



INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE CHILDREN'S POSITIVE EMOTIONS PEOPLE LIVING WITH CANCER

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Abstrak

Anak-anak penderita kanker tidak hanya menghadapi nyeri fisik, tetapi juga tekanan psikologis berupa isolasi diri, keterbatasan aktivitas, serta emosi negatif seperti sedih, takut, dan putus asa. Intervensi psikososial berbasis nilai Islam dipandang sebagai pendekatan yang tepat untuk membantu mengurangi emosi negatif dan menumbuhkan emosi positif. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan dampak intervensi psikososial Islami terhadap anak penderita kanker di Rumah Singgah C-Four Aceh. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan observasi dan wawancara terhadap 20 partisipan (anak, orang tua, ketua, dan pengurus yayasan). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan emosi positif, seperti ekspresi ceria, semangat, ketenangan, dan keberanahan berinteraksi. Orang tua dan pengurus juga menilai kegiatan ini bermanfaat karena mengurangi kebosanan menunggu pengobatan dan menumbuhkan harapan baru. Integrasi nilai Islam melalui aktivitas bernyanyi dengan lagu doa, menggambar bertema Islami, dan mindfulness dzikir menjadikan intervensi ini tidak hanya efektif secara psikologis, tetapi juga bermakna secara spiritual. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya dukungan psikososial berbasis komunitas dan spiritual Islam sebagai upaya pemulihan emosional anak secara holistik.

Kata Kunci: Intervensi Psikososial, Anak Penderita Kanker, Nilai Islam; Emosi Positif.

Abstract

Children with cancer face not only physical pain but also psychological distress such as isolation, limited activities, sadness, fear, and hopelessness. Islam-based psychosocial intervention is considered an appropriate approach to reduce negative emotions and foster positive ones. This study aims to describe the impact of Islamic psychosocial intervention on children with cancer at the C-Four Aceh shelter. A qualitative descriptive method was employed, using observation and interviews with 20 participants (children, parents, the foundation's chairperson, and staff). The findings indicate an increase in positive emotions, including cheerfulness, enthusiasm, calmness, and improved social interaction. Parents and staff also reported that the activities

were beneficial in reducing boredom during medical waiting times and in nurturing new hope. The integration of Islamic values through singing religious songs, drawing Islamic themes, and practising mindfulness with dhikr made the intervention not only psychologically effective but also spiritually meaningful. This study highlights the importance of community-based psychosocial support rooted in Islamic spirituality as a holistic effort to strengthen emotional recovery in children with cancer.

Keywords: Psychosocial Intervention, Children with Cancer; Islamic Values, Positive Emotions

Introduction

Childhood is a period characterised by joy and play, predominantly with peers. This period spans the ages of 6 to 12 years, consistent with the characteristics of human development (Hurlock, 1991). Children in this phase begin to demonstrate the potential for independence, expanding social interactions through peers, and engaging in various activities, which are crucial for developing social skills and psychological well-being in adulthood. In Islam, childhood is viewed as a natural phase, where children grow in the purity and love of Allah SWT. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "He is not one of us who does not show mercy to children and does not respect his parents." (Narrated by Tirmidhi). This highlights the importance of providing special attention and care to children, even when they are ill.

However, not all children have the opportunity to live optimally. Children with chronic illnesses, such as cancer, face limitations in their physical and social activities. Cancer is a chronic disease with a high risk of death. The phenomenon of cancer affects not only older people but also people of all ages. The World Health Organisation (2025) indicates that approximately 400,000 children and adolescents worldwide are diagnosed with cancer each year. In Indonesia, in 2022, approximately 12,000 children and adolescents aged 0 to 19 years were diagnosed with cancer (International Atomic Energy Agency, 2024). In Aceh Province, although no explicit data were found, observations by researchers on April 14, 2025, at the Children Cancer Care Community (C-Four) Shelter in Aceh showed that approximately 15 to 20 children with cancer come to Banda Aceh each week for therapy at the Dr Zainoel Abidin Regional General Hospital in Banda Aceh.

C-Four Aceh is a social foundation focused on providing holistic support, including temporary housing, psychological counselling, and other social services for children with cancer. In Islam, social support and caring for others are part of Islamic brotherhood, as stated by Allah SWT: "Indeed, the believers are brothers..." (Quran, Al-Hujurat: 10). Therefore, providing care to children who are being tested by illness is a tangible form of compassion and solidarity recommended in Islam.

According to Papalia, Olds, and Feldman (2008), children with chronic health disorders

often face greater psychosocial challenges than their peers, including emotional regulation and feelings of isolation. If left untreated, these psychological conditions can worsen moods, trigger anxiety, and reduce a child's motivation to undergo treatment. Therefore, it is essential to cultivate positive emotions, such as hope, enthusiasm, and self-confidence. In Islam, hope and enthusiasm for life are highly encouraged, as stated by Allah SWT: "And do not despair of the mercy of Allah..." (QS. Az-Zumar: 53). This verse serves as a spiritual foundation that every individual, including sick children, still has hope and God's vast compassion.

Structured psychosocial support, whether through a psychosocial approach, is efficacious in improving the psychological well-being of children with cancer (Zhang et al., 2025). Positive emotions not only help children cope with physical pain but also strengthen their psychological resilience in the long and painful process of cancer treatment. In Islam, resilience and patience in the face of trials are core values, as stated in the Quran (Quran, Al-Baqarah: 155–157).

وَلَنَبُوَّلُكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَفْسٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالْمُتَّمَرِاتِ ۖ وَبَشِّرُ الْأَصَّابِرِينَ

"And indeed, We will test you with a little fear, hunger, lack of wealth, lives and fruits. Moreover, give good news to those who are patient."

وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَجُعُونَ اللَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُّصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا

"(Namely) those who, when a disaster strikes, they say, 'Indeed we belong to Allah and to Him we will return.'"

أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوٌتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهَتَّدُونَ

"It is they who receive perfect blessings and mercy from their Lord, and they are the ones who receive guidance."

This indicates a real need for structured psychosocial interventions to promote positive emotions and psychological well-being in children with cancer, particularly in Aceh. This is not unique to Aceh; recent research in Indonesia also shows that the need for psychosocial services for children with cancer remains under-addressed, including psychological and social aspects, which are often overlooked (Swipratami Pangarso et al., 2025).

According to Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), cultivating positive emotions, strengthening character strengths, and fostering a sense of meaning in life are essential for enhancing an individual's psychological well-being. Positive emotions such as hope, joy, and self-confidence have been shown to increase psychological resilience in individuals experiencing significant stress (Fredrickson, 2001). In the context of children with cancer, strengthening positive emotions is an alternative approach to helping them cope with the stress of pain and treatment. In Islam, peace of mind and spiritual happiness are essential components of mental health, as Allah says: "Remember, only by remembering Allah will hearts find peace." (QS. Ar-Ra'd: 28).

Several previous studies have demonstrated that psychosocial interventions incorporating art, play, or mindfulness can enhance positive emotions in cancer patients (Sposito et al., 2015; Celik et al., 2021). Research in Indonesia conducted by Dwi and Prameswari (2019) found that play therapy can improve mood and reduce anxiety in children with cancer in the hospital. Furthermore, research conducted by Celik, SS, & Edirne, T. (2021) also showed that play therapy can reduce anxiety and help children express emotions more healthily. Children who participate in play therapy become more emotionally responsive and resilient.

The differences between previous studies and this study are as follows: First, the studies conducted by Sposito et al. (2015) and Celik et al. (2021) were conducted abroad in a clinical context, using a mixed research approach, and focused on cancer patients in general. Then, the study conducted by Dwi and Prameswari (2019), located in Indonesia, focused on children with cancer in hospitals. The study conducted by Celik, SS, & Edirne, T. (2021) differed in its geographical context, as it was conducted in Turkey within a clinical setting in a hospital.

Meanwhile, the research conducted by the researcher focused on the context in C-Four Aceh, not the hospital, with subjects of children with cancer aged 6 to 12 years who were waiting in line for treatment for up to one week in the hospital. The intervention approach provided was a psychosocial intervention to strengthen positive emotions (hope, enthusiasm, and self-confidence) through structured activities, namely: group play to build social interaction, singing together with Islamic songs that foster enthusiasm and togetherness, expressive drawing with Islamic themes as an artistic means to channel emotions, and mindfulness exercises based on simple dhikr to foster inner calm and gratitude. Therefore, the research question can be formulated as follows: How effective is the psychosocial intervention based on Islamic values, incorporating group play activities, Islamic singing, expressive drawing, and mindfulness dhikr, in increasing positive emotions (hope, enthusiasm, and self-confidence) in children with cancer in C-Four Aceh?

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to describe the findings based on data obtained through direct observation of children's emotional expressions while participating in psychosocial interventions, as well as based on the experiences of parents, foundation heads, and administrators in observing positive emotional changes in children with cancer after participating in psychosocial intervention activities at C-Four Aceh.

The study involved 20 participants, selected using purposive sampling, with the data source being located at the C-Four Aceh Foundation, including leaders, administrators, children with cancer, and their parents. The detailed characteristics of the participants are as follows:

Table 1. Research Participants

No.	Participants	Amount
1.	Chairman of the Aceh C-Four Foundation	1
2.	Daily management of C-Four Aceh	2
3.	Children with cancer aged 6-12 years	12
4.	Parents of Children with Cancer	5
Total Participants		20

The data collection technique consisted of two methods: direct observation of children's emotional expressions during psychosocial interventions and semi-structured interviews with the foundation's chairman, administrators, and parents of children with cancer at C-Four Aceh. The primary instrument of this study was the researcher herself, who was directly involved in the data collection and interpretation process. The researcher was also supported by an observation guide and a semi-structured interview guide as supporting instruments. The observation guide was used to observe children's behaviour and emotional expressions during psychosocial interventions.

Table 2. Observation Guide

No.	Aspects of observation	Indicator
1.	Expression of positive emotions	Children are often seen smiling, laughing, and being enthusiastic while playing.
2.	Social interaction	Children interact actively with peers and facilitators
3.	Response to activity	Children show interest in drawing, singing Islamic songs, and participating in dhikr-based mindfulness exercises (for example, saying Subhanallah, Alhamdulillah, Allahu Akbar while doing simple breathing and relaxation).
4.	Expression of negative emotions	The child appears moody, cries, and withdraws from the group.

Next, the researcher employed a semi-structured interview guide to explore the perceptions of parents, foundation heads, and C-Four administrators regarding changes in children's emotions following participation in the intervention.

Table 3. Interview Guide

No.	Respondents	Aspects interviewed
1.	Parent	Changes in children's emotions after being interviewed Children's interest in activities Children's verbal expressions of activity experiences Perception of the benefits of the activity
2	the foundation's	General emotional changes in children

3 C-Four Management	president	Effectiveness of psychosocial interventions
	Correlation of activities with the Foundation's vision and mission	Children's emotional responses during activities
	Changes in children's behaviour and social interactions	Changes in children's behaviour and social interactions
	Children's involvement in activities	Children's involvement in activities
	Perception of the benefits of the activity	Perception of the benefits of the activity

The data analysis technique employed in this study is based on the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). This model consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The process is carried out continuously during and after data collection. This study uses a model data analysis technique. This study was conducted for four days, starting on April 14, 2025, with initial observation activities. From April 15 to 16, 2025, a psychosocial intervention was conducted. Interviews were conducted with parents, the head of the foundation, and the C-Four Aceh administrators on April 17, 2025.

The psychosocial interventions designed in this study focused not only on arts and general activities but also consciously integrated Islamic values into each stage of the activity. This integration was carried out to ensure that the emotional support provided to children with cancer in C-Four Aceh was aligned with their spiritual and cultural context. Activities such as group play, singing, drawing, mindfulness, and closing reflection were combined with Islamic elements, including dhikr (remembrance of God), Islamic-themed songs, Islamic-themed images, and communal prayer and expressions of gratitude. Thus, this intervention not only served as a means of strengthening positive emotions but also as a medium for instilling spiritual values that support inner peace, enthusiasm for life, and a sense of togetherness in the children.

Table 4. Stages of Islamic Value-Based Psychosocial Interventions in Foundations C-Four Aceh

Stage	Intervention Activities	Activity Description	Psychosocial Goals
1	Ice-breaking Group Play	& Light games, such as guessing the movement, ball relay, or simple role-playing games, are played. The facilitator incorporates the value of ukhuwah (brotherhood) by greeting each other and using Islamic greetings.	Building trust, breaking the ice, increasing social interaction, and instilling the values of Islamic brotherhood.
2	Singing Together	Children sing together	Increase the expression of

	Islamic Songs	cheerful songs with Islamic nuances (for example, about prayer, enthusiasm for life, Allah's love), accompanied by simple music.	positive emotions, strengthen the sense of togetherness, reduce stress, and instil the values of gratitude and the Islamic spirit of life.
3	Expressive Drawing with an Islamic Theme	Children often draw freely on Islamic themes, such as mosques, families, the crescent moon, or prayers. Facilitators provide space for creative expression with spiritual nuances.	Channelling emotions visually, strengthening self-identity, increasing self-confidence, and growing spiritual awareness.
4	Mindfulness Dhikr for Children	Breathing and body relaxation exercises are guided by simple dhikr (Subhanallah, Alhamdulillah, Allahu Akbar). Positive visualisations are directed toward God's love and the hope of recovery and healing.	Enhance inner peace, self-awareness, and emotional management skills, while cultivating the values of sabr (patience) and tawakkal.
5	Islamic Reflection & Closing	Children are invited to share experiences, mention what they liked about the day's activities, and then close with a short prayer together.	Strengthening positive meaning, building hope, fostering a sense of appreciation, and instilling Islamic values of gratitude and optimism.

The stages of Islamic value-based psychosocial intervention presented in the table above demonstrate that each activity serves not only as a means of emotional expression and social interaction, but also as a medium for instilling spiritual values relevant to the lives of children with cancer. The integration of Islamic elements through dhikr (remembrance of God), songs with prayerful and encouraging nuances, Islamic-themed images, and collective reflections on gratitude make this intervention more contextualised to the culture and beliefs of children in Aceh. Thus, this psychosocial intervention can strengthen positive emotions while fostering inner peace, hope, and a sense of community, aligning with Islamic teachings and thereby supporting children's holistic emotional recovery.

Results

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of psychosocial interventions on enhancing positive emotions in children with cancer at C-For Aceh, researchers conducted direct observations of the children's behaviour and emotional expressions during the intervention. Furthermore, researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with parents, the Foundation's

chairman, and C-For Aceh administrators. The following data, based on observations and interviews conducted by the researchers, are presented in tabular form.

Table 5. Description of children's expression data during the intervention

No.	Observed Aspects	Child Behaviour Indicators	Frequency	Information
1.	Expression of positive emotions	Children smile, laugh, and show enthusiasm	10 out of 12 children	While drawing and singing
2.	Social interaction	Children actively talk and work together with friends	9 out of 12 children	In group activities
3.	Response to activity	Engage in singing and mindfulness	8 out of 12 children	Join in singing along, and follow the relaxation with concentration.
4.	Expression of negative emotions	Withdrawn, gloomy, unwilling to talk	3 out of 12 children	Seen at the beginning of the first session

The results showed that most children experienced an increase in positive emotions, such as smiles, enthusiasm, and vigour, during the intervention sessions. While the children initially appeared anxious and withdrawn, they began to show active engagement later in the session. These results indicate a positive effect on the children's emotions from the play, drawing, singing, and mindfulness interventions.

Interviews with parents of children with cancer at C-Four Aceh revealed significant emotional changes after their children participated in psychosocial interventions. One mother stated, "My child seems happier now, interacting and talking with his friends. He used to be quiet and gloomy." This indicates an increase in positive emotional expression directly felt by the family.

Additionally, several parents reported that their children showed a strong interest in the activities. One father said, "He asked to come back if there were activities like this. He said it was fun, and he did not get bored waiting for his turn for treatment." This quote demonstrates that intervention activities can reduce boredom and increase children's motivation.

A child's verbal expressions are also an important indicator. One parent imitated her child's words: "It is fun, I want to sing again, I want to draw, my friends are good." These simple expressions reflect the child's happiness and emotional engagement in the activity.

Furthermore, parents found the activity very beneficial. One mother stated, "We find this activity very helpful. The children do not get bored waiting for their appointments; instead, they

seem happy and excited." This statement reinforces the finding that Islamic-based psychosocial interventions have a positive impact not only on children but also on their families.

Parents reported that their children appeared happier after participating in the activities, occasionally singing songs again, continuing to draw, and playing with their friends. Some parents reported that their children were easier to talk to and joke with.

An interview with the head of the Aceh C-Four Foundation revealed that the psychosocial intervention activities align with the foundation's mission to support the psychological well-being of children. The head of the foundation stated, "This activity aligns with our vision and mission. The children seemed happier and less afraid to interact during the activity." This statement confirms that the intervention is not only psychologically relevant but also supports the institution's goals.

Meanwhile, the daily administrators of C-Four Aceh also testified to changes in the children's behaviour. One administrator said, "Children who were usually passive and silent are now more responsive and even laugh during the singing sessions." This indicates an increase in the children's emotional and social engagement in the activities.

Furthermore, another administrator added that some children showed enthusiasm for participating in the activities again. He said, "Some children asked when this activity would be held again. They seemed to be waiting." This quote demonstrates that the intervention not only had a short-term impact but also fostered children's motivation and hope to continue engaging in positive activities.

The Foundation Chair and C-Four Aceh management believe that psychosocial interventions are highly beneficial for children with cancer at C-Four Aceh. These interventions can improve children's positive emotional well-being, both individually and in groups. These interventions can support holistic healing efforts, focusing not only on the physical but also on the psychological well-being of children.

Discussion

Based on initial observations, children with cancer in C-Four Aceh who were awaiting medical appointments generally displayed negative emotional expressions, such as gloomy expressions, feelings of sadness, and minimal social interaction with others. This condition indicates psychological distress experienced by the children due to physical pain and uncertainty about treatment. This is in line with the opinion of Papalia, Olds, and Feldman (2008), who stated that children with chronic health disorders often face more severe psychosocial challenges than their peers, including in terms of emotional regulation and feelings of isolation. Within the context of Islamic values, these expressions of sadness and isolation are seen as part of life's trials that

require patience (sabr) and fortitude. Therefore, the psychosocial intervention not only aims to reduce negative emotions but also fosters positive emotions through Islamic activities, such as singing prayer songs, drawing on Islamic themes, and mindfulness exercises based on dhikr (remembrance of God). This integration is expected to provide inner peace and strengthen the children's enthusiasm for life as they face the treatment process.

Children with cancer living at C-Four Aceh come from various districts/cities in Aceh Province and must undergo treatment at the Dr Zainoel Abidin Regional General Hospital in Banda Aceh. The treatment process often requires long waits, even days, making their already weak physical condition worse, compounded by boredom and emotional exhaustion. This situation causes significant psychological stress, as the children face uncertain medical service schedules and limited social activities. From an Islamic perspective, the fatigue and hardship experienced by the sick have high spiritual value, as the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "No Muslim is afflicted with fatigue, illness, sadness, or even a thorn that pricks him, but that Allah will expiate his sins because of it." (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim). Therefore, the psychosocial intervention provided at C-Four Aceh serves not only as a means of entertainment to reduce boredom, but also as a medium for spiritual strengthening through Islamic activities such as singing prayer songs, drawing Islamic-themed pictures, and mindfulness exercises based on dhikr. This integration helps children find positive meaning in a time of waiting that is often filled with uncertainty, while also fostering enthusiasm and inner peace.

However, after psychosocial interventions were provided through group play activities, singing Islamic songs, Islamic-themed drawing, and dhikr-based mindfulness exercises according to the planned stages, a positive influence was seen on increasing the positive emotions of children with cancer. This was evidenced by the research findings on children at C-Four Aceh, where they began to show an interest in interacting with one another, administrators, and facilitators. The emotional atmosphere during the activities appeared more cheerful, marked by smiling, laughing, and the courage to show off their Islamic-themed drawings. During the singing activities, almost all the children enthusiastically sang prayers and gratitude songs, creating a warm atmosphere of togetherness. The children also appeared enthusiastic in group games, greeting each other, exchanging games, and demonstrating more positive social interactions. Simple dhikr-based mindfulness activities helped them become calmer, more focused, and able to manage anxiety, thus strengthening positive emotions such as enthusiasm, calmness, and hope.

In Islam, happiness and joy are part of God's grace that must be preserved and shared with others. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Your smile for your brother is charity." (Narrated by Tirmidhi). Therefore, the children's smiles and joy during this activity are

not only a sign of increased positive emotions but also a valuable form of social worship. This reinforces Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory, which explains that positive emotions can increase psychological capacity and build an individual's mental resilience in dealing with stress (resilience). In the Islamic context, this mental resilience aligns with the concepts of sabr (patience) and ridha (acceptance of fate), which serve as spiritual foundations for facing life's trials.

Figure 1. Drawing Activity



Source: Documentation at C-Four Aceh

Interview data with parents of children with cancer in C-Four Aceh showed a marked change in children's emotional expression after participating in an Islamic-based psychosocial intervention. One mother stated, "My child is now happier, even after returning home; he still sings the prayer song we sang together earlier." This quote demonstrates that the Islamic singing activity is not only enjoyable but also fosters a spiritual spirit that continues beyond the session. Another parent stated: "He said it was fun, wants to sing again, wants to draw a mosque and a crescent moon. Good friends, he said." These expressions demonstrate emotional engagement as well as the integration of Islamic themes into the drawing activity. Some children even requested that the activity be repeated, indicating that the intervention is not only creative but also functional in supporting children's emotional recovery. From an Islamic perspective, happiness and joy are part of Allah's grace that must be preserved and shared with others. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Your smile for your brother is charity." (Tirmidhi, No. 1956). Therefore, the children's expressions of smiles, enthusiasm, and involvement in these Islamic activities are not only a sign of increased positive emotions but also a valuable form of social worship, while strengthening their sense of gratitude and hope in the face of illness.

Interview data with the foundation's chairman and C-Four Aceh administrators illustrated significant changes in children's emotional expression and behaviour after participating in an Islamic-based psychosocial intervention. The chairman stated, "This activity aligns with our vision and mission. The children seemed happier and less afraid to interact during the activity." This statement emphasised that the intervention was not merely entertainment but also supported the

children's psychological well-being, in line with the institution's mission. A daily administrator added: "Children who were usually passive and silent are now more responsive and even laugh during the singing sessions." This quote demonstrates that Islamic singing activities can foster positive emotional expression and social engagement. Another administrator stated, "Some children asked when this activity would be held again. They seemed to be looking forward to it." This demonstrates that the intervention provided new hope and motivation for the children. These changes indicate an increase in psychological well-being that aligns with the Islamic concept of afiyah, which is a state of physical, mental, and spiritual health. Allah SWT says: "Remember, only in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Ar-Ra'd: 28). The peace of mind created through dhikr, Islamic songs, and social support in this activity is part of the holistic healing process recommended in Islam.

Figure 2. Children's Emotional Expression after Psychosocial Intervention



Source: Documentation at C-Four Aceh

This is evidenced by research findings that children showed interest in social interactions and the activities provided. Children who were initially passive began to actively engage in singing prayers, drawing Islamic-themed pictures, and participating in mindfulness exercises based on the remembrance of God (dhikr). These findings are supported by Zhang et al. (2025), who revealed that psychosocial interventions significantly strengthen children's psychological resilience in coping with cancer treatment. Previous research by Sposito et al. (2015), Celik et al. (2021), and Dwi & Prameswari (2019) also demonstrated that psychosocial interventions incorporating art, games, or mindfulness can enhance positive emotions in cancer patients. In this study, the art and mindfulness forms used were not only general but also adapted to Islamic values—for example, drawing a mosque or a crescent moon as a symbol of hope, singing Islamic poetry that fosters enthusiasm, and simple dhikr that soothes the heart. This adaptation makes the intervention more culturally and spiritually relevant to Acehnese children, so that play therapy not only reduces anxiety and improves mood but also fosters gratitude, patience, and trust in God. Children participating in the activities become more emotionally responsive and receive spiritual empowerment that supports the holistic recovery process.

Parents acknowledged that their children were beginning to appear cheerful and more willing to share stories with others. They were very enthusiastic, especially during drawing and singing activities. For parents, these activities were very beneficial and helped relieve the children's boredom while waiting for their turn for treatment at the hospital. In Islam, happiness and enthusiasm for life are considered part of Allah's blessings. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Your smile for your brother is charity." (Tirmidhi, no. 1956). Therefore, the children's smiles and enthusiasm during these activities are not only a sign of increased positive emotions, but also a valuable form of social worship.

Strengthening positive emotions through psychosocial interventions is one way to create psychological well-being. This is also emphasised by Swipratami Pangarso et al. (2025), who showed that in Indonesia, the need for psychosocial support for children and families remains significant and has not been comprehensively addressed, thus reinforcing the urgency of community-based interventions such as those conducted in C-Four Aceh. In Islam, mental well-being and peace of mind are part of holistic health. Allah SWT says: "Remember, only by remembering Allah do hearts find rest." (Ar-Ra'd: 28). Peace of mind created through positive activities and social support is part of the holistic healing process.

The results of this study are also supported by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), within the framework of positive psychology theory, which emphasises the importance of reinforcing positive emotions in improving children's long-term psychological well-being. Children who can express hope and enthusiasm are more likely to demonstrate more adaptive psychological adjustments in facing difficult situations. In Islam, hope and enthusiasm for life are highly encouraged, as Allah SWT says: "And do not despair of Allah's mercy..." (Az-Zumar: 53).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Islamic-value-based psychosocial interventions, including group play activities, singing Islamic songs, Islamic-themed drawing, and mindful dhikr, can increase positive emotions in children with cancer at the C-Four Aceh Shelter. The children became happier, more enthusiastic, and more willing to interact, while parents and administrators also saw tangible benefits from these activities. The integration of Islamic values makes the intervention not only psychologically effective but also spiritually meaningful, thus supporting children's holistic emotional recovery.

As a recommendation, Islamic-based psychosocial interventions in shelters should be developed as a sustainable program with the support of professional staff. Further, longitudinal research should be conducted to assess their long-term impact. This effort aligns with Islamic teachings on the importance of maintaining physical and mental health and providing care for

those being tested by Allah SWT.

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