



GRATITUDE AND ISLAMIC SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE AS SOCIAL WELFARE CAPITAL: A STUDY ON INNER PEACE AMONG ISLAMIC COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE STUDENTS AT UIN SUMATERA UTARA

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Abstract

Students' social welfare is an important part of Islamic community development, since psychological stability shapes the quality of their social contribution on campus and in wider society. High academic pressure can disrupt this welfare, making psychological-spiritual capital such as gratitude essential for students' inner peace, including for students of the Islamic Counseling and Guidance Study Program (BPI), Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (UINSU). This study analyzes the effect of gratitude within Islamic spiritual intelligence on students' inner peace as an indicator of social welfare. A quantitative approach with an associative-causal method was used. A total of 93 out of 248 students were selected as respondents through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire tested for validity and reliability, then analyzed through classical assumption tests and simple linear regression using SPSS version 25. Results show that gratitude has a positive and significant effect on students' inner peace, with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) and a regression coefficient of 0.625. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.567 indicates that 56.7% of the variation in students' inner peace is explained by gratitude. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening gratitude and Islamic spirituality to develop students' social-psychological welfare within Islamic higher education.

Keywords: Gratitude; Islamic Spiritual Intelligence; Social Welfare; Inner Peace.

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Abstrak

Kesejahteraan sosial mahasiswa merupakan bagian penting dari pengembangan masyarakat Islam, karena stabilitas psikologis individu turut menentukan kualitas kontribusinya di lingkungan kampus maupun masyarakat. Tekanan akademik yang tinggi berpotensi mengganggu kesejahteraan tersebut, sehingga dibutuhkan modal psikologis-spiritual seperti rasa syukur untuk menjaga ketenangan diri mahasiswa, termasuk mahasiswa Program Studi Bimbingan Penyuluhan Islam (BPI) Fakultas Dakwah dan Komunikasi Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (UINSU). Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pengaruh rasa syukur dalam kecerdasan spiritual Islami terhadap ketenangan diri mahasiswa BPI UINSU sebagai salah satu indikator kesejahteraan sosial. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode asosiatif kausal. Sebanyak 93 dari 248 mahasiswa dipilih sebagai responden melalui teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner skala Likert yang telah diuji validitas dan reliabilitasnya, kemudian dianalisis dengan uji asumsi klasik dan regresi linier sederhana berbantuan SPSS versi 25. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa rasa syukur berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap ketenangan diri mahasiswa, dengan nilai signifikansi 0,000 ($p < 0,05$) dan koefisien regresi 0,625. Koefisien determinasi (R^2) sebesar 0,567 menunjukkan bahwa 56,7% variasi ketenangan diri mahasiswa dijelaskan oleh rasa syukur. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya penguatan nilai syukur dan spiritualitas Islami sebagai strategi pengembangan kesejahteraan sosial-psikologis mahasiswa dalam lingkungan pendidikan tinggi Islam.

Kata Kunci: Rasa Syukur; Kecerdasan Spiritual Islami; Kesejahteraan Sosial; Ketenangan Diri.

INTRODUCTION

Student social welfare constitutes a fundamental dimension of Islamic community development, since the psychological stability of individual students shapes the quality of their social contribution both on campus and within the wider community.¹ As emerging adults navigate the early transition into higher education, they are increasingly confronted with complex social and academic demands that can compromise their emotional equilibrium and, in turn, their capacity for constructive social engagement.² Within this framework, understanding the psychological-spiritual resources that sustain student welfare becomes not merely a matter of individual mental health but a strategic concern for the development of resilient, socially contributive Muslim communities.

Academic stress has become one of the most pervasive challenges confronting university students worldwide, arising from cumulative assignments, intensive examinations, and heightened expectations from family and academic environments.³

¹ Solahudin Solahudin, Muslim Muslim, and Muhammad Thalib, 'Kecerdasan Spiritual Dan Psikologis Sebagai Solusi Kesehatan Mental Gen Z Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an', *Al-Tadabbur: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, 11.01 (2026) <<https://doi.org/10.30868/AT.V11I01.9408>>.

² Georgia Barbayannis and others, 'Academic Stress and Mental Well-Being in College Students: Correlations, Affected Groups, and COVID-19', *Frontiers in Psychology*, Volume 13 (2022) <<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.886344>>.

³ Durrotunnisa Durrotunnisa and others, 'Peran Rasa Syukur Dan Kecerdasan Emosional Terhadap Subjective Well-Being Pada Mahasiswa', *Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi*, 16.2 SE-Articles (2026), 98-107 <<https://doi.org/10.29080/jpp.v16i2.1591>>; Sabilatul Hanifah, M Arrafie Abduh, and Khairiah Khairiah, 'Hubungan Rasa Syukur Dan Sabar Dalam Membentuk Ketenangan Jiwa Mahasiswa/I Jurusan Aqidah Dan

Empirical evidence indicates that unmanaged academic pressure is strongly associated with anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and diminished psychological well-being among college populations.⁴ Recent studies further demonstrate that structural and institutional factors—rather than purely individual predispositions—substantially shape the intensity and persistence of this stress, suggesting the need for systemic as well as personal coping resources.⁵

The Indonesian context mirrors this global pattern with notable regional variation. Surveys among students in eastern Indonesia, particularly in Aceh Province, reveal that as many as 72.8 percent of respondents experience moderate to high levels of academic stress, driven primarily by assignment overload, examination pressure, and achievement expectations.⁶ National mental health surveys corroborate this trend, indicating that a majority of Indonesian adolescents and university students report symptoms of depression and anxiety linked to the compounded demands of academic, social, and emotional adaptation.⁷ These findings underscore that psychological-spiritual capital, rather than external stress-reduction alone, may hold particular relevance for the Indonesian higher-education context.

Amid these pressures, inner peace—understood as a stable and adaptive emotional condition that buffers against psychological disturbance—emerges as a critical indicator of student psychological welfare.⁸ Individuals who possess a strong sense of inner peace are better equipped to interpret adverse experiences constructively, maintain mental clarity under pressure, and sustain functional social relationships despite external stressors.⁹ Consequently, identifying the psychological-spiritual antecedents of inner peace has direct implications for designing more effective student welfare interventions within Islamic higher-education institutions.

Gratitude has been consistently identified in positive psychology literature as a significant contributor to psychological well-being and emotional stability. Meta-analytic evidence demonstrates that gratitude-based interventions meaningfully improve emotional

Filsafat Islam UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau', *At-Tarbiyah: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 3.2 SE-Artikel, 364–71 <<https://journal.staittd.ac.id/index.php/at/article/view/902>>.

⁴Mengfan Liu, Bo Shi, and Xu Gao, 'The Way to Relieve College Students' Academic Stress: The Influence Mechanism of Sports Interest and Sports Atmosphere', *BMC Psychology*, 12.1 (2024), 327 <<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-01819-1>>.

⁵Risky Nabilah, 'Praktik Dzikir Al-Adzkar Al-Nabawiyah Untuk Meningkatkan Kecerdasan Spiritual Santri Di Pesantren Mahasiswa (Cultivating Spiritual Intelligence through the Practice of Dzikir Al-Adzkar Al-Nabawiyah among Santri at An-Nur Student Islamic Boarding School)', *Happiness: Journal of Psychology and Islamic Science*, 9.1 SE-Articles (2025), 29–43 <<https://doi.org/10.30762/happiness.v9i1.2765>>; Ru'uliyannah Sabrianti and Adhi Setiawan, 'Peran Kecerdasan Spiritual Dan Strategi Manajemen Waktu Mahasiswa Pendidikan Islam Dalam Mempertahankan Keberhasilan Akademik Di UIN Sunan Kalijaga', *Jurnal Harmoni Pendidikan*, 1.2 (2025), 92–106 <<https://doi.org/10.64845/JHP.V1I2.99>>.

⁶Sarah Humaira, Widi Astuti, and Hafnidar Hafnidar, 'Gambaran Stress Akademik Pada Mahasiswa Indonesia Bagian Timur Di Provinsi Aceh', *INSIGHT: Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi*, 2.4 (2024), 796–809 <<https://doi.org/10.2910/INSIGHT.V2I4.18071>>.

⁷Nur Hayati and Risna Meliyani, 'Hubungan Stres Akademik Dengan Kesehatan Mental Pada Mahasiswa Di Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi', *Jurnal Kesehatan Medika Saintika*, 16.1 (2025), 368–74 <<https://doi.org/10.30633/JKMS.V16I1.3284>>; Laila Azizah Hakim and Ratna Sari, 'Mental Well-Being on Grit and Spiritual Intelligence', *Journal of Psychology and Instruction*, 9.2 (2025) <<https://doi.org/10.23887/JPAI.V9I2.93725>>.

⁸Geyze Diniz and others, 'The Effects of Gratitude Interventions: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.', *Einstein (Sao Paulo, Brazil)*, 21 (2023), eRW0371 <https://doi.org/10.31744/einstein_journal/2023RW0371>.

⁹Ulfatun Ni'mah and Ira Wirtati, 'Adversity Quotient Pada Mahasiswa Tingkat Akhir Dalam Penyelesaian Skripsi Di Fakultas Dakwah Dan Komunikasi Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara', *Jurnal Edukasi : Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling*, 11.1 (2025), 22–43 <<https://doi.org/10.22373/JE.V11I1.29657>>.

well-being and reduce negative affect among youth populations.¹⁰ Complementary research shows that gratitude enhances the quality of social relationships, thereby strengthening the interpersonal resilience that underlies sustained emotional stability.¹¹ Within the Indonesian context, gratitude training has similarly been shown to increase resilience and subjective happiness among students, reinforcing its function as an accessible psychological resource rather than a purely dispositional trait.¹²

Beyond its general psychological function, gratitude occupies a distinctive theological position within Islamic teaching, where *syukur* is framed not merely as an emotional response but as a comprehensive spiritual orientation encompassing the heart, the tongue, and bodily action.¹³ Group-based gratitude interventions targeting university populations have further demonstrated measurable improvements in psychological well-being, suggesting that structured, intentional gratitude practice—rather than incidental gratitude—produces the most consistent welfare outcomes.¹⁴ This distinction is particularly relevant for Islamic higher-education settings, where spiritual practice is embedded within the institutional and curricular environment rather than treated as an optional supplement to academic life.

Islamic spiritual intelligence, understood as the capacity to internalize religious values, transcendental meaning, and life orientation within a framework of divine consciousness, has likewise been identified as a significant predictor of student psychological welfare.¹⁵ Research among Indonesian university students indicates that spiritual intelligence correlates positively with psychological well-being and contributes to the formation of a stable, positive self-concept, even in settings where overall spiritual intelligence levels remain moderate.¹⁶ Other studies affirm that structured engagement with spiritual practices—such as reflective gratitude journaling—can measurably strengthen students' spiritual intelligence over time, pointing to its trainable rather than fixed nature.¹⁷

¹⁰Al Fuertes, 'Students in Higher Education Explore the Practice of Gratitude as Spirituality and Its Impact on Well-Being', *Religions*, 2024, 1078 <<https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15091078>>.

¹¹David Stefan and others, 'The Impact of Gratitude Letters and Visits on Relationships, Happiness, Well-Being, and Meaning of Graduate Students', *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 5 (2021), 110–26 <<https://doi.org/10.47602/jpsp.v5i2.256>>.

¹²Ratih Arruum Listiyandini, 'The Influence of Gratitude on Psychological Resilience of Adolescence Living in Youth Social Care Institutions', *Journal of Educational, Health and Community Psychology*, 7 (2018), 197 <<https://doi.org/10.12928/jehcp.v7i3.10894>>.

¹³Moh. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2012), penjelasan QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 152. <<https://books.google.co.id/books?id=wKomjwEACAAJ>>; Aida Fajriyatin Formaningrum and Rahmah Saniatuzzulfa, 'Hubungan Antara Psychological Well-Being Dan Rasa Syukur Dengan Kespian Mahasiswa', *Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi Candradijwa*, 9.2 (2024), 75–85 <<https://doi.org/10.20961/JIP.V9I2.77181>>.

¹⁴Melati Sumari and others, 'Gratitude (Shukr) Group Intervention for Promoting College Students' Well-Being: A Quasi-Experimental Study', *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 11 (2025), 101294 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101294>>; Ahmad Firas Naufal, Muhimmatul Hasanah, and Ima Fitri Sholichah, 'Pengaruh Rasa Syukur Terhadap Kebahagiaan Guru Di Sekolah', *Jurnal Integrasi Riset Psikologi*, 2.1 (2024), 31–41 <<https://doi.org/10.26486/INTENSI.V2I1.3952>>.

¹⁵Ahmad Khoirudin, Suroso Suroso, and Muhammad Farid, 'Spiritual Well-Being and Peer Social Support with Academic Stress on Student in Boarding School', *International Journal of Research in Counseling*, 2.2 (2023), 49–64 <<https://doi.org/10.55849/IJRC.V2I2.57>>.

¹⁶Zhenfei Zhou and others, 'The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Spiritual Intelligence, and Student Achievement: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.', *BMC Medical Education*, 24.1 (2024), 217 <<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-024-05208-5>>; Zakiatul Fikriyyah, Muhammad Farid, and Abdul Rouf, 'Kecerdasan Spiritual Dan Dukungan Sosial Teman Sebaya Sebagai Prediktitor Terhadap Kesejahteraan Psikologis Siswa', *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia*, 5.2 (2024), 57–66 <<https://doi.org/10.59141/JAPENDI.V5I2.2707>>.

¹⁷Agie Hanggara and others, 'Pengaruh Kecerdasan Emosional Dan Kecerdasan Spiritual Terhadap Tingkat Resiliensi Mahasiswa FKIP UNIKU', *Equilibrium: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Dan Ekonomi*, 21.01

Further research integrating Islamic psychological principles has shown that constructs such as *tawakal* (trust in God), *sabr* (patience), and *syukur* (gratitude) significantly enhance academic resilience, extending conventional resilience models—which have traditionally emphasized psychological and social dimensions—to include an explicit spiritual dimension.¹⁸ These findings suggest that Islamic spiritual intelligence does not operate independently of gratitude but functions as an integrative framework through which gratitude is expressed, deepened, and sustained as a form of religious practice rather than isolated positive emotion.

Despite this growing body of literature, most existing studies examine gratitude and spiritual intelligence separately, or in relation to general psychological well-being, rather than as an integrated construct explaining inner peace within a specifically Islamic higher-education context. Few studies have addressed this relationship among students enrolled in Islamic Counseling and Guidance (Bimbingan Penyuluhan Islam/BPI) programs, whose academic formation directly involves the theory and practice of psychological-spiritual guidance. For BPI students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (UINSU), spiritual intelligence functions not only as a personal psychological resource but also as a professional competency embedded within their academic curriculum and future counseling practice, making this population particularly relevant for empirical investigation.

This study therefore seeks to examine the effect of gratitude, situated within the framework of Islamic spiritual intelligence, on the inner peace of BPI students at UINSU as an indicator of social-psychological welfare. By integrating these two constructs within a single explanatory model, this research is projected to address an identifiable gap in the literature and to provide empirical grounding for the development of more integrative spiritual-guidance programs and student welfare policies within Islamic higher-education institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Gratitude within Islamic Spiritual Intelligence

In positive psychology, Emmons and McCullough identify gratitude as one of the central constructs contributing to individual psychological well-being.¹⁹ From a modern psychological perspective, gratitude is understood as a positive emotion arising from the recognition of benefits received, a concept that continues to be supported by recent research linking gratitude to both psychological and subjective well-being.²⁰ Gratitude is not merely affective; it also carries cognitive and behavioral dimensions, making it an adaptive mechanism for coping with life's challenges.

Wood, Froh, and Geraghty demonstrate that gratitude contributes to enhanced subjective well-being, reduced stress, and greater resilience against negative experiences. This finding is corroborated by more recent evidence showing that gratitude disposition is

(2024), 15–21 <<https://doi.org/10.25134/EQUI.V21I01.8924>>; Maryam Isnaini Damayanti, Mochammad Nursalim, and Diana Rahmasari, 'Analisis Penguatan Kecerdasan Spiritual Mahasiswa PGSD FIP UNESA Melalui Aktivitas Menulis Jurnal Syukur', *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan*, 13.1 Februari (2024), 963–80 <<https://doi.org/10.58230/27454312.497>>.

¹⁸Eka Aprilianti, 'Integrating Islamic Psychological Principles in Enhancing Students' Academic Resilience', *Nusantara Journal of Behavioral and Social Science*, 3.2 SE- (2024), 63–72 <<https://doi.org/10.47679/202246>>.

¹⁹Robert A Emmons and Michael E McCullough, 'Counting Blessings versus Burdens: An Experimental Investigation of Gratitude and Subjective Well-Being in Daily Life.', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84.2 (2003), 377–89 <<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.2.377>>.

²⁰Norberto Eiji Nawa and Noriko Yamagishi, 'Distinct Associations between Gratitude, Self-Esteem, and Optimism with Subjective and Psychological Well-Being among Japanese Individuals', *BMC Psychology*, 12.1 (2024), 130 <<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-01606-y>>.

distinctly associated with both subjective and psychological well-being.²¹ Gross further explains that individuals with a strong disposition toward gratitude are better able to engage in cognitive reappraisal of life experiences, producing more stable and adaptive emotional responses.²²

Within Tafsir al-Misbah, M. Quraish Shihab explains that gratitude, as referenced in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 152, constitutes a comprehensive spiritual disposition that requires remembrance of Allah prior to the enjoyment of His blessings. Gratitude is thus more than a verbal expression of thanks; it involves the participation of the heart, the tongue, and bodily action. The heart expresses gratitude by acknowledging that all blessings originate from Allah, the tongue through praise and glorification, and the body through obedience and the appropriate use of blessings received.²³ According to Shihab, Allah's command to remember Him precedes the mention of His blessings, since the act of granting favor takes precedence over merely enjoying it. Gratitude, in this reading, is therefore an active spiritual practice that produces obedience, increased blessing, and existential closeness between the individual and God.²⁴

According to a study by Tamami et al. (2025), gratitude is an internal expression of a person's spiritual well-being that has developed and is rooted in spiritual well-being. Therefore, gratitude can be viewed as an important component of spiritual intelligence, which leads to more flexible psychological coping.²⁵ Based on this theoretical foundation, four indicators of gratitude can be formulated:

1. Awareness of Allah's Blessings. Interpreting QS. Luqman [31]: 12, Shihab explains that the command to give thanks to Allah (*ashkur lillāh*) represents the essence of wisdom itself, since gratitude requires acknowledgment of the Giver, deep understanding of the blessing received, and full awareness of its purpose according to divine will.²⁶ Such awareness produces obedience, admiration, and motivation to use blessings appropriately, so that every aspect of life is regarded as a meaningful gift from God.
2. Acceptance of Allah's Decree. QS. Luqman [31]: 12 further affirms that "whoever is grateful, is grateful for the benefit of his own soul," indicating that gratitude has direct implications for the individual's inner quality. In this sense, gratitude reflects the capacity to accept Allah's decree with an open heart—a form of spiritual maturity in which the individual not only acknowledges blessings but is also able to interpret every life condition as part of divine wisdom (*hikmah*).
3. Inner Calm and Stability. Shihab explains that the wisdom (*hikmah*) bestowed upon Luqman is closely tied to the capacity for gratitude, which in turn produces inner tranquility. In interpreting QS. Ibrahim [14]: 7, gratitude is shown to carry not only theological but also psycho-spiritual consequences: the divine promise, "*la'in syakartum la-azīdannaikum*" ("if you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]"), signifies an assurance of increase that extends beyond material blessing to include

²¹Alex M Wood, Jeffrey J Froh, and Adam W A Geraghty, 'Gratitude and Well-Being: A Review and Theoretical Integration.', *Clinical Psychology Review*, 30.7 (2010), 890–905 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2010.03.005>>; Sumari and others.

²²James J. Gross, 'The Emerging Field of Emotion Regulation: An Integrative Review', *Review of General Psychology*, 2.3 (1998), 271–99 <<https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.2.3.271>>.

²³Moh. Quraish Shihab, tafsir QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 152.

²⁴Zaki Ali Zakaria, *Tafsir Inspirasi: Inspirasi Dan Ppb Suci Alquran* A, ed. by R Husaini, 7th edn (Duta Azhar, 2022).

²⁵Abi Syamsudin Tamami, Fina Hidayati, and Fathul Lubabin Nuqul, 'Islamic College Students' Gratitude Model: The Role of Social Support in Mediating Spiritual Well-Being', *Psikis : Jurnal Psikologi Islami*, 11.2 SE-Articles (2025), 381–94 <<https://doi.org/10.19109/psikis.v11i2.31675>>.

²⁶Moh. Quraish Shihab, tafsir QS. Luqman [31]: 12.

expanded perspective, optimism, and the impetus toward good deeds.²⁷ Conversely, ingratitude does not necessarily result in immediate punishment but may manifest as a gradual withdrawal of blessing or *istidrāj*—a delayed reckoning intended to lull the ungrateful into complacency, as referenced in QS. Al-A'raf [7]: 182–183.

4. Expression of Gratitude in Attitude and Behavior. Tafsir al-Misbah emphasizes that gratitude does not remain an internal disposition but must be manifested in concrete action. Interpreting the divine command in QS. Saba' [34]: 13, "*Work, O family of David, in gratitude*," Shihab affirms that true gratitude is demonstrated through deeds: using blessings according to their intended purpose, improving the quality of worship, engaging in prosocial behavior, and fulfilling moral responsibility toward others.²⁸

B. Inner Peace

Lavallee and colleagues describe inner peace as a critical dimension of psychological health, reflecting an individual's capacity to experience emotional stability, inner calm, and effective stress management. One relevant theoretical framework for understanding this construct is subjective well-being (SWB), defined as an individual's own evaluation of their quality of life, encompassing both pleasant emotional experience and overall life satisfaction.²⁹ Within this framework, inner peace can be understood as a manifestation of subjective well-being in which positive affect predominates over negative affect in daily life, even amid challenges or stress—an understanding that remains consistent with recent research on subjective well-being among young adults.³⁰

Within the framework of Qur'anic spiritual intelligence, inner peace represents one of the principal indicators that an individual has successfully integrated divine consciousness with moral and social life. Bensaid, Machouche, and Grine argue that spiritual intelligence developed according to a Qur'anic framework incorporates awareness of the divine into a coherent system of belief, worship, morality, and social responsibility—with inner harmony and positive transformation, reflected in inner peace, as central outcomes.³¹ This conception is further supported by recent findings showing that spiritual intelligence is positively associated with self-development, mental health, and academic success among students.³²

Based on this framework, four indicators of inner peace can be formulated:

1. Emotional Stability – the capacity to maintain emotional balance when confronted with pressure and life's dynamics. Individuals with strong inner peace are not easily overwhelmed by excessive anxiety, anger, or restlessness, owing to a firm spiritual foundation.
2. Clarity of Mind and Heart – reflected in the ability to think clearly, reflectively, and without excessive emotional reactivity. From the perspective of Qur'anic spiritual intelligence, this clarity results from continuous awareness of Allah's presence in every aspect of life.

²⁷Moh. Quraish Shihab, tafsir QS. Ibrahim [14]: 7.

²⁸Moh. Quraish Shihab, tafsir QS. Saba' [34]: 13.

²⁹Loraine F Lavallee and others, 'Development of the Contentment with Life Assessment Scale (CLAS): Using Daily Life Experiences to Verify Levels of Self-Reported Life Satisfaction', *Social Indicators Research*, 83.2 (2007), 201–44 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-006-9054-6>>.

³⁰Cristina Nadal, Agnès Ros-Morente, and Carla Quesada, 'Trait Emotional Intelligence Mediates the Dispositional Gratitude and Subjective Well-Being in Young Adults', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15 (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1414867>>.

³¹Benaouda Bensaid, Salah B Machouche, and Fadila Grine, 'A Qur'anic Framework for Spiritual Intelligence', *Religions*, 2014, 179–98 <<https://doi.org/10.3390/rel5010179>>.

³²Zhou and others.

3. Sense of Security and Spiritual Peace – a feeling of being protected, anchored to a transcendental foundation, and not easily shaken by life's uncertainties. This sense of security is a direct manifestation of spiritual closeness to Allah and a religiously grounded interpretation of life's meaning.
4. Composed Problem-Solving Capacity – the ability to confront problems without excessive emotional reaction, accepting life's trials as part of a spiritual process and interpreting them constructively. Within the framework of Qur'anic spiritual intelligence, this capacity reflects spiritual maturity with direct implications for psychological health.

METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative approach with an associative-causal design to examine how gratitude within Islamic spiritual intelligence shapes students' inner peace. The quantitative approach was selected because it enables objective hypothesis testing through measurable numerical data, thereby producing findings that are more precise and accountable.³³

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (UINSU). The population comprised all active students enrolled in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year in the Islamic Counseling and Guidance (BPI) Study Program, totaling 248 individuals. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling, involving active students who voluntarily agreed to participate and completed the questionnaire in full.³⁴ Using Slovin's formula with a 10 percent margin of error, the minimum required sample size was calculated at 71 respondents; however, to strengthen data representativeness and minimize potential bias from incomplete or invalid responses, the sample was increased to 93 respondents.

Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale (1–5), consisting of 24 statements based on the indicators of each variable.³⁵ The research instrument had previously been tested for validity and reliability, rendering it appropriate and accurate for use as a measurement tool.³⁶ Data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics version 25, encompassing validity testing, reliability testing, classical assumption testing, and simple linear regression analysis to examine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.³⁷ All collected data were processed both descriptively and inferentially as the basis for drawing the study's conclusions.

Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables.

Variable	Type	Indicators
Gratitude within Islamic Spiritual Intelligence	Independent (X)	1. Awareness of Allah's blessings 2. Acceptance of Allah's decree 3. Inner calm and stability 4. Expression of gratitude in attitude and behavior

³³Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019).

³⁴Mumtaz Memon and others, 'Purposive Sampling: A Review and Guidelines for Quantitative Research', *Journal of Applied Structural Equation Modeling*, 9 (2024), 1–23 <[https://doi.org/10.47263/JASEM.9\(1\)01](https://doi.org/10.47263/JASEM.9(1)01)>.

³⁵Rensis Likert, 'A Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes.', *Archives of Psychology*, 22 140 (1932), 55.

³⁶Roberta Heale and Alison Twycross, 'Validity and Reliability in Quantitative Research', *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 18 (2015), 66–67.

³⁷Mohsen Tavakol and Reg Dennick, 'Making Sense of Cronbach's Alpha', *International Journal of Medical Education*, 2 (2011), 53–55 <<https://doi.org/10.5116/ijme.4dfb.8dfd>>.

Inner Peace	Dependent (Y)	1. Emotional stability 2. Clarity of mind and heart 3. Sense of security and spiritual peace 4. Composed problem-solving capacity
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FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study aimed to analyze the effect of gratitude within Islamic spiritual intelligence on the inner peace of students in the Islamic Counseling and Guidance (BPI) Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, UINSU. The study involved 93 BPI students. Data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics 25 for Windows, yielding the following descriptive statistics:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gratitude (X)	93	12	60	45.29	10.514
Inner Peace (Y)	93	12	60	42.48	8.732
Valid N (listwise)	93				

A. Instrument Validity Testing

Instrument validity testing was conducted to ensure that each questionnaire item genuinely reflected the intended research construct, using the Corrected Item-Total Correlation technique in SPSS Statistics 25. An item was considered valid if its calculated r-value exceeded the critical r-table value of 0.205.

For the gratitude within Islamic spiritual intelligence variable (X), all items from X1 to X12 produced r-values above the 0.205 threshold, with item X11 recording the highest value (0.825) and item X6 the lowest (0.249). All items were therefore declared valid.

For the inner peace variable (Y), all items from Y1 to Y12 likewise exceeded the threshold, with item Y2 recording the highest value (0.788) and item Y9 the lowest (0.332), confirming that all items were valid and capable of accurately measuring the research construct.

B. Instrument Reliability Testing

Table 3. Reliability Test Results.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Criterion	Result
Gratitude (X)	0.902	0.70	Reliable
Inner Peace (Y)	0.843	0.70	Reliable

Both instruments produced Cronbach's Alpha coefficients well above the standard threshold of 0.70.³⁸ The coefficient of 0.902 for gratitude is classified as excellent, indicating that the scale items consistently capture the construct across repeated measurement. Similarly, the coefficient of 0.843 for inner peace confirms stable and accurate measurement. This high validity and reliability provide a solid foundation for proceeding to inferential analysis, consistent with methodological literature affirming that

³⁸Tavakol and Dennick.

instrument reliability is a fundamental precondition for objective and defensible data generalization in scientific publication.³⁹

C. Classical Assumption Testing

1. Normality Test

The normality test was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk method in SPSS Statistics 25, appropriate given the sample size of 93 respondents. The test on the Unstandardized Residual produced a significance value of 0.18. Since this exceeds the 0.05 threshold, the data are considered normally distributed, satisfying the precondition for parametric statistical analysis such as simple linear regression.

2. Linearity Test

The linearity test examined whether a linear relationship exists between gratitude within Islamic spiritual intelligence and students' inner peace, using the Test for Linearity feature in SPSS Statistics 25. Results showed a Linearity significance value of 0.000 and an F-value of 6.814. Since the significance value falls well below 0.05, a clear linear relationship between the two variables is confirmed, satisfying the assumption required to proceed with simple linear regression analysis.

D. Simple Linear Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Table 4. Simple Linear Regression and Hypothesis Test Results.

Model	Unstd. B	Std. Error	Std. Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	14.168	2.664	-	5.318	.000
Gratitude (X)	.625	.057	.753	10.908	.000

Dependent variable: Inner Peace (Y).

Based on Table 4, the regression equation obtained is:

$$Y = 14.168 + 0.625X$$

This indicates that when gratitude equals zero, the predicted inner peace score is 14.168. The regression coefficient of 0.625 (positive) indicates that each one-unit increase in gratitude is associated with a 0.625-unit increase in inner peace. The t-test yielded a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), leading to rejection of H_0 and acceptance of H_1 : gratitude within Islamic spiritual intelligence has a significant effect on students' inner peace. In other words, the higher a student's gratitude, the higher their inner peace.

These findings highlight that gratitude, as a component of Islamic spiritual intelligence, is key to building stable emotion and inner calm among students. Students who cultivate gratitude in daily life tend to view life more optimistically, manage emotions more skillfully, and face life's pressures with inspiring composure.

E. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.753	.567	.562	5.780

³⁹Heale and Twycross.

The R Square value of 0.567 indicates that gratitude accounts for 56.7 percent of the variance in students' inner peace—more than half of the dynamics of individual inner peace can be explained by their level of gratitude. The remaining 43.3 percent is attributable to other variables outside this study's model, such as social support, emotion regulation, or environmental conditions, which were not explored here. In psychological research, an R^2 value above 50 percent is generally categorized as a fairly strong effect.

This study reveals that gratitude cultivated within Islamic spiritual intelligence has a positive and substantive impact on the inner peace of BPI students at UINSU. Through simple linear regression analysis, a significance value of 0.000 (well below 0.05) and a regression coefficient of 0.625 were obtained—in other words, the deeper a student's gratitude, the more peaceful their heart.

Discussion

These findings align with the positive psychology theory advanced by Emmons and McCullough, who identify gratitude as a positive emotion capable of enhancing individual psychological well-being.⁴⁰ Students who cultivate gratitude tend to view life more brightly, accept circumstances with greater equanimity, and are less prone to becoming trapped in emotional pressure—conditions that make individuals better able to achieve inner peace amid academic and social demands, a pattern corroborated by recent evidence on gratitude's association with subjective and psychological well-being.⁴¹

This study's findings also align with Wood et al.'s theory, which affirms that gratitude contributes to increased subjective well-being, reduced stress, and greater psychological resilience.⁴² In this study's context, students with high gratitude tend to exhibit better emotional stability, clearer thinking, and greater calm in facing campus-life challenges—consistent with the inner-peace indicators of emotional stability, clarity of mind, spiritual security, and composed problem-solving, a pattern also reflected in recent shukr-based group intervention research among college students.⁴³

From the perspective of Islamic spiritual intelligence, these findings are also consistent with M. Quraish Shihab's thought in *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, which explains that gratitude is not merely an emotional expression but a spiritual awareness involving the heart, mind, and behavior directed toward Allah SWT.⁴⁴ Grateful individuals find it easier to accept Allah's decree, view life positively, and maintain inner stability—conditions that subsequently shape students' inner peace. Furthermore, in *Tafsir Inspirasi*, remembrance of Allah is framed as a gift that strengthens a believer's life guidance, while ingratitude is described as a calamity that distances a person from inner peace: gratitude increases blessing, while ingratitude diminishes it.⁴⁵ Gratitude, in this reading, is understood not merely as verbal expression but as a form of tawhidic awareness and mature faith that shapes psychological stability and inner peace.

These findings also reinforce prior research by Fuertes, who found that the practice of gratitude positively impacts students' mental, spiritual, and social well-being,⁴⁶ as well as research by Formanigrum, who found that gratitude reduces negative feelings such as loneliness and enhances students' psychological well-being.⁴⁷ This study underscores that

⁴⁰Emmons and McCullough.

⁴¹Nawa and Yamagishi.

⁴²Wood, Froh, and Geraghty.

⁴³Sumari and others.

⁴⁴Shihab.

⁴⁵Zakaria.

⁴⁶Fuertes.

⁴⁷Formanigrum and Saniatuzzulfa.

gratitude serves as a critical key to cultivating inner peace among students. Overall, this study's findings reveal that gratitude within Islamic spiritual intelligence plays an important role in enhancing students' inner peace. Students able to cultivate gratitude find it easier to achieve emotional stability, inner calm, and the capacity to face life's pressures more positively and adaptively. Consequently, cultivating gratitude within students' academic and spiritual lives is essential to supporting psychological well-being within Islamic higher-education environments.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that gratitude, cultivated within the framework of Islamic spiritual intelligence, exerts a positive and statistically significant effect on the inner peace of students in the Islamic Counseling and Guidance (*Bimbingan Penyuluhan Islam/BPI*) Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (UINSU). The regression coefficient of 0.625, combined with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), confirms that gratitude constitutes a meaningful predictor of inner peace, while the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.567 indicates that 56.7 percent of the variance in students' inner peace is explained by gratitude within Islamic spiritual intelligence. These results affirm that students who consistently cultivate *syukur* – through awareness of divine blessings, acceptance of Allah's decree, inner calm and stability, and its expression in attitude and behavior – tend to demonstrate greater emotional stability, clarity of mind, a stronger sense of spiritual security, and more composed problem-solving capacity in the face of academic and social pressures.

The findings carry significant theoretical implications. First, they affirm the integrative function of Islamic spiritual intelligence as a framework through which gratitude is not merely experienced as a positive emotion but is deepened into a sustained spiritual orientation encompassing the heart, tongue, and bodily action – consistent with the Qur'anic conception of *syukur* as explicated in *Tafsir al-Misbah*. Second, they extend existing positive psychology models of gratitude by demonstrating that within an Islamic higher-education context, gratitude operates through a distinctly theological and communal logic – connecting individual psychological welfare to the broader project of Islamic community development and social well-being. Third, by establishing inner peace as a measurable indicator of student social welfare, the study contributes empirically to the scholarship on Islamic community development, affirming that the psychological-spiritual dimension of student life is inseparable from the quality of their social contribution on campus and within the wider Muslim community.

From a practical standpoint, the findings carry direct implications for student welfare policy and program development within Islamic higher-education institutions. The cultivation of gratitude and Islamic spirituality should not be treated as incidental to academic formation but should be systematically integrated into student development programs, campus pastoral care, and the BPI curriculum itself – given that BPI students are themselves future practitioners of psychological-spiritual guidance for Muslim communities. Structured interventions such as *syukur* journaling, reflective Qur'anic engagement, group-based gratitude practices, and the integration of Islamic psychological principles within academic counseling services represent promising and evidence-grounded approaches for strengthening students' inner peace and social-psychological welfare.

This study acknowledges certain limitations. The research was conducted within a single study program at one Islamic university, and the cross-sectional quantitative design does not allow for causal inference in the strict longitudinal sense. The purposive sampling approach, while appropriate for the study's objectives, limits the generalizability of findings to broader student populations. Future research is recommended to employ longitudinal

designs to trace the development of gratitude and inner peace over time, to include larger and more diverse samples across multiple Islamic universities, and to investigate potential mediating and moderating variables – such as social support, academic self-efficacy, religious practice intensity, and family environment – that may further elucidate the mechanisms through which Islamic spiritual intelligence shapes student psychological welfare. Mixed-methods approaches that combine quantitative measurement with qualitative exploration of students' lived spiritual experiences would also enrich the scholarly understanding of this relationship, contributing to the growing literature on Islamic community development and spiritual well-being in Indonesian higher education.

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