


Islamic Guidance and Counseling to Foster Gratitude in Boarding High School Students

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<p>Revised: 2025-03-26</p> <p>Published: 2025-06-21</p> <p>Keywords: Islamic Guidance and Counseling, Gratitude, Boarding School, Student</p> <p>Copyright holder: © Author/s (2025)</p> <p>This article is under:</p>  <p>How to cite: Saputra, M. I. D., Naqiyah, N., Setiawati, D., Wiyono, B. D., Ilhamuddin, M. F., & Habsy, B. A. (2025). Islamic Guidance and Counseling to Foster Gratitude in Boarding High School Students. <i>Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy</i>, 7(2). https://doi.org/10.51214/002025071350000</p> <p>Published by: Kuras Institute</p> <p>E-ISSN: 2656-1050</p>	<p>ABSTRACT: This study investigates the application of Islamic guidance and counseling to foster gratitude among students at Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic senior high school) Syekh Abdul Qodir Al-Jailani, Probolinggo. Using a quasi-experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest approach, the study assessed gratitude levels before and after intervention. The gratitude scale, developed based on aspects of personal and transpersonal gratitude, was administered to a purposive sample of 229 students. Data analysis using a paired sample t-test revealed a significant increase in students' gratitude scores post-intervention (Sig. < 0.05). The intervention involved delivering materials on gratitude, positive perspective (khusnudzon), and appreciation, aligning with Islamic principles to promote emotional resilience, spiritual growth, and prosocial behavior. The findings suggest that integrating gratitude into Islamic counseling not only enhances emotional stability but also strengthens students' social relationships and spiritual well-being. For counselors, the study underscores the importance of culturally and spiritually sensitive approaches, particularly in Islamic settings, to address students' psychosocial and spiritual needs. The results imply that incorporating practices like reflection, prayer, and empathy into counseling can create a supportive framework for fostering gratitude as a sustainable habit, contributing to students' holistic development. This approach provides a model for counselors to align therapeutic interventions with clients' cultural and spiritual values, promoting resilience and overall mental health.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counseling are provided by an expert. The help provided to individuals to grow and develop optimally (Cashwell et al., 2013; Cornish & Wade, 2010). Meanwhile, counseling is help from counselors offering to solve individual problems with individual strengths. Technological media enable counselors to conduct counseling in the development of information technology. Cyber Counseling or counseling using the internet can be done by video call or using an online platform. Counseling can be done anywhere and anytime, depending on the agreement between the counselor and the client. Comprehensive guidance and counseling are developing in schools in Indonesia (Cornish & Wade, 2010).

Islamic counseling is rooted in the foundational triad of *aqidah* (faith), *ibadah* (worship), and *akhlaq* (moral conduct), which shape both its theoretical and practical approach (Al-Bagha, 1997;

Sabiq, 1985; Zaydan, 2000). Aqidah, representing matters of faith, serves as the bedrock upon which the other components of Islamic counseling rest, providing individuals with inner peace and spiritual grounding (Al-Banna, 1978). Its fostering a sense of trust and reliance on God's wisdom and plan. *Ibadah* strengthens the connection with the Divine through practices like prayer, fasting, and charity, which promote discipline and emotional resilience (Mat Akhir, 2008). Meanwhile, *akhlaq* guides ethical behavior and personal development by helping individuals distinguish between commendable and blameworthy traits (Al-Ghazali, 2000). Research supports the integration of religious values into counseling, showing benefits for spiritual and psychological well-being (Burke et al., 1999; Cornish & Wade, 2010; Hofmann & Walach, 2011). In other research that written by Rofiq, Zamroni, & Baharudin (2021), scholars emphasize that aligning counseling with Islamic teachings enhances resilience and meets the unique psychosocial and spiritual needs of Muslim clients (Hamdan, 2008; Hasyimi, 1986; Zahran, 1980). Islamic guidance and counseling can be applied with group counseling methods as noted in the Bahiroh (2021), but a counselor should have, 1) mastered the science of guidance and counseling, 2) understand the educational insights related to their field of work, and 3) understand adequate Islamic sharia. Finally, add noble morals for good communication in society (Thohari Musnamar, 1992).

Moreover, Islamic counseling incorporates faith-based practices such as prayer, Quran recitation, and *shukr* (gratitude) to strengthen clients' spiritual connection and resilience during times of distress (Lumbard, 2021). Group counseling based on hadith has been effective in promoting self-awareness and emotional regulation, particularly by encouraging a *zuhud* (ascetic) mindset that shifts focus from materialism to inner contentment (Jannati & Hamandia, 2020). Moreover, Muslim faith leaders often act as informal mental health providers, helping bridge gaps to formal services while reducing stigma and cultural barriers (Meran & Mason, 2019).

Gratitude is widely recognized as a prosocial emotion and moral virtue tied to reciprocity and positive social behavior (McCullough, Emmons, Kilpatrick, & Larson, 2001; Morgan, Gulliford, & Kristjánsson, 2017; Navarro & Tudge, 2020; Tsang, 2006). Scholars have identified three central determinants of gratitude: the benefactor's cost, the intention behind the benefaction, and the perceived value of the benefit (Rusk, Vella-Brodrick, & Waters, 2016; TESSER, GATEWOOD, & DRIVER, 1968; Wood, Maltby, Stewart, Linley, & Joseph, 2008). Gratitude is understood at both state and trait levels—state gratitude reflects temporary emotional responses to kindness, while trait gratitude is a stable tendency to recognize and respond to life's positives (Watkins, Woodward, Stone, & Kolts, 2003). Individuals differ in this disposition, with those higher in trait gratitude experiencing more frequent and intense moments of state gratitude (McCullough, Tsang, & Emmons, 2004).

Islamic scholars emphasize the reciprocal nature of *shukr* (gratitude), where expressing thanks to God both acknowledges His blessings and invites further favor (Liang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023; Zhu, Long, & Liu, 2023). *Shukr* is considered a core element of Islamic virtue ethics. People who show gratitude not only acknowledge the blessings they have already received, but they also attract more blessings from God (Liang et al., 2022). Grateful individuals tend to experience higher life satisfaction, optimism, and lower levels of depression and stress, indicating its protective psychological role (Myers et al., 2009). Gratitude also promotes prosocial behavior, empathy, and strong social bonds. Spiritually inclined individuals often view positive events as divine gifts, deepening both faith and gratitude (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). In educational settings, gratitude interventions enhance student well-being, and Islamic counseling has been shown to improve mental health, especially among students with strong religious values (Abdurrahman, Akhyar Lubis, Tanjung, & Hawa Lubis, 2021).

Although gratitude interventions can be effective, individuals may face difficulties adopting a grateful mindset due to psychological barriers such as entitlement, victim mentality, jealousy, resentment, and reluctance to acknowledge personal shortcomings (Myers et al., 2009). For

instance, jealousy can lead individuals to fixate on perceived deficiencies compared to others, while entitlement or victimhood may create unrealistic expectations, making it hard to appreciate existing blessings (Watkins et al., 2003). To ensure the effectiveness of gratitude-based interventions, these mental blocks must be addressed. Therapeutic approaches that help individuals reframe their self-worth and relationships can support the development of a more appreciative and balanced perspective (Myers et al., 2009).

Integrating Islamic counseling with gratitude-based interventions in high schools provides a culturally and spiritually appropriate way to support students' emotional growth. Islamic values such as humility, recognition of blessings, and appreciation for divine and human kindness align with the concept of *shukr* (Al-Yamani, 2022). Quran-based counseling can enhance students' awareness of divine sustenance (*rizq*), fostering deeper gratitude (Jannati & Hamandia, 2022). Reflective practices like gratitude journaling and verbal thanks help reinforce these values, while group discussions can address barriers such as entitlement or jealousy. The belief that gratitude brings further blessings also motivates students to maintain a thankful mindset (Al-Yamani, 2022).

Islamic counseling, as a distinctive theoretical framework, is grounded in the triad of faith (aqidah), worship (ibadah), and moral conduct (akhlaq), which serve not only as spiritual pillars but also as the conceptual basis for the intervention methods discussed and being essential in Islamic education and character development. Nisa Silmi Nafisah (2024), highlights that values like obedience, patience, sincerity, and gratitude are essential in both religious teachings and everyday character formation. This framework aligns with the concept of transpersonal gratitude, which goes beyond interpersonal thanks to reflect a spiritual connection with a higher power. As Garg (2023) explains, transpersonal gratitude enhances spiritual well-being and reduces psychological distress, complementing the Islamic view of gratitude as both a moral and spiritual practice. These principles guide the counseling methods used in this study, linking practices such as reflection, positive thinking, and appreciation to Islamic values.

Study Aim and Hypothesis

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of Islamic guidance and counseling in fostering gratitude among boarding high school students. Specifically, the study examines the impact of gratitude-focused interventions on students' emotional stability, social relationships, and spiritual well-being. The hypothesis is that Islamic guidance and counseling significantly enhance students' gratitude levels, demonstrating a measurable increase in gratitude scores following the intervention.

METHODS

Design

The research employed a quasi-experimental design, specifically utilizing a one-group pretest-posttest approach. A pre-test was administered to the participants for 30 minutes to establish a baseline of their gratitude levels before the intervention. The intervention, titled Islamic Guidance and Counseling to Foster Gratitude, was then implemented for the selected sample of 26 students. The intervention sessions were conducted in classroom settings within the boarding school environment. Each session was facilitated by the researcher, who had received prior training in Islamic counseling principles to ensure the effective and consistent delivery of the materials. The intervention was delivered through a group guidance method, with students divided into groups of 13. Each group received one 60-minute session conducted in different class settings to encourage group dynamics—an essential aspect of group counseling. The materials delivered during the sessions covered three main components aligned with Islamic values:

Islamic Guidance and Counseling

According to [Aura Husna \(2013\)](#), Researcher convey three ways of being grateful that students can apply (1) Oral: Expressing gratitude for what is received also emphasizes the importance of keeping the oral from complaining. (2) Actions: the researcher modeled the importance of doing good and not giving up easily in the face of difficulties, such as being away from family. (3) Heart: Students should always have faith in God and be patient in facing trials. The researcher emphasized to the students that a grateful heart helps maintain emotional stability.

Positive Perspective

Researcher explained to the students that a positive perspective or *khusnudzon* is an attitude of thinking well of God and fellow humans. The researcher explained that when people have negative thoughts or are prejudiced against others, their lives will be filled with worries and negative energy. With *khusnudzon*, people will more easily learn and accept life lessons with an open heart. For example, when something bad happens such as theft, the researcher said that people should think that the thief might need the item more and Allah might replace it with something better. In addition to *Khusnudzon*, researchers also conveyed the importance of empathy. The researcher explained that empathy must be developed, especially in the context of the lives of santri who are accustomed to living together in boarding schools.

At the end, the researcher stated that humans are basically created to achieve success and emphasized that by having *khusnudzon*, a person can focus more on developing their potential and winning the battle against harmful things. *Khusnudzon* helps one to face challenges calmly and believe that everything has a wisdom, so that it can encourage a person to continue trying without being burdened with excessive worry.

Table 1. Intervention Design

Session	Content	Objectives
1	Introduction and Pretest Administered gratitude scale to measure students' baseline gratitude level.	Establish a baseline understanding of students' gratitude levels before the intervention.
2	Oral Gratitude Expressing thanks and avoiding complaints	Encourage verbal expressions of gratitude and reduce negative speech patterns.
3	Gratitude in Action Doing good and remaining resilient, even when away from family.	Foster behavioral gratitude and perseverance in challenging situations.
4	Gratitude from the Heart Developing faith and patience during trials.	Promote emotional stability through internalized faith and spiritual resilience.
5	Positive Thinking (<i>Khusnudzon</i>) Assuming good in God and others to reduce worry and prejudice.	Build a positive mindset and encourage constructive interpretation of life events.
6	Empathy in Daily Life Understanding others' feelings, especially in the boarding school setting.	Develop empathy and awareness of social interactions among peers.
7	Appreciation of Blessings Recognizing gifts like health, education, and faith.	Increase awareness of everyday blessings and instill spiritual appreciation.
8	Spiritual Expressions of Gratitude Through prayer and reflection.	Reinforce the role of <i>ibadah</i> (worship) as a medium to express gratitude to God.
9	Social Gratitude Believing in others' kindness and saying thank you.	Encourage gratitude toward people (parents, teachers, peers) and strengthen social bonds.
10	Group Reflection and Posttest Open sharing session and re-administration of the gratitude scale.	Reflect on changes in gratitude and evaluate the impact of the intervention.

Appreciation

As an opening, the researcher conveyed a sense of appreciation to God such as the completeness of the limbs, the ability to go to school, and the blessing of being a Muslim are examples of grace that should be grateful for. The researcher emphasized that gratitude when receiving blessings and patience when tested are the keys to being a calm person and not feeling

difficult. Furthermore, the researcher explained how to give appreciation, including (1) Prayer: the researcher explained that prayer is a strong form of appreciation for a believer. (2) Believing in the Goodness of Others: The researcher emphasized the importance of eliminating complaints and envy. More clearly, the researcher explained that humans live not only with Allah SWT but also with parents, teachers, and friends. Therefore, saying thank you is very important. After providing material to students The facilitator in group counseling, who is the researcher, opens a discussion about what students get after receiving the various materials that have been delivered.

Participants

The participants in this study were students from Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic senior high school) Syekh Abdul Qodir Al-Jailani, Probolinggo, who live in an Islamic boarding school environment. Prior to the intervention, Islamic guidance and counseling had not been formally practiced in the school's regular curriculum. Thus, the selected participants had not been exposed to structured Islamic counseling sessions before, allowing the study to measure changes in gratitude levels as a response to the newly introduced intervention. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. A total of 26 students were selected as the sample, representing a portion of the 229-student population. The participants met the criteria of having low score of gratitude from pre-test which actively enrolled students and willing to participate in the study

Table 2. Gratitude Aspects and Indicator with Pretest and Post Test Instrument

Aspect	Indicator	No	Description
Personal Gratitude	Feeling favored by others' actions	1	I am grateful when other people help me
		2	I am grateful to have many people who have contributed in assisting me to achieve my goals
		3	I am grateful for my current life
		4	I complain about my current life
	Appreciates others' kind treatment of him/her	5	I appreciate the support I have received from friends
		6	I always try to show my gratitude by repaying the kindness of others every day.
		7	I am grateful to often receive kind actions from people around me
		8	I repay other people's kindness with kindness
		9	I am grateful that many people around me always treat me with kindness
		10	I struggle to repay the kindness that my family has given me
		11	I repay the kindness of others by giving gifts
Transpersonal Gratitude	Desire to help others who are experiencing difficulties as he/she used to.	12	I am inspired by others' kindness to spread kindness to others
		13	I do not give gifts or repay other people's kindness
		14	I am grateful to Allah SWT for mine and my family's health
		15	I think support and help from others is not a form of kindness from Allah SWT
		16	I always remember to say thank you to Allah SWT when facing a happy situation
	Desire to repay the kindness of others	17	I do not see the goodness given by Allah SWT
		18	I am grateful to have a comfortable and safe home
		19	I often neglect the food I eat
		20	I am grateful to be able to enjoy the beauty of the universe that I see.
	Appreciating an object		

Instruments

A survey in the form of a gratitude scale was applied as the research instrument. According to [Peterson & Seligman \(n.d.\)](#), the gratitude scale consists of two primary aspects: personal gratitude and transpersonal gratitude. The gratitude scale was developed by the researcher based on the aspects and indicators of existing scales. The indicators were derived from research by [Triwahyuningsih \(2021\)](#). The items on the scale included both favorable and unfavorable items. The scoring system assigned values for favorable items as follows: very suitable (4), suitable (3), not suitable (2), and very unsuitable (1). For unfavorable items, the scoring was reversed: very suitable (1), suitable (2), not suitable (3), and very unsuitable (4). The gratitude scale consists of two aspects, namely (1) personal gratitude, and (2) transpersonal gratitude. Personal gratitude is a sense of gratitude directed to other people. Transpersonal gratitude is an expression of thanks to God, to a higher power, and to the world. Before use, the instrument was first validated by practitioners and experts and declared valid. Data analysis used to analyze student pretest and posttest data is the t test and validity test. The indicator that used presented in Table 2. The validity test was conducted on 229 respondents and tested at 5% validity (See Table 3).

Table 3. Validity Test

Item	Total	R Count	R Table	Varians	Description
1	271	0,561068	0,138	0,185512909	VALID
2	321	0,578046	0,138	0,311575883	VALID
3	316	0,534903	0,138	0,333103501	VALID
4	335	0,50122	0,138	0,354975868	VALID
5	519	0,304467	0,138	0,854171455	VALID
6	299	0,431578	0,138	0,362292193	VALID
7	704	0,178181	0,138	0,840956102	VALID
8	335	0,392228	0,138	0,495326745	VALID
9	329	0,616271	0,138	0,378648587	VALID
10	554	0,403495	0,138	0,612962537	VALID
11	359	0,507938	0,138	0,439477515	VALID
12	258	0,562302	0,138	0,190032943	VALID
13	706	0,353466	0,138	1,28694553	VALID
14	290	0,530949	0,138	0,283996016	VALID
15	657	0,157883	0,138	0,930131004	VALID
16	333	0,43975	0,138	0,371791925	VALID
17	351	0,544498	0,138	0,434229679	VALID
18	725	0,264361	0,138	0,770589137	VALID
19	331	0,333053	0,138	0,502489849	VALID
20	805	0,306134	0,138	0,79472152	VALID

Table 4. Reliability Test

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
X01	37.2325	29.325	0.508	0.678
X02	37.0132	28.633	0.507	0.67
X03	37.0351	28.712	0.457	0.673
X04	36.9561	28.843	0.418	0.675
X05	36.1675	29.253	0.515	0.669
X06	37.1026	29.248	0.339	0.682
X07	35.3431	30.369	0.092	0.866
X08	36.9518	29.002	0.52	0.671
X09	36.9701	29.026	0.543	0.664
X10	36.8768	28.92	0.471	0.674
X11	36.8465	28.501	0.414	0.675
X12	37.1992	29.37	0.5	0.671
X13	35.2397	27.322	0.161	0.707
X14	37.1357	28.639	0.388	0.68
X15	37.1186	28.616	0.404	0.677
X16	36.9355	28.909	0.278	0.69
X17	37.2644	29.063	0.112	0.705
X18	36.3643	28.704	0.446	0.679
X19	36.8605	29.164	0.215	0.697
X20	34.9035	29.585	0.154	0.701

All items achieved a score of ≥ 0.6 , indicating that the instrument is reliable for research purposes which can be used for pre-test and post-test of this research.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using a paired sample t-test to compare students' gratitude scores before and after the intervention. Prior to hypothesis testing, data were examined for normality as a prerequisite for parametric analysis. The gratitude scale used in this study was tested for validity and reliability before implementation. Data processing was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 for Windows software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Post-Test was conducted to test for changes that occurred from the Pre-Test that had been conducted before providing material. The results of the Pre-Test and Post-Test questionnaires with the paired sample t-test test in table 4.

Table 4. Paired Sample T-Test 1st Output

Pair 1	M	N	SD	SE M
Pretest	66.62	26	6.319	1.239
Posttest	70.46	26	5.935	1.164

This output shows the summary results of descriptive statistics from both samples or pretest and posttest with an average pretest data score of 66.62 and post-test data score of 70.46. After first output results, Decision-making Base was determined by, (1) If the Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05 , then there is a significant difference between the gratitude scores on the pretest and posttest data. (2) If the value of Sig. (2-tailed) > 0.05 , then there is no significant difference between the gratitude scores on the pretest and posttest data.

Table 4. Paired Sample T-Test 2nd Output

Pair 1	M	SD	SE	95% CI		t	df	p
				Lower	Upper			
Pretest - Posttest	70.46	26	5.935	1.164		-6.065	25	.000

From the second output of Paired Sample T-test, It is known that the value of Sig. (2-tailed) of $0.00 < 0.05$, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in gratitude scores on pretest and posttest data or it can be said that there is an increase in students' gratitude scores after being given treatment.

Discussion

The results of this study support the literature showing that gratitude-based interventions, especially when combined with counseling principles, can effectively improve students' psychological and emotional well-being. In the context of education, counseling plays an important role as professional assistance to help individuals grow and develop optimally (Cashwell et al., 2013; Cornish & Wade, 2010). The material on gratitude, positive perspective and appreciation can reinforce the concept that gratitude not only impacts on spiritual well-being but also on students' emotional stability and social relationships.

This study highlights the transformative impact of gratitude-focused interventions within an Islamic counseling framework, demonstrating their ability to enhance spiritual well-being, emotional stability, and social relationships. In line with the results of previous research conducted

by [Burke et al., \(99\)](#); [Cornish & Wade, \(2010\)](#); [Hofmann & Walach, \(2011\)](#), that the integration of spiritual beliefs and practices in counseling as a basic strategy to overcome existential problems and psychological matters. Such an approach not only increases resilience and hope, but can be used as an intervention in cultural sensitivity by incorporating core Islamic principles such as prayer, empathy and khusnudzon or positive thinking ([Hamdan, 2008](#); [Hasyimi, 1986](#); [Zahran, 1980](#)). Having Islamic core principles in this approach, the counseling process can be more suitable for clients/students who are Muslim, fostering an environment that supports their cultural and spiritual awareness.

The scope of Islamic counseling is to combine aqidah (faith), ibadah (worship), and moral teachings to cultivate gratitude. Faith being a solid foundation, the practice of worship, which includes prayer and reflection, can enhance one's spiritual connection. Moral principles, such as shukr (gratitude), are important in shaping emotional resilience and fostering a positive outlook on life ([Lumbard, 2021](#)). This perspective is supported by research conducted by [Meran & Mason \(2019\)](#), which states that it is important to integrate religious principles into counseling sessions to meet the psychosocial and spiritual needs of Islamic clients. By reducing the stigma surrounding mental health, Islamic counseling can be a suitable approach for holistic healing, empowering clients/students to seek help to foster mental resilience and well-being. As a core element in Islamic-based therapy, Gratitude can enhance a person's well-being to reach a broader spiritual and social dimension in the future. In addition, Islamic counseling can also encourage clients/students to practice gratitude progressively and in line with Islamic teachings on gratitude that contain reciprocity, in which it is stated that gratitude to God is believed to obtain continuous blessings ([Liang et al., 2022](#)). The presence of the connection between spiritual well-being and psychological well-being suggests that gratitude is fundamental to spiritual practices and psychological interventions. Previous research supports the Islamic counseling approach and explains that gratitude is associated with greater life satisfaction, optimism, vitality and lower levels of stress and depression ([Myers et al., 2009](#)). This research underscores the importance of gratitude as an element that can promote emotional resilience and positive mental health. Gratitude-focused interventions in Islamic counseling are particularly effective for overcoming barriers to gratitude, including jealousy and grievance. Thus, through reflective practice and integrated interventions, clients/students are taught to cultivate a positive outlook and develop empathy ([Watkins et al., 2003](#)).

In addition to improving individual well-being, gratitude can also strengthen prosocial behaviors such as kindness and generosity, enabling one to contribute to social cohesion. Gratitude can also foster empathy and appreciation, strengthen interpersonal relationships and can increase a sense of community, which is at the core of Islamic teachings. With positive activities as a focus, avoiding negative thinking or su'udzon and practicing meditation as a form of gratitude for God's blessings, counselors play an active role in shaping clients/students in the practice of gratitude. Structured and progressive interventions can make gratitude something that can increase emotional resilience and a positive outlook. To keep clients/students in gratitude and practice gratitude, they are encouraged to engage in reflective practices such as understanding what is meant by blessing/favor, avoiding negative thought patterns and focusing on positive actions. Here, the counselor plays a large and active role in the implementation of this intervention, for example by providing guidance that includes promoting gratitude as a daily habit. This structured approach can help clients/students build emotional resilience and a constructive perspective on life so as to contribute to their holistic development.

To improve learning in the educational environment, gratitude can be used to foster motivation, perseverance and an optimistic attitude that has an impact on achieving success. Counselors can play a role in encouraging adolescents to be more appreciative by appreciating what they have gained such as educational opportunities, reciprocating kindness or help from peers and

teachers, positively viewing all challenges as opportunities to improve their abilities. Teachers and counselors as models can provide a positive role to show gratitude, in addition to encouraging an environment that can improve collaboration skills, mutual respect and spiritual activities that can instill gratitude in the daily lives of clients / students. Ways that can support the development of student gratitude include positive peer relationships that promote prosocial behavior and a sense of belonging; a supportive environment that encourages cooperation, appreciation, and respect for one another; spiritual practices that integrate gratitude into daily routines, such as regular prayer, reflection, and expressions of gratitude; and positive role models, such as teachers, counselors, and family members, who demonstrate gratitude through their actions and attitudes, including the inherent connection between spirituality and gratitude (McCullough et al., 2002). A person who is spiritually inclined is more likely to perceive that there are benefits and good things received from the almighty, which can increase gratitude and strengthen their spiritual bonds. This perspective reflects the ideas presented in this study, which encourage clients/students to acknowledge heavenly blessings and cultivate a long-term habit of gratitude to make gratitude a spiritual practice. Using gratitude in Islamic counseling supports spiritual development and emotional stability and is consistent with general psychological research on the transformational power of gratitude. These focuses foster a positive outlook, resilience to social well-being while supporting the holistic development of clients/students by using a balanced approach to meet their emotional and spiritual needs.

Implications

This study has implications for both practical and theoretical perspectives on the role of Islamic guidance and counseling in fostering gratitude among boarding school students. The findings highlight the importance of integrating spiritual and cultural values into counseling practices to enhance students' emotional stability, social relationships, and overall well-being. Practically, this study underscores the necessity for counselors and educators to incorporate gratitude-based interventions within Islamic counseling frameworks. By emphasizing gratitude through verbal expression, positive thinking (*khusnudzon*), and appreciation, students can develop resilience and a more positive outlook on life. The study suggests that structured interventions, such as reflective gratitude exercises, prayer, and prosocial behaviors, can be essential tools for improving students' emotional and spiritual well-being. Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing body of research on gratitude and counseling by demonstrating the effectiveness of Islamic-based interventions. It reinforces the significance of integrating religious principles, such as *shukr* (gratitude) and moral guidance, into psychological well-being frameworks. These findings support the idea that faith-based counseling approaches can play a crucial role in fostering gratitude as a sustainable habit and coping mechanism. Additionally, the study informs counselors, educators, and policymakers about the importance of culturally sensitive approaches in mental health interventions. Training for counselors on implementing gratitude-focused techniques can further enhance their effectiveness in supporting students' psychological development. Future interventions could also incorporate creative therapeutic methods, such as storytelling or art therapy, to reinforce gratitude expression in meaningful ways.

Limitations and Further Research

Limitation of this study is that it was conducted with a relatively small sample size from a single boarding school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational settings with different cultural or religious backgrounds. Additionally, since the study employed a quasi-experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest approach, the absence of a control group makes it difficult to rule out other potential factors influencing the increase in gratitude scores. Another limitation is that the study relied on self-reported measures, which may be influenced by

social desirability bias or individual differences in interpreting gratitude-related questions. Some students may have responded based on perceived expectations rather than their actual feelings, potentially affecting the accuracy of the results. Future research should explore the effectiveness of Islamic guidance and counseling for fostering gratitude across diverse student populations, including comparisons between different types of schools (e.g., public, private, and Islamic boarding schools). Longitudinal studies could also examine the long-term impact of gratitude-based interventions on students' emotional resilience and well-being. Further studies could incorporate qualitative approaches, such as interviews or focus group discussions, to gain deeper insights into students' experiences and perceptions of gratitude development. Additionally, expanding the scope to investigate how factors such as family support, socio-cultural influences, and spiritual practices contribute to gratitude cultivation would provide a more comprehensive understanding of this topic. A broader study with a larger, more diverse sample could yield more representative and generalizable results, further strengthening the theoretical and practical implications of gratitude-focused counseling interventions.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates how Islamic guidance and counseling might help students become more appreciative. The positive effect of this intervention is demonstrated by the significant rise in gratitude scores from the pre-test to the post-test (mean scores increased from 66.62 to 70.46 and a Sig. value of 0.00). Through the integration of spiritual principles, such as verbal, emotional, and behavioral expressions of gratitude, as well as the cultivation of positive viewpoints (khusnudzon) and appreciation, the approach successfully enhanced students' emotional stability and fortified their social bonds. By including Islamic counseling concepts, the findings broaden the breadth of previous research on gratitude-based therapies while remaining consistent with it. The program's incorporation of moral principles, ibadah (worship), and aqidah (faith) fosters not just spiritual development but also fortitude and a positive outlook on life. These results underscore the significance of holistic approaches in education and counseling that address both psychological and spiritual dimensions of student well-being. The study provides a valuable framework for future applications of gratitude-focused Islamic counseling, especially in educational and community contexts, ensuring its relevance for broader psychological and spiritual development.

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MIDS, NN, DS, BDW and MFI agree to the final version of this article.

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