



BRIDGING THE GAP OF WRITING FOR HEALING AND ISLAMIC SPIRITUALITY

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Abstract:

This study aimed to bridge the gap between writing for healing and Islamic spirituality by exploring the experiences of four Muslim students in MTs Terpadu Ar-Roihan, Lawang Malang. The study utilized a case study approach to analyse the expressive writing content of the participants, focusing on the integration of Quranic values and teachings. The participants, aged 13 to 15, were selected based on their emotional difficulties and behavioural problems with five-session treatment plan for participants in the writing intervention (the principles and guidance found in the Quranic scriptures). The findings revealed that the participants demonstrated a deep connection to Allah and a strong awareness of the creation and destiny of life. Their writings reflected their hopes, prayers, and apologies, seeking guidance and forgiveness to others. The expressive writing also exposed their emotional expressions, with some participants expressing sadness, self-blame, frustration, and anger. The study concludes that there is a meaningful connection between writing for healing and Islamic spirituality.

Keywords: *expressive writing, Islamic spirituality, mental health, writing for healing*

INTRODUCTION

Writing has long been recognized as a powerful tool for self-expression and personal growth (Lengelle, 2009a; Ruini, 2022). Research has shown that writing can also be beneficial for mental health (Algristian, 2019; Stephenson, 2015). In recent years, there has been growing interest in the use of writing as a form of therapy, particularly in the context of expressive writing (Ayers, 2018; Cosentino, 2021; Glass, 2019). Despite the growing interest in writing for healing and expressive writing, there has been limited research on how these practices can be integrated with Islamic teachings on positive behaviour and character development. Furthermore, there is a need to examine how writing for healing and expressive writing can be adapted to the cultural and religious contexts of Muslim individuals.

Writing for healing approach involves writing about one's thoughts and feelings in a free, uncensored manner, with the goal of promoting emotional processing and healing (Kalianivala, 2019; Pennebaker & Smyth, 2016). At the same time, the Islamic tradition places great emphasis on positive behavior (akhlaq) and character development, as outlined in the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Abdullah & Sharif, 2019; Baharun & Ummah, 2018). While some studies have explored the potential benefits of incorporating spirituality and religion into mental health interventions (Captari et al., 2018; Garssen et al., 2021; Uyun et al., 2019), there is still a lack of understanding about how Islamic principles and concepts can be integrated into therapeutic writing practices.

Writing for healing has been the focus of much research over the past few decades. There is ample evidence to suggest that it can be a beneficial form of treatment

for a range of mental health concerns (Boulay, 2020). Expressive writing, in particular, has been shown to be effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Kupeli, 2019; Qian, 2020; Reinhold et al., 2018) as well as improving overall well-being and quality of life. The practice of expressive writing typically involves writing about emotionally significant experiences or events for a set period of time, often over the course of several sessions. Expressive writing can promote emotional regulation, cognitive restructuring, and other therapeutic benefits (Göçen, 2019; Pavlacic et al., 2019). That is all emerging through encouraging individuals to confront and process difficult emotions and experiences. Additionally, writing for healing has the advantage of being a relatively low-cost and accessible intervention (Wong et al., 2018) that can be practiced on one's own time and in the privacy of one's own space.

In Islamic views, the Quran contains numerous references to mental health and well-being, often linking these concepts with one's relationship with Allah. Islamic belief that mental health is not only viewed as an individual concern, but also as a spiritual one, as the state of one's mental health is thought to be interconnected with one's relationship with Allah. The Quranic perspective on mental health is rooted in the idea that one's psychological well-being is dependent on one's spiritual well-being, and that the ultimate source of healing and restoration is Allah. Quranic teachings encourage individuals to seek Allah's guidance and support during times of emotional distress.

The Quranic tradition also offers insights into the potential benefits of expressive writing for mental health and well-being. Quranic verses such as Surah Al-Sharh (94:5-6) encourage individuals to turn to God in times of difficulty and to express their concerns and fears to Him. Similarly, Surah Al-Baqarah (2:216) reminds believers that they may face hardship and adversity in life, but that God is always with them and that they should have patience and perseverance.

Through writing about their experiences and emotions, individuals may be better able to connect with these Quranic teachings and find comfort, meaning, and purpose in their struggles. Furthermore, writing for healing can be seen as a form of self-reflection and self-improvement, which are core tenets of the Islamic tradition. As Surah Al-Mu'minin (23:115) states, believers are encouraged to engage in introspection and to continually strive for self-improvement in order to better serve God and fulfil their potential. In this way, writing for healing may be seen as a means of cultivating positive behaviour and character traits in accordance with Quranic principles.

The study aims to explore the connections between writing for healing and Islamic spirituality and gain insights into the value and potential benefits of incorporating Islamic teachings in the expressive writing processes. The study offers an understanding of the advantages and difficulties associated with utilizing writing as a healing intervention in Muslim students' circumstances, and to highlight the ways in which Quranic and Hadith principles and teachings can be incorporated into such interventions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore complex phenomena and subjective experiences (Cresswell, 2012), making it an appropriate method for examining the intersection of writing for healing and Islamic spirituality. This study case research will involve a purposive sample of four Muslim students who have expressed emotional distress or difficulty in managing their emotions. The setting is in MTs. Terpadu Ar-Roihan Lawang Malang, located at Jl. Mayor Abdullah 248 Lawang Malang.

The participants in this study are students 13-15 years old, one boy and three girls, were selected through a purposive sampling approach, with the assistance of the school's counselling teacher. The counselling teacher was asked to identify students who had demonstrated emotional difficulties or behavioural problems, such as anxiety, depression, stress, or anger management issues, which may have impacted their academic performance or social functioning. This approach was chosen as it allowed for the selection of participants who were more likely to benefit from expressive writing as a

therapeutic intervention. The counselling teacher was asked to provide a list of potential participants, and from this list, four students were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. The selected participants were informed about the purpose and scope of the study, and provided with a consent form to sign. All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty.

Participants will be asked to complete a series of worksheets that incorporate Quranic and Hadith verses, and to reflect on their experiences and emotions through expressive writing. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews and content analysis of the participants' written reflections. This methodology will allow for an in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences and perspectives, and provide insight into understanding of the advantages and difficulties of employing writing as a therapeutic method for healing among Muslim students.

The defining research questions of this study are RQ1: How can writing for healing and expressive writing be aligned with Islamic teachings on positive behaviour and character development? RQ2: How can writing for healing be utilized for self-reflection and self-improvement in accordance with Islamic principles?

The rubrics given to analyse the content of the worksheets completed by a small sample size of students with emotional problems using expressive writing techniques and including Quranic values.

Table 1. Rubrics of Expressive Writing Analysis

Criteria	Descriptive
Integration or internalisation of Quranic values	The extent to which the participants integrated or internalised the Quranic values into their writing
Emotional Expression	The extent to which the participants expressed their emotions and feelings in the writing
Reflection and Insight	The extent to which the participants reflected on their emotions and gained insight from the writing
Authenticity and Honesty	The extent to which the participants were honest and authentic in their writing

The rubrics of analysis are needed in this study in order to ensure that the data collected is systematically and rigorously analysed. It can objectively evaluate the content of the writing samples and identify patterns or themes that emerge across the data. This allows for a deeper understanding of the ways in which Quranic verses and Hadith are integrated into the students' emotional expression and reflection.

To assist with this process, it has compiled a list of related words and phrases that are frequently used in the writing samples. The words and phrases will be used to code the data according to the established criteria. This list has been organized into a table for ease of reference during the analysis process. The use of this table ensures that the coding process is consistent and transparent, and helps to minimize the risk of missing important themes or patterns in the data.

Table 2. Key Terms for Coding Writing Samples

Integrated Quranic Values	Emotional Expression	Emotional Reflection	Authentic And Honest
Q1. Relevant Quranic values being used in the student's writing. Q2. Represent their meaning and context Quranic values in a meaningful way to their own emotional experiences and struggles.	E1. Anger E2. Sadness E3. Frustration E4. Fear E5. Anxiety E6. Depression E7. Happiness E8. Gratitude	R1. Self-reflection R2. Self-awareness R3. Self-discovery R4. Personal R5. growth	A1. Authenticity A2. Honesty A3. Transparency A4. Sincerity A5. Openness A6. Vulnerability A7. Genuine expression

Q3. Integrating the Quranic values into their own personal beliefs. Q4. Internalization of the Quranic values into their own beliefs and behaviours. Q5. Use of Quranic values leading to any changes in their emotional state, attitudes, or behaviours.	E9. Hope E10. Forgiveness E11. Regret E12. Guilt E13. Shame E14. Empathy E15. Compassion E16. Love	R6. intelligence R7. Mindfulness R8. Insight R9. Understanding R10. Clarity R11. Perspective R12. Realization R13. Learning R14. Epiphany R15. Revelation R16. Discovery	A8. Truthfulness A9. Candour A10. Frankness A11. Straightforwardness
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Through analysing the writing samples through the lens of these key terms, it can gain insights into how the students are internalizing Quranic verses and Hadith, expressing their emotions, reflecting on their experiences, and being authentic and honest in their writing. This analysis will provide a more nuanced view of the effectiveness of writing for healing practices in the context of Muslim students.

The scope of this study is focused on examining the writing samples of 4 Muslim students aged 13-15 years old who are currently studying at MTs. Terpadu Ar-Roihan Lawang and have been identified to have emotional problems. The study will analyse the writing samples of the students, which were completed during a workshop that aimed to help them express their emotions, reflect on their emotions, and integrate Quranic verses and Hadith into their writing.

The five-session treatment plan for participants in the writing intervention includes an introductory session for orientation, a session focused on self-reflection, a session on exploring emotions and experiences, a session for promoting self-expression and creativity, and a final session for reflection, goal setting, and developing strategies for continued writing practice.

The study will be limited to the writing samples provided by the selected students and the analysis will be based solely on the content of those samples. The research will not consider any external factors that may be influencing the emotional state of the students or any other variables that may impact the outcome of the study. Additionally, the study will only focus on the experiences of the selected students and will not be generalized to other Muslim students who may have different backgrounds or experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1) *Participant Characteristics.* This table below provides an overview of the specific characteristics observed in the four Muslim students (respondents) from MTs. Terpadu Ar-Roihan Lawang Malang who participated in the study. Through careful observation and analysis, unique aspects of each student's background and emotional challenges have been identified. These characteristics play a significant role in shaping their experiences with expressive writing and their engagement with Islamic spirituality.

Table 3. Students Characteristic

Respondent A	Respondent B	Respondent C	Respondent D
Boy, 15 years old, grade VIII	Girl, 13 years old, grade VII	Girl, 15 years old, grade VIII	Girl, 13 years old, grade VII
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited emotional expression Self-blame tendencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxiety symptoms and impact Risk of depression Family abuse and its effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature and severity of abuse Psychological trauma Coping mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frustration and emotional distress interpersonal Challenges help-seeking behaviour

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introversi and social challenges 			
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The analysis of Respondent A's expressive writing involves recognizing prevalent emotional themes, including self-doubt, guilt, and frustration. He wrote, "It's entirely my responsibility, I consistently make errors." There is a clear acknowledgment of personal accountability, yet further exploration is needed to understand the specific factors contributing to this pattern of mistakes.

Following five instances of composing expressive writings incorporating an Islamic perspective (treatment), this student undergoes a transformation. The alignment with Quranic values involves a thorough exploration of how Respondent A's writing resonates with teachings from the Quran, particularly in terms of self-compassion, self-forgiveness, and seeking support. "Grant me ease in all aspects of my life, O Allah." He wrote as recognize as expressing optimism. By assessing any observable changes or progress in Respondent A's writing throughout the study, one can gain insights into the transformative impact of aligning with Islamic principles on the individual's mindset and expression.

The primary emotional themes evident in Student B's expressive writing encompass fear, sadness, and hope. Analysing the intensity and depth of these emotions as reflected in her writing. "I never anticipated life in this world, it feels like everyone despises me," is how she conveyed her sentiments.

Integration of Quranic values, by examining Student B incorporates Quranic teachings into her writing to address her anxiety and experiences of family abuse. Empowerment and healing through Analysing the extent to which Student B's expressive writing process, infused with Quranic values, contributes to her empowerment, healing, and resilience. Subsequently, she began expressing aspirations for Allah to restore her parents' affection towards her.

Student C's wrote, "Why don't my friends and family have a liking for me?" By identifying the prevalent emotional themes in Student C's writing, such as fear, anger, or sadness. Analysing the intensity of these emotions and how they are expressed in her writing.

Incorporation of Quranic values, examining Student C weaves Quranic teachings into her writing to address the trauma and abuse she has endured. Healing and transformation, analysing the potential healing and transformation evident in Student C's expressive writing. She then expressed, "I desire a transformation in my father."

Student D's expressive writing identify as the primary emotional themes explored in such as frustration, anger, or sadness. She wrote, "I hate this world." The intensity of these emotions is apparent, highlighting a deeper layer of discontent.

Analysing the depth and intensity of these emotions and she manifests in her writing. Integration of Quranic values, examine Student D incorporates Quranic teachings into her writing to address her frustrations and interpersonal conflicts. Interpersonal growth and conflict resolution, analysing the extent to which Student D's expressive writing, influenced by Quranic values, facilitates her interpersonal growth and conflict resolution skills.

2)Integration of Quranic Values. Based on analysis of expressive writing integrated with Quranic values as treatment, Respondent A's expressive writing reflects a strong connection with Allah and a sincere desire for His guidance and help. He acknowledges his own shortcomings and seeks forgiveness from those who have hurt him. Through his writing, he demonstrates a profound understanding of the importance of relying on Allah's support in overcoming emotional difficulties and seeking redemption. His expressions of remorse and apology indicate a willingness to take responsibility for his actions and foster a sense of personal growth and self-improvement.

Respondent B's expressive writing shows the belief, her deep faith in Allah is evident as she turns to Him in prayer. She beseeches Allah for patience and a miraculous

intervention in her family's life. Her writing demonstrates a heartfelt plea for relief from the burdens she carries. Despite struggling with the difficulty of offering apologies, she recognizes the importance of seeking forgiveness and acknowledges the challenges she faces in this regard. Her writing suggests a sense of hope and reliance on Allah's intervention to alleviate her hardships.

Respondent C's reveals her yearning for a better and more peaceful environment. She implores Allah to bring harmony to her family, praying for an end to the conflicts between her parents. Her writing reflects a strong desire for peace and a happier life. Additionally, she demonstrates a willingness to apologize to her father, highlighting her efforts to mend broken relationships despite the difficulty of doing so. Through her writing, she seeks solace in her faith and looks to Allah for resolution and serenity.

Respondent D's portrays a sense of hopelessness, fatigue, and despair, yet she maintains a glimmer of hope in Allah's power. Her writing reveals her struggles with forgiveness, as she admits her inability to forgive others. Despite feeling overwhelmed by life's challenges, her writing demonstrates a continued reliance on Allah's support. Although forgiveness remains a challenge for her, she relies on her faith to find strength in difficult times and to hold onto the hope that Allah can provide solace and guidance.

The analysis of the data reveals a significant theme across the writing of three out of the four students, indicating a strong connection to Allah and a profound awareness of the creation and destiny of life. This spiritual aspect permeates their expressive writing and demonstrates the influence of Quranic teachings on their worldview and personal experiences.

In Respondent A's writing, there is a clear sense of surrendering to Allah and seeking His guidance. He acknowledges his limitations and places his trust in Allah's plan for his life. Through his expressions of remorse and apology, he demonstrates an awareness of accountability to Allah and a desire for redemption. This connection to Allah serves as a source of strength and a guiding force in his journey of emotional healing and self-improvement.

Respondent B's expressive writing reflects her deep devotion to Allah and her unwavering faith in His power to bring about miracles. She turns to Allah in prayer, seeking patience and beseeching Him to alleviate the burdens in her family's life. Her writing displays a profound trust in Allah's divine intervention, highlighting her belief in His ability to shape her destiny. This connection to Allah provides her with hope and a sense of purpose amidst her struggles.

Respondent C's Recognition of Allah's Role. In Respondent C's writing, there is a strong acknowledgment of Allah's role in her life and the lives of those around her. She prays for peace and harmony, recognizing that Allah holds the ultimate power to transform her family dynamics. Her expressions of apology and her willingness to seek forgiveness demonstrate a deep sense of responsibility and an understanding of the importance of aligning her actions with the teachings of Islam. Through her writing, she exhibits a genuine connection to Allah and a belief in His ability to shape her present circumstances.

The presence of these themes in the expressive writing of three of the four students underscores the significance of Islamic spirituality in their lives. Their writing reveals a profound awareness of the existence of a higher power, a sense of submission to Allah's will, and an understanding of the purpose and destiny of life. This connection to Allah serves as a source of strength, hope, and guidance as they navigate their emotional challenges. It demonstrates the integral role of Islamic teachings and values in shaping their perspectives and providing them with a sense of meaning and direction in their personal journeys.

In analysing the data from the expressive writing of each respondent, it is evident that their writing is deeply influenced by Quranic values. They express their reliance on Allah, seek His guidance and support, and demonstrate a willingness to seek forgiveness and peace. Their writing reflects the integration of Quranic teachings into their emotional processing and their quest for personal growth and healing. The participants' expressive writing serves as a means of connecting with their faith, finding solace, and

seeking guidance from Allah as they navigate their emotional challenges.

The results discussed above demonstrate a clear relationship between the identified themes in the students' expressive writing and the four aspects of the instrument related to Quranic values integration.

First, relevant Quranic values being used in the students' writing. The analysis reveals that the students incorporated relevant Quranic values into their writing. They demonstrated an understanding of values such as seeking forgiveness, relying on Allah's guidance, patience, trust in Allah's plan, and seeking peace. These Quranic values were reflected in their expressions of remorse, prayers for intervention, and desires for positive change in their lives. There is hope that provides purpose and alleviates the burden of psychological challenges by facilitating shifts in attitude, making them more manageable for individuals to endure (Masjedi-Arani et al., 2020).

Thus, representing the meaning and context of Quranic values in a meaningful way to their own emotional experiences and struggles. Their writing showcased a deep understanding of how Quranic teachings could address their specific challenges. They were able to find resonance between the Quranic values and their own emotional journeys, using them as tools for self-reflection, healing, and personal growth. Individuals have effectively connected the significance and contextual relevance of Quranic values to their personal emotional encounters and hardships (Sabki et al., 2019).

Next, integrating the Quranic values into their own personal beliefs. The expressive writing of the students demonstrated a genuine integration of Quranic values into their personal beliefs. They internalized these values and viewed them as essential elements in their lives. The students expressed their reliance on Allah, their faith in His ability to bring about change, and their commitment to aligning their actions with Quranic teachings.

The last, internalization of the Quranic values into their own beliefs and behaviours. The findings suggest that the students internalized the Quranic values and applied them to their beliefs and behaviours. They sought forgiveness, demonstrated patience, expressed trust in Allah, and exhibited a desire for positive transformation. The students' writing indicated a shift in their emotional processing, coping mechanisms, and interpersonal attitudes, indicating the internalization of Quranic values into their beliefs and behaviours.

In summary, the results align with the instrument's focus on Quranic values integration. The students effectively used relevant Quranic values in their writing, related them to their emotional experiences, integrated them into their personal beliefs, and internalized them into their behaviours. This demonstrates the meaningful and impactful integration of Islamic spirituality and teachings into the students' expressive writing as an intervention tool for emotional healing and personal growth.

3) *Emotional Expression*. The data collected from the respondents' expressive writing aligns with the criterion of emotional expression showed that Respondent A's writing reflects a significant emotional expression characterized by feelings of sadness, self-blame, and the creation of a fantasy friend. These expressions indicate a deep emotional struggle and a difficulty in openly expressing and processing emotions. Through his writing, Respondent A finds a medium to channel and express his emotions, providing an outlet for his inner thoughts and feelings.

Respondent B's writing captures an emotional expression centred around blame, a sense of neglect, and a desire to keep her problems hidden. These expressions highlight the emotional turmoil she experiences within her family dynamics. By utilizing expressive writing, Respondent B is able to give voice to her emotions, even if it is in a private and anonymous form. This allows her to express and explore her feelings without fear of judgment or disclosure.

Respondent C's writing reveals a powerful emotional expression characterized by a profound feeling of worthlessness and self-perception as the "saddest girl in the world." These expressions demonstrate the intense emotional pain and internal struggles she faces. Through expressive writing, Respondent C can externalize and articulate her emotions, giving them a tangible form and creating an opportunity for reflection and

introspection.

Respondent D's writing showcases emotional expressions of anger directed towards herself and a reluctance to trust others. These expressions indicate a struggle with self-acceptance and difficulty in forming meaningful connections with others. Respondent D can explore and confront her emotions by engaging in expressive writing, gaining a better understanding of the underlying causes, and finding a way to express and process them constructively.

The emotional expressions identified in the data demonstrate that expressive writing serves as a valuable tool for the respondents to express and examine the emotions (Wegner et al., 2017). It allows them to delve deeper into their inner world, gain insights into their emotional struggles, and potentially find ways to cope and heal. The utilization of expressive writing in this study enables the students to communicate their emotions in a safe and confidential manner, fostering self-expression and emotional release.

The data revealed that all four respondents expressed a range of complex emotions through their writing. Respondent A exhibited deep feelings of sadness, self-blame, and a tendency to create a fantasy friend, indicating a struggle to openly express and process emotions. Respondent B demonstrated emotions centred around blame, a sense of neglect, and a reluctance to share her problems with others. Respondent C expressed a profound feeling of worthlessness, describing herself as the "saddest girl in the world." Finally, Respondent D showcased emotions of self-directed anger and a lack of trust in others.

These emotional expressions are significant as they serve as indicators of the students' emotional well-being and their need for support and intervention. By engaging in expressive writing, the participants were able to externalize and articulate their emotions, providing an opportunity for self-reflection, introspection, and emotional release. The act of writing allowed them to communicate their feelings and struggles, providing a sense of validation and potentially serving as a first step towards healing and personal growth (Lengelle, 2009b).

It is worth noting that while the expressive writing exercise provided a platform for the students to express their emotions, it should not be viewed as a standalone intervention. The identified emotional expressions highlight the need for further support and intervention, such as counselling, to address the underlying emotional difficulties faced by the participants. The findings emphasize the importance of a comprehensive approach that combines expressive writing as an intervention tool with appropriate professional guidance to ensure the well-being and growth of the students (Alam, 2022).

4) *Emotional Reflection.* The analysis of the data reveals an important observation regarding the instrument criterion of Emotional Reflection. It is notable that none of the respondents demonstrated a clear track of emotional reflection in their writing. This suggests that they may not have developed a significant level of self-awareness, self-reflection, self-discovery, or mindfulness in their lives at the time of the study.

The absence of emotional reflection in their writing indicates that the participants may not have had the necessary tools or opportunities to engage in deep introspection or explore their emotions in a meaningful way. It is possible that their emotional difficulties and struggles have hindered their ability to engage in self-reflection, as they may be preoccupied with their immediate challenges and concerns.

The lack of emotional reflection in their writing may also indicate a need for external guidance or support to facilitate their journey towards emotional awareness and reflection. It is plausible that the students require the presence of a trusted teacher, counsellor, or mentor who can provide them with the necessary guidance and prompts to foster emotional reflection. Without such guidance, the participants may struggle to independently engage in introspection and self-analysis.

Given the context of the study, where the participants were selected based on their emotional difficulties and behavioural problems, it is essential to recognize that emotional reflection may be a skill that needs to be nurtured and cultivated over time (Aguilar, 2018). The participants may require structured interventions, such as

counselling sessions or targeted activities, to encourage the development of emotional reflection skills.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the absence of emotional reflection in their writing does not indicate a lack of potential or willingness to engage in self-reflection. Instead, it highlights the importance of providing a supportive environment that encourages and facilitates the development of emotional reflection skills (Estrada et al., 2021). By offering guidance and opportunities for the participants to explore their emotions and reflect on their experiences, they can gradually develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their emotional well-being.

In future research or interventions, it would be valuable to incorporate strategies that specifically target emotional reflection. These strategies could include structured prompts, guided journaling exercises, or interactive discussions that encourage the participants to explore and reflect on their emotions. The students may begin to develop a stronger sense of self-awareness and gain insights into their emotional experiences, ultimately fostering personal growth and resilience by actively promoting emotional reflection.

Overall, the absence of emotional reflection in the respondents' writing highlights the need for intentional interventions and support systems to foster this crucial aspect of their emotional well-being. Recognizing and addressing this gap can contribute to the students' overall development and help them navigate their emotional challenges more effectively.

5) *Authenticity and Honesty*. The analysis of the data concerning the instrument criterion of Authentic and Honest reveals a consistent pattern among all the respondents. It is evident that the participants demonstrated a remarkable level of frankness, honesty, sincerity, openness, and truthfulness in their expressive writing. Their writings reflect a genuine and authentic expression of their emotions and feelings.

The respondents' ability to write with authenticity and candour is noteworthy, as it indicates their willingness to openly share their innermost thoughts and experiences. They exhibited a deep sense of vulnerability and transparency, allowing their true emotions to come to the surface without inhibition or pretence. Their writings provide a glimpse into their inner worlds, offering insights into their personal struggles, fears, hopes, and desires.

The authenticity displayed in their writing indicates that the participants have a strong connection to their own emotions and a genuine desire to express themselves truthfully (Malchiodi, 2020). Their deep feelings are conveyed with originality, and their words resonate with a sense of genuineness and sincerity. Through their expressive writing, they have found a medium to communicate their innermost experiences without filters or facade.

This level of authenticity in their writing suggests that the participants have established a degree of trust and comfort in the process of expressive writing. They feel safe to express themselves openly, allowing their true emotions to emerge onto the paper. This authenticity in writing may also indicate a growing self-acceptance and self-awareness (Gardner, 2021), as they are able to confront and acknowledge their emotions in an unadulterated manner.

The participants' genuine expression of their feelings and emotions through their writing is an important aspect of the therapeutic value of expressive writing. Engaging in a form of self-expression that promotes emotional release, self-discovery, and personal growth by embracing authenticity (Brunzell et al., 2015). It provides them with an opportunity to confront and process their emotions, leading to a deeper understanding of themselves and their experiences.

The authenticity and honesty observed in the participants' expressive writing highlight the potential benefits of using expressive writing as a therapeutic intervention. It becomes possible to create a safe space for self-expression and self-exploration through encouraging individuals to write authentically and honestly. This process can contribute to emotional healing, improved self-awareness, and a sense of empowerment.

It is important to recognize and celebrate the participants' ability to write with

authenticity and honesty. Their genuine expression of emotions serves as a reminder of the transformative power of self-expression and the potential for personal growth through writing. The findings underscore the significance of incorporating authentic and honest self-expression within the framework of writing for healing like reflective writing (Sudirman et al., 2021), providing individuals with a means to navigate and understand their emotions more deeply.

6) *Connection between Writing for Healing and Islamic Spirituality.* The connection between Writing for Healing and Islamic Spirituality is multifaceted and offers a unique perspective on the therapeutic process. Islamic spirituality, rooted in the teachings of the Quran and Hadith, provides a rich framework that can be integrated with writing for healing practices to foster holistic well-being and personal growth.

Writing for Healing encompasses various therapeutic writing techniques that encourage individuals to express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences through writing (Ruini, 2022). It serves as a tool for self-reflection, emotional release, and exploration of inner struggles. By engaging in expressive writing, individuals can gain insights into their emotions, develop self-awareness, and find a sense of clarity and healing.

Islamic spirituality emphasizes the importance of inner introspection, self-reflection, and the development of a strong connection with Allah (God) (Bensaid et al., 2021). The Quran and Hadith provide guidance on personal growth, ethical conduct, and emotional well-being. Individuals can tap into the spiritual dimensions of their experiences and integrate them into the therapeutic process by aligning writing for healing practices with Islamic teachings.

The integration of Quranic values and teachings within expressive writing enables individuals to explore their emotions and struggles in a manner consistent with Islamic principles. Quranic verses and Hadiths can serve as sources of inspiration, guidance, and solace during the writing process (Hooker, 2019). The use of these sacred texts can instil a sense of spirituality, faith, and hope in individuals as they navigate their emotional challenges.

Writing for Healing, infused with Islamic spirituality, provides a means for individuals to seek forgiveness, express gratitude, and find strength in their faith. It allows them to deepen their relationship with Allah, seek His guidance, and surrender their worries and burdens to Him. Through this integration, individuals can experience a sense of peace, comfort, and resilience as they engage in the therapeutic practice of expressive writing.

Moreover, writing for healing practices can help individuals align their thoughts, emotions, and actions with the ethical values and principles of Islam (Haque & Keshavarzi, 2014). It encourages individuals to reflect on their behaviour, seek forgiveness for their shortcomings, and strive for personal growth and positive change.

LIMITATION OF STUDY. Several limitations must be considered in the interpretation of the study's findings. Firstly, the exclusive focus on MTs Terpadu Ar-Roihan in Lawang Malang as the solitary setting. Second, the small sample size, next the participants were specifically selected based on emotional difficulties and behavioral problems, the cultural and contextual specificity of the study's setting poses another limitation, the relatively short duration of the five-session treatment, and finally, the qualitative nature of the study.

First, limited Setting. The study's focus on MTs Terpadu Ar-Roihan in Lawang Malang as the sole setting may limit the generalizability of the findings, as characteristics and experiences of participants in this specific madrasah may not be representative of a broader population.

Small sample size. The inclusion of only four participants in the study could impact the generalizability and reliability of the results. A larger and more diverse sample might provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between expressive writing, Islamic spirituality, and healing.

Age range of participants. The narrow age range of participants, aged 13 to 15,

may limit the applicability of the study's findings to other age groups within the broader Muslim student population.

Selection bias. The participants were selected based on emotional difficulties and behavioral problems, which could introduce selection bias. This bias may affect the ability to generalize the findings to a broader population of Muslim students without such challenges.

Cultural and contextual specificity. The study is situated in a specific cultural and educational context. The findings may not be universally applicable, as cultural and contextual factors could influence the experiences of Muslim students in other regions or educational settings.

Treatment duration. The study employed a five-session treatment plan, and the duration of the intervention may be considered relatively short. A longer intervention period might provide more insight into the sustained effects of integrating Quranic values into expressive writing for healing.

Qualitative nature. The study's qualitative approach may offer rich insights into individual experiences but may lack the statistical power associated with quantitative studies, limiting the ability to draw broad conclusions.

CONCLUSION

The connection between Writing for Healing and Islamic Spirituality offers a powerful and transformative approach to emotional well-being and personal growth. By integrating the teachings of Islam with expressive writing practices, individuals can embark on a holistic therapeutic journey that aligns their emotions, thoughts, and actions with their faith. This integration allows individuals to explore their inner world, seek spiritual solace, and cultivate a deeper connection with Allah. Ultimately, this connection fosters a more comprehensive and culturally responsive approach to healing that acknowledges the spiritual dimensions of human experience.

Based on the positive outcomes observed in this study, further research can focus on developing structured interventions that integrate writing for healing techniques with Quranic values and teachings. Also, longitudinal studies that will provide a deeper understanding of the long-term effects of writing for healing practices integrated with Islamic spirituality.

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