



***TAZKIYATUN NAFS-BASED ART THERAPY IN  
GENERATION Z'S EMOTION REGULATION: A CASE  
STUDY AT MTSN 6 SUMEDANG***

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**Abstrak**

Generasi Z menghadapi berbagai tantangan emosional akibat paparan digital yang tinggi dan perubahan sosial yang cepat. Regulasi emosi menjadi salah satu aspek penting dalam kesejahteraan psikologis mereka. *Art therapy* telah terbukti sebagai metode yang efektif dalam membantu individu mengekspresikan dan mengelola emosi secara sehat. Untuk memberikan pendekatan yang lebih holistik dan kontekstual, *Art therapy* dalam penelitian ini diintegrasikan dengan konsep *tazkiyatun nafs*, yaitu penyucian jiwa dalam Islam yang menekankan pengendalian diri dan penguatan spiritual sebagai bagian dari ketahanan mental. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas *Art therapy* berbasis *tazkiyatun nafs* dalam membantu Gen-Z meregulasi emosi mereka di MTSN 6 Sumedang. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan partisipan sebanyak 10 siswa yang mengalami kesulitan dalam regulasi emosi. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam sebelum dan sesudah intervensi, serta observasi selama sesi *Art therapy* yang dikombinasikan dengan nilai-nilai *tazkiyatun nafs*. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan teknik analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan ini membantu peserta dalam meningkatkan kesadaran emosional, mengelola stres, serta memperkuat dimensi spiritual mereka. Peserta yang awalnya mengalami kesulitan dalam mengekspresikan perasaan mulai menunjukkan peningkatan dalam memahami dan mengendalikan emosi secara lebih positif. Integrasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam terapi seni juga memberikan dampak signifikan dalam membangun keseimbangan psikologis mereka. *Art therapy* berbasis *tazkiyatun nafs* ini merupakan pendekatan yang efektif dalam membantu Gen-Z meregulasi emosinya. Model ini berpotensi diterapkan dalam program bimbingan konseling di sekolah untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan mental siswa..

**Kata Kunci:** Art Therapy; *Tazkiyatun nafs*; Regulasi Emosi; Generasi Z; Kesehatan Mental

## Abstract

Generation Z faces various emotional challenges due to high digital exposure and rapid social change. Emotion regulation is an essential aspect of their psychological well-being. *Art therapy* has been proven to be an effective method in helping individuals express and manage emotions healthily. To provide a more holistic and contextual approach, *art therapy* in this study is integrated with the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs*, which is the purification of the soul in Islam and emphasises self-control and spiritual strengthening as part of mental resilience. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the effectiveness of *tazkiyatun nafs*-based *Art therapy* in helping Gen-Z regulate their emotions at MTSN 6 Sumedang. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with participants as many as 10 students who experience difficulties in emotion regulation. Data were collected through in-depth interviews before and after the intervention and observation during *Art therapy* sessions combined with *tazkiyatun nafs* values. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques. The results showed that this approach helped participants to increase emotional awareness, manage stress, and strengthen their spiritual dimension. Participants who initially experienced difficulties in expressing feelings began to show improvement in understanding and controlling emotions more positively. Integrating Islamic values in *Art therapy* also significantly impacts building their psychological balance. *Art therapy* based on *tazkiyatun nafs* is a practical approach to helping Gen-Z regulate their emotions. This model can be applied in school counselling guidance programs to improve students' mental well-being.

**Key Words:** Art Therapy; *Tazkiyatun nafs*; Emotion Regulation; Generation Z; Mental Health

## Introduction

Generation Z is a group of individuals born in an environment heavily influenced by the development of digital technology. Easy access to information, social media, and high academic demands often trigger stress and emotional pressure for them (Budiman & Franky, 2021). This challenge becomes even more complex when the social and family environment cannot provide adequate emotional support. One of the social realities found at MTSN 6 Sumedang is that 46% of students come from broken home families. This is supported by the result of interviews with the school counsellor at MTsN 6 Sumedang, who noted that students from disrupted family backgrounds often display emotional volatility, including outbursts, withdrawal, or mood instability in classroom settings. These findings are consistent with the daily observation records and counselling documentation collected during the first semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. This condition has implications for emotional instability that can interfere with their learning process and social interactions. This is reinforced by the findings of Fachridatul and Hartati (Arrum Fachridatul et al., 2022), which show that students from broken home families tend to

experience difficulties in emotional regulation, which leads to aggressive behaviour and disruption of social relations in the school environment.

Emotion regulation is an important skill every individual must possess to maintain their psychological well-being (Dwi Nur Rahma et al., 2023). However, not all students have sufficient capacity to manage emotions effectively. One study showed that individuals who experience difficulties in emotion regulation tend to experience behavioural problems, decreased academic motivation, and mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression (Abraham, Matthews & Rahmah Hastuti, 2025).

One method that has been proven effective in helping individuals overcome emotional problems is art therapy. The effectiveness of this approach is proven through research by Lolombulan, Yuliandari, and Dianovinina (2020), which shows that *Art therapy* can reduce symptoms of depression in emerging adults who experience body dissatisfaction by facilitating the process of expressing emotions safely and constructively (Lolombulan et al., 2020). *Art therapy* allows individuals to channel their emotions through various art media such as painting, drawing, writing (expressive writing), and music (Arum Wilis Kartika Ayuningtari, 2022). This approach allows individuals to express feelings that are difficult to express verbally, thus helping them to manage emotions better.

In the Islamic context, emotion regulation is not only related to psychological aspects but also touches the spiritual dimension. The concept of *tazkiyatun nafs*, or purification of the soul, is one of the central principles in Islam that has a close relationship with emotion management (Yuzarion et al., 2019). *Tazkiyatun nafs* includes the process of cleansing oneself from despicable traits (*takhalli*), developing praiseworthy traits (*tahalli*), and achieving a calm and bright state of the soul (*tajalli*), which in practice is very relevant to aspects of emotional control, self-reflection, and strengthening spiritual resilience (Gusmi Ranti et al., 2019). In this case, emotion regulation in Islam is not just about holding back anger or reducing sadness, but shaping the quality of a stable, adaptive, and conscious soul through a spiritual approach.

In line with that, integrating *tazkiyatun nafs* and *Art therapy* is important to explore further. *Art therapy* as an expressive method has proven effective in helping individuals process and express emotions constructively. When combined with the values of *tazkiyatun nafs*, it facilitates emotional catharsis and brings participants into a process of spiritual reflection. This form of integration is manifested through art activities directed at the stages of *tazkiyatun nafs*, such as journaling for self-reflection (*tahalli*), visualisation of released negative emotions (*takhalli*), and creation of works that represent inner calm and gratitude (*tajalli*). This approach is expected to

increase emotional awareness and instil spiritual values that strengthen overall emotional regulation, especially for students in an Islamic-based educational environment or madrasah.

*Art therapy* is effective in helping individuals express and manage emotions, primarily through catharsis mechanisms and non-verbal expression. However, for learners, an approach that only focuses on psychological aspects may not be enough to reach the emotional needs closely related to spirituality. Therefore, this study integrates *Art therapy* with the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* as an effort to build emotional regulation that is not only psychologically healthy but also in line with Islamic values.

The concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* in Islam contains the stages of *takballi* (emptying from despicable traits), *taballi* (filling with praiseworthy values), and *tajalli* (achieving spiritual awareness), which are in principle in line with the process of emotion regulation. This approach is more contextual and touches the deepest dimensions of students' souls. The therapeutic model developed in this research includes expressive techniques such as journaling, drawing, and painting directed at the process of self-reflection based on the stages of *tazkiyatun nafs*. Thus, this integration is expected to be a holistic, comprehensive, and relevant intervention in Islamic education.

Based on the background that has been described, this study aims to answer several main questions, such as the emotional condition of MTSN 6 Sumedang students who come from broken-home families in facing academic and social pressures, the extent to which *Art therapy* helps students regulate their emotions, and how the integration of the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* in *Art therapy* can have a more profound impact on students' emotional regulation.

So, this research aims to analyze the emotional conditions of MTSN 6 Sumedang students who come from broken home families and the challenges they face in emotional regulation, examine the effectiveness of *Art therapy* in helping students express and manage their emotions, and develop a *tazkiyatun nafs*-based *Art therapy* intervention model that can be applied in counselling guidance programs.

The benefits of this research include adding insight into the study of Islamic psychology related to integrating *Art therapy* and *tazkiyatun nafs* in emotional regulation and contributing to the development of art-based intervention methods in Islamic guidance and counselling. The practical benefits of this research are that it provides concrete solutions for counselling teachers and educators in dealing with students' emotional regulation problems and develops approaches that can be applied in Islamic education to help students in mental and spiritual strengthening.

Thus, this research is expected to contribute to developing art-based intervention methods focusing on psychological and spiritual aspects to be a more holistic approach to dealing with emotional problems among Generation Z.

## Methods

This research uses an interpretative paradigm with a descriptive qualitative approach. Descriptive qualitative research is an approach to a specific behaviour, phenomenon, event, problem, or situation that becomes the research object; the findings are meaningful sentence descriptions that explain certain understandings (Afrizal, 2015). Research with this descriptive qualitative approach aims to deeply understand the emotional conditions of MTsN 6 Sumedang students who come from broken home families in facing academic and social pressures, analyze the extent to which Art therapy can help students regulate their emotions, and explore how the integration of the concept of tazkiyatun nafs in Art therapy can have a more profound impact on their emotional regulation.

The paradigm used in this research is the interpretive paradigm, which views reality as subjective and shaped by experiences and meanings given by individuals. Subjective exploration is a strategy in social research that seeks to collect and examine information in words (spoken or written) and human activities (Afrizal, 2015). Using this approach, researchers sought to describe students' emotional experiences holistically and contextually based on their narratives, observations, and documentation during the intervention process.

The constructs of this study consisted of:

1. Art Therapy: Art techniques are used for emotional expression, including painting, drawing, expressive writing, and music.
2. *Tazkiyatun nafs*: An Islamic concept of soul purification focusing on self-control, introspection, and increased spirituality.
3. Emotion Regulation: An individual's ability to recognise, understand, and manage emotions effectively.

The population of this study was all MTsN 6 Sumedang students, totalling 367 students from grades 7, 8, and 9. The research sample was selected by purposive sampling; from the election results, 10 students were selected as the main participants of this study, with the following criteria:

1. Students who experience difficulties in emotion regulation are identified based on the initial assessment of the counselling teacher.

2. Students from broken home families (as an additional factor in emotion regulation).

3. Students who are willing to participate voluntarily.

Data collection is done through several techniques, namely:

1. In-depth Interview: Conducted twice, before and after the *Art therapy* intervention, to explore changes in students' experiences and perceptions.

2. Participatory Observation: Recorded students' expressions, emotional responses, and interactions during *Art therapy* sessions.

3. Documentation: Student artwork, reflection notes, and video recordings during therapy.

4. Data Triangulation: Data validity was maintained through the triangulation of methods (interviews, observations, and documentation) and triangulation of sources (students, counselling teachers, and parents).

In this qualitative research, data validity was tested through source and method triangulation techniques and confirmation of results (member checking). Triangulation is done by comparing interviews, observations, and documentation data to obtain a comprehensive and consistent understanding (Afriзал, 2015). Member checking was done by confirming interim findings with participants so that their meanings and experiences were truly represented. In addition, peer debriefing was also conducted by asking for input from experts in Guidance and Counselling and Psychology to review the data interpretation process so that the findings are more reliable and not biased by the researcher's subjectivity.

Data were analysed using thematic analysis techniques (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with the following steps:

1. Data Transcription: Interview results were transcribed verbatim.
2. Initial Coding: Looking for patterns in the repetitive data.
3. Theme Identification: Grouping related codes into major themes.
4. Narrative Development: Analysing the relationships between themes and constructing descriptions.

**Table 1.**  
*Data Processing Based on Key Findings*

No	Data Collection Technique	Focus Analysis	Expected Results
1	In-depth Interview	Emotional experience before and after therapy	Changes in emotion regulation patterns

2	Participatory Observation	Non-verbal expression and interaction	Indication of behaviour change
3	Documentation	Artwork and student reflections	The meaning of experience through art
4	Triangulation	Confirmation from various sources	Validity and trustworthiness of data

With this approach, the research is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of how *tazkiyatun nafs*-based *art therapy* can help students regulate their emotions.

## Results

This research reveals how *Art therapy* based on *Tazkiyatun nafs* helps MTsN 6 Sumedang students regulate their emotions. The research results were obtained from in-depth interviews, participatory observation, documentation, and data triangulation.

### 1. Emotional Condition of MTsN 6 Sumedang Students

Most students who come from broken home families show emotional instability in dealing with academic and social pressures. They tend to easily feel anxious, angry, sad, and even withdraw in a friendship environment. Family factors and academic pressure cause them to have difficulty healthily regulating emotions. This is reinforced by students' narratives, which show they do not have a safe place to express their emotions honestly.

### 2. Effectiveness of *Art Therapy* in Helping Emotion Regulation

The results of interviews and observations show that *Art therapy* helps students recognise and channel their emotions. Painting, drawing, and expressive writing provided a significant cathartic space. They began to show increased emotional awareness and ability to manage stress. Some students claimed to feel calmer, more open to others, and more confident after attending several *Art therapy* sessions. These results were also reflected in the change of expression in their artwork, from darker shades to brighter and more reflective ones.

### 3. Impact of *Tazkiyatun nafs* Integration in Art Therapy

Integrating the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* in *Art therapy* sessions has a more profound impact on students' emotional changes. Based on thematic analysis, it was found that the process of emotional regulation through *Art therapy* occurs in three main stages, in line with the concept of *Tazkiyatun nafs*, namely *Takballi*, *Taballi*, and *Tajalli* (Yuzarion et al., 2019).

The following are the stages of thematic analysis and the stages of *tazkiyatun nafs* in Art Therapy:

a. *Takballi* Stage (Cleansing the Soul from Despicable Traits)

This stage is the initial phase in the *tazkiyatun nafs*-based *Art therapy* process, which aims to help students release negative emotions such as anger, sadness, disappointment, or stress that have been pent up. The relevance of this stage to the techniques used is very close because the art activities in this stage are designed to facilitate emotional catharsis. Through art, students express their feelings symbolically and process emotions slowly in a safe and non-judgmental way. Here are some key findings:

- Techniques Used: Painting, drawing, and expressive writing.
  - Painting and drawing were chosen because they can represent students' emotions through the colours, shapes, and objects they create. This technique provides a visual medium for students to project their emotional content that is not easily expressed through words. For example, students who experience high anxiety are more likely to choose dark colours, sharp lines, or objects that depict loneliness and pressure.
  - Expressive writing is used because Gen Z is known to express themselves more easily through text or writing, such as journaling or personal notes. This technique allows students to express their feelings freely, honestly, and reflectively without worrying about judgment from others.
- Expression of Emotions: Students who experience high stress and anxiety describe objects with dark colours, shadows, and abstract shapes. In expressive writing, they wrote down experiences of sadness, feelings of isolation, or disappointment with their social environment and family. This work showed the high emotional burden they had been carrying.
- Changes After the Session: After pouring their emotions into art, most students felt more relieved, calm, and free. Some students revealed that, for the first time, they could understand the feelings that had been confusing. This process indirectly paved the way for them to move on to the next stage, *taballi*, by adorning the soul with positive values. Thus, the techniques used in this stage of *thalli* are very relevant and strategic to achieve the gradual and conscious release of negative emotions.



**Table 2.***Changes in Students' Emotional Response Before and After Art Therapy Sessions*

No	Art Therapy Technique	Student Response Before Session	Student Response After Session
1	Painting	Anxious, sad, moody	Calmer, start to accept the situation
2	Expressive Writing	Storing emotions, difficult to speak	Can express feelings more honestly
3	Music Therapy	Irritable, impulsive	More controllable, feels lighter

b. *Taballi* Stage (Decorating the Soul with Praiseworthy Attributes)

After negative emotions have been successfully expelled in the *thalli* stage, the *thalli* stage focuses on filling students' souls with positive values, such as calmness, gratitude, enthusiasm, and self-acceptance. In emotion regulation, this stage is important for shaping healthier and more constructive mindsets and emotional reactions. The techniques used at this stage are closely relevant to internalising praiseworthy traits and rebuilding students' psychological spirit. Here are some of the key findings:

- The techniques used included painting symbols of hope, writing self-reflection, and relaxation music. These techniques were chosen because they fit the characteristics of Gen Z, which is more responsive to visual, audio, and personal narrative stimuli. These techniques strengthen aspects of emotional expression and help students develop positive narratives about themselves. In addition, the students' work showed a change in colours and brighter themes, as well as writing narratives that contained more hope and meaning in life. Thus, the techniques at the *taballi* stage are very relevant to forming a more emotionally and spiritually solid soul. This stage is an important bridge to the *Tajalli* stage, where students are emotionally stable and experience real spiritual growth. Here is the explanation:
  - Painting symbols of hope stimulates students' imagination and creativity in positively describing their future or hopes. Symbols such as sunrises, blooming flowers, or blue skies often appear in students' work as expressions of renewed vigour and emotional awakening. This artwork depicts an emotional shift from sadness to optimism.
  - Writing self-reflection is used to encourage the value internalisation process. Students are invited to write down things they are grateful for, life lessons they have learned from previous emotional experiences, and plans they want to achieve. This technique is relevant as it reflects *taballi* values such as self-awareness, acceptance, and goodwill.
  - Relaxation music serves to create a peaceful atmosphere and enhance inner focus. The music played has a slow and soothing rhythm, which helps students enter a more stable, reflective,

and emotional state. Music also supports physiological regulation, such as breathing and heart rate, thus strengthening emotional control.

- Interview Results:

- Student A: "I feel better after writing about my feelings. Now I can accept myself more. Writing helps me understand that I do not always have to please others".
- Student B: "Painting bright colours makes me more excited. I never thought that art could help me. When I paint, I feel like I can breathe more freely".
- Student C: "After the music listening session, I felt calmer and less panicky like before. Music makes me feel like I have space to heal myself".
- Student D: "I learned not to keep blaming myself. When I wrote my reflection, I realised that I also have strengths".
- Student E: "I like to draw a growing tree. It is like a symbol that even though I have many problems, I can still grow".
- Student F: "I usually keep quiet when I am sad. But now I can write down all those feelings. It feels like my burden is lessened".
- Student G: "Through drawing, I can tell my story without talking. I feel more comfortable and realise I am not alone".
- Student H: "When I was told to write about what I was grateful for, I thought I had nothing. But it turns out I still have friends and hope".
- Student I: "I used to get angry and felt that no one understood me. But now I feel I can be more patient and start to open up".
- Student J: "I became more sure of myself. After I painted a picture depicting myself now and what I want, I became excited to pursue it".

- Attitude Change:

All participants showed positive attitude changes after participating in *Art therapy* sessions at the *Tahalli* stage, although in different forms and intensities. The following is a summary of attitude changes based on each subject:

- Student A became more open and self-accepting after expressing feelings through writing.
- Student B showed increased enthusiasm and optimism, which was reflected in his selection of bright colours.
- Student C learned to calm down when stressed, moving from impulsive to reflective reactions.
- Student D began to share emotional experiences and show empathy towards friends.

- Student E experienced a shift in perspective towards problems, depicting growth and hope through the tree symbol.
- Student F can better manage anger by writing or drawing as a form of healthy release.
- Student G feels more comfortable expressing himself, especially in non-verbal forms such as drawings.
- Student H showed increased gratitude and focus on the positive things in his life.
- As a student, I became more patient and reduced my reactive habits in dealing with conflict.
- Student J started to develop a realistic and straightforward life plan and showed motivation to change.

In general, students show improvement in self-awareness, reflective ability, and a more positive outlook on life, which are indicators of the success of the *Taballi* stage in the emotion regulation process.

c. *Tajalli* Stage (Unveiling the Veil to Spiritual Awareness)

The *Tajalli* stage is the final phase of the therapeutic process, where students experience deeper emotional and spiritual awareness. The main objective of this stage is to help students connect the emotions they have managed with spiritual values such as gratitude, self-acceptance, and strengthening of faith. This stage becomes a reflective moment and the culmination of the emotion regulation process based on the purification of the soul.

- Techniques Used: Expressive writing, self-affirmation, and art meditation.
  - Expressive writing at this stage differs from the *Takballi* and *Taballi* stages. If, in the *Takballi* stage, writing is used to pour out negative emotions, and in the *Taballi* stage, it is used to instil positive values, then in the *Tajalli* stage, expressive writing is focused on spiritual reflection. Students are invited to write about their experiences, what they learned from their emotions, how they see themselves now, and how those feelings relate to their relationship with God.
  - Self-affirmations reaffirm the positive identities and values they have discovered during the therapeutic process. These affirmations include: 'I am valuable', 'I am accepted', 'I am capable of change', and 'I am grateful for what I have'.
  - Art meditation is an activity conducted in a calm atmosphere, where students are invited to create symbolic artworks that represent inner peace, such as light, water, or religious symbols that are meaningful.
- Key Findings:

- Students who had previously experienced difficulties with emotion regulation showed improved self-awareness and inner peace.
- Some students began to relate their experiences to spiritual values, such as gratitude and acceptance.
- Additional Interview Data:
  - Student A: "I used to panic very easily. Now I feel more able to see everything calmly, and I started to learn to pray meaningfully".
  - Student B: "I often felt alone, but now I believe I always have someone to accompany me; I am closer to God".
  - Student D: "I wrote about what I learned from all these experiences, and I understood that everything happens because there is wisdom".
  - Student E: "Meditation withdrawing makes me peaceful. I do not feel like I used to be angry and blaming".
  - Student F: "Affirmations help me believe in myself again. I always said I was stupid, but now I know I can do it".
  - Student G: "Writing about the changes I experienced made me realise that I am already much stronger than I thought".
  - Student H: "I learned to accept my family as they are. I no longer blame, but try to understand".
  - Student I: "I became calmer and less reactive. Now I can choose to be quiet and think before I speak".
  - Student J: "I draw a light and write that I want to keep going in a better direction. It makes me feel like I have a direction".

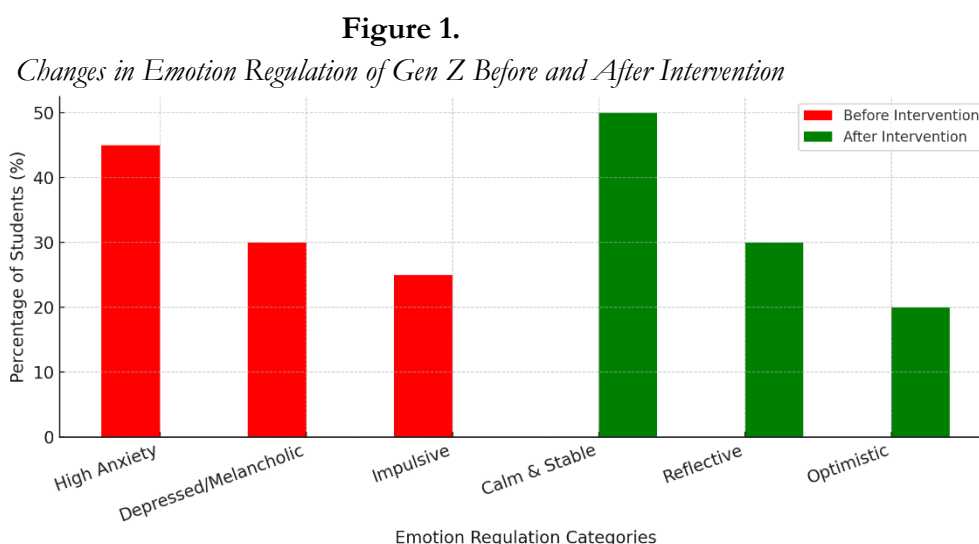
The *Tajalli* stage shows that integrating art and spiritual values can strengthen emotion regulation and deepen students' meaning of life. Students not only experienced a decrease in negative emotional symptoms but also developed a stronger and healthier spiritual identity.

**Table 3.**

*Indication of Changes in Students' Emotions at the Tajalli Stage*

No	Therapy Tehnic	Indication of Change
1	Expressive Writing	More reflective, able to manage emotions better
2	Art Meditation	Feeling more peaceful and having spiritual understanding
3	Self-Affirmation	More confident and optimistic

Based on interview transcripts and reflective journals, changes were categorised using thematic analysis. Percentages were calculated based on the frequency of emotional responses before and after the intervention as recorded in students' weekly digital journals and counsellor's observation logs. For example, a 40% reduction in self-reported emotional outbursts was calculated by comparing the number of emotional incidents reported by participants in the first and final weeks of the intervention.



Explanation of the graph of changes in Generation Z's emotional regulation before and after receiving the *tazkiyatun nafs*-based *Art therapy* intervention:

- Before implementing the intervention, students' emotional conditions were described through observations, field notes, and in-depth interviews with 10 participants. Data were obtained qualitatively through students' narrative descriptions, initial artworks, and expressive notes from the first session. Indicators used to understand the initial condition of students' emotions include:

- Frequency of anxiety expressions
- Tendency to be moody or withdrawn
- Impulsive behaviours such as irritability or explosions in social and academic situations.

- After the *tazkiyatun nafs*-based *Art therapy* intervention took place in several sessions, emotional changes were analysed through the same indicators, but focusing on:

- Increased calmness and emotional stability
- Ability to reflect feelings and experiences verbally and symbolically
- The emergence of self-confidence, optimism, and positive affection in students' works and narratives.

- A significant decrease occurred in anxiety, moodiness, and impulsivity, which turned into calmness, self-reflection, and optimism after the application of *tazkiyatun nafs*-based art therapy. These changes were studied by triangulating data in follow-up interviews, which showed a narrative shift from negative to positive, observation of verbal and nonverbal expressions, and documentation of artworks that transitioned from dark and stressful symbolism to more expressive, open, and positive forms. With this approach, the analysis of the student's emotional change process is not presented in quantitative statistics but in the form of thematic descriptions based on the students' subjective experiences. The use of percentages in the report is only a descriptive representation of the dominant patterns that appear in the participants' narratives, not as inferential statistical data.

The results of this study show that *Art therapy* based on *Tazkiyatun nafs* plays a role in helping students regulate their emotions. Through the stages of *Takballi*, *Taballi*, and *Tajalli*, students cannot only let go of negative emotions but also learn to adorn their souls with positive values and achieve inner peace. Thus, *Tazkiyatun nafs*-based *Art therapy* can be a valuable approach to education, especially in supporting students' emotional well-being at MTSN 6 Sumedang.

## Discussion

The research findings show that applying *tazkiyatun nafs*-based *Art therapy* significantly affects Generation Z's emotional regulation at MTsN 6 Sumedang. Before the intervention, students experienced high levels of anxiety (45%), were often moody or experienced symptoms of depression (30%), and had a tendency to be impulsive (25%). After the intervention, there was a positive change where 50% of students showed emotional calmness, 30% were more reflective of their feelings, and 20% became more optimistic and confident.

This research aligns with previous studies that show the effectiveness of *Art therapy* in managing individual emotions. The study by Amalia et al. (Amalia Putri & H. Halida, 2024) confirmed that *Art therapy* can assist individuals in expressing feelings that are difficult to express through words. In the context of *tazkiyatun nafs*, this study deepens the spiritual approach in art therapy, which aligns with research from Al-Ghazali (Al-Ghazali, 2014) on the importance of purification of the soul in shaping psychological stability.

The *tazkiyatun nafs*-based *Art therapy* approach combines the creative process with methods of purifying the soul in three main stages:

1. *Takballi* (Cleansing the Self from Despicable Traits):

In the initial therapy session, students are invited to identify their negative emotions through art, such as drawing or expressive writing. This helps them to release their pent-up emotions.

2. *Taballi* (Adorning the Soul with Praiseworthy Attributes):

After the negative emotions have been successfully expelled, students begin to be directed to internalise positive values. In this stage, music therapy and painting are used to build a more peaceful mood and to accept oneself.

3. *Tajalli* (Unveiling of the Veil to Peace of Mind):

Students begin to feel a greater sense of calmness and emotional stability at this stage. They have stronger self-control and can deal with pressure more calmly.

The integration of *Art therapy* and *tazkiyatun nafs* in this study showed more effective results compared to conventional *Art therapy* that does not contain spiritual elements. This is reinforced by research from Gusmi Ranti et al. (2021), which states that spirituality-based therapy is more effective in reducing stress levels and improving emotional well-being.

Several previous studies have shown that *Art therapy* has a positive contribution in reducing anxiety and improving individuals' emotional well-being. For example, a study conducted by Lolombulan et al. showed that *Art therapy* plays a role in reducing depressive symptoms in emerging adults who experience body dissatisfaction (Lolombulan et al., 2020). Through the art approach, individuals aged 18-25 in the study could express feelings they had difficulty expressing verbally. Another study by Putri and Halida showed that *Art therapy* helps improve stress-coping strategies in adolescents who face social and academic pressures, especially in challenging developmental periods (Putri & Halida, 2024). Meanwhile, a study by Azahra (Azahra, 2023) has linked *Art therapy* with the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs*. However, it is still limited to the context of the academic stress of XII-grade students at MAN 2 Bandung City.

From these various studies, the contribution of *Art therapy* to emotional well-being is quite significant. However, several gaps have not been studied in depth. First, there is still a lack of research that explicitly combines *Art therapy* with the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* in the context of more comprehensive emotional regulation. Most studies only discuss *Art therapy* as a medium for emotional release (catharsis) or stress coping without linking it to a deep spiritual dimension, such as the purification of the soul in Islam. Secondly, the focus of previous studies is generally limited to academic stress, while adolescent emotion regulation covers broader aspects such as family problems, friendships, and the search for self-identity. Third, the approaches used in previous studies were mainly quantitative or quasi-experimental. A qualitative approach, primarily

descriptive, is more appropriate to holistically describe students' subjective experiences in the context of Islamic education. Therefore, this research will fill the gap by exploring in depth how *Art therapy* based on *tazkiyatun nafs* can support students' emotional regulation process through a descriptive qualitative approach. However, this research offers a new approach by combining the concept of purification of the soul in art therapy, which has not been widely studied empirically. This makes this research a new contribution to the world of psychology and education, especially in the context of Islamic education.

## Conclusion

This research reveals that *Art therapy* based on *tazkiyatun nafs* plays an important role in helping MTS 6 Sumedang students, especially those from broken home families, to regulate emotions amid academic and social pressures. Based on a descriptive qualitative approach, it was found that students experienced emotional challenges such as anxiety, impulsivity, and a sense of isolation before participating in the intervention. Through the *Art therapy* process involving drawing, painting, music, and expressive writing techniques, students showed a more positive trend in recognising, channelling, and understanding their emotions. The integration of *tazkiyatun nafs* values in the therapy sessions provided a deep spiritual dimension through three stages, namely *takballi* (release of negative emotions), *taballi* (strengthening of positive values), and *tajalli* (spiritual meaning and inner peace). This process allows students to reflect on their emotional experiences as a whole and develop new understandings that are spiritual and personal. Thus, this research contributes to the scientific development of Islamic Guidance and Counselling, especially in designing interventions that are responsive to the emotional needs of adolescents in the digital era through an approach that combines creative expression and Islamic values contextually. Several studies have shown that Art therapy reduces stress and improves emotional well-being.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that *Art therapy* based on *tazkiyatun nafs* be integrated more widely into Islamic Guidance and Counselling services in schools, especially for students who experience difficulties in emotional regulation. BK teachers can develop a more systematic and sustainable *Art therapy* program by considering students' needs. In addition, school policies need to support the implementation of this approach by providing facilities and training for counselling teachers to implement *Art therapy* effectively. For future research, it is recommended to explore the effectiveness of this method in the long term and see



its impact on other aspects, such as academic achievement and psychological well-being of students. The findings can also serve as a basis for developing a more inclusive counselling curriculum, incorporating Islamic spiritual values in the therapeutic approach.

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