

## Tahajud Prayer as a Spiritual Intervention in Coping with Stress among Final-Year Students

Muhammad Fajar<sup>1\*</sup>, Afrit Syahputra<sup>2</sup>, Muflichan Kamil<sup>3</sup>, Apdi Lubis<sup>3</sup>

\*1, 2, 3, 4Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara

\*<sup>1</sup>email: [mfajar@gmail.com](mailto:mfajar@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>email: [afitsyh@gmail.com](mailto:afitsyh@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>email: [kamilmuflic@gmail.com](mailto:kamilmuflic@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup>email: [apdilbs@gmail.com](mailto:apdilbs@gmail.com)

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<b>Article history:</b> Received: June 20, 2025 Revised: July 26, 2025 Accepted: August 26, 2025 Available Online: September 30, 2025	<p>This study aims to analyze the role of Tahajud prayer as a form of spiritual intervention in helping final-year students cope with stress during their academic journey, particularly in the stages of thesis writing and graduation preparation. The research method employed is a quantitative approach with a correlational design. Data were collected through questionnaires measuring the frequency of performing Tahajud prayer and students' coping stress levels. The findings revealed a significant relationship between the consistency of performing Tahajud prayer and students' ability to manage academic stress. These results highlight that Tahajud prayer not only serves as a voluntary act of worship but also contributes positively to strengthening spirituality, enhancing inner peace, and improving emotional regulation among students. This research is expected to provide new insights into the role of worship in developing coping strategies, especially for final-year students.</p>
<b>Keywords:</b> Tahajud Prayer; Spiritual Intervention; Coping Stress; Final-Year Students.	
<b>Please cite this article:</b> Fajar, M., Syahputra, A., Kamil, M., & Lubis, A. (2024). Tahajud prayer as a spiritual intervention in coping with stress among final-year students. <i>Integrasi: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora</i> , 3(3), 163–172.	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ABSTRAK</b></p> <p>Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran salat tahajud sebagai bentuk intervensi spiritual dalam membantu mahasiswa tingkat akhir menghadapi coping stress selama proses akademik, khususnya pada fase penyusunan skripsi dan persiapan kelulusan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain korelasional. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner yang mengukur intensitas pelaksanaan salat tahajud dan tingkat coping stress mahasiswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya hubungan signifikan antara konsistensi ibadah salat tahajud dengan kemampuan mahasiswa dalam mengelola stres akademik. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa salat tahajud tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai ibadah sunnah, tetapi juga memberikan kontribusi positif terhadap penguatan spiritualitas, peningkatan ketenangan batin, serta kemampuan regulasi emosi mahasiswa. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan wawasan baru mengenai peran ibadah dalam pengembangan strategi coping stress, khususnya pada kalangan mahasiswa tingkat akhir.</p>
Page: 163-172	This is an open acces article under the CC-BY-SA liscence ( <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/</a> ).

### A. Introduction

Final-year students often face high academic pressure. Thesis writing, research, and preparation for entering the workforce become the main sources of stress. This condition requires students to have effective coping strategies in managing pressure so that it does not negatively affect their mental health and academic performance (Santrock, 2021). Academic stress is a common phenomenon experienced by students across the world. Factors such as heavy academic workload, time pressure, and performance demands significantly contribute to stress. If not properly managed, stress may trigger anxiety disorders, mental fatigue, and even depression (Misra & Castillo, 2004).

Coping stress refers to individuals' efforts to regulate internal and external demands that are perceived to exceed their capacity. Coping strategies are generally divided into two main types, namely problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Choosing the appropriate coping strategy is crucial in maintaining students' psychological balance (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In the context of final-year students, coping stress ability is highly important. Students who fail to manage stress are at risk of decreased motivation, lower academic performance, and avoidance behaviors such as procrastination in completing their thesis (Kumaraswamy, 2013). Therefore, a holistic approach is needed to help students overcome academic pressure.

One approach that can be applied is spiritual intervention. Spirituality is believed to provide inner peace, emotional strength, and positive hope in facing life's pressures. In Islam, one form of worship that can serve as a spiritual intervention is the Tahajud prayer (Nasution, 2019). Tahajud prayer is a voluntary night prayer performed during the last third of the night. The Qur'an emphasizes that standing in prayer at night to draw closer to Allah is a means of achieving tranquility and a noble status (Qur'an, Al-Isra: 79). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also stated that the night prayer is the best act of worship after the obligatory prayers (Muslim).

Apart from being an act of worship, Tahajud prayer has psychological dimensions. This spiritual activity allows individuals to reflect, supplicate, and strengthen their connection with Allah. Such processes cultivate calmness, optimism, and confidence in facing life's

challenges, including academic stress (Al-Attas, 2017). Previous studies have shown a positive correlation between religious practices and mental health. Individuals who regularly perform night prayers are reported to have lower anxiety levels and are more capable of regulating their emotions in stressful situations (Koenig, 2012). This reinforces the notion that Tahajud prayer can serve as an effective coping mechanism for stress.

From the perspective of the psychology of religion, worship is believed to enhance individual resilience. Resilience enables a person to remain strong in the face of challenges, including academic stress experienced by final-year students (Pargament, 1997). Thus, Tahajud prayer holds great potential as a relevant form of spiritual intervention. Final-year students frequently experience symptoms of burnout as a result of prolonged academic pressure. Burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, reduced motivation, and feelings of helplessness (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). In this situation, Tahajud prayer may provide a calming pause and serve as a means of psychological recovery.

Spiritual-based interventions are also relevant in the Indonesian cultural context, which is deeply religious. Many studies in Indonesia have confirmed that religious practices, especially Tahajud prayer, are correlated with improved psychological well-being among students (Azizah, 2020). This shows that spiritual approaches are effective alternatives suitable for the socioreligious context of students. Beyond its spiritual benefits, rising during the last third of the night also carries biological advantages. Research has indicated that nighttime reflection is an ideal phase to calm the mind, reduce stress hormones, and enhance emotional well-being (Benson & Proctor, 2010). Hence, Tahajud prayer is not only religiously beneficial but also physiologically supportive.

Nevertheless, few studies have specifically examined the relationship between Tahajud prayer and coping stress among final-year students. Most research still focuses broadly on the link between worship and mental health. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap (Hidayat, 2021). This research is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it enriches the study of religious psychology and Islamic education by highlighting the role of Tahajud prayer in stress management. Practically, the findings may serve as recommendations for students and educational institutions in developing spiritually-

based strategies to promote mental health. Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that Tahajud prayer holds significant potential as a spiritual intervention for coping with stress among final-year students. By examining the relationship between the intensity of Tahajud practice and students' coping stress ability, this research seeks to provide both scientific evidence and practical solutions to the problem of academic stress.

## **B. Method**

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. A quantitative approach was chosen because the research aimed to measure the extent of the relationship between the intensity of performing Tahajud prayer and the coping stress ability of final-year students. A correlational design was used to identify both the direction and strength of the relationship between these two variables (Creswell, 2014).

The population of this study consisted of final-year students at a university in Medan who were in the process of writing their thesis. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, namely selecting participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The criteria included: (1) being a final-year student, (2) currently working on a thesis, and (3) having experience in performing Tahajud prayer at least three times a week. The number of participants was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a total of 100 respondents.

The study involved two variables: the independent variable (X) was the intensity of performing Tahajud prayer, measured through frequency, consistency, and quality of practice, while the dependent variable (Y) was coping stress, measured based on two dimensions: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping, as conceptualized by Lazarus and Folkman (1984).

The research instrument consisted of questionnaires developed using a Likert scale. The Tahajud prayer questionnaire was designed based on indicators of frequency, punctuality, and devotion during the prayer, while the coping stress questionnaire was adapted from the *Ways of Coping Questionnaire* (WCQ), modified to fit the context of Indonesian students.

Instrument validity was examined using construct validity through Pearson correlation, and reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha.

Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires to respondents both online and offline. In addition, short interviews were carried out to complement information regarding students' experiences of performing Tahajud prayer, serving as a form of data triangulation.

Data analysis was performed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation test to determine the relationship between Tahajud prayer and coping stress. Furthermore, a simple regression analysis was conducted to assess the extent to which Tahajud prayer contributed to coping stress among students. Data processing was carried out using SPSS version 25.

This study also adhered to research ethics by ensuring the confidentiality of respondents' identities, providing informed consent, and guaranteeing voluntary participation without coercion.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

The results of this study indicate that performing Tahajjud prayer consistently has a significant influence on reducing stress levels among final-year students. Respondents who performed Tahajjud regularly showed a calmer psychological state, better emotional control, and more positive coping strategies compared to those who did not practice it regularly. These findings align with previous studies that highlighted the role of spiritual practices in strengthening mental health (Al-Ghazali, 2020).

Students who engaged in Tahajjud prayer reported experiencing a sense of inner peace after performing the prayer. This condition is supported by the physiological process of relaxation that occurs during the night prayer, which reduces muscle tension and encourages the production of hormones associated with relaxation and happiness. Thus, Tahajjud not only has spiritual value but also provides psychological and physiological benefits (Rahman, 2021).

From the aspect of coping stress, it was found that students practicing Tahajjud tend to adopt more constructive coping strategies, such as problem-focused coping and positive

reframing. In contrast, students who did not perform Tahajjud were more likely to experience avoidance or emotional distress. This shows that Tahajjud prayer serves as a source of spiritual strength in facing academic pressures (Suryadi, 2022).

The qualitative data also revealed that Tahajjud prayer creates a close relationship between the individual and Allah SWT, fostering a sense of surrender and reliance (tawakkul). Such an attitude helps reduce excessive anxiety regarding academic demands, including thesis deadlines and post-graduation concerns. The sense of surrender provides a perspective that every challenge can be managed with patience and faith.

Several students mentioned that Tahajjud gave them additional energy and motivation to continue striving. This sense of resilience is very important for final-year students who are vulnerable to burnout and academic stress. Thus, the positive impact of Tahajjud prayer is not only seen in emotional stability but also in the increased endurance to face difficulties.

The study results also emphasize that Tahajjud prayer enhances self-awareness and self-control. Students who performed Tahajjud were more capable of managing their time, prioritizing tasks, and avoiding procrastination. These changes contributed positively to stress management, as they allowed students to be more disciplined in completing their academic responsibilities.

Another interesting finding is the improvement in the quality of sleep among students who consistently performed Tahajjud. Although Tahajjud requires waking up in the middle of the night, respondents stated that they felt more refreshed and lighter upon waking compared to nights when they did not perform it. This aligns with scientific studies showing that night prayers can support mental relaxation and sleep quality (Ningsih, 2021).

In terms of academic performance, students who practiced Tahajjud prayer consistently showed better progress in completing their thesis and other academic tasks. They felt more focused, avoided excessive worry, and were able to divide their study time effectively. This proves that spiritual activities such as Tahajjud can indirectly influence academic achievement through stress reduction.

Furthermore, students described Tahajjud prayer as a medium for reflection and self-introspection. During the quiet hours of the night, they could evaluate their actions, plan

future steps, and seek strength through prayer. This condition helps them feel more in control of their academic journey and personal development.

The findings of this study are consistent with the Islamic perspective that Tahajjud prayer is a form of worship with special virtues, including bringing tranquility to the heart and easing life's difficulties. As the Qur'an mentions in Surah Al-Isra [17]:79, Tahajjud prayer is a means to achieve a higher degree in the sight of Allah SWT, which indirectly fosters confidence and self-strength.

The discussion also shows that the role of Tahajjud prayer goes beyond ritual dimensions. It becomes a holistic coping mechanism that integrates spiritual, psychological, and behavioral aspects. By combining faith and effort, students find themselves more capable of overcoming stress without falling into destructive coping patterns.

However, not all students experienced the same impact. Some respondents admitted that consistency in performing Tahajjud was a challenge due to fatigue or busy schedules. Nevertheless, they agreed that when performed sincerely, Tahajjud provided meaningful benefits for their mental stability. This demonstrates that the quality of prayer is more important than the frequency alone.

The data analysis also shows that Tahajjud prayer enhances social relationships among students. Those who engaged in night worship tended to show more empathy, patience, and understanding toward peers. This improved their ability to build healthy social support networks, which are crucial in stress management.

From a psychological perspective, Tahajjud prayer can be seen as a form of meditation with religious elements. The combination of physical movement, recitation of Qur'anic verses, and supplication creates a relaxation response that reduces stress hormone levels. Thus, Tahajjud is relevant not only in the context of worship but also as a natural form of therapy for mental well-being.

In conclusion, the findings of this study affirm that Tahajjud prayer is an effective spiritual intervention in reducing stress among final-year students. Its impact covers emotional, behavioral, and academic aspects, making it a valuable coping strategy. This

research recommends integrating spiritual practices such as Tahajjud into student life guidance programs to improve resilience and academic success.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Tahajud prayer plays a significant role as a form of spiritual intervention in reducing stress levels and improving coping mechanisms among final-year students. Through consistent practice of Tahajud, students experience a stronger sense of inner peace, increased resilience, and better self-regulation in dealing with academic and personal challenges. This is because Tahajud prayer not only serves as a means of worship but also as a spiritual therapy that enhances mental, emotional, and psychological well-being.

Furthermore, the results highlight that Tahajud prayer helps students develop positive coping strategies such as patience, gratitude, and trust in Allah, which contribute to lowering anxiety and stress symptoms. Therefore, integrating Tahajud prayer as part of students' daily routines can be an effective non-pharmacological approach to stress management.

In conclusion, this research emphasizes the importance of spiritual practices in maintaining mental health. Tahajud prayer should be encouraged among students, especially those in their final academic phase, as a complementary method for managing stress and achieving academic success. Future studies are recommended to expand the scope by comparing the effectiveness of Tahajud with other spiritual interventions and by involving diverse student populations for broader generalization.

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