Article

Emotional stress among students in Islamic institutions: An Islamic perspective

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ABSTRACT

Emotional stress is a significant issue among university students, impacting their mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. While conventional psychological interventions exist, Islamic students often experience additional challenges, including balancing religious and educational expectations, financial constraints, and social pressures. This study explores the causes of emotional stress among students in Islamic institutions and examines how Islamic teachings and psychological strategies can be integrated into effective stress management approaches. Through a qualitative analysis of scholarly sources, this paper highlights key Islamic coping mechanisms, such as *ṣabr* (patience), *tawakkul* (trust in Allah), and *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), alongside modern psychological techniques like cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness, and emotional regulation. The findings suggest that a combined Islamic-psychological approach can offer a more holistic and culturally relevant solution to managing student stress. Additionally, this paper emphasizes the importance of institutional support, advocating for Islamic universities to integrate faith-based mental health programs and reduce stigma surrounding mental health in Muslim communities. By bridging Islamic spirituality with modern psychology, this study contributes to the growing discourse on faith-based mental health interventions and offers practical recommendations for educators, policymakers, and mental health practitioners.

Keywords: *Islamic Psychology, Faith-based mental health, Emotional Distress, Islamic Student Life, Stress Management.*

INTRODUCTION

Emotional stress among university students, especially in Malaysia, has become an increasingly pressing issue, attracting serious attention from educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals. The transition to university life presents significant challenges, requiring students to adapt to new environments, academic expectations, and social dynamics. This period of change often triggers emotional distress, negatively impacting students' mental health and overall well-

being. Several key factors contribute to this phenomenon, including academic workload, financial difficulties, and personal issues (Nurhidayah Norazlan et. al, 2020). Research suggests that academic pressures are the most significant contributor to student stress, followed closely by financial struggles and personal challenges. As the demands of university life continue to intensify, addressing these stressors becomes increasingly critical.

Students in Islamic institutions are not exempt from experiencing stress similar to those in other universities (Abdul Rahim & Nurul Husna, 2015). Islamic educational institutions often associated with high academic and spiritual discipline, presenting unique challenges to students. In addition to the general academic pressures faced by university students, those in Islamic institutions must balance academic demands with religious studies, adding another layer of potential stress. A study conducted in an Islamic boarding school in Tangerang, Indonesia, identified that the majority of stressors stemmed from non-academic sources, including interpersonal relationships, environmental factors, and health-related concerns (Maroof Ahmed et al., 2023). Interestingly, despite a substantial female representation in the sample, a significant proportion of students employed problem-based coping strategies to address these stressors.

A deeper understanding of the factors contributing to emotional stress is essential in formulating effective coping mechanisms and support strategies. Qualitative studies have identified various sources of academic stress, including the transition from high school to university, time constraints, overwhelming coursework, intense academic competition, and high expectations from family, lecturers, and peers (Nordin & Abd Rahman, 2023). Additionally, financial burdens such as tuition fees, living expenses, and part-time work commitments add another layer of stress for many students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. Personal issues, including social relationships, family conflicts, and feelings of isolation, further exacerbate emotional distress. Understanding these root causes allows universities, mental health professionals, and society to develop tailored interventions that provide students with the necessary support and resources to manage their stress effectively.

From an Islamic perspective, addressing emotional stress among students goes beyond psychological well-being—it is also a matter of spiritual and moral development. Islam acknowledges the reality of emotional struggles and offers guidance on managing stress through patience (*ṣabr*), trust in Allah (*tawakkul*), and engaging in acts of worship such as prayer, Quran recitation, and seeking support from the community. A study analyzing the relationship between stress levels and spiritual well-being among female students in Islamic boarding schools in Surabaya found that nearly all respondents (85.0%) reported considerable stress, and most reported a low level of spiritual well-being (50.9%). The study concluded that students' spiritual well-being is negatively impacted by their stress levels, suggesting that enhancing spiritual practices could serve as a coping mechanism to mitigate stress (Khamida, et. al, 2024).

The consequences of failing to address emotional stress among university students can be severe, affecting both their mental health and academic performance. Persistent stress that is left unmanaged can lead to a range of mental health issues, including anxiety disorders, depression, and emotional exhaustion (Nazneen Ismail et al., 2024). This psychological distress can, in turn, result in declining academic performance, difficulty concentrating, and loss of motivation. In more severe cases, students may engage in high-risk behaviors such as substance abuse, self-harm, or even suicidal ideation. The long-term impact of chronic stress can extend beyond university life, affecting students' future careers, relationships, and overall quality of life. Given these risks, early intervention and continuous support are crucial in ensuring students' psychological well-being and academic success.

Universities play a pivotal role in providing the necessary support systems to help students cope with emotional stress. Counseling services, peer support networks, and faculty

mentorship programs have been identified as effective strategies fostering students' emotional resilience and overall well-being (Nordin & Abd Rahman, 2023). Moreover, incorporating mental health awareness campaigns and stress management workshops into university programs can help equip students with practical tools to navigate academic and personal challenges. Universities should also promote a culture of openness and destigmatization surrounding mental health issues, encouraging students to seek help when needed without fear of judgment. In Islamic educational settings, integrating spiritual activities such as daily Quran recitation before classes and promoting religious programs can enhance students' spiritual well-being, serving as a buffer against stress (Dwi Utari & Achir Yani, 2021).

University students in Malaysia experience significant levels of emotional stress, with studies indicating that 26% report varying degrees of stress, 33% suffer from depression, and 61% experience anxiety (Priscilla & Palaniammal, 2022). These mental health challenges can adversely affect academic performance and overall well-being. While conventional psychological interventions exist, there is a growing interest in integrating culturally and religiously sensitive approaches to better address these issues. Notably, Islamic-based therapeutic methods, such as logotherapy, have shown promise in reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress among university students (Fereydouni & Forstmeier, 2022). However, there remains a gap in research specifically focusing on the combined application of Islamic and psychological strategies for managing emotional stress among university students in Malaysia.

In conclusion, emotional stress among university students is a multifaceted issue that requires proactive intervention. By understanding the underlying causes of stress and implementing effective support systems, universities can help students develop resilience and coping skills necessary for academic and personal success. Addressing this issue not only benefits students individually but also contributes to a healthier and more productive society as a whole. In Islamic institutions, integrating faith-based approaches with modern psychological strategies can provide students with a holistic framework to manage stress effectively while maintaining their spiritual and academic commitments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional stress is a significant concern among university students, including those in Islamic institutions. While university life offers opportunities for intellectual and spiritual growth, it also introduces various stressors that can negatively impact students' well-being. The combined pressures of academic workload, financial struggles, social expectations, and personal challenges contribute to heightened stress levels. While students in conventional universities face similar difficulties, those in Islamic institutions often experience additional pressures, particularly in balancing religious and secular studies. Furthermore, a societal misconception persists that Islamic students, due to their faith, are naturally more resilient to stress, which discourages many from seeking psychological support. However, just as all humans experience stress in their daily lives, Islamic university students are no exception. The notion that faith alone prevents stress is misleading—Islam does not deny human emotions but instead provides guidance on managing them through patience (*ṣabr*), reliance on Allah (*tawakkul*), and seeking knowledge and support.

In modern times, the pressures faced by university students have intensified. The fast-paced nature of education, competitive academic environments, and the constant pressure to achieve success have significantly contributed to student anxiety. A study at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) highlighted that excessive academic workloads, including intense exam preparation and continuous assignments, significantly contribute to students' stress levels (Ahmad Fuad et al., 2024). This is further exacerbated in Islamic institutions, where students must simultaneously manage secular academic requirements and religious studies, such as the memorization of religious texts, mastery of Arabic, and adherence to strict moral and disciplinary codes. Research by Abdul Rahim & Nurul Husna (2015) found that students in Islamic university

in Malaysia, USIM (Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia) experience similar, if not greater, levels of academic stress compared to those in conventional universities, dispelling the notion that religious students inherently face less pressure. However, the challenge for many students today is not merely meeting both scholarly and religious expectations but also navigating the complexities of modern life—managing their social lives, career aspirations, and adapting to technological advancements while remaining steadfast in their faith.

Financial difficulties further amplify stress among students in Islamic institutions. Many come from families with limited financial resources, making it challenging to afford tuition fees, accommodation, and daily expenses. The necessity of seeking part-time employment while maintaining academic performance adds another layer of stress. A study by Nurhidayah Norazlan, Sarina Yusuf, and Fatima Hamoud (2020) found that financial insecurity among university students forces many to take on jobs, leading to exhaustion and decreased academic focus. This issue is particularly challenging for Islamic students, as job opportunities aligning with their religious values may be scarce, increasing the difficulty of managing their financial burdens.

In addition to academic and financial stress, social and psychological pressures also weigh heavily on students in Islamic institutions. Family and community expectations play a significant role in shaping their experiences, as students are often pressured to maintain high academic performance while upholding Islamic values. The fear of failing to meet these expectations can lead to anxiety, self-doubt, and withdrawal from social interactions. Moreover, there is a widespread misconception that strong religious faith should shield students from stress and mental health struggles. This stigma discourages students from acknowledging their emotional distress or seeking professional help, exacerbating untreated psychological issues (Fariza Sham, 2005).

Unhealthy coping mechanisms have also been observed among university students experiencing significant stress. A study on psychology students at Universitas Negeri Padang found that academic stress often leads to emotional eating as a coping strategy, further complicating students' health and well-being (Prasetya & Hidayati, 2024). Similarly, students in Islamic institutions may develop avoidance behaviors, such as excessive sleep, disengagement from academic and religious activities, or complete withdrawal from social interactions. A study by Mohamed Swadiq (2025) found that final-year students experience significantly higher stress levels than first-year students due to career uncertainties and the looming transition into professional life.

Despite these challenges, research has demonstrated that incorporating Islamic principles into stress management can significantly benefit students' mental health. Spiritually sensitive logotherapy, an Islamic-based counseling approach, has proven effective in reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress among university students in Iran (Fereydouni & Forstmeier, 2022). This method integrates Islamic concepts such as *ṣabr* (patience), *tawakkul* (trust in Allah), and *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) as coping mechanisms, reinforcing the importance of faith in overcoming challenges. By combining psychological interventions with religious teachings, students can develop a balanced and holistic approach to managing stress.

In other regions such as Africa, university students face a unique set of stressors that significantly affect their well-being and academic performance. A study among South African medical students identified several key stressors, including the academic curriculum, workload issues, personal problems, communication and language difficulties, and financial challenges (Naidoo et al., 2014). These stress factors not only hinder students' academic progress but also contribute to a range of emotional and physical symptoms, impacting overall student health. Additionally, research by Van Heerden Pieterse (2015) suggests that factors outside the

university context, such as socio-economic conditions and family pressures, can also impede students' well-being, further exacerbating stress levels.

Moreover, a qualitative study by Henry Mason (2017) explored the coping strategies used by first-year students in managing academic-related stressors. Data were collected through a non-probability and purposive sample of 225 first-year students at a South African university, who were asked to write naïve sketches. The findings revealed six categories of stressors: financial, spiritual, physical, emotional, mental, and institutional. These stressors not only affect students' academic performance but also have a lasting impact on their mental and emotional health, highlighting the need for tailored support systems to address these diverse challenges.

Addressing emotional stress among university students requires an integrative approach that blends modern psychological support with Islamic teachings. Understanding the root causes of stress, dismantling the stigma surrounding mental health in Muslim communities, and implementing faith-based mental health interventions are essential steps toward improving students' well-being. Islamic institutions should prioritize the development of faith-integrated counseling services, mental health awareness programs, and a supportive academic environment that encourages students to seek help without fear of judgment.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative research method based on the review of previous studies. It focuses on understanding emotional stress among students in Islamic educational institutions by examining existing research, academic articles, and literature related to the topic. The research does not involve collecting new data but instead analyzes information from past studies that discuss stress, mental health, and Islamic approaches to emotional well-being. It looks at how Islamic values such as *ṣabr* (patience), *tawakkul* (trust in God), and *dhikr* (remembrance of God) are used to cope with emotional challenges. By using this qualitative approach, the study aims to provide deeper insights into how students in Islamic institutions deal with stress through both spiritual and psychological support, based on what has already been researched and published.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Islam acknowledges that emotional stress is a natural part of human life and provides comprehensive guidance on managing it. Rather than viewing stress as solely a psychological or physiological issue, Islam integrates it into a holistic framework that includes faith (*īmān*), patience (*ṣabr*), reliance on Allah (*tawakkul*), and seeking support from the community. While modern psychological theories focus on cognitive and behavioral coping mechanisms, the Islamic tradition emphasizes a spiritual-psychological approach that aligns with religious teachings and practices (Batrisyia Hidayah, et. al, 2024). Engaging in spiritual and physical practices in Islam can help effectively manage stress and improve overall physical, emotional, and spiritual health (Batrisyia Hidayah, et. al, 2024).

The Concept of Emotional Trials in Islam

Stress is often framed within Islamic teachings as a test from Allah (*ibtilāʾ*), intended to strengthen a believer's faith and resilience. The Quran states:

> *"And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to the patient."*
> (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:155).

This verse highlights that emotional distress is an inevitable aspect of life, but perseverance (*ṣabr*) and trust in Allah (*tawakkul*) are key to overcoming difficulties. Research by Fereydouni &

Forstmeier (2022) found that spiritually sensitive logotherapy an Islamic adaptation of Viktor Frankl's logotherapy significantly reduced symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress among Muslim university students by incorporating faith-based existential meaning into therapy.

Islam offers various religious practices that serve as effective mechanisms for emotional regulation. Prayer (ṣalāh), dhikr (remembrance of Allah), and recitation of the Quran are strongly encouraged as a means of calming the mind and seeking spiritual support. A study at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) found that religious engagement was a significant factor in reducing stress among students, particularly during high-pressure periods like examinations (Ahmad Fuad et al., 2024). Another study by Abdul Rahim & Nurul Husna (2015) emphasized that Islamic university students rely on these spiritual practices to manage stress, especially when facing the dual challenge of academic and religious expectations.

One of the fundamental teachings in Islam regarding stress is *tawakkul*, or complete reliance on Allah while making personal efforts. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) encouraged a balanced approach: taking practical steps while maintaining faith in divine wisdom. This aligns with modern psychological theories of stress management, which emphasize both action-oriented problem-solving and cognitive reframing. A study by Fariza Sham (2005) highlights that students who internalize *tawakkul* exhibit higher emotional resilience, as they perceive stressors as temporary trials rather than insurmountable obstacles.

Despite Islam's holistic approach to emotional well-being, a stigma still exists within some Muslim communities regarding mental health issues. Many students hesitate to seek professional help due to the misconception that faith alone should prevent stress. However, Islam encourages seeking knowledge and assistance when needed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *"For every disease, there is a cure"* (Sahih Muslim, 2204), which includes psychological distress. Studies by Zartashia Javaid et al. (2024) have shown that integrating Islamic counseling with psychological therapy significantly improves mental health outcomes among Muslim students.

While Islam provides a strong spiritual foundation for managing stress, it does not negate the importance of psychological interventions. A study at Universitas Negeri Padang found that students who combined religious coping mechanisms with modern stress management techniques, such as cognitive restructuring (the process of changing negative thought patterns) and emotional regulation (the ability to manage emotional responses), reported lower levels of anxiety and depression (Prasetya & Hidayati, 2024). This highlights the effectiveness of a dual approach, where faith-based resilience (the ability to bounce back from stress through faith and spiritual practices) is complemented by evidence-based psychological strategies.

The Islamic perspective on emotional stress emphasizes a holistic balance between spiritual, psychological, and practical coping mechanisms. Stress is acknowledged as a natural and inevitable challenge, but through ṣabr, *tawakkul*, and *dhikr*, students can cultivate inner strength. Additionally, Islamic institutions should encourage open discussions on mental health and integrate faith-based mental health support alongside professional counseling services. By combining Islamic teachings with psychological best practices, students can develop a comprehensive and sustainable approach to managing emotional stress.

Main Sources of Emotional Stress

Students in Islamic institutions face stressors similar to those in secular universities, including academic workload, financial strain, and social expectations. However, they also experience additional pressures, such as balancing religious and secular studies and navigating community expectations regarding their behavior and performance. A study by Maroof Ahmed et al. (2023) highlights those students in Islamic boarding schools face stress from non-academic sources,

including social relationships and environmental challenges, making emotional stress a multifaceted issue. Additionally, mental health stigma within Muslim communities discourages students from seeking psychological support. Many students fear being perceived as having weak faith if they admit to stress or anxiety as mentioned in the study by Sawsan A. & Ahlam Al-Natour (2021) entitled *"Mental health stigma: the effect of religiosity on the stigma perceptions of students in secondary school in Jordan toward people with mental illnesses".* The findings indicated that higher levels of religiosity were associated with increased stigma toward individuals with mental health conditions. This suggests that in highly religious contexts, students might be reluctant to acknowledge their own mental health struggles due to fear of being judged or perceived as lacking in faith. A study by Fariza Sham (2005) found that students who internalize *tawakkul* (trust in Allah) and *ṣabr* (patience) exhibit higher emotional resilience, yet many still hesitate to seek professional counseling due to cultural misconceptions.

One of the most commonly reported stressors among university students is academic pressure. Students are often required to meet tight deadlines, juggle multiple assignments, and maintain high academic standards. This constant demand to perform can result in heightened levels of anxiety and mental exhaustion. In particular, students who struggle with time constraints or feel underprepared may find the academic load especially overwhelming (Misra & McKean, 2000). Financial challenges are another significant contributor to stress. Many students face the burden of tuition fees, textbook costs, accommodation expenses, and daily living costs. These pressures are even more acute for students from low-income families or those who need to work part-time jobs to support themselves, which can interfere with their academic commitments (Ross, Niebling, & Heckert, 1999). Effective time management is essential for balancing academic demands, social life, and personal responsibilities. However, many students struggle with organizing their schedules, leading to missed deadlines, last-minute studying, and overall disorganization. Research shows that inadequate time management skills can negatively impact academic performance and increase stress levels (Britton & Tesser, 1991).

The social environment at university, while often enriching, can also be a source of stress. Students may feel pressure to form friendships, fit into peer groups, or maintain a certain social image. These expectations can create emotional strain, especially for those who experience social anxiety or have difficulty adapting to new environments (Bewick et al., 2010). Sleep deprivation is a common issue among university students due to academic demands and late-night studying. Inadequate sleep affects cognitive function, mood, and overall health, making it harder for students to concentrate and perform academically. Persistent lack of rest can also lead to emotional instability and increased susceptibility to stress (Lund et al., 2010). For students from collectivist or high-expectation cultures, family pressure can significantly influence their mental health. The desire to meet parental expectations in terms of grades, career choices, and moral conduct can become a heavy burden. This kind of stress is often internalized and rarely discussed, which exacerbates its impact (Wong & Halgin, 2006).

Impact of Stress on University Students

The consequences of emotional stress among Islamic university students can be severe, affecting their mental health, academic performance, and spiritual well-being. A study by Nazneen Ismail et al. (2024) found that prolonged stress leads to increased cases of anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion, negatively impacting students' ability to focus on their studies. One of the most alarming effects of stress is the decline in academic performance. Many students report difficulty concentrating, loss of motivation, and chronic fatigue, which results in poor exam performance and incomplete assignments. Research conducted at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) found that high workloads, time constraints, and pressure to excel are major academic stressors that significantly impact students' performance and mental well-being (Ahmad Fuad et al., 2024).

Additionally, spiritual well-being can be affected by stress, despite the common belief that religious students are emotionally stronger due to their faith. A study on female students in Islamic boarding schools in Surabaya found that those experiencing high stress reported lower levels of spiritual engagement and emotional connection to their faith (Khamida et al., 2024). This suggests that although faith can be a source of resilience, excessive academic and social pressures can create a disconnect between students and their spiritual practices. In extreme cases, students resort to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as emotional eating, avoidance behaviors, or withdrawal from social and religious activities. A study by Bibi Hajra & Tamkeen Saleem (2021) found that Islamic students who lacked access to mental health support were more likely to experience chronic stress, which manifested in self-isolating behaviors and increased academic burnout.

Coping Strategies from an Islamic and Psychological Perspective

Coping refers to the thoughts and actions people use to handle situations they see as potentially overwhelming or beyond their abilities (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It serves two main functions: managing emotions (emotion-focused coping) and dealing directly with the source of stress (problem-focused coping) (Ramesar et al., 2009). Emotion-focused coping is used to manage internal emotional responses, especially when a person views the situation as harmful or threatening. Strategies like wishful thinking, avoiding the issue, or trying to downplay the problem are common (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In contrast, problem-focused coping targets the external cause of stress, aiming to change or resolve it. This includes seeking support or actively solving the problem, particularly when the stressor can be changed (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Recent studies also highlight that stress, when managed well, can have a positive or motivating effect on individuals.

Both Islamic teachings and psychological frameworks provide valuable coping mechanisms for stress management among university students. A balanced approach that incorporates faith-based resilience and modern psychological interventions can offer an effective solution to the rising levels of stress among students in Islamic institutions.

Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of faith, patience (*ṣabr*), and reliance on Allah (*tawakkul*) in overcoming difficulties. Research by Zulkarnain (2018) found that students who regularly engage in prayer (*ṣalāh*), dhikr (remembrance of Allah), and supplication (*du'a*) report significantly lower levels of stress and anxiety. The Qur'an states:

> *"Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest."*
> (Surah Ar-Ra'd 13:28)

Additionally, Islamic-based therapeutic interventions have shown positive results. A study on logotherapy with an Islamic framework found that students who adopted spiritually sensitive stress management strategies experienced a significant reduction in depressive symptoms (Fereydouni & Forstmeier, 2022).

While faith provides emotional resilience, modern psychology offers practical strategies for stress management. A study on art therapy in stress management found that using Islamic calligraphy and geometric designs in therapeutic exercises significantly reduced stress and anxiety (Bibi Hajra & Tamkeen Saleem, 2021). Additionally, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness, and emotional regulation techniques have been effective in helping students develop problem-solving skills and healthier coping mechanisms (Bibi Hajra & Tamkeen Saleem, 2021). By integrating these psychological strategies with Islamic teachings, students can create a more holistic and sustainable approach to managing stress.

Islam acknowledges that stress is a natural part of life, including among students. However, Islamic teachings provide a structured approach to managing emotional struggles, focusing on spiritual endurance, gratitude (*shukr*), and seeking help when needed. A study by Fariza Sham (2005) highlights that Islamic students who adopt faith-based coping mechanisms, such as *ṣabr* (patience) and *tawakkul* (trust in Allah), exhibit higher emotional resilience. However, the study also cautions against over-reliance on spiritual coping without addressing underlying psychological distress, which may lead students to avoid seeking professional mental health support.

Furthermore, Islamic teachings encourage a proactive approach to well-being, as seen in the hadith:

"Tie your camel and then put your trust in Allah."
(Sunan At-Tirmidhi 2517)

This hadith emphasizes the balance between faith and action, suggesting that students should combine religious practices with practical stress management techniques, such as seeking counseling, engaging in social support, and maintaining healthy lifestyle habits. By integrating Islamic teachings with psychological interventions, universities and policymakers can create faith-based mental health programs that cater specifically to the needs of Islamic students.

Islamic coping strategies play a significant role in how Muslim university students manage academic and personal stress. A commonly utilized approach is religious coping, where students turn to obilagatory daily prayers, supplication, and reliance on God (tawakkul) for emotional regulation and psychological strength. Studies have shown that individuals who engage in religious coping based on Islamic teachings often experience enhanced spiritual well-being and reduced stress levels (Abu-Raiya, Pargament, Mahoney, & Stein, 2008). In addition, social support through religious communities—such as participating in halaqahs (study circles), interacting with fellow Muslim students, or receiving guidance from religious mentors—has been associated with lower stress and higher emotional resilience (Al-Kandari & Vidal, 2007).

Another effective coping strategy is the recitation and listening to the Qur'an, which has been shown to have calming effects on both the mind and body. A recent study by Khadijeh Moulaei et al. (2023) highlighted that Holy Qur'an recitation and listening significantly reduce anxiety (45%), stress (30%), and depression (25%), with the *Beck Depression Inventory* being the most commonly used tool to assess these effects. The most notable outcomes of Qur'anic recitation were its ability to reduce anxiety, stress, and depression, and its practical, cost-effective nature as a treatment. Furthermore, the practices of *sabr* (patience) and *shukr* (gratitude) have been emphasized as internal coping mechanisms. These values, deeply embedded in Islamic teachings, enable students to maintain psychological stability, helping them view their challenges as tests of faith rather than sources of despair (Rasool & Kalsoom, 2014).

Additionally, self-reflection through dhikr (remembrance of God) and meditation is another important strategy. Research by Yunus and Mahyuddin (2010) found that students who regularly engage in dhikr feel more grounded, spiritually focused, and emotionally composed, even during periods of academic stress. Overall, these Islamic-based coping mechanisms offer culturally relevant, spiritually fulfilling, and psychologically effective means for managing stress in the university setting.

CONCLUSION

Emotional stress is a prevalent issue among university students, particularly those in Islamic institutions who face unique stressors such as balancing religious and secular education, meeting

community expectations, and dealing with financial constraints. This paper has explored the main sources of stress, including academic pressure, social and religious expectations, and the stigma associated with mental health in Muslim communities. The findings highlight that while stress is inevitable, Islamic teachings offer valuable coping mechanisms, including *ṣabr* (patience), *tawakkul* (trust in Allah), and *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), which can complement modern psychological interventions such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness.

The analysis further emphasizes that Islamic students should not rely solely on spiritual practices but should also seek professional mental health support when necessary. The stigma surrounding mental health in Muslim communities needs to be addressed to encourage students to adopt a balanced approach to emotional well-being. Universities play a crucial role in destigmatizing mental health discussions, integrating faith-based counseling services, and providing students with tailored mental health support that aligns with their religious and cultural backgrounds.

To effectively manage emotional stress, Islamic institutions should adopt a holistic framework that combines faith-based resilience-building practices with structured psychological interventions. Future research should explore the empirical impact of integrating Islamic and psychological coping strategies, particularly through case studies and student experiences. By fostering an environment that supports both academic and spiritual well-being, universities can ensure that students thrive emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually, ultimately contributing to a healthier and more resilient academic community.

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