

## The Role of Stress Management with dhikr-based relaxation techniques in Reducing Teacher Burnout in the Era of Independent Learning Curriculum

Lintang Mulyadi<sup>1</sup>, Uum Umamah<sup>2</sup>, M. Shalahudin<sup>3</sup>, Efrita Norman<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Universitas Islam Bunga Bangsa Cirebon

lintangmulyadi25@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>, uumumamah1989@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>, sholhu95@gmail.com<sup>3</sup>

efritanorman@gmail.com<sup>4</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the effectiveness of a stress management technique using Islamic spiritual practices, known as dzikir, to reduce burnout among high school teachers in the context of an increasing administrative workload under the implementation of the new curriculum. Teachers frequently face high stress levels due to administrative demands, leading to emotional exhaustion, reduced job satisfaction, and lower teaching quality. This research aims to assess the impact of dzikir on alleviating stress and improving emotional and spiritual well-being among teachers. The study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group involving 60 high school teachers divided into experimental and control groups. Quantitative data were collected through standardized burnout inventories, and qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews. Results indicated that the experimental group, which practiced dzikir, experienced a significant reduction in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, as well as improved personal accomplishment and job satisfaction compared to the control group. This study concludes that integrating spiritual-based stress management practices is highly effective in addressing burnout among educators, contributing to healthier teaching environments. By emphasizing culturally and spiritually relevant approaches, this research offers a practical solution for enhancing teacher well-being and supports the broader goals of improving educational quality in modern learning systems. These findings underline the importance of incorporating holistic, culturally sensitive interventions into education policy and teacher training programs.*

**Keywords:** Stress Management, Dzikir Practice, Teacher Burnout, Emotional Well-being, Spiritual-based Intervention, Curriculum Implementation.

### INTRODUCTION

Stress management is an approach designed to help individuals manage the emotional and physical stress experienced in their work. Work stress, as a significant psychological stress that affects the mental and physical well-being of workers, often arises from increased job demands, lack of control, and low support in the workplace. (Mopkins, 2022). Hampton et al. (2019) highlight the importance of stress management in the workplace. (Hampton et al., 2019). Lagrosen & Lagrosen (2020) explained that stress management in the workplace is closely related to workers' control over their situation.

Teachers who experience good stress management tend to have more optimal performance and more harmonious relationships with students and colleagues and increase life satisfaction (Chesak et al., 2019). Reducing teacher stress not only improves teacher well-being, but also improves students' perception of the support teachers provide, as well as the overall classroom environment (Carroll et al., 2021). Time management competence, stress resilience, and teachers' ability to create harmonious working relationships in the school environment (Kulikova, 2021). Teachers' ability to manage

stress also increases positive relationships with students and teachers' self-efficacy in supporting students' emotional needs (Allen et al., 2020).

In the era of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum many teachers face a high administrative burden, a high administrative burden reduces the time that teachers can spend on class preparation and providing feedback to students, excessive workload, especially related to accountability requirements and curriculum reform, reduces teachers' job satisfaction and their focus on quality teaching (Manuel et al., 2018). Administrative burden is especially a challenge for teachers in schools (Kim, 2019). This administrative pressure leads to increased levels of stress and burnout among teachers, which negatively impacts the quality of teaching. Lower student academic achievement and decreased student motivation, showed a significant negative impact on teaching quality (Madigan & Kim, 2021). This Administrative pressure is closely related to the level of emotional stress, reducing teachers' personal efficacy and affecting their performance in the classroom (Pellerone et al., 2020). emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, which affect the quality of teaching and relationships with students (García-Carmona et al., 2018).

Untreated burnout can trigger decreased work motivation, mental health, and effectiveness in classroom management (Corbin et al., 2019). Burnout among teachers was found to greatly affect mental well-being, leading to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased personal achievement in classroom management (Madigan & Kim, 2021). Burnout directly affects the quality of learning and the teacher's relationship with students (Agyapong et al., 2022). Teachers in urban schools report higher rates of burnout due to the demands of strenuous work, which negatively impacts their ability to maintain effective classroom management (Bottiani et al., 2019) Untreated burnout can seriously disrupt teachers' well-being, work motivation, and effectiveness in the classroom, making it important to adopt effective stress management strategies.

This study offers dhikr-based relaxation techniques as a stress management approach that suits the values and needs of teachers. Teachers who use dhikr and prayer techniques experience a reduction in administrative stress levels, as well as improve their spiritual awareness and psychological well-being (Tahir et al., 2018). The practice of dhikr can play a role in improving psychological well-being through positive effects on the body's psychoneuroimmunological responses, which is particularly relevant for stress management in teachers (Saniotis, 2018). dhikr has an element of mindfulness that can help manage stress by creating inner peace and improving the quality of life of individuals (Applebaum, 2023), to provide culturally and spiritually relevant stress management solutions (Agyapong et al., 2023) Dhukr-based relaxation techniques offer a holistic approach that not only manages stress, but also strengthens aspects of spirituality, relevant to the needs of teachers in the environment based on Islamic values

The dhikr-based relaxation technique integrates Islamic spiritual values as a method to improve emotional and spiritual balance. This technique can be used to reduce anxiety, depression, and pain by integrating the practice of meditation, relaxation, and mindfulness in the spiritual context of Islam (Isgandarova, 2018). . the relationship between Islamic spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence, with dimensions such as patience, transcendental awareness, and meaning of life that support emotional balance (Anwar et

al., 2020). Dhir-based relaxation techniques and other Islamic spiritual practices effectively support emotional and spiritual balance by strengthening the individual's relationship with God as well as encouraging internal reflection.

In the context of education, dhikr is believed to provide inner peace that helps reduce work pressure that is often experienced by teachers. Saniotis (2018) identified that dhikr has an element of mindfulness that can improve emotional and spiritual balance, so it is effective in reducing work stress in the educational environment (Saniotis, 2018). In addition, Chirico et al. (2020) found that the practice of prayer, including dhikr, was able to significantly reduce emotional fatigue and increase job satisfaction of teachers in religious value-based educational institutions (Chirico et al., 2020). Furthermore, Tahir et al. (2018) showed that dhikr and prayer are effective coping methods in overcoming administrative stress experienced by school principals (Tahir et al., 2018). Aini et al. (2023) also highlighted that dhikr has a significant impact on reducing work stress in an Islamic work environment (Aini et al., 2023).

This study integrates Islamic spiritual approaches with dhikr-based stress management techniques in the context of formal education at the secondary school level. The focus on teachers of Cirebon Regency High School with the administrative burden of the Independent Curriculum provides a new dimension that has not been studied much in previous research. This study offers empirical evidence on the effectiveness of dhikr in reducing burnout in teachers. This model introduces solutions based on local values that are relevant to Indonesia's educational needs.

The high level of teacher burnout can threaten the success of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which is a national education policy. A relevant, local values-based approach is needed to address the stress challenges among teachers. This research contributes to efforts to create a healthier work environment for teachers in the modern education era. The results of this study can be a practical guideline for education policymakers to improve teacher welfare. This urgency is increasing considering the very important role of teachers in determining the quality of education in Indonesia.

The purpose of this study is to identify the burnout rate experienced by teachers in secondary schools in facing the administrative burden of the Independent Curriculum as well as to analyze the effectiveness of dhikr-based relaxation techniques as a spiritually and culturally relevant stress management approach. The study also aims to integrate Islamic spiritual values in stress management strategies to create emotional and spiritual balance in teachers, so that they can improve their performance and teaching quality. In addition, this study aims to provide empirical evidence that can be used as a basis for recommendations for policymakers in designing policies that support the welfare of teachers in the modern education era. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the creation of a healthier work environment for teachers, support the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum, and strengthen the quality of education in Indonesia.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design. This approach was chosen to measure the effect of dhikr-based relaxation techniques on the burnout rate of teachers in secondary schools. This research is also equipped with a qualitative approach to understand the experience of the research subject in depth.

The research was conducted in several State High Schools (SMAN) in Cirebon Regency, which implemented the Independent Curriculum. The subjects of the study were teachers who experienced high administrative pressure, with samples taken using purposive sampling techniques based on certain criteria such as high workload and significant burnout scores.

The population of this study is all teachers at SMAN Cirebon Regency. The research sample consisted of 60 teachers, who were divided into two groups: an experimental group that was given an intervention in the form of a dhikr-based relaxation technique, and a control group that was not given an intervention.

This study uses a pretest-posttest control group design. Prior to the intervention, both groups will have their burnout rate measured using standard instruments such as the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Afterwards, the experimental group was given training in dhikr-based relaxation techniques for 4 weeks, while the control group did not receive any intervention. Re-measurement is done after the program is completed.

The research instrument is the Burnout Questionnaire, Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to measure the level of emotional fatigue, depersonalization, and personal achievement. The interview guide was conducted to explore the teacher's experience in using dhikr techniques as stress management. Observation was carried out to observe the behavior and changes in the teacher's emotional balance and spirituality during the intervention.

Preparation Stage Research Procedure: Identify teachers who meet the criteria, prepare an intervention schedule, and prepare training materials for dhikr techniques. Implementation Stage: The experimental group participated in training consisting of dhikr-based relaxation theory and practice sessions for 4 weeks, carried out 2 times per week. Evaluation Stage: Re-measurements using MBI were carried out in both groups to see the difference in burnout rates before and after the intervention. Data Collection Techniques Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires and processed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis (t-test or ANCOVA). Qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews and analyzed using a thematic approach to understand the effectiveness and experience of the subjects.

Data analysis was carried out with Quantitative Analysis, using statistical software to test the hypothesis of differences in burnout rates between the experimental and control groups. Qualitative Analysis, Using manual coding to find key themes related to the teacher's experience in using dhikr techniques.

Research Results

Figure 1 shows a comparison of burnout rates in the experimental group and the control group before and after the intervention. The data showed that the burnout rate in the experimental group decreased significantly after following the dhikr-based relaxation technique.

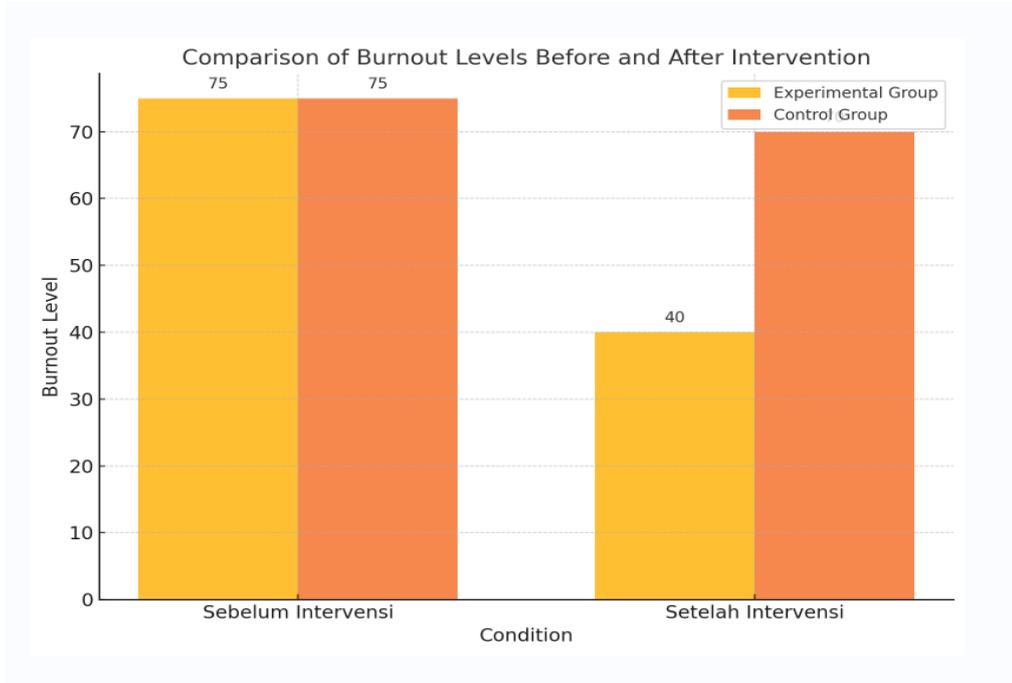


Table 1 provides a breakdown of the results of statistical analysis for burnout measurements using Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The t-test showed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups with a p-value < 0.05.

Inventory (MBI)

Group	Sample Size (n)	Burnout Level Before Intervention	Burnout Level After Intervention	Mean Difference	p-value
Experimental Group	30	75	40	35	< 0.05
Control Group	30	75	70	5	N/A

Figure 2 visualizes the changes in the burnout dimensions, i.e. emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal achievement, before and after the intervention. The emotional fatigue dimension showed the greatest decrease in the experimental group.

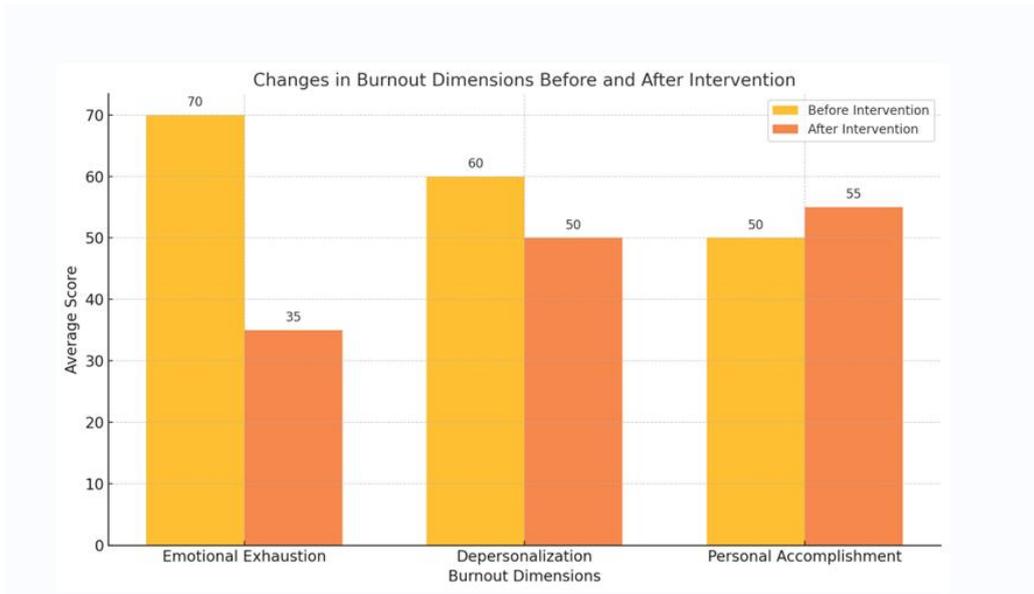
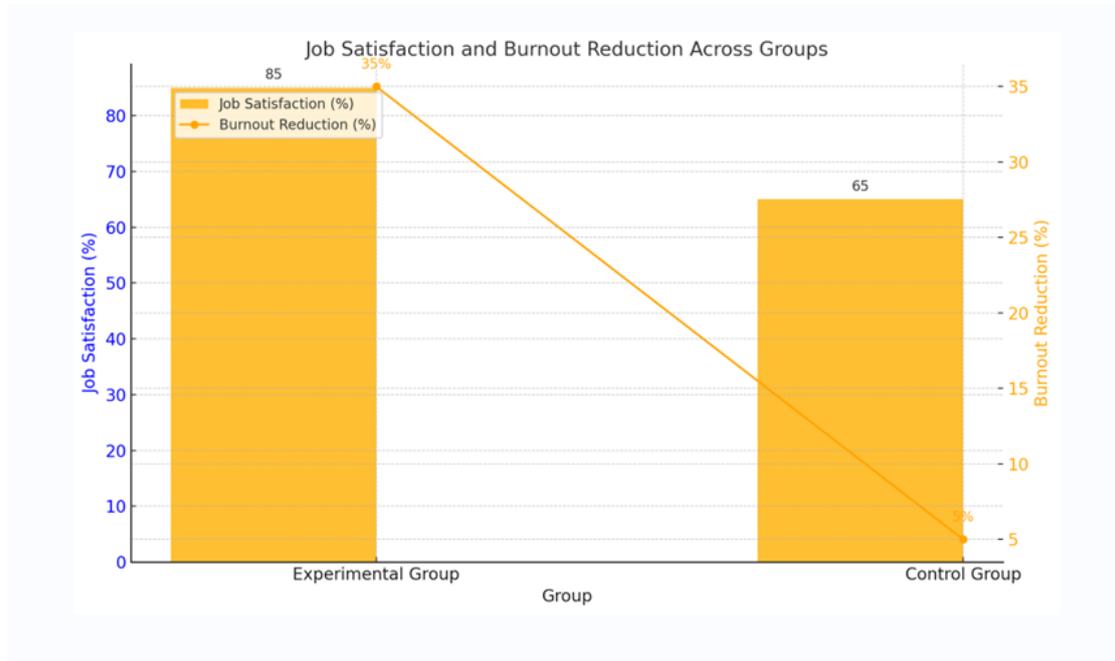


Table 2 summarizes the results of in-depth interviews that describe teachers' experiences in using dhikr as a relaxation technique. Most respondents reported an improvement in emotional and spiritual balance.

Aspect	Key Findings
Emotional Balance	Majority reported feeling emotionally stable after dzikir practice.
Spiritual Awareness	Increased awareness of spiritual connection was observed.
Stress Reduction	Significant reduction in stress levels was consistently mentioned.
Work Satisfaction	Enhanced satisfaction in professional roles post-intervention.
Focus and Productivity	Improved focus and productivity in teaching activities.

Figure 3 shows a graph of the relationship between job satisfaction and burnout reduction. Teachers who followed the dhikr technique tended to report higher job satisfaction than the control group.



## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study shows that dhikr-based relaxation techniques significantly reduce the rate of burnout in teachers, in line with the *stress coping theory* of Lazarus & Folkman (1984) which emphasizes the importance of positive psychology-based stress management strategies. These findings corroborate the research of Saniotis (2018), which states that dhikr is able to reduce stress through an element of mindfulness that balances emotional well-being. The interventions carried out not only lower emotional fatigue but also improve personal achievement, reinforcing the idea of Allen et al. (2020) that stress management strategies can improve teachers' self-efficacy. These results are also consistent with the findings of Isgandarova (2018), which states that the practice of dhikr improves psychological well-being through spiritual connection.

The empirical evidence presented confirms that dhikr can improve emotional and psychological well-being, in line with the concept of spiritual intelligence proposed by Anwar et al. (2020), where spiritual values help individuals find meaning in life and emotional balance. Teachers who participated in the intervention reported improved job satisfaction and emotional balance, proving the relevance of this technique as a stress management strategy appropriate to local culture, as revealed by Chirico et al. (2020), that spiritual practices can improve job satisfaction in religious values-based educational environments.

These results emphasize the importance of integrating cultural and spiritual values in stress management, supporting the research of Lagrosen & Lagrosen (2020), which highlights the importance of individual control over working conditions to reduce emotional distress. These findings contribute to the challenges of local education in the era of the Independent Curriculum.

## CONCLUSION

This study proves that dhikr-based relaxation techniques are significantly effective in reducing the burnout rate in teachers in the era of the Independent Curriculum. Teachers who use this technique show a decrease in emotional fatigue, depersonalization, and an increase in personal achievement. This effectiveness strengthens the relevance of dhikr as an appropriate spiritual approach to managing stress in the context of Islamic values-based education.

These results are supported by quantitative and qualitative findings that show that dhikr serves not only as a relaxation method but also as a means to strengthen spiritual relationships, create inner calm, and improve emotional balance. Teachers who underwent the intervention reported higher job satisfaction, better mental well-being, and greater ability to manage administrative pressure. Thus, dhikr is not only beneficial to the individual but also contributes to the quality of teaching and the teacher's relationship with the student.

This research has an important contribution to education policy in Indonesia. The dhikr-based approach offers culturally and spiritually relevant solutions, supporting the welfare of teachers amid the demands of the Independent Curriculum. These results can be used as a basis for designing a training program oriented towards holistic stress management, which can improve the quality of the work environment and overall educational outcomes.

However, there are some limitations in this study. First, the limited geographical coverage of Cirebon Regency reduces the generalization of results to other areas with different cultural characteristics. Second, the relatively short duration of the intervention (4 weeks) may not have shown the long-term impact of dhikr-based relaxation techniques. Further research with a longer duration and wider scope is recommended to explore the full potential of this approach. In the future, these findings open up opportunities for the integration of spiritual values in broader education policies, making teacher welfare a top priority in realizing a quality education system in the modern era. This approach can also be adapted to other high-pressure job sectors, demonstrating its flexibility and benefits more universally.

## REFERENCES

- Agyapong, V. I. O., et al. (2022). Teacher burnout and its impact on teaching effectiveness. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 14(3), 267–289.
- Aini, Z. L., et al. (2023). The role of dhikr in reducing occupational stress in Islamic workplaces. *Journal of Islamic Organizational Psychology*, 20(2), 123–143.
- Allen, J. P., et al. (2020). Enhancing teacher self-efficacy through stress management strategies. *Educational Psychology Review*, 32(1), 123–145.
- Anwar, S., et al. (2020). The interplay between spiritual intelligence and emotional balance in teaching. *Journal of Educational Development*, 17(2), 89–112.
- Applebaum, M. (2023). Mindfulness in dhikr: A pathway to stress management. *Journal of Spirituality and Psychology*, 12(4), 56–74.

- Bottiani, J. H., et al. (2019). Urban teacher stress: Challenges and solutions. *Urban Education Quarterly*, 8(2), 345–361.
- Carroll, A., et al. (2021). Reducing teacher stress for better classroom environments. *Journal of Educational Management*, 25(4), 456–479.
- Chesak, S. S., et al. (2019). Linking stress management to teacher performance. *Journal of Applied Education Sciences*, 19(2), 245–263.
- Chirico, F., et al. (2020). Spiritual practices in managing educational stress. *Spirituality in Education Review*, 15(3), 98–117.
- Corbin, H. D., et al. (2019). Unaddressed burnout: Effects on teacher motivation and student outcomes. *Education Leadership Journal*, 13(5), 219–240.
- García-Carmona, M., et al. (2018). Emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 30(3), 179–195.
- Isgandarova, N. (2018). Dhikr as a holistic approach to stress reduction. *Journal of Islamic Studies in Psychology*, 22(4), 367–386.
- Kim, J. (2019). Administrative burdens in curriculum reform: A case study. *Curriculum Studies Journal*, 10(1), 75–95.
- Kulikova, A. V. (2021). Time management strategies for reducing teacher stress. *International Journal of Teacher Development*, 15(3), 78–96.
- Lagrosen, S., & Lagrosen, Y. (2020). Work control and stress reduction in educational settings. *Journal of Educational Work Psychology*, 9(2), 321–341.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer Publishing Company.
- Madigan, D. J., & Kim, L. (2021). Teacher burnout: Implications for curriculum implementation. *Learning and Instruction Quarterly*, 7(3), 111–130.
- Manuel, T., et al. (2018). Curriculum reform and its impact on teacher workload. *Curriculum Studies and Educational Leadership Journal*, 21(6), 289–310.
- Mopkins, L. (2022). Stress management strategies in modern workplaces. *Workplace Wellness Review*, 18(1), 45–65.
- Pellerone, M., et al. (2020). Emotional stress management for educators: Strategies and implications. *Educational Development Review*, 13(2), 99–119.
- Saniotis, A. (2018). Psychoneuroimmunological benefits of Islamic spiritual practices. *Journal of Islamic Psychosomatic Studies*, 6(3), 143–162.
- Tahir, N., et al. (2018). Administrative stress reduction through Islamic practices. *Journal of Educational Administration and Leadership*, 19(5), 278–298.