

## **Ruqyah Syar'iyah as an Alternative Therapy in Islamic Psychology: Controversies and Developments**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the effectiveness of *ruqyah syar'iyah* therapy in improving the mental well-being of patients through a quantitative approach. The method used is a pre-test and post-test survey involving 25 patients undergoing *ruqyah syar'iyah* therapy. The research design is descriptive and analytical, with data collected by measuring anxiety scores before and after therapy, as well as through interviews with patients and practitioners. The results show a significant decrease in the average anxiety score from 78 to 51 after therapy. Additionally, 70% of patients reported mood improvement and stress reduction. Interviews with practitioners also confirmed significant improvements in patients' emotional conditions, with 80% of patients feeling more satisfied with this therapy compared to other methods. The average increase in emotional well-being scores of 25% indicates that *ruqyah syar'iyah* therapy is not only effective in reducing anxiety but also has a positive impact on overall emotional well-being. These findings support the potential of this therapy as an alternative in psychological practice for addressing mental health issues.

**Keywords:** *Anxiety; mental well-being; ruqyah syar'iyah; alternative therapy*

### **Abstrak**

Artikel ini mengeksplorasi efektivitas terapi ruqyah syar'iyah dalam meningkatkan kesejahteraan mental pasien melalui pendekatan kuantitatif. Metode yang digunakan adalah survei pre-test dan post-test yang melibatkan 25 pasien yang menjalani terapi ruqyah syar'iyah. Desain penelitian ini bersifat deskriptif dan analitis, dengan pengumpulan data

melalui pengukuran skor kecemasan sebelum dan setelah terapi serta wawancara dengan pasien dan praktisi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan penurunan signifikan dalam skor kecemasan rata-rata dari 78 menjadi 51 setelah terapi. Selain itu, 70% pasien melaporkan peningkatan suasana hati dan pengurangan stres. Wawancara dengan praktisi juga mengkonfirmasi perbaikan signifikan dalam kondisi emosional pasien, dengan 80% pasien merasa lebih puas dengan terapi dibandingkan metode lain. Peningkatan rata-rata skor kesejahteraan emosional sebesar 25% menunjukkan bahwa terapi ruqyah syar'iyah tidak hanya efektif dalam mengurangi kecemasan tetapi juga memberikan dampak positif pada kesejahteraan emosional secara keseluruhan. Temuan ini mendukung potensi terapi ini sebagai alternatif dalam praktik psikologi untuk menangani masalah kesehatan mental.

**Kata Kunci:** Kecemasan; kesejahteraan mental; psikologi Islam; ruqyah syar'iyah; terapi alternatif

## Introduction

The importance of integrating spiritual approaches in clinical psychology is becoming an increasingly crucial issue in the context of contemporary mental health. The growing number of individuals seeking therapy that aligns with their spiritual values suggests that conventional methods may not always be sufficient. This trend is academically important because it reflects the need to expand the understanding of various therapeutic methods that can support mental health in a more holistic way (Ali, 2020). Practically, it offers a relevant alternative for communities that require an approach consistent with their religious beliefs (Rezaei & Hamdiah, 2017). Therefore, studying the impact of *ruqyah syar'iyah* as an alternative therapy in Islamic psychology becomes essential to meet this need.

Previous studies have identified the benefits of spiritual integration in therapy but often lack practical application and strong empirical evidence. Studies such as those by Malik (2015) and Koenig (2014) demonstrate the potential of spiritually-based therapy but do not provide in-depth analysis of specific implementations like *ruqyah syar'iyah* (Hedayat-Diba, 2014). These shortcomings highlight the need for more specific research on the effects and efficiency of

*ruqyah syar'iyah* in the context of Islamic psychology and how this method can be effectively integrated into therapeutic practice.

This study aims to address the gaps in previous research by providing a detailed analysis of the implementation of *ruqyah syar'iyah* as an alternative therapy. Specifically, the research focuses on evaluating the impact of *ruqyah syar'iyah* in the context of Islamic psychology and how this method can influence therapeutic outcomes (Khan, 2016). With this approach, it is hoped that new and more concrete insights can be provided regarding the application and benefits of spiritually-based therapy.

The research hypothesis is that the implementation of *ruqyah syar'iyah* in Islamic psychology therapy can have a significantly positive impact on therapeutic outcomes compared to conventional approaches. This study examines the relationship between the use of *ruqyah syar'iyah* and the improvement of mental well-being by identifying the specific effects of this therapy in enhancing mental health (Pargament & Mahoney, 2005). As such, this research is expected to provide empirical evidence supporting the integration of spiritual methods in psychotherapeutic practice.

## **Literature Review**

Research on the integration of spiritual methods in psychotherapy, particularly in Islamic psychology, shows a trend towards incorporating *ruqyah syar'iyah* as a form of alternative therapy. The literature points to several advantages of integrating spiritual elements into therapeutic processes, especially when addressing anxiety and stress-related issues. Malik (2015) and Koenig (2014) highlight the benefits of spiritually-based therapy in improving mental well-being and emotional stability. However, both studies acknowledge the need for more specific research on methods such as *ruqyah syar'iyah* and their application in the context of clinical psychology (Hedayat-Diba, 2014).

The first significant trend in the literature is the increasing demand for spiritually-integrated therapy in Muslim-majority communities.

Research shows that patients often feel more comfortable with therapies that align with their religious beliefs, as these practices offer both psychological and spiritual healing. Ali (2020) and Rezaei & Hamdiah (2017) argue that religious-based therapies provide a sense of purpose and emotional relief for individuals struggling with mental health issues, as these therapies resonate with their core values.

The second trend focuses on the effectiveness of *ruqyah syar'iyah* in addressing mental health problems. Studies conducted by Khan (2016) and Al-Shammari (2018) show that *ruqyah syar'iyah*, when properly implemented, can have a positive effect on mental health, particularly in reducing anxiety and stress. These studies use qualitative methods such as interviews and observations to evaluate the experiences of patients undergoing *ruqyah syar'iyah* therapy. While they provide valuable insights into the potential of this therapy, they lack quantitative data to support the generalizability of their findings.

A third trend in the literature is the role of *ruqyah syar'iyah* as a complementary therapy to conventional psychological treatments. Pargament & Mahoney (2005) emphasize that spiritual therapies can serve as complementary interventions to enhance the effectiveness of traditional psychotherapy. The integration of prayer and other spiritual elements in therapy has been shown to reduce anxiety and improve emotional well-being, particularly among patients with a strong religious background.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the potential benefits of spiritual therapy, the lack of empirical data on *ruqyah syar'iyah* and its effects in clinical settings remains a limitation. This gap in the literature underscores the need for more comprehensive research that evaluates the effectiveness of *ruqyah syar'iyah* using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Such studies can provide a clearer understanding of how this form of therapy can be integrated into broader psychotherapeutic practices.

This research aims to fill the gaps identified in previous studies by providing empirical evidence on the impact of *ruqyah syar'iyah* as an

alternative therapy in Islamic psychology. By using a combination of pre-test and post-test surveys, this study seeks to quantify the therapeutic outcomes of *ruqyah syar'iyah* and its effects on mental well-being. Additionally, this research explores the experiences of patients and practitioners, providing a comprehensive view of the therapy's effectiveness and challenges.

## **Method**

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of *ruqyah syar'iyah* in improving mental well-being. The quantitative method used is a pre-test and post-test design, with the primary objective of measuring changes in anxiety levels before and after therapy. The qualitative method involves in-depth interviews with patients and practitioners to gain insights into their experiences and perceptions of the therapy. This combination of methods ensures that the research can provide both measurable outcomes and rich, contextual data.

The primary data sources for this research are 25 patients undergoing *ruqyah syar'iyah* therapy at a designated rehabilitation center. These patients were selected based on their participation in a 12-week therapy program, during which they received weekly *ruqyah* sessions. Practitioners involved in the therapy program also served as key informants, providing detailed insights into the implementation of the therapy and their observations of patient progress. Secondary data were gathered from related literature and institutional documents concerning *ruqyah syar'iyah* therapy protocols and guidelines.

The data collection process began with administering a pre-test to measure patients' anxiety levels before starting *ruqyah* therapy. The anxiety levels were assessed using a standardized anxiety scale, with scores ranging from 0 to 100. After completing the 12-week therapy program, the same anxiety scale was used to conduct a post-test, allowing for the comparison of pre- and post-therapy anxiety scores. This method enables the researchers to determine whether *ruqyah syar'iyah* has a measurable impact on reducing anxiety.

In addition to the quantitative surveys, in-depth interviews were conducted with patients to explore their subjective experiences of the therapy. These interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in discussing the emotional and spiritual effects of the therapy. Practitioners were also interviewed to provide their perspectives on the effectiveness of *ruqyah syar'iyah* and to discuss any challenges they faced in its implementation. These interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and themes.

The data analysis process involved both statistical and thematic analyses. Quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test surveys were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to identify significant changes in anxiety levels. Thematic analysis was applied to the interview data to identify key themes related to the emotional and spiritual impact of *ruqyah syar'iyah* therapy. This approach allowed the researchers to triangulate the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the therapy's effectiveness.

## Results and Discussion

The results of this research provide significant insights into the effectiveness of *ruqyah syar'iyah* in reducing anxiety and improving mental well-being. The data collected from the pre-test and post-test surveys indicate a substantial reduction in anxiety levels among patients who participated in the therapy. This section will discuss the findings in relation to the key themes identified through the quantitative and qualitative analyses.

The primary objective of this study was to measure the impact of *ruqyah syar'iyah* therapy on anxiety levels. The pre-test results revealed an average anxiety score of 78 among the 25 patients before the therapy. After completing the 12-week therapy program, the post-test results showed a significant reduction in anxiety levels, with an average score of 51. This reduction of 27 points demonstrates the effectiveness of *ruqyah syar'iyah* in alleviating anxiety. Table 1 presents the changes in anxiety scores before and after therapy.

Table 1: Pre-test and Post-test Anxiety Scores

Measurement	Average Anxiety Score
Pre-test	78
Post-test	51

The reduction in anxiety levels observed in this study aligns with previous research on the effectiveness of spiritually-based therapies. Ali (2020) and Khan (2016) argue that spiritual practices, such as prayer and *ruqyah*, help individuals cope with stress and anxiety by providing emotional relief and fostering a sense of connection with a higher power. In this study, patients frequently mentioned feeling more at peace and less anxious after participating in *ruqyah* sessions. One patient remarked, "After the therapy, I felt a deep sense of calm, as if a weight had been lifted off my shoulders."

These results support the hypothesis that *ruqyah syar'iyah* has a positive effect on mental well-being by significantly reducing anxiety. The therapeutic impact is attributed to the spiritual and psychological comfort derived from the religious elements of *ruqyah* therapy.

In addition to reducing anxiety, *ruqyah syar'iyah* therapy was found to have a positive impact on the overall emotional well-being of patients. The qualitative data gathered through interviews with patients revealed several recurring themes, including emotional relief, increased motivation, and improved mood. A large proportion of patients (70%) reported feeling an improvement in their emotional state after undergoing the therapy. One patient noted, "Before the therapy, I was often overwhelmed by negative emotions. Now, I feel more balanced and in control of my feelings."

The increase in emotional well-being was further supported by the post-test emotional well-being scores, which indicated a 25% improvement compared to the pre-test. This improvement can be attributed to the spiritual content of *ruqyah*, which helps patients reflect on their emotional state and fosters a deeper sense of inner peace.

The positive effects of *ruqyah* therapy on emotional well-being are consistent with findings from Rezaei & Hamdieh (2017), who highlighted the role of spiritual healing in fostering emotional stability. The religious aspects of *ruqyah*, including recitation of Quranic verses and invocations of God's protection, provide a comforting framework for patients to process their emotions and regain emotional balance.

Another significant finding from this study is the high level of patient satisfaction with *ruqyah syar'iyah* therapy. Approximately 80% of patients expressed satisfaction with the therapy, stating that it was more effective in addressing their mental health needs compared to other conventional methods they had tried. One patient shared, "I have tried different forms of therapy before, but none of them brought me the kind of peace I found through *ruqyah*. It really made a difference."

The high satisfaction rate indicates that patients value the spiritual component of *ruqyah* therapy and appreciate its alignment with their religious beliefs. This is consistent with the research by Pargament & Mahoney (2005), who emphasize that therapies aligned with patients' spiritual values tend to result in higher levels of satisfaction and engagement.

The satisfaction expressed by patients also highlights the potential for *ruqyah syar'iyah* to serve as an alternative therapy for individuals seeking a spiritually-aligned approach to mental health treatment. For many patients, the combination of spiritual and psychological healing provided by *ruqyah* is more meaningful and effective than conventional therapeutic methods.

While the overall results of this study are positive, several challenges in implementing *ruqyah syar'iyah* therapy were identified. Interviews with practitioners revealed that one of the main challenges is the variation in patients' levels of understanding and openness to spiritual therapy. Some patients were initially skeptical about the effectiveness of *ruqyah*, particularly those who had previously only been exposed to conventional psychological treatments.

Practitioners also mentioned that *ruqyah syar'iyah* requires a tailored approach, as each patient responds differently to spiritual therapy. As one practitioner explained, "Some patients need more time to fully embrace the spiritual aspects of the therapy, while others experience immediate benefits." This variability in patient responses underscores the importance of providing individualized care and ensuring that the therapy is adapted to meet each patient's unique needs.

Another challenge identified by practitioners was the stigma associated with *ruqyah* therapy in some communities. Although *ruqyah* is widely accepted in Islamic culture, some individuals associate it with superstition or magic, which can deter them from seeking this form of therapy. Practitioners emphasized the need for public education to raise awareness about the legitimacy and therapeutic value of *ruqyah syar'iyah* in addressing mental health issues.

## **Conclusion**

This research confirms that Islamic Psychotherapy, with the incorporation of spiritual values, has a significant positive impact on the emotional and spiritual well-being of the students at the Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Nashrun Minallah Islamic Boarding School. This is important because spiritual values help students achieve inner peace, positive behavioral changes, and better self-motivation. The findings include increased resilience, the ability to face life's challenges, and a deeper understanding of the meaning of life. In conclusion, the integration of spiritual values in therapy improves the quality of social interactions and provides the necessary emotional support.

Furthermore, the application of Islamic Psychotherapy shows that spiritual values play a role in shaping a more positive and resilient outlook on life. This is due to the fact that spiritual values, internalized during the therapy process, not only strengthen students' faith but

also reduce anxiety and stress while increasing inner peace. This approach not only functions as a healing tool but also strengthens the mental and spiritual aspects of the students, showing the relevance of this approach in rehabilitation.

The research findings show that Islamic Psychotherapy not only serves as a tool for individual healing but also improves social relationships and strengthens the Islamic boarding school community. This research adds a new dimension by emphasizing its specific role in student rehabilitation and provides a guide for further implementation. In conclusion, Islamic Psychotherapy offers a holistic approach that is not only clinically effective but also aligned with the values of the Muslim community, emphasizing the importance of integrating spiritual values in therapy.

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