikr continuously, the heart will feel calmer. The more often you get closer to Allah SWT through dhikr, the closer you are to Him and the more inner peace you will feel . Dhikr offers diverse psychological benefits, including the fostering of a calm heart and the support of positive emotional control .

For Muslim students, spiritual belief provides a foundation for inner peace through prayer and worship. Dhikr functions not only as a spiritual obligation but also as a practical form of mental therapy easily integrated into daily life. The current findings indicate that students with high dhikr intensity possess more stable emotion regulation, allowing them to navigate the complexities of academic life with better balance. This is supported by the descriptive data, which shows that 66% of the sample exhibited high emotion regulation and 53% maintained high dhikr intensity. These results reinforce the conclusion that frequent dhikr serves as an effective coping mechanism to mitigate negative emotions.

Despite these insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the sample was limited to 100 students, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to the broader Muslim student population in Indonesia. Future research should aim for a larger sample size, ideally exceeding 200 participants. Second, the gender distribution within the sample was imbalanced. It is recommended that future studies should strive for a more representative ratio (e.g., 50:50 or 60:40) to better accommodate gender-based variations.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study demonstrate a significant positive relationship between the intensity of dhikr and emotion regulation among Muslim students. The findings confirm that as the intensity of dhikr increases, there is a corresponding elevation in an individual's capacity for emotion regulation. As a fundamental practice within the Islamic tradition, dhikr functions effectively as a religious coping mechanism that facilitates emotion regulation. Good emotion regulation helps guide a person to behave appropriately in any given situation and reduces the occurrence of undesirable behaviour resulting from negative emotions.

SUGGESTION

The suggestion proposed in this study is that Muslim students should consider integrating dhikr into their daily routines as a consistent practice to help calm their minds and control their emotions. Beyond individual practice, it is recommended that future researchers expand upon this study by conducting more comprehensive investigations with larger, more diverse samples to ensure that the results are robust and widely applicable. To further deepen the academic understanding of this phenomenon, future studies should consider employing different methodologies and incorporating mediating or moderating variables.

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