



The Practice of Fasting and Dhikr in Developing Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ)

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Abstract :

This study aims to explore the role of tirakat (spiritual fasting) and wirid (recitation of dhikr) as practices to develop Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ). ESQ combines emotional and spiritual intelligence, aligning with Islamic principles to foster strong moral character and deeper spiritual connections. The research employs a qualitative approach to understand the phenomenon of tirakat and wirid as tools to enhance ESQ. Data collection was conducted through observations, interviews, and documentation, with data analysis using Miles and Huberman's model, consisting of data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Triangulation techniques ensured validity and reliability, including source, method, and time triangulation. The results show that tirakat and wirid significantly contribute to developing emotional and spiritual intelligence. From an emotional perspective, these practices improve self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and empathy. Participants demonstrated better emotional control, increased patience, and a more thoughtful response to challenges. From a spiritual perspective, tirakat and wirid cultivate sincerity (ikhlas), patience (sabar), and a stronger connection with God. Participants reported greater focus in worship, improved discipline, and a deeper sense of purpose in life. This study highlights the importance of tirakat and wirid as systematic practices for developing ESQ. By integrating these practices, individuals can cultivate emotional maturity, moral character, and spiritual intelligence, which are essential for facing life's challenges with resilience and ethical awareness.

Keywords : Tirakat, Wirid, Emotional Spiritual Quotient, Spiritual Development, Emotional Intelligence

Abstrak :

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peran *tirakat* (puasa spiritual) dan *wirid* (bacaan *dzikir*) sebagai praktik untuk mengembangkan Kecerdasan Emosional dan Spiritual (ESQ). ESQ menggabungkan kecerdasan emosional dan spiritual, selaras dengan prinsip-prinsip Islam untuk membentuk karakter moral yang kuat dan hubungan spiritual yang lebih mendalam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif untuk memahami fenomena *tirakat* dan *wirid* sebagai alat pengembangan ESQ. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, dengan analisis data menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman, yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Teknik triangulasi, termasuk triangulasi sumber, metode, dan waktu, digunakan untuk memastikan validitas dan reliabilitas data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *tirakat* dan *wirid* secara signifikan berkontribusi pada pengembangan kecerdasan emosional dan spiritual. Dari perspektif emosional, praktik ini meningkatkan kesadaran diri, pengendalian diri, motivasi, dan empati. Peserta menunjukkan pengendalian emosi yang lebih baik, peningkatan kesabaran, dan respons yang lebih bijak terhadap tantangan. Dari perspektif spiritual, *tirakat* dan *wirid* menumbuhkan keikhlasan (*ikhlas*), kesabaran (*sabar*), serta hubungan

yang lebih kuat dengan Tuhan. Peserta melaporkan peningkatan fokus dalam ibadah, disiplin yang lebih baik, dan rasa tujuan hidup yang lebih mendalam. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya *tirakat* dan *wirid* sebagai praktik sistematis untuk mengembangkan ESQ. Dengan mengintegrasikan praktik ini, individu dapat menumbuhkan kedewasaan emosional, karakter moral, dan kecerdasan spiritual, yang penting untuk menghadapi tantangan hidup dengan ketahanan dan kesadaran etis.

Kata Kunci: *Tirakat, Wirid, Kecerdasan Emosional dan Spiritual (ESQ), Pengembangan Spiritual, Kecerdasan Emosional.*

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to explore one form of developing Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) through fasting (*tirakat*) and *dhikr* practices in Islamic education. These practices are significant components of Islamic tradition aimed at enhancing spiritual intelligence and emotional maturity. The concept of *tirakat*, which involves self-restraint through fasting and regular *dhikr*, is regarded as a form of spiritual discipline that trains individuals to control desires, purify the soul, and strengthen their connection with Allah. This spiritual approach serves as a means of character development, aligning with the broader goal of Islamic education to nurture individuals with ESQ—a balance of emotional and spiritual intelligence (Rochmat et al., 2023).

GINANJAR AGUSTIAN defines ESQ as the integration of emotional and spiritual intelligence to produce satisfaction for oneself and others. In the Islamic context, spiritual intelligence develops through a strong connection with Allah, as emphasized by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who regarded spiritual purity as the foundation of goodness. The heart, as the core of spirituality, must be purified and remain connected to Allah to foster extraordinary strength, responsibility, and resilience in one's actions and decisions (Ginanjar & Kurniawati, 2020).

From a psychological perspective, fasting serves as therapy for emotional, intellectual, and spiritual intelligence. It improves mental health, self-control, stress management, and inner resilience. Regular fasting and *dhikr* also enhance spiritual values, guiding individuals to purify their hearts and achieve greater emotional and spiritual balance. Research by Siti Nurbaiti emphasizes the positive impact of emotional and spiritual intelligence in religious education on shaping students' character (Safitri et al., 2023).

In Yusaul Anwar's research, it is revealed that emotional refinement can be achieved through life experiences such as *muhasabah* (self-reflection), *mujahadah* (spiritual training), *safar* (travel), *dhikr* and contemplation, fasting, and *zuhud* (renouncing worldly matters). This study shares similarities as both focus on Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ). However, there is a notable difference: the previous study emphasizes individual ESQ and the teaching of *Akhlaqul Karimah* (noble character education), while this study seeks to apply the concept of fasting (*tirakat*) and *dhikr* as learning methods in an Islamic boarding school context (Fiddari, N. H., & Turmudi, 2020).

There are five relevant previous studies related to the development of Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) through fasting (*tirakat*) and *dhikr*, Ginanjar Agustian (2001) – In his book "ESQ: Emotional Spiritual Quotient", Ginanjar Agustian introduces ESQ as the integration of emotional and spiritual

intelligence, which creates balance and satisfaction for oneself and others. He argues that a strong spiritual connection with Allah is the foundation for achieving emotional control, responsibility, and resilience in both personal and professional life. This study highlights the role of spirituality in fostering personal growth and decision-making rooted in moral and ethical principles (Ginanjari & Kurniawati, 2020).

Siti Nurbaiti (2015) – Siti Nurbaiti's research emphasizes the impact of emotional and spiritual intelligence in religious education on shaping students' character. She found that integrating spiritual practices such as *dhikr* and prayer enhances students' moral behavior, self-discipline, and empathy. The study concludes that spiritual education is instrumental in developing individuals with strong emotional and spiritual foundations, contributing to overall character formation (Nurbaiti, 2022).

Yusaul Anwar (2017) explores various methods for developing ESQ, including *muhasabah* (self-reflection), *mujahadah* (spiritual training), *dhikr*, contemplation, fasting, and *zuhud* (renunciation of worldly desires). He argues that these practices cultivate emotional balance and spiritual growth by encouraging individuals to connect deeply with their inner selves and Allah. The study focuses on ESQ as a pathway to building strong moral and ethical character. Zohar and Marshall (2000) – In "Spiritual Intelligence: The Ultimate Intelligence", Zohar and Marshall discuss spiritual intelligence as the ability to address questions of meaning, purpose, and values in life. They highlight how spiritual intelligence guides individuals in making choices aligned with their deeper values and transcendent goals. This study connects spiritual intelligence to emotional maturity, arguing that practices like meditation, contemplation, and spiritual disciplines promote self-awareness and resilience (Anwar, 2022).

Edi Saputra (2023) examine the role of fasting (*tirakat*) in enhancing spiritual intelligence and emotional control. Their research demonstrates that regular fasting not only improves self-discipline and emotional regulation but also strengthens spiritual awareness and connection with Allah. The study concludes that spiritual practices such as fasting and *dhikr* contribute significantly to fostering ESQ, enabling individuals to develop a balanced character and higher resilience in facing challenges (Saputra, 2023).

These studies collectively emphasize the role of spiritual practices, such as fasting and *dhikr*, in developing Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ). They underline the connection between spirituality and emotional intelligence, highlighting their importance in character development, self-control, and achieving a meaningful relationship with Allah. This study focuses on the role of fasting and *dhikr* as spiritual practices to develop ESQ. It investigates the concepts and methods of fasting and *dhikr* as tools for fostering emotional and spiritual maturity, ultimately leading to individuals with strong character, enhanced self-awareness, and closer relationships with Allah.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach to understand the phenomenology of spiritual and emotional development through fasting and *dhikr*. Qualitative research aims to gather detailed, in-depth information to

describe existing realities (Bungin, 2023). Data collection methods include observation, interviews, and documentation, analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model of data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity is ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time (Huberman & Miles, 1992).

The analysis involves direct interactions with teachers, religious leaders (*kiai*), and students while observing their practices of fasting and *dhikr*. This process captures both the conceptual framework and practical implementation of these spiritual practices as a means of developing ESQ.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Fasting and Dhikr Practices in Al-Hadi 2 Islamic Boarding School, Tambakberas Jombang

In Islamic education, it is generally emphasized that a learner must maintain purity of heart and avoid reprehensible traits to ensure successful acquisition of knowledge, especially religious studies. (Bungin, 2023) This is because knowledge from Allah is sacred and noble, and it is most fitting for those with pure hearts to absorb and utilize it for the benefit of others. As part of this educational approach, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), such as Al-Hadi 2, implement various strategies to ensure the spiritual and academic success of their students (*santri*) (Hidayah, 2020).

Beyond visible or external efforts, internal spiritual exercises are equally important. Such processes, referred to as *tirakat*, are recognized as acts of spiritual discipline (*laku prihatin*), involving specific religious practices aimed at suppressing desires and purifying the soul. These acts require individuals to forsake worldly pleasures for spiritual fulfillment and to gain closeness to Allah SWT. Imam Al-Ghazali emphasizes that the nature of *tirakat* varies for each individual but universally entails abandoning worldly desires, focusing on the heart, and engaging in constant remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*) (Koesmeiran & Utami, 2022).

At Al-Hadi 2, *tirakat* practices include fasting, consistent recitation of *wirid*, and serving the teachers (*kyai*) and the institution. These practices serve as a preliminary process for eradicating undesirable traits and preparing the soul for divine connection. By engaging in regular fasting and *wirid*, individuals gradually refine their character, channeling their energy away from unproductive activities. Fasting, in essence, involves both physical restraint—abstaining from food and drink—and spiritual purification, where individuals refrain from all actions prohibited by Allah and increase both obligatory and voluntary worship. *Wirid*, on the other hand, consists of routine recitations aimed at achieving a pure heart and fostering righteous behavior (Izzah, 2020).

At Pondok Pesantren Al-Hadi 2, fasting and *wirid* are guided and supervised by the *kyai* (spiritual leader). *Santri* must first receive *ijazah* (permission) from their *kyai* to practice these acts, symbolizing a connection to the spiritual lineage (*sanad*). The fasting process typically spans three consecutive days—Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday—and concludes with collective prayers and *wirid* recitation on the third day. These routines are repeated weekly to instill consistency and discipline among the students (Abdul Hamid, 13

Nopember 2023).

The *kyai* plays a significant role in prescribing the *wirid* recitations, which are often compilations of supplications, including *Hizb Nasr*, *Hizb Bahr*, and various *shalawat*. Before beginning the recitation, santri are required to perform at least two units of voluntary prayer (*sunnah*) and offer *tawasul* to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Through these practices, students develop habits that strengthen their spiritual and emotional resilience, enabling them to control their thoughts, actions, emotions, and behavior (Choiri et al., 2024).

The implementation of *tirakat* fasting and *wirid* has significant effects on the emotional and spiritual development of the students. KH Ainur Rofiq, the *kyai*, notes that these practices serve as character-building tools, helping students become more humble, patient, and focused on their studies. Testimonies from students indicate that regular *tirakat* practices enhance their ability to face challenges, improve focus, and cultivate greater self-discipline (KH. Ainnur Rofiq, 27 Nopember 2023).

The Development of ESQ (Emotional Spiritual Quotient) through Fasting and Dhikr

One of the methods to shape human character is by developing a person's Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ). A person with good morals can be identified by how they interact with others and their ability to strengthen their connection with their Creator. The development of ESQ among the santri (students) at Al-Hadi 2 Islamic Boarding School, Tambakberas Jombang, through fasting (*tirakat puasa*) and dhikr (*wirid*) serves as an essential step in shaping their personality.

The significance of ESQ is reflected in all the activities of the boarding school. (Hamid et al., 2022) The religious culture strategy is implemented to enhance ESQ through structured routines such as daily congregational prayers, *madrasah diniyah*, Quranic studies, and weekly activities like fasting, visiting the graves of *mashayikh* in Tambakberas, and annual visits to the tombs of Islamic saints. These routines become habits for the santri, which significantly enhance their spiritual intelligence. This is achieved by instilling *tawhid* (faith in the oneness of Allah), activating the heart to love and remain close to God, teaching self-awareness, patience, gratitude for responsibilities, and guiding students to rely on God in every hardship as a source of spiritual decision-making.

The enhancement of ESQ can be achieved in three main ways: *tazkiyah qalb* (*purifying the heart*) from blameworthy traits, filling it with praiseworthy qualities, practicing worship according to religious rules, and maintaining and strengthening faith as a path toward *taqwa* (Hamid et al., 2022). Since actions are a reflection of the heart, emotional intelligence inherently demonstrates the quality of one's spirituality.

1. Santri's Emotional Intelligence Condition

The emotional intelligence of santri can be observed through their consistency in fasting and performing dhikr with sincere intentions. The main purpose of fasting and dhikr is self-control. A person with a healthy soul has the ability to regulate internal and external impulses. Theoretically, fasting is a noble act of worship and an effective tool to strengthen and build emotional

intelligence. It increases motivation, strengthens willpower, teaches patience, clears the mind, and enables wise decision-making. Fasting also shapes a resilient and patient personality capable of dealing with problems, avoiding despair, and maintaining optimism for the future (Azzahra et al., 2024).

According to Daniel Goleman, there are five characteristics of emotional intelligence: 1) Self-awareness, the ability to identify and control one's feelings. Individuals who practice fasting and dhikr exhibit a high level of self-awareness and introspection. 2) Self-regulation, the ability to manage emotions for positive outcomes, remain in control, and delay gratification to achieve goals. 3) Motivation, the drive to achieve goals effectively and remain proactive while overcoming disappointments. 4) Empathy, the ability to understand others' perspectives and connect with people of diverse backgrounds. 5) Social skills, the ability to manage emotions in social interactions, read social cues, and build relationships (Nasution et al., 2023).

Based on the research conducted, the santri at Al-Hadi 2 Islamic Boarding School who consistently practice fasting and dhikr show high levels of emotional intelligence. This is reflected in their self-awareness, ability to regulate emotions, strong motivation to learn, empathy for others, and healthy relationships with peers. Santri with good emotional intelligence are also quick to adapt to their environment and avoid antisocial behavior, which can hinder their social and spiritual development.

2. Santri's Spiritual Intelligence Condition

Fasting is an act of worship that is carried out in private and with exclusivity for Allah. Those who fast with sincerity, patience, and awareness are able to train themselves to refrain from all things that invalidate the fast during a prescribed time (Agus Ali, Nurwadjah Ahmad EQ, 2022). Fasting has a positive impact on spirituality, but not all fasting can enhance spiritual intelligence. Only fasting that is performed with purity of heart and soul can elevate spiritual intelligence, as it involves the conscience. This kind of fasting serves as a powerful tool for purifying the heart and achieving higher spiritual consciousness (Agus Ali, Nurwadjah Ahmad EQ, 2022).

According to Zohar and Marshall, spiritual intelligence is the ability to address and resolve issues of meaning and values, placing one's behavior and life in a broader, deeper perspective. Spiritual intelligence allows individuals to make life choices that hold greater meaning and purpose. Zohar and Marshall define spiritual intelligence (SQ) as the capacity to address and resolve questions about meaning, purpose, and values. This intelligence allows individuals to frame their lives and behaviors within a broader, deeper context (Ali et al., 2022). It involves the ability to find meaning in hardship, maintain resilience in the face of challenges, and connect actions to a sense of ultimate purpose. Spiritual intelligence is not limited to religious contexts; it transcends rituals and is embedded in how individuals navigate their lives. It guides them to: Identify higher purposes behind their actions, Resolve conflicts of values with wisdom and compassion, Align their behaviors with their deeper beliefs, fostering integrity, Make conscious decisions that contribute to personal and communal

well-being. In the context of fasting, spiritual intelligence helps individuals move beyond the physical abstention to engage with the deeper moral and spiritual dimensions of this act. Fasting becomes a medium for self-reflection, leading to a greater understanding of oneself and one's relationship with Allah.

The research findings indicate that the santri at Al-Hadi 2 Islamic Boarding School experience spiritual growth through fasting and dhikr. This growth is seen in their heightened *taqwa* (*God-consciousness*), sincerity, and patience. Santri become more focused in their worship, more diligent in fulfilling their duties, and use their time effectively to strengthen their relationship with Allah. Despite not always understanding the scriptural basis of their practices, the santri believe that consistent fasting and dhikr will earn them a high spiritual status in both this world and the hereafter.

3. Santri's Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ)

Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) is the integration of three forms of intelligence—IQ, EQ, and SQ—that work together to create balance within an individual. (Panuntun, 2024) ESQ represents a new paradigm rooted in Islamic teachings, guiding individuals to combine cognitive, emotional, and spiritual intelligence in their actions and behaviors. The ESQ of santri at Al-Hadi 2 Islamic Boarding School is evident in their active participation in activities such as fasting and dhikr. Through these consistent practices, the santri develop the core values of ESQ. Those with high spiritual intelligence are characterized by respectful behavior towards teachers, administrators, and peers. They prioritize good manners when interacting with teachers and follow the rules of the boarding school. Moreover, they display strong motivation to study and improve themselves, reflecting the integration of emotional and spiritual intelligence in their daily lives (Fiddari & Turmudi, 2020).

Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) is a comprehensive concept that integrates three dimensions of intelligence (Intellectual Quotient (IQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ), and Spiritual Quotient (SQ)) to create a balanced and harmonious individual. This integration emphasizes the holistic development of cognitive, emotional, and spiritual aspects, enabling individuals to lead meaningful and purposeful lives. In the context of Islamic teachings, ESQ is not just about intellectual achievements or emotional regulation but also about aligning one's actions and decisions with spiritual values and principles.

At Al-Hadi 2 Islamic Boarding School, the development of ESQ among santri (Islamic boarding school students) is actively cultivated through consistent participation in activities such as fasting (*tirakat puasa*) and dhikr (*wirid*). These practices serve as powerful tools for nurturing the core values of ESQ, helping students internalize moral principles, self-discipline, and a deeper connection with their Creator.

At Al-Hadi 2 Islamic Boarding School, the ESQ of the santri is cultivated through a structured framework of daily, weekly, and annual activities. The school environment fosters an atmosphere where Islamic values are embedded in all aspects of life. Key activities contributing to ESQ development include: 1) Fasting (*Tirakat Puasa*): This practice teaches self-discipline, patience, and a sense

of gratitude. By restraining their physical desires, santri learn to develop inner strength and focus their energies on spiritual growth. 2) Dhikr (*Wirid*): Regular recitation of dhikr reinforces mindfulness of Allah, calming the heart and aligning one's thoughts and actions with spiritual principles. 3) Adherence to Rules: Following the boarding school's rules helps inculcate a sense of responsibility and accountability, which are essential aspects of emotional and spiritual maturity. 4) Good Manners and Respect: Santri are encouraged to prioritize good manners (*akhlak*) in their interactions, particularly with teachers, administrators, and peers (AH & Ashoumi, 2019). Respectful behavior reflects their emotional balance and spiritual grounding. These practices enable the santri to integrate Islamic teachings into their daily routines, transforming religious rituals into meaningful habits that contribute to their overall character development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the practice of fasting (*tirakat puasa*) and dhikr (*wirid*) serves as both a form of self-discipline and a method for developing the Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) of santri. At Al-Hadi 2 Islamic Boarding School, these practices are performed with specific guidelines, including seeking permission or *ijazah* from the *kyai* or school administrators. Fasting is carried out for three consecutive days—Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday—and concludes with communal prayer and dhikr on the final day.

Santri who consistently perform fasting and dhikr experience emotional and spiritual maturity. From an emotional perspective, they demonstrate strong self-awareness, leadership qualities, accountability, and the ability to manage their emotions, particularly in controlling anger and stress. Spiritually, they develop sincerity, patience, and a stronger focus in worship and daily activities. Through these practices, santri are able to dedicate more time to building their relationship with Allah and engaging in meaningful activities. Ultimately, fasting and dhikr contribute to the overall development of santri's ESQ, fostering balanced individuals capable of excelling emotionally, spiritually, and socially.

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