



## The Use of Wattpad as a Bibliotherapy Medium in Islamic Counseling Services to Improve Adolescents' Mental Health

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*Bibliotherapy*

**Abstract:**

*The aim of this research is to find out how the Wattpad application is used as a bibliotherapy medium in Islamic counseling services to improve adolescent mental health. This research uses a literature study research method which can be processed by collecting information through previous research references and then compiling it to draw conclusions. The results of the research analysis obtained are that by utilizing the Wattpad application, counselors can implement bibliotherapy media in Islamic counseling services. The steps include identifying the client's problem, determining a diagnosis (for example, low adolescent mental health), formulating a prognosis (reading therapy), and selecting an appropriate book from the Wattpad application. After providing reading material, the counselor carries out follow-up actions to monitor changes that occur in the counselee. So it can be concluded that the Wattpad application as an Islamic counseling bibliotherapy medium to improve adolescent mental health can be implemented.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Mental health is a condition that enables optimal development for individuals physically, intellectually, and emotionally, as long as it does not contradict the interests of others. Adolescent mental health has become an increasingly significant global concern. In contemporary society, adolescents often face various pressures that affect their psychological well-being. These pressures may come from school environments, social interactions, and family dynamics. To achieve their maximum potential in various aspects of life, good mental health is a prerequisite.

For instance, according to the Indonesia National Adolescent Mental Health Survey (I-NAMHS), one in three adolescents in Indonesia experiences mental health issues, while one in twenty adolescents has suffered from a mental disorder in the past 12 months. This ratio is equivalent to 15.5 million and 2.45 million Indonesian adolescents, respectively. I-NAMHS is the first national mental health survey that measures the prevalence of mental disorders among

adolescents aged 10-19 in Indonesia. It is undeniable that special attention needs to be given to adolescents, where Islamic values and spiritual aspects can play a role in developing their mental health. Therefore, exploring approaches that integrate adolescent mental health with Islamic teachings and values is increasingly important.

Bibliotherapy is an effective method in helping individuals overcome mental health issues by utilizing reading materials and literature as therapeutic tools. Bibliotherapy demonstrates the success of therapy as it brings individuals closer to reading, serves as a guiding technique for moral behavior development, motivates adolescents, alleviates emotional stress, and facilitates open discussions to explore various solutions to their problems. A study titled *The Role of Libraries in Shaping Mentally Healthy Individuals through Bibliotherapy* concludes that bibliotherapy helps improve behavior in individuals who struggle with self-adjustment. This occurs due to the dynamic interaction between the reader's personality and the literature they engage with. As a result, readers gain new insights about themselves and their lives while learning valuable lessons from the literature they read.

Books often provide concrete solutions and strategies that help individuals cope with their problems. This includes stress management techniques, anxiety coping strategies, and relaxation methods. Bibliotherapy can reduce social stigma associated with mental health issues. By reading the stories of others who have overcome similar challenges, individuals may feel more comfortable discussing their concerns or seeking help. Furthermore, literature on mental health often serves as an effective self-help tool. Bibliotherapy also supports counselors by providing relevant materials for discussion in therapy sessions. Thus, bibliotherapy is a valuable medium in assisting individuals on their journey to better mental health by offering understanding, solutions, emotional support, and easy access to mental health information.

Bibliotherapy, a long-established concept in counseling, is an approach that uses literature as a tool to help individuals overcome mental health issues. By reading stories or books relevant to their experiences, individuals can identify themselves with the characters and situations in the stories, which in turn helps them gain insight, comfort, or support in dealing with personal issues. In Islam, this approach can be expanded by incorporating spiritual dimensions and religious values. In this context, religion is seen as a means of mental therapy. Islamic values serve as guidance for self-adjustment and self-control, helping individuals avoid inner conflicts. As stated in Surah Yunus [10]:57:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاۤءَكُمْ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ نُوْرٌ وَّ شِفَاۤءٌ ۗ لِّمَنۡ فِي الصُّدُوْرِ وَرُوْحٰى وَّرَحْمَةٌ ۗ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

*"O mankind! Indeed, there has come to you a lesson from your Lord, and a cure for what is in your hearts, and guidance and mercy for the believers." (Yunus [10]:57)*

This verse explicitly states that peace of mind can be achieved through dhikr (remembrance of Allah), piety, and good deeds, which serve as preventive measures against fear and sorrow. It suggests that patience and prayer are the means to overcoming difficulties, and Allah describes Himself as the All-Knowing and Most Wise, capable of granting peace to the hearts of the believers. This demonstrates that religion is closely related to personal approaches to Allah as an effective therapy for addressing life challenges, including those that lead to mental health disorders.

With technological advancements, many adolescents now turn to practical and free reading materials such as the Wattpad application. Indonesian adolescents are actively engaged in reading Wattpad, reflecting changes in literacy behavior and media consumption in the digital era. The use of Wattpad in Indonesia became popular in 2015, particularly among adolescents. In 2019, Wattpad announced that its platform had reached 80 million monthly users, a 23% increase from 2018. A 2018 survey by Jakpat regarding Wattpad users in Indonesia revealed that out of 1,791 respondents across the country, 70.85% (1,269 respondents) were aware of and had used the Wattpad platform.

Wattpad is a platform for reading and blogging that allows users to write and read for free. Wattpad presents an opportunity as an innovative bibliotherapy medium in adolescent counseling. As an online-based platform widely popular among teenagers, Wattpad offers an intriguing potential for developing bibliotherapy within the mental health context. The platform enables users to access thousands of diverse stories, including those addressing mental health issues and Islamic values. This diversity of stories creates opportunities to identify, curate, and utilize them as a medium in Islamic counseling for adolescents. Wattpad not only provides access to narratives reflecting adolescent experiences but also allows interaction with these stories through comments, discussions, and personal reflections.

With easy access to internet-based devices, many adolescents find comfort in exploring the various stories and genres offered by Wattpad. They can choose stories based on their personal interests, ranging from romance to fascinating fantasy adventures. Beyond passive reading, many adolescents also become amateur writers on the platform, expressing their creativity and engaging with a community of readers and writers. This creates a dynamic social and literary environment where they can share ideas, feedback, and experiences. Wattpad also facilitates reading in the Indonesian language, making it a relevant tool for improving literacy in their native language. However, while Wattpad serves as a valuable source of entertainment and learning, it is crucial to balance it with other literacy activities to broaden their knowledge and perspectives.

Wattpad enables users to engage in social activities. In addition to providing a space for writing and reading stories, Wattpad also features profile pages where users can chat with others, add friends, and follow their favorite writers. Readers can also show their appreciation by voting with stars or ratings. Wattpad offers various genres, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, modern literature, and more.

Wattpad has gained the attention of counselors for its potential to enhance creativity in counseling services. Therefore, the development of Wattpad as a bibliotherapy medium in Islamic counseling services can help adolescents address their mental health challenges while enriching their understanding of religious and spiritual values in their daily lives. Given the phenomenon of using Wattpad as a reading and writing medium for adolescent mental health, this study aims to explore Wattpad as a bibliotherapy medium in Islamic counseling services for adolescent mental health.

This study is motivated by the open-access nature of Wattpad, which allows individuals to easily obtain various types of information, particularly for users who enjoy writing about their thoughts and emotions. Previous research by Mustika Ananti (2017) on *The Implementation of Mental Health Development Through Islamic Counseling Guidance in Enhancing Self-Adjustment Ability of 10th Grade Students at SMA Islam Raudlatul Falah Bermi Gembong Pati* indicates that Islamic counseling services play a vital role in mental health development by fostering

responsibility, self-control, righteous deeds, and coordinated thinking, including social skills, friendship, empathy, and counseling services.

Other studies have also examined Wattpad as a bibliotherapy medium. One such study by Irawati (2022) analyzed the use of bibliotherapy through Wattpad in Islamic cognitive-based counseling services for mental health at MTs Hidayatul Mustafidin Lau. However, unlike previous research, this study explicitly integrates Islamic values and spiritual aspects into the selected stories, providing a more specialized and relevant approach for adolescents. This study aims to investigate how Wattpad can be utilized as a bibliotherapy medium in Islamic counseling services for adolescent mental health. The findings are expected to provide practical guidance for counselors, educators, mental health professionals, and adolescents on the feasibility and effectiveness of Wattpad as a medium for maintaining and enhancing mental health.

## **METHOD**

This research utilizes a literature study or library research approach, which involves gathering information from previous research references and compiling them to draw conclusions. The literature review method includes theories relevant to the issues being examined by the researcher. A literature review is an essential activity in research, primarily aimed at developing theoretical aspects as well as practical benefits. This study is based on a literature review or library research. Therefore, the nature of this research is library-based (library research). All collected and analyzed data come from literature and other relevant documentation sources.

The data collection technique used in this research is a literature study, which involves searching for data related to the research topic. In this study, relevant data are gathered from various sources, including literature studies, literature reviews, and online searches. The data analysis technique used in this research is qualitative analysis through a deductive approach. This technique applies general theories or specific concepts to draw particular conclusions.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Wattpad Application***

The Wattpad application serves as a platform for fictional stories and novels as well as a medium for written expression. Many people use Wattpad for reading due to its accessibility via Android devices. This ease of access makes it attractive to readers. Wattpad aligns well with technological advancements, as it can be accessed through both the application and website. Regarding the availability of books on Wattpad, a wide variety of genres are offered, including romantic fiction, horror stories, action tales, exemplary stories, family life narratives, and stories about prophets and messengers. This application is often utilized in school programs to enhance reading and writing literacy.

According to kumparan.com, Wattpad allows users to add books to their reading list. Besides reading authors' works, users can appreciate and share writers' creations through this platform. In addition to reading stories, Wattpad users can also participate as contributors or writers. Users can share engaging stories with readers, and if their stories gain significant interest, they can earn money. Wattpad is available in both free and premium versions.

According to Puspitasari and Hasanuddin's journal, the steps for using Wattpad are as follows: (1) Download the Wattpad application via Play Store or visit Wattpad; (2) Register an account to access and use Wattpad; (3) Explore the features available on Wattpad: Home: Displays recommended stories from both local and international authors; (3) Library: Stores stories for offline reading, including "Current Read" (stories being read), "Archive" (saved stories), and "Reading List" (stories intended for future reading); (4) Search: Helps users find specific stories by genre or author; (5) Notifications: Informs users about new uploads by authors or important announcements from Wattpad; (5) Vote: Allows users to upvote stories they find interesting. Comment: Enables users to provide feedback on stories; (7) Share: Allows users to share stories on social media like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook; (8) Follow: Lets users follow writers and fellow readers. These features make Wattpad highly accessible and user-friendly.

### ***Bibliotherapy as a Medium***

Bibliotherapy is a therapeutic approach that uses reading materials to help individuals cope with psychological and emotional issues. The fundamental concept of bibliotherapy is that books, articles, stories, and other literature serve as therapeutic tools. The effectiveness of bibliotherapy largely depends on selecting appropriate reading materials. In practice, bibliotherapy involves choosing literature relevant to an individual's issues or emotions. For example, someone struggling with mental health challenges might be encouraged to read books that discuss similar experiences, coping strategies, or methods for improving mental well-being.

Bibliotherapy also involves a counselor who guides individuals in selecting suitable reading materials and helps them reflect on their responses to the content. The counselor assists individuals in processing their thoughts and emotions, gaining insights, and applying lessons from the literature to their daily lives. At its core, bibliotherapy integrates the power of literature with therapeutic principles to support individuals on their journey toward better mental and emotional health.

Carefully chosen reading materials in bibliotherapy serve several important functions in promoting mental well-being: (1) Identification: Reading stories that reflect similar experiences helps individuals feel understood and less alone; (2) Insight: Literature offers perspectives and guidance on dealing with challenges; (3) Self-reflection: Encourages individuals to understand themselves and their potential better; (4) Entertainment and Escape: Provides a healthy distraction from daily stressors; (5) Bibliotherapy has been studied in various contexts.

Research by Aliya Nisrina (2021) titled *Utilizing Novels as a Bibliotherapy Medium to Foster Optimism in Adolescent Cancer Patients at the Indonesian Children's Cancer Foundation (YKAKI)* demonstrated that bibliotherapy significantly benefits adolescent cancer patients. By identifying with book characters and their struggles, patients experienced emotional resonance, were inspired by the characters' solutions, and showed positive changes in their attitudes and spiritual outlook during their recovery. This highlights bibliotherapy's effectiveness in supporting young patients through their challenges and improving their quality of life.

### ***Adolescents***

Adolescents are more vulnerable to mental health issues than other age groups. Several characteristics make adolescents susceptible to mental health challenges:

Physical and hormonal changes can impact self-perception and identity, leading to anxiety and depression. Social pressure to conform to peer norms and expectations can cause psychosocial stress. Environmental transitions, such as moving to high school or university, can be significant stressors. Brain development during adolescence makes them more prone to impulsivity and emotional regulation difficulties. Several factors influence adolescent mental health.: (1) Lack of social and family support, including poor communication and understanding of mental health issues, increases the risk; (2) Academic pressure and unrealistic expectations from parents or schools add to stress; (3) Substance abuse and risky behaviors can negatively affect mental health. Traumatic experiences further exacerbate mental health issues.

Research indicates a rising trend in adolescent mental health problems. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 10-20% of adolescents worldwide experience mental health issues. Studies report increasing rates of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and self-harming behaviors among adolescents. Factors such as academic pressure, excessive social media use, and modern life uncertainties contribute to these trends. Thus, raising awareness, education, and support systems for adolescents are crucial to addressing their mental health concerns and preventing severe consequences.

### ***Implementing Wattpad as a Bibliotherapy Medium in Counseling Services***

Before using Wattpad as a bibliotherapy medium, it is essential to identify the types of issues best addressed through reading materials. According to Lestari (2021), bibliotherapy helps improve mental health by providing information, support, and guidance to individuals facing specific challenges. Research by Altunbay (2018) suggests that bibliotherapy allows individuals to discover solutions to their problems through reading. Additionally, Fitri et al. (2020) state that Islamic-themed bibliotherapy helps individuals appreciate themselves, develop personal growth, and manage difficult situations more creatively, particularly those experiencing emotional or mental struggles through Islamic values. Based on these previous studies, this research concludes that bibliotherapy can effectively enhance adolescent mental health.

Counselors can leverage technological advancements by utilizing Wattpad as a bibliotherapy medium for Islamic counseling services. The steps in implementing Wattpad for bibliotherapy counseling include:

1. Identifying the client's problem
2. Diagnosing the issue, in this case, poor mental health among adolescents
3. Formulating a prognosis, determining that bibliotherapy (reading therapy) can address the client's mental health concerns
4. Selecting appropriate books on Wattpad that align with the client's issues
5. Following up on the client's progress after engaging with the selected reading materials
6. Studies by Irawati (2022) explored bibliotherapy using Wattpad for adolescents struggling with mental health in schools.

The study found that implementing Wattpad in bibliotherapy received positive feedback and effectively improved adolescents' mental well-being. Additionally, Rofi'Azmi (2022) stated that stories on Wattpad are easily comprehensible, and selecting suitable books for bibliotherapy has proven beneficial in counseling services. Thus, integrating Wattpad as a bibliotherapy medium in Islamic counseling services presents an innovative approach to improving adolescent mental health. By utilizing a platform that is already popular among adolescents, counselors can provide

accessible and engaging therapeutic interventions that align with Islamic values and contemporary reading habits.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the use of Wattpad as a bibliotherapy medium in Islamic counseling services to improve adolescent mental health, it can be concluded that counselors can utilize technological advancements, such as Wattpad, as a bibliotherapy medium in Islamic counseling services by selecting books that match the client's issues. The steps in the counseling service process include:

1. Identifying the client's problem
2. Diagnosing the issue, specifically recognizing that the client suffers from poor mental health
3. Drawing a prognosis, concluding that the client's poor mental health can be addressed through reading therapy or bibliotherapy
4. Selecting appropriate reading materials, choosing stories on Wattpad that align with the client's issues

After providing the client with selected reading materials on Wattpad, the counselor follows up on the client's progress and any changes that occur.

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