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## Brainstorming the Students Mental Health after Covid-19 Outbreak and How to Curb from Islamic Perspectives: Nominal Group Technique Analysis Approach

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### Abstract

This article discusses the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) as an alternative strategy for proposing solutions to mental health problems according to the Islamic approach. This technique has been applied by researchers to provide solutions to mental health problems among students. The findings of the summary of expert recommendations have identified a total of 12 alternatives and methods in solving mental health problems. In addition, the findings of the study show that the NGT technique has helped researchers to obtain element validation quickly and easily because the elements have been developed through reading the literature and then discussed and voted for expert consensus. Suggestions for further study are suggested to make a better study with the producers of specific modules to solve mental problems in particular.

**Keyword:** Nominal Group Technique, Islamic, Mental Health, Covid-19

### Introduction

Issues related to mental health are not a new thing, in fact they have been going on for a long time. However, this mental conflict became more widespread after the covid 19 pandemic. The World Health Organization designated the worldwide epidemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) a public health emergency on January 30, 2020. Following in the footsteps of other nations such as China and Italy, the French government has legislated a quarantine from March 17 to May 11, 2020. Citizens were asked to stay at home, and any needless travel was forbidden. A recent analysis of the literature suggested that quarantine measures might have detrimental psychological impacts, including feelings of posttraumatic stress, tension, anxiety, and depression, based on lockdown experiences described in reaction to prior outbreaks (Brooks et al, 2020).

Despite this crisis, there is a group that is very affected by this pandemic issue. University students tend to be especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of quarantine when compared to the general population (Wathelet et al, 2020). Indeed, even before the COVID-

19 pandemic, the mental health of young people was a global issue. Suicide is the second highest cause of mortality among those aged 15 to 25 in France, as it is in most high-income nations. 4 In a 2016 nationwide poll of 18 875 French university students, 37 percent reported having experienced an episode of depression, and 8 percent reported having suicidal thoughts in the previous 12 months (Wathelet et al., 2020). Based on this data and information, the researcher will describe in more detail related to mental health in the next sub -topic. In addition, this study is expected to provide an alternative form of solution related to this mental problem.

### **Mental Health among Students after Covid-19 Outbreak**

In the global community, the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak is regarded as both epidemic and pandemic. People all across the world are now impacted by SARSCoV-2, the sixth pandemic after the 1918 flu pandemic (Sohel et al., 2021). Accumulating research reveals that a SARSCoV2 mediated epidemic might harm psychological or mental health during a pandemic, which is not surprising given that individuals have encountered a similar crisis for every pandemic in the last year, such as the Ebola viral disease outbreak (Schultz et al., 2016). Long-term epidemics can have a detrimental influence on people in a variety of ways, including perceptions of personal infection risk and concern for relatives and family (Li et al., 2020).

With the global spread of the coronavirus illness (COVID-19) epidemic, the psychological disorders associated with this pandemic have dramatically increased its public health impact (Torales et al., 2020). Emerging research on the mental health implications of COVID-19 has found a higher incidence of moderate-to-severe self-reported depression and anxious symptomatology in the general population, demonstrating the pervasive consequences of uncertainty and health-related anxieties (Wang et al., 2020).

In general, this mental health issue is not only focused on the general public, but also among students has become a hot issue to be debated. Among those affected by covid are students. They are very impressed and even lead to mental problems after the occurrence of covid-19 nowadays. Under normal conditions, college students experience increased psychological anguish and severe academic effects (American College Health Association, 2019). Tertiary education institutions have changed to an emergency online learning style as a result of physical distancing measures imposed in response to COVID-19, which is projected to worsen academic pressures for students. Based on findings from research into the impact of academic disruptions on students, it is reasonable to speculate that as a direct result of these measures, students may experience reduced motivation toward studies, increased pressures to learn independently, abandonment of daily routines, and potentially higher rates of dropout (Whiken, 2011).

There are some research data that we can all take advantage of to clearly see the effects of mental problems among students. This data is useful and can be used as a guide in assessing the effects and consequences behind the occurrence of mental problems among students. Indications of severe "mental health difficulties" were observed in 45 percent of the respondents. The prevalence rates of acute stress reactions were 34.9 percent, depressive disorders 21.1 percent, and anxiety disorders 11.0 percent (Woolston, 2020). Nature released the summary of a study of 45,000 US students who were polled using a shortened version of the PHQ from May 26th to June 11th, 2021 in September 2020. In this study, 35% of undergraduates and 32% of graduate and professional students tested positive for major depressive disorder, whereas 39% of undergraduates and 32% of graduate and professional students tested positive for generalised anxiety disorder. The incidence of major depressive disorder was two times greater in 2020 than in the pre-pandemic year, and the prevalence of

generalised anxiety disorder was 1.5 times higher (Holm-Hadulla, Klimov, Juche, Möltner, & Herpertz, 2021). In a pre-pandemic research at the University of Cologne, a "full university" equivalent to Heidelberg University, 53.6 percent of the 4,957 students tested with the PHQ-D from December to February 2014/2015 indicated at least one syndromal condition at the time of the survey. Depressive syndrome was the most common, accounting for 35% (of which 20.6 percent were "severe depression" and 14.4 percent "mild depression"), followed by somatoform syndrome (23.6%). The PHQ-D criteria for alcohol syndrome were met by 19.1% of respondents. 13.5 percent of the pupils had symptoms of generalised anxiety disorder or panic disorder (Weber, 2020; Holm-Hadulla et al., 2021).

These preliminary findings show the several variables that contributed to students' suffering during the epidemic; nevertheless, there is still much to learn about the psychological repercussions that students face and what can be done to mitigate their negative effects. It is proposed that a timely call to action be issued for more study into the impact of COVID-19 on student mental health. Priorities should specifically include disruptions to educational progress, modifications of habitual coping techniques, and efforts adopted by academic institutions to prevent negative academic and psychological results. Therefore, this study will dissect and suggest a process to treat or overcome this mental health problem according to the Islamic approach based on the views and consensus of experts.

### Islam and Mental Health

Religion is a worldwide phenomena. It has acted as one of the most potent factors in life, death, health, and illness. Islam is the world's second most populous and fastest growing religion. Islam, like other religions, has numerous elements and facets. Islam is comparable to other religions in certain aspects while being distinct and distinct in others. For the vast majority of its adherents, proper Islam is linked to and organises all aspects of human life. Islam is the third and last monotheistic religion given to humanity, following Judaism and Christianity. It is, however, the only divine religion that acknowledges and accepts all 25 past prophets sent by God, as revealed and recognised in the Holy Qur'an:

*The Messenger (Muhammad) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers, (They say), "We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers" and they say, "We hear, and we obey. (We seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the return (of all)." (The Qur'an 2: 285).*

The Muslim faith is primarily based on the idea that science and religion work in tandem as an integrated whole as part of cosmic reality (Heng & Gone, 2018; Haque & Maslan, 2003). The notion of free will is present in Islam; while created parts of the world such as the sun, moon, and cosmos are tied to Allah's orders, human people are given the (limited) choice of whether or not to accept God's directives. The subsequent reward and punishment are determined by the decisions made and whether they are compatible with or contrary to Allah's instructions as stated in the Qur'an. ( Heng et al., 2018). The metaphysical components, referred to in the Qur'an as the heart (*qalb*), soul (*al-nafs*), spirit (*ruh*), and intellect, are the source of real knowledge in humans (*al-aql*). Knowledge and ruh are inherent in human nature and are called together as *alfitrah*, which guides human conduct throughout their lives. Deviation from *alfitrah* leads humanity astray, resulting in grief and suffering in this life.

The notion of mental health in Islam is founded on the belief that divergence from Islamic knowledge and teachings leads to pain and misery. Suffering and agony in this life are the outcome of a fight for man's spiritual intellect to intervene and strike a balance in human

nature while the physical body requires physical pleasure. Human consciousness is controlled by the dynamic interaction of material and non-material forces that results in the psyche or nafs. As a result, a study of both of these factors is required when attempting to establish a knowledge of man. Finally, continuous purification of thought and deed brings a person closer to God and keeps a person mentally healthy. The term *inshirah al sadr* is used in the Qur'an to refer to a state of mental health or psychological well-being, as indicated in the following verses: 6:125, 10:57, 16:106, 20:25, and 94:1. The phrase *dhaiq al sadr* is also used in the Qur'an to allude to conditions of psychological instability, as shown in the following verses: 6:125, 11:12, 15:97, 26:13, and 29:33. The Qur'an mentions psychological stress (*dhaiq nafsi*) in the following verses: 6:125, 9:25, 9:118, 11:12, 11:77, 15:97, 16:12, 18:6, 26:3, 26:13, 27:70, 29:33, 35:8, 65:5. The phrase *hayatan dhaniqah* is also used to describe a life filled with psychological hardship (20:124). *Taqwa* is connected with a state of well-being, whereas *ma'siyat* is related with psychological or mental disorder (Haque, 2005).

### Objective of the Study

The objectives of the project as a whole were:

- The purpose of this study is to see the views and recommendations of experts in dealing with mental health problems among students according to Islamic ways and methods.
- Make conclusions and recommendations in dealing with mental health problems based on methods practiced in Islam based on expert recommendations.

### Methodology

This study uses the NGT method as the main method of the study. The study involved 7 experts related to the mental health and psychology of students. Since currently the process of gathering experts at a time face to face is still not feasible, researchers make NGT sessions online using google meet. A 2 -hour session was performed. Experts were gathered and a brainstorming session of NGT method was implemented in gathering ideas and solutions based on expert opinion. At the end of the session, the researcher made a specific calculation using the NGT method in obtaining results to answer the objectives of this study.

### Nominal Group Technique

NGT is a methodical procedure that identifies a group's common opinions on a certain issue. It was originally envisioned as a "participation approach for social planning scenarios" (Delbecq et al., 1975), with social planning situations described as exploratory research, citizen engagement, the use of interdisciplinary specialists, and proposal assessment (Kennedy & Clinton, 2015). Since then, the technique has been used in a variety of group settings, including empirical research in the social sciences. While it has been used in education research to some extent (O'Neil and Jackson, 1983; Lomax and McLeman, 1984), it appears to be more commonly used in social science research in the field of health studies. The technique aids in the identification of problems, the exploration of solutions, and the establishment of priorities. It works especially well in "stranger groups," where it is important to balance status and verbal dominance among group members. NGT typically consists of four steps:

1. Brainstorming (silent generation of ideas in writing): Participants work silently and independently to jot down their responses to a stimulus question.
2. Round Robin session: When asked, each participant contributes a single idea, which is then recorded on a large flip-chart. It is not permitted to debate the ideas. Sheets that

have been completed are taped to the wall so that everyone can see them. The group facilitator continues to summon the participants until all ideas have been recorded or the group determines that they have generated a sufficient number of ideas.

3. Discussion of the list of ideas: Each idea on the list is discussed by the participants so that everyone understands what it means.
4. Voting: The participants identify the most important ideas, rank-order their preferences (optional), vote on the flipchart, and discuss the voting pattern.

It encourages genuine results and commitment to them by requiring anonymous voting in conjunction with the provisions outlined above. Finally, by recording all inputs and approved changes to them on flipchart pages, NGT provides a permanent record of group process and outcomes. When displayed, these sheets allow a group to easily pick up where it left off at a previous meeting, and they also serve as an excellent means of briefing those who miss all or part of a meeting (Fox, 1989).

### Research Sample

There is some debate about the most appropriate sample size in conducting studies using NGT techniques. There are scholars who state that NGT can be conducted on a single cohort or large group (Lomax & McLeman, 1984; Dobbie et al., 2004; Muqsith et al, 2017) however it can be divided into small groups so that effective communication can be conducted depending on the needs of the study. For that purpose, the following are the sample sizes that have been used by previous researchers which have been detailed in table 1:

Author	Sample
Van de Ven dan Delbecq (1971)	5 – 9 experts/participants
Horton (1980)	7 – 10 experts/participants
Harvey dan Holmes (2012)	6 – 12 experts/participants
Abdullah & Islam (2011)	7 – 10 experts/participants
Carney et al (1996)	Min. 6 experts/participants

As a result of the above reference, the researcher selected 7 experts to participate in the NGT process of this study. Given the current situation that limits encounters then this amount is considered appropriate for this study.

### Finding

#### Curb The mental health from the experts view: Islamic approach

Multiple practises are available in Islam, as in other religions, to relieve anxiety and other negative mental states as coping mechanisms against everyday stresses and hardships. In addition, Islam introduces the concept of "Islam is a way of life" which includes every act and practice in life is linked to the way that Islam prescribes. In dealing with these problems related to mental health, everything is contained in the quran and explained in the hadith. In addition, the scholars in Islam have their views and opinions that they interpret from the Quran and the hadith of the Prophet PBUH. After conducting the NGT session, as a result of the recommendations and views of experts, the researcher formulated alternatives or methods that can be used to treat mental problems among students. Below is a list of recommendations obtained from the views and opinions of experts:

Table 2: list of solution

No	Expert opinion and suggestion	Source
1	Reciting Qur'an	The Noble Qur'an (1996, 2: 153): "O you who believe! Seek help in patience and the prayer. Truly! Allah is with As-Sabirin (the patient)." And: "Those who believed (in the oneness of Allah. Islamic - Monotheism), and whose heart find rest in the remembrance of Allah: verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest" (13: 28) Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah, hearts are assured (13:28).
2	Remembering Allah (Zikr)	
3	Supplication or invocation	
4	Asking God's forgiveness (Taubah) and istighfar: Tawba is an Islamic principle that aids in soul decontamination.	
5	Sharing: Share problems and find solutions by referring to religious scholars (ulama')	Expert
6	Prayer : Prayer's physical aspect, with changing postures, has a very relaxing effect on the body.	Expert
7	Attending religion kuliah: Attending knowledge gatherings because by attending knowledge gatherings the individual will be calmer in terms of emotions and thoughts.	Expert
8	Ruqya: An incantation that is commonly regarded as 'Du'a or prayers based on hadith and al-Quran, Syari'ah compliant for the primary purpose of achieving well-being.	Expert
9	Belief in the hereafter: A person who believes in the afterlife understands that life does not end in this world and that there is another world where all of his wishes are granted.	Expert
10	Unity of personality: People with personality unity are consistent in their thoughts, actions, and emotions.	Expert
11	Will power and patience: The Quran does not explicitly mention will power or how to strengthen it, but as a teaching tool, it emphasises practical strategies.	Expert
12	Frugality: as a habit of procuring things and services in a cost-efficient manner, is useful in preserving mental health.	Expert

NGT analysis result:

Table 3: NGT result

Items/elements	Voter 1	Voter 2	Voter 3	Voter 4	Voter 5	Voter 6	Voter 7	Total item score/vote	Percentage	Rank priority	Voter consensus
Reciting Qur'an	7	7	6	7	7	6	7	47	95.0	2	SUITABLE
Remembering Allah (Zikr)	7	6	7	7	6	6	6	45	92.0	5	SUITABLE
Supplication or invocation	7	7	6	6	5	7	5	43	89.0	7	SUITABLE
Asking God's forgiveness (Taubah) and istighfar	7	7	7	7	7	6	7	48	98.0	1	SUITABLE
Sharing	7	6	5	7	5	7	6	43	89.0	7	SUITABLE
Prayer	7	6	6	7	7	6	7	46	94.0	4	SUITABLE
Attending religion kuliah	5	6	7	5	7	6	7	43	89.0	7	SUITABLE
Ruqya	7	7	7	7	6	6	7	47	95.0	3	SUITABLE
Belief in the hereafter	7	6	6	6	7	6	7	45	92.0	5	SUITABLE
Unity of personality	7	6	7	7	7	7	7	48	98.0	1	SUITABLE
Will power and patience	7	5	7	7	5	6	7	44	90.0	6	SUITABLE
Frugality	7	6	7	7	7	6	7	47	95.0	2	SUITABLE

Table 3 shows the total scores for the solution component for mental health problems obtained from the expert's point of view. The findings of this study briefly indicate that all percentages of the elements evaluated are at a level suitable for use. This is because the value of the percentage has exceeded 70% as has been required based on studies (Deslandes, Mendes, Pires & Campos 2010 ;Dobbie et al., 2004). The conclusion and conclusion that can be made by the researcher is that all study participants agree that all the main components in the developed model are acceptable and can be used. In contrast to the Delphi method, the modified NGT technique allows researchers to obtain information quickly as it does not involve rounds of evaluation sessions between experts.

### Conclusion and Further Direction

As a result of this analysis, the researchers concluded that there are many solutions that can be used in solving mental health problems. Among the methods and solutions to this problem, it is possible for individuals who have this problem to use the approach proposed by Islamic experts in the manner that Islam outlines. These outlined methods can be used as a reference and alternative to conventional or psychological methods commonly used in society. Various methods have been proposed before, yet mental health -related problems remain high and every day there is a significant improvement. Therefore, the proposed method proposed in this study can be used as a solution alternative. For future studies future researchers can replicate this study and form specific modules and be used in treating these mental health problems. The construction of the module is considered significant in the future because it can be applied in care and education.

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