

The Role of Tahajjud Prayer on Stress Levels in Young Adults

Peran Shalat Tahajjud terhadap Tingkat stress pada Dewasa Muda

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Abstrak

Masa dewasa muda merupakan fase perkembangan yang ditandai dengan tuntutan akademis, pekerjaan, dan sosial yang signifikan, yang seringkali meningkatkan kerentanan terhadap stres psikologis. Shalat Tahajjud, sebagai bentuk penyesuaian diri secara religius yang melibatkan refleksi spiritual dan pengaturan emosi, diyakini memainkan peran penting dalam mengurangi tingkat stres dan meningkatkan kesejahteraan psikologis di kalangan dewasa muda. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui peran shalat Tahajjud terhadap tingkat stres. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah desain kuantitatif cross-sectional, dengan 30 sampel. Kegiatan dilakukan pada dewasa muda, dengan memberikan perlakuan berupa shalat Tahajjud. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa shalat Tahajjud berperan positif dalam mengurangi tingkat stres pada dewasa muda. Oleh karena itu, kegiatan shalat Tahajjud sebaiknya dilakukan secara berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci : Tahajjud, Stres, Dewasa Muda

Abstract

Young adulthood is a developmental phase marked by significant academic, occupational, and social demands that often increase vulnerability to psychological stress. Tahajjud prayer, as a form of religious coping involving spiritual reflection and emotional regulation, is believed to play an important role in reducing stress levels and enhancing psychological well-being among young adults. The purpose of this study was to determine the role of Tahajjud prayer on stress levels. The research method used a quantitative cross-sectional design, with 30 samples. The activity was carried out on young adults, by providing a treatment of Tahajjud prayer. The results showed that Tahajjud prayer plays a positive role in reducing stress levels in young adults. Therefore, Tahajjud prayer activities should be carried out continuously.

Keywords: Tahajjud, Stress, Young Adults

Pendahuluan

Stress is a psychological problem that is increasingly prevalent in line with the dynamics of modern life (Chaabane *et al.*, 2021). Rapid social change, academic and professional demands, and economic and social pressures make stress an almost inseparable phenomenon in individual life, especially among young adults. Young adulthood is a developmental phase marked by various important transitions in life, such as completing education, searching for self-identity, entering the workforce, and establishing interpersonal and family relationships (Nasir *et al.*, no date). These demands often exceed an

individual's adaptive capacity, triggering psychological stress that impacts mental and physical health (Matud *et al.*, 2020).

According to Lazarus and Folkman, stress is understood as a transactional process between an individual and their environment, where stress arises when an individual assesses the demands they face as exceeding their available resources. Cognitive assessment of a situation perceived as threatening or burdensome will elicit specific physiological, emotional, and behavioral responses (Mcewen and Akil, 2020). If stress persists over a long period of time and is not managed properly, it can lead to anxiety

disorders, depression, sleep disturbances, cognitive decline, and a reduced overall quality of life. Therefore, adaptive coping strategies are needed to help individuals manage stress effectively (Eric Reyes *et al.*, 2021).

One approach widely studied in health psychology is religious coping. Religious coping is defined as an individual's efforts to deal with stress by engaging with religious beliefs, values, and practices. Pargament states that religion can serve as a source of meaning, control, emotional comfort, and social support, significantly contributing to an individual's psychological resilience in the face of life's stresses (Cordova *et al.*, 2024). In the context of religious communities, religious practices often serve as an important source of psychological strength in managing stress (Palamarchuk and Vaillancourt, 2021).

In Islam, one form of religious practice that has a deep spiritual dimension is the Tahajjud prayer (Mahfuzah, 2023). Tahajjud prayer is a sunnah prayer that is performed at night after someone wakes up from sleep, especially in the last third of the night (Fatayati and Kholifatus Sa'diyah, 2023). This worship has a special position in Islamic teachings because it reflects the spiritual closeness between the servant and his Lord (Indrawanto *et al.*, 2023). Tahajjud activities not only include prayer movements, but also involve prayer, dhikr, self-reflection, and contemplation of the meaning of life, which psychologically have the potential to calm the mind and emotions (Argo Dwi Mardiantoro and Paryontri, 2024).

From a psychological perspective, Tahajjud prayer can be understood as a form of active religious meditation (Fernanda *et al.*, 2024). The practice of meditation and prayer has been shown to reduce the activity of the sympathetic nervous system and increase the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system, resulting in a relaxation response that has

an impact on reducing stress (Rofi'atin, Dewi and Fadillahwati, 2021). Spiritual activities carried out in a quiet and calm atmosphere at night enable individuals to engage in deep self-reflection, manage negative emotions, and rebuild meaning and hope in facing life's problems. (Prasetya, 2020).

A number of previous studies have examined the relationship between the practice of Tahajjud prayer and an individual's psychological condition. (Izah, Aini and Bukhori, 2023). Experimental research conducted on a group of Islamic boarding school students showed that performing Tahajjud prayers regularly had a significant effect on reducing stress levels. (Pratiwi and Kamila, 2023). Research subjects who performed Tahajjud consistently experienced reduced stress scores compared to the control group who did not perform Tahajjud. These findings suggest that Tahajjud can serve as an effective non-pharmacological intervention in stress management. (Achyar and Azizah, 2023).

Another study conducted on college students also found a negative relationship between the intensity of Tahajjud prayer and stress levels. Students who performed Tahajjud more frequently tended to have lower stress levels than those who performed it less frequently or never. These findings align with findings in religious psychology that suggest that involvement in religious activities can improve psychological well-being and reduce symptoms of stress and anxiety. (Oktaviana, 2022).

A study conducted on nursing students, known to experience high levels of academic stress, also showed similar results. The intensity of Tahajjud prayer was significantly associated with lower stress levels (Nazari *et al.*, 2025). This indicates that Tahajjud may be a relevant religious coping strategy for individuals facing demanding academic and professional demands (Nazari *et al.*, 2025). Furthermore, qualitative research among

young adults indicates that Tahajjud provides a sense of inner calm, increases self-control, and helps individuals cope with life's pressures with a more positive and optimistic attitude (Nabila *et al.*, 2024).

Within the framework of Lazarus and Folkman's coping theory, Tahajjud prayer can be categorized as emotion-focused coping, a coping strategy aimed at regulating emotional responses to stressors. Through prayer and spiritual reflection, individuals can change their perspective on the problems they face, so that stressors are no longer perceived as excessively threatening. Furthermore, Tahajjud also plays a role in cognitive reappraisal, where individuals reinterpret stressful events as part of life's trials with spiritual meaning (Sivandian and Falahzade, 2025).

Although various studies have demonstrated the psychological benefits of Tahajjud prayer, most research is limited to specific populations, such as Islamic boarding school students (santri) or university students. Research specifically examining the role of Tahajjud prayer on stress levels in young adults is still relatively limited. Young adults are a highly vulnerable group due to the demands of complex development and life changes. Therefore, further research is needed to empirically examine the role of Tahajjud prayer as a religious coping strategy in reducing stress levels in young adults (Abdurrahman and Ma'sum, 2022).

Based on this description, research into the role of Tahajjud prayer on stress levels in young adults is important and relevant. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of religious psychology studies and practical contributions by providing alternative approaches to stress management based on spiritual and cultural values. Thus, Tahajjud prayer is understood not only as a mere ritual worship but also as a source of psychological strength that has the potential to improve the mental well-being

of young adults (Machfud and Lessy, 2022).

Metode Penelitian

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. This approach was chosen because it aimed to objectively examine the relationship between the intensity of Tahajjud prayer and stress levels in young adults through numerical measurements and statistical analysis. A correlational design was used to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between variables without providing any specific treatment or manipulation to the respondents. This study used a cross-sectional design, where data were collected at a specific point in time to describe the stress levels and intensity of Tahajjud prayer among the respondents during the study.

The population in this study were young Muslim adults aged 18 to 30 years. This age range was selected based on developmental theory, which states that young adults are in a transitional phase of life filled with academic, work, and social demands, thus having a relatively high vulnerability to psychological stress. The research sample was taken using a purposive sampling technique, considering certain criteria in accordance with the research objectives. Respondents involved in this study were individuals aged 18–30 years, Muslim, willing to participate in the study voluntarily, and able to complete the questionnaire independently. Respondents with severe psychological disorders that had been clinically diagnosed and were undergoing intensive treatment were not included in the study to avoid data bias. The sample size in this study was set at 30 respondents to meet the requirements for statistical analysis and increase the generalizability of the research results.

The independent variable in this study is the intensity of Tahajjud prayer, while the dependent variable is stress level. Tahajjud prayer intensity is defined as the level of regularity and frequency of

Tahajjud prayer performed by respondents over a certain period of time, while stress level is defined as a psychological condition that arises due to the demands or pressures of life that are perceived to exceed an individual's ability to manage and adapt to the situation.

Data collection was conducted using a closed-ended questionnaire. Stress levels were measured using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), developed by Cohen and widely used in psychology and mental health research. This scale measures an individual's perception of the level of stress they have experienced over the past month. The instrument consists of ten statements with response options on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from never to very often. Higher scores indicate higher levels of stress. This instrument has been shown to have good validity and reliability in various previous studies.

The intensity of Tahajjud prayer was measured using a questionnaire developed by the researchers based on theoretical studies, the concept of religious coping, and the results of previous research. This questionnaire covered aspects of the frequency of Tahajjud prayer, consistency, and regularity. Each item was structured using a five-level Likert scale, ranging from never to always. Before being used in the main study, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability through a pilot test on respondents with characteristics similar to the research sample. Validity testing was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment correlation, while reliability testing was conducted by calculating the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The instrument was declared reliable if the reliability coefficient value reached or exceeded 0.70.

The data collection procedure began with an explanation of the research objectives and benefits to respondents, as

well as a guarantee of confidentiality of the data provided. Respondents who agreed to participate were asked to sign a consent form as a form of informed consent. The questionnaire was then distributed to respondents online and offline, depending on their circumstances and availability. All respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire honestly and accurately, reflecting their experiences. The collected data was then checked for completeness before statistical analysis.

Data analysis was performed using statistical software. The initial stage of the analysis included descriptive analysis to describe the characteristics of the respondents and the distribution of stress scores and Tahajjud prayer intensity. This analysis included calculating the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values. Next, assumption tests were conducted, including a normality test to determine the distribution of the data and a linearity test to ensure a linear relationship between the variables studied. If the data were normally distributed, the analysis of the relationship between Tahajjud prayer intensity and stress levels was performed using the Pearson correlation test. However, if the data were not normally distributed, the Spearman correlation test was used. To determine the magnitude of the effect of Tahajjud prayer intensity on stress levels, a simple linear regression analysis was performed with a significance level of 0.05.

This research was conducted in accordance with ethical research principles, namely confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary consent. Respondents' identities were not disclosed in the questionnaire or research report, and all data obtained was used solely for academic purposes and the development of science.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Stress Levels

No.	Stress Level	<i>Pre-test</i>		<i>Post-test</i>	
		Frekuensi	Persentase	Frekuensi	Persentase
1.	Normal	0	0%	3	10%
2.	Mild stress	6	20%	13	43,3%
3.	Moderate Stress	16	53,3%	14	46,7%
4.	Severe Stress	8	26,7%	0	0%
5.	Extremely Stressed	0	0%	0	0%
	Total	30	100%	30	100%

The data in Table 1 above shows that the majority of respondents' stress levels before the Tahajjud prayer intervention were moderate, with 16 respondents (53.3%). After the Tahajjud prayer

intervention, the majority of respondents' stress levels were still moderate, with 14 respondents (46.7%), and 3 respondents (10%) not experiencing stress.

Table 2. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Before and After Tahajjud Prayer Intervention (n=30)

Uji		N	Mean of Rank	Sum of Rank	Z	p
Tingkat Stress (Post test – Pre test)	<i>Negative Ranks</i>	17	9,00	153,00	-	0,000
	<i>Positive Ranks</i>	0	0,00	0,00		
	<i>Ties</i>	13				
					3,827	

Based on the statistical test results in Table 2 above, the significance value for stress levels obtained was ($Z=-3.827$, $p=0.000$). This means there was a significant difference in stress levels between before and after the Tahajjud prayer intervention..

The results of this study indicate a change in stress levels in young adults after the Tahajjud prayer intervention. Based on the frequency distribution of stress levels, before the intervention, the majority of respondents were in the moderate stress category, namely 16 respondents (53.3%), followed by severely stressed respondents (8 respondents (26.7%) and mildly stressed respondents (6 respondents (20%). There were no respondents in the normal or very severely stressed categories. These findings illustrate that the majority of young adults in this study experienced significant levels

of stress before the intervention. This condition is in line with the characteristics of the young adult phase, which is vulnerable to stress due to academic demands, work, social relationships, and future uncertainty

After the Tahajjud prayer intervention, there was a change in the distribution of respondents' stress levels. The number of respondents with moderate stress decreased to 14 (46.7%), while the mild stress category increased to 13 (43.3%). Furthermore, three respondents (10%) were in the normal category, and no more respondents with severe or very severe stress were found. These changes indicate a shift in stress levels to a lighter category after performing the Tahajjud prayer, indicating that the intervention had a positive impact on reducing respondents' stress levels

Conceptually, the results of this study can be explained through the stress and coping theory proposed by Lazarus and Folkman. This theory states that stress results from an individual's cognitive assessment of environmental demands and their ability to cope. When an individual perceives demands to exceed their resources, stress occurs. In this context, Tahajjud prayer serves as an emotion-focused coping strategy, helping individuals manage their emotional responses to stressors. Through prayer, dhikr, and spiritual reflection performed during Tahajjud, individuals can calm their minds, reduce emotional tension, and change their perspective on the problems they face.

Furthermore, Tahajjud prayer can also be understood as a form of positive religious coping, as proposed by Pargament. Positive religious coping involves the search for meaning, closeness to God, and spiritual surrender in the face of life's pressures. This practice is believed to increase feelings of hope, optimism, and acceptance of the circumstances. In this study, the emergence of respondents with normal stress after the intervention indicates that Tahajjud not only reduces stress levels but also helps some individuals achieve a more stable psychological state.

The results of this study align with various previous studies examining the relationship between Tahajjud prayer and an individual's psychological state. Experimental research conducted by Hidayati (2014) on Islamic boarding school students (*santri*) showed that regularly performing Tahajjud prayer significantly reduced stress levels compared to a group that did not perform Tahajjud. The study explained that the calm night atmosphere and intense spiritual activities contributed to a sense of calm and improved self-control. These findings are relevant to the results of the current study, where the category of severe

stress was no longer found after the Tahajjud intervention was administered.

Another study conducted by Suryani and Wibowo (2018) on college students also found a negative relationship between the intensity of Tahajjud prayer and stress levels. Students who performed Tahajjud more frequently tended to have lower stress levels. This suggests that Tahajjud can serve as a source of psychological strength, especially in young adults facing academic and social pressures. This study supports the findings of this study, which found a shift in stress from moderate and severe to mild and normal.

Research in mental health also shows that consistent religious practice can influence the autonomic nervous system. Benson and Proctor explain that religious prayer and meditation can activate a relaxation response characterized by reduced heart rate, blood pressure, and the activity of stress hormones like cortisol. Tahajjud prayers performed at night, when the environment is relatively quiet and external distractions are minimal, allow individuals to achieve a more optimal state of relaxation. This may explain why no further respondents were found to be severely stressed after the intervention.

However, the study results also showed that the majority of respondents after the intervention remained in the moderate and mild stress categories. This indicates that Tahajjud prayer does not completely eliminate stress, but rather plays a role in reducing its severity. This condition can be influenced by various other factors not controlled for in the study, such as the burden of problems faced by respondents, sleep quality, social support, and consistency in Tahajjud practice. Lazarus and Folkman emphasize that coping effectiveness is greatly influenced by situational context and individual characteristics, so it is natural that stress reduction is not uniform across all respondents.

The findings of this study also align with research by Rahmawati (2020), which

states that nighttime prayer practices, including Tahajjud, contribute to improving psychological well-being, but the results are highly dependent on the regularity and quality of the practice. Respondents who performed Tahajjud with devotion and consistency tended to experience greater psychological impacts than those who performed it irregularly. This may explain why only a small proportion of respondents reached the normal stress category in this study.

From an Islamic psychological perspective, Tahajjud prayer is also seen as a means of tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul). Al-Ghazali stated that night prayer is essential for calming the heart and strengthening the spiritual connection with God, ultimately resulting in inner peace. This inner peace plays a crucial role in reducing psychological stress and helping individuals face problems with a more adaptive attitude. The results of this study indicate that these spiritual values have significant implications for the psychological well-being of young adults.

Overall, the results of this study reinforce the findings of previous research and the theoretical basis that Tahajjud prayer has a positive role in reducing stress levels. The shift in stress distribution from moderate and severe to mild and normal suggests that Tahajjud can be used as a spiritually based, non-pharmacological intervention for stress management in young adults. However, this study also suggests that Tahajjud prayer should be viewed as part of a comprehensive coping strategy, which needs to be supported by other factors such as time management, social support, and a healthy lifestyle.

Thus, this discussion confirms that Tahajjud prayer not only has religious value but also significant psychological significance. This research provides an empirical contribution to the development of religious psychology studies and opens up opportunities for further research examining the effects of Tahajjud with broader designs, longer intervention

durations, and involving other psychological variables such as anxiety, subjective well-being, and quality of life.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the implementation of Tahajjud prayer has a positive effect on reducing stress levels in young adults, as indicated by a shift in stress levels from moderate and severe to lighter categories and the emergence of a normal category after the intervention. Although the majority of respondents remained in the moderate stress category, the absence of respondents with severe stress indicates that Tahajjud prayer plays a role in reducing stress severity. Thus, Tahajjud prayer can be considered an effective religious coping strategy in helping manage stress in young adults. It is recommended that young adults make Tahajjud prayer a routine worship practice to help manage and reduce stress levels. Future research is expected to examine the effect of Tahajjud prayer with a longer intervention duration and involving other psychological variables to obtain more comprehensive results.

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