

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

The Qur'an, as the divine revelation to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), serves as the ultimate source of guidance in Islam, encompassing theological, ethical, and spiritual principles. Central to its teachings is the concept of dhikr (remembrance of Allah), which the Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes as a means of attaining spiritual and psychological equilibrium. Verses such as *Surah Ar-Ra'd* (13:28) explicitly link dhikr to tranquility of the heart (سَكِينَةً), underscoring its role in fostering mindfulness and existential grounding. The Qur'an's holistic approach to human well-being integrates faith with practical spirituality, positioning dhikr not merely as ritual but as a therapeutic mechanism embedded in Islamic theology. Dhikr is considered a spiritual meditation that connects individuals with Allah, creating a deep sense of peace, satisfaction, and security.¹ Through dhikr, one is reminded of Allah's greatness and the

¹ It was remarked that dhikr is another meditative practice, also known as divine remembrance. Similar to meditation, Dhikr is the process of "listening within, the activation of a presence capable of witnessing inner and outer events without becoming absorbed in them.

insignificance of worldly problems compared to eternity,² helping to reduce mental burdens and anxiety.³

In the book *Mu'jam Alfazh Al-Qur'an Al-Karim*, the word dhikr in the Qur'an is mentioned hundreds of times. However, in the context of dhikr paired with the word Allah, it is repeated only 10 times, including in *Surah Al-Ma'idah* verse 91, *Surah Ar-Ra'd* verse 28, and others.⁴ But, the meaning of dhikrullah from the context of these 10 verses that directly links with tranquility and has relevance with anxiety disorder is only found in *Ar-Ra'd* verse 28. The verse states: الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ “Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah, hearts are assured”.⁵

Sara N Al-Rawi and Michael D. Fetters, “Traditional Arabic & Islamic Medicine: A Conceptual Model for Clinicians and Researchers,” *Global Journal of Health Science* 4, no. 3 (April 28, 2012): 167.

² The spiritual practice of Dhikr goes beyond attaining clarity and relaxation, however, and becomes about establishing a relationship with the divine. Al-Rawi and Fetters, 167.

³ The research revealed that higher scores on religiosity and spirituality are associated with lower depression and anxiety, and correlated negatively with measure of loneliness and despair. Moreover, positive relationships between self-reported religiosity and hopefulness and confidence were observed. A greater degree of religiosity is associated with hopefulness and confidence. Salih Yücel, *Prayer and Healing in Islam with Addendum of 25 Remedies for the Sick by Said Nursi* (Clifton Ave: Tughra Books, 2010), 89–90.

⁴ Ibrahim Madkur, *Mu'jam Alfazh Al-Qur'an Al-Karim* (Mesir: Jumhuriyyah Mishrul-'Arabiyyah Mujma' Al-Lughoh Al-'Arabiyyah, 1988), 456.

⁵ Saheeh International, *The Qur'an English Meanings* (Jeddah: Al-Muntada Al-Islami, 2004), 231.

Despite the Qur'anic emphasis on dhikr, modern Muslims increasingly neglect this practice due to secular lifestyles, materialism, and misconceptions about its relevance. Contemporary society prioritizes rapid solutions to stress, often overlooking spiritual practices in favor of secular therapies. This trend reflects a broader disconnect from religious traditions, where dhikr is perceived as time-consuming or incompatible with modern productivity paradigms. Additionally, limited understanding of dhikr's psychological benefits contributes to its underutilization, even among devout individuals. This avoidance exacerbates emotional instability, as individuals lose access to a faith-based tool that could mitigate existential anxieties and provide inner resilience.⁶

Dhikr manifests in various forms, each offering distinct psychological benefits that contribute to emotional well-being and spiritual stability. One prominent form is verbal dhikr, which involves the repetition of sacred phrases such as *Subhanallah* (Glory to Allah) and *La ilaha illallah* (There is no god but Allah). These utterances serve to anchor the mind in the constant awareness of the divine, fostering a state of inner calm and focus. The Qur'an emphasizes the

⁶ Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Islam and the Challenge of Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 45–60.

importance of this practice in *Surah Al-Ahzab* (33:41-42), where believers are instructed to remember Allah frequently, the verse states: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا “O you who have believed, remember Allah with much remembrance, and exalt Him morning and afternoon”.⁷ Through regular verbal repetition, individuals may experience a reduction in intrusive thoughts, anxiety, and cognitive distractions, as their attention is redirected toward transcendental realities. This practice aligns closely with what scholars define as Dhikr Jali, or audible dhikr, which engages the senses through vocalization and is often performed collectively or individually in a pronounced, outward manner.⁸

Another significant form is contemplative dhikr, which involves deep reflection on the attributes of Allah (*Asma'ul Husna*). This mode of remembrance invites believers to internalize divine qualities such as mercy, wisdom, and justice, thereby cultivating positive emotional states like gratitude and hope. *Surah Al-Baqarah* (2:152) states: فَادْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ “So remember Me; I will remember you.”⁹ This verse affirms the reciprocal nature of remembrance, stating that when

⁷ International, *The Qur'an English Meanings*, 412.

⁸ Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Inner Dimensions of Islamic Worship*, trans. Muhtar Holland (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1983), 25–40.

⁹ International, *The Qur'an English Meanings*, 21.

individuals remember Allah, He remembers them. By engaging in contemplative dhikr, individuals can disrupt negative thought patterns and foster a more optimistic and purposeful mental framework, ultimately supporting psychological resilience against anxiety and despair. This form of dhikr corresponds to *Dhikr Khafi*, or silent remembrance, which takes place within the heart and mind without the necessity of vocal expression, enabling a continuous, internal state of spiritual mindfulness.¹⁰

The third form, known as practical dhikr, refers to the integration of divine remembrance into daily activities, including acts of worship, ethical conduct, and community service. Rather than confining dhikr to ritualized moments, this practice encourages a holistic approach in which remembrance permeates one's entire way of life. As outlined in *Surah Al-Jumu'ah* (62:10), believers are instructed to engage with the world while maintaining constant mindfulness of Allah; the verse states: *فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا*. "And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah, and remember Allah often that you may succeed".¹¹

¹⁰ Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali and David Burrell, *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1992), 15–30.

¹¹ International, *The Qur'an English Meanings*, 569.

This ongoing spiritual awareness can align behavior with higher moral standards, promote self-discipline, and enhance overall well-being by grounding individuals in a sense of divine purpose throughout their daily routines. This comprehensive embodiment of remembrance reflects *Dhikr Haqiqi*, or true dhikr, wherein an individual's entire existence becomes an expression of divine awareness, transcending specific acts of remembrance to achieve a permanent state of God-consciousness.¹²

Modern psychology recognizes spirituality as a critical dimension of mental health, with studies affirming that religious practices enhance emotional regulation and resilience. Cognitive-behavioral theories align with dhikr's mechanisms: repetitive affirmations restructure thought patterns (akin to CBT's cognitive restructuring), while mindfulness during dhikr parallels secular mindfulness techniques. Psychosocial frameworks also acknowledge the role of community support in religious rituals, which reduces isolation—a key factor in anxiety disorders. This synergy between Islamic spirituality and psychological principles positions dhikr as a viable, faith-integrated therapeutic intervention.¹³

¹² Hamza Yusuf, *Purification of the Heart* (Birmingham: Sandala, 2004), 85–100.

¹³ G. Hussein Rassool, *Islamic Psychology: Human Behaviour and Experience from an Islamic Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2021), 120–35.

Furthermore, in recent decades, the increasing prevalence of anxiety disorders has become a global concern that cannot be ignored.¹⁴ This disorder, which includes various types such as generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and social phobia, has been proven to significantly impact the quality of life of individuals.¹⁵ It is estimated that millions of people worldwide are affected by this condition,¹⁶ which not only disrupts daily functioning but also reduces productivity.¹⁷ Factors such as lifestyle changes, socio-economic

¹⁴ It was mentioned that chronic anxious disturbance first appeared in the DSM as an “anxiety reaction” in 1952. While in the fourth page of this book, the research on 2005 examined the specific impact of the DSM-IV excessive worry criterion. Once this particular diagnostic criterion was eliminated, the estimated lifetime prevalence of Generalized Anxiety Disorder increased by approximately 40%. So, we could conclude that the increasing prevalence of anxiety disorder increases since the recent decades. Holly Hazlett-Stevens, *Psychological Approaches to Generalized Anxiety Disorder: A Clinician’s Guide to Assessment and Treatment* (Boston, MA: Springer Science + Business Media, 2008), 2.

¹⁵ In this book, it clearly described that health anxiety’s evidence is common and negatively impacts individual health and the healthcare system as a whole. Alexander L. Gerlach and Andrew T. Gloster, eds., *Generalized Anxiety Disorder & Worrying: A Comprehensive Handbook for Clinicians and Researchers*, First edition (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), 78.

¹⁶ This book remarked estimatively that depression affects over 120 million people worldwide with a lifetime prevalence ranging from 10% to 15%. Gillian Todd and Rhena Branch, eds., *Evidence-Based Treatment for Anxiety Disorders and Depression: A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Compendium* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 384.

¹⁷ In this research, they stated that half of those who respond to treatment and do show substantial decrease in their symptomatology, have significant residual symptoms that continue to affect their functioning and quality of life, while the term quality of life has mesmerizing correlation with productivity itself. D. Amital et al., “Serious Life Events among Resistant and Non-Resistant MDD Patients,” *Journal of Affective Disorders* 110, no. 3 (October 2008): 260.

pressures, and increased awareness of mental health have been linked to this upward trend.¹⁸

Anxiety Disorder is a mental health condition characterized by excessive and persistent anxiety and fear that can affect a person's ability to live daily life.¹⁹ This condition is more than just occasional nervousness; it makes individuals feel overwhelmed by constant and intense anxiety, often without a clear cause.²⁰

¹⁸ It was well stated that compulsive hoarding is associated with substantial health risk, impairment in functioning, and economic burden. Both hoarding and anxiety disorders can involve similar cognitive patterns, such as perfectionism, indecisiveness, and avoidance. These cognitive distortions can reinforce both the hoarding behavior and the anxiety symptoms as a consequence of perfectionism has the remarkable relevance with the term socio-economic itself. David F. Tolin et al., "Family Burden of Compulsive Hoarding: Results of an Internet Survey," *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 46, no. 3 (March 2008): 334.

¹⁹ In accordance with the research; for a diagnosis of specific phobia according to the DSM-5, there must be clear evidence that the symptoms interfere with or reduce the quality of social, academic, or occupational functioning. While the term "daily life" on my research refers to the term "occupational functioning" due to the occupational functioning is integral to a person's ability to live daily life, as it directly influences economic stability, routine, and self-esteem. Whereas the term occupational functioning itself refers to an individual's ability to perform tasks and responsibilities related to their job or profession effectively. Michael B First et al., "Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-5: Research Version (SCID-5 for DSM-5, Research Version; SCID-5- RV)," *American Psychiatric Association*, 2015, 196.

²⁰ It was well stated that Chloe was faced ten years of anxious feelings and obsessive worrying; the term "constant anxiety" is relevant to Chloe's ten-year period of anxiety, along with the term "intense anxiety" is relevant with obsessive worrying that Chloe has mentioned in his book. In addition, the term "clear cause" is relevant with Chloe's realization within help from external factor; while in his book, it highlights that it took another ten years for me to realize he needed help and to seek professional counselling. Chloe Brotheridge, *The Anxiety Solution: A Quieter Mind, a Calmer You* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2017), 10.

This can result in panic attacks, avoidance of certain situations, and even physical problems such as fatigue and headaches.²¹

In psychology, theories about the influence of spirituality on mental health have gained significant attention. Many studies show that spiritual and religious practices, including dhikr (remembrance of Allah), meditation, and prayer, can have positive effects on mental and physical well-being. Spirituality often provides a framework for understanding suffering, giving meaning and purpose in life, and offering community support that can reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.²² So, in the context of anxiety, spirituality can help individuals manage stress and anxiety better, giving them tools to face fears and uncertainties with a calmer and more centered perspective.²³

²¹ Chloe also remarked that anxiety is exhausting, frustrating, and terrifying; while the term “fatigue” is relevant with the term “exhausting”. Furthermore, the hallucination that Chloe described is like being stuck in a suffocating glass box, feeling sick while gazing at the world, and wondering what it’s like to feel normal. To analyze, his hallucination tremendously correlates with the term “headache”, as a consequence of there is a brain inside human’s head, while the hallucination played role within the mind inside human’s brain. Brotheridge, 12.

²² The research revealed that those who reporting religious experience in every other way are personally and socially competent; this kind of revelation (socially competent) mesmerizingly correlates with the term “isolation and loneliness”. Moreover, the term “personally competent” has relevance with understanding suffering, giving meaning and purpose in life. David Hay and Rebecca Nye, *The Spirit of The Child*, Rev. ed (London; Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006), 28.

²³ The term “centered perspective” used due to the spirituality takes place on human’s center which is heart.

Anxiety disorder affects individuals differently, with symptoms ranging from mild anxiety to severe panic and hindrance.²⁴ These symptoms often make it difficult for someone²⁵ to carry out normal activities and interact in social life, which in turn affects work performance and interpersonal relationships.²⁶ Furthermore, the social stigma associated with anxiety disorders often prevents individuals from seeking help, worsening their condition in the long term.²⁷

To tackle this challenge, various treatment approaches and therapies have been developed. Pharmacological treatments, including the use of antidepressants and anxiolytics, have become the primary choice for many

²⁴ Gillian Todd and Rhena Branch, eds., *Evidence-Based Treatment for Anxiety Disorders and Depression: A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Compendium*, 1st ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 138.

²⁵ The context of “someone” in my research refers to the 13 years old girl that had mild depression and she reported that she was very emotional and had problems controlling negative emotions, frequently ended up crying; she also said that she reacted emotionally very quickly and had problem regulating stress. Todd and Branch, 280.

²⁶ In addition, the term “often” indicates that the severity of symptoms can be anywhere on a scale from mild to severe, affecting both distress and impairment. Todd and Branch, 141.

²⁷ Actually, there are many examples of the social stigma associated with anxiety disorders often prevents individuals from seeking help. One of the example came from Brotheridge’s research, Brotheridge stated that he took another ten years to realize that he needed help and to seek professional counseling Brotheridge, *The Anxiety Solution*, 10.

cases.²⁸ Additionally, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) has been proven effective in teaching individuals how to identify and overcome the negative thoughts and behaviors underlying their anxiety.²⁹ This therapy aims to provide long-term strategies for individuals to manage their symptoms and improve their quality of life.³⁰

However, not all individuals respond well to these conventional interventions, raising the need for effective alternative or supportive therapies.³¹ In the search for solutions, many individuals and health

²⁸ It was stated that the antidepressant drugs refers to the selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors. In addition, the context of many cases refers to the review included 17 studies (3097 participants), and showed that SSRIs were effective in reducing the symptoms of OCD. G Mustafa Soomro et al., "Selective Serotonin Re-Uptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) versus Placebo for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)," ed. Cochrane Common Mental Disorders Group, *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, January 23, 2008, 2.

²⁹ The study from Liebowitz highlighted that both pharmacotherapy and cognitive-behavioral therapy have been found efficacious in treating social anxiety disorder symptoms. In addition, the study indicated that CBT, often conducted in a group format, is effective in reducing social anxiety through exposure and cognitive restructuring techniques. R. G. Heimberg et al., "Psychometric Properties of the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale," *Psychological Medicine* 29, no. 1 (January 1999): 201.

³⁰ The context of long-term strategies refers to some studies that suggest CBT yields better long-term outcomes and lower relapse rates than pharmacotherapy. Todd and Branch, *Evidence-Based Treatment for Anxiety Disorders and Depression*, 2021, 96.

³¹ Jarman Arroisi and Amir Reza remarked that the healing of the soul based on riyadhah has not yet been fully applied by all members of society as a whole. While the context of riyadhah in this research refers to cognitive-behavioral therapy. Moreover, in page 93, Jarman also elucidated that the civilizations' thought on yoga is that yoga is comfortably applicable in seeking genuine happiness after the process of self-consciousness. Jarman Arroisi and Amir Reza Kusuma, "Menelaah Problem Terapi Yoga Perspektif Ibnu Taimiyah," *Jurnal Penelitian Medan Agama* 12, no. 2 (December 30, 2021): 99.

professionals have begun exploring other methods such as meditation, yoga, and mindfulness-based interventions.³² These approaches, which emphasize the balance between mind, body, and soul, offer new hope for those seeking holistic solutions to manage their anxiety.³³ Eventually, the integration of conventional and alternative approaches promises a more inclusive and personalized treatment paradigm for addressing anxiety disorders.

One approach that has gained attention in recent years in addressing anxiety disorders is the application of spiritual and religious practices. In many religious traditions, including Islam, spiritual practice is considered a source of inner peace and strength.³⁴ Specifically, in Islam, dhikr is the practice of

³² The context of many individuals and health professionals in this research refers to the people that also have similarity with this research's topic. The people that involves are Deckro et al; Rosenzweig et al; Jain et al; Chiesa and Seretti, and Shearer et al. Melissa Hunt et al., "Mindfulness Training, Yoga, or Both? Dismantling the Active Components of a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Intervention," *Mindfulness* 9, no. 2 (April 2018): 512–13.

³³ The intervention, which included breathing exercises, traditional yoga poses (asanas) for balance, core strength, and flexibility, and short mindfulness exercises such as body scans and loving kindness meditations, exemplifies approaches that emphasize the balance between mind, body, and soul, offering new hope for those seeking holistic solutions to manage their anxiety. Hunt et al., 515.

³⁴ A further indication that Islam leads to inner peace is the presence of concepts such as sabr (patience), shukr (gratitude), husn al-zann (positive opinion), rida (contentment), sakina (serenity), and itminan (satisfaction). These six concepts pertain to spiritual practice, as they are based on abstract spiritual aspects located in the heart, mind, and soul; emphasizing their abstract and internal nature. Zuleyha Keskin, *Attaining Inner Peace in Islam: Said Nursi's Perspective* (Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2021), 9.

remembering and mentioning the name of Allah, seen as one of the most effective ways to achieve mental and emotional balance. This practice is not only an important part of daily worship for Muslims but is also considered a therapeutic approach to reducing anxiety symptoms.³⁵

In the context of Fakhruddin Al-Razi's *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghayb*, it is explained that the heart plays an important role in bringing happiness to the body and soul.³⁶ Additionally, Sheikh Muhammad Mutawalli Asy-Sya'rawi in his book *Tafsir Asy-Sya'rawi* also explains that the meaning of tranquility is the tranquility of the heart and its stability, and its comfort with a belief that does not surface to be debated again.³⁷ Furthermore, Shihabuddin Mahmud bin Abdullah Al-Alusi in his book *Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani* explains that the cause of tranquility is the light that Allah Almighty bestows into the hearts of believers because of remembering Him, thus eliminating anxiety, loneliness, and the like

³⁵ While the historical and religious aspects of salat and dhikr are well documented, there have been few studies conducted on their therapeutic aspects. It is reasonable to suggest that mind/body medicine as offered in the practice of salat and dhikr may assist in the prevention of chronic illness, as well as, as alleviating the symptoms of chronic disease. Arthur Saniotis, "Understanding Mind/Body Medicine from Muslim Religious Practices of Salat and Dhikr," *Journal of Religion and Health* 57, no. 3 (June 2018): 854.

³⁶ Fakhruddin Razi, *Tafsir Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, vol. 19 (Beirut: Daarul-Ihya At-Turats Al-'Arabi, 1999), 49.

³⁷ Muhammad Mutawalli Asy-Sya'rawi, *Tafsir Al-Sya'rawi*, vol. 12 (N.C: Alrayah, 2015), 7318.

from their hearts.³⁸ This shows that the essence of tranquility, which can bring comfort and happiness to the soul and body of a believer, is only by remembering Allah Almighty.

The issue raised by the researcher in this study is the activity of dhikr that can influence anxiety disorder. This needs to be understood to know how one's heart can become the axis of all activities of the soul and body. Therefore, a heart occupied with dhikr can influence one's psychology to avoid all negative human traits.

With this perspective, we certainly wonder how the process of dhikr can have relevance to anxiety disorder. This study aims to understand how dhikr can contribute to a more holistic anxiety management strategy. Through a deeper understanding of the practice of dhikr and its impact on the mental health of Muslims and even non-Muslims, new ways to cope with anxiety disorders can be found, showing the potential integration between faith and treatment in achieving emotional and psychological well-being.

³⁸ Syihabuddin Mahmud bin Abdullah Al-Alusi, *Ruh Al-Ma'ani Fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Azhim Wa As-Sab'Ul Matsani*, vol. 7 (Beirut: Daarul Kutub Al-'Ilmiyyah, 1994), 142.

B. Problem Formulation

1. What are the historical and theological perspectives on the concept of dhikr in the Qur'an, and how have these perspectives evolved over time in relation to mental health, particularly anxiety disorders?
2. How do existing psychological and Islamic scholarly frameworks conceptualize dhikr as a mechanism for managing anxiety, integrating spiritual principles with psychological theories of emotional regulation?
3. What does extant literature reveal about the relationship between dhikr practice (frequency, methods, and intentionality) and its perceived or documented effects on anxiety symptom alleviation?

C. Research Objectives

1. To conduct a comprehensive literature review of the historical and theological perspectives on the practice of dhikr as presented in the Qur'an and classical Islamic scholarship, analyzing how these perspectives have evolved and their implications for contemporary understandings of mental health and the management of anxiety disorders.

2. To analyze existing psychological and Islamic literature that explores dhikr as a spiritually-grounded intervention for anxiety, identifying theoretical alignments between its cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions and contemporary psychological models of anxiety management.
3. To evaluate and synthesize findings from peer-reviewed studies, Islamic scholarly works, and psychological research on the efficacy of dhikr practices (e.g., frequency, types, and mindfulness components) in reducing anxiety symptoms, as documented in existing literature.

D. Significance of the Research

1. Theoretically
 - a. This research will enrich the existing religious and psychological literature regarding the influence of spiritual activities, particularly dhikr in Islam, on mental health. It helps to understand more deeply how spiritual practice contributes to positive psychology and mental resilience.
 - b. By exploring dhikr in the context of its impact on anxiety disorder, this research offers an interdisciplinary perspective that connects

psychology with Islamic studies, expanding the understanding of how religion and spirituality can interact with mental health.

- c. This research contributes to theories that support a holistic approach to treating mental disorders that not only focus on physical and emotional aspects but also consider the spiritual needs of individuals.

2. Practically

- a. By validating the effectiveness of dhikr as one method of addressing anxiety disorder, this research offers alternatives or supports conventional treatment methods, providing a wider range of options for individuals seeking solutions for their mental health issues.
- b. The results of this research can be used as a reference for psychologists, psychiatrists, and other mental health practitioners in designing therapy programs that integrate aspects of spirituality, especially for Muslim patients who may resonate more with this approach.
- c. By understanding and applying the practice of dhikr, individuals experiencing anxiety disorder can find new ways to cope with their

symptoms, achieve tranquility, and improve their overall quality of life.

- d. The findings of this research can be used by policymakers in formulating more inclusive mental health strategies that recognize and integrate religious and spiritual practices as part of mental health services.

E. Previous Studies

1. A thesis written by Oktana Dipenta Amrullah in 2024, titled *“Dzikir sebagai Psikoterapi terhadap Gangguan Mental (Mental Disorder) Menurut Al-Qur’an”*, was conducted at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Faculty of Syariah, Department of Qur’anic Sciences and Tafsir. This research is a library research using a qualitative method with descriptive and correlational analysis. The study explores how dzikir functions as a form of Islamic psychotherapy to address mental disorders, focusing on relevant verses in the Qur’an and supported by interpretations from classical and modern tafsir, as well as contemporary psychological studies. The results of the study reveal that dzikir provides significant benefits for mental health,

including reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress, while enhancing inner peace, mental resilience, and optimism. Furthermore, dzikir helps individuals build a closer relationship with Allah SWT, which serves as a strong source of spiritual support, suggesting that integrating dzikir into mental health treatment offers a holistic therapeutic approach grounded in Qur'anic principles.

The research gap between Oktana Dipenta Amrullah's thesis and this research is that Oktana's study focuses on explaining dzikir as psychotherapy for various mental disorders according to the Qur'an, such as depression, anxiety, and stress. This study emphasizes the use of dzikir as a comprehensive Islamic therapeutic approach, highlighting its benefits in achieving mental peace and emotional stability through qualitative analysis of Qur'anic verses. Meanwhile, the author's research focuses specifically on the concept of dhikr in the Qur'an and its psychological relevance for managing anxiety disorders, particularly through thematic interpretation of *Surah Ar-Ra'd* (13:28), by combining theological studies with empirical evidence and neurobiological

explanations regarding the effectiveness of dhikr in reducing anxiety symptoms.

2. A thesis written by Muhammad Idris in 2016, titled "*Konsep Zikir dalam al-Qur'an (Studi atas Penafsiran M. Quraish Shihab)*", was completed at Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Alauddin Makassar, Faculty of Ushuluddin, Philosophy, and Politics, Department of Tafsir Hadith. This research is a qualitative study using library research with an interpretative approach. The thesis aims to describe the concept of dzikir in the Qur'an according to M. Quraish Shihab's interpretation. The study focuses on three main aspects: the essence of dzikir in the Qur'an, M. Quraish Shihab's interpretation of dzikir, and the urgency of dzikir in a Muslim's life. The results of the study reveal that dzikir, according to M. Quraish Shihab, is not only the verbal remembrance of Allah but also a deep spiritual awareness that brings tranquility, spiritual growth, and a balanced personality between worldly life and the hereafter.

The research gap between Muhammad Idris's thesis and this research lies in their focus and scope. Muhammad Idris's research

explains the general concept of dzikir in the Qur'an based on M. Quraish Shihab's interpretation, aiming to elaborate on its meaning, forms, and importance in daily life as a spiritual practice. Meanwhile, this research focuses more specifically on the concept of dhikr in the Qur'an and its psychological relevance in managing anxiety disorders. This study not only discusses dhikr from a theological perspective but also integrates empirical psychological evidence, including neurobiological insights, to show how dhikr plays a therapeutic role in alleviating anxiety, thus making it more interdisciplinary and clinically oriented compared to Muhammad Idris's conceptual and textual analysis.

3. A thesis written by Vika Nur Meilina in 2023, titled "*Murottal Al-Qur'an dan Dzikir sebagai Metode Bimbingan Rohani dalam Mengatasi Kecemasan pada Lansia di Panti Wredha Pacitan*", was completed at Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Faculty of Dakwah and Communication, Department of Islamic Guidance and Counseling. This research is a qualitative study using a descriptive phenomenological approach. The study focuses on how murottal Al-Qur'an and dzikir are implemented as spiritual guidance methods to reduce anxiety

experienced by elderly residents at the Panti Wredha Pacitan. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving religious instructors, caregivers, and elderly participants aged 58–65 years. The results show that regular murottal Al-Qur'an and dzikir sessions help reduce anxiety, foster feelings of calm and comfort, and cultivate attitudes of qona'ah and tawakkal among the elderly, ultimately improving their mental and spiritual well-being.

The research gap between Vika Nur Meilina's thesis and this research is that Vika's study focuses on the application of murottal Al-Qur'an and dzikir as methods of spiritual guidance specifically to address anxiety in elderly individuals living in a nursing home through a qualitative, field-based, and phenomenological approach. Meanwhile, this research focuses on the concept of dhikr in the Qur'an and its psychological relevance for managing anxiety disorders through a thematic tafsir study, combining Qur'anic interpretation with empirical psychological analysis, including neurobiological insights, to demonstrate the therapeutic role of dhikr in alleviating anxiety from both theological and scientific perspectives.

4. A thesis written by Nopa Three Sartini in 2021, titled *“Dzikir sebagai Psikoterapi Islam dalam Mengatasi Kecemasan Menurut Dadang Hawari”*, was completed at Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Bengkulu, Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Dakwah, Department of Islamic Counseling and Guidance. This research is a library research using a qualitative descriptive method. The study focuses on analyzing the thoughts of Dadang Hawari, an Islamic psychiatrist, regarding dzikir as a form of Islamic psychotherapy in treating anxiety. The research explores concepts of anxiety, dzikir, and the techniques of dzikir as therapy in overcoming anxiety disorders. The results show that according to Dadang Hawari, dzikir—not only in the form of verbal recitation but also including prayers and regular worship—serves as a comprehensive method to relieve anxiety, instill positive emotions like peace and happiness, and restore mental stability through spiritual practices.

The research gap between Nopa Three Sartini’s thesis and this research is that Nopa’s study focuses on dzikir as Islamic psychotherapy for anxiety based on the thoughts of Dadang Hawari, with an emphasis

on describing his concept and therapeutic techniques without engaging in empirical or thematic tafsir studies. Meanwhile, this research focuses on the concept of dhikr in the Qur'an and its psychological relevance for managing anxiety disorders through a thematic tafsir study, integrating Qur'anic interpretation with empirical psychological analysis, including neurobiological perspectives, to highlight dhikr as a therapeutic practice not only spiritually but also scientifically in the management of anxiety.

5. A thesis written by Meliana Istianah in 2022, titled "Peranan Dzikir sebagai Psikoterapi dalam Mengatasi Kecemasan pada Lansia di Desa Tanjung Raja Lampung Utara", was completed at Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Metro, Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Dakwah, Department of Islamic Counseling Guidance (BPI). This research is a field research study using a qualitative descriptive case study method. The study focuses on examining the role of dzikir, specifically dzikir istighosah, as Islamic psychotherapy in reducing anxiety among the elderly in Desa Tanjung Raja, Lampung Utara. Data were gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation involving elderly

participants experiencing anxiety related to health conditions such as chronic gastric problems, rheumatism, low blood pressure, high blood pressure, and blindness. The results show that dzikir istighosah effectively helps alleviate anxiety in the elderly by providing peace of mind, emotional stability, and spiritual strength through regular and collective recitations involving prayers, remembrance of Allah, and supplications.

The research gap between Meliana Istianah's thesis and this research is that Meliana's study focuses on the practical application of dzikir istighosah as a psychotherapeutic intervention specifically targeting anxiety in elderly individuals within a localized community setting using qualitative field research. Meanwhile, this research focuses on the concept of dhikr in the Qur'an and its psychological relevance for managing anxiety disorders through a thematic tafsir study, combining Qur'anic interpretation with empirical psychological analysis, including neurobiological insights, to highlight dhikr as a therapeutic practice not only spiritually but also scientifically in addressing anxiety.

From the studies above, there are similarities and differences with this research. The similarity lies in the common theme of discussing dzikir and its relation to anxiety and mental disorders. The difference is in the focus and perspective of each study. The previous studies generally discuss the concept of dzikir, its application as therapy for specific groups, such as the elderly, drug users, or students, and its effectiveness in reducing anxiety through practical or conceptual approaches. Meanwhile, this research focuses on the concept of dhikr in the Qur'an and its psychological relevance to anxiety disorders, offering a deeper analysis by combining thematic interpretation of Qur'anic verses with scientific and neurobiological insights. This research not only examines the causes of anxiety disorders but also provides solutions from the perspective of the Qur'an supported by modern psychological studies.

F. Theoretical Framework

The approach used in this research is scientific exegesis, which delves deeper through the psychological science approach. The method used in this research is thematic interpretation method, which collects the meaning of *Surah*

Ar-Ra'd verse 28 through various tafsir and then analyzes them to obtain their true meaning.

Thematic Exegesis (*Tafsir Maudhu'i*) is a method of interpreting the Qur'an that focuses on understanding specific themes or topics by compiling and analyzing all verses related to a particular subject.³⁹ In this study, *Ar-Ra'd* 28, which mentions dhikr as a source of peace for the heart, is analyzed through various classical tafsir. By examining different interpretations from scholars, *Tafsir Maudhu'i* facilitates a deeper, thematic understanding of the verse.⁴⁰ This approach enables the integration of diverse perspectives, leading to a comprehensive interpretation of the significance of dhikr. Through this method, *Ar-Ra'd* 28 is understood not only through traditional exegesis but also in relation to contemporary psychological insights, particularly concerning its role in managing anxiety and promoting emotional well-being.

According to Nashruddin Baidan, *Tafsir Maudhu'i* is an approach to understanding the Qur'an by compiling verses that discuss the same theme and

³⁹ Ibn Manzhūr, *Lisān Al-'Arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1994), 396–98; Abū al-Ḥusain Aḥmad bin Fāris bin Zakariyā, *Mu'jam Maqāyis al-Lughah* (Beirut: Dār al-Jail, 1991), 117.

⁴⁰ Nashruddin Baidan, *Wawasan Baru Ilmu Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2005), 382–83.

analyzing them through a structured framework that involves several stages. Baidan explains that the process begins by identifying a specific theme, collecting all related verses, studying their historical context (asbabun nuzul), examining linguistic aspects, and finally interpreting them by connecting the thematic messages to contemporary realities.⁴¹ This method aims to reveal the Qur'an's guidance holistically and contextually, making its teachings relevant to current social, psychological, and spiritual issues.⁴² By applying Baidan's approach to the theme of dhikr, particularly in relation to anxiety disorders, *Tafsir Maudhu'i* offers insights into how the practice of dhikr as emphasized in the Qur'an, especially in *Ar-Ra'd* 28, can contribute to psychological resilience and emotional balance in modern life.

In the context of this research, the application of *Tafsir Maudhu'i* provides a structured and thematic exploration of dhikr, allowing for a clearer connection between its Qur'anic roots and its psychological relevance in managing anxiety disorders. This methodology not only enriches the understanding of dhikr but

⁴¹ Nashruddin Baidan, *Metodologi Penafsiran Al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2012), 151.

⁴² Baidan, 151.

also provides a framework for discussing its therapeutic potential within a contemporary psychological context.

Subsequently, in the context of dhikr, the theory according to Sufi scholars that can influence Anxiety Disorders is found in the book *Ruh al-Ma'ani*; al-Alusi explains that the main cause of human tranquility is through heart activities in the form of dhikr to remember Allah.⁴³ While in the context of psychological science, the author will use the journal data that talks about dhikr that relevance with anxiety disorder.

G. Research Methodology

The research methodology used in this thesis is as follows:

1. Type of Research

Research methodology is a procedure or steps taken to obtain scientific knowledge.⁴⁴ A literature review is a study based on written materials such

⁴³ Shihabuddin Mahmud, *Ruh Al-Ma'ani Fi Tafsir Al-Quran Al-'Azhim Wa As-Sab'u Al-Matsani* (Beirut: Daar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiah, 1990), 142.

⁴⁴ Suryana, *Metodologi Penelitian: Model Praktis Penelitian Kuantitatif Dan Kualitatif* (Bandung: Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, 2010), 5.

as books, articles, images, documents, and others, with the addition of the relationship between the Qur'an and its interpretation in libraries.⁴⁵

2. Data Sources

In this research, the researcher divides data sources into two: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are the main references in the research and form the basis for data collection, while secondary sources are other sources related to the main topic that support the primary sources to obtain complete data.⁴⁶

a. Primary Sources:

- a) *Tayseer al-Karim ar-Rahman fi Tafsir Kalim al-Manan* by Abdul Rahman bin Nasir bin Abdullah al-Sa'di
- b) *Tafsir Asy-Sya'rawi* by Syekh Muhammad Mutawalliy asy-Sya'rawi
- c) *Tafsir Latha'if al-Isyarat: Tafsir al-Qusyairi* by 'Abd al-Karim bin Hawazin bin 'Abd al-Malik al-Qusyairi

⁴⁵ H Baidan and Erwati Aziz, *Metodologi Khusus Penelitian Tafsir* (Institut Agama Islam Negeri Surakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2016), 58.

⁴⁶ Fenti Hikmawati, *Metodologi Penelitian* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2017), 33.

d) *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghayb* by Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin

Umar bin al-Hassan bin al-Hussein al-Taymi al-Razi

e) *Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani* by Abu al-Tsana' Syihabuddin as- Sayyid

Mahmud Afandi al-Alusi al-Baghdadi.

b. Secondary Sources

i. Psychological Approaches to Generalized Anxiety Disorder:

A Clinician's Guide to Assessment and Treatment by Holly

Hazlett-Stevens.

ii. Generalized Anxiety Disorder & Worrying: A Comprehensive

Handbook for Clinicians and Researchers by Alexander

Gerlach and Andrew Gloster.

iii. Evidence-Based Treatment for Anxiety Disorders and

Depression: A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Compendium by

Gillian Todd and Rhena Branch.

iv. The Anxiety Solution: A Quieter Mind, a Calmer You by Chloe

Brotheridge.

3. Data Analysis

In presenting the discussion in this research, the researcher uses several methods:

a. Descriptive Method

The researcher collects data related to the concept of dhikr in *Surah Ar-Ra'd* verse 28, then elaborates on the meanings contained in these verses. This method aims to obtain clear and detailed information regarding the understanding and interpretation of the Qur'anic verses.⁴⁷

b. Analytical Method

The researcher examines the interpretation of Qur'anic verses by providing explanations from various aspects contained in the verses. The researcher also provides meanings and wisdom in *Surah Ar-Ra'd* verse 28 and analyzes the data. The aim is to elaborate detailed explanations related to the words in these verses.⁴⁸

H. Systematic Discussion

The systematic writing of this research will be broadly explained in each chapter to make it easier to understand the overall picture of this research.

⁴⁷ Suryana, *Metodologi Penelitian: Model Praktis Penelitian Kuantitatif Dan Kualitatif*, 20.

⁴⁸ Suryana, 53.

Systematically, the chapters are as follows:

Chapter I:

This chapter establishes the foundation of the study by contextualizing the Qur'anic concept of dhikr (remembrance of Allah) as a therapeutic mechanism for anxiety disorders. The background highlights the Qur'an's emphasis on dhikr as a source of spiritual and psychological equilibrium, juxtaposed against its neglect in modern secular lifestyles. The problem formulation delineates three research questions: (1) the historical and theological evolution of dhikr in relation to mental health, (2) the integration of dhikr within psychological and Islamic frameworks for anxiety management, and (3) the empirical relationship between dhikr practices and anxiety alleviation. The research objectives aim to synthesize classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary psychological models, analyze theoretical alignments, and evaluate dhikr's efficacy through interdisciplinary literature. The significance of the study is twofold: theoretically, it bridges Islamic theology and psychology, enriching holistic mental health paradigms; practically, it offers faith-integrated therapeutic alternatives for clinicians and policymakers. Previous studies are critically reviewed, identifying gaps in specificity and empirical integration. The

theoretical framework employs *Tafsir Maudhu'i* (thematic exegesis), focusing on *Surah Ar-Ra'd* (13:28) through classical commentaries (e.g., Al-Alusi, As-Sa'di) and psychological theories. The methodology combines descriptive and analytical approaches, utilizing primary tafsir sources and secondary psychological literature to explore dhikr's theological and neurobiological relevance to anxiety.

Chapter II:

This chapter constructs a tripartite framework integrating Islamic theology, clinical psychology, and empirical neuroscience. It begins with a theological analysis of dhikr, defining it linguistically as "remembrance" and theologically as a holistic practice encompassing verbal, contemplative, and practical forms. Classical scholars like Ibn Qayyim and Al-Ghazālī classify dhikr into *Jali* (audible), *Khafi* (silent), and *Haqiqi* (existential) types, each offering distinct psychological benefits such as cognitive restructuring and parasympathetic activation. The chapter then examines anxiety disorders clinically, detailing diagnostic criteria, neurobiological substrates (e.g., amygdala hyperactivity, HPA axis dysregulation), and psychosocial impacts. Bridging these domains, psychological theories (CBT, mindfulness) and empirical studies position dhikr

as a culturally resonant intervention. Neuroimaging evidence shows dhikr reduces cortisol levels, enhances alpha-wave activity, and fosters emotional regulation, aligning with Islamic concepts like *tawakkul* (trust in Allah). The synthesis advocates for dhikr's integration into mental health care as a faith-aligned, evidence-based practice.

Chapter III:

This chapter analyzes *Surah Ar-Ra'd* (13:28)—“By the remembrance of Allah, hearts are assured”—through classical tafsir and contemporary research. Thematic exegesis (*Tafsir Maudhu'i*) reveals dhikr as a dynamic process of divine assurance: Al-Alusi emphasizes its role in dispelling existential doubt through Qur'anic engagement; Ibn Kathir links it to emotional resilience via Allah's omnipotence; Sufi scholars like Al-Qushayri frame dhikr as a means of attaining *uns* (divine intimacy). The analysis also explores the interplay of fear (*khawf*) and tranquility (*sakina*), noting that dhikr transforms reverential awe into psychological stability. Contemporary studies validate these theological insights: preoperative dhikr reduces anxiety by 67% (Wulandari & Huriyati, 2015), while hemodialysis patients report 32% lower anxiety scores post-dhikr (Anggun et al., 2021). Neurobiological mechanisms, such as vagus nerve

stimulation and oxytocin release during collective dhikr, are discussed alongside cognitive parallels to CBT (e.g., replacing catastrophic thoughts with *La ilaha illallah*). The chapter concludes that dhikr's efficacy lies in its dual spiritual-psychological axis, offering a Qur'anically grounded remedy for anxiety.

Chapter IV:

This final chapter concludes that dhikr, as presented in the Qur'an, plays a crucial role in managing anxiety disorders by providing both spiritual and psychological benefits. The study demonstrates that dhikr aligns with modern psychological approaches like mindfulness and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), offering emotional regulation and stress relief. By engaging in dhikr, individuals experience reduced anxiety and increased tranquility, supported by both theological and scientific perspectives, such as the reduction of cortisol levels and activation of the parasympathetic nervous system.