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NATURE-BASED SUFI GUIDANCE AS A STRENGTHENER OF COLLEGE
STUDENT RESILIENCE

Devi Ratnasari¹, Evi Winingsih², Titin Indah Pratiwi³, Denok Setiawati⁴, Bambang Dibyo Wiyono⁵, Edison⁶, Widya Anggraeni Setiarini⁷

¹State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia,
deviratnasari@unesa.ac.id

²State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia,
ewiningsih@unesa.ac.id

³State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia,
titinindahpratiwi@unesa.ac.id

⁴State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia,
denoksetiawati@unesa.ac.id

⁵State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia,
bambangwiyono@unesa.ac.id

⁶ Indonesian University of Science and Technology, Purwodadi Indah Street, West Sidomulyo, Pekanbaru, Indonesia, dr.edison@usti.ac.id

⁷State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia,
widya.23259@mhs.unesa.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop a Sufi-based model of nature contemplation to improve students' psychological resilience. This model is based on the philosophy of ethical Sufism, philosophical Sufism, and religious-rational Islamic educational philosophy, as well as Al-Ghazali's theory of tazkiyatun nafs and Ibn Arabi's theory of wahdatul wujud. The research used the Research and Development (R&D) method with five main stages: preliminary study, model formulation, rational validation, implementation, and evaluation. Data were collected using psychological resilience instruments, then analyzed using qualitative (data reduction, theme coding, meaning interpretation) and quantitative approaches using independent t-tests. The results showed a significant increase in students' psychological resilience ($p < 0.05$) after participating in Sufi-based nature contemplation counseling. The resulting model proved to be feasible and effective as an alternative counseling service in higher education to help students cope with academic pressure and build religious character. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of integrating Sufi values into guidance and counseling services to strengthen students' mental resilience in the modern era.

Keywords: model, sufistic guidance in contemplating nature, psychological resilience

INTRODUCTION

Humans are created with spiritual and intellectual potential that can be developed to know and draw closer to God. Al-Ghazali emphasizes that humans are special beings who have the ability to know Allah through the heart (Haq & Khan, 2018). Ibn Arabi views humans as perfect beings because they are able to manifest the names of God in life (Rasic, 2021). In this context, students as the younger generation play an important role as agents of change who are expected to have resilience, idealism, and perseverance in facing life's challenges (Gada, 2024). However, reality shows that not all students are able to realize this potential optimally. In early adulthood, many experience psychological pressure, identity crises, and low emotional management skills, known as the quarter-life crisis (Robinson, 2019). The strawberry generation phenomenon describes a group of young people who are creative but fragile in the face of life's pressures (Murphy, 2018). Low psychological resilience among students is an important issue because it correlates with increased stress, anxiety, and declining mental health (Chow, 2019).

The phenomenon of low psychological flexibility among students was also identified in the survey results of 401 students at Surabaya State University, which showed that 14.04% or 52 students had a high level of psychological flexibility with a score of >169. A total of 67.49% or 274 students were in the moderate category with a score of 141–169, and 18.47% or 75 students were in the low category with a score of <141. These data illustrate that the majority of students (moderate category) still have a level of psychological resilience that needs to be improved, especially in dealing with academic pressure and personal problems. Additional data from the Unesa Student Mental Condition Check (SMCC) reinforces these findings that students' stress and mental fatigue levels tend to increase, especially during periods of transition and high academic pressure. Of the 1,257 respondents who completed the questionnaire, most experienced problems in their personal lives. These problems include: low motivation to study (29.9%), depression (13.8%), family pressure (16.5%), anxiety (42.9%), loneliness (32.1%), and homesickness (20%). In fact, some students showed maladaptive responses to the pressure they experienced, such as self-harm, decline in academic performance, and even suicidal thoughts (SMCC Data, 2024).

This fact shows that there's an urgent need for a coaching model that integrates spiritual, emotional, and rational aspects to strengthen students' psychological resilience in college. The conditions experienced by these students are related to the dynamics of spiritual development in students. Research results on first-year students in the United States show that closeness to God greatly influences spiritual struggles and well-being (happiness, life satisfaction, and meaning of life) in students. Closeness to God makes students feel safer even though the campus environment does not respond as expected (Gilbertson, 2022). Research results on students in Yogyakarta also reveal that spiritual intelligence can influence the level of subjective happiness in students (Hurlena, 2018).

Philosophically, humans are viewed as spiritual beings who have divine potential to develop towards moral and spiritual perfection (Al-Ghazali, 2010; Ibn Arabi, 2004). In the perspective of Islamic education, the process of self-development must involve the dimension of tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul) so that individuals are able to manage their nafsani impulses and achieve inner balance (Badri, 2021). Sufi values such as patience, sincerity, gratitude, and trust in God play an important role in building psychological resilience. Therefore, a Sufi approach to guidance and counseling is relevant in helping

students understand the meaning of suffering, cultivate self-awareness, and strengthen their spiritual relationship with God.

The Sufi guidance approach discussed in this study is based on three main pillars: ethical Sufism, philosophical Sufism, and religious-rational Islamic educational philosophy. The integration of these three pillars gives rise to the Sufi guidance model of *tadabbur alam*, which is a guidance service that utilizes reflective activities in the outdoors as a medium for spiritual contemplation and psychological resilience strengthening. Through the process of *tadabbur* on the verses of *kauniyah*, students are invited to understand the greatness of God, realize their limitations, and find a broader meaning of life. This approach is expected to be a more contextual alternative to guidance, in line with the needs of students in the modern era who tend to experience a spiritual void.

The purpose of this study is to develop and test the effectiveness of the Sufi-based *tadabbur alam* guidance model in improving students' psychological resilience. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) describe the profile of students' psychological resilience, (2) develop a Sufi-based guidance model based on *tadabbur alam*, (3) test the feasibility and effectiveness of this model in the context of guidance services in higher education. Through this model, it is hoped that a new approach to Islamic guidance and counseling will emerge, one that is not only oriented towards problem solving, but also towards the formation of students' religious character and spiritual resilience.

Previous studies have shown that integrating Sufi values into counseling is effective in improving individuals' psychological well-being and spirituality (Nisma, 2020). However, most of these studies still focus on conceptual aspects and have not developed a systematic applied model in the context of higher education. There has been little research utilizing nature contemplation activities as a medium for Sufi reflection to develop students' psychological resilience. This is where the novelty (state of the art) of this research lies, namely the integration of Sufi values with contemplative experiences of nature, packaged into a practical guidance model for counselors, lecturers, and higher education institutions.

Thus, this study makes an important contribution to the development of Islamic guidance and counseling, particularly in presenting a *sufistic* approach that is adaptive to the challenges of the times. The *sufistic* model of *tadabbur alam* guidance is not only a methodological innovation, but also offers a new paradigm that psychological resilience can be built through spiritual awareness and human closeness to nature as a manifestation of Divine greatness.

METHOD

This study uses a Research and Development (R&D) approach with the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) development model to produce a valid, practical, and effective model of Sufi guidance in contemplating nature to improve students' psychological flexibility. The ADDIE model was chosen because it is systematic in developing educational products and guidance, from needs analysis to final evaluation (Branch, 2009). This approach combines qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative approach was used to explore the needs and dynamics of the counselees during the service, while the quantitative approach was used to test the effectiveness of the model through a one-group pretest-posttest design and a non-equivalent control group design (Creswell, 2018).

The object of this study is a Sufi-based tadabbur alam guidance model developed to improve students' psychological flexibility. The scope of the study covers all stages of model development, starting from (1) Preliminary study, conducted through interviews, observations, and distribution of psychological flexibility instruments to 401 students at Surabaya State University to map problems and service needs; (2) Model design, which involved compiling the components of Sufi tadabbur alam guidance, including rationale, objectives, targets, methods, structure, and success indicators based on Tyler's principles of learning experience development, which emphasize objectives, learning experiences, and evaluation (Tyler, 1949); (3) Development, conducted through expert validation using the Delphi method by six experts in the fields of guidance and counseling as well as Sufism, followed by limited testing on nine students and model revisions based on input; (4) Implementation, namely empirical testing with a non-equivalent control group design, involving 10 students in the experimental group and 10 students in the control group who were matched in terms of characteristics (Gall et.al, 2003); (5) Evaluation, conducted by analyzing the effectiveness of the model and conducting follow-up interviews to determine the dynamics of changes in students' psychological resilience, which were then used as a basis for refining the model. There were 621 research participants, consisting of experts and students from several universities. Participants were selected using purposive sampling in accordance with the research stages (Patton, 2015). Six experts were involved in validating the model using the Delphi method, while fourth-semester students were the main subjects in the survey, readability test, and empirical test. The experimental group consisted of 10 BK students from Surabaya State University who received treatment, while the control group consisted of 10 FMIPA Unesa students without treatment (Gall & Guirguis-Younger, 2013).

The main research instrument was a psychological resilience scale for students, in the form of a rating scale with a score range of 0–2, developed from the Connor Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) (Connor, 2003). This scale consisted of 60 items representing aspects of reason, heart, and action. The content validity of the instrument was tested through expert judgment, while reliability was tested through a feasibility test (Azwar, 2019). In addition, semi-structured interview guidelines were used to explore qualitative data regarding participants' experiences and perceptions while participating in the service (Merriam, 2020). The research was conducted at Surabaya State University (Unesa), PGRI Adi Buana University Surabaya (Unipa), and Indraprasta PGRI University Jakarta (Unindra). The research activities were carried out in stages, starting from preliminary studies, model design, expert validation, trials, to implementation and evaluation (Miles, 2014).

Data were collected using several techniques, namely: interviews to obtain qualitative data on participants' needs and experiences (Moleong, 2017); observation to record the dynamics of the implementation of nature contemplation services; distribution of psychological resilience scales to collect quantitative data before and after treatment; expert validation using a model assessment sheet using the Delphi method. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis through a process of reduction, categorization, and interpretation of meaning (Braun, 2006). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including independent t-tests, effect size analysis, and comparison of pretest-posttest scores between the experimental and control groups (Field, 2013). Data triangulation was

conducted to enhance the validity of the findings by combining the results of interviews, observations, and quantitative measurements (Denzin, 2012).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Psychological Resilience among Students at Surabaya State University

Data collection on the psychological resilience of students was conducted by distributing a psychological resilience scale to fourth-semester students at Surabaya State University in the 2024/2025 academic year from various faculties. Based on the data collected from 401 respondents, a descriptive analysis was conducted to identify the distribution of psychological resilience scores among respondents. This analysis included grouping based on score categories (high, medium, low) and distribution based on relevant demographic variables (cultural background, place of residence, source of education funding, and participation in student organizations), considering that demographic variables are one of the factors that influence psychological resilience (Slot, 2025). This profile provides a starting point for understanding the factors that influence students' psychological resilience and has implications for the formulation of a sufistic tadabbur alam guidance model.

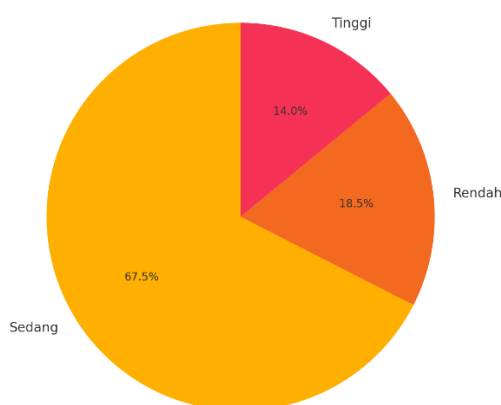


Figure 1. Distribution of Psychological Flexibility Categories

The diagram shows that 14.04% or 52 students have a high level of psychological flexibility with a score of >169 . Then, 67.49% or 274 students are in the moderate category of psychological flexibility with a score of 141-169. In the low category, 18.47% or 75 students scored <141 . The majority of students were in the moderate category of psychological flexibility. When viewed by gender, women had a higher average psychological flexibility score of 156.49 compared to men at 150.45. This shows that in the context of this data, female respondents tend to have stronger psychological flexibility than men. The majority of respondents from various ethnic groups were in the moderate category, indicating a fairly good but not yet optimal level of psychological flexibility. Ethnic groups included in the moderate category were Javanese (68.50%), Madurese (72.73%), Batak (66.67%), Sundanese (50.00%), and Betawi (100%). The Javanese ethnic group, as the largest group (377 respondents), is dominated by the moderate category, indicating stability but still needing improvement in the high category. The Batak ethnic group had the highest proportion in the high category (33.33%), reflecting strong psychological resilience, while the Madurese ethnic group had no respondents in the high category, indicating the need for special attention to the

development of resilience in this group. These differences in distribution between ethnic groups indicate the possible influence of cultural factors on individuals' levels of psychological resilience.

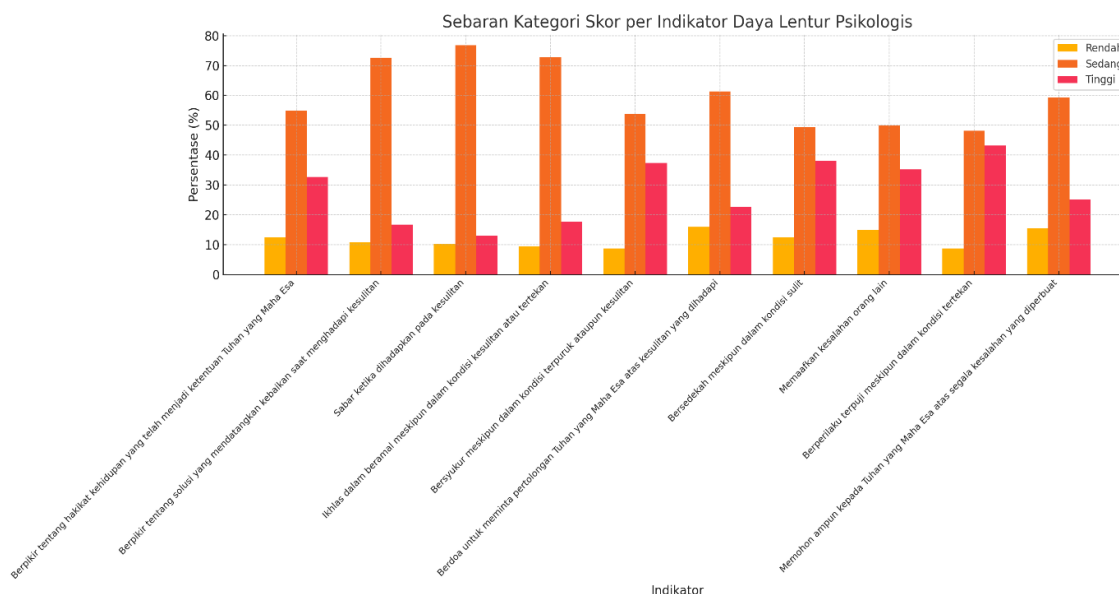


Figure 2. Scatter Diagram of Score Categories per Indicator in Each Aspect of Psychological Flexibility

Furthermore, the results of the study show that on the indicator “thinking about the nature of life that has been determined by God Almighty” (intellectual aspect), 32.67% of respondents were in the high category, 54.86% in the medium category, and 12.47% in the low category. The majority of respondents were in the medium category, indicating sufficient cognitive ability to understand that life runs according to God's destiny after efforts have been made. On the indicator “thinking about solutions that bring goodness when facing difficulties,” 16.71% of respondents were in the high category, 72.57% in the medium category, and 10.72% in the low category. The dominance of the medium category indicates sufficient cognitive ability to find positive solutions to life's difficulties. The indicator “patience when faced with difficulties” (heart aspect) was 12.97% high, 76.81% medium, and 10.22% low, indicating that patience is sufficient but not yet optimal. For the indicator “sincerity in doing good deeds despite difficulties,” 17.71% of respondents were in the high category, 72.82% in the medium category, and 9.48% in the low category. These results indicate a sufficient level of sincerity in doing good deeds to get closer to God.

The indicator “being grateful even in difficult circumstances” scored 37.41% high, 53.87% moderate, and 8.73% low, indicating positive affection in acknowledging God's blessings and remaining submissive to Him. In terms of charity, the indicator “praying for God's help” showed 22.69% high, 61.35% moderate, and 15.96% low, reflecting the spiritual adequacy of students in relying on prayer as inner strength. The indicator “giving alms even in difficult circumstances” shows 38.15% high, 49.38% moderate, and 12.47% low. Social actions such as almsgiving indicate strong applied spirituality, although it is not yet evenly distributed. On the indicator of “forgiving others' mistakes,” 35.16% of respondents were in the high category, 49.88% were in the medium category, and 14.96% were in the low category, indicating students' ability to manage their emotions and choose peaceful behavior. The indicator “behaving

commendably even under pressure” received the highest score with 43.14% in the high category, 48.13% in the moderate category, and 8.73% in the low category, indicating that students' positive character remains intact under pressure. Meanwhile, the indicator “asking God for forgiveness for mistakes made” recorded 25.19% in the high category, 59.35% in the medium category, and 15.46% in the low category, indicating fairly good introspective activity but still needing improvement.

Overall, the majority of respondents were in the moderate category in almost all indicators, showing that students' spiritual, cognitive, and affective abilities were quite good but not yet optimal. The indicators of behaving commendably under pressure and being grateful in difficult situations stood out as key strengths, while patience and positive thinking still needed further strengthening.

Feasibility of the Sufistic Guidance Model of Tadabbur Alam

A feasibility analysis of the Sufi-based nature contemplation guidance model was conducted to ensure the practical applicability of the model, not just its theoretical effectiveness. Using Bowen's framework, which includes the dimensions of acceptance, needs, implementation, and practicality (Bowen et al., 2009), as well as additional aspects relevant to the research context, the assessment was carried out through observation, implementation notes, participant attendance, feedback, expert validation, and pretest–posttest results. In summary, the feasibility of the model was analyzed through eight main aspects: implementation, participation, acceptance, impact, resource support, validator assessment, and evaluation of the process and service outcomes. The implementation consisted of nine sessions with stages of Sufi guidance on contemplating nature that had undergone validity testing by experts. The development of the steps of Sufi guidance in tadabbur alam is based on the theories of Tazkiyatun Nafs, Kimiyyas Sa'adah, and Wahdatul Wujud, which are rooted in the philosophies of Ethical Sufism, Philosophical Sufism, and Religious-Rationalism. According to Al-Ghazali, Ethical Sufism emphasizes the purification of the soul through noble character as an ethical filter so that tadabbur alam becomes a means of self-transformation, not just contemplation (Harahap & Ependi, 2023). Philosophical Sufism according to Ibn Arabi views nature as *tajalli* or the manifestation of *Asmaul Husna*, a reflection of Divine reality (Usman, 2022; Zuhri, 2023).

No	Tanggal	Sesi Ke-	Topik/Metode	Waktu Mulai–Selesai	Jumlah Peserta Hadir	Fasilitator
1	14 April 2025	1	Asesmen/ Mengisi instrumen daya lentur psikologis	13.00-14.00	10	Devi Ratnasari
2	23 April 2025	2	Ma'rifatun nafs (memahami diri secara mendalam)/ Muhasabah dan montase alam	13.00-14.00	10	Devi Ratnasari
3	30 April 2025	3	Takhalli (menghilangkan sifat tercela)/ Riyadhah	14.30-15.30	10	Devi Ratnasari
4	9 Mei 2025	4	Tahalli (menghiasi diri dengan sifat terpuji)/ Rihlah akhlak	16.30-17.30	10	Devi Ratnasari
5	17 Mei 2025	5	Tajalli (menghadirkan keilahian)/ Mengingat kebesaran Tuhan	11.00-12.30	10	Devi Ratnasari

6	20 Mei 2025	6	Mujahadah (menghadirkan kesungguhan)/ Rihlah tafakur dan tahawur	12.00-13.00	10	Devi Ratnasari
7	22 Mei 2025	7	Pencarian Ibrah (mengambil hikmah)/ Membaca kitab suci	15.30-16.30	10	Devi Ratnasari
8	23 Mei 2025	8	Tafakur (pemikiran mendalam untuk membuat perencanaan hidup)/ Tadbir	12.30-13.30	10	Devi Ratnasari
9	26 Mei 2025	9	Asesmen/ Mengisi instrument daya lentur psikologis	09.00-10.00	10	Devi Ratnasari

Table 1 Application Log

In its implementation, the attendance rate reached 100%, with active participants in sessions 2 and 6, but in other sessions there were counselors who were less active in expressing their opinions. Additionally, the implementation of this Sufi-inspired nature contemplation guidance service proceeded smoothly for the most part, but there were several challenges, such as schedule changes for the service sessions due to participants' conflicting schedules, occupied or under renovation rooms, and changes in the nature route due to fraudulent individuals using the vehicles.

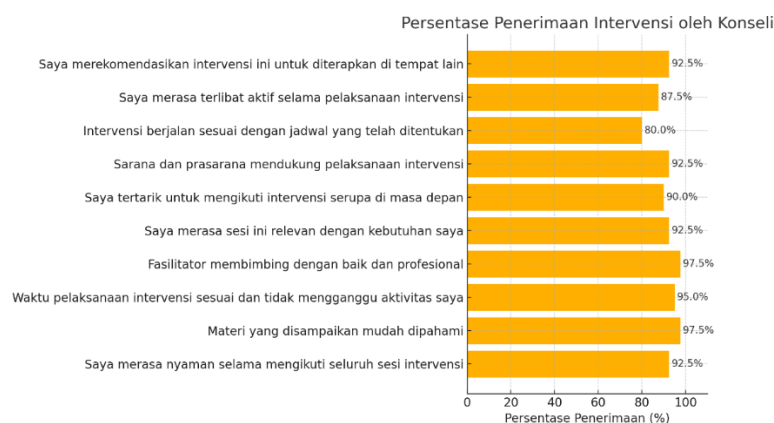


Figure 3. The Acceptance of Care Chart

Then, for service acceptance, it showed a high percentage of over 80%, which indicates a positive response to the services provided. This is reinforced by the impact of the services experienced by the participants, where the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental group showed that almost all participants experienced an increase in scores from the pre-test to the post-test, which indicates a positive effect of the treatment. Meanwhile, in the control group, there were more varied changes in scores, with some increasing and some decreasing, but the increase was generally not as significant as in the experimental group.

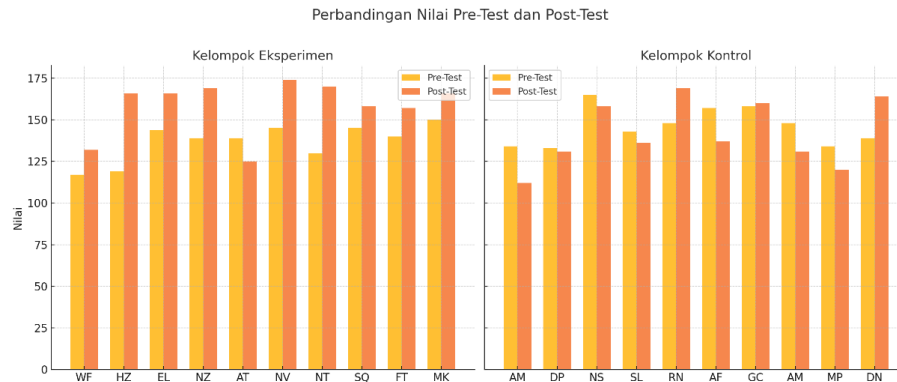


Figure 4. Comparison chart of pre-test and post-test results in the experimental group and control group

In addition, the results of the independent t-test on the experimental group and the control group showed that the significance value (2-tailed) was $0.034 / 0.036 < 0.05$, indicating a significant difference between the experimental group (class A) and the control group (class B). The average score of the experimental group (24.30) was significantly higher than that of the control group (13.70). The experimental group had a significantly higher score increase than the control group.

Group Statistics

Kelas	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Selishih Score Kelas A	10	24.30	11,851	3,748
Kelas B	10	13.70	8,590	2,716

Independent Samples Test

t-test for Equality of Means

		t	df	Significance One-Sided p	Significance Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Selishih Score	Equal variances assumed	2,290	18	,017	,034	10,600	4,629	,876	20,324
	Equal variances not assumed	2,290	16,411	,018	,036	10,600	4,629	,808	20,392

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

	Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval		
			Lower	Upper	
Selishih Score	Cohen's d	10,350	1,024	,074	1,949
	Hedges' correction	10,808	,981	,071	1,867
	Glass's delta	8,590	1,234	,169	2,251

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Figure 5. Results of the independent t-test on the experimental group and control group

To obtain more complete data regarding the impact of the service, an analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores was also conducted using the Effect Size (Cohen's d) approach. The results of the Cohen effect size analysis are shown in the following graph.

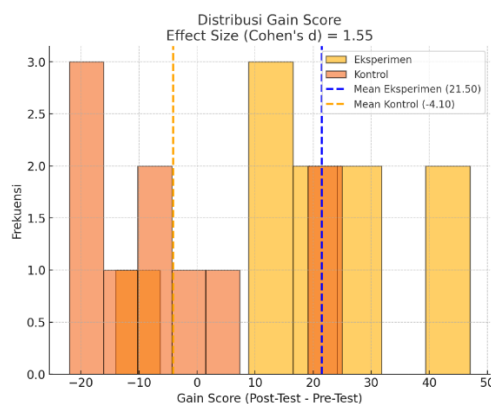


Figure 6. Graph of Cohen's effect size analysis results

The graph shows the distribution of gain scores for both groups, with the Experimental group having a much higher average score increase, with a distribution shifted to the right. In the Control group, the distribution is closer to zero, with some even negative. It is the average distance between the two groups that makes Cohen's $d = 1.55$ very large, indicating a very strong treatment effect.

Based on the results of this study, it appears that the majority of students at Surabaya State University have a moderate level of psychological flexibility, reflecting fairly good but not yet optimal spiritual, cognitive, and affective abilities. The implementation of the Sufi-based tadabbur alam guidance model has been proven to be feasible and effective empirically, as shown by a significant increase between the pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group compared to the control group ($p < 0.05$) with a Cohen's d effect size of 1.55, indicating a strong effect. The high attendance and participation rates of participants, as well as the acceptance rate of the service above 80%, indicate a positive response to the program. Overall, this model is not only practically feasible but also capable of strengthening students' psychological resilience through the integration of Sufi values and reflective experiences of nature.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Sufi-based tadabbur alam guidance model is feasible and effective as a strategy to enhance students' psychological resilience. The majority of students exhibit moderate psychological resilience, characterized by commendable behavior under pressure and an attitude of gratitude in the face of difficulties. This model, which is based on the theories of Tazkiyatun Nafs, Kimiyaus Sa'adah, and Wahdatul Wujud, has been validated by experts and shows a high level of acceptance through smooth implementation, active participation, and significant improvements in pre-test and post-test results. Theoretically, this model enriches the study of spirituality-based guidance and counseling; practically, it can be applied by college counselors to strengthen students' mental resilience; and in terms of policy, it provides important input for the development of comprehensive, contextual, and spiritually-oriented counseling services.

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