



## Improving the psychological well-being of nurses through Islamic positive psychology training

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**Abstract:** Nurses have a heavy workload, which has become heavier during the COVID-19 pandemic, putting them at risk of psychological stress and affecting their psychological well-being, which impacts their mental health, work productivity, and self-development. In addition, their worship activities also decrease. However, there has been little research on Islamic-based interventions to improve the psychological well-being of nurses. This study seeks to determine the effectiveness of Islamic-based positive psychology training on improving such well-being by comparing the pre-test and post-test results of the control and experimental groups employed. The Ryff Psychological Well-being Scale and training were given to 38 respondents using consecutive sampling. The data were analyzed using SPSS 25.0, observation, independent assignments, and open questionnaires. The Mann-Whitney test results ( $Z = -2.416$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and those of Wilcoxon ( $Z$ -experiment =  $-2.774$ ;  $p < .05$  and  $Z$ -control =  $-0.081$ ;  $p > .05$ ) show that Islamic-based positive psychology training is effective in improving the psychological well-being of nurses. This research contributes to providing alternative interventions that can be used to foster positive activities and emotions that can improve such well-being.

**Keywords:** Islamic-based positive psychology; nurse; mental health; psychological well-being; positive psychology

**Abstrak:** Perawat memiliki beban kerja yang berat, dan semakin bertambah berat selama pandemi COVID-19 sehingga berisiko memunculkan tekanan psikologis dan berpengaruh pada kesejahteraan psikologis yang berdampak terhadap kesehatan mental, produktifitas kerja, dan pengembangan diri. Keyakinan yang terimplementasi pada kegiatan ibadah juga menurun. Masih sedikit penelitian dengan intervensi dan berbasis Islam untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan psikologis perawat. Penelitian ini berupaya mengetahui efektivitas pelatihan psikologi positif berbasis Islam untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan psikologis perawat dengan membandingkan hasil pre-test serta post-test kelompok kontrol dan eksperimen. Skala *Ryff Psychological Well-being* dan pelatihan diberikan pada 38 responden secara *consecutive sample*. Data dianalisis menggunakan SPSS 25.0, observasi, tugas mandiri, dan kuesioner terbuka. Hasil uji *Mann Whitney* ( $Z = -2,416$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ); *Wilcoxon* ( $Z$ -eksperimen =  $-2,774$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ;  $Z$ -kontrol =  $0,081$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ), artinya pelatihan psikologi positif berbasis Islam efektif untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan psikologis perawat. Penelitian ini berkontribusi memberikan alternatif intervensi yang dapat digunakan untuk menumbuhkan kegiatan serta emosi positif, sehingga dapat meningkatkan kesejahteraan psikologis pada perawat.

**Kata Kunci:** perawat; kesehatan mental; kesejahteraan psikologis; psikologi positif; psikologi positif berbasis Islam

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## Introduction

Nurses are part of the medical personnel who play an important role in hospital services. The functions and roles of the nursing profession center on helping individuals, families, and communities maintain their health. For this reason, nurses, including mental ones, need to be able to apply and develop all their potential and abilities so that optimal health services can be achieved, considering the condition of patients who require special treatment.

Patients with mental disorders require special treatment because of their cognitive limitations and periodic uncontrolled emotions. As they may not be independent, they need help in their daily activities to fulfill their needs. It adds to the mental workload of nurses. Aimi (2018) found that psychiatric nurses had to be more vigilant because at any time patients could throw a tantrum and endanger themselves and others. Nurses also have to work on reports and serve patient needs such as eating and bathing, coping with patients' varying characteristics, emotions, and behavior.

Hospital policies in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic can increase nurses' workload and add to their concerns about the health of patients and families, thus meaning they need to make more efforts in their psychological adjustment. In addition, the situation can cause fatigue, which can affect psychological well-being, namely in terms of relationships with other staff, who may become less friendly, less independent, and underachieve (Diva et al., 2017). These conditions pose great risks to nurses' physical and mental health, leading to the emergence of various problems that cause feelings of anxiety and stress and can consequently affect their psychological state.

The researcher conducted a preliminary survey in June 2021 on 56 nurses at the Surakarta Mental Hospital to illustrate the problems experienced by nurses in relation to their work

during the pandemic. They felt an increased workload, were at risk of being exposed to the virus, and worried about their own health and their families, giving rise to various negative feelings; 92% of participants had disturbed feelings, such as anxiety, fear, and sadness, amongst other negative feelings. Only 8% felt normal and were able to accept the situation calmly. According to Prijayanti (2015), heavy workloads create emotional exhaustion, triggering negative feelings.

The respondents' problems had an impact on several aspects of their life. Only 6% did not feel a significant impact, while 26% experienced an impact on their emotions, making them feel unstable, easily carried away by emotions, prone to conflict, and lacking self-control. Those who felt an impact on their social life were the highest group, at 66%. They had limited movement, could not carry out their activities freely, and were hampered in socializing with family and work friends. 8% felt an impact on their family, feeling worried about their health and financial situation. Such worried about their own health and that of their family could develop into anxiety and depression (Silaen, 2020). Furthermore, 7% of the respondents felt affected in terms of their work, believing that it had become more difficult because of the need to maintain health protocols for themselves, the patients, and their families at home.

Such problems have added to the psychological pressure on nurses during the pandemic. Nurses with weakened psychological well-being will often experience physical, emotional, and psychological fatigue (Fahmawati, 2019). They will find it difficult to motivate themselves and feel anxious, sad, angry, and frustrated. This situation makes nurses vulnerable to mental health disorders and may affect the performance of their duties to their patients.

On the other hand, nurses with good psychological well-being will be more cooperative and efficient in their work and will serve patients well, allowing them to prosper. Such a positive attitude that nurses develop can reduce stress during times of pandemics (Kurniawan et al, 2021). Nurses who are healthy and psychologically stable will be encouraged to grow into productive individuals, both at work and in other aspects of life. According to Ceri and Cicek (2021), strong psychological well-being can help people minimize their anxiety and depression. The ability of nurses to adapt to existing tasks and conditions can also reduce such problems.

Psychological well-being is defined as a condition in which individuals have positive attitudes toward themselves and others; are able to make decisions and act without depending on others; are able to create and manage an environment that suits their needs; have a clear purpose in life; have a meaningful life; and are able to develop themselves (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

The psychological well-being of nurses plays a role in mental health and development. Nurses who are healthy psychologically can identify their strengths, cope with stress, and be actively involved in social and community environments. Psychological well-being also helps individuals manage themselves at work and create a good environment both physically and mentally (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

It can be characterized by a sense of happiness, life satisfaction and absence of symptoms of depression (Ryff, 1995). In this vein, the researcher is interested in researching mental health promotion. This is an activity aimed at helping individuals, groups, or communities improve their abilities or behavior in achieving optimal health. As it deals with the problems of nurses that have an impact on their mental health and psychological well-being, but not including those who are in a period of mental health

recovery, health promotion uses interventions to improve psychological well-being.

Research related to psychological well-being has mostly been conducted quantitatively in order to determine its relationship with independent variables. The research conducted on medical personnel (Latuheru et al, 2021) has explained that the higher the negative stigma to health workers, the lower the psychological well-being of medical personnel. Moreover, mindfulness had a positive correlation with psychological well-being. (Latuheru et al, 2021).

In another study that conducted by Pridayati and Indrawati (2019), it was found that the factors that improved adolescents' psychological well-being at the X Bekasi orphanage were forgiveness and happiness; the higher the levels of these in the adolescents the higher their psychological well-being. Other factors that affect the level of psychological well-being are feelings of gratitude for existing conditions and social support (Millisani & Handayani, 2019).

Some of the studies discussed above were based on non-nurse subjects. With regard to nurses, Jayafa (2018) found that if they received high social support, their psychological well-being would also be high, but that vice versa, if social support was low, their psychological well-being was also low. Likewise, in a hospital environment, Sarifudin (2018) found that applying a leadership style that pays attention to the needs of employees will improve the psychological well-being of nurses. In addition, factors that can affect the psychological well-being of nurses include work-family conflicts (I. Hapsari, 2020). All these studies based on nurse subjects were non-experimental.

Several studies have been related to interventions to improve psychological well-being; for example, prophetic psychotherapy is known to improve the psychological well-being of prisoners (Kusumastuti, 2020), namely healing therapy for observable and unobservable symptoms of

psychological disorders. Furthermore, toughness training can be used for students involved in UKM management. It has been shown that although actual toughness after training did not change, with the knowledge gained psychological well-being increased (Widhigdo et al., 2020)

Other studies on improving psychological well-being include the application of logotherapy to breast cancer patients (Hastutiningtyas et al., 2017); HERO training for orphaned children (Alfinuha et al., 2019); meditation therapy for people with lupus (Ardelia & Hartini, 2019); positive psychological training to improve psychological well-being in patients with diabetes mellitus (Ganesan et al., 2020); and in mothers of children with cancer (Damreihani et al., 2018). All the studies using the intervention method involved non-nurse subjects.

The researchers also examined the focus used in previous studies, where it is known that this research focuses on finding the cause of stress and then trying to reduce it. These studies include using emotional intelligence training to manage emotions that arise (Wijaya et al., 2020). Emotions that arise try to identify and focus on positive emotions. Furthermore, research shows that stress management is found to be most effective for improving employee psychological well-being (Holman et al., 2018).

In addition to this, the researcher found that several related mostly focused on the causes of stress, but paid less attention to the strength and development of positive mental health. Therefore, this study focuses on positive mental strength and development using positive psychological interventions.

Positive psychology is a scientific study of positive human functioning developed at several levels, namely the personal, biological, relational, institutional, cultural, and global dimensions of life (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2001). The approach aims to generate positive emotions and

focus on individual strengths (Seligman, 2013). The addition of Islamic values in this study makes such training suitable to be applied to Muslims, as is the case with most nurses. It is also consistent with research that suggests that beliefs that are implemented in religious activities or that are religious will create feelings of calm and happiness, which are the goals of psychological well-being (Pajević et al., 2005). According to the Islamic approach, positive psychology emphasizes human nature, the ability to develop and the human relationship with Allah.

Furthermore, few studies have examined interventions made on nurses related to their psychological well-being, so this study aims to use positive psychological training to empower the positive side of nurses and foster their self-awareness. In addition, the aim is to strengthen their confidence and allow them to manage their self-concept and thus form positive emotions, character strength, and meaningfulness by building a pleasant life that is active and meaningful. Such training applies Islamic values from the Quran and Al-Hadith intended to form good behavior (*akhlāq karīmah*) and encourage individuals to feel closer to Allah.

Positive psychology training can be achieved using six techniques: including using your strengths; three good things; enjoying peace; making thank you visits; active constructive communication; and writing biographies (Seligman et al., 2006). These six basic techniques are then modified according to Islamic values to encourage people to be aware of their strengths and in relation to technique three pockets of blessings good thing, gratitude, enjoyment, effective communication etiquette, and biography.

Setyaningrum used the concept of positive psychology training based on Islamic values to improve students' psychological well-being (Setyaningrum, 2021). The results of the study showed that such training was effective. Based on

this, this study aims to establish whether Islamic-based psychological training can effectively improve the psychological well-being of nurses.

The hypothesis proposed is that Islamic-based positive psychology training is effective in improving the psychological well-being of nurses.

## Methods

The study used a quasi-experimental approach. Such a method involves a control group that does not fully function to control external variables that affect the implementation of the experiment. The study subjects were 40 nurses at the Surakarta Mental Hospital in Indonesia, who were Muslim, actively provided services to patients, and were willing to become respondents by filling out an informed consent form. The quasi-experimental pattern used was a nonequivalent group design in which the placement of subjects into the experimental and control groups is made by random assignment. The groups were given a pre-test and post-test.

The dependent variable in the study is psychological well-being and the independent variable is Islamic-based positive psychology training.

Psychological well-being was measured using the Ryff psychological well-being scale adapted by Randa (2018). This consists of 28 items, and comprises the six dimensions of independence, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, life goals, and self-acceptance. The determination of the scores is based on a Likert scale with four answer options: Very suitable (SS), Suitable (S), Not suitable (TS), and Very Unsuitable (STS), with values ranging from 1 to 4. This scale has been tested by Randa (2018) for validity and reliability, with a Chronbach's alpha of .887.

The intervention employed the Islamic-based positive psychology training module of D. K. Hapsari et al. (2021), whose stages are conducted

in one meeting consisting of 6 intervention sessions, namely realizing your strength, three bags of blessings good thing, being grateful, enjoying peace, effective communication etiquette, and writing a biography. The professional judgment process was conducted with the help of six psychologists, then analyzed and corrected according to their recommendations. The validity results show a t-value of between .87 and 1.0 ( $>.79$ ), meaning the module is suitable for use. Furthermore, the fixed module was tested at the mental hospital dr. RM. Soedjarwadi Klaten with 10 subjects who met the criteria. The results of the training module trial show that the average assessment of the trainees was 3.56, while the maximum average value is 4. This means that the average value is above the appropriate category. The results indicate that the Islamic-based positive psychology training module was suitable for use in the study.

Research preparation began with selecting the training participants who completed the informed consent form between 12 December 2021 and 17 December 2021, namely 40 nurses working at the Surakarta Mental Hospital who were aged 22-52 years and had work experience of 2.5 -38 years. The participants were randomly divided into two groups, a control group and an experimental group with 20 respondents in each. They were then given a pre-test involving the filling in of the psychological well-being scale.

The Islamic-based positive psychology training in the experimental group was held on Wednesday, December 22, 2021, from 08.00 to 14.30 WIB, with 20 participants attending. One participant could not complete the training program. The post-test was given to the experimental group after it had completed a series of Islamic-based positive psychology training and collecting tasks over a period of 7 days. 19 participants fully completed the task. The post-test was also given to the control group and was also completed by 19 of the participants.

**Results**

The overall description of the subjects included their gender, age, and room where they worked. Descriptions of the subjects in the experimental group are shown in Table 1.

Figure 1 is a graph of the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group. Based on the results of the Mann-Whitney test, the Asymp significance value is .016 ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that there is a significant difference in the psychological well-being scores of the two groups.

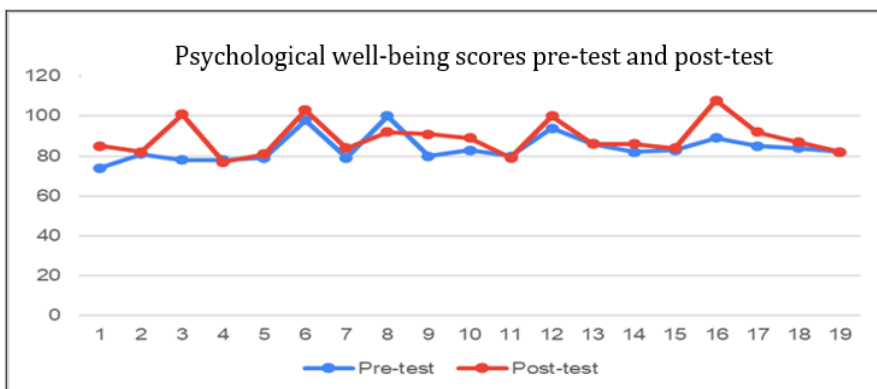
The results of the analysis using SPSS 25.0 can be seen in Table 2.

Based on the results of the Wilcoxon test, the significance of Asymp in the experimental group is .006 ( $p < .01$ ), meaning that there is a significant difference in psychological well-being scores pre-test and post-test. In other words, it can be concluded that there is an increase in the psychological well-being of nurses after attending Islamic-based positive psychology training.

**Table 1**  
*Description of Research Subjects in the Experimental Group*

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	10 nurses	53%
Male	9 nurses	47%
Age		
20-40 years old	9 nurses	47%
41-60 years old	10 nurses	53%
Patient care room		
Acute	5 nurses	26%
Stable	14 nurses	74%

**Figure 1**  
*Graph of the Pre-test and Post-test Psychological Well-being Scores for the Experimental Group*



**Table 2***Result of the Hypothesis Testing Analysis*

	Z	Sig	p
Whitney U Test Psychological Well-being	-2.416	.016 (2-tailed)	p < .05
Wilcoxon control group	-0.081	.935 (2-tailed)	p > .05
Wilcoxon experiment group	-2,774	.006 (2-tailed)	p < .05

Meanwhile, in the control group,  $p = .935$  ( $p > .05$ ), meaning that there is an insignificant difference in psychological well-being scores pre-test and post-test. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the research hypothesis is accepted, namely that Islamic-based positive psychology training is effective in improving the psychological well-being of nurses.

Based on the analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group, there was an increase in the average score from 83.9 to 88.9 between the two tests. Fourteen participants saw an increase, three experienced a decrease and two remained the same.

The supporting data show that there were two passive participants, nine quite active ones, and eight active ones in terms of their participation in the training activities. On average, they were quite active or active in completing the assigned tasks. All the participants stated that they had received significant benefits after participating in the training and doing independent assignments.

## Discussion

The results show that the Islamic-based positive psychology training was effective in improving the psychological well-being of nurses. The results are in line with previous research, that such training can be used to improve psychological well-being (Setyaningrum, 2021).

However, this research was conducted offline and used different subjects, namely nurses.

The demographics show that most of the participants who experienced an increase in psychological well-being scores were women. This is in line with previous research which states that women have higher well-being than men (Izzati & Mulyana, 2021). Women are more likely to build social relationships with other people, which is one of the dimensions of psychological well-being, so they are able to receive support when experiencing a decline in psychological functions.

One of the descriptions of the research subjects other than gender is the room in which the nurses are assigned to serve patients. Several participants worked in the acute room, namely the ICU, emergency room, and COVID treatment room; i.e., Kresna, and Samba. In that room, nurses have a workload that exceeds the average because the potential for the patients to get angry is greater than in the sub-acute room or quiet room. The room also treats COVID-19 patients. This was found by Aimi (2018) in a study on the workload of nurses in the Sembodro room at the Surakarta Regional Mental Hospital. Excessive workload can trigger fatigue, both physically and emotionally, which can result in impaired psychological well-being. Diva et al. (2017) found that the condition of psychological well-being felt by nurses corresponded to work fatigue. The pandemic has increased nurses' workload on duty in the acute room, causing fatigue at work and in the family,

but they showed an increase in psychological well-being scores, meaning that an excessive workload does not interfere with the effectiveness of Islamic-based positive psychology training.

Analysis of the increased scores was conducted by considering the qualitative data, namely the independent tasks performed after training. The choice of activities undertaken by participants in independent tasks is enjoying peace with religious activities, according to the one of the techniques in the training. These activities include prayer, almsgiving, gratitude, and reading the Qur'an. Participants also enjoy obligatory and *sunnah* worship. The result is that participants feel happy, calm, and peaceful. Gratitude is not only directed to God, but participants also express it to others, receiving in turn a positive response. This means that being grateful to someone can increase the dimensions of positive relationships with them. There is a close relationship between gratitude, personal growth, positive relationships with others, and self-acceptance (Wood et al, 2009). Nurses can be grateful for the little things that are obtained, such as being greeted by their friends or receiving thanks for the help given to perform their duties/work and interact with patients without complaining. In other words, the positive activities undertaken by the participants encourage positive emotions, which can bring happiness to them.

Positive changes are obtained by writing about the good things experienced. In the three good things session, participants were able to accept themselves and be grateful for the blessings that Allah had given them, participants were able to accept themselves and be grateful that Allah allowed them to experience His blessings. An understanding of good things also encourages participants to continue to do good. A person who strives for self-improvement over time and reflects on a better and more positive self has the characteristics of well-functioning personal

growth. According to Seligman et al. (2006), the three good things are a simple technique that helps individuals develop a more positive outlook on all aspects of life. Awareness of good things helps people increase the dimensions of personal growth and self-acceptance. According to Ryff (2014), self-acceptance is a form of positive self-evaluation and accepting positive and negative abilities in oneself.

However, there was a significant decrease in the score in one participant, while two others experienced a decrease, but with a difference of one only point, so it was not significant. Although the results of the study show some participants experienced a decrease and others remained the same, based on the results of the open questionnaire, they felt the benefits of a series of Islamic-based positive psychology training activities. After putting it into practice, they better understood the knowledge conveyed and felt more grateful and happy. Before the training, the activities performed by the participants were not based on a sincere heart, whereas afterwards they felt calm, enjoyed responding to their daily activities, and accepted everything with a more positive attitude. The technique of enjoying peace affects participants' positive emotions, which refer to their personal growth and positive relationships with others. It shows the achievement of goals of positive psychology training, in line with the findings of the research by Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009).

The participants were also accustomed to undertaking positive activities in their daily lives and were open to new ones. This encouraged them to continue developing themselves and to have clear goals and life plans to help lead a more meaningful life (Rashid & Howes, 2016).

Despite the research contributions, it has limitations, for example, the technical obstacles that arose unexpectedly, even though preparations had been made before the training.



Another limitation is that the analysis does not include personality and family life factors, which may influence the outcomes of the intervention.

### Conclusion

The results show that positive psychology training based on Islamic values improved nurses' psychological well-being. Training will be very useful if individuals can turn their positive activities into a habit.

Based on the conclusions above, the participant nurses are expected to be able to take part in sessions in positive psychology training independently and continuously so that their psychological well-being will increase. Related

institutions (hospitals) are expected to be able to hold mental health promotion programs, especially to improve the psychological well-being of nurses. The programs developed could refer to Islamic-based positive psychology training procedures. Institutions can start by informing staff about mental health promotion through hospital communication media.

Future researchers into positive psychology training based on Islamic values should better control the factors that might influence the success of the intervention, including personality and family conditions.[]

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