

THE EFFECT OF QURAN RECITATION ON THE RELAXATION

أثر القرآن في إحداث الطمأنينة

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ABSTRACT

This research emphasizes on the effectiveness of reciting the Quran and its tranquillity in relation with the stress level among the students. The seventy-four respondents of this study came from Kolej PERMATApintar® Negara, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia who are randomly chosen for the purpose of cross-sectional study. Spielberger's State-Trait Anxiety Inventory© is used to determine the overall stress level of the respondents. Digital sphygmomanometer is used to take the measurements of pulse rate, systolic blood pressure and diastolic blood pressure of the respondents. In order to get a more authentic result, the respondents recited Surat al-Fatihah and Surat Yasen. As a result, the indicator is divided into different types of respondents within interrelation in reciting the Quran. 70.3% of the respondents showed a decrease of pulse rate after reciting the Quran with a p-value of 0.017 for the initial and final reading of the pulse rate. 60.8% of the respondents showed a decrease in the reading of systolic blood pressure ($p=0.034$) and 59.5% showed a decrease in the reading of diastolic blood pressure ($p<0.01$). The results of this research showed that reciting the Quran brings positive effect to the relaxation of the respondents.

Keywords: *Quran; Surat al-Fatihah; Surat Yasen; Tranquillity; Relaxation.*

INTRODUCTION

Since the past few years, many researches have been done to test the Quranic approach in medication and for healing purposes. In the Quran, many verses have described Quran as having healing properties (Surat al-Isra' 17:82) and in other times it is mentioned to provide guidance and cure (Surat Yunus 10:57). According to western scholars, the contemporary human has problems related to religion and moral values (Koshan&Vaghei 2008). Humans need religion as guidance in their lives and believing in a religion affects how humans behave. Islam is a religion that promotes guidance and truth to its believers. The Holy book of Islam, the Quran, is a divine book in which the content suits the concept of human growth

ملخص البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى بيان مدى فعالية قراءة القرآن في إحداث الطمأنينة لدى الطلاب. وقد اتبع المنهج التحليلي الإحصائي من خلال أربعة وسبعين مستجيباً ماليزياً تم اختيارهم عشوائياً لغرض دراسة مستعرضة. استُخدم اختبار لتحديد مستوى الطمأنينة للمستجيبين وذلك بقياس ضغط الدم الرقمي لمعدل النبض وضغط الدم الانقباضي وضغط الدم الانبساطي لديهم. وقد تم الحصول على نتيجة واقعية، بقراءة سورتي الفاتحة وياسين. فانقسم القياس إلى أنواع مختلفة من المستجيبين. أظهر 70.3% من المبحوثين انخفاضاً في معدل النبض بمقدار 0.017 في القراءة الأولى والنهائية، كما أظهر 60.8% من المستجيبين انخفاضاً في ضغط الدم الانقباضي بمقدار 0.034 و 59.5% منهم أظهروا انخفاضاً في قراءة ضغط الدم. مما يوضح أن قراءة القرآن تجلب تأثيراً إيجابياً على استرخاء المستجيبين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القرآن، سورة الفاتحة، سورة ياسين، الطمأنينة، الاسترخاء.

and evolution (Sadeghi 2011). The issues of social and psychological functions are also not exception from the comprehensive vision of Quran (Sedighpoor et al. 2009). Relaxation and the way to achieve it have been mentioned in many verses of the Quran including solutions and guidelines for mental health with different psychological categories (Sadeghi 2011).

Defining giftedness has been a widely discussed topic for many years. Often these definitions are accompanied with suggestions of educational system that suits the needs of gifted and talented children (Yewchuk 1998, 1999). Alberta Education defines giftedness as follows:

Giftedness is a broad, evolving concept which addresses exceptional ability and/or performance in a wide range of human endeavours including: intellectual and creative domains; talent in kinaesthetic areas, music and visual arts; and socio-emotional dimensions such as intrapersonal and interpersonal strengths. Some students have a potential to achieve that is not always demonstrated in their school work or through the school's identification, assessment and evaluation procedures. To reach their maximum potential, gifted students need to be recognized and nurtured.

Along with this and other contemporary definitions, gifted students need specifically modified educational system in content, process, product and learning environment to develop their advanced abilities in learning (Maker, 1982, 1983).

In recent years, a gifted school for Malaysian gifted students has emerged and now based in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Conducive and different learning environment are provided for these students to develop and nurture their giftedness. In entering a new learning environment, gifted students have to adjust accordingly to different factors including different social backgrounds. Adjusting to a new environment can cause distress and anxiety. A certain amount of stress is believed to enhance learning however, learning can be obstructed if too much stress is present (Ford 2011).

Many previous studies have reported positive effect of Quran recitation on the well-being of different people. Thus, this research aims to study the correlation between the Quran in promoting tranquillity and the relaxation of Malaysian gifted students.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QURAN AND ITS CALMING EFFECT

In recent years, many researches have been done to correlate the relationship between Quran and its calming effect on different subjects. The subjects include athletes, mother in labour pain, preterm new-born babies, elderlies, patients in burn wards, patients before anaesthesia induction and stress adolescents.

Many athletes experience anxiety before a tournament, which could affect the sport skills and psychological of the athletes (Mottaghi et al. 2011). Anxiety in a small amount would affect success and is harmful in exceeding amount (Farrokhi&Hakkak 2000). In a research done by Mottaghiet al. (2011), 80 female athletes from Gonabad Medical University who took part in sports competition were involved in a quasi-experimental study. They were

given questionnaires and listened to Quran verses prior to the competition. The result showed a significant difference ($p=0.02$) after intervention.

In another research, it is concluded that the pleasant sound of Quran could be used in alleviating the labour pain (Forouhari et al. 2011). Forouhari et al. also reported that 77% of primiparas mentioned labour as severe pain and unbearable. As the use of pharmaceutical drugs to alleviate the pain has many limitations, non-drugs methods are preferably used. In the experiment, respondents were given questionnaire and listened to the Quran played by a cassette. The result showed that the Quran is an effective tool to prevent labour pain from increasing.

Preterm infants experienced many problems in neurological, psychological and social aspects (Neal 2008). In a recent research done by Eskandari et al. (2012) on preterm infants, 120 subjects were chosen from NICU of Akbar Abadi Teaching Birth centre in Tehran. They were listened to Surat Yusuf, verses 7-23 for 20 minutes every morning. Oxygen saturation, respiratory rate and heart rate were observed after the experiment. It is reported that there were a significant differences in all three variables. It is concluded that Quran recitation positively affects the physiological responses of preterm infants and did not cause any unwanted effects (Eskandari et al. 2012).

Quran recitation during residence in nursing home of elderlies could reduce mental health when compared before their stay in the nursing home (Sooki et al. 2011). The participants from Golabchi nursing home in Kashan were given the standard health questionnaire (GHQ-28) and a self-developed questionnaire. The result showed that there is a positive relation between mental health and reciting Quran while staying in the nursing home. It is concluded that necessary facilities for religious activities should be provided for the promotion of mental health of the elderly in nursing homes (Sooki et al. 2011).

In the Quran, the word “reciting” was repeated 260 times (Avazeh et al. 2011). A research was conducted to test the effect of the word “Allah” on burn patients who suffered during dressing change. 30 burn patients were given a three-part questionnaire. It is concluded that reciting the word “Allah” could alleviate pain and reduce anxiety. According to many psychologists and psychiatrists, life challenges and mind concerns can be alleviated from a person by praying or giving complete attention to God thus creating a sense of inner peace (Avazeh et al. 2011).

Patients who are going for surgery are mostly stressed and can cause complications. A study done by Shafieiet al. (2011) suggested that reciting Quran could be used as an effective non-pharmaceutical approach in reducing patient’s anxiety before any operation. Three 60-patient groups were given questionnaires. The first group was treated with Quran, the second group was treated with Quran accompanied by its translation and the third group was the controlled group. It is reported that the second group of participants showed positive result in reducing anxiety.

Quran recitation is effective in reducing the stress of youngsters and adolescents (Taghilou 2009). Many researches have been done to correlate the effect of Quran on stress

level. Mahmodiyan et al. (2008), Jahanmiriet al. (2001), Moghadam and Maghsodi (2004), Mosavi et al. (1997) and Khatoni (1997) all reported that Quranic approach could reduce stress, depression and anxiety. In these studies, Quran is used in favour of medicine in treating psychological problem. Therapeutic needs are still needed in spite of medicine in psychology (Kazemi et al. 2003)

In Malaysia, a research done by UniversitiTeknologi MARA reported that listening to Quran resulted in a more calming and alert condition when compared to classical music. It is indicated that alpha band is increased more when listening to Quran recitation as opposed to when listening to classical music (Zulkurnaini et al. 2012). In the study, 28 participants were exposed to three states which are before during and after listening to Quran and classical music. Prior to the EEG signals acquisition, participants were involved in an interview session. The result showed a 12.67% increment of left and right brainwaves when listening to Quran and 9.96% increment for classical music.

In conclusion, either reciting or listening to the Quran brings positive effects to human well-being. These researches have shown that Quran can be used an alternative tool in treating many psychological problems. When compared to classical music, Quran stands as a better tool in development of brainwave.

METHODOLOGY

Design

During the experiment, respondents were given a questionnaire which can be completed in 15 minutes. Then, a digital sphygmomanometer is used to measure the initial reading of pulse rate, systolic and diastolic blood pressure. The respondents themselves recited one full page from Surat Yaseen. Finally, the final readings for the three variables are taken.

Respondents

This cross-sectional study was conducted among 74 gifted students population in Malaysia aged between 14 to 17 years old who were based at Kolej PERMATApintar® Negara, UniversitiKebangsaan Malaysia.

Instrument

The respondents were assessed through Spielberger's State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) for adults that contains 2 subscales. First, the State Anxiety Scale (S-Anxiety). Second, the Trait Anxiety Scale (T-Anxiety).

The S-Anxiety evaluates the current anxiety state that measures feelings of apprehension, tension, nervousness, worry and activation/arousal of autonomic nervous system. The scale consists of 20 items with 4-point Likert scale responses as follows: 1) Not at all, 2) Somewhat, 3) Moderately so, 4) Very much so. The items of S-Anxiety scale include anxiety absent item such as "I am calm" and anxiety present item such as "I am tense".

Meanwhile, the T-Anxiety evaluates the proneness towards anxiety including general states of calmness, confidence and security. The scale consists of 20 items with 4-point Likert scale responses as follows: 1) Almost never, 2) Sometimes, 3) Often, 4) Almost always. The items of T-Anxiety scale include anxiety absent item such as “I am content” and anxiety present item such as “I worry too much over something that really doesn’t matter”.

The STAI reported a positive validity between 0.078 and 0.085 based on test-retest method (Barnes et al. 2002). Previous study also relied upon this inventory to measure the degree of anxiety of women before Caesarean section (Mirbagher and Ranjbar 2012) and nursing students stress (Yucha et al., 2009).

Statistical Analyses

Data analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software version 16.0. Frequency table is and chi-square test are used to analyse the data.

RESULTS

Out of 74 respondents, 43 (58.1%) were male and 31 (41.9%) were female. In terms of age, 38 (51.4%) were 17 years of age, 30 (40.5) were of 16 years old and 6 (8.1%) were 15 years old. It is found that 53 (71.6%) of the respondents showed high score of S-Anxiety scale while 21 (28.4%) showed a lower score. The T-Anxiety scale showed a larger difference where 67 (90.5%) amounted for high score and 7 (9.5%) amounted for low score. 22 (29.7%) of the respondents showed an increase in the pulse reading after reciting the Quran and a significant 52 (70.3%) showed a decrease in the pulse reading (Table 1). For the systolic blood pressure reading, 22 (29.7%) showed an increase in the measurement, 45 (60.8) showed a decreased reading and 7 (9.5) showed a constant reading (Table 2). 26 (35.1%) showed an increase in diastolic blood pressure reading, 44 (59.5%) showed a decrease and 4 (5.4%) recorded a constant reading (Table 3).

Table 1 Difference in pulse rate

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Increase	22	29.7	29.7	29.7
Decrease	52	70.3	70.3	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 Difference in systolic blood pressure

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Increase	22	29.7	29.7	29.7
Decrease	45	60.8	60.8	90.5
Constant	7	9.5	9.5	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	

Difference in diastolic blood pressure

Table 3

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Increase	26	35.1	35.1	35.1
Decrease	44	59.5	59.5	94.6
Constant	4	5.4	5.4	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	

The average reading of pulse rate before reciting the Quran was 75.58 ± 11.05 . Average readings for systolic blood pressure and diastolic blood pressure before reciting the Quran are

126.65 ± 17.49 and 69.65 ± 12.68 respectively. The difference between initial and final reading of pulse rate was significant ($p=0.017$) as well as initial and final reading of systolic blood pressure ($p=0.034$) and initial and final reading of diastolic blood pressure ($p=0.00$). All results are shown below in Table 4.

Table 4 Associations of initial and final readings of pulse rate, systolic blood pressure and diastolic blood pressure.

Variables	Reading	Average reading	Level of significance
Pulse rate	Initial reading	75.58 ± 11.05	0.017
	Final reading	72.92 ± 12.31	
Systolic blood Pressure	Initial reading	126.65 ± 17.49	0.034
	Final reading	123.11 ± 17.69	
Diastolic blood Pressure	Initial reading	69.65 ± 12.68	$p < 0.01$
	Final reading	69.301 ± 1.99	

DISCUSSION

This study resulted that there are significant statistical differences in the reading of pulse rate, systolic blood pressure and diastolic blood pressure. These results are in inconsistency with the results of research conducted by Shafiei et al. (2011).

Potter and Perry (1999) believed that anxiety is reduced by creating mental deviation and sleep induction when treated using music therapy. Music therapy is mentioned as one of the most important non-medical treatment (Sharifi 1997). The results of this research can be related to Quran, which gives pleasant to its reciters (Shafiei et al., 2011), as the Quran recitation is the most beautiful and harmonious music (Mottaghi et al. 2011). Majidi (2004) reported that listening to the Quran brings positive effects to blood pressure, pulse rate and respiratory rate.

Researchers reported that anxiety and depression can be diminished by practicing religious attitude (Mottaghi et al. 2011). Therefore, it is no doubt that in this research Quran is used to lower the pulse rate, systolic and diastolic blood pressure, indicators of stress in the respondents, since Muslims believe that reciting the Quran could bring inner peace.

At present, sympathetic reactions resulting from anxiety are treated with different medical and non-medical methods including relaxation techniques (Sadeghi 2011). This research showed that the Quran is a very effective tool in reaching relaxation by reciting it hence, promotes the use of non-medical approach in psychological problems.

CONCLUSION

The stress level among students of KolejPERMATApintar® Negara is high and this could leads to many psychological problems in the near future. Thus, reciting the Quran is suggested as one of the ways to overcome this problem among the students. Reciting the Quran is also seen as a future tool in treating psychological problems. Steps to promote Quranic approach in medical treatment should be promoted and developed.

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