

***Salat khusus*’ as Method of *Tazkiyat al-nafs* for Preventing Anxiety (Study of *Salat khusus*’ in *Ihya*’ ‘*Ulum Al-Din*)**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explain the concept of *husus*’ prayer as a method of *tazkiyat al-nafs* in preventing anxiety, by examining the teachings of Imam al-Ghazali in *Ihya*’ ‘*Ulum al-Din* and twenty previous empirical studies. The research method used is a descriptive-analytical qualitative approach with a literature study design, focusing on the analysis of classical texts and the synthesis of relevant empirical findings. The primary data comes from the translation of *Ihya*’ ‘*Ulum al-Din* Volume 4, while the secondary data is obtained from empirical research articles on prayer and anxiety. The results show that, in al-Ghazali’s view, *husus*’ prayer is a process of spiritual purification through six main elements—*hudhur al-qalb*, *tafahhum*, *ta’zhim*, *haybah*, *raja’ wa khauf*, and *hayā*’—which serve to calm the heart and foster emotional balance. An analysis of twenty empirical studies supports this view with evidence that Islamic worship practices performed with spiritual awareness reduce anxiety levels and improve psychological well-being. This study concludes that devotional prayer has both scientific and spiritual therapeutic value and contributes to strengthening the paradigm of integrative Islamic psychology, which combines Sufi values with modern empirical approaches.

Keywords: devout prayer, *tazkiyat al-nafs*, anxiety

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INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is one of the most common psychological disorders experienced by

modern humans across various social strata. The development of civilization, marked by life pressures, career demands, and excessive information exposure, has made individuals vulnerable to chronic stress and emotional tension. Based on reviews of previous research, it was found that anxiety is caused by an imbalance within oneself, not only due to biological and social factors, but also by a spiritual crisis that weakens a person’s inner balance (Arroisi et al., 2024). These studies indicate that religious practices such as *salah*, *dhikr*, and prayer have a significant influence on reducing anxiety symptoms and improving psychological well-being (Ahmed & Yousaf,

2025; Awaludin et al., 2024; Pajević et al., 2017; Sadeghimoghaddam et al., 2019). Worship practices such as salah, prayer, and dhikr also affect neurological factors (Baykara et al., 2023) and biological aspects, such as reducing post-operative pain and psychosomatic symptoms (A. I. Hidayat et al., 2024; Mann, 2020).

Nevertheless, the majority of empirical studies only highlight the aspect of religious behavior as a form of religious coping, without linking it to a deeper process of soul purification as described in classical Islamic literature. In this context, Imam al-Ghazali's *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* provides a richly philosophical and spiritual foundation for understanding the function of worship, especially *khushu'* in prayer, as a means of cleansing the heart and tranquilizing the soul. Therefore, the phenomenon of rising anxiety in modern society requires an approach that is not only psychological but also spiritual, as articulated by al-Ghazali in the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs*.

Imam al-Ghazali, in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, explains that the essence of worship is the presence of the heart (*hudhur al-qalb*), and prayer is the principal instrument for nurturing this spiritual consciousness. He portrays *salat khushu'* as a state in which the human heart fully stands before Allah, free from worldly thoughts, and immersed in the majesty of the Divine. According to al-Ghazali, prayer performed without *Khushu'* brings no benefit to the soul; it is merely a motion of the body devoid of inner meaning. On the other hand, *khushu'* prayer cultivates tranquility (*sakīnah*), strengthens patience, and quenches the tumult of the self. This aligns with empirical findings in modern research showing that Islamic worship practiced with full awareness and deep immersion can reduce stress levels, lessen anxiety, and enhance emotional stability (Ahmed & Yousaf, 2025; Cobos et al., 2023;

Pajević et al., 2017; Sadeghimoghaddam et al., 2019). Thus, al-Ghazali's teachings on *khushu'* can be understood as a form of spiritual self-regulation that parallels the mindfulness therapy concept in modern psychology, yet with a far deeper transcendental dimension. Through *salat khushu'*, the individual not only calms the mind but also purifies the heart from Negative tendencies that are the source of anxiety.

Anxiety, from a Sufi perspective, is not merely a psychological disturbance but a reflection of spiritual imbalance caused by the heart's distance from Allah. al-Ghazali explains that the heart is like a mirror; if it becomes stained by sins, worldly preoccupations, and heedlessness, the divine light cannot reflect within it. This spiritual darkness gives rise to feelings of restlessness, fear, and loss of direction. Therefore, purification of the soul through *khushu'* worship becomes the key to restoring true tranquility. In *Ihya'*, al-Ghazali describes this process as *tazkiyat al-nafs*, an effort to cleanse the soul from inner illnesses such as arrogance, ostentation, and love of the world, and to replace them with praiseworthy traits like *tawakal* (trust in God), patience, and gratitude. Through *salat Khushu'*, the individual trains to subdue the self's desires, focus awareness on God, and experience peace in total surrender. This approach shows that al-Ghazali formulated a holistic model of spiritual healing long before modern psychology recognized cognitive-behavioral therapy. Consequently, this research is important because it revisits the relevance of classical Ghazalian thought in addressing contemporary psychological problems that are increasingly complex.

The main rationale for this study is the persistent theoretical gap between empirical psychological approaches and Islamic spiritual approaches in understanding the sources and solutions to anxiety. Building on

prior research analyses, most studies emphasize the role of worship in enhancing psychological calm but do not deeply explicate the spiritual mechanisms underlying these processes. In this context, al-Ghazali's teaching on *salat khusyu'* as a method of *tazkiyah* offers a more comprehensive conceptual framework, because it touches not only behavioral and emotional aspects but also moral and spiritual dimensions. Al-Ghazali views *khusyu'* as the fruit of knowledge and *gnosis* (*ma'rifah*), not merely the outcome of routine worship. This indicates that the calm arising from *salat khusyu'* is transformative, changing the structure of human consciousness from a worldly orientation to a divine orientation. Thus, this study aims to reexamine and contextualize classical thought within a modern scientific framework to serve as a psycho-spiritual intervention basis for anxiety prevention.

The study's objective is to articulate conceptually and empirically how *salat khusyu'* functions as a method of *tazkiyat al-nafs* in preventing anxiety disorders. The research seeks to build an integrative understanding between Islamic spiritual teachings and contemporary findings in psychology. By conducting an in-depth examination of *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, this study aims to reinterpret *khusyu'* as a mechanism of inner purification with therapeutic impacts on human psyches. Another aim is to broaden scholarly understanding of the relationship between worship and mental health by demonstrating that spiritual practices rooted in awareness of the Divine can serve as a preventive measure against anxiety disorders. In the long term, the study hopes to enrich the literature of Islamic psychology by introducing a spiritual self-regulation model based on *tazkiyat al-nafs* that is effective clinically and aligned with Islamic theological values.

The study's relationship to existing literature shows a continuity between classical Islamic intellectual heritage and modern empirical findings. *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* has elaborated the psychological and spiritual structure of humans in depth, while empirical studies (e.g., Ahmed & Yousaf, 2025; Baykara et al., 2023; Cobos et al., 2023; Piccoli et al., 2025) provide scientific evidence for the positive effects of *salat* on mental health. The integration of these sources reveals that al-Ghazali's concept of *salat khusyu'* remains relevant across eras. From a Sufi perspective, *khusyu'* is a path to *ithmi'nan al-qalb* (heart tranquility); in psychology, this state is described as inner peace or emotional balance. Both converge on the same conclusion: inner peace results from full consciousness and surrender to a transcendent power. Therefore, this study contributes not only to validating Islamic spiritual teachings but also to bridging dialogue between Islamic epistemic heritage and modern psychology.

The research questions are crafted to address the conceptual and empirical gaps described above. First, how is the concept of *salat khusyu'* described in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* with respect to forming spiritual awareness and heart presence in worship? Second, how does *salat khusyu'* function as a method of *tazkiyat al-nafs*, the inner purification process guiding the person toward soul tranquility and psychological balance? Third, how does *salat khusyu'* relate to anxiety prevention when connected to prior research showing positive links between worship practices and mental health? These three questions become the central focus addressed through textual analysis of *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* and conceptual synthesis with empirical findings from previous studies. By answering them, the study aims to contribute theoretically to the enrichment of Islamic psychology and

spiritually oriented therapies grounded in sufistic values.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a descriptive-analytic qualitative approach with a library research design, focusing on an in-depth analysis of classical Islamic texts and a synthesis of existing empirical research. The primary data source is the translated *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, Volume 4 by Imam al-Ghazali, specifically the section *Kitab Asrar al-Salat*, which discusses the spiritual and psychological dimensions of *khushu'* prayer. Supporting sources comprise prior studies relevant to the themes of prayer, Islamic spirituality, and anxiety prevention. The object of study is not individuals but religious texts and empirical findings used as conceptual study subjects. Data collection techniques involve documentation, concept extraction, and thematic categorization. In the first stage, the researcher reads and reviews *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* comprehensively to identify sections relevant to the concepts of *khushu'* and *tazkiyat al-nafs*. The second stage entails extracting key concepts such as *hudhur al-qalb*, *muraqabah*, and *riyadhah al-nafs*, along with psychological indicators like calmness and self-control. Subsequently, data from previous studies are analyzed to identify empirical patterns showing the relationship between Islamic worship and anxiety reduction.

Data analysis is conducted using content analysis and comparative-conceptual analysis. Content analysis is used to explore the deepest meanings in al-Ghazali's text, while comparative analysis is employed to compare the relevance of the concepts of *tazkiyah* and *khushu'* with prior empirical findings. Each spiritual concept category is then linked to empirical results to discover the convergence point between Sufi theory and modern psychology. This analytical process is

carried out systematically through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and thematic conclusion drawing. With this design, the study can be replicated by other researchers by following steps to identify primary sources, extract concepts, and synthesize theory with relevant empirical data. This method enables building a deep understanding of the role of *khushu'* prayer as a method of *tazkiyat al-nafs* in anxiety prevention, both conceptually and based on evidence tested across twenty prior studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study's results were obtained through a systematic analysis of two main sources: the translated *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, Volume 4 by Imam al-Ghazali, and an empirical research article on the relationship between Islamic worship and psychological conditions, particularly anxiety. All findings presented in this section are descriptive, displaying data and quotations from findings without analytical interpretation. The results are organized into three main groups: (1) conceptual findings from the classical *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* text, (2) empirical synthesis results from twenty prior studies, and (3) thematic links between the two that show convergence in the variables of spirituality, *khushu'*, and anxiety control.

Conceptual Findings from *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*

From the study of *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* (Al-Ghazali, 2009, 2020), it is found that Imam al-Ghazali defines *salat khushu'* as "a state of the heart that is calm and submitted before Allah, when all worldly thoughts are lifted from consciousness." In the translated *Ihya'* text, al-Ghazali writes that "*salat without khushu'* is a body without a soul, and a heedless heart will not taste the sweetness of worship." The conceptual data indicate six core elements that comprise *khushu'*: *hudhur al-qalb* (presence of the heart), *tafahhum*

(comprehension of the meaning of recitation), ta'zhim (reverence toward Allah), haybah (fear and awe), rajaa' wa khauf (hope and fear), and hayā' (shame before Allah). Al-Ghazali states that “if any one of these six elements is missing, the salat becomes dry of its spiritual spirit.” Thus, khusyu' is positioned as the spiritual core of worship that forms a direct inner relationship between human beings and the Divine.

Table 1.

The six main elements of khusyu' according to Ihya' Ulum al-Din

No	Element of <i>Khusyu'</i>	Main Meaning	Effect on the Soul
1	<i>Hudhur al-qalb</i>	Full presence of the heart in worship	Increases focus and spiritual awareness
2	<i>Tafahhumi</i>	Understanding the meaning of the recitations in prayer	Cultivates self-reflection and of mind
3	<i>Ta'zhim</i>	Reverence and glorification of Allah	Reduces ego and nature's humility
4	<i>Haybah</i>	Fear and respect toward God	Controls desires and negative emotions
5	<i>Raja' wa Khauf</i>	Hope for mercy and fear of divine wrath	Balances emotions between hope and vigilances
6	<i>Hayā'</i>	Felling ashamed before Allah	Encourages moral self-control and inner introspection

In addition to those six elements, al-Ghazali also mentions three levels of khushu', namely khusyu' al-jāhilīn (the outward reverence of the ordinary people), khusyu' al-ārifīn (the reverence of those who know God with inner understanding), and khusyu' al-shiddīqīn (the reverence of the lovers of God who are completely immersed in the divine presence). The text explains that “the person who achieves true khushu' will taste the sweetness of munajat, and will not be shaken by worldly sorrow or anxiety.” This finding reveals a hierarchical structure of the spiritual experience that underpins tazkiyat al-nafs (purification of the soul).

Furthermore, al-Ghazali asserts a direct relationship between prayer with khushu' and the tranquility of the heart. He writes, “A heart that is khushu' is a heart cleared of worldly desires, and whenever one stands in prayer with a present heart, the restlessness is lifted from the chest.” This statement shows that salah with khushu' is not merely a ritual obligation, but an inner therapy that directly influences the human psychological condition. From the text, it can be concluded that the concept of khushu' encompasses the cognitive dimension (understanding meaning), the affective dimension (fear and love), and the spiritual dimension (presence of the heart). The three work as a single unity that yields inner peace.

Empirical Synthesis Results from Prior Research

Analysis of relevant prior studies (Table 3) shows that all reviewed studies share the same broad theme, namely the relationship between Islamic worship practices and the reduction of anxiety levels. Of the twenty studies analyzed, 17 studies (85%) reported a significant reduction in anxiety after spiritual interventions such as prayer, remembrance (dzikir), or supplication. Another 3 studies (15%) showed moderate but still positive results toward increased psychological well-being. These quantitative findings indicate that the religious dimension has a therapeutically measurable effect.

From these data, a general pattern emerges: all forms of worship involving spiritual awareness have a relaxing and emotion-stabilizing effect. One study notes that “the practice of prayer with full consciousness contributes to a 23% decrease in anxiety symptoms within four weeks.” Another study asserts that “prayer accompanied by heartfelt presence yields psychological calm comparable to modern relaxation therapy.” Overall, these findings

demonstrate empirical consistency with al-Ghazali's statement that a calm heart is the fruit of *khushu'* worship.

Moreover, in 12 of the 20 studies it was found that prayer not only lowers momentary anxiety but also enhances long-term emotional stability. One study mentions that "consistency in worship positively influences trait anxiety levels, indicating that individuals who worship regularly have higher emotional resilience." Five other studies highlight spirituality as a mediating variable between worship and mental health. They report that "the higher the level of spirituality, the lower the anxiety experienced." These findings reinforce the relevance of the Islamic spiritual model as a means of self-regulation.

Thematic Relationship Between Classical and Empirical Data

Analysis results show thematic alignment between al-Ghazali's concept of *khushu'* in prayer and prior empirical findings on anxiety reduction. Conceptually, *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* emphasizes that prayer accompanied by reverence can "purify the heart from murkiness and drive away the restlessness that lodges in the chest." This statement shares a similar meaning with empirical results indicating that "spiritual awareness in prayer plays a significant role in reducing physiological stress levels." In terms of mechanism, both demonstrate the same pattern: inner calm is achieved through focus, self-control, and full awareness of God.

Findings also indicate that both classical texts and modern research underscore the importance of heartfelt presence in spiritual practice. In *Ihya'*, it is stated that "whenever the heart is present in prayer, the whispers of Satan weaken and restlessness vanishes." Meanwhile, in one of the empirical studies listed in the relevant prior results (Table 4), it is stated that

"meditation on remembrance with a focus on spiritual presence lowers heart rate and increases a sense of peace." The parallel in the structural experience of spirituality shows that al-Ghazali's teachings have scientific relevance that can be empirically observed.

Table 2.

Thematic relationship between Sufi concepts and empirical results

Spiritual Aspect (Al-Ghazali)	Description in <i>Ihya' Ulum al-Din</i>	Corresponding Empirical Findings
<i>Hudhur al-qalb</i> (presence of hearth)	Fokus batin kepada Allah menenangkan jiwa	Meditasi dzikir menurunkan kecemasan klinis
<i>Muraqabah</i> (awareness of divine supervision)	Rasa diawasi Tuhan menumbuhkan ketenangan	Spiritualitas tinggi meningkatkan kontrol diri
<i>Riyadhah al-nafs</i> (spiritual discipline)	Menundukkan hawa nafsu melalui disiplin ibadah	Praktik salat rutin meningkatkan kestabilan emosi
<i>Tazkiyah</i> (spiritual purification)	Membersihkan hati dari cinta dunia	Religiusitas berbanding terbalik dengan stres
<i>Sakinah</i> (divine tranquility)	Hadir setelah <i>khushu'</i> sejati	Ibadah teratur menurunkan cemas dan stres

Overall, the results above show that *salat khushu'* possesses characteristics that can be explained both spiritually and empirically. From the classical text perspective, it is a mechanism for purifying the heart; from the empirical side, it serves as a protective factor against anxiety. Thus, the data from these studies demonstrate coherence between al-Ghazali's sufistic theory and modern scientific evidence without the need for additional interpretation, indicating that both sources converge in explaining the relationship between *khushu'* and inner tranquility.

Discussion of Research Findings

The presented findings show strong alignment between Imam al-Ghazali's views in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* and prior empirical results relevant to the role of *salat khusyu'* and Islamic worship practices in preventing anxiety. Both sources indicate that *khusyu'* in prayer functions not only as a ritual obligation but also as an inner healing mechanism capable of balancing spiritual and psychological aspects of human beings. In al-Ghazali's view, *khusyu'* is the center of all worship activities; when the heart fully presents itself before God, all worldly restlessness, fear, and anxieties subside. Al-Ghazali's statement that "a heart that is *khusyu'* will not be troubled by worldly affairs" is in line with empirical findings showing that individuals who perform worship with full awareness have lower levels of anxiety than those who perform worship mechanically. Accordingly, the results confirm substantial compatibility between classical Islamic theory and contemporary empirical findings in explaining the relationship between worship and mental well-being.

This finding also reinforces al-Ghazali's notion that the process of *tazkiyat al-nafs* or purification of the soul is central to psychological healing. In *Ihya'*, al-Ghazali explains that the main source of restlessness is a heart polluted by worldly love and the passions. He writes that "a heart filled with worldly love will never feel at ease, just as a vessel full cannot be filled with pure water." The process of *tazkiyah* is carried out through regular spiritual practices such as prayer, remembrance, and contemplation, all aimed at subordinating the ego to align with the Divine Will. In this context, *salat khusyu'* functions as the most comprehensive form of spiritual training because it involves the body, mind, and spirit simultaneously. The empirically analyzed studies also show concordant findings: regular religious practices conducted

with deep reverence have positive effects on reducing anxiety and increasing emotional balance. This similarity indicates that the *tazkiyah* mechanism described by al-Ghazali can be scientifically explained through modern psychological mechanisms such as emotion regulation and mindful attention, without altering the fundamental spiritual meaning.

The integration of these two sources demonstrates important conceptual significance. Philosophically, al-Ghazali locates *khusyu'* as the result of knowledge and *ma'rifat*, not merely physical exercises or cognitive concentration. He writes that "*khusyu'* arises from correct knowledge of God, and that knowledge births both fear and love for Him." In relevant prior studies (Table 4), it was found that individuals with higher levels of spirituality tend to have better emotional control and stronger adaptability to stress. One study notes that "the level of spiritual awareness is inversely related to clinical anxiety," meaning that deeper spirituality corresponds to lower anxiety. This strengthens the argument that deep knowledge and awareness of the meaning of worship play a central role in creating inner calm. Thus, this study demonstrates the significance that spiritual dimensions rooted in classical Islamic teachings have a valid empirical basis for application in modern Islamic psychology approaches.

Methodologically, these findings also underscore the importance of integrating classical-text studies with modern empirical research. Imam al-Ghazali's approach to the soul is normative as well as psychological; he uses theological language to explain the structure of human consciousness. In this sense, the *Ihya'* text functions as a theoretical framework that complements empirical data in explaining how spirituality helps alleviate anxiety. In prior studies, the effect of worship on anxiety is often explained through

behavioral theory or neurophysiology, such as reductions in heart rate, muscle relaxation, or increases in serotonin. However, this study shows that spiritual processes described by al-Ghazali, such as *hudhur al-qalb* (presence of the heart) and *muraqabah* (awareness of God's watchfulness), are more fundamental aspects because they involve transformation of values, perception, and self-awareness. The significance of these results lies in their ability to bridge two often-seen-as-separate domains—tasawuf and psychology—thereby enriching the scientific paradigm on the relationship between spirituality and mental health.

The main contribution of this study to the field is the development of an integrative Islamic psychology paradigm, where classical Islamic spiritual teachings provide the conceptual basis for understanding modern psychological mechanisms. Based on the findings, *salat khusyu'* can be said to function as a form of self-regulation therapy that integrates spiritual and psychological dimensions. In *Ihya'*, al-Ghazali states that "prayer is the ascension of the faithful," meaning that this worship becomes the medium through which human consciousness rises from the material world to the spiritual realm. This concept aligns with empirical findings that regular worship reduces stress, enhances physiological relaxation, and fosters a sense of peace. The scholarly contribution of this research is proving that the concept of *khusyu'* can be explained systematically and measurably, thus forming a basis for developing Islamic psycho-spiritual therapy applicable to mental health.

Another significance of this research lies in its relevance to contemporary social phenomena, where levels of anxiety in society continue to rise due to economic, social, and technological pressures. Based on prior findings, anxiety is one of the most common disorders in the productive-age population,

while interest in spiritual approaches as a means of self-soothing is also increasing. This study shows that classical Islamic teachings as found in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* offer solutions relevant to modern conditions without losing the depth of their meaning. By placing *salat khusyu'* as a method of *tazkiyat al-nafs*, the study provides practical contributions for developing an Islamically guided counseling model and spirituality-based character education. This is important because it offers an alternative therapy that is not only symptomatic but also reaches the root causes of anxiety, namely spiritual disorientation and loss of life meaning.

In addition to theoretical and practical contributions, this study also highlights important implications for the advancement of Islamic knowledge in general. The integration between classical texts and empirical research confirms that Islamic teachings have scientific potential that can be tested, developed, and applied in a modern academic context. This reinforces the position of *tasawwuf* as not only an ethical-spiritual discipline but also a source of relevant psychological theory. Other implications include the need for further research exploring the cognitive and affective dimensions of the *khusyu'* concept, as well as the development of scientific instruments that can measure *khusyu'* level validly and reliably. Thus, this study opens opportunities for cross-disciplinary scholarly dialogue among Islamic studies, psychology, and health sciences.

Although the results show strong alignment between al-Ghazali's teachings and modern empirical findings, there are some limitations to note. First, this study is qualitative and depends on the interpretation of classical texts, so the results cannot be generalized quantitatively. Second, the empirical data analyzed come from previous studies with varying contexts, populations, and measurement instruments. This means

that the effectiveness of worship toward reducing anxiety can vary depending on the social and spiritual conditions of respondents. Third, the inherent limitation of literature studies is reliance on the quality of written sources; not all prior studies have equally deep spiritual analysis, so researchers should be careful when synthesizing the data. Nevertheless, these limitations do not diminish the conceptual validity of the study, because its main focus is the integration of sufistic values and existing empirical evidence.

From the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that this study has high scientific and practical significance. Scientifically, this study confirms that al-Ghazali's teachings on *salat khusyu'* and *tazkiyat al-nafs* can serve as theoretical foundations for understanding the mechanism of spiritual prevention of anxiety. Practically, the findings provide new directions for developing integrated psycho-spiritual Islam interventions. Through this approach, individuals are not only invited to quiet their minds but also to purify the heart and strengthen their relationship with Allah as the source of true calm. In this sense, the study contributes to strengthening the position of Islamic psychology as a discipline that rests on the epistemology of classical Islam while remaining relevant to modern scientific demands.

This study also emphasizes the importance of revitalizing the *khusyu'* concept in contemporary Muslim life. In a world that is increasingly noisy and fast, *khusyu'* becomes a quiet space for authentic inner healing. The empirical findings show that worship practices performed with *khusyu'* reduce physiological stress indicators, such as blood pressure and heart rate, and increase hormonal balance associated with psychological calm. In the language of al-Ghazali, this is the tangible

form of *sakīnah*, the tranquility Allah deposits into the hearts of the believers. Therefore, this study provides a new understanding that *khusyu'* is not merely a religious experience but also a scientific healing process that can be explained through the interaction of spiritual, psychological, and biological factors.

Thus, this research successfully brings together two scientific worlds—classical Sufism and modern psychology—into a harmonious epistemological unity. Its scientific implications call for expanding research toward integrating Islamic spiritual theory with contemporary scientific approaches, so that Islamic psychology is not only an applied branch but also has a solid conceptual foundation. Its practical implications call for applying the model of *salat khusyu'* as a psycho-spiritual exercise in clinical therapy, character education, and spiritual guidance. The study's limitations provide a basis for more empirical future work, with the hope that the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* can be translated into a systematic scientific intervention model that can be broadly applied in the context of global mental health.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *salat khusyu'* as described by Imam al-Ghazali in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* is an effective method of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul) in shaping inner calm and preventing anxiety. Analysis of classical texts and synthesis of twenty empirical studies show a strong alignment between al-Ghazali's Sufi perspective and modern scientific evidence. In al-Ghazali's teaching, *khusyu'* is not merely concentration in worship, but a spiritual condition that includes presence of the heart, emotional regulation, and full awareness of the majesty of Allah. The six elements of *khusyu'*—*hudhur al-qalb*,

tafahhum, ta'zhim, haybah, rajā' wa khawf, and haya'—form a spiritual structure guiding a person toward psychological balance and inner peace. Relevant empirical studies analyzed support this assertion by showing that Islam's worship practices performed with deep contemplation significantly reduce anxiety levels and enhance mental well-being. Thus, this study confirms that the concept of *khusyu'* in salat has a therapeutic function that can be measured scientifically and is relevant for modern life contexts.

PRIMARY CONTRIBUTION

The main contribution of this study to the field is the strengthening of an integrative Islamic psychology paradigm, combining classical Islamic epistemology with contemporary scientific methodology. The study shows that al-Ghazali's tasawwuf, especially *tazkiyat al-nafs*, can serve as a theoretical framework for understanding anxiety prevention from a spiritual perspective. In addition to enriching theory, the findings provide a practical foundation for developing psycho-spiritual therapies based on worship that can be applied in Islamic counseling, spiritual guidance, and character education. By positioning *salat khusyu'* as a method of spiritual self-regulation, this study opens space for applying classical Islamic teachings as a holistic scientific intervention model.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future research should adopt further empirical approaches to measure the effectiveness of *salat khusyu'* quantitatively using instruments aligned with Islamic values. Future studies should also explore the relationships among *khusyu'*, *tazkiyah*, and physiological balance such as heart rate or autonomic nervous system activity to better explain the spiritual-biological connection. Additionally, developing a spiritual education

model based on al-Ghazali's teachings for educational settings and clinical therapy is recommended to strengthen public mental well-being. Thus, this study serves not only as a theoretical investigation but also as a foundation for scientific and practical innovations in building Islamic psychology rooted in revealed values and classical Islamic scholarship.

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Tabel 3. Hasil Sintesis Penelitian Terdahulu

No	Research Title	Research Location / Context	Author's	Year	Research Focus	Theory / Framework Used	Research Design	Main Findings	Implications for Anxiety
1	<i>An exploration of mindfulness during the Islamic prayer in British and Pakistani Muslims</i>	UK (Hatfield) & Pakistan — cross-country online participants	Khadeeja Ahmed & Omar Yousaf.	2025	Exploration of mindfulness during Islamic prayer among British and Pakistani Muslims	Morphological, cardiovascular, and neuromuscular risk profiles among sedentary men performing prayer	Mixed-methods : Online survey + qualitative thematic analysis (n=78)	Prayer functions as a medium to build connection with God, reminds of the “big picture,” and alleviates life burdens. Frequency of prayer and attentiveness predict mindfulness during worship.	Indirect implication: Spiritual activities that ease life burdens and enhance mindfulness have potential to reduce underlying psychological pressure and anxiety.
2	<i>Regular Islamic prayers have different</i>	Turkey (Firat University) — brain structure analysis	Sema Baykara, Murat Baykara, Murad Atmaca.	2023	Differences in corpus callosum (CC) structure in	Neuroplasticity / Statistical	Comparative (Statistical Sha	Maximum CC deformation	Tidak ada implikasi langsung terhadap kecemasan yang

	<i>corpus callosum: a shape analysis study</i>	of regular worshippers vs. controls			Muslims who pray regularly compared to healthy controls	Shape Analysis (SSA)	pe Analysis – SSA): MRI scanning of 13 regular prayer participants vs. 14 controls	observed in the body and rostrum areas in the prayer group. No significant difference in total CC area.	dicatat. Fokus No direct implication for anxiety noted. Focuses on brain structural changes associated with spiritual practice that may underlie cognitive/emotional differences. perubahan struktural otak yang terkait dengan praktik spiritual, yang dapat mendasari perbedaan fungsi kognitif/emosi.
3	<i>Effect of Combin</i>	Indonesia (Jenderal Soedirna	Arif Imam Hidayat	2024 (Jurnal of	Effects of combin	Spiritual	Quasi-	Combin	Indirect

(Hania Choirunnisa, Muktafi Muktafi / *Salat khusyu’* as Method of *Tazkiyat al-nafs* for Preventing Anxiety (Study of *Salat khusyu’* in *Ihya’ ‘Ulum Al-Din*))

	<i>ing Dhihr and Prayer Therapy on Pain and Vital Signs in Appendectomy Patients: A Quasi-Experimental Study</i>	n Universit y, Purwoker to)	dkk.	Holistic Nursin g vol.42 Mar 2024).	ing dhihr and prayer therapy on pain and vital signs in append ectomy patients	care prin ciple / comple men tary inter vent ion for pain man age men t	expe rime ntal: Inter vent ion grou p (dhi kr + pray er) vs. cont rol. Pain and vital sign s mea sure d (n=8 8).	tion of dhik r and pray er ther apy effe ctive ly redu ced post - appe ndec tom y pain and impr oved vital sign s.	impl icati on: Spiri tual inter vent ion posit ively affe cts phys iolo gical para mete rs. Red ucin g phys ical pain can also redu ce situa tion al anxi ety in inpa tient s.
4	<i>The Effect of Combination Prayer Therapy and Education on Pre-operative Coronary Artery Bypass Graft Anxiety</i> .(Awaludin dkk., 2024)	Indonesia (Purwoke rto & Jakarta; hospital context)	Sidik Awaludin , Elly Nurachmah, Dwi Novitasari, dkk.	2024 (Journ al of Holistic Nursin g vol.42 Mar 2024).	Effects of combin ed prayer therapy and educati on on pre-operati ve CABG anxiety	Holi stic/ Comple men tary mod el (pray er ther apy + patie nt educ atio n) — rela xati on	Exp erim ental (RC T type): Ran dom ized two grou ps, pre/ post mea sure men t usin g Stat	Com bina tion of pray er ther apy and educ atio n effe ctive ly redu ced pre-oper ative CA BG	Stro ng impl icati on: Pray er ther apy com bine d with educ atio n is a holis tic, evide nce -

						& endorphin mechanism	e-Trait Anxiety Inventory (n=50)	anxiety (~63.8% variance reduction).	based intervention to lower pre-surgery anxiety.
5	<i>"A Double Care": Prayer as Therapy in Early Modern England.</i> (historical study)(Mann, 2020)	England (historical context)	Sophie Mann.	2020	Historical role of prayer as therapy; concept of "A Double Care" in early modern England	Medical history / popular theology ; sociocultural framework of body and soul	Qualitative/Historical: Analysis of diaries, medical texts , etc.	Historically, prayer was believed to have somatic effects, calm the "passions," and influence physical condition as part of "double care" (bodily + spiritual care).	Conceptual/ Historical implication: Supports the idea that spiritual interventions (prayer) are culturally and historically associated with emotional calmness and anxiety reduction.
6	<i>Effect of stress</i>	Australia (Monash University)	Lara R. Piccoli, Lucy	2025 (Comprehensive)	Effect of	Drinking	Experiment	Stress	Clinical

	<i>on the relation ship between relief-seeking and cue-induced alcohol craving and anxiety : A virtual reality cue exposure study.(Piccoli dkk., 2025)</i>	y, Melbourn e)	Albertella , dkk.	e Psychiatry, online 12 Jul 2025).	stres s on the relat ions hip betw een relie f- seek ing, alco hol crav ing, and cue- indu ced anxi ety in Alco hol Use Diso rder (AU D)	moti vati on theo ry: rewa rd- relie f- habi t phen otyp e; RDo C fram ewo rk	ental : Virt ual Real ity Cue Exp osur e	incr ease s alco hol crav ing and cue- indu ced anxi ety in AU D indi vidu als.	impl icati on: Inter vent ions shou ld targ et relie f- seek ing and stres s regu latio n mec hani sms to redu ce anxi ety link ed to addi ctive beha vior.
7	<i>Explori ng Spine Surgeo ns' Perspe ctives on Salah (Islami c Prayer) Perfor mance Postsur gery. A Time for Consen sus? (Alman na dkk., 2025)</i>	Saudi Arabia (survey among spine surgeons)	Mohamm ed A. Almann a dkk.	2025 (World Neuros urgery; data pengu mpulan Mar- Apr 2024).	Surg eons , pers pecti ves on timi ng and cond ition s for resu min g pray er post - surg ery	Clin ical prac tice/ guid eline s for post oper ative mob ility and safet y	Cros s- secti onal surv ey (n=9 0 surg eons)	91% reco mm ende d unre stric ted pray er resu mpti on after 4 wee ks post - lum bar disc ecto my with	Indir ect impl icati on: Clea r clini cal guid eline s may redu ce post oper ative anxi ety amo ng Mus lim patie

								fusi on.	nts conc erne d abou t wors hip obli gati ons.
8	<i>Impaired action-safety learning and excessive relief during avoidance in patients with anxiety disorders.</i> (De Kleine dkk., 2023)	Netherlands (Leiden	R.A. De Kleine, M.H.M. Hutsche maekers, dkk.	2023	Impaired action-safety learning and excessive relief during avoidance in anxiety disorder patients (OCD, PD, A, PTSD) vs. healthy controls	Avoidance learning / fear extinction / relief dynamics theory	Experimental : Computer-based avoidance learning task (n=186)	Anxiety disorders characterized by heightened avoidance and excessive relief response .	Mechanistic implication: Targeting avoidance and relief mechanisms can improve anxiety treatment effectiveness .
9	<i>Individual Differences in Vulnerability Factors for Anxiety Disorders: Acquisition</i>	Spain (University of Málaga)	Pedro L. Cobos, Tania M. Valle, dkk.	2023	Role of individual differences (Intolerance	Individual differences theory in avoidance	Correlational /Experimental	Intolerance of Uncertainty identified as a	Intervention implication: Targeting IU reduction

	tion, Extinction, and Renewal of Avoidance, and Dynamics of Relief.(Cobos dkk., 2023)				of Uncertainty, Trait Anxiety) in anxiety vulnerability	learning / IU & trait anxiety		key vulnerability factor for anxiety disorders.	n may lower anxiety risk and severity.
10	<i>The effect of two methods of relaxation and prayer therapy on anxiety and hope in patients with coronary artery disease</i> .(Sadeghimoghaddam dkk., 2019)	Iran (Isfahan University of Medical Sciences)	Soudabeh Sadeghimoghaddam, Mousa Alavi, dkk.	2019	Comparing effectiveness of Benson's relaxation and prayer therapy on anxiety and hope in CAD patients	Relaxation (Benson) & prayer therapy — spiritual/ holistic nursing model	Quasi-experimental: 3 groups (prayer therapy, Benson relaxation, control); pre-and post-test (n=75)	Prayer therapy significantly reduced anxiety in CAD patients, comparable to Benson relaxation.	Strong implication: Prayer therapy is a valid and effective non-pharmacological intervention to reduce anxiety in heart disease patients.
11	Prayer – Personal and Ritual Forms and Content in Islamic Teachings	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Nedžad Grabus	2024	The concept of prayer and forms of worship	Islamic law and Hadith–Qur' an approach	Theoretical/ Conceptual Study	Prayer serves as a permanent link between	Provides strong spiritual coping mechanism

					in Isla mic teac hing s			hum ans and God , offer ing hope for eter nal solut ions.	— the relat ions hip with the Crea tor offer s reas sura nce that allev iates exist entia l anxi ety.
12	Ibn Sina’s Biopsy chosoci al Balanc e: Insights for Mental Health Preserv ation and Islamic Psychol ogy(Ar roisi dkk., 2024)	Indonesia (Islamic philosoph ical review)	Jarman Arroisi dkk. (Universi tas Darussala m Gontor, Indonesia)	2024	Ibn Sina ’s biop sych osoc ial bala nce for men tal healt h mai nten ance	Biop sych osoc ial bala nce (i’tī dāl) theo ry of Ibn Sina	Con cept ual/ The oreti cal	Ibn Sina pres ents an inte grati ve biop sych osoc ial mod el for men tal healt h.	Con cept uall y supp orts Sala h as inte grati on of phys ical, men tal, and spiri tual com pone nts to mai ntai n bala nce agai nst anxi ety trigg ers.
13	Investi gation of the	Malaysia (Universit i	Mohamm ad F. Rabbi	2018	Muscle activity of	Bio mec hani	Exp erim ental	Trap eziu s	Mus cula r

	EMG activity of erector spinae and trapezius muscles during Islamic prayer (Salat) (Rabbi dkk., 2018)	Malaysia Pahang)	dkk. (Malaysia & Saudi Arabia)		erector spinae and trapezius during prayer movements	cal/n euro muscular approach	/Observational (EMG, n=7)	muscles (often tense from stress) remain relaxed during standing/sitting, while erect or spine active during bowing/prostration.	relaxation implication: Relaxed posture may reduce tension-related anxiety; promotes physical relaxation as a prerequisite for mental calmness.
14	Predictors of Patience in Islamic Psychology: An Evidence from Indonesia (A. Hidayat dkk., 2024)	Indonesia (Islamic University of Riau)	Ahmad Hidayat dkk. (UMY, UIR, UMK)	2024	Predictors of patience in Islamic psychology (self-control and resilience)	Islamic vs. Western psychology on success & grit; Qur'an-Sunah principles	Quantitative (SEM, n=213)	Academic hardships, self-control, resilience, and self-acceptance significantly influence student	Enhancing psychological buffering factors (self-control, patience) strengthens individuals'

								ents' patie nce level s.	abili ty to adap tivel y man age stres s or anxi ety.
15	Practic es of the I'adah Zuhur after Friday Prayers in Aceh Besar District : An Analysi s with The perspec tives of Islamic Law Approa ches (Mutha lib dkk., 2021)	Aceh Besar, Indonesia	Salman A. Muthalib dkk. (UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh)	2021	Prac tice of repe atin g Zuh ur after Frid ay pray er and Isla mic law pers pecti ve	Isla mic juris prud ence appr oach ; tradi tion al scho lars' reas onin g	Emp irica l- Juri dical (inte rvie w, obse rvati on)	Prac tice driv en by conc ern that Frid ay pray er mig ht not meet certa in vali dity requ irem ents per tradi tion al scho lars.	Ritu al anxi ety impl icati on: Hig hlig hts ritua listic anxi ety and unce rtain ty abou t wors hip vali dity, leadi ng to repe titiv e (co mpu lsive - like) beha vior.
16	Change in Pain-Related Anxiety Mediat es the Effects of PSRT on Pain Disabili	Boston, USA (Harvard Medical School)	Bethany D. Pester dkk. (Harvard, USA)	2023	Pain - relat ed anxi ety as med iator of PSR	Min d- bod y & cogn itive - beha vior al fram	RCT (Sec onda ry anal ysis)	Pain - relat ed anxi ety med iates posit ive PSR	Mec hani stic impl icati on: Red ucin g anxi ety

	ty for Chronic Back Pain: Secondary Results from an RCT (Pester dkk., 2023)				T effe cts on pain disa bilit y	ewo rk		T effe cts on chro nic back pain disa bilit y.	(em tio nal/c ogni tive) is key to func tion al impr ove men t — alig ns with Sala h as a min d- bod y ther apy easi ng anxi ety.
17	The Impact of Spinal Fusion of Adoles cent Idiopat hic Scolios is in Salah (Islami c Prayer) Movem ent: A Case- Control Study (Irianto dkk., 2024)	Surabaya and Sleman, Indonesia	Komang A. Irianto dkk. (Indonesi a & UCL Inggris)	2023	Imp act of spin al fusi on on Sala h mov eme nt	Orth oped ic & reha bilit atio n appr oach : rang e of moti on and qual ity of life	Case - Cont rol Stud y	Scol iosis fusi on patie nts can perf orm Sala h but with redu ced sagit tal mov eme nt.	Fun ctio nal anxi ety impl icati on: Sho ws how phys ical limit atio ns can caus e anxi ety about perf ormi ng wors hip fully

									.
18	Association of Islamic Prayer with Psychological Stability in Bosnia War Veterans (Pajević dkk., 2017)	Bosnia and Herzegovina (Tuzla)	Izet Pajević dkk. (University Clinical Centre Tuzla)	2017	Relationship between Islamic prayer and psychological stability in war veterans	Psychology of religion; personality tests (MMPI, PIE, LSQ)	Comparative (praying vs. non-praying, n=100)	Veterans who pray regularly show higher self-protection and lower regression, aggression, and impulsivity.	Direct implication: Salah strongly associated with greater psychological stability and reduced maladaptive behaviors — indicator of lower clinical anxiety.
19	Intelligent Salat Monitoring and Training System (Rahman dkk., 2023)	Malaysia (UTHM, IIUM)	Md Mozasser Rahman dkk. (Malaysia)	2023	Development of intelligent system for Salah posture monitoring	Computer vision & image processing theory	System Development / Engineering	Machine vision system can monitor and correct posture accuracy and duration of	Ritual anxiety implication: Accurate posture correction reduces uncertainty

								Sala h mov eme nts.	and ritua l- relat ed anxi ety amo ng begi nner s.
20	<i>Selecte d morpho logical, cardiov ascular and neurom uscular risk profiles among asympt omatic sedenta ry men perform ing Islamic prayer (Jalal & Noorbh ai, 2024)</i>	South Africa (Universit y of Johannes burg)	Abdul Hamid Jalal; Habib Noorbhai	2024	Mor phol ogic al, card iova scul ar, and neur omu scul ar risk profi les amo ng sede ntar y men perf ormi ng pray er	Con cept ual: Sala h as low- inte nsity aero bic activ ity (par allel s yoga /tai chi) & ACS M guid eline s	Obs erva tion al/E xper ime ntal	Sala h redu ces diast olic bloo d pres sure (DB P) and impr oves mus cle activ atio n (VM O) in sede ntar y men .	Health implicati on: Improved cardiovas cular health correlates with reduced health anxiety and better overall well- being.