IJoIS: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Studies
Vol. 7, 1 (January-June, 2026), pp. 85-96
EISSN: 2745-7745, DOI: https://doi.org/10.59525/ijois.1482

Effectiveness of Islamic Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling in Reducing Academic Burnout: A Mixed-Methods Study

Frendi Fernando[1], Kartika Wanojaleni[1], Fitroh Qudsiyyah[1], Trimulat[1], Taqiyudin Subki[1]

[1] Institut Agama Islam KH Sufyan Tsauri Majenang, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Academic Burnout;
Islamic Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling;
Mixed-Methods Research

Article history:

Received 2026-02-23
Revised 2026-04-03
Accepted 2026-06-01

ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the effectiveness of Islamic Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling (ICBC) in mitigating academic burnout among university students. Employing an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the research involved 40 students with high burnout levels as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS). Quantitative results revealed a statistically significant reduction in burnout scores, with the mean shifting from 68.51 to 44.87 ($p < 0.001$). The intervention yielded a massive effect size (Cohen's $d = 4.94$), underscoring that the ICBC formulation is both robust and practically meaningful for student recovery. Qualitatively, the findings identified a Triple-Axis Transformation driving the change: neutralizing cynicism through the Tawakal-Control axis, reversing emotional exhaustion via Dhikr-based biological resets, and restoring personal accomplishment through Muhasabah-Amanah integration. The discussion highlights that by integrating spiritual tenets—specifically the Dichotomy of Control between Ikhtiar (effort) and Tawakal (divine reliance) the ICBC model provides a transcendental anchor that recalibrates students' stress appraisal more effectively than purely secular interventions. This spiritual strategy transforms academic tasks from burdensome chores into a form of Amanah (Divine Trust), moving students from fragile self-regulation to a higher-order ethical accountability. The study concludes that the ICBC model offers a culturally resonant and clinically robust solution that fills the existential gap found in conventional counseling, providing a more resilient motivational foundation for students navigating the pressures of modern higher education.

This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC license.

Corresponding Author:
Frendi Fernando
Institut Agama Islam KH Sufyan Tsauri Majenang, Indonesia; Frendifernando@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic burnout has emerged as a pervasive and pressing challenge within contemporary higher education systems, affecting students across diverse cultural and institutional contexts. It is commonly characterized by three interrelated dimensions: chronic emotional exhaustion, a growing

sense of cynicism toward academic tasks, and a diminished feeling of personal accomplishment. These symptoms collectively undermine not only academic performance but also students' overall psychological well-being. Recent studies emphasize that academic burnout is closely associated with levels of academic engagement; when engagement declines, burnout tends to increase, creating a self-reinforcing cycle that is difficult to break (Sari et al., 2025). This cyclical relationship highlights the urgency of developing effective interventions that can simultaneously address both motivational and emotional aspects of student life.

In both secondary and higher education settings, burnout is often described as a "re-charge mind" crisis, a condition in which students experience a depletion of psychological energy necessary to meet academic demands (Itryah & Fazrin, 2025). This phenomenon is particularly evident in the post-pandemic educational landscape, where students are required to adapt to hybrid learning environments, increased academic workloads, and uncertain future prospects (Fathurohim, 2023). These conditions contribute to heightened levels of stress and anxiety, which, if left unaddressed, can evolve into chronic burnout. Global data indicates that the prevalence of academic burnout remains alarmingly high, with estimates suggesting that up to 50% of university students experience significant symptoms. In Indonesia, recent surveys similarly reveal that a substantial proportion of students report moderate to severe academic stress following the transition back to face-to-face or blended learning systems.

Given the complexity and scale of this issue, researchers and practitioners have increasingly turned to Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) as a primary intervention strategy. CBT is widely recognized for its structured, evidence-based approach to identifying and modifying maladaptive thought patterns and behaviors. Its application in educational contexts has yielded promising results, particularly in addressing issues such as procrastination, test anxiety, and self-handicapping behaviors. Empirical evidence demonstrates that group-based CBT counseling can significantly reduce burnout symptoms while simultaneously improving students' coping strategies and academic functioning (Khurshid et al., 2025).

Moreover, specific techniques within the CBT framework such as cognitive restructuring and metacognitive regulation—have proven especially effective in helping students reinterpret academic stressors. Cognitive restructuring enables students to challenge irrational beliefs and replace them with more adaptive, realistic perspectives, thereby reducing emotional distress. Meanwhile, metacognitive strategies encourage students to reflect on their own thinking processes, fostering greater self-awareness and control over their cognitive responses. Studies by (Allita & Prasetya, 2025) and (Sufairok et al., 2025) confirm that these techniques not only alleviate psychological exhaustion but also enhance students' sense of agency and academic efficacy.

Despite the well-documented success of secular CBT, there is a growing recognition of its limitations when applied in culturally and spiritually specific contexts, particularly within Islamic educational environments. In such settings, students' worldviews are deeply shaped by religious beliefs and practices, which influence how they interpret stress, success, and failure. Consequently, purely secular interventions may fail to fully resonate with students' lived experiences. This has led to an increasing interest in developing culturally responsive and spiritually integrated counseling approaches.

Recent literature suggests that incorporating Islamic values into therapeutic practices can significantly enhance the effectiveness of counseling interventions. Practices such as controlled dhikr (remembrance of God) and muhasabah (self-reflection) provide students with spiritually grounded tools for managing anxiety and overcoming procrastination (Fadheela & Fakhriya, 2024). These practices not only address psychological symptoms but also reinforce a sense of purpose and connection to a higher meaning. Systematic reviews further highlight that Islamic-based counseling approaches are essential for promoting holistic mental well-being, as they align therapeutic techniques with the foundational belief systems of students (Suhertina, 2025).

This integration becomes even more relevant in unique educational settings such as Islamic boarding schools and faith-based universities, where religious values are embedded in daily life. In

these contexts, CBT techniques have been successfully adapted to address modern psychological challenges, including Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), academic pressure, and digital distractions (Budianto et al., 2026). By contextualizing psychological interventions within an Islamic framework, counselors can create more meaningful and effective support systems for students.

Within this evolving landscape, Islamic Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling (ICBC) emerges as a promising integrative model. Operationally, ICBC is defined as a counseling approach that combines the systematic methods of CBT with core principles of Islamic psychology. A central component of this model is the concept of the "Dichotomy of Control," which distinguishes between human effort (ikhtiar) and divine decree (tawakal). This concept serves as a cognitive tool that helps students navigate uncertainty and manage expectations by balancing proactive effort with spiritual acceptance.

Theoretically, ICBC is grounded in the broader framework of the Islamization of Knowledge and Islamic Psychology. These paradigms assert that human cognition is not solely a product of biological and environmental factors but is also deeply influenced by spiritual orientation. From this perspective, mental health cannot be fully understood or addressed without considering the individual's relationship with the Divine. Therefore, ICBC seeks to bridge the gap between psychological science and spiritual insight, offering a more holistic approach to student well-being.

Despite these advancements, a significant gap remains in the systematic evaluation of ICBC as a comprehensive intervention model. While individual components such as muhasabah and dhikr have been studied independently, there is limited research examining their combined application within a structured cognitive-behavioral framework. Furthermore, few studies have employed mixed-methods designs to capture both the measurable outcomes and the subjective experiences associated with such interventions(Abdullah et al., 2025; Indrawan & Refika, 2025).

Recent studies conducted between 2021 and 2025 underscore the importance of integrating spiritual values into psychological interventions, particularly in addressing anxiety and stress through a faith-based lens (Nemati et al., 2022; Nisa et al., 2025; Sholichah et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2025). However, these studies also highlight the need for more rigorous methodological approaches to assess the unique contributions of integrated models like ICBC. Specifically, there is a lack of research that systematically compares the effectiveness of ICBC with conventional CBT in reducing academic burnout.

This study seeks to address this gap by formulating and empirically testing an Islamic Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling model that incorporates the Dichotomy of Control as a central cognitive mechanism. By employing a mixed-methods approach, the research aims to achieve two primary objectives. First, it seeks to quantitatively measure the extent to which ICBC reduces academic burnout among university students. Second, it aims to qualitatively explore the internal spiritual and cognitive transformations experienced by participants during the intervention process.

Through this dual approach, the study aspires to provide a comprehensive understanding of how and why ICBC is effective. It not only evaluates the outcomes of the intervention but also uncovers the underlying mechanisms that drive change. In doing so, the research contributes to the development of more culturally and spiritually responsive counseling practices, particularly within Islamic educational contexts. Ultimately, it offers a novel framework for addressing academic burnout that integrates psychological rigor with spiritual depth, thereby promoting holistic student development in an increasingly complex educational landscape.

2. METHODS

This study employs an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, a rigorous and widely acknowledged research framework known for its capacity to generate a comprehensive and nuanced evaluation of educational and psychological interventions (Teerawongpairoj et al., 2024). This design is particularly suitable for studies that aim not only to measure the effectiveness of an intervention quantitatively but also to explore the underlying mechanisms and subjective experiences that explain those outcomes. By combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in a sequential manner, the

study ensures both statistical validity and contextual depth, thereby strengthening the overall credibility of the findings (Buck & Williamson, 2022; Ertesvåg et al., 2021).

The research subjects consist of 40 university students who were selected through purposive sampling. This sampling technique was deliberately chosen to ensure that participants met specific inclusion criteria, namely exhibiting high levels of academic burnout. Burnout levels were assessed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS), a validated and widely used instrument in academic settings. The MBI-SS measures three core dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced academic efficacy. By focusing on students who scored high across these dimensions, the study targets individuals who are most in need of psychological intervention, thereby increasing the relevance and impact of the findings.

In accordance with established procedures for explanatory sequential designs (DeVries et al., 2025; Teerawongpairoj et al., 2024), the research is conducted in two distinct but interconnected phases: a quantitative quasi-experimental phase followed by a qualitative phenomenological phase. The first phase aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention in measurable terms, while the second phase seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how and why the intervention works from the participants' perspectives.

During the quantitative phase, participants undergo an eight-session group counseling intervention based on the Islamic Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling (ICBC) module. This intervention is carefully structured to integrate both cognitive and behavioral components rooted in Islamic principles. Cognitive restructuring is facilitated through the practice of muhasabah (self-reflection), which encourages participants to critically examine their thoughts, beliefs, and emotional responses in light of spiritual values. This process helps students identify and challenge maladaptive cognitions, such as irrational fears of failure or excessive self-criticism.

In parallel, behavioral activation is implemented through practices such as dhikr (remembrance of God), which serves both as a spiritual exercise and a psychological coping strategy. These practices are designed to promote emotional regulation, reduce stress, and foster a sense of inner calm. By integrating these elements into a structured counseling program, the ICBC module offers a holistic intervention that addresses both the cognitive and spiritual dimensions of burnout.

To assess the effectiveness of the intervention, the MBI-SS is administered as the primary measurement instrument. Data collection is conducted through digital questionnaires distributed before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the intervention. This pre-test/post-test design allows for the comparison of burnout levels before and after participation in the counseling sessions, thereby providing a clear measure of change. The collected data are analyzed using Paired Sample T-Tests with the assistance of SPSS version 29. This statistical method is appropriate for determining whether there are significant differences between two related sets of scores, in this case, the pre-intervention and post-intervention burnout levels.

The results of this quantitative analysis provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the ICBC intervention in reducing academic burnout. However, while statistical findings can demonstrate whether an intervention works, they do not fully explain how or why it works. For this reason, the study proceeds to a second phase of qualitative inquiry.

The qualitative phase involves semi-structured, in-depth interviews with six participants who demonstrated the most significant clinical improvement during the quantitative phase. This selection strategy ensures that the qualitative data are drawn from individuals who have experienced the intervention's impact most strongly. As recommended in recent phenomenological studies of psychological distress (Clark, 2004), these interviews are designed to capture the lived experiences of participants, with a particular focus on their internal cognitive and spiritual transformations.

One of the central themes explored in these interviews is the concept of the "Dichotomy of Control," operationalized through the balance between ikhtiar (human effort) and tawakal (trust in God). Participants are encouraged to reflect on how this conceptual framework influenced their coping strategies, emotional responses, and overall recovery from burnout. This exploration provides valuable

insight into the mechanisms through which ICBC facilitates psychological change, particularly in relation to meaning-making and spiritual resilience.

All interview data are transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. This method involves systematically identifying, coding, and categorizing patterns or themes within the data. Through this process, recurring narratives of resilience, cognitive transformation, and spiritual growth are identified. These themes offer a rich, contextualized understanding of the participants' experiences, complementing the numerical findings obtained in the quantitative phase.

The final stage of the study involves the integration of quantitative and qualitative data. This step is a defining feature of explanatory sequential mixed-methods research, as it allows the researcher to connect statistical outcomes with experiential insights. In this study, the qualitative findings are used to explain and elaborate on the quantitative results, providing a more holistic interpretation of the intervention's effectiveness.

For example, a statistically significant reduction in burnout scores can be better understood through participants' narratives about how muhasabah helped them reframe negative thoughts, or how dhikr provided emotional relief during periods of stress. Similarly, the concept of ikhtiar and tawakal can be linked to observed improvements in coping strategies and reductions in anxiety. By integrating these perspectives, the study moves beyond surface-level analysis and offers a comprehensive account of both outcomes and processes.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive look at the efficacy of the Islamic Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling (ICBC) intervention, presented in two integrated phases: quantitative statistical results and qualitative thematic insights. The integration of these two data types offers a holistic understanding not only of if the intervention worked, but also how it was experienced by the participants.

3.1. Phase I: Quantitative Results (Statistical Efficacy)

The quantitative phase aimed to empirically test whether the ICBC intervention significantly reduced academic burnout among university students. A Paired Sample T-Test was conducted to compare pre-test and post-test scores derived from the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS).

The statistical analysis revealed a robust and significant drop in burnout levels following the eight counseling sessions (N = 40). The average burnout score shifted from a pre-intervention mean of 68.51 to a post-intervention mean of 44.87. This reduction represents a 34.5% decrease, indicating that participants moved from a state of high burnout to a significantly healthier academic psychological state.

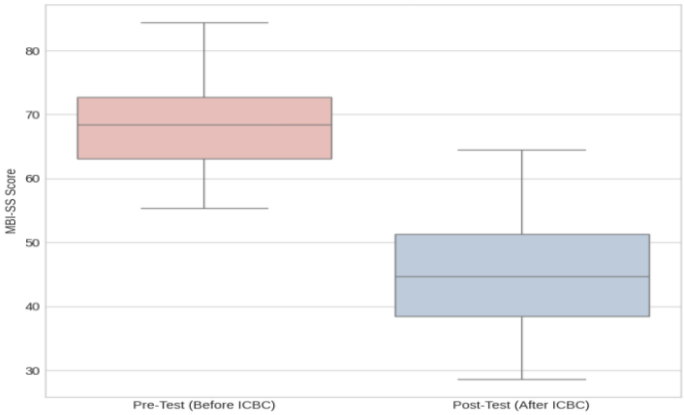


Figure 1. The distribution of academic burnout

Figure 1 (the boxplot analysis) provides a visual summary of this aggregate shift. The comparison shows that the entire interquartile range (IQR) of burnout scores plummeted after the ICBC sessions. In the Pre-Test, the median score hovered above 68, representing high severe burnout. After the ICBC, the median dropped drastically to around 45, with most students scoring well below the pre-test minimum values.

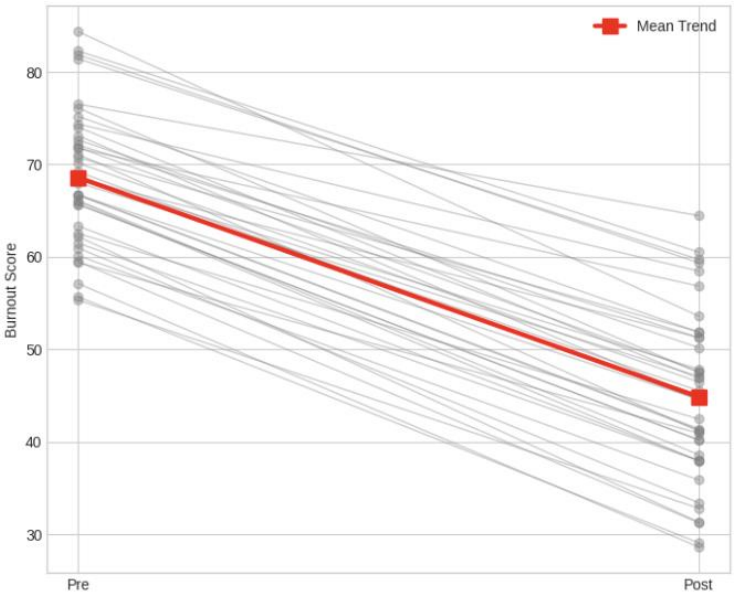


Figure 2. Individual student score shifts

To confirm that this statistical decrease was not skewed by a few extreme cases but reflected a consistent trend among participants, the individual student shifts were tracked and visualized in Figure 2. This slope chart confirms a nearly universal downward trajectory, where almost every student experienced a substantial reduction in their personal burnout score, paralleling the steep downward red trend line of the group mean. Statistical tests further reinforced these visual patterns, revealing a T-value of 31.28, which indicates that the observed change is a massive and highly unlikely statistical coincidence. This is supported by a P-value of < 0.001, proving the results are statistically significant well beyond the standard 0.05 threshold. Most notably, the calculated Cohen's d of 4.94 represents an extremely large effect size, underscoring that the clinical effect of the Islamic Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling (ICBC) formulation is both robust and practically meaningful for student recovery.

3.2. Phase 2: Qualitative Results (Thematic Explanations)

To elucidate the psychological mechanisms driving the significant quantitative reduction in burnout, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six participants (P_1–P_6) who exhibited the most substantial clinical improvement. The thematic analysis revealed that the Islamic Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling (ICBC) framework triggered a Triple-Axis Transformationthat directly neutralized the three dimensions of academic burnout.

3.2.1. Neutralizing Cynicism through the 'Tawakal-Control Axis'

The most profound shift was observed in the reduction of academic cynicism. Participants reported that internalizing the **Dichotomy of Control**—re-labeled as the synergy between *Ikhtiar* (human agency) and *Tawakal* (divine reliance)—effectively deconstructed their performance-related anxiety. By limiting their "cognitive concern" to the process rather than the outcome, students reclaimed their interest in learning.

"I used to feel bitter toward my lecturers and the whole system because I was paralyzed by the fear of failing my final project. But the ICBC taught me to leave the results to Allah while I focus strictly on my daily word

count. Treating each paragraph as an act of worship (ibadah) changed my perspective; it's no longer about the grade, but about my 'amanah' to the process." (Participant #04, male, 22 years old).

3.2.2. Reversing Emotional Exhaustion via 'Dhikr-Based Biological Reset'

The intervention addressed **Emotional Exhaustion** by introducing controlled *dhikr* as a form of "spiritual biofeedback." Unlike secular mindfulness, this technique provided a transcendental anchor that allowed students to regulate their autonomic nervous system during acute stress episodes.

"Whenever the pressure felt like it was drowning me, I practiced the 'Dhikr Nafas' (rhythmic remembrance) we learned in the sessions. It didn't just 'calm' me; it physically reset my focus. It felt like a mindful circuit breaker that prevented my brain from reaching total exhaustion. I could return to my laptop without the typical mental fog." (Participant #29, female, 21 years old).

3.2.3 Restoring Personal Accomplishment via 'Muhasabah-Amanah Integration'

The third theme addressed the sense of **Reduced Personal Accomplishment** by reframing academic procrastination as a spiritual deficit. Through *Muhasabah* (systematic self-reflection), students shifted from an external locus of control to an internal, faith-based accountability system. This re-definition transformed academic tasks from "burdensome chores" into "spiritual mandates."

"The 'Muhasabah' journal made me realize that my procrastination was actually a betrayal of 'Amanah'—the divine trust of time. Once I viewed my study schedule as a form of spiritual discipline rather than just a university requirement, my motivation became intrinsic. I didn't just finish my assignments; I felt a genuine sense of mastery and religious fulfillment in doing so." (Participant #12, male, 23 years old).

Discussion

The empirical evidence from this study demonstrates that the Islamic Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling (ICBC) formulation serves as a robust intervention in mitigating academic burnout among university students. The extraordinary effect size (d = 4.94) suggests that when spiritual tenets are not merely added but systematically integrated into a cognitive-behavioral framework, they function as a potentially more effective psychological buffer against the multifaceted pressures of modern higher education. This finding indicates that the integration of Islamic spiritual values is not simply complementary to conventional therapeutic approaches, but rather transformative in nature. By embedding spirituality into the cognitive-behavioral structure, ICBC creates a multidimensional intervention that addresses not only cognitive distortions and maladaptive behaviors but also existential concerns, meaning-making processes, and spiritual well-being.

Furthermore, this approach recalibrates how students cognitively appraise academic stress. Instead of perceiving stressors as purely external pressures that must be managed or avoided, ICBC enables students to reinterpret them through a transcendental lens. Academic challenges become part of a broader spiritual journey, where effort, patience, and perseverance are imbued with religious significance. This transcendental anchoring differentiates ICBC from secular Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), as it integrates purpose-driven cognition with faith-based acceptance, resulting in deeper psychological resilience. Consequently, students experience not only reduced burnout symptoms but also an enhanced sense of inner peace and direction.

The Efficacy of ICBC: Navigating Academic Involution

The significant reduction in burnout scores observed aligns with the global crisis of academic involution and heightened anxiety, which currently characterizes the post-COVID-19 educational landscape (Chen & Chen, 2025; Liu et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2026; Ye et al., 2021). Academic involution refers to a condition in which students are trapped in increasingly intense competition without proportional gains in achievement or personal development. This phenomenon has been exacerbated by the rapid transformation of educational systems following the COVID-19 pandemic, where hybrid learning models, increased workloads, and uncertain career trajectories contribute to chronic stress and emotional exhaustion.

While contemporary studies in Poland and China identify procrastination and intolerance of uncertainty as the primary drivers of burnout (Ober et al., 2025; Önder et al., 2025; Qiang et al., 2024), the ICBC model introduces a unique corrective lens. Rather than focusing solely on secular self-regulation strategies, ICBC addresses the root of these cognitive distortions through transcendental restructuring. Students are guided to reinterpret uncertainty not as a threat but as a domain governed by divine wisdom. This shift reduces the psychological burden associated with ambiguity and fosters a more adaptive coping mechanism grounded in faith.

This perspective resonates with the work of (Kurnia et al., 2026) and (Itryah & Fazrin, 2025; Putri et al., 2025), who argue that integrating Islamic values within educational environments provides students with the internal fortitude necessary to navigate rigorous academic demands and psychological barriers. By aligning academic pursuits with spiritual objectives, students develop a more cohesive identity that integrates intellectual and religious dimensions. This alignment reduces internal conflict and enhances motivation, as learning is no longer perceived as an isolated task but as part of a meaningful life mission.

Spiritual-Cognitive Mechanisms: Beyond Secular Resilience

A pivotal finding in the qualitative phase was the role of Tawakal (Divine Reliance) as a sophisticated cognitive restructuring tool. Within the ICBC framework, tawakal is conceptualized not as passive resignation but as an active cognitive strategy that reframes one's relationship with control and uncertainty. Students are taught to exert maximum effort while entrusting the outcome to God, thereby alleviating the cognitive load associated with overcontrol and fear of failure.

This mechanism mirrors the Syncretic Counseling approach, where the fusion of Islamic and local cultural values helps students reconstruct the Meaning of Life, thereby neutralizing the cynicism component of burnout (Hanafi et al., 2025). By reconstructing meaning, students are able to contextualize their academic struggles within a broader existential framework. This reduces feelings of emptiness and detachment, which are key components of burnout, and replaces them with a sense of purpose and spiritual fulfillment.

Within this framework, the Dichotomy of Control—operationalized through the synergy of Ikhtiar (Human Agency) and Tawakal—functions as a powerful moderator of anxiety. Students learn to distinguish between factors within their control and those beyond it, allowing them to allocate their cognitive and emotional resources more effectively. This clarity reduces rumination and enhances focus, leading to improved academic performance and psychological well-being.

This spiritual strategy parallels the secular roles of self-compassion and mindfulness in reducing self-regulatory fatigue (Hadi et al., 2025), yet it offers a more stable existential foundation for students in Islamic contexts. While self-compassion encourages kindness toward oneself and mindfulness promotes present-moment awareness, tawakal introduces a relational dimension with the Divine. This relationship fosters a deeper sense of security and trust, which can sustain resilience over longer periods.

Furthermore, the implementation of Dhikr (remembrance of God) and Istighfar (seeking forgiveness) acts as both a biological and spiritual reset mechanism. These practices have been shown to regulate emotional states and reduce physiological markers of stress. Empirical evidence from (Nihayah & Prabawa, 2024) supports the notion that such interventions stabilize emotional responses and effectively reduce acute anxiety. By engaging in repetitive, rhythmic spiritual practices, students activate calming neural pathways, leading to improved emotional regulation.

By framing worship as a form of behavioral activation, ICBC provides students with structured, meaningful activities that counteract withdrawal and avoidance behaviors associated with burnout. These practices also offer transcendental social and spiritual support, which is particularly important in mitigating the effects of maladaptive perfectionism (Asim et al., 2025). Students who previously equated self-worth with academic achievement begin to shift their focus toward spiritual growth and ethical conduct.

This study extends the work of (Putra & Firman, 2025) by demonstrating that cognitive restructuring, when integrated with spiritual values, is not merely a tool for enhancing self-confidence but serves as the foundational bedrock for sustained academic resilience. This integration ensures that cognitive changes are deeply internalized and consistently reinforced through daily spiritual practices.

Ethical Accountability and Practical Implications

The success of ICBC reinforces the versatility of Islamic-integrated CBT across diverse behavioral domains, including juvenile delinquency and digital addiction (Farjantoky et al., 2020; Kuswatun et al., 2021). This versatility highlights the adaptability of ICBC as a culturally responsive intervention that can be tailored to various psychological challenges. Its effectiveness lies in its ability to connect therapeutic techniques with values that are deeply embedded in the individual's belief system.

By utilizing culturally resonant metaphors, such as the Andai-Andai approach, counseling becomes more relatable and accessible. These metaphors bridge the gap between abstract psychological concepts and everyday experiences, facilitating deeper understanding and engagement. As a result, students are more likely to internalize the principles of counseling and apply them in real-life situations.

However, the most significant contribution of this study lies in its demonstration of motivational transformation. ICBC shifts the source of motivation from external pressures, such as grades and competition, to internal, spiritually grounded drives. This transformation is crucial in sustaining long-term engagement and preventing relapse into burnout.

As suggested by (Zamani et al., 2020), combining spiritual teachings with cognitive flexibility enables a transition from a fixed-anxious mindset to a growth-oriented spiritual mindset. This shift empowers students to view challenges as opportunities for both personal and spiritual development. Failure is no longer perceived as a definitive endpoint but as a meaningful experience that contributes to growth.

By reframing procrastination as a breach of Amanah (Divine Trust), ICBC introduces a higher-order ethical accountability. Students begin to see their responsibilities not merely as academic obligations but as trusts entrusted to them by God. This perspective fosters a stronger sense of discipline and integrity, as actions are guided by moral and spiritual considerations rather than external enforcement.

Ultimately, this shift provides a more sustainable and intrinsic motivational force than external academic pressure. It effectively insulates students from the involutionary exhaustion characteristic of the modern educational era. ICBC, therefore, emerges not only as an effective intervention for reducing academic burnout but also as a comprehensive framework for fostering holistic student development, integrating cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions into a unified model of resilience and well-being.

4. CONCLUSION

This study successfully concludes that the formulation of Islamic Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling (ICBC) is a highly effective intervention for mitigating academic burnout among university students. By systematically integrating spiritual tenets into a structured cognitive-behavioral framework, the research has met its primary objective, demonstrating a substantial reduction in emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment. The primary discovery of this work is that spiritual concepts, specifically Tawakal and Amanah, do not merely serve as religious rituals but function as sophisticated cognitive anchors that recalibrate a student's perception of academic stress and ethical accountability.

The findings suggest a paradigm shift in student counseling: the integration of a transcendental perspective provides a more resilient motivational foundation than purely secular self-regulation strategies. This research establishes that addressing academic burnout through the "Dichotomy of Control"—focusing on Ikhtiar (effort) while surrendering the outcome to divine decree—effectively deconstructs the paralyzing anxiety associated with modern academic involution. Consequently, the

ICBC model offers a culturally resonant and clinically robust solution that fills the existential gap often found in conventional counseling methodologies.

While this study proves the immediate efficacy of the ICBC model, future research should transition toward longitudinal evaluations to determine the sustainability of these spiritual-cognitive shifts over multiple academic years. Furthermore, research is currently underway to digitize the ICBC module into an AI-driven "Spiritual-Assistant" platform, aiming to provide real-time, "no-code" accessible mental health support for students in Islamic higher education institutions. Expanding the scope of subjects to include diverse cultural backgrounds within the Muslim diaspora would also strengthen the generalizability of this integrated counseling framework.

Acknowledgments: The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Institut Agama Islam (IAI) KH. Sufyan Tsauri Majenang, Cilacap, particularly LPPM, for providing the essential administrative and technical support to conduct this study. We also extend our profound appreciation to the faculty members and university staff who assisted in the recruitment of research participants and facilitated the implementation of the group counseling sessions. Most importantly, special thanks are given to the students who participated in this research for their time, openness, and sincere commitment throughout the therapeutic process.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; or in the decision to publish the results.

REFERENCES

Abdullah, M. R., Muhamad, F. N., Abdullah, Z. H., Amonov, B., & Yaakob, M. A. (2025). Exploring the mediating effect of academic self-efficacy on metacognitive awareness and students' academic writing skill in Islamic higher education. *Journal of Instruction and Islamic Religious Education*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:283766041

Allita, F. A. N., & Prasetya, A. F. (2025). Efektivitas Konseling Kelompok Cognitive Behavior Teknik Metakognitif dalam Mereduksi Burnout Siswa di SMA Muhammadiyah Bantul. *Katalis Pendidikan : Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Matematika*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:283237818

Asim, S., Kausar, N., & Naz, I. (2025). The Impact of Perfectionism and Academic Burnout among University Students: The Role of Social Support. *The Regional Tribune*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:279976086

Buck, G. A., & Williamson, F. A. (2022). MIXED METHODS RESEARCH ON SCIENCE TEACHER EDUCATION. In *Handbook of Research on Science Teacher Education*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003098478-5

Budianto, A., Anam, M. K., Nisa, Z., & Alkhazaleh, Z. M. (2026). The Efficacy of Group Counseling Using CBT Techniques in Reduce Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) Among Female University Students in Islamic Boarding Environments. *Al-Ihath: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling Islam*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:285084948

Chen, J., & Chen, G. (2025). Academic burnout among Chinese college students: A study based on FSQCA method. *Acta Psychologica*, *253*, 104701. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:275469433

Clark, R. E. (2004). The classical origins of Pavlov's conditioning. *Integrative Physiological and Behavioral Science*, *39*(4), 279–294. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02734167

DeVries, C., Rodríguez-Putnam, A., Ewen, A. M., Flores, B., Choudhary, P., Spring, E., Miller, A., Zhong, C., Mannor, K. M., Messina, R., & Mezuk, B. (2025). Protocol for the diabetes, distress and disparities (3D) study: an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. *BMJ Open*, *15*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:277734850

Ertesvåg, S. K., Sammons, P., & Blossing, U. (2021). Integrating data in a complex mixed-methods classroom interaction study. *British Educational Research Journal*, *47*(3), 654 – 673. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3678

Fadheela, A., & Fakhriya, F. (2024). The Effectiveness of Controlled Dhikr-Based Islamic Counseling in Reducing Students' Academic Anxiety. *Journal on Islamic Studies*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:282053446

Farjantoky, B., Sunawan, S., & Mulawarman, M. (2020). *The Effects of Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling on Self-esteem and the Tendency of Mobile Phone Addiction*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:211080259

Fathurohim, F. (2023). KURIKULUM MERDEKA DALAM PERSPEKTIF FILSAFAT PENDIDIKAN ISLAM. *Jurnal Asy-Syukriyyah*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:266402956

Hadi, A. F. M. Q. A. H. A. F. M. Q. Al, Shobahiya, M. S. M., & Ibrahim, S. A. S. I. S. A. S. (2025). The Role of Mindfulness in Reducing Academic Burnout Among University Students. *Iseedu: Journal of Islamic Educational Thoughts and Practices*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:280866174

Hanafi, H., Hidayah, N., Mappiare, A., & Mamat, N. Bin. (2025). Syncretic Cognitive Behavioral Counseling: Developing Students' Meaning of Life through the Blended Values of Islamic and Osing Culture. *Pamomong: Journal of Islamic Educational Counseling*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:279442115

Indrawan, I., & Refika, R. (2025). Dynamics of Islamic Education Management and Its Impact on Academic Service Effectiveness in Islamic Higher Education. *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:282087940

Itryah, I., & Fazrin, A. S. P. (2025). Re-charge Mind melalui Konseling Kelompok untuk Mengurangi Burnout Akademik pada Siswa SMA Negeri 5 Palembang. *AJAD : Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:284620788

Khurshid, K., Mushtaq, R., Rauf, U., Anwar, N., Abbas, Q., Aljhani, S., Ramzan, Z., & Shahzadi, M. (2025). Cognitive behavior therapy for academic burnout, procrastination, self-handicapping behavior, and test anxiety among adolescents: a randomized control trial. *BMC Psychology*, *13*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:276103896

Kurnia, V., Rahmawati, W. K., & Fauziyah, N. (2026). COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL COUNSELING TO IMPROVE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN AN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY. *EDUCATIONE*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:284776610

Kuswatun, E., Nurjannah, N., & Depriansya, D. (2021). KONSELING ISLAM DENGAN PENDEKATAN COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY (CBT) UNTUK MENGATASI KENAKALAN REMAJA [ISLAMIC COUNSELING WITH COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT) APPROACH TO OVERCOME JUVENILE DELINQUENCY]. *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Counselling*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:244336966

Liu, W., Zhang, R., Wang, H., Rule, A., Wang, M., Abbey, C., Singh, M. K., Rozelle, S., She, X., & Tong, L. (2024). Association between anxiety, depression symptoms, and academic burnout among Chinese students: the mediating role of resilience and self-efficacy. *BMC Psychology*, *12*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:270313898

Nemati, S., Pourtaleb, N., Badrigargari, R., Hashemi, T., Deetjen, R., & Shojaeian, N. (2022). The Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Training Program on the Level of Academic Stress and Academic Burnout in Students with Specific Learning Disability. *Advances in Neurodevelopmental Disorders*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:254804835

Nihayah, S., & Prabawa, A. F. (2024). Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Counseling Istigfar Therapy: Can It Reduce Anxiety? *Foramadiahi: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Dan Keislaman*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:267102909

Nisa, M., Kosasih, A., & Budiyanti, N. (2025). Strengthening Mahabbah, Mujahadah and Sa'adah through Fitrah-Based Education in Non-Formal Education. *Khazanah Pendidikan Islam*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:285295962

Ober, J., Kochmańska, A., & Sitinjak, C. (2025). Assessment of Academic Burnout among University Students in Poland. *SAGE Open*, *15*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:282704062

Önder, İ., Önder, A. N., & Yıldırım, E. G. (2025). Morningness and academic burnout among university students: the mediating role of procrastination. *BMC Psychology*, *13*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:279790597

Putra, T. R. I., & Firman, F. (2025). The Effectiveness of Group Counseling Using The Approach Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) With Improved Cognitive Restructuring Techniques Self-Confidence of Pre-Prosperous Students. *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:279551533

Putri, S. R., Degeng, I. N. S., Muslihati, M., Ramli, M., & Siregar, I. K. (2025). Enhancing academic self-efficacy through cognitive behavioral counseling with integrated islamic values: a study on university students. *Psikopedagogia*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:282087778

Qiang, J., He, X., Xia, Z., Huang, J., & Xu, C. (2024). The association between intolerance of uncertainty and academic burnout among university students: the role of self-regulatory fatigue and self-compassion. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *12*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:271436987

Sari, P., Hasan, M. A., Lakadjo, M. A., & Prasetyo, A. (2025). Mengungkap Hubungan Antara Engagement Akademik dengan Burnout Akademik Pada Mahasiswa di Perguruan Tinggi Islam. *Indonesian Journal of Counseling and Development*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:283980289

Sholichah, M., Kushartati, S., & Hidayati, E. (2021). *RELIGIOUS COGNITIVE BEHAVIOR COUNSELING TO INCREASE SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING IN ADOLESCENTS SURVIVOR OF FAMILY VIOLENCE*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:233280391

Sufairok, M. N., Razzaq, A., & Putra, B. J. (2025). Efektivitas Konseling Kelompok dengan Terknik Cognitive Restructuring untuk Mengurangi Academic Burnout pada Mahasiswa. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Dan Riset Pendidikan*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:280601325

Suhertina, S. (2025). Islamic-Based Counseling Approaches for Student Mental Well-Being: A Systematic Literature Review. *Madania: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:281631573

Teerawongpairoj, C., Tantipoj, C., & Sipiyaruk, K. (2024). The design and evaluation of gamified online role-play as a telehealth training strategy in dental education: an explanatory sequential mixed-methods study. *Scientific Reports*, *14*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:269312594

Yang, Z., Wang, L., Xu, J., Li, F., & Chen, K. (2026). Perceived Involution and Academic Burnout among University Students: The Mediating Role of Anxiety and the Moderating Role of Self-Control. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:286396597

Ye, Y., Huang, X.-F., & Liu, Y. (2021). Social Support and Academic Burnout Among University Students: A Moderated Mediation Model. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, *14*, 335–344. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:232353258

Zamani, S. N., Zarei, E., Alizadeh, K. H., & Naami, A. (2020). Combined Cognitive–Behavioral Therapy and Counseling Program Based on Islamic Spiritual Teachings and Cognitive Flexibility on the Sexual Function of Pregnant Women. *Middle Eastern Journal of Disability Studies*, *10*, 111. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:229144390

Zhang, J., Meng, J., & Wen, X. (2025). The relationship between stress and academic burnout in college students: evidence from longitudinal data on indirect effects. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *16*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:278920297