

Salat khusyu' as Method of Tazkiyat al-nafs for Preventing Anxiety (Study of Salat khusyu' in Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explain the concept of khusyu' 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, khusyu' 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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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,

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is one of the most common psychological disorders experienced by

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 *khusyu'* 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 *khusyu'* 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 *Khusyu'* brings no benefit to the soul; it is merely a motion of the body devoid of inner meaning. On the other hand, *khusyu'* 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 *khusyu'* 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 *khusyu'*, 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 *khusyu'* 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 *Khusyu'*, 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 *khusyu'* 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 *khusyu'* and *tazkiyat al-nafs*. The second stage entails extracting key concepts such as *hudhur al-qalb*, *muraqabah*, and *rijadhah 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 *khusyu'* 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 *khusyu'* 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, *khusyu'*, 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 khusyu'* 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 *khusyu'* 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 *khusyu'*: *hudhur al-qalb* (presence of the heart), *tafahhum*

(comprehension of the meaning of recitation), *ta'zhim* (reverence toward Allah), *haybah* (fear and awe), *raja'a' 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>Tafahhu m</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 natures 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 *khusyu'* 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'</i> <i>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>Riyadkah 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>Sakīnah</i> (divine tranquility)	Hadir setelah <i>khusyu'</i> sejati	Ibadah teratur menurunkan cemas dan stres

Overall, the results above show that salat *khusyu'* 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 *khushu'* 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 Muslim s</i>	UK (Hatfield) & Pakistan — cross-country online participants	Khadeejah Ahmed & Omar Yousaf.	2025	Exploration of mindful ness during Islamic prayer among British and Pakistani Muslim s	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	Mix ed- met hods : Onli ne surv ey + qual itati ve the mati c anal ysis (n=7 8)	Pray er func tions as a med ium to buil d conn ectio n with God , remi nds of the "big pict ure, " and alleviates life burd ens. Freq uenc y of pray er and atten tive ness pred ict min dful ness duri ng wors hip.	Indir ect impl icati on: Spir itual activ ities that ease life burd ens and enha nce min dful ness have pote ntial to redu ce unde rlyin g psyc holo gical pres sure and anxi ety.
2	<i>Regula r Islamic prayers have differen t</i>	Turkey (Firat Universit y) — brain structure analysis	Sema Baykara, Murat Baykara, Murad Atmaca.	2023	Diffe rences in corpus callosu m (CC) structur e in	Neu ropl astic ity / Stati stica l	Com para tive (Stat istic al Sha	Max imu m CC defo rmat ion	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	Sha- pe Anal- ysis — (SSA) A)	pe- Anal- ysis — SSA): MRI scan- ning of 13 regu- lar pray- er parti- cipa- nts vs. 14 cont- rols	obse- rved in the bod- y and rostr- um area s in the pray- er grou- p. No signi- fica- nt diffe- renc- e in total CC area.	dicat- at. Fokus No dire- ct impl- icati- on for anxi- ety note- d. Foc- uses on brai- n struc- tural chan- ges asso- ciate- d with spirit- ual prac- tice that may unde- rlie cogn- itive /em- otio- nal diffe- renc- es.	
3	<i>Effect of Combin</i>	Indonesia (Jenderal Soedirma	Arif Imam Hidayat	2024 (Journal of	Effects of combin	Spiri- tual	Qua- si-	Com- bina	Indir- ect

	<i>ing Dhikr 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 dhikr and prayer therapy on pain and vital signs in appendectomy patients	care prin ciple / com ple 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 ivel y affe cts phys iolo gical para mete rs. Red ucin g phys ical pain can also redu ce situa tional anxi ety in inpa tient s.
4	<i>The Effect of Combination Prayer Therapy and Education on Pre-operative Coronary Artery Bypass Graft Anxiety .(Awal udin dkk., 2024)</i>	Indonesia (Purwoko rto & Jakarta; hospital context)	Sidik Awaludin , Elly Nurachm ah, Dwi Novitasari, dkk.	2024 (Journa l of Holistic Nursin g vol.42 Mar 2024).	Effects of combin ed prayer therapy and education on pre-operative CABG anxiety	Holi stic/ Com bin ed prayer therapy and education on pre-operative CABG anxiety	Exp erimen tal (RC T type): Ran dom ized two grou ps, pre/ post mea sure nt educ atio n) — rela xati on	Com bina tion of pray er ther apy and educ ation effe ctive ly redu ced pre- oper ative CA BG	Stro ng impl icati on: Pray er ther apy com bine d with educ ation is a holis tic, evid ence -

							e- endo rphi n mec hani sm	e- Trait Anx iety Inve ntor y (n=5 0)	anxi ety (~63 .8% vari ance redu ctio n).	base d inter vent ion to lowe r pre- surg ery anxi ety.
5	<i>"A Double Care": Prayer as Therapy in Early Modern England.</i> (historical study)(Mann, 2020)	England (historical context)	Sophie Mann.	2020	Hist oric al role of pray er as ther apy; conc ept of "A Dou ble Care " in earl y mod ern Engl and	Med ical histo ry / pop ular theo logy ; soci ocul tural fram ewo rk of bod y and soul	Qual itati ve/H istor ical: Anal ysis of diari es, med ical texts , etc.	Hist oric ally, pray er was belie ved to have som atic effe cts, calm the "pas sion s," and influ ence phys ical cond ition as part of "dou ble care " (bod ily + spiri tual care).	Con cept ual/ Hist oric al impl icati on: Sup port s the idea that spiri tual inter vent ions (pra yer) are cult urall y and histo rical ly asso ciate d with emo tion al calm ness and anxi ety redu ctio n.	
6	<i>Effect of stress</i>	Australia (Monash Universit	Lara R. Piccoli, Lucy	2025 (Comprehensiv	Effe ct of	Drin king	Exp erim	Stre ss	Clin ical	

	<i>on the relationship between relief-seeking and cue-induced alcohol craving and anxiety : A virtual reality cue exposure study.</i> (Piccoli dkk., 2025)	y, Melbourn e)	Albertella , dkk.	e Psychia try, online 12 Jul 2025).	stres s on the relat ions hip betw een reli 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- belie 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>Exploring Spine Surgeons' Perspectives on Salah (Islamic Prayer) Performance Postsurgery. A Time for Consensus?</i> (Alman na dkk., 2025)	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

								fusion.	nts concerne d about wors hip obli gations.
8	<i>Impaired action-safety learning and excessive relief during avoidance in patients with anxiety disorders.(De Kleine dkk., 2023)</i>	Netherlands (Leiden	R.A. De Kleine, M.H.M. Hutsche maekers, dkk.	2023	Impaire d actio n-safet y learn ing and exce ssiv e relie f duri ng avoi danc e in anxi ety diso rder patie nts (OC D, PD A, PTS D) vs. healt hy cont rols	Avo idan ce lear ning / fear exti ncti on / relie f dyna mics theo ry	Exp erimental : Com pute r-base d avoi danc e learn ing task (n=1 86)	Anx iety diso rder char acter ized by heig hten ed avoi danc e and exce ssiv e relie f resp onse .	Mec hanistic impl icati on: Targ etin g avoi danc e and relie f mecha nisms can impr ove anxi ety treat men t effe ctive ness .
9	<i>Individual Differences in Vulnerability Factors for Anxiety Disorders: Acquisi</i>	Spain (Universit y of Málaga)	Pedro L. Cobos, Tania M. Valle, dkk.	2023	Role of indi vidu al diffe rence s (Intoler ance	Individu al diffe rence s theo ry in avoi danc e	Correlational /Experiment	Intoler ance of Uncertai nty iden tifie d as a	Interv ention impl icati on: Targ etin g IU redu ctio

	<i>tion, Extinction, and Renewal of Avoidance, and Dynamics of Relief.(Cobos dkk., 2023)</i>			of Uncertainty, Trait Anxiety) in anxiety vulnerability	learning / IU & trait anxiety		key vulnerability for anxiety disorder s.	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 .(Sadeghimoghaddam dkk., 2019)</i>	Iran (Isfahan University of Medical Sciences)	Soudabeh Sadeghimoghaddam, Mousa Alavi, dkk.	2019	Comparing effective ness of Ben son's relaxation and prayer therapy on anxiety and hope in CA D patients	Relaxation (Ben son) & prayer — spiri tual/ holis tic nurs ing model	Qualitative exper imental: 3 groups (prayer — ther apy, Ben son relaxation, control); pre- and post -test (n=75)	Prayer ther apy signif icantly reduced anxiety in CA D patients, compared to Ben son relaxation.	
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 Hadi th—Qur'an approach	Theoretical/ Conceptual Study	Prayer services as a permanent link between	Provides strong spiritual coping mechanism

					in Islamic teaching			humans and God, offering hope for eternal solutions.	— the relationship with the Creator offers reassurance that alleviates existential anxiety.
12	Ibn Sina's Biopsychosocial Balance: Insights for Mental Health Preservation and Islamic Psychology (Arroisi dkk., 2024)	Indonesia (Islamic philosophical review)	Jarman Arroisi dkk. (Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia)	2024	Ibn Sina's biopsychosocial balance for mental health maintenance	Biopsychosocial model (i'tidāl) theory of Ibn Sina	Conceptual/Theoretical	Ibn Sina presents an integrative biopsychosocial model for mental health.	Conceptually supports Salah as integration of physical, mental, and spiritual components to maintain balance against anxiety triggers.
13	Investigation of the	Malaysia (Universiti	Mohammad F. Rabbi	2018	Muscle activity of	Bio mechnani	Experimental	Trap ezius	Muscular

	EMG activity of erector spinae and trapezius muscle s during Islamic prayer (Salat) (Rabbi dkk., 2018)	Malaysia Pahang)	dkk. (Malaysia & Saudi Arabia)		erector spinae and trapezius during prayer movements	cal/n euro mus cula r appr oach	/Obs erva tion al (EM G, n=7)	mus cles (ofte n tens e from stres s) rem ain rela xed duri ng stan ding /sitti ng, whil e erect or spin ae activ e duri ng bow ing/ pros trati on.	rela xati on impl icati on: Rela xed post ure may redu ce tensi on- relat ed anxi ety; pro mot es phys ical rela xati on as a pre equi site for men tal calm ness .
14	Predict ors of Patienc e in Islamic Psychol ogy: An Eviden ce from Indonesia (A. Hidayat dkk., 2024)	Indonesia (Islamic Universit y of Riau)	Ahmad Hidayat dkk. (UMY, UIR, UMK)	2024	Pred ictor s of patie nce in Isla mic psyc holo gy (self - cont rol and resil ienc e)	Isla mic vs. patie nce in Isla mic psyc holo gy (self - cont rol and resil ienc e)	Qua ntita tive (SE M, n=2 13)	Aca dem ic hard ines s, self- cont rol, resil ienc e, and self- acce ptan ce signifi cantly influ ence stud	Enh anci ng psyc holo gical buff erin g fact ors (self - cont rol, patie nce) stren gthe ns indi vidu als'

								ents' pati- nce level s.	abi- lity to adap- tivel y man- age stress or anxi- ety.
15	Practices of the I'adah Zuhur after Friday Prayers in Aceh Besar District : An Analysis with The perspectives of Islamic Law Approaches (Muthalib dkk., 2021)	Aceh Besar, Indonesia	Salman A. Muthalib dkk. (UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh)	2021	Practice 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 Mediates 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 medi ates posit ive PSR	Mec hanistic 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 otio nal/c ogniti ve) is key to functional 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 Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis in Salah (Islamic Prayer) Movement: A Case-Control Study (Irianto dkk., 2024)	Surabaya and Sleman, Indonesia	Komang A. Irianto dkk. (Indonesia & UCL Inggris)	2023	Imp act of spin al fusi on on Sala h moveme 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	Scoliosis fusi on patie nts can perf orm Sala h but with reduced sagit tal moveme nt.

									.
18	Association of Islamic Prayer with Psychological Stability in Bosnia n War Vetera ns (Pajević dkk., 2017)	Bosnia and Herzegov ina (Tuzla)	Izet Pajević dkk. (Universi ty Clinical Centre Tuzla)	2017	Rela tions hip betw een Isla mic pray er and psyc holo gical stabi lity in war vete rans	Psyc holo gy of relig ion; pers onal ity tests (M MPI , PIE, LSQ)	Com para tive (pra ying vs. non-pray ing, n=1 00)	Vete rans who pray regu larly sho w high er self-prot ectio n and lowe r regr essi on, aggr essi on, and imp ulsiv ity.	Dire ct impl icati on: Sala h stro ngly asso ciate d with grea ter psyc holo gical stabi lity and red uced mala dapt ive beha vior s — indi cato r of lowe r clini cal anxi ety.
19	Intellig ent Salat Monito ring and Trainin g System (Rahma n dkk., 2023)	Malaysia (UTHM, IIUM)	Md Mozasser Rahman dkk. (Malaysia)	2023	Dev elop men t of intel lige nt syst em for Sala h post ure mon itori ng	Com pute r visio n & ima ge proc essi ng theo ry	Syst em Dev elop men t / Engi neer ing	Mac hine visio n syst em mon itor and corr ect post ure accu racy and dura tion of	Ritu al anxi ety impl icati on: Acc urate post ure corr ectio n red uces unce rtain ty

								Sala h mov eme nts.	and ritua l- relat ed anxi ety amo ng begi nner s.
20	<i>Selected morphological, cardiovascular and neuromuscular risk profiles among asymptomatic sedentary men performing Islamic prayer (Jalal & Noorbhai, 2024)</i>	South Africa (University of Johannesburg)	Abdul Hamid Jalal; Habib Noorbhai	2024	Morphological, cardiovascular, muscular, and neuronal risk profiles among sedentary men performing prayer	Conceptual: Salah as low-intensity aerobic exercise (parallel yoga/tai chi) & ACS M guidelines	Observation: Salah reduces diastolic blood pressure (DBP) and improves muscle activation (VMO) in sedentary men.	Salah reduces diastolic blood pressure (DBP) and improves muscle activation (VMO) in sedentary men.	Health implication: Improved cardiovascular health correlates with reduced health anxiety and better overall well-being.