

A case study on impact transcendental communication on emotional well-being in Indonesia

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Abstract This study examined the impact of transcendental communication on the emotional well-being of older adults in Indonesia. Employing a case study approach within an elderly Islamic study group (*pengajian*), data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and participatory observations involving productive older adults, health workers, and community leaders. The findings indicate that transcendental communication, including practices such as communal prayer, Quran memorisation, and in-depth dialogue, has a significantly positive effect on the emotional well-being of older adults. Participants who engaged in these practices reported reduced stress and anxiety, enhanced self-awareness, and greater optimism and inner calm. This study underscores the potential of transcendental communication as an effective strategy for enhancing the emotional well-being of older adults in Indonesia. It provides policy recommendations to support its broader implementation.

Keywords: transcendental communication; emotional well-being; elderly; visualisation

INTRODUCTION

The demographic trend of the elderly population has shown a significant increase in recent decades (Duan et al., 2022). In 2024, approximately 10.3% of the global population was 65 years or older, with projections indicating that this figure will continue to rise, reaching 20.31% by 2045 (Bar-Tur, 2021). As the elderly population grows, the demand for more complex and sustainable healthcare services, including medical care, long-term care, and psychological support, also increases (Lim, S. A., & Jung, 2024). Furthermore, this demographic shift often leads to changes in family structures, with a transition from extended to nuclear families, which can influence social dynamics and familial support systems (Ukeachusim, C. P., Okwor, C. O., Eze, E., Okoli, A., Ugwu, C. I., & Ebimgbo, 2023). Older adults also have distinct financial needs compared to younger generations, including healthcare costs, daily living expenses, and social needs. The increasing elderly population has significant implications for economic policy and resource allocation. Additionally, older adults are at greater risk of social isolation and loneliness, which can have detrimental effects on their mental health (Sipi Seda, A. E. K., & Halim, 2024).

Older adults' mental health and emotional well-being are critical concerns in the context of global population aging. Many older individuals face emotional challenges such as loneliness, bereavement, and declining physical function (Olivera, M., Prozzillo, P., & Simkin, 17 C.E.). Transcendental communication, including meditation, visualisation, and deep dialogue, has been shown to help individuals manage stress and enhance emotional well-being (Sulaeman et al., 2022). For example, an elderly person who lives alone may experience feelings of loneliness despite having neighbours nearby. The loss of a loved one, such as a spouse or close friend, can significantly impact their emotional well-being (Özer et al., 2022). Additionally, the physical

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decline associated with ageing, including mobility limitations and chronic illnesses, can contribute to psychological distress. Transcendental communication provides strategies for mitigating stress and anxiety related to these emotional challenges (Prasetyo et al., 2023). Through meditation, individuals can cultivate mindfulness and reduce intrusive negative thoughts, while visualisation creates calming or motivating mental imagery. Ensuring that older adults have access to and can effectively utilise these transcendental communication techniques is essential for improving their emotional well-being and overall quality of life (Abreu, T., Ribeiro, O., & Araújo, 2021).

Transcendental communication is a form of communication that employs techniques to achieve higher and deeper levels of consciousness (Upenieks, 2022). Its primary objective is to enhance emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being through profound reflective practices. The core elements of transcendental communication include meditation, visualisation (mentally constructing positive and calming images or scenarios), and deep, meaningful dialogue with oneself or others to explore and understand emotions, thoughts, and experiences. Additionally, it encompasses contemplative prayer or religious rituals that foster higher spiritual awareness and self-reflection, which involves introspection on personal experiences and emotions (Schreiber & Richards, 2023). Transcendental communication is rooted in the belief that meditation, prayer, and visualisation can facilitate human interaction with spiritual or divine entities. By incorporating these techniques, individuals can attain emotional and mental balance, ultimately enhancing their overall quality of life (Guerrero-Castañeda, R. F., Menezes, T. M. de O., do Prado, M. L., & Galindo-Soto, 2019). These methods have been widely applied across various fields, including therapy, education, and personal development (McCarthy, V. L., Hall, L. A., Crawford, T. N., & Connelly, 2018).

Transcendental communication offers a range of significant benefits for individuals, encompassing emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being (Jadidi et al., 2022). Personal experiences may shape older adults' perceptions of the effectiveness of these techniques (Yahya, F. B., Hassan, H. C., Panduragan, S. L., & Mat, 2024). Many elderly people report improved emotional well-being and reduced loneliness through active participation in Islamic studies or recitation (*pengajian*) groups (Fallah, 2024). Community support plays a crucial role in validating personal experiences, enhancing the perceived effectiveness of these practices (Azeredo, M. J. de, Filippin, L. I., & Boniatti, 2024).

Older adults experience changes after engaging in transcendental communication, often including enhanced emotional resilience. Participants frequently report improved emotional stability and coping mechanisms following regular participation in *pengajian* activities (McCarthy, V. L., Bowland, S., Hall, L. A., & Connelly, 2015). Increased social interaction within *pengajian* groups can also improve mental health outcomes by fostering a stronger sense of community belonging. The involvement of community members and health professionals is essential in facilitating transcendental communication practices. Community leaders and healthcare professionals can play a key role in organizing recitation groups and ensuring their accessibility for older participants. Additionally, they can provide the necessary resources and training to enhance the effectiveness of these practices, ensuring that older individuals receive the emotional support they need.

Despite these benefits, comprehensive studies do not examine the specific transcendental communication techniques employed in elderly *pengajian* groups. This research aims to address this gap by identifying the communication techniques that enhance transcendental communication among productive older adults, thereby promoting their mental well-being. This topic is particularly significant as it responds to the growing need for effective emotional support systems for the elderly, especially in Indonesia, where traditional values and communal practices are vital in social cohesion. As the population ages, there is an urgent need to develop strategies that integrate cultural and spiritual practices to improve mental health outcomes. Moreover, with increasing urbanization and shifting family structures, many elderly individuals may experience isolation, making community-based interventions such as *pengajian* groups particularly relevant. Over time, research on transcendental communication has expanded beyond a purely theological perspective to incorporate psychological and sociological dimensions. While early studies primarily examined religious practices from a spiritual standpoint, more recent research has explored their psychological impact on well-

being. This shift reflects a broader recognition of the role of spirituality in mental health care, particularly among vulnerable populations such as the elderly.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative approach using a case study method, enabling an in-depth examination of the phenomenon under study (Londoño-Cardozo & Pineda-Henao, 2024). The research location was purposely selected within several productive elderly *pengajian* communities in Karawang Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia. Data were collected through three primary techniques; In-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including productive elderly individuals, healthcare professionals, and community leaders. Interviews with productive elderly provided firsthand accounts of how transcendental communication influences their daily lives. Meanwhile, discussions with healthcare professionals offered a professional perspective on the role of transcendental communication in elderly care. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with elderly participants to explore the benefits and challenges of practising transcendental communication in greater depth. These discussions allowed participants to share personal experiences and insights on how effective communication fosters a sense of connection and understanding within the community. Participatory observation was conducted to observe transcendental communication activities within the elderly community. By analysing real-time interactions and group dynamics, researchers gained deeper insight into how transcendental communication is practiced daily. This method also enabled researchers to observe how the elderly support one another and build strong social relationships through these practices.

The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis (Gustafsson, 2024), allowing researchers to identify key patterns and themes highlighting transcendental communication's significance within productive elderly communities in Indonesia. To enhance the reliability and validity of the findings, data triangulation was employed, comparing data from multiple sources, including interviews, focus group discussions, and observations (Niwa, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the impact of transcendental communication on the emotional well-being of elderly individuals participating in a *pengajian* group in Indonesia. Using a case study approach, the research focused on a productive elderly *pengajian* group in Karawang Regency, West Java Province. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 10 elderly participants aged 58 to 65, categorised into two groups: key informants (seven individuals) who actively participated throughout the research process and additional informants (three individuals). Additionally, interviews were conducted with *pengajian* community leaders and healthcare professionals to provide a broader perspective (See Table 1).

Table 1. Informant Background

Initial	Age	Category	Role In research
SN	68	Key Informant	Actively participated throughout the research process
LS	64	Key Informant	Actively participated throughout the research process
ID	60	Key Informant	Actively participated throughout the research process
IM	60	Key Informant	Actively participated throughout the research process
EP	60	Key Informant	Actively participated throughout the research process
DF	68	Additional Informants	Provided additional interviews to strengthen the data
YN	60	Additional Informants	Provided additional interviews to strengthen the data
TM	60	Additional Informants	Provided additional interviews to strengthen the data
NR	60	Key Informant	Offered leadership perspectives on the community
DS	50	Key Informant	Provided professional insights on transcendental communication in elderly care

Source: Result of the researcher's processing, 2024

The study began with an interview phase to explore the experiences, perspectives, and emotions of elderly participants regarding their involvement in *pengajian* and Quran memorisation. The motivations for participating in these activities included religious devotion and seeking closeness to Allah, opportunities for social interaction, and engaging in meaningful activities post-retirement, particularly for those living far from their children and grandchildren.

A concrete example of the positive impact of transcendental communication is the sense of happiness and spiritual connection experienced by elderly participants as they learn and memorise Quranic verses together. They find solace in reciting the verses and develop a sense of belonging within the group. Moreover, participation in these sessions allows them to share life experiences, provide mutual support, and foster a strong sense of togetherness.

The significance of *pengajian* for the elderly is also reflected in its role as a platform for continuous learning and religious enrichment, contributing to their spiritual fulfilment. Furthermore, *pengajian* maintains mental and emotional well-being, as social engagement and productive activities help mitigate the risks of depression and loneliness in older adults (Dasgupta et al., 2023). Through participation in recitation groups, elderly individuals feel valued and socially accepted, and remain actively engaged, all of which contribute to their overall emotional well-being.

These interactions strengthen the positive perception of their participation, enhancing their emotional well-being (Bouchard et al., 2021). Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism theory highlights the importance of social interaction in shaping individual meaning and actions (Rauty, 2019). Blumer argued that society is constructed through interpersonal interactions, where shared symbols, such as language, gestures, and rituals, play a central role in understanding human behaviour (Riani & Zarkasi, 2023). Individuals are not passive recipients of social structures but active agents who shape and are shaped by their social interactions (Erber, 2019).

Blumer's theory is based on three key premises (Breton, 2024). The first premise states that individuals act based on the meanings they attribute to experiences. For elderly participants, *pengajian* and Quran memorisation are not merely routine activities but deeply meaningful acts of worship that foster spiritual closeness to God. This spiritual engagement is a powerful motivator, reinforcing their commitment to these practices. The second premise asserts that meaning is derived from social interaction. Within *pengajian*, elderly participants engage with fellow members, community leaders, and healthcare professionals. Through dialogue, sharing life experiences, and mutual support, they develop a shared understanding of the significance of recitation (Ramsey, 2001). The social environment of *pengajian* creates a space for relationship-building, reducing loneliness, and fostering a sense of community. These interactions reinforce the positive meaning of their participation, allowing them to share life experiences, feel a deep sense of togetherness, and build solidarity with fellow members (Bouchard et al., 2021). The third premise emphasises that individuals continuously interpret and refine meanings through interactions. Elderly individuals facing retirement and potential social isolation perceive *pengajian* as a way to fill their time with purposeful and meaningful activities. They actively construct meaning around their life situations and engage in practices that fulfil their spiritual and social needs. They maintain intellectual engagement, deepen their religious knowledge, and sustain emotional resilience by participating in *pengajian* and Quran memorisation. The role of *pengajian* in fostering religious learning, maintaining mental health, and reducing the risk of depression and loneliness underscores its significance for the well-being of elderly individuals.

Religious symbols, such as Quranic verses, prayers, and rituals, hold profound meaning for the elderly. Through social interactions in *pengajian*, these symbolic meanings are continuously explored and enriched. The elderly do not merely memorise sacred texts; they interpret and internalise them daily. These social interactions and the shared construction of meaning contribute significantly to their emotional well-being. Feeling valued, accepted, and socially engaged enhances their overall sense of fulfilment and happiness. The combination of spiritual connectedness with God and social connectedness with others fosters a deep sense of peace and joy. Elderly participants experience emotional comfort and support by reciting the Quran and engaging with their community. Blumer's symbolic interactionism theory helps explain how the elderly's participation in *pengajian* and Quran memorisation emerges from meaning construction through social interaction. This activity holds dual significance for them: as an act of worship and a means of social engagement. The meaning of these activities is not static but evolves through continuous interaction and lived experiences within the *pengajian* group. Engagement with fellow members, community leaders, and healthcare professionals reinforces the positive perception of these activities, ultimately enhancing the emotional well-being of elderly individuals. By participating in meaningful activities, they spend their post-

retirement with meaningful activities, reduce loneliness, and improve their overall quality of life (Hubbard et al., 2003).

Motive to participate in Pengajian and Quran memorisation

This study found that elderly individuals have various motivations for participating in *pengajian* and Quran memorisation activities. One of the primary motives is the pursuit of inner peace. Many elderly participants perceive these activities as a source of calmness and tranquillity in navigating life's challenges. One informant stated, "Every time I participate in *pengajian* and memorise the Quran, my heart feels calmer and more peaceful". Another key motivation is the desire to strengthen their spiritual connection with God. Through *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) and memorisation of holy verses, they feel a deepened sense of closeness to God and a greater understanding of life's meaning. One participant shared, "By remembering and memorising the holy verses, I feel closer to God and understand more about the meaning of life".

Social interaction within *pengajian* also plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of community among the elderly (Wijaya et al., 2024). *Pengajian* allows participants to build stronger social relationships, reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation. One informant explained, "I don't feel lonely because I can share stories and experiences with my friends at *pengajian*." Additionally, *pengajian* is a source of emotional and moral support, helping participants encourage and uplift one another. A participant expressed, "*Pengajian* gives me encouragement and moral support. We strengthen each other".

Furthermore, elderly individuals expect *pengajian* and Quran memorisation to enhance their emotional well-being. These spiritual practices help alleviate stress and anxiety while fostering greater happiness. One informant noted, "After regularly attending *pengajian*, I feel happier and calmer". Participation in *pengajian* also provides a sense of fulfilment and communal belonging, contributing to overall life satisfaction. Another participant affirmed, "The *Pengajian* makes me feel happier and more satisfied with my life".

In addition to spiritual and emotional motivations, many elderly individuals join *pengajian* to deepen their religious knowledge. They are driven to better understand the Quran and apply its teachings daily. One participant stated, "I want to understand the Quran better and practice its teachings daily". Moreover, *pengajian* serves as a means to combat loneliness. The regular social interactions within these gatherings provide a sense of companionship and belonging, reducing feelings of isolation. An informant shared, "I no longer feel lonely when attending the *pengajian*. Some friends always accompany me".

The leader of the *pengajian* community explained that the *pengajian* activities are designed to provide spiritual and social support for the elderly. They believe that transcendental communication through recitation fosters a stronger connection between the elderly, God, and their community. Each session invites participants to reflect on the meaning of life and deepen their spiritual engagement, helping them attain inner peace and a greater sense of fulfilment.

"We always organise activities involving the elderly, such as *dhikr* and spiritual discussions, to maintain their motivation and well-being", stated one of the community leaders. Additionally, these spiritual discussions offer the elderly an opportunity to share their life experiences, fostering strong emotional bonds among participants. This, in turn, reinforces a sense of togetherness and solidarity within the community. Community leaders also acknowledge the significance of donations from supporters, as these contributions help strengthen communal ties and solidarity among members. Donations are often allocated toward purchasing religious materials or organising charitable activities for those in need. These efforts serve as tangible expressions of care and mutual support within the *pengajian* community.

Health workers involved in the study highlighted the positive impact of transcendental communication on the mental and emotional well-being of the elderly. They observed a reduction in symptoms of depression and anxiety among elderly individuals actively engaged in these activities. For instance, some participants who initially experienced loneliness and anxiety reported feeling greater happiness and inner peace after joining the recitation sessions.

"We see significant improvements in the mental health of elderly individuals who regularly participate in transcendental communication activities. They appear calmer and happier", noted a health worker. Additionally, health professionals guide and support the elderly in their transcendental communication practices, including relaxation and meditation

techniques. This guidance helps participants understand and integrate spiritual concepts more effectively into their daily lives.

Alfred Schutz's perspective on motives is essential in understanding social action from a phenomenological standpoint. Schutz, a sociologist and social philosopher, examined how individuals ascribe meaning to their social world through subjective experiences (Brown, 2015). In his framework, he differentiated between two types of motives in human action, as follows– 'Because' Motives: These motives refer to past experiences or reasons influencing an individual's actions. They are shaped by historical factors or previous experiences that continue to affect behaviour. For instance, elderly individuals may attend *pengajian* groups due to long-standing family traditions or past religious experiences that have shaped their beliefs. The 'because' motive explains actions based on existing causes, offering a retrospective understanding of why an individual behaves in a certain way, rooted in prior experiences. 'In-Order-To' Motives: These motives relate to future-oriented goals or intentions that individuals seek to achieve through their present actions. An elderly person may engage in transcendental communication and *pengajian* to attain inner peace and enhance emotional well-being. 'In order to' motives explain actions based on the objectives individuals hope to accomplish, providing a prospective orientation toward expected outcomes.

Schutz emphasised that to deeply understand human action, it is essential to consider an individual's subjective experience (Belvedere, 2019). This means recognising how individuals assign meaning to their actions within a social context. According to Schutz, social action is not merely an automatic response to external stimuli but rather the result of personal interpretation and meaning making (Harrington, 2000). Additionally, he highlighted the significance of the lifeworld– the everyday, taken-for-granted reality in which individuals interact. Within this framework, motives play a crucial role in shaping social interactions and understanding the actions of others (Gyllai, 2022).

By examining 'because' and 'in order to' motives, we can interpret social actions more comprehensively, bridging past experiences with future aspirations. In the context of this study, Schutz's theory provided a valuable lens for analysing the underlying reasons behind older adults' participation in transcendental communication and recitation. This includes both the past experiences that drive their engagement (the 'because' motive) and the goals they aspire to achieve, such as emotional well-being and inner peace (the 'in-order-to' motive).

From Schutz's perspective, 'because' motives reflect past experiences that shape present actions. Elderly individuals involved in *pengajian* often have a strong spiritual background and a belief that religious activities contribute to inner peace. Many have previously experienced the benefits of such practices, such as a sense of tranquillity or social connectedness, which now motivate continued participation. Thus, in this context, "because" motives comprise historical influences and personal experiences that inform and sustain their engagement in religious activities.

In contrast, the 'in-order-to' motive refers to the goals or intentions individuals seek to achieve through their current actions. Elderly individuals participating in *pengajian* aim to deepen their spiritual connection, attain inner peace, and experience greater happiness. Additionally, they seek social support from fellow members of the community. One community leader explained that activities such as *dhikr* and spiritual discussions are specifically designed to nurture the motivation and well-being of the elderly. This 'in-order-to' motive reflects their hope that engaging in transcendental communication will help them achieve these objectives. According to Schutz, the lifeworld refers to the everyday social context individuals take for granted. Within the lifeworld of older adults involved in *pengajian*, spiritual activities and communal gatherings become integral aspects of their daily routines, reinforcing their identity as individuals of faith and as members of a close-knit community. Spiritual discussions and opportunities to share life experiences foster strong emotional bonds, strengthening their sense of belonging and solidarity.

Elderly experience

Positive experience

The results of the interviews indicate that transcendental communication through *pengajian* and Quran memorisation positively impacts the emotional well-being of the elderly. Participation in *pengajian* fosters a strong sense of community and social support, helping to reduce loneliness

and enhance self-confidence. The elderly felt a deep connection to Allah and reported profound spiritual experiences. Additionally, they expressed happiness when donors occasionally provide food treats or organise visits to sick friends, fostering a sense of gratitude and well-being. They also feel like they have found a new family and are saddened when a member gets sick or has a misfortune. Such acts of kindness reinforce their appreciation for health and community support.

Beyond religious study, *pengajian* is a platform for sharing stories and life experiences, creating strong emotional bonds among participants and preventing social isolation. When a member faces difficulties, the group comes together to offer moral and material support. For instance, when an elderly participant falls ill, others visit and assist with daily needs, further strengthening their sense of solidarity.

Moreover, participation in *pengajian* extends beyond religious activities, enabling the elderly to engage with the broader community. They contribute to social initiatives such as distributing groceries to needy people or participating in charity events. These activities provide a profound sense of satisfaction and purpose, allowing them to support others actively. The spiritual experiences from *pengajian* and Quran memorization also contribute to inner peace. Through these activities, the elderly cultivate patience and gratitude, learning to accept life's challenges with resilience. This fosters optimism and enthusiasm despite the limitations of older age. Thus, it can be concluded that transcendental communication through Quran recitation enhances emotional well-being and empowers the elderly to remain active, socially engaged, and contributing members of society.

Negative experience

However, the study also identified several challenges faced by some elderly individuals. For instance, many experience difficulties memorising the Quran, particularly as they age. They may struggle to memorise the verses and fully comprehend their meanings. Additionally, some elderly individuals face confusion and difficulty adapting to life after retirement, feeling a loss of direction or purpose after relinquishing their long-held work routines. In some cases, retirees even forget they are no longer employed and unintentionally wear their work uniforms, illustrating the difficulty of letting go of past mindsets and habits. Furthermore, some elderly individuals feel burdened by the Quran memorisation targets set for them, experiencing pressure or struggling to meet the expectations of their recitation groups. Others perceive that their peers engage in too many activities outside the *pengajian* context. For example, some may feel that spending time on leisure activities, such as sightseeing, detracts from their focus and concentration on understanding the Quran. These negative experiences highlight the need for religious learning approaches tailored to the elderly's needs and limitations.

Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian philosopher and literary theorist, is known for his concept of dialogism, which emphasises that meaning is created through dialogue between diverse voices and perspectives (Al-Doory et al., 2022). In Bakhtin's view, every individual participates in an ongoing social dialogue, and meaning is inherently contextual and intersubjective (McCaw, 2022). Similarly, Martin Buber underscores the significance of authentic dialogical relationships, wherein individuals interact with openness and mutual recognition of one another as subjects (Hadad, 2023). In the context of these research findings, Bakhtin's theory helps explain how meaning in *pengajian* and Quran memorisation is constructed through dialogue among the elderly. Dialogicity emerges as the elderly engage in recitation, share life experiences, and discuss the meaning of Quranic verses. The diversity of voices and perspectives (heteroglossia) within the group enriches collective understanding and meaning-making. Elderly participants often experience a profound spiritual connection when memorising and reciting the Quran together, finding comfort in chanting the verses and strengthening their bonds with fellow group members.

Buber's concept of the 'I-Thou' relationship further illustrates the depth of interaction within these groups (*I and Thou*, 2023). Through *pengajian*, elderly individuals engage in open and respectful interactions with their peers. This 'I-Thou' dynamic is reflected in the deep dialogue and social support fostered within the group, which helps alleviate loneliness and enhances emotional well-being. Participating in *pengajian* allows the elderly to share life experiences, support one another, and cultivate a strong sense of community. This relational dynamic fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance. Additionally, the dialogical interactions

within recitation groups enable the elderly to continue learning and deepen their religious knowledge, contributing to their mental and emotional well-being. The significance of *pengajian* for the elderly is evident in its role in enhancing religious understanding, preserving mental health, and reducing the risk of depression and loneliness.

Symbolism in religious rituals, such as Quranic verses and prayers, holds profound significance for the elderly. Through social dialogue in *pengajian*, these symbolic meanings are explored and enriched. Older adults do not merely memorise the Quran but also interpret and integrate it into their daily lives. Social interaction and the co-construction of meaning through dialogical engagement contribute to their emotional well-being. By feeling valued, accepted, and socially engaged, the elderly experience an overall improvement in emotional health. The interplay between spiritual connectedness with God and social connectedness with others fosters a deep sense of fulfilment and happiness. The elderly find peace and joy in reciting the Quran together while receiving support from their community. Through social and spiritual dialogue, they develop profound meanings associated with recitation, perceiving it as an act of worship and a means of social interaction. These interactions enhance their emotional well-being and strengthen authentic relationships within the *pengajian* community.

Exploring the meaning of life: Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy perspective

Viktor Frankl's concept of logotherapy emphasises the search for meaning in life as central to emotional and mental well-being (Bořilčá, 2024). Frankl argued that individuals can find meaning through experiences, love, and suffering (McLafferty, 2024). For instance, a person who experiences career failure may interpret it as an opportunity for learning and growth. In the context of this study, Quran recitation and memorisation provide older adults with a renewed sense of purpose, helping them feel more meaningful, productive, and fulfilled. Regular engagement in Quran recitation fosters a deep sense of inner peace and happiness, as understanding the holy verses offers guidance, direction, and clarity in life. Moreover, social support from the recitation community aligns with Frankl's emphasis on the significance of human relationships in the search for meaning (Pfeifer, 2021). By participating in a *pengajian* group, older adults not only deepen their understanding of the Quran's teachings but also experience the warmth and support of their fellow members. This strengthens their connection with others, providing opportunities to share experiences and expand their social networks (Humer, E., Kisler, I. M., Bach, D., Schimböck, W., Pieh, C., & Probst, 2024). Overall, Quran recitation not only grants new meaning to the lives of older individuals but also enriches their well-being by fostering happiness and a deeper sense of belonging.

Making meaning of life through experience: Alfred Schutz's Phenomenological perspective

Alfred Schutz's work focuses on how individuals construct meaning from subjective experiences in everyday life (Kudernatsch, 2023). He emphasised that meaning arises not only from social interactions but also from personal, individual experiences (López, 2021). In the context of *pengajian*, the social interactions between elderly individuals and their community play a crucial role in shaping new meanings and reinforcing their sense of belonging. When the elderly participate in *pengajian* activities, they engage in collective learning, provide mutual support, and build close relationships. This meaning-making process extends beyond the social dimension to include spiritual aspects (Deep, 2020). Through Quran memorization and spiritual reflection, older adults develop a closer connection with God, leading to a greater sense of happiness and fulfilment. Spiritual experiences within the recitation setting serve not only to deepen religious understanding but also as a medium to enhance the overall quality of life for the elderly. This suggests that through social interactions and spiritual engagement in recitation activities, older individuals can cultivate a stronger connection with themselves, others, and God, ultimately leading to a deeper sense of meaning and well-being.

Islamic meditation and breathing practices to reduce stress and anxiety levels in the elderly

Reducing stress and anxiety in the elderly can be achieved through various Islamic meditation and visualisation practices that have been proven effective. For instance, *tafakur* (contemplation) and *dhikr* (remembrance of God) are important means for older adults to attain inner peace. One research participant reported that each time she engaged in *tafakur* and *dhikr*, she experienced

a profound sense of tranquillity and a significant reduction in stress. This finding reinforces that meditation and spiritual practices can positively impact mental and emotional well-being. In addition, deep breathing techniques and Islamic relaxation practices play a crucial role in helping older adults manage anxiety. By practising controlled breathing regularly, older individuals can activate the body's relaxation response, reducing stress hormone levels. Another participant shared that incorporating deep breathing and Islamic relaxation techniques into her routine led to a much deeper sense of calm and a marked decrease in anxiety. Psychological theories support this claim, explaining that deep breathing helps regulate the sympathetic nervous system, which triggers the 'fight or flight' response, promoting relaxation and alleviating anxiety. The combination of Islamic meditation and visualisation with deep breathing and relaxation techniques demonstrates significant potential in assisting the elderly in managing stress and anxiety more effectively. Future research should continue to explore the benefits of these practices and develop innovative ways to integrate them into the daily lives of older adults to enhance their overall quality of life.

Increased self-awareness, optimism, and inner calm

Studies on the impact of transcendental communication have revealed its significant influence on enhancing self-awareness, optimism, and inner calm in the elderly. The findings are based on in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including leaders of elderly *pengajian* communities, participants, and medical professionals involved in their care. The elderly reported that engaging in spiritual practices such as *dhikr* and *tafakur* allowed them to better understand themselves, approach life's challenges with a more positive outlook, and achieve profound inner peace. Resilience, the ability to endure, recover, and thrive amid life's stresses and difficulties, is strengthened by internal and external protective factors. Internal factors such as optimism, self-awareness, and emotional regulation, alongside external factors such as social support and a nurturing environment, play a crucial role in fostering resilience (Abate et al., 2024).

In this study, transcendental communication functions as an internal protective factor, reinforcing the resilience of older adults. For example, increased self-awareness through spiritual engagement enables older individuals to better understand and manage their emotions. The optimism derived from spiritual practices enhances their ability to confidently navigate life's challenges (Joosten et al., 2024). Furthermore, the inner calm achieved through *dhikr* and *tafakur* significantly contributes to emotional stability and the capacity to remain composed in stressful situations. Beyond these internal benefits, the presence of a *pengajian* group as a supportive community serves as a vital external protective factor, further strengthening the resilience of the elderly. Social interactions and mutual support among group members and community leaders foster a safe and nurturing environment (Wambua et al., 2024). Additionally, the involvement of medical professionals provides an additional layer of expert support, further reinforcing the elderly's social networks.

The findings of this study affirm that transcendental communication not only enhances the emotional well-being of older adults but also bolsters their resilience by fostering internal and external protective factors. Resilience theory underscores how the interplay between spiritual practices and community support helps older adults cope with distress and improve their quality of life (Serdiuk, 2024). These results highlight the importance of a holistic approach that integrates spiritual and social dimensions to enhance the emotional well-being of older adults in Indonesia.

Policy recommendations

Health worker training

Periodic training for health workers is essential for improving the quality of services provided to the community, particularly regarding transcendental communication techniques and emotional support for the elderly. These techniques enable health workers to develop greater sensitivity and empathy toward the elderly, allowing them to deliver more personalised and targeted care. Additionally, the training aims to enhance health workers' capacity to support older adults' emotional well-being. For instance, introducing innovative strategies such as music or art therapy can help create a more comfortable and emotionally engaging environment for older adults. By equipping health workers with these skills, the provision of care will become more holistic and attuned to the psychological needs of the elderly. This improvement will enhance

the quality of life for older adults and strengthen the relationship between health workers and elderly patients. Consequently, such training will benefit not only healthcare professionals but also society.

Improved mental health services

Strengthening mental health services is crucial in promoting the well-being of the elderly. One effective approach is to integrate transcendental communication practices into mental health services. These practices can assist older adults in gaining a deeper understanding of themselves and managing various mental health challenges. Expanding access to transcendental communication programs within healthcare facilities and community settings is equally important. For example, organising regular transcendental communication workshops in health centres or hospitals frequented by older adults can provide them with easier access to relevant information and guidance regarding their mental well-being. Enhancing mental health services and increasing elderly access to transcendental communication programs are expected to contribute significantly to maintaining mental well-being among the elderly. This effort requires collaboration among healthcare professionals, families, and the broader community to improve the overall quality of life for the elderly.

Community education campaign

Public education campaigns highlighting the benefits of transcendental communication for the emotional well-being of the elderly are crucial for enhancing their quality of life within society. Transcendental communication, which transcends physical and material boundaries, can profoundly impact the emotional well-being of the elderly. For example, practising transcendental communication can foster deeper emotional connections between the elderly and their family and friends, enhancing their sense of belonging and overall happiness. Moreover, raising awareness about the importance of social and emotional support for the elderly is essential. Social support encompasses physical, emotional, and social assistance, all of which contribute to the well-being of older adults. Adequate social support can help the elderly feel safer and more protected in their daily lives while improving their ability to cope with emotional difficulties. By increasing public awareness of the significance of transcendental communication and social support for the elderly, the elderly can experience a higher quality of life that is both fulfilling and meaningful. Through comprehensive and well-structured educational campaigns, society can cultivate an environment that fosters the growth, well-being, and overall inclusion of the elderly.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully examines the impact of transcendental communication on the emotional well-being of the elderly in Indonesia, employing a case study approach within an elderly *pengajian* group. Data collected through in-depth interviews, FGDs, and participatory observations reveal various motives and benefits associated with the elderly's engagement in transcendental communication practices, including congregational prayer, Quran memorization, and reflective dialogue. The findings indicate that transcendental communication has a significant positive effect on the emotional well-being of the elderly. One of the key findings is that transcendental communication practices help reduce stress and anxiety among the elderly. Participants who regularly engage in recitation activities report experiencing a greater sense of calm and peace, which contributes to a reduction in symptoms of anxiety and depression. This finding is further supported by health workers, who observed noticeable improvements in the mental health of elderly individuals involved in these activities.

These findings suggest that transcendental communication serves as an effective coping mechanism for managing stress and anxiety among the elderly. Additionally, the study finds that transcendental communication enhances self-awareness and fosters a sense of optimism among the elderly. Through spiritual practices such as *dhikr* and *tafakur*, the elderly develop a deeper understanding of their emotions and thoughts. Many participants report increased optimism, enabling them to approach life's challenges more positively. One informant said, "Every time I attend *pengajian* and memorise the Quran, my heart feels calmer and more peaceful." These feelings of tranquillity and optimism are crucial in improving emotional well-being. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of social and emotional support gained through interactions

within the community. *Pengajian* activities allow older adults to connect with others, fostering closer social relationships and reducing feelings of loneliness. This social support system strengthens a sense of togetherness and solidarity within the *pengajian* community, further reinforced by health workers' contributions and guidance. An analysis of these findings through the lens of resilience theory proposed by Emmy Werner and Michael Rutter suggests that transcendental communication practices act as a protective factor, enhancing the elderly's ability to cope with stress and life pressures. Resilience theory posits that individuals with strong internal resources, such as high self-awareness and optimism, are better equipped to endure and recover from adversity. In this context, transcendental communication functions as an effective coping mechanism, strengthening internal protective factors and fostering emotional resilience among the elderly.

Thus, transcendental communication not only enhances the emotional well-being of the elderly but also fortifies their resilience by developing internal and external protective factors. This study underscores the substantial potential of transcendental communication as an effective strategy for improving the emotional well-being of the elderly in Indonesia. The findings emphasise the importance of integrating spiritual practices into daily life to enhance the elderly's quality of life and emotional resilience. Additionally, this research provides policy recommendations to support the broader implementation of transcendental communication programs, encouraging collaboration between healthcare professionals and community organisations to cultivate a supportive environment for the elderly. Hence, the study makes a valuable contribution to developing emotional well-being initiatives for older adults in Indonesia.

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