

The Balance of Life Quality among the Elderly through the Practice of Sunnah Nabawiyyah: A Study at Madrasah Ibnu Mas'ud, Malaysia

Maisarah Saidin¹, Latifah Abdul Majid²

¹Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, Islamic Science University of Malaysia, Nilai, Malaysia, ²Faculty of Islamic Studies, National University of Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia
Corresponding Author Email: maisarah@usim.edu.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v15-i2/24499> DOI:10.6007/IJARBS/v15-i2/24499

Published Date: 03 February 2025

Abstract

Elderly individuals are regarded as guardians of traditional values and sources of wisdom. However, physiological and psychological changes due to aging make them more vulnerable to cognitive decline, mental stress, and social isolation. In this context, approaches based on Islamic principles, particularly the Sunnah of the Prophet (Sunnah Nabawiyyah), have received limited attention. Therefore, this study aims to explore the role of the Sunnah Nabawiyyah in fostering spiritual, mental, and physical balance among the elderly. Using a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews with elderly participants at Madrasah Ibnu Mas'ud, Malaysia, the collected data was analyzed thematically. The findings reveal that the practice of Sunnah, such as congregational prayers, voluntary fasting, engaging in dhikr (remembrance of Allah), walking frequently and reciting the Quran, has a positive impact on the well-being of the elderly. The implementation of Sunnah Nabawiyyah serves as a holistic framework for enhancing the quality of life among the elderly.

Keywords: Elderly Well-being, Islamic Elderly Care, Life Quality Balance, Madrasah Ibnu Mas'ud, Sunnah Nabawiyyah Practices

Introduction

The increasing population of the elderly is becoming a prominent global phenomenon, including in Malaysia. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, individuals aged 60 and above are expected to make up more than 15% of the country's total population by 2030 (JKM, 2017). This demographic shift has significant implications for society, the economy, and national support systems, including a growing demand for healthcare services and the need for user-friendly infrastructure. Elderly individuals are often viewed as a group with extensive experience, profound wisdom, and substantial contributions to society. The Fourth Edition of the Kamus Dewan (2010) defines elderly individuals as those who have reached old age.

Similarly, the World Assembly on Aging in 1982 classified the elderly as individuals aged 60 and above (KPWKM, 2024).

From the perspective of Islamic scholars such as Abu Hayyan (1999) and al-Alusi (2010), the elderly are those who experience physical and sensory decline, with changes manifesting as reduced memory, thinking abilities, and communication skills, resembling the state of dependency during childhood. Ibn Qayyim (1971) further emphasized that the strength and function of human organs begin to deteriorate after the age of 40. This physical, intellectual, and emotional decline makes the elderly a vulnerable group, exposed to various risks and life challenges, including health threats and loneliness (Zakaria & Kusrin, 2023). Research by Wijayanti et al. (2024) indicates that cognitive issues among the elderly often lead to decreased self-confidence, social isolation, and mental stress.

Therefore, the vulnerabilities in various aspects of life, compounded by issues frequently faced by the elderly, such as neglect and reduced social activity, require special attention from society. In Islamic teachings, every stage of life comes with its responsibilities. For the elderly, they are considered guardians of traditional values and sources of wisdom. However, they also need moral and physical support from family members and the community to live peacefully and securely. In Malaysia, despite various programs aimed at empowering the intellectual capacity of the elderly, there is still a lack of approaches based on Islamic principles, particularly those rooted in the Sunnah Nabawiyyah.

Islam, through the Sunnah Nabawiyyah, offers comprehensive guidance for caring for the elderly, addressing not only their physical well-being but also their mental, spiritual, and social needs. In the context of intellectual empowerment, the practices outlined in the Sunnah Nabawiyyah have the potential to holistically enhance the well-being of the elderly. Aging is an inevitable process; however, by adopting the Sunnah Nabawiyyah as an intervention, the elderly can maintain their cognitive and mental faculties and enjoy a higher quality of life that is healthier and more meaningful. Therefore, this study aims to explore the potential of the Sunnah Nabawiyyah in preserving the well-being and quality of life of the elderly, supported by scientific evidence that underscores the benefits of these practices.

Issues and Challenges Faced by the Elderly

The elderly often encounter various intellectual challenges closely associated with natural changes due to aging. As they grow older, they are at risk of losing abilities due to cognitive decline, such as weakened memory, difficulty concentrating, and reduced problem-solving capacity. Additionally, they are susceptible to neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's, vascular dementia, and others that affect mental function (Lai et al., 2022). Dementia is characterized by memory loss, language impairment, behavioral issues, and diminished social and physical abilities. This progressive condition adversely affects daily activities, worsening over time, and predominantly impacts the elderly, although not all experience it as they age (World Health Organization, 2023).

In the Quran, several verses address cognitive decline in old age, including in Surah Al-Nahl, where Allah says:

﴿وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ ۚ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْدَلِ الْعُمْرِ لِكَيْ لَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ﴾

Meaning: “It is Allah Who created you; then He causes you to die; and some of you are sent back to the feeblest age, so that they know nothing after having known (much): for Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful.” (Quran, Al-Nahl:70).

This verse highlights Allah’s power in creating humans and determining their life journey, including the phase of weakness in old age. Ibnu Kathir (1998) explained that Allah creates humans from nothing, then causes their death, while some are granted long life until they experience physical and mental frailty in old age. As-Suddi interpreted the term “أَزْدَلٍ” as senility. Qatadah defined this age as approximately ninety years, while Ali (r.a.) considered it to be around seventy-five years (Ibnu Al-Mulaqqin, 2008). Al-Muhallab interpreted “أَزْدَلٍ” as an advanced age where one becomes weak, unable to fulfill obligations or care for themselves, eventually becoming a burden on their family (Ibnu Bathol, 2003).

Allah has bestowed intellect upon humans, enabling them to think, plan, create memories, communicate, and move. However, at this stage of life, individuals lose their cognitive strength, becoming senile and dependent on others, much like a child. This condition reminds us that all strength and abilities are blessings from Allah, and He has the power to withdraw them. This reality is evident in patients with dementia or Alzheimer’s, whose cognitive abilities gradually deteriorate, leading to memory loss and reliance on others for daily routines. This underscores the limitations of human capability without Allah’s power. It serves as a reminder of Allah’s sovereignty over His creations and humanity's dependence on Him.

Besides intellectual decline, the elderly are prone to emotional disturbances such as loneliness, depression, and confusion. Loneliness often arises from living apart from family members, losing a spouse, and undergoing life changes (Ishak & Alavi, 2024). Behavioral changes such as excessive emotions, irritability, crying, and irrational reactions are among the signs of depression in the elderly (Azizan, 2021). They also have physical health issues that make it difficult for them to stay active and manage their own daily activities (Nazali & Alavi, 2021). Therefore, they require social support, but the type, level, and intensity of support needed may vary between individuals depending on the nature, severity, and complexity of the problems they face (Ashaari et al., 2022).

Physical, intellectual, and emotional deterioration makes the elderly a vulnerable group, exposed to various risks and life challenges, including health threats and loneliness (Zakaria & Kusrin, 2023). Research by Wijayanti et al. (2024) indicates that cognitive issues among the elderly often lead to decreased self-confidence, social isolation, and mental stress.

Thus, the weaknesses in various aspects of their lives, compounded by common issues such as neglect and reduced social activities, call for specific guidance and support from Islamic teachings. These measures aim to help the elderly continue their lives with peace and well-being.

The Role of Sunnah Nabawiyyah for the Elderly

The Sunnah Nabawiyyah provides comprehensive guidance for improving the quality of life for Muslims. Specifically, for the elderly, the Sunnah plays a vital role in empowering their intellectual, emotional, and spiritual well-being. It offers a holistic framework for maintaining physical, mental, and spiritual balance. Through his sayings and practices, Prophet

Muhammad (PBUH) encouraged the pursuit of knowledge, preservation of good character, and respect for the elderly, all of which form the foundation for a meaningful life for older individuals.

As is well known, the Sunnah, or hadith, is the second primary source of Islamic law after the Qur'an. It encompasses the actions, sayings, and approvals of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Rofiah, 2017). Although understanding hadith is not overly complex, it requires systematic methods. Hadith plays a crucial role in interpreting the Qur'an by explaining commands, elaborating concise statements, clarifying ambiguous verses, and adding rulings not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an (Yuslem, 2001).

Understanding and internalizing hadith is particularly significant for the elderly, as the teachings address various aspects that help maintain mental and emotional health, enhance cognitive agility, and strengthen social relationships. For example, the hadith narrated by Abu Dharr encourages piety:

{قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: اتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ، وَأَتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمَحُّهَا، وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقِي حَسَنٍ}
 Meaning: "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said to me: 'Fear Allah wherever you are, follow up a bad deed with a good deed and it will erase it, and treat people with good manners.'" (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhi. *Bab Ma Jaa Fi Mu`asyarati al-Nas*. 1987). Al-Tirmidhi classified this as Hasan Sahih hadith.

This hadith implies that piety is incomplete if one only focuses on the relationship with Allah but neglects human relationships. The encouragement to fear Allah and maintain good relations with others can inspire the elderly to remain positive in life. This is supported by Sulaiman et al. (2013), who stated that understanding and practicing this hadith helps preserve emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships.

Moreover, Musa et al. (2018) noted that the Sunnah Nabawiyah, addressing diverse aspects such as faith, worship, and spirituality, has therapeutic value. Islamic psychotherapy rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah is effective in alleviating stress and emotional turmoil while positively impacting physical and mental health. These findings highlight that understanding and practicing the Sunnah can profoundly benefit one's spiritual and emotional well-being. Therefore, teaching and learning hadith among the elderly is highly relevant, as it plays a crucial role in their lives and understanding of Islam.

The Sunnah Nabawiyah also emphasizes respect and compassion for the elderly as a religious obligation. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) instructed Muslims to treat the elderly with kindness and honor, as narrated by Abdullah bin Amr:

{يَبْلُغُ بِهِ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا، وَيَعْرِفْ حَقَّ (وَفِي لَفْظٍ: وَيُوقِر) كَبِيرَنَا، فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا}
 Meaning: "He who does not show mercy to our young and does not recognize the rights of our elders is not one of us." (Hadith. Al-Bukhari. *Bab Fadlu al-Kabir*. 272).

This hadith highlights that compassion for the young and respect for the old are fundamental principles of Islamic ethics. Abdul Razak stressed that honoring the elderly is a form of reverence for Allah. Even in communication, Islam teaches that the elderly should be given priority in initiating conversations, provided they possess knowledge on par with the younger. However, if the younger have greater knowledge, it is not considered disrespectful

for them to speak first (Al-Aini, 2010). This demonstrates that Islam values knowledge over mere age.

Furthermore, Islam mandates that every group be treated according to their rights. Children are entitled to love and care, while the elderly are given respect and dignity. Al-Hafiz al-Iraqi stated that honoring the elderly is due to their virtues such as knowledge, goodness, or noble lineage. Old age itself is regarded as a form of honor in Islam (Al-Munawi, 2010). This is supported by the hadith narrated by Abu Bakrah:

{أَنَّ رَجُلًا قَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيُّ النَّاسِ خَيْرٌ، قَالَ: «مَنْ طَالَ عُمُرُهُ، وَحَسَنَ عَمَلُهُ»، قَالَ: فَأَيُّ النَّاسِ شَرٌّ؟ قَالَ: «مَنْ طَالَ عُمُرُهُ وَسَاءَ عَمَلُهُ»}

Meaning: “A man asked the Prophet (PBUH), ‘Who are the best people?’ He said, ‘Those whose lives are long and whose deeds are good.’ The man then asked, ‘Who are the worst people?’ He said, ‘Those whose lives are long, but their deeds are bad.’” (Hadith. Al-Tirmidhi. *Bab Ma Jaa Fi Tuli Al-Umri Lilmukmin*. 2330). Al-Albani classified this hadith as Sahih Li Ghairihi.

Respecting the elderly is not merely a social responsibility but also a way of practicing the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). This attitude not only enhances the social well-being of the elderly but also gives them a sense of value, relevance, and worth—crucial for their emotional balance.

In conclusion, the Sunnah Nabawiyah provides a holistic framework for improving the quality of life of the elderly. It addresses cognitive, emotional, and spiritual aspects while fostering strong social networks and offering the necessary spiritual support. The Sunnah remains a relevant guide for ensuring that the elderly live meaningful and optimistic lives.

Methodology

This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach, with document analysis as the primary method for collecting and analyzing data to achieve the study objectives. Data was gathered through an extensive literature review on the concept of quality-of-life balance for the elderly. The main sources included academic books, indexed journal articles, conference papers, and theses, which were accessed from online databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect. Additionally, authoritative references, including the Quran with its interpretations, collections of hadith and their commentaries, were consulted to identify Sunnah Nabawiyah practices and their impact on the elderly. The collected data was critically analyzed using scientific evidence to explore the relationship between Sunnah Nabawiyah and cognitive and psychological health. The study also involved semi-structured interviews conducted with five elderly individuals selected through purposive sampling. All participants were residents of the elderly care facility at Madrasah Ibnu Mas’ud, located in Sungai Mahang, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan. Data from the interviews was analyzed thematically to identify Sunnah practices integrated into their daily lives to enhance their quality of life.

Research Findings and Discussion

In Malaysia, the learning centre system provides various religious education classes for the elderly, including Madrasah Ibnu Mas’ud. These facilities serve to motivate the elderly to enhance their knowledge while fulfilling their spiritual needs (Zainudin et al., 2020). Based on interviews with the elderly residents at Madrasah Ibnu Mas’ud, it was found that Sunnah

practices have become an essential and regular part of their daily routines during their stay at the learning centre. This contrasts with their lifestyle before residing in the institution.

Spiritual Balance

Practices such as congregational prayers and daily remembrance (dhikr) bring a sense of inner peace to the elderly. Congregational prayer is a daily activity that holds significant importance for the elderly residents of the madrasah. It is performed collectively during every prayer time. This practice not only serves as a routine act of worship but also fosters a harmonious environment among the residents.

“...here, there are approximately 38 residents. During each prayer time, everyone participates in the congregational prayer. If someone is absent, their neighbors will notice and begin to check on their whereabouts. Congregational prayer nourishes my soul and brings me closer to God.” (Informant 1)

The presence of each individual in congregational prayers is highly anticipated. If any resident fails to attend, their peers promptly inquire and look into the reason for their absence. This reflects a strong sense of moral support and care among the residents, thereby creating a loving and supportive atmosphere.

Congregational prayer is seen not merely as a religious obligation but also as a vital social, spiritual, and psychological mechanism in the lives of the elderly. In dealing with the challenges of aging, congregational prayer offers significant benefits for intellectual and emotional well-being. The virtues of congregational prayer were emphasized by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in his saying:

{أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: «صَلَاةُ الْجَمَاعَةِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ صَلَاةِ الْفَدِّ بِسَبْعٍ وَعِشْرِينَ دَرَجَةً»}

Meaning: “The prayer in congregation is twenty-seven times superior to the prayer offered by a person alone.” (Hadith Muslim. *Bab Fadli Salati al-Jama’ah, wa Bayani al-Tashdidi fi al-Takhallufi ‘Anha*. 249).

The practice of congregational prayer holds immense significance and offers profound benefits for those who observe it. From a psychosocial perspective, congregational prayer can serve as an effective therapeutic tool in modern times. According to Syafi’I & Mulya (2023), congregational prayer is significantly linked to psychoneuroimmunology, as it positively impacts the immune system by reducing anxiety levels. This activity helps lower stress levels due to its elements of contemplation, meditation, and relaxation. These not only alleviate stress but also enhance mental health and physical resilience. From a neuroscience perspective, congregational prayer stimulates the production of neurotransmitters that reduce cortisol levels, providing tranquillity and peace of mind.

In addition, the practice of dhikr (remembrance of Allah) is an integral part of the daily routine for the elderly at Madrasah Ibnu Mas’ud. Each informant shared that they have their own preferred dhikr, in addition to reciting the al-Mathurat collectively.

“After performing the congregational dawn prayer, we do the morning dhikr, and later the evening dhikr... Every day, it’s different. Sometimes it’s La ilaha illallah, things like that. Subhanallah. For instance, on Fridays, it’s Ya Allah, Ya Allah. On Sundays, it’s La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah. Then, on Tuesdays, it’s sending salawat, and on

Wednesdays, it's Astaghfirullah al-'Azim, seeking forgiveness. On Thursdays, we recite Subhanallahi wa bihamdihi, Subhanallahil Azim. Fridays again, Ya Allah, Ya Allah. Saturdays, it's Ya Ghaniy. That's how it is." (Informant 3)

This routine helps them maintain inner peace, strengthen their faith, and deepen their connection with Allah SWT. These activities not only provide spiritual benefits but also support their mental and emotional well-being in daily life. Furthermore, the practice of dhikr becomes even more intensified when they feel anxious or emotionally disturbed.

"When doing dhikr, I feel calmer. When we feel uneasy or anxious, we turn to Allah, asking for good things to come and for bad things to be kept away. That's all." (Informant 5)

According to Hakim (2018), supplication (du'a) and dhikr have profound benefits for physical, mental, and spiritual health. Supplication, often likened to meditation, helps the body relax by slowing breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure. It also triggers positive psychological responses, reduces stress hormones, boosts immunity, and instills a sense of peace and happiness. Similarly, dhikr serves as a continuous effort to remember and connect with God, either through verbal recitation or heartfelt contemplation. It not only soothes the soul but also fosters profound spiritual awareness, leading to lasting inner tranquility and strengthening one's relationship with the Creator.

This view aligns with the findings of Ahmad Fakhurrazi et al. (2022), which show that dhikr also enhances a positive attitude towards Allah (SWT), forming the foundation for the development of other praiseworthy traits (mahmudah).

Mental Balance

Activities such as reading and memorizing the Quran help enhance memory and improve mental clarity. The activity of reading and memorizing the Quran at the Ibnu Mas'ud Madrasah is one of the main programs highly favoured by the elderly. This class is held every morning during the Duha period and serves as an essential medium for residents to improve their Quranic recitation. Each elderly participant attends this learning session under the guidance of experienced instructors. For many of the residents, this class is one of the primary reasons they choose to stay at the shelter, as they seek to enhance their understanding and mastery of the Quran, which may have been overlooked during their youth. As one informant stated:

"Quranic recitation improvement. After improving with the teacher, we will recite in groups. Because when we are here, we try to make it a habit, at least. We want to make reading the Quran a regular practice. If we're at home, we often get distracted." (Informant 4)

The instructors ensure that each individual receives attention and support, including those who may be slower in their learning progress. Fellow residents also support one another, fostering a deep sense of brotherhood and solidarity. This Quranic reading and memorization activity not only helps the residents draw closer to Allah (SWT) but also aids in preventing cognitive decline, as noted in a hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas:

{قَالَ: مَنْ قَرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ لَمْ يُرَدَّ إِلَى أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمِ شَيْئًا، وَذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ﴿ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ﴾ (٥) إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ﴿[التين: ٦] قَالَ: إِلَّا الَّذِينَ قَرَأُوا الْقُرْآنَ}

Meaning: He said: "Whoever reads the Quran will not be returned to a state of senility, such that they will forget what they once knew. This is the meaning of Allah's words: 'Then We return him to the lowest of the low, except for those who believe...' [At-Tin: 5-6]. Ibn Abbas interpreted this as referring to those who read the Quran." (Hadith Al-Hakim. *Kitab Tafsir Surah Al-Tin Bismillahi al-Rahmani al-Rahim*. 3952) This hadith is authentic in its chain of narration but is not found in Bukhari or Muslim collections.

Reading and memorizing the Quran are closely related to the intellectual development of the elderly, as it is not just an act of worship but also a mental exercise that helps maintain cognitive function. Activities such as repetitive reading, memorization, and focus enhance brain activity, strengthen memory, and improve concentration. Through this process, the brain is trained to recognize letters, recall verses, and focus on tajwid, thereby sharpening memory and improving cognitive functions. This is supported by the study of Tobing et al. (2022), which found that elderly individuals who frequently read the Quran showed better cognitive function, particularly when done for more than 15 minutes consistently.

In addition to cognitive benefits, reciting the Quran with tajwid and tartil (slow and measured pronunciation) also soothes the soul and helps regulate breathing. Deep, controlled breathing increases oxygen levels in the blood. Adequate oxygen supply is vital for the brain, as it is the most oxygen-consuming organ in the body. Sufficient oxygen helps maintain the health of brain cells, enhances cognitive processing, and improves both short- and long-term memory. Research shows that oxygen deficiency (hypoxia) can impair cognitive function by reducing the brain's efficiency in processing information (McMorris et al., 2017). Therefore, according to Anira (2020), Quranic recitation with tajwid not only calms the soul but also helps regulate breathing, which indirectly soothes the nervous system and balances the body. This regulated breathing also stimulates the production of endorphins, which improve immune function, protect brain cells, combat aging, and enhance focus and creativity.

This statement is further supported by Syed Ahmad et al. (2023), who explain that the requirement for reciting in tartil is linked to mental health, physiological well-being, and intellectual development. Therefore, it can be concluded that the continuous practice of reading the Quran can help preserve the intellectual abilities of the elderly. This practice not only strengthens their spiritual connection with Allah but also trains long-term memory, protects the brain from aging, and maintains mental health and physical well-being, especially when performed with discipline and consistency.

Physical Balance

The Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) strongly encourages Muslims to adopt an active lifestyle. While the Prophet (SAW) did not explicitly mention exercise, several hadiths support practices related to health and physical activities that benefit both the body and mind, particularly for the elderly. Walking is a physical activity that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) frequently engaged in. He often walked to the mosque, the market, and other places in his daily life. In a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) emphasized the benefits of walking to the mosque, an act that expiates sins and elevates one's status:

{أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: «أَلَا أُدْلِكُمْ عَلَى مَا يَمْحُو اللَّهُ بِهِ الْخَطَايَا، وَيَرْفَعُ بِهِ الدَّرَجَاتِ؟» قَالُوا بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ: «إِسْبَاحُ الْوُضُوءِ عَلَى الْمَكَارِهِ، وَكَثْرَةُ الْخُطَا إِلَى الْمَسَاجِدِ، وَانْتِظَارُ الصَّلَاةِ بَعْدَ الصَّلَاةِ، فَذَلِكَ الرِّبَاطُ»

Meaning: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "Shall I not guide you to that by which Allah erases sins and raises your ranks?" They replied, "Certainly, O Messenger of Allah." He said, "Perfecting ablution in times of difficulty, walking frequently to the mosques, and waiting for the next prayer after the prayer. That is the guarding of the frontier." (Hadith Muslim. *Bab Man Fadli Isbagh al-Wudu' 'Ala al-Makarihi*. 41).

According to al-Albani (2000) and al-Mudhiri (2012), walking to the mosque refers to physically moving one's feet or walking. Walking is a form of light exercise that has positive effects on both physical and mental health.

At the Ibnu Mas'ud Madrasah, physical activities and exercises such as walking around the shelter's grounds are carried out by the elderly residents in the morning, according to their physical capabilities.

"Every morning after the sunrise, before breakfast, we walk around the shelter's area. It's like walking around the Kaaba. We walk in a circle, sometimes alone, sometimes with others. We always keep moving, hanging the laundry at the back..." (Informant 2).

Walking exercise offers numerous physical health benefits for the elderly. This activity is easy to perform, requires no special equipment, and can be tailored to suit individual capabilities. According to Wang et al. (2024), 12-week brisk walking exercise significantly enhanced flexibility, lower limb muscle strength, and cardiorespiratory endurance among elderly women. Generally, brisk walking has been shown to improve cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength, and body composition. Moreover, evidence of restriction proves that high-intensity (80–85%) brisk walking is more effective than moderate-intensity (60–75%) brisk walking on the aerobic capacity of the elderly (Bai, 2022).

Besides, studies have shown that regular exercise helps reduce anxiety, depression, and stress, while also improving sleep quality and enhancing memory (Mahindru et al., 2023). A recent study by Choe et al. (2023) indicates that elderly individuals who engage in regular walking exhibit better episodic memory. The recommended exercise practice not only aligns us with the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who was active and healthy, but it is also supported by modern research as an effective method for improving physical and cognitive health while fostering emotional intelligence among the elderly in a positive manner.

In addition, fasting serves as an activity that offers significant physical health benefits for the elderly. It helps them manage chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol, thus maintaining overall health. At the Madrasah Ibnu Mas'ud, elderly individuals practice voluntary fasting according to their own abilities.

"I usually fast on Mondays and Thursdays, and if I'm healthy, I will continue. My body feels lighter when I fast. It makes it easier to perform religious duties. Fasting is beneficial for health. If we keep eating, we may develop high blood pressure and cholesterol, so fasting helps maintain health. I don't eat much." (Informant 3).

In Islam, fasting is not merely refraining from food and drink but is also a means of maintaining bodily health. Islam teaches that fasting is a way to protect the body from illness by giving the digestive system a rest and controlling one's appetite. Numerous hadiths emphasize the

benefits of fasting, such as the one narrated by Abu Hurairah, where the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ... وَصُومُوا تَصِحُّوا..

Meaning: "The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: ...Fast, and you will be healthy...." (Hadith al-Tabrani. *Min baqiyyati man awwalu ismihi mīm, man ismuhu Mūsā*. 8312).

Although the chain of narration for this hadith is not authentic to be attributed directly to the Prophet (SAW), its meaning has been scientifically proven. Research in the fields of medicine and science indicates that fasting offers various health benefits.

Fasting helps in managing non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. It aids in regulating blood sugar levels and blood pressure, which is crucial for preventing health complications. Fasting also boosts the body's metabolism, assisting in fat burning and the removal of toxins, thereby contributing to the overall health of the elderly. According to a study by Al-Jafar (2021), fasting can effectively reduce blood pressure by 3.42 to 7.29 mmHg from the baseline, whether accompanied by weight loss or not. This is important for the elderly to prevent health complications such as heart disease or stroke. In terms of cholesterol readings, a comparison of before and after fasting during Ramadan shows a decrease in total cholesterol and triglycerides, while good cholesterol levels increase. All these changes clearly contribute to better control of diabetes, hypertension, and cholesterol (Akhtar P et al. 2020). Overall, fasting not only provides spiritual tranquility but also offers physical health benefits, as taught in Islam and proven by modern science.

Conclusion

The practice of Sunnah Nabawiyah significantly contributes to improving the quality of life for the elderly by fostering spiritual, mental, and physical well-being. Activities such as congregational prayers and daily remembrance (dhikr) create a sense of inner peace and a supportive social environment, strengthening bonds of care and camaraderie among residents. These practices enhance emotional well-being while offering psychological and physiological benefits, including reduced stress and improved immunity. Moreover, Quranic recitation and memorization not only deepen spiritual connection but also serve as cognitive exercises, preserving memory and mental clarity. Similarly, physical activities like walking, inspired by the Prophet's active lifestyle, improve cardiovascular health, muscular strength, and emotional balance. The inclusion of fasting as a recommended practice further supports health by managing chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, aligning with both Islamic teachings and scientific findings. These practices reflect an integrated approach to aging, combining spiritual fulfillment, mental clarity, and physical vitality. By adhering to the Sunnah Nabawiyah, the elderly can maintain a balanced and meaningful life, addressing the challenges of aging while fostering overall well-being. The consistent practice of Sunnah Nabawiyah by the elderly residents at Madrasah Ibnu Mas'ud has shown a positive impact on their quality of life. This study suggests further research on technological approaches to promoting the practice of Sunnah Nabawiyah to enhance the adoption of these practices among the elderly in a more holistic manner.

By offering a sophisticated understanding of how Sunnah Nabawiyah activities improve the elderly's overall well-being, this study makes a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge already in existence. By showing how Sunnah practices are relevant and

compatible with modern health and wellness paradigms, it theoretically closes the gap between Islamic spiritual traditions and contemporary gerontological studies. In terms of context, the study provides a framework with cultural and theological roots that may be used when designing programs for the elderly, especially in Islamic contexts like madrasahs, community centers, and elderly care facilities. By integrating spiritual, cognitive, and physical aspects of well-being, this research establishes a comprehensive approach to aging that addresses the unique challenges faced by elderly Muslims, thus serving as a model for future studies and practical applications globally.

Acknowledgement

This research has been funded by the Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) in collaboration with Dar al-Qari under the USIM-Industry grant scheme [PPPI/USIM-INDUSTRI/FPQS/USIM/13624]. Appreciation is also extended to the Centre for Quranic and Sunnah Studies, Faculty of Islamic Studies, National University of Malaysia (UKM) for the trust and opportunity provided through the appointment as a postdoctoral researcher (KQ02023).

Corresponding Author

Maisarah Saidin, Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, Islamic Science University of Malaysia, Bandar Baru Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, maisarah@usim.edu.my. Postdoctoral Researcher, Faculty of Islamic Studies, National University of Malaysia.

References

Al-Quran

- Akhtar, P., Kazmi, A., Sharma, T. & Sharma, A. (2020). Effects of Ramadan Fasting on Serum Lipid Profile. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 9:2337-2341. DOI: 10.4103/jfmpc.jfmpc_550_19
- Al-Jafar, R., Themeli, M. Z., Zaman, S., Akbar, S., Lhoste, V., Khamliche, A., Elliott, P., Tsilidis, K. K. & Dehghan, A. (2021). Effect of Religious Fasting in Ramadan on Blood Pressure: Results From LORANS (London Ramadan Study) and a Meta-Analysis. *Journal of the American Heart Association*, 10:e021560. DOI: 10.1161/JAHA.120.021560
- Ashaari, M. F., Norhisham, N. A. S., Rasit, R. M., Khafidz, H. A. (2022). Sumber Sokongan Sosial untuk Warga Emas. *Jurnal Pengajian Islam*, 15 (1), 208-223.
- Bai, X., Soh, K. G., Omar Dev, R. D., Talib, O., Xiao, W. & Cai, H. (2022). Effect of Brisk Walking on Health-Related Physical Fitness Balance and Life Satisfaction Among the Elderly: A Systematic Review. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 9:829367. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2021.829367
- Choe, Y. M., Suh, G. H., Lee, B. C., Choi, I. G., Kim, H. S, Kim, J. W., Hwang, J., Yi, D. & Kim, J. W. (2023). High-Intensity Walking in Midlife Is Associated with Improved Memory in Physically Capable Older Adults. *Alzheimer's Research & Therapy*, 15 (143), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13195-023-01293-8>.
- Hakim, N. (2018). Kecerdasan Intelektual, Emosional, Dan Spiritual Dalam Perspektif Bidayatul Hidayah. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, 1 (2), 218-233.
- Ishak, N. A. S. & Alavi, K. (2024). Meneroka Kesunyian Dan Keperluan Sokongan Emosi Ke Arah Kesejahteraan Hidup Warga Emas. *Jurnal Wacana Sarjana*, 8 (1), 1-11.
- Lai, W. H., Hon, Y. k., Pang, G. M. H., Chong, E. M. G., Nordin, N., Tiong, L. L., Tan, S. H., Abu Sopian, R., Lee, Y. F., Rosli, N. (2022). Dementia of The Ageing Population in Malaysia: A

- Scoping Review of Published Research. *Aging and Health Research*, 2 (2), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ahr.2022.100077>
- Mahindru, A., Patil, P. & Agrawal, V. (2023) Role of Physical Activity on Mental Health and Well-Being: A Review. *Cureus*, 7;15(1): e33475. doi: 10.7759/cureus.33475.
- McMorris, T., Hale, B. J., Barwood, M., Costello, J. T., & Corbett, J. (2017). Effect of acute hypoxia on cognition: A systematic review and meta-regression analysis. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 74, 225-232.
- Musa, N., Yaakub @ Ariffin, A., Ihwani, S. S, Muhtar, A., Mustafa, Z. & Rashid, M. H. (2018). Psikoterapi Islam Menurut Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Sunnah Dalam Mengurus Tekanan Pesakit Kanser Payudara. *e-BANGI: Jurnal Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan*, 13 (2), 131-140.
- Nazali, N. H. & Alavi, K. (2021). Meneroka Kesejahteraan Psikologi dan Kualiti Pusat Jagaan Warga Emas di Selangor. *Jurnal Psikologi Malaysia*, 35 (1), 87-97.
- Sulaiman, H., Ismail, Z. & Yusof, R. (2013). Kecerdasan Emosi Menurut Al-Quran dan Al-Sunnah: Aplikasinya Dalam Membentuk Akhlak Remaja. *The Online Journal of Islamic Education*, June, 1(2), 51-57.
- Syafi'i, M. H. & Mulya, A. (2023). Literature Study on The Impact of Congregational Morning Prayer on Academic Anxiety: A View on Psychospiritual and Psychoneuroimmunology in Students. *Journal of Islamic Communication and Counseling*, 3 (1), 73-90.
- Syed Ahmad, S. N., Nurul Hanim, & Sharifah Fazirah. (2023). Kesan Bacaan Tartil (Tajwid Dan Tadabur) Terhadap Fisiologi dan Aktiviti Neurosains Kognitif Menggunakan Electroencephalography dan NeuroFeedback Training: Suatu Sorotan. *Jurnal Pengajian Islam*, 16 (2), 19-32. <https://doi.org/10.53840/jpi.v16i2.176>
- Tobing, Y. V. L, Boy, E, Mukhtasor, A. S. & Furqoni, A. (2022). The Effect of Reading the Qur'an on the Cognitive Function of the Elderly. *MAGNA MEDIKA Berk Ilm Kedokteran dan Kesehatan*, 9(2), 183– 189.
- Wang, Y., Lu, Y., Fang, Z., Yan, H., Li, J., Ye, Z., Yu, Y. & Shan, W. (2024). Brisk Walking Improves Motor Function and Lower Limb Muscle Strength in Chinese Women Aged 80 Years and Older. *Scientific Reports*, 14: 7933. <https://doi.org/10.1038 /s41598-024- 55925-6>
- Wijayanti, I., Sandi, D. H., Pusparini, A, Haslinda, N., Rahma, H. S. & Suyono, H. (2024). Menjaga Ingatan Lansia: Studi Kasus Penurunan Fungsi Kognitif pada Lansia di Sompok Sriharjo Bantul untuk Pengembangan Rancangan Intervensi Berbasis Komunitas. *Seminar Nasional Psikologi*, 233-245.
- Zainudin, N. A. M, Baharudin, H., Hamzah, M. I. & Mahat, M. A. (2020). Pemilihan Sistem Pengajian Pondok dalam Kalangan Warga Emas dan Hubungannya dengan Teori Keperluan Motivasi. *International Conference on Islamic Education ICIEd 2020*. Fakulti Pendidikan, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. 59
- Zakaria, Z. & Kusrin, Z. M. (2023). Kepentingan Amalan Beragama Bagi Warga Emas dan Perlaksanaannya di Pusat Jagaan Terpilih di Malaysia. *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Law*, 8(2), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.26475/jcil.2023.8.2.01>
- Abu al-Husain, M. H. (2010). *Sahih Muslim*. Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabiyy
- Abu Hayyan, M. Y. (1999). *Tafsir Al-Bahr Al-Muhit*. Beirut: Dar Al-Fikri.
- Ahmad Fakhurrrazi, M. Z., Wan Razali, W. Q. A & Mahfuzah, M. Z. (2022). Pengaruh Zikir Terhadap Kesehatan Mental dan Tekanak Psikologi Dalam Mendepani Cabaran Revolusi Industri 4.0. *Penyelidikan Islam: Integrasi Ilmu Naqli dan Aqli Siri 4*.
- Al-Aini, M. A. (2010). *Umdah al-Qari fi Syarh Sahih al-Bukhari*. Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi.

- Al-Albani, M. N. D. (2000). *Sahih al-Targhib Wa al-Tarhib*. Riyadh: Maktabah al-Maarif li al-Nashar Wa al-Tawzi'.
- Al-Alusi, S. D. M. A. (2010). *Ruh Al-Ma`ani Fi Tafsir Al-Quran Al-`Adhim Wa Al-Sab`u Al-Masani*. Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah.
- Al-Bukhari, M. I. (2012). *Sahih Al-Bukhariyy*. Dar Tuq al-Najat.
- Al-Hakim, M. A. (1990). *Al-Mustadrak Ala Al-Sahihain*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah.
- Al-Mudhiri, H. M. (2012). *Al-Mafatih fi Syarhi al-Masobih*. Kuwait: Dar Al-Nawadir.
- Al-Munawi, A. T. A. (2010). *Faidhul Qodir Syarah Al-Jami' Ash-Shoghir*. Mesir: Al-Maktabah Al-Tijariyah Al-Kubra.
- Al-Tabrani, S. A. (2010). *Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*. Al-Kaherah: Dar al-Haramain.
- Al-Tirmidhi, M. I. (1998). *Sunan Al-Tirmidhi*. Beirut: Dar Al-Gharbi al-Islami.
- Ibnu Al-Mulaqqin, U. A. 2008. *Al-Taudhih Li Syarhi al-Jami' al-Sahih*. Damsyik: Dar Al-Nawadir.
- Ibnu Bathol, A. K. (2003). *Syarah Sahih al-Bukhari Li Ibn Bathol*. Riyadh: Maktabah Al-Rashd.
- Ibnu Kathir, I. U. (1998). *Tafsir al-Quran al-'Azim*. Beirut: Dar Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.
- Ibnu Qayyim, S. D. (1971). *Tuhfah al-Maudud bi Ahkam al-Mawlud*. Dar Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah. p. 162.
- Rofiah, K. (2017). *Studi Ilmu Hadits*. Yogyakarta: IAIN PO Press.
- Yuslem, N. (2001). *Ulumul Hadis*. PT Mutiara Sumber Widya, hlm. 68-75.
- Azizan, N. A. (2021, December 21). *Warga Emas Semakin Tertekan dan Sepi*. *Dewan Budaya*. Retrieved from <https://dewanbudaya.jendeladbp.my/2021/12/21/899/>
- Pustaka, D. B. (2010, September 28). *Kamus Dewan, Edisi Keempat*, Kuala Lumpur: DBP. Retrieved from <https://prpm.dbp.gov.my/>.
- JKM. (2017, Mac 18). *Dasar Warga Emas Negara*. Retrieved from <https://www.jkm.gov.my/>.
- KPWKM. (2024, September 28). *Dasar Kesihatan Warga Emas Negara*. Retrieved from <https://www.kpwkm.gov.my/kpwkm/>.
- World Health Organization. (2023, Mac 15). *Dementia*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/dementia>.
- Anira, P. (2020). *Membaca Dan Mendengarkan Al-Quran Sebagai Terapi (Studi Pemikiran Mustamir Pedak dalam Qura'anic Super Healing)*. *Tesis Master*: Fakhultas Ushuluddin dan Humaniora Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang.
- Resident of Madrasah Ibnu Mas'ud, Mahang, K. S., Sembilan, N. N. (12 December 2024).