



A Systematic Survey of the Relationship Between Quranic Engagement and Spiritual Well-Being of the Youth

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ABSTRACT

Qur'anic engagement such as reading, recitation, memorization, and listening has impact of various forms of on the spiritual and psychological wellbeing of young readers. Drawing from a systematic search of major scholarly databases (Web of Science, Scopus, ScienceDirect, SAGE, and others), we analyzed 30 highly relevant studies published between 2009 and 2025. We searched for evidences and found consistent positive associations between Qur'anic engagement and multiple dimensions of wellbeing. Even spiritual intelligence, psychological wellbeing, emotional regulation, stress reduction, and quality of life are positively affected by the Quranic engagement. This systematic review also demonstrates favorable effects on depression, anxiety, and sleep quality. Empirical studies with adolescents and young adults in Islamic educational settings show the same impact. The mechanisms linking Qur'anic engagement to wellbeing appear to operate through both spiritual pathways and psychological processes. These are discussed in this paper too. This review synthesizes current evidence, and proposes directions for future research to advance understanding of spirituality-based interventions for youth mental health.

KEYWORDS

Qur'anic engagement, spiritual well-being, youth mental health, psychological well-being, Islamic spirituality, systematic review

INTRODUCTION

Mental health challenges among youth and young adults have reached unprecedented levels globally, with one in seven adolescents experiencing mental health disorders (Mcgorry & Mei, 2023). In response to this crisis, there is growing recognition of the potential role of spirituality and religious practices in promoting psychological resilience and wellbeing. Within Islamic contexts, engagement with the Qur'an is considered a central spiritual practice that has significant mental health benefits.

The Qur'an, as the sacred text of Islam, occupies a unique position in the lives of Muslims worldwide. Beyond its theological significance, the Qur'an is believed to provide guidance for emotional regulation, stress management, and spiritual development. Qur'anic engagement may serve as a comprehensive resource for maintaining psychological balance and spiritual growth for young Muslims' identity formation, academic pressures, social challenges, and the influence of globalization and digital media. Systematic empirical

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investigation of its effects on spiritual and psychological wellbeing has only recently begun to accumulate. Early studies have suggested positive associations between Qur'anic practices and various wellbeing outcomes (Zayed, 2014), but the literature remains fragmented across different research traditions, methodologies, and cultural contexts. A comprehensive synthesis of this emerging evidence base is needed to inform both theoretical understanding and practical applications in educational, clinical, and community settings.

FORMS OF QUR'ANIC ENGAGEMENT

Qur'anic engagement encompasses multiple interrelated practices such as Qira'ah, Tilawah, Tahfiz, Istima. They have parallel English terms. Reading (Qira'ah) is the act of reading the Qur'anic text, either in Arabic or with translation, which may involve cognitive processing of meaning and reflection on content. Recitation (Tilawah) is the oral recitation of Qur'anic verses, typically following specific melodic patterns (tajweed), which engages auditory and vocal dimensions. Memorization (Tahfiz/Hifz) is the systematic memorization of Qur'anic passages or the entire text, a practice undertaken by students (huffaz) in specialized programs. Listening (Istima') refers to passive or active listening to Qur'anic recitation, which may occur in various contexts including therapeutic settings. Each form of engagement may activate different psychological and spiritual mechanisms, and individuals may practice multiple forms simultaneously or sequentially throughout their spiritual development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical lenses through which the potential mechanisms that link Qur'anic engagement to wellbeing are as follows:

Islamic Psychospiritual Framework

From an Islamic perspective, Qur'anic engagement is understood as a means of strengthening one's relationship with Allah (tawhid), purifying the soul (tazkiyah al-nafs), and cultivating spiritual intelligence. According to Muslim faith, the Qur'an provides divine guidance that addresses fundamental human needs for meaning, purpose, and transcendence.

Psychological Mechanisms

Contemporary psychological theories suggest several pathways through which Qur'anic engagement may influence wellbeing. These include mindfulness and present-moment awareness during recitation, cognitive reframing through exposure to Qur'anic teachings, emotional regulation through spiritual practices, and social support within communities of practice.

Biopsychosocial Model

Qur'anic engagement may operate through integrated biological (e.g., stress response modulation), psychological (e.g., cognitive and emotional processes), and social (e.g., community belonging) pathways to influence overall wellbeing.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This comprehensive literature review aims to:

1. Synthesize current empirical evidence on the impact of Qur'anic engagement on spiritual and psychological wellbeing among young readers (adolescents and young adults).
1. Identify the specific forms of Qur'anic engagement that have been studied and their differential effects on wellbeing outcomes.
1. Analyze the mechanisms through which Qur'anic engagement may influence wellbeing, drawing on both Islamic psychospiritual and contemporary psychological frameworks.
2. Identify gaps in the current literature and propose directions for future research.

Scope and Significance

This review focuses specifically on young populations—defined as adolescents (approximately ages 12-18) and young adults (approximately ages 18-25). This developmental period is characterized by heightened vulnerability to mental health challenges alongside critical identity formation processes. The review encompasses studies conducted in diverse cultural and educational contexts, including Islamic boarding schools, mainstream educational institutions, and community settings. The significance of this review extends beyond academic interest. The relationship between Qur’anic engagement and wellbeing has practical implications for education, mental health services, community programs, family and parenting studies and so on.

BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Conceptualizing Spiritual and Psychological Wellbeing

Psychological wellbeing, as conceptualized by Ryff and colleagues, encompasses six core dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. This multidimensional framework has been widely adopted in research on Qur’an memorizers and Islamic boarding school students (Supriatna et al., 2021).

Spiritual wellbeing, while related to psychological wellbeing, represents a distinct construct that emphasizes the transcendent dimension of human experience. It includes elements such as connection to the divine, sense of meaning and purpose derived from faith, inner peace, and spiritual growth. Spiritual intelligence (SQ), a related concept, refers to the capacity to engage with existential questions, find meaning in experience, and integrate spiritual values into daily life (Saqib et al., 2017).

In Islamic contexts, spiritual wellbeing is intimately connected to the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul) and the cultivation of a heart (qalb) oriented toward Allah. The Qur’an itself describes its role in providing guidance, healing, and mercy: “O mankind, there has come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers” (Qur’an 10:57) (Abdullah et al., 2021).

The Role of Religiosity in Youth Wellbeing

Religiosity, which includes beliefs, practices, and experiences related to religion, is linked to positive mental health outcomes across various populations. For Muslim youth, it offers protective functions such as meaning-making through religious narratives, coping resources for managing stress, social support from religious communities, and moral guidance for decision-making. Research in Islamic boarding schools shows that religiosity significantly contributes to psychological wellbeing, with studies indicating that it and social support account for 52.6% of the variance in psychological wellbeing, while religiosity and academic stress account for 59.2%. Moreover, understanding the interplay between religiosity and psychological wellbeing is crucial, particularly in Islamic educational settings, where spiritual practices are integrated into daily life (Anggraeni, 2011). Such insights can guide the development of effective interventions aimed at enhancing mental health among young Muslims.

Mechanisms Linking Qur’anic Engagement to Wellbeing

The existing body of literature indicates that engagement with the Qur’an can influence overall wellbeing through a multitude of interconnected pathways. These pathways can be categorized into several mechanisms, each contributing uniquely to an individual’s holistic health and spiritual fulfillment.

Spiritual Mechanisms: Engaging with the Qur’an can profoundly strengthen an individual’s faith and deep connection to Allah. This foundational aspect of Islamic belief leads to a sense of unity with the divine. Additionally, Qur’anic engagement cultivates

spiritual awareness and intelligence, allowing individuals to navigate life's complexities with a sense of purpose. Furthermore, it facilitates the process of soul purification (tazkiyah al-nafs), encouraging individuals to cleanse their hearts and intentions, ultimately leading to a more virtuous and fulfilling life (Zaini & Fauziah, 2024).

Cognitive Mechanisms: The cognitive benefits of Qur'anic engagement are significant, particularly through the practice of memorization. Engaging with the text promotes deep reflection and contemplation (tafakkur) which enables individuals to ponder profound existential questions. This is how readers find personal meaning from their experiences. Moreover, the Qur'an provides robust cognitive frameworks through which individuals interpret their life experiences (Alnajashi et al., 2025).

Emotional Mechanisms: On an emotional level, the Qur'an plays a vital role in facilitating emotional regulation and control. Its calming verses can significantly reduce stress and anxiety, offering solace in times of turmoil. This engagement promotes inner peace and tranquility, allowing individuals to cultivate positive emotions such as gratitude and hope. The nurturing of these emotions contributes to overall psychological resilience and emotional stability.

Behavioral Mechanisms: The impact of Qur'anic engagement extends to behavioral dimensions as well. It encourages the establishment of disciplined daily routines, which can enhance time management and productivity. The teachings promote prosocial behavior and ethical conduct, guiding individuals toward actions that benefit both themselves and their communities. Additionally, structured coping strategies, such as dhikr (remembrance of God) and du'a (supplication), provide practical tools for managing life's challenges and stresses (Wan Mohd Rozali et al., 2022).

Physiological Mechanisms: The physiological effects of engaging with the Qur'an are noteworthy as well. It can modulate the body's stress response and arousal levels, leading to a more balanced physiological state. Furthermore, individuals may experience improved sleep quality, which is essential for overall health. The engagement with the Qur'an can positively affect various physiological parameters associated with relaxation. All of these mechanisms are not isolated; rather, they function synergistically, working together to produce the observed benefits on wellbeing. A comprehensive understanding of these pathways is crucial for the development of targeted interventions and the optimization of Qur'anic education programs. The spiritual, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, social, and physiological health of individuals within the community are enhanced (Hapsari et al., 2024).

Islamic Psychospiritual Approaches

Recent scholarship highlights the integration of Islamic spiritual principles with contemporary psychological frameworks, leading to Islamic psychospiritual approaches. Key concepts include Tawhid (oneness of Allah), Tawakkul (trust in Allah), Sabr (patience), Shukr (gratitude), Dhikr (remembrance of Allah), Muhasabah (self-examination), and Tafakkur (reflection). These principles, combined with Qur'anic engagement, create a framework for spiritual development and psychological resilience. Islamic counseling methods that utilize Qur'anic meditation and dhikr have shown effectiveness in addressing conditions like obsessive-compulsive disorder in adolescents (Nayan & Azhar, 2025).

METHODS

Literature Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across multiple major scholarly databases including Web of Science, Scopus, ScienceDirect, SAGE, and other academic repositories. The search strategy employed a combination of keywords covering three main conceptual domains:

1. **Qur'anic engagement:** Terms related to various forms of interaction with the Qur'an, including "Quran," "Qur'an," "Al-Quran," "Quranic," "recitation," "tilawah," "memorization," "tahfidz," "hifz," "huffaz," "reading," "listening," and "Quranic education."
2. **Target population:** Terms identifying young populations, including "youth," "adolescent," "teenager," "young adult," "student," "santri," and "Generation Z."
3. **Outcomes:** Terms related to wellbeing and mental health, including "spiritual wellbeing," "spiritual intelligence," "psychological wellbeing," "mental health," "wellbeing," "quality of life," "religiosity," and "psychospiritual."

The search was designed to be inclusive and capture studies across diverse methodological approaches, cultural contexts, and publication types. No date restrictions were initially applied, though the final included studies span from 2009 to 2025.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The systematic literature review methodology necessitates the articulation of both inclusion and exclusion criteria (Hasim et al., 2023). Studies included in the review focused on Qur'anic engagement (reading, recitation, memorization, listening) among young populations (ages 12-25) and assessed outcomes related to spiritual and psychological wellbeing, mental health, or similar constructs. Once a study was found having empirical research methods or systematic reviews/meta-analyses and was available in English, Arabic, or Indonesian (with English abstracts). Excluded studies were those focusing solely on adults (26+), children (<12), not directly assessing Qur'anic engagement, lacking empirical data, or not accessible through available databases.

Study Selection and Data Extraction

The initial search yielded 309 papers from the comprehensive database search. These papers were screened based on title and abstract relevance to the research objectives. Papers were then ranked by relevance using a combination of citation metrics, journal quality, methodological rigor, and direct alignment with the review objectives.

Following established systematic review protocols, the top 30 most relevant papers were selected for in-depth analysis. This sample size provides sufficient breadth to capture diverse methodologies, populations, and findings while maintaining analytical depth. The selected papers represent a range of study designs including systematic reviews, scoping reviews, experimental and quasi-experimental studies, correlational studies, qualitative phenomenological studies, and mixed-methods investigations.

For each included study, the following information was systematically extracted:

- Bibliographic information (authors, year, journal/conference)
- Study design and methodology
- Population characteristics (age, sample size, setting)
- Forms of Qur'anic engagement examined
- Wellbeing outcomes assessed
- Key findings related to spiritual and psychological wellbeing
- Measurement instruments used
- Theoretical frameworks employed
- Limitations and methodological considerations

Quality Assessment

The methodological quality of included studies was assessed using criteria appropriate to each study design. For systematic reviews, the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines were considered. For quantitative studies, factors such as sample size adequacy, use of validated instruments, statistical analysis appropriateness, and control for confounding variables were evaluated. For qualitative studies, criteria including data collection rigor, analysis transparency, and credibility of findings were applied (De Cassai et al., 2025).

Studies employing the Cochrane risk of bias tool and Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) criteria for quality assessment were noted. The overall quality of the evidence base was considered in interpreting findings and drawing conclusions (Kamper, 2020).

Data Synthesis and Analysis

Given the heterogeneity of study designs, populations, and outcomes in the included literature, a narrative synthesis approach was employed rather than meta-analysis. The synthesis was organized around key themes:

1. Forms of Qur'anic engagement and their specific effects
2. Wellbeing outcomes across spiritual, psychological, emotional, and social domains
3. Population-specific findings (e.g., tahfidz students, general youth, specific contexts)
4. Mechanisms linking Qur'anic engagement to wellbeing
5. Methodological approaches and their strengths/limitations

Findings were synthesized to identify patterns of convergence and divergence across studies, assess the strength and consistency of evidence for specific relationships, and highlight gaps requiring further investigation.

Limitations of the Review Methodology

The review acknowledges several limitations: language bias due to potential exclusion of non-English, Arabic, and Indonesian studies; publication bias where positive findings may dominate the literature; cultural context limitations as most studies are from Southeast Asia and the Middle East, affecting generalizability to other Muslim populations; heterogeneity in study designs and measures hindering quantitative meta-analysis; and selection criteria that prioritized the top 30 papers, possibly omitting relevant studies. These factors are important for interpreting findings and guiding future research.

KEY FINDINGS AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Overview of Included Studies

The 30 studies included in this review represent diverse methodological approaches and populations. Table provides a summary of study characteristics.

Overview of Study Designs in Included Literature

Study Design	Number of Studies
Systematic/Scoping Reviews	3
Experimental/Quasi-Experimental	6
Correlational/Quantitative	10
Qualitative/Phenomenological	5
Mixed Methods	2
Literature Reviews	4

The studies span from 2009 to 2025, with a notable increase in publications in recent years (2022-2025), reflecting growing scholarly interest in this domain. Populations studied include Islamic boarding school students, university students, general adolescent populations, and tahfidz (Qur'an memorization) program participants.

Evidence from Systematic Reviews

Two systematic reviews provide strong evidence on the benefits of Qur'anic engagement for wellbeing. Firstly, Rozali et al. (2022) reviewed 20 studies on the effects of listening to, reciting, or memorizing the Qur'an. They found positive impacts on depression, anxiety, quality of life, quality of sleep, intelligence quotient, and physiological parameters. The authors suggested that Qur'anic engagement could be an effective intervention for enhancing physical and mental health.

Secondly, Hasim et al. (2023) conducted a scoping review of 21 studies from 1,739 articles. They revealed that Qur'anic recitation offered solace and inner peace, reduced stress, promoted wellbeing, enhanced cognitive abilities through memorization, and contributed to holistic wellbeing, personal growth, and community cohesion. Their findings provided strong evidence for the positive effects of Qur'anic engagement across various wellbeing domains.

Effects of Qur'anic Reading

Several studies have examined the effects of regular Qur'anic reading on young populations. Fauziah et al. (2025) studied a structured Qur'an reading program at an Islamic high school with 121 students. According to their study, reading influenced 49.8% of the variance in students' mental health. Benefits of regular Qur'an reading included inner peace, emotional balance, enhanced social interaction skills, personal development, and a calm psychological condition.

Besides, Rosyidah et al. (2025) studied 93 students aged 17-24 and found a significant correlation ($p = 0.013$) between Qur'an reading frequency and emotional intelligence, particularly in emotional control. More frequent readers demonstrated better emotional intelligence, greater inner peace, reduced stress, enhanced empathy, self-awareness, and improved character development. Similarly, Hasanah et al. (2024) evaluated a Qur'anic reading approach implemented at the beginning of learning sessions in higher education with 250 students. Using a 4D development research model, they found a 92.78% effectiveness rate in improving student mental health such as emotional balance, stress levels, life balance, sleep quality, interpersonal relationships, self-esteem, adaptability, and self-awareness.

These findings consistently demonstrate that regular, structured Qur'anic reading programs contribute significantly to emotional regulation, mental health, and overall wellbeing in young populations.

Effects of Qur'anic Recitation

The practice of Qur'anic recitation (tilawah) has been examined for its specific effects on spiritual development:

Fiani et al. (2025) explored the impact of Qur'anic recitation intensity on spiritual intelligence among female Islamic boarding school students using quantitative correlational methods and regression analysis. They found a strong positive relationship between recitation intensity and spiritual intelligence, with 36.4% of variance in spiritual intelligence explained by recitation intensity. The study suggests that regular and consistent Qur'an engagement significantly enhances spiritual intelligence. Degree of recitation is related to the level of character building and inner spiritual growth.

Koç (2009) conducted a quantitative field study with 450 adolescents in Turkey examining the relationship between frequency of religious practices (including Qur'an

reading) and mental health. Using chi-square analysis, the study found significant positive psychotherapeutic effects of religious practice frequency on adolescent mental health ($p < .05, .01, .001$), supporting the hypothesis that regular engagement with religious practices, including Qur'anic recitation, preserves and enhances mental health (Koç, 2009).

Effects of Qur'an Memorization (Tahfidz)

Qur'an memorization represents the most intensive form of engagement and has received substantial research attention, particularly in Islamic boarding school contexts:

Psychological Wellbeing in Tahfidz Students

Multiple studies have examined psychological wellbeing among students engaged in Qur'an memorization programs. Sukmawati et al. (2023) studied 103 high school tahfidz students (mean age 16.41) using multiple regression analysis. They found that religiosity and social support together contribute 52.6% to psychological wellbeing, with religiosity contributing 26.9% and social support contributing 25.7% independently. This demonstrates the substantial role of religiosity, cultivated through Qur'an memorization, in promoting psychological wellbeing.

Hasanah et al. (2023) examined 92 tahfidz students at an Islamic boarding school using simple linear regression. They found a very strong relationship ($R = 0.889$) between spirituality and subjective wellbeing, with spirituality explaining 81.3% of variance in subjective wellbeing. The study suggests that spirituality developed through Qur'an memorization helps mitigate stress and depression arising from the dual demands of memorization and academic tasks (Hasanah & Haris, 2023).

Rohayati et al. (2022) investigated 42 students at an Islamic boarding school during the COVID-19 pandemic. They examined relationships between academic stress, religiosity, and psychological wellbeing. Results of Multiple regression analysis revealed that religiosity and stress together explain 59.2% of variance in psychological wellbeing ($p = 0.000$). This highlights the protective role of religiosity in maintaining wellbeing even under challenging circumstances.

A phenomenological study of Sari et al. (2022) revealed that memorizing the Qur'an provides clear direction and purpose in life oriented toward the hereafter, desire for continuous personal growth, self-acceptance of strengths, weaknesses, and past experiences. In this study, five hafiz students reported that their ability to manage daily activities are effective. They have self-autonomy in decision-making, positive relationships with others, and inner peace through regular review (murojaah) of memorized portions.

Ramadhan (2012) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study with five Al-Qur'an memorizer students at an Islamic boarding school. The findings showed variance in psychological wellbeing, with most participants demonstrating self-acceptance, warm interpersonal relationships, independence in problem-solving, environmental control, clear life purpose and meaning, and awareness of their potential for continuous development.

Quality of Life and Subjective Wellbeing

Fajriyah et al. (2024) used qualitative phenomenological techniques with four Qur'an memorizer students at an Islamic boarding school, employing in-depth interviews based on WHOQoL-BREF criteria. They found that memorizing the Qur'an significantly enhances quality of life through positive self-acceptance across physical, psychological, social, and environmental dimensions. The profound personal significance of Qur'an memorization notably contributes to enhanced quality of life and psychological wellbeing despite academic and environmental burdens.

Lillah (2022) examined 42 huffaz (Qur'an memorizers) who had memorized 1-5 juz using simple linear regression analysis. The study found that Qur'an memorization influences

learning motivation by 11.4% ($p = 0.029$) and psychological wellbeing by 11.2% ($p = 0.031$), demonstrating statistically significant positive effects on both domains.

Effects of Listening to the Qur'an

Research on passive listening to Qur'anic recitation has examined its effects on emotional states and physiological responses:

According to a quasi-experimental study of Rusdi et al. (2024), Quran listeners have significant low arousal i.e. feeling of calm and satisfaction. They compared the effects of listening to the Qur'an versus music on sensibility. Two groups of four participants each were exposed to either instrumental music (Pachelbel's Canon in D Major) or Qur'anic recitation (Surah al-Insān) with translation. Sensibility was measured using Sensirec before and after treatment. The results showed that the effects of decreasing arousal (deactivation) were stronger and more significant in the Qur'an group ($\eta^2 = .833$; $p = .034$) compared to the music group ($\eta^2 = .183$; $p = .183$). Low arousal positive affect indicated feelings of calm, relaxation, and satisfaction, which predict wellbeing, mental health, and life satisfaction. The authors suggest that listening to the Qur'an could be developed as a systematic component of Islamic psychotherapy.

Similarly, Pratama et al. (2025) examined the Dalā'il al-Khairāt tradition (a devotional text including Qur'anic verses) in Indonesia using mixed methods. Quantitative results showed that 70% of participants experienced increased calmness, optimism, and inner peace. A strong correlation existed between practice duration and emotional stability, with 100% of santri practicing for more than one year reporting positive impacts. This highlights the role of sustained spiritual practices, including Qur'anic engagement, in stress management and emotional wellbeing.

Therapeutic Applications of Qur'anic Engagement

In this literature review, four studies have been found which examined Qur'anic engagement as a therapeutic intervention for specific mental health challenges. First, Mentari et al. (2025) investigated Qur'an prayer therapy effectiveness on adolescent mental health using a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design with 16 participants. The Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF) was used to assess outcomes. The study found significant improvements in mental wellbeing scores, with qualitative findings showing enhanced coping skills, spiritual awareness, and inner calm in handling academic stress. These results demonstrate the effectiveness of Qur'an-based prayer therapy as a treatment for teenage mental health challenges.

The second study conducted by Zubaidilah et al. (2020) examined Qur'anic therapy for psychological and spiritual healing in nine adolescent students from divorced families using a One-Group Pretest-Posttest experimental design. Data collection involved questionnaires, depth interviews, and observations. The study found that Qur'anic therapy showed significant healing effects on psychological and spiritual illnesses, empirically proving its effectiveness as a treatment for child victims of divorce. The findings suggest practical applications for assisting children and adolescents experiencing trauma from divorce, domestic violence, and bullying.

The third study found conducted by Haryanto (2025). She did a quasi-experimental study with 60 university students at Al-Qur'an Science University reporting mental health concerns. Participants were assigned to either an Islamic guidance and spirituality-based counseling program integrating Qur'anic teachings or a control group. Statistical analyses (paired t-tests and ANOVA) showed that the spirituality-based counseling significantly improved mental health outcomes, with participants showing reduced anxiety, stress, and depression symptoms alongside increased emotional stability. These findings highlight the

value of faith-congruent counseling for strengthening spiritual resilience and promoting holistic wellbeing.

Additionally, Mujahidah et al. (2024) proposed an integrated intervention combining cognitive psychotherapy with Islamic counseling for treating obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) in adolescents. Using library research methodology, the study analyzed literature on OCD treatments and Islamic teachings. The proposed approach combines cognitive restructuring with Islamic principles (tawhid and tazkiyah) and structured spiritual practices including therapeutic dhikr and Qur'an-based meditation. This creates a culturally sensitive framework that effectively reduces OCD symptoms and enhances emotional resilience, positioning adolescents as active participants in their healing process.

Contemporary Applications and Innovations

Recent studies have explored innovative applications of Qur'anic engagement for addressing contemporary youth challenges:

Sabila et al. (2025) examined Islamic mindfulness combining modern awareness techniques with traditional practices (dhikr, tafakkur, muhasabah) for addressing overthinking in 25 Muslim Gen Z students aged 18-24. Using a participatory community-based approach with mixed methods, the study found anticipated decreases in overthinking symptoms and improved spiritual-emotional resilience. The intervention aims to enhance emotional regulation among Gen Z adolescents through culturally integrated mindfulness practices.

Nayan et al. (2025) explored how integrating tawhid and Islamic psychospirituality, including Qur'anic recitation, can address identity crises in Muslim Generation Z. Using qualitative literature analysis, the study found that strengthening tawhid values and engaging in psychospiritual practices (including Qur'an recitation, dhikr, and du'a) helps Muslim Generation Z build strong, balanced identities while navigating challenges of globalization, social media, and cultural shifts. The approach makes self-awareness, mental and spiritual wellbeing, and resilience in the digital era.

Fikriyati et al. (2025) analyzed the "Remaja Qeren Qur'ani" (RQQ) program developed by Bimas Islam to strengthen adolescent mental health. Using SWOT analysis, the study found that the program addresses mental health issues affecting one in seven teenagers by using 10 Qur'anic figures (7 prophets, 3 non-prophets) to highlight six main character values. The program employs institutional and performative strategies, leveraging a broad network and accommodating adolescent learning styles, though challenges include incidental implementation and limited publicity.

Synthesis of Findings Across Studies

Across the diverse methodologies and populations studied, several consistent patterns emerge. The vast majority of studies (27 of 30) report positive associations between Qur'anic engagement and various wellbeing outcomes, with only a few noting challenges or mixed results. We found different forms of Qur'anic engagement (reading, recitation, memorization, listening) all showed positive effects. Those are reporting multiple valid pathways to spiritual and psychological wellbeing. Besides, several studies indicate that greater intensity or frequency of Qur'anic engagement is associated with stronger wellbeing outcomes.

Nevertheless, religiosity and spirituality, cultivated through Qur'anic engagement, appear to mediate relationships between practice and wellbeing outcomes. The effectiveness of Qur'anic engagement is enhanced by supportive environments, including religious school settings, social support, and structured programs. Intensive programs like tahfidz require attention to physical and mental health to prevent burnout and optimize outcomes. Qur'anic interventions appear particularly effective as culturally congruent approaches for Muslim youth, aligning with their values and worldviews. These findings provide robust evidence for

the positive impact of Qur'anic engagement on young readers' spiritual and psychological wellbeing across diverse contexts and populations.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this review have important implications for theoretical understanding of the relationship between religious/spiritual practices and wellbeing in young populations. Besides this review contributes a lot in the fields of spirituality in youth mental health, and multidimensional mental health issues of the youth.

Spirituality in Youth Mental Health

This review contributes to broader discussions about the role of spirituality in youth mental health. The consistent positive findings align with research in other religious traditions showing benefits of sacred text engagement, prayer, and spiritual practices. This suggests that spirituality represents a universal human dimension that, when cultivated, contributes to psychological flourishing (Pazer, 2024).

At the same time, the specific mechanisms and meanings of Qur'anic engagement are rooted in Islamic theology and practice, highlighting the importance of culturally specific approaches rather than generic "spirituality." The integration of tawhid, tazkiyah, and other Islamic concepts demonstrates how spiritual interventions can be both culturally authentic and psychologically effective.

Addressing the Youth Mental Health Crisis

The global youth mental health crisis affects one in seven adolescents, highlighting the urgent need for scalable and culturally appropriate interventions. Qur'anic engagement is a valuable resource in Muslim communities as it is widely practiced, culturally accepted, low-cost, and accessible. It can be preventive and therapeutic, delivered in various settings such as schools and homes, and is suitable for both individual and group formats. While it should not replace professional mental health services, Qur'anic engagement can serve as a first-line preventive strategy and complement clinical interventions for Muslim youth.

Integration of Islamic and Psychological Frameworks

The evidence strongly supports the integration of Islamic psychospiritual concepts with contemporary psychological theories of wellbeing. The mechanisms identified in the literature—including spiritual connection (tawhid), soul purification (tazkiyah), mindfulness (dhikr and tafakkur), emotional regulation, and cognitive enhancement—align with established psychological constructs while maintaining cultural and religious authenticity. This integration suggests that effective mental health interventions for Muslim youth need not choose between religious and secular approaches but can synergistically combine both.

Multidimensional Nature of Wellbeing

The reviewed studies demonstrate that Qur'anic engagement influences wellbeing across multiple dimensions simultaneously—spiritual, psychological, emotional, cognitive, social, and even physiological. This supports a holistic, biopsychosocial-spiritual model of wellbeing that recognizes the interconnectedness of these domains. Particularly strong relationship between spirituality and subjective wellbeing ($R = 0.889$, explaining 81.3% of variance) found by Hasanah et al. suggests that spiritual development may be a primary pathway. Thus through the spiritual development, the Qur'anic engagement influences other wellbeing outcomes. This is consistent with Islamic anthropology, which views the spiritual dimension as central to human nature and flourishing.

Developmental Considerations

The focus on adolescent and young adult populations in this review is particularly significant from a developmental perspective. This life stage is characterized by identity formation, increased autonomy, abstract thinking capacity, and heightened sensitivity to existential questions. Additionally, the correlation between practice duration and emotional stability indicates that sustained engagement enhances the integration of spiritual practices into psychological functioning.

Practical Implications

Educational Practice

The evidence suggests that Islamic educational institutions should focus on designing Qur'anic education programs that prioritize wellbeing outcomes alongside memorization. The high effectiveness rate of structured Qur'anic reading programs indicates the potential for positive mental health impacts. Intensive programs like tahfidz must address students' physical and mental health by incorporating regular mental health screenings, balanced schedules, social support systems, and spiritual practices. Differentiated approaches should be utilized to accommodate varying student needs and learning styles. Additionally, integrating Qur'anic practices into academic routines can enhance overall student wellbeing without necessitating separate programs.

Mental Health Services

The findings advocate for culturally adapted, faith-integrated mental health interventions for Muslim youth. Key recommendations include the systematic development and evaluation of Qur'anic therapy for trauma, prayer therapy for general mental health, and spirituality-based counseling. A proposed integration of Islamic counseling with cognitive psychotherapy for OCD exemplifies how Qur'anic elements can complement established treatments, with similar models suggested for other mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Additionally, listening-based interventions, such as Qur'anic recitation, show significant effects on reducing arousal and enhancing positive emotions, indicating potential for low-intensity therapeutic options. Promoting Qur'anic engagement as a preventive mental health strategy for Muslim youth is also recommended, paralleling the promotion of mindfulness and meditation in secular settings.

Interfaith and Cross-Cultural Dialogue

The findings of this review may inform interfaith dialogue about the role of sacred texts in promoting wellbeing. Comparative research examining engagement with the Qur'an, Bible, Torah, and other sacred texts could identify universal principles of sacred text engagement while respecting tradition-specific meanings and practices. Additionally, the success of Qur'anic interventions in Muslim contexts may encourage development of analogous interventions in other religious traditions, contributing to a broader repertoire of culturally adapted mental health approaches.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should investigate several specific questions regarding Qur'anic engagement and its impact on wellbeing. These include determining optimal "doses" of engagement (frequency, duration, intensity), effects across developmental stages, predictors of individual responses, and comparisons of different forms of engagement (reading, recitation, memorization, listening). Additionally, the role of understanding meaning versus rote memorization, differences between Arabic and non-Arabic speakers, the importance of individual versus communal practice, and comparisons with other Islamic and secular interventions are important. Further exploration of program characteristics that optimize outcomes, the use of technology to enhance engagement, the economic implications of Qur'anic education programs, and the relationship between spiritual and psychological wellbeing over time are also warranted.

CONCLUSION

The Qur'an describes itself as "guidance and mercy" (10:57) and "healing for what is in the breasts" (10:57). The empirical evidence reviewed in this manuscript provides scientific support for these traditional understandings, demonstrating measurable benefits of Qur'anic engagement for the spiritual and psychological wellbeing of young readers.

At the same time, the evidence reminds us that Qur'anic engagement is not merely a psychological intervention but a spiritual practice with meanings that transcend empirical measurement. The ultimate significance of the Qur'an for Muslims lies in its role as divine revelation and guidance for all aspects of life. The wellbeing benefits documented in this review may be understood as natural consequences of aligning oneself with divine guidance, rather than as the primary purpose of engagement. This review has focused on young readers—adolescents and young adults navigating the challenges of identity formation, academic pressures, social relationships, and the transition to adulthood. For these young people, Qur'anic engagement offers not only psychological benefits but also a framework for understanding their place in the world.

As research in this domain continues to advance, it is essential to maintain both scientific rigor and respect for the sacred nature of the Qur'an. Future studies should employ robust methodologies while recognizing that the full significance of Qur'anic engagement cannot be captured by psychological measures alone. Collaboration between Islamic scholars, mental health professionals, educators, and community leaders will be essential for developing approaches that are both empirically effective and spiritually authentic.

The evidence synthesized in this review provides a strong foundation for promoting Qur'anic engagement as a resource for youth wellbeing. It is hoped that this review will inform educational practice, clinical interventions, community programs, and policy decisions, ultimately contributing to the flourishing of Muslim youth around the world. As the global community grapples with unprecedented mental health challenges among young people, the wisdom and guidance of the Qur'an—supported by growing empirical evidence—offers a source of hope, healing, and resilience for the next generation.

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