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Original Article

The Effects of Itikaf on State-Trait Anger, Intrinsic Religiousness, and Subjective Well-Being

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Abstract

Itikaf (seclusion in a mosque) is prayer maintained with deep hunger during Ramadan, the month of fasting. Hunger has a positive psychological impact on people. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of itikaf on spirituality and mental health by examining its effects on anger control and subjective well-being. This experimental study investigates the effects and changes on trait anger, intrinsic religiousness, and subjective well-being during the period of itikaf on healthy adults practicing itikaf worship. While a statistically significant difference exists between the State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory and Subjective Well-Being Inventory scores collected before and after the itikaf ($p < 0.05$), no statistically significant difference has been found for the scores from the Intrinsic Religiousness Scale before and after the itikaf ($p > 0.05$). At the end of itikaf, anger-control scores were observed to increase as anger scores decreased. A significant difference has been observed in the Subjective Well-Being Inventory and State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory posttests in terms of the duration of the fast. Itikaf has been found to have positive psychological effects due to being an intensive worship program.

Keywords

Itikaf, Subjective well-being • Intrinsic religiousness • State-trait anger expression

İtikafın Durumluk-Sürekli Kaygı, İçsel Dindarlık ve Öznel İyi Oluş üzerindeki Etkileri

Öz

İtikaf (camide yapılan bir tür inziva) Ramazan ayında oruç ayı boyunca derin bir açlıkla sürdürülen bir ibadet biçimidir. Açlığın insanlar üzerinde olumlu bir psikolojik etkisi vardır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, itikafın maneviyat ve ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkisini, öfke kontrolü ve öznel iyi oluş üzerine olan etkilerini inceleyerek araştırmaktır. Bu deneysel araştırma, itikaf ibadetlerini yapan sağlıklı yetişkinlerde, itikaf sürecinin sürekli öfke, içsel dindarlık ve öznel iyi oluş düzeyleri üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektedir. İtikafın önce ve sonra alınan Durumluk-Sürekli Öfke Dışavurumu Envanteri ve Öznel İyi Olma Ölçeği puanları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark bulunurken ($p < 0.05$), İçsel Dindarlık Ölçeğinden alınan itikaf öncesi ve sonrası puanları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır ($p > 0.05$). İtikafın sonunda öfke puanlarının azaldığı, öfke kontrol puanlarının arttığı gözlenmiştir. Öznel İyi Oluş Envanteri ve Durumluk-Sürekli Öfke Dışavurumu Envanteri son testlerinde, oruç süresi açısından anlamlı bir fark bulunmuştur. İtikaf'ın yoğun bir ibadet programı olması nedeniyle olumlu psikolojik etkileri olduğu değerlendirilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

İtikaf • Öznel iyi oluş • İçsel dindarlık • Durumluk-sürekli öfke dışavurumu

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Religious beliefs do not resemble liquids in closed containers; they are direct, outward human actions. In this sense, worship resembles a power source that sustains religious life (Certel, 1999).

Worship is the most important means for keeping the human-creator, human-human, and human-soul relations constant and alive. This aspect of worship represents the most important aspect of religiousness. Worship varies according to different beliefs and religions. One of the most important worships of the Abrahamic religions is fasting. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of itikaf on spirituality and mental health, examining its effects on anger control and subjective well-being. When looking at the literature, no study is found to have investigated the effect of itikaf on spirituality and mental health in the field of the psychology of religion. Itikaf is only mentioned in books of worship. With this study, itikaf is researched for the first time in the field of the psychology of religion and provides a preliminary contribution to the literature.

Muslims fast for 29 to 30 days in the month of Ramadan, which comes 10 days earlier every year due to the differences between the Lunar and Gregorian calendars. Fasting is worship based on not eating or drinking anything from the first light of dawn (Imsak) until sunset. Because sunset and sunrise times vary throughout the year, fasting lasts 11-12 hours in months with shorter days and lasts about 17-18 hours in months with longer days.

According to Islamic belief, itikaf means to go somewhere secluded to become occupied with worship; in particular, it means to stay in mosques or masjids during the last 10 days of Ramadan for worship, becoming occupied with knowledge about faith and reading and reciting the Qur'an. The legitimacy of itikaf has been made clear in the Qur'an (7:138; 20:91, 97; 21:52; 26:71) and the Sunnah of the Prophet of Islam (Buhari: Itikaf 1, 6, & 17; Muslim: Itikaf 1-4).

Itikaf refers to secluding one's self in a mosque for the sole purpose of worshipping Allah and attaching the self and one's heart to worshipping Him. Itikaf provides an opportunity for the believer to get closer to Allah by temporarily freeing oneself and one's mind from the activities and worries of this world. This provides an excellent opportunity to train oneself to disassociate temporarily from the worries of the world and to instead focus only on Allah (Iqrasense.com, 2017)

Various studies have examined how fasting in Ramadan affects people's vital functions. For example, in a study comparing those fasting in Ramadan with those not fasting in Ramadan unexcused, those fasting were seen to have higher levels of spiritual intelligence and happiness (Bahram, Asgharnejad, Bahari, & Mahboube, 2012).

Conceptual Framework

Itikaf

In Islamic literature, itikaf is “seclusion in a mosque with the intention of earning the pleas of Allah by following certain rules.” Itikaf as a type of worship has been known since the time of Abraham. Itikaf aims to keep the relationship with the world to a minimum, to maintain one’s solitude, to worship more, to pray for the forgiveness of sins, and to approach closer to God. One who has engaged in this struggle cuts off connections with the outside world and gives oneself to worship and reading the Qur’an, to invocations and thought. Thanks to this seclusion in Ramadan called itikaf, the heart shines and the mind slows down. The nafs are held in check a certain extent. Signs of worship and servitude are seen from those coming out of itikaf (Yılmaz, 1990).

The Prophet of Islam, Saint Muhammad (S.A.W.S.) would enter itikaf for the last 10 days of Ramadan. He would perform worship at night on these last 10 days, wake up his family, and pay attention to his prayers; he worshipped more than at other times and recommended this to other Muslims (Muslim: Itikaf 7). Thus, itikaf is important worship that lifts one from the vortex of globalization and raises one’s level of servitude toward God.

On the other hand, the most important thing that makes itikaf important is to relive Laylat al-Qadr. The Qur’an (98; 1-5) mentions the importance of this night: “1. Indeed, We sent it (The Quran) down during the Night of Decree [Laylat al-Qadr]. 2. And what can make you know what is the Night of Decree? 3. The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months. 4. The angels and the Spirit (Gabriel) descend therein by permission of their Lord for every matter. 5. Peace it is (upon the believers) until the emergence of dawn.” Believers receive good deeds as if they had worshiped for nearly 84 years on this night. Allah forgives those who spend this night worshipping and praying. The people whom Allah has forgiven are happy. Allah in the Qur’an (11:3) says: “(And to preach thus), ‘Seek ye the forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance; that He may grant you enjoyment, good (and true), for a term appointed, and bestow His abounding grace on all who abound in merit! But if ye turn away, then I fear for you the Chastisement of a Great Day.’” Again, Allah says, “And O My People! Ask forgiveness of your Lord and turn to Him (in repentance): He will send you the skies pouring abundant rain, and add strength to your strength: so, turn ye not back in sin!” (Qur’an, 11:52). When we contemplate the verses, those who want to be forgiven are happy and strong people. Happy and strong people can cope more easily with the troubles of life.

One repents to God in itikaf, becoming busy with dhikr and prayer. All of this improves the individual’s spirituality. Individuals with strong spirituality can control their emotions more easily. Itikaf is meaningful solitude. In fact, one is alone with God.



Worship brings the individual closer to God, experiencing emotional transformation by feeling God's mercy. We can describe it using the butterfly metaphor. While the caterpillar is a reptilian animal, it becomes a free butterfly after a certain period in its cocoon. One can turn into an individual who is free from bad feelings with the mercy of God through one's worship and prayer.

Itikaf can be performed in several ways. In the seclusion style of itikaf, a portion of low-fat and salt-free green lentil soup in the evening (200 grams) and 150 grams of bread; at sahur (the meal eaten before the start of the day's fast in Ramadan), 21 raisins + 150 grams of bread can be eaten. A total of about 1000 calories is taken per day.

When examining the literature, no study is found to have investigated the effect of itikaf on spirituality and mental health in the field of the psychology of religion. Itikaf is only mentioned in the books of worship. Yet itikaf is a form of worship that has increased in popularity over the last 10 years. It is a prayer that the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) took care to perform every Ramadan. Applying the worship that the Prophet cares about earns the love of God.³³ This love can strengthen one's spirituality.

Anger

Anger appears in the dictionary as an intense negative feeling that occurs when a person feels blocked, attacked, threatened, deprived, restricted, etc. that can be felt in such situations and usually results in some form of aggressive behavior towards the thing or person causing it (Budak, 2000, p. 806). According to the psychoanalytical approach, the sentiment of anger is considered as a dimension of aggression. According to Freud, the prevention of one's pleasure is the source of anger and aggression (Geçtan, 2004). Another definition of anger is the more severe form of irritability that increases blood pressure (El-İsfehani, 1986, p. 554). According to al-Ghazali (1974, Vol. III, p. 376), anger is a fever in the heart that when its potential cannot be reached accelerates the heart rate. It causes blood to attack the brain and face. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.S.) said the following about anger: "Anger is a devil, and the devil is created from fire;" Belhi (2012, p. 458) argued that this hadith should be sourced, that the fire should be extinguished before it grows, and that anger should be checked from the beginning.

According to the cognitive behavioral approach, what induces anger is not the stimulus, but the meaning of the stimulus and the stimuli of the individual (Özmen, 2006, p. 47). Many internal and external reasons are found that cause feelings of anger. Internal reasons that cause feelings of anger include frustration, guilt, shame, low self-esteem, jealousy, frustration, bad memories, and competition. External reasons

3 From the Quran (3:31): Say: "If ye do love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

include permanent illnesses, alcohol, drugs, being threatened, being attacked, being deceived, being deemed worthless, being ignored, sexual abuse, and death (Karslı, 2012). According to social learning theory, behaviors are gained by modeling and imitating the behaviors observed around others. Individual and environmental factors influence learned anger and aggressive behaviors. In manifesting observed or learned behaviors of anger, the individual's perception of self, the situation faced, and other environmental factors are important. The individual evaluates all these factors and decides whether or not to present anger-based reactions (Özmen, 2006).

Subjective well-being

Subjective well-being is a subjective assessment of one's positive and negative emotions and their fulfillment from the satisfaction one receives from life. As such, it is defined as experiencing positive emotions more than negative ones and having high life satisfaction (Diener, 1984).

Factors affecting subjective well-being are grouped under three main headings: living conditions, purposeful life events, and genetic factors. According to this, demographic variables such as age, gender, educational status, place of living, marital status, economic situation are evaluated under the heading of living conditions. Meta-analysis studies have shown that life conditions are about 10% effective on subjective well-being. Purpose-oriented life events influence subjective well-being by 40%. Purposeful living activities include activities such as setting life goals and realizing them, establishing social relations, helping, forgiving, fulfilling the requirements of religious beliefs. The greatest effect on subjective well-being has been revealed to be genetic factors (equilibrium point) by 50% (Doğan , 2013).

Subjective well-being is accepted as having three components. First, life satisfaction is the cognitive component of subjective well-being. It reflects the individual's assessment of satisfaction in various habitats (Myers & Diener, 1995). Second, positive affection represents feelings such as joy, interest, excitement, trust, and alertness. Third, negative affection defines depression and subjective stress, including negative feelings such as fear, anger, hatred, guilt, and sadness (Ben-Zur, 2003).

For high subjective well-being, pleasant emotions should be greater than unpleasant emotions, and cognitive judgment about the quality of the one's life must be positive (Aydımay Satan, 2014).

Religiousness

The individual's attachment to the sacred is reflected somewhat in all aspects of life (Subaşı, 2004). According to Tekin, religiousness is "the level that religion penetrates human life." This definition includes all stages of religion, such as theoretical,



worship, and life (Tekin, 2006). According to Okumuş (2004), religiousness “is a phenomenon that expresses life in the direction of the religious attitude, experience, and behavior that man puts forth on the basis of faith and action, namely in the direction of the orders and prohibitions of believing religion, and has dimensions such as faith, knowledge, experience, emotion, and worship.”

Intrinsic religiousness is a religiousness in which individuals live their beliefs sincerely, heartfelt and without any benefit. In other words, religiousness is preferred because it is seen as valuable in and of itself. Individuals who tend to be intrinsic find themselves pre-judging motivations. No matter how strong they are, they look at other things as secondary things through their meaning and significance. Their needs are aligned as much as possible with their religious beliefs and instructions (Hökelekli, 1998). Common features of intrinsic religiousness are: living one’s religion, religion has an intrinsic value that forces one to change, and religion is an integral part of the self, not a means to dignity but its ultimate aim (Karaca, 2011). Extrinsic religiousness has a scale designed to measure the form of religiousness used for personal purposes, such as not being isolated in society. Religion is used here to serve the interests of the person, not because it is seen as valuable in itself.

Itikaf asceticism, which is an intense reflection of religiousness, can be instrumental in creating a feeling of peace and satisfaction in the individual through invocations and the congregation’s prayers and blessings. The Qur’anic verse, “Know that hearts are only peaceful to the invocation of Allah” (13:28) also ushers in this status. İtikaf is an instrument of self-isolation from the outside world and is mentioned in the Qur’an (23:3) as “...a way to save yourself by avoiding useless things and struggles.” After completing itikaf, the individual may question one’s religion by confronting the self and may feel better internally. Thus, one can deal with harmful emotions like anger more easily. On the other hand, spirituality that is strengthened by the influence of itikaf can improve patience and confidence in God. Patience with strong spirituality can facilitate anger control. Anger control earns the favor of Allah.⁴⁴ This sense of trust may also contribute to a more positive interpretation of life events.⁵⁵ This can increase one’s subjective well-being.

Instrument and Method

This research was carried out between June 24 to July 1, 2016 between the 20th and 27th days of Ramadan. Male participants experiencing itikaf secluded in mosques in Istanbul and Denizli were included in the survey.

4 From the Qur’an (3:134): “Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men; for Allah loves those who do good.”

5 From the Quran (14:12): “Why we should not put our trust on Allah? Indeed, He Has guided us to the Ways we (follow). We shall certainly bear with patience all the hurt you may cause us. For those who put their trust should put their trust on Allah.”

The research was carried out by two field experts: Assistant professor Dr. Karakaş, an expert in the psychology of religion who had prepared his doctoral thesis in psychological counseling at Sakarya University, and Professor Dr. Eker, a family medicine specialist at Istanbul Health Sciences University.

The research model is a pre-experimental design based on the relationships between variables. The study model has no control group. Pretests and posttests of the scales were applied to the experimental groups. In the model, itikaf is defined as the independent variable and subjective well-being, anger control, and intrinsic religiousness as the dependent variables.

Itikaf has become a popular form of worship in recent times, and its application is difficult. Participants were informed about the research and their consent was received as volunteers. A total of 46 volunteers participated in the survey. However, data from the 31 participants who had completed the questionnaires were evaluated. Data from 15 participants was not analytically competent so these were not included in the survey.

All 31 participants in this research were male. The distribution of participants according to age range are: nine people between 20-25, three between 31-40, eight between 41-50, eight between 51-60, and three 61 years old or older. The distribution of participants according to educational status is eight high school graduates, 17 university graduates, and six postgraduates. The distribution of participants according to fasting duration is four having fasted for 1-10 years, seven for 11-20 years, eight for 21-30 years, eight for 31-40 years, and four for 40 years or more.

Because the itikaf season is a difficult prayer that includes work days and one needs to be away from family and daily routines, the number of participants is generally small. The mosques that are set for itikaf are capable of providing both broad and basic needs. These mosques have bathroom facilities, accommodations, and a dining hall. These criteria have been determined by the Department of Religious Affairs.

The limitations of the research are that itikaf is not a widespread form of worship like Ramadan fasting or the Tarawih prayer. Because the worship and its rules are difficult, the number of participants is also limited. Thirty-one analytical data were collected through the 46 volunteers that participated in the study.

The Intrinsic Religiousness Scale (Allport & Ross, 1967), State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI; Spielberger, Sydeman, Owen, & Marsh, 1999), and Subjective Well-Being Inventory (SUBI; Sell & Nagpal, 1992) have been applied to all participants. All participants were asked to fill in these scales at the beginning and end of the itikaf.

Stait-Trait Anger Expression Inventory. STAXI (Spielberger et al., 1999) consists of 34 items and includes subscales for constant anger, controlled anger, outburst anger, and repressed anger. The following Cronbach alpha values have been found in the acceptability



confidence study (Özer, 1994): 0.79 for the continuous anger dimension, 0.84 for the controlled anger dimension, 0.78 for the outburst anger dimension, and 0.62 for the suppressed anger dimension. Higher scores gathered from continuous anger show high anger levels; higher scores gathered from controlled anger show anger can be controlled; higher scores gathered from outburst anger show anger can easily be expressed; and higher scores gathered from suppressed anger show that anger is suppressed.

Intrinsic Religiousness Scale (IRS) (Allport & Ross, 1967). This is a one-dimensional scale and when analyzing the included items using the split-half method, the correlation coefficient between the two half-scales has been calculated as .76. Cronbach's alpha of internal consistency has been determined as .84 (Karaca, 2001).

Subjective Well-Being Scale (Sell & Nagpal, 1992). SUBI consists of 46 items, including personal judgments on living areas and expressions of positive and negative feelings. The answer system uses a 5-point Likert scale, and for every expression, answers are (5) Totally Appropriate, (4) Mostly Appropriate, (3) Partially Appropriate, (2) A Little Appropriate, and (1) Totally Inappropriate. Every item is scored from 5 to 1. There are 26 positive and 20 negative expressions on the scale. Negative expressions are reverse scored. Cronbach's alpha of reliability for the scale has been determined as .93 and the test-retest reliability as $r = .86$ (Tuzgöl Dost, 2005).

All calculations were done using the statistical software package SPSS 11.5 (the system for statistics) for data analysis. All data have been expressed as mean standard deviations (*SD*). Comparisons between the means observed before and after itikaf were tested using paired *t*-tests. The data within each phase have also been examined using Pearson's *r* correlation analysis to find the relationship between the studied variables. All differences are considered significant at $p < 0.05$.

Results

The results of the research have been shared in the form of tables. In the findings, the pretest and posttest results from the scales and relationships among them are shared.

Table 1.

Pretest and Posttest Averages for Trait Anger Expression, Intrinsic Religiousness, and Subjective Well-Being, and the Differences among Them: Paired Samples Statistics

		<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Pair 1	IRS Pretest	28.09	31	2.85	0.34	.732
	IRS Posttest	27.80	31	5.08		
Pair 2	STAXI Pretest	72.67	31	9.80	4.18	.000
	STAXI Posttest	66.45	31	7.14		
Pair 3"	SUBI Pre- Test	135.90	31	20.99	-2.73	.010
	SUBI Posttest	145.25	31	15.09		

As shown in Table 1, while a statistically significant difference exists between the scores for the STAXI and SUBI scales before and after itikaf ($p < 0.05$), the scores from the Intrinsic Religiousness Scale before and after itikaf are not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

Table 2.
Correlations among Pretests for Trait Anger Expression, Intrinsic Religiousness, and Subjective Well-Being

Before Itikaf		IRS Pretest	STAXI Pretest	SUBI Pretest
	<i>r</i>	1	.245	.015
IRS Posttest	<i>p</i>		.184	.935
	<i>N</i>	31	31	31

As shown in Table 2, no statistically significant relationship is found among the variables before itikaf.

Table 3.
Correlations among Posttest for Trait Anger Expression, Intrinsic Religiousness, and Subjective Well-Being

After Itikaf		IRS Posttest	STAXI Posttest	SUBI Posttest
	<i>r</i>	1	-.009	.380*
IRS Posttest	<i>p</i>		.960	.035
	<i>N</i>	31	31	31

* Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 3, a significant relationship is found between the posttest averages for intrinsic religiousness and subjective well-being. ($r = 0.380, p = 0.035$)

Table 4.
Correlations among the Pretests-Posttests for Trait Anger Expression, Intrinsic Religiousness, and Subjective Well-Being

IRS Pretest	IRS Posttest	STAXI Pretest	STAXI Posttest	SUBI Pretest	SUBI Posttest
<i>r</i>	1	.419	1	.560	1
<i>p</i>		.019		.001	
<i>N</i>	31	31	31	31	31

In Table 4, statistically significant results are observed between the pretest and posttest results for the variables. A significant relationship exists between the pretest-posttest averages for intrinsic religiousness ($r = .419, p = .019$). A significant relationship exists between the pretest-posttest averages for state-trait anger expression. ($r = .560, p = .001$). Again, a significant relationship is found between the pretest-posttest averages for subjective well-being ($r = .484, p = .006$). According to Table 4, a positive correlation is observed among the variables. The averages of the variables can be said to have increased after itikaf.

Table 5.
Differences among STAXI, Intrinsic Religiousness, and SUBI Posttests According to Fast Duration: ANOVA Results

Fasting Time		Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
IRS Posttest	Between Groups	29.482	4	7.370	.256	
	Within Groups	747.357	26	28.745		.903
	Total	776.839	30			
STAXI Posttest	Between Groups	81.695	4	20.424	.367	
	Within Groups	1,447.982	26	55.692		.830
	Total	1,529.677	30			
SUBI Posttest	Between Groups	2,210.435	4	552.609	3.104	
	Within Groups	4,629.500	26	178.058		.033
	Total	6,839.935	30			



In the context of fasting durations in Table 5, a significant difference has only been observed for the SUBI posttest. ($F = 3.104, p = .033$); no significant difference was observed among the other variables with fasting duration. When examining the effect values of the variables, only intrinsic religiousness is observed to have a significant effect on subjective well-being ($r^2 = .144, \beta = .380, p = .035$). According to results, intrinsic religiousness is only able to significantly explain 14% of trait anger. No significant effect is observed between the other variables ($p > 0.05$).

Discussion

This study investigates the intrinsic religiousness, trait anger expression, and subjective well-being attitudes of individuals before and after entering itikaf. Thus, the effects of itikaf on these attitudes have been examined.

By the end of the research, the itikaf program seems to not have a statistically positive contribution to intrinsic religiousness. At the same time, even though insignificant, a decrease has been seen. This conclusion can be interpreted as those entering itikaf having had a high sense in mind; they were able to confront themselves about their high perception of intrinsic religiousness and intense worship, and at the end of the itikaf program they realized that their intrinsic religiousness was not really strong. Therefore, they had realized that they were not actually as strongly religious as they had thought themselves to be before the itikaf. Thus, the participants' intrinsic religiousness may have been reduced. Riazat [abstinence, asceticism] radically changes the form and natural structure of the worshiper (Yıldız & Meçin, 2014). As itikaf is a form of riazat, they may have realized the many ways they did not exhibit intrinsic religiousness and questioned their previous religious sincerity. This can also be explained by the metaphor of one realizing and accepting one's ignorance by reading more.

A statistically significant decrease is found in the mean level of trait anger expression in our study group after itikaf. Anger management increased. This may have been the effect of a riazat fasting. Fasting has also been found to have positive effects on anger management (Kimter, 2015). Özkan (2008) also found religious motives to lower the level of anger in his study on religious motivations and anger control. In this context, one can argue that a good deed increases anger management and reduces anger. The Qur'an (3:134) states, "Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men; - for Allah loves those who do good." Muslims naturally rarely eat or drink during Ramadan. Sustenance is further reduced in itikaf. The person is purified by eating less and intensely worshipping. One learns to control the self and bad feelings. Intense worship and dhikr soften one's heart. Anger is one of these bad feelings. As has been said, one controls the anger and becomes more forgiving. Through this, those who

leave things that are not free, that is to say those who determine their priorities and prayers correctly, are happy. People leave everything earthly from their mind and turn to Allah. “Successful indeed are the Believers, those who humble themselves in their prayers; Who avoid vain talk,” Allah states in the Qur’an (23:1-3). The person turns to Allah and abandons self-sacrificing pleasures, arriving at the favor of Allah. Therefore, anger can be checked because there is no pleasure to be intercepted. According to the results of an experimental study (Bremner, Koole, & Bushman, 2011), after being insulted, prayer reduces anger and actual aggressive behavior. Prayer further undoes the effects of being insulted regarding the cognitive appraisals that typically accompany anger. Anger-related appraisals were assessed in a task that appeared unrelated to anger according to the participants, so that the effects of prayer did not appear driven by concerns of social desirability. In another study (Gonzalez, Lôpez, Moreno, & Losada, 2012), support from the religious community is directly and negatively associated with anger, while the relationship between spiritual meaning and anger is mediated by caregivers’ appraisals of problem behaviors; this suggests that spiritual beliefs might help caregivers find meaning in caregiving experiences and thus appraise care recipients’ behavioral problems as less stressful. As a person interacts with other participants, they can receive spiritual support from each other. Thus anger may diminish. In another study (Karakaş, 2018), itikaf was observed to decrease the severity of worry and to increase spiritual intelligence.

Meanwhile, the subjective well-being averages of itikaf participants were observed to increase at the end of the program. A positive relationship was also observed for intrinsic religiousness and anger management with subjective well-being. The positive effects of religious belief and righteousness on mental health are now a known reality. Öztürk (2013) found spirituality and optimism to increase subjective well-being in his study. As negative emotions and attitudes decrease, a natural result is that the person feels good and peaceful. The results of one study (Hoverd & Sibley, 2013) from a national probability sample of New Zealanders ($N = 5,984$) indicated that religious people living in deprived neighborhoods have higher subjective well-being than their non-religious counterparts living in the same neighborhoods. Subjective well-being has evidenced a strong positive correlation with religious belief through 18 of the 19 studies in this section, which supports the notion that belief has a positive effect on subjective well-being (Spencer, Madden, Purtill, & Ewing, 2010, p. 14). Stronger religious beliefs have been observed to positively correlate with subjective well-being. According to the literature on happiness, religion influences subjective well-being by providing meaning and purpose to people’s lives; stronger religious beliefs reflect a stronger influence of religion when interpreting life events (Bacó, 2010).

In Küçükköse’s (2015) study, trait anger, trait anger expression, and stress levels were determined to affect high school students’ subjective well-being. A



meaningful negative and low-level relation was found between high school students' subjective well-being with trait anger, and internal/external anger expressions. A significant positive and low-level relation was found between high school students' subjective well-being and trait anger expression and a significant positive and intermediate level relation was found between high school students' subjective well-being and stress levels.

When reviewing the literature, studies are found to have been conducted in the context of religiousness, anger, and subjective well-being. For example, one study (Kimter, 2015) observed Ramadan fasting and supererogatory fasting to decrease anger. Again, statistically significant data was reached in Karsh's (2012) study; when participating in worship increases, trait anger, anger suppression, and anger expression in the form of verbal and physical aggression decrease and anger management increases.

In another study (Sopti, 2010), participants argued that fasting contributes to well-being and sustainable happiness by strengthening and enhancing personal and subjective resources, thus providing better coping with stress. A positive relation was found between religiosity and subjective well-being. According to conducted research (Aydinay Satan, 2014), university students with strong religious beliefs were found to have higher life satisfaction than students without strong beliefs.

In a study comparing those who fast with those who don't (Meena, 2010), fasting worship has been determined to have a significant effect on dealing with health, happiness, and life events. Accordingly, fasting increases one's physical and mental health as well as well-being. However, no direct psychology of religion study has been found on itikaf. The study of itikaf has mostly been done in the context of mysticism; its relation with any other variables has been seen to be uninvestigated.

Research has found that the level of religious belief to be a significant predictor of subjective well-being. According to Aydinay Satan (2014), one of the two important equation variables while predicting subjective well-being scores is the level of religious belief. When religious belief is seen as an important element in meeting the need for meaning in life, this element can be said to be an important contributor to the life happiness of the individual with the role of balance in determining the shape and direction of harmony and behavior that the individual brings to the inner world. In addition, a strong sense of spirituality can promote optimism; facilitate anxiety, fear, and stress management; and make individuals happier in life when they are thought to have strengthened the ability to cope with problems.

Gratitude, like patience, is also spiritual value. In itikaf, the person recognizes the blessings that God has bestowed, praising Him. Gratitude can positively shape

a person's subjective well-being. One study (Watkins, Woodward, Stone, & Kolts, 2003) supports the theory that gratitude is an affective trait important to subjective well-being. Again, children have been seen to indicate higher averages regarding comparative appreciation, worshipping appreciation, and appreciation intended for materialistic ownership; youths with friends in prison value their social environment more, and significantly positive relationships have been seen to exist between appreciation and subjective well-being (Göcen, 2016).

When examining the pretests and posttests for the variables, a positive relationship is observed among them. A positive and meaningful relationship has been found among the meanings of intrinsic religiousness, trait anger, and control with subjective well-being. A significant positive correlation exists between the intrinsic religiousness posttests and subjective well-being posttests. After itikaf, a significant positive correlation is found between the intrinsic religiosity posttests with the trait anger and anger control posttests. The variables were observed to affect each other positively after itikaf. According to these results, itikaf can be said to have the effect of spiritual therapy.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The levels of state-trait anger expression and subjective well-being in the subjects participating in the study were positively and statistically significantly affected after the itikaf period. In terms of fasting times, a significant correlation has also been found with the posttest averages for subjective well-being. However, a slight decrease was found for the averages of intrinsic religiousness. At the end of the itikaf program they realized that their intrinsic religiousness was not really strong. Thus, they realized they had not actually considered themselves strongly religious before itikaf. Therefore, the participants' intrinsic religiousness may have been reduced.

In conclusion, itikaf can be said to contain intense worship and, more importantly, to allow leaving earthly things behind to be left alone with Allah so that by performing itikaf the individual can expand the heart and reach spiritual peace. Expanding the heart's intent means achieving inner peace. Individuals who reach inner peace can cope more easily with the troubles of life and can develop anger-control skills.

Itikaf is a time of purification and spiritual upheaval. In this study, itikaf has been observed to increase subjective well-being and can be especially said to increase confidence in the future and the ability to cope with life troubles. The potential of itikaf to increase spirituality should also be noted. At the same time, patience and confidence in God are spiritual values. More limited nutrition is used in this form of worship. Self-indulgence can make a person selfish. Hunger can make a person tolerant. Patience is an important frame of mind in anger control.

In addition to spiritual blessings, Muslims' participation in checking people's expert knowledge contributes positively to the world of their soul. The result of this research is limited to the study group. Itikaf's effects on mental health with a number of different groups can be examined. Participating in itikaf can develop feeling trust in God thanks to the mercy of dhikr. Thus, it can develop anger control and increase subjective well-being. Itikaf is recommended as an option in spiritually-oriented interventions. More qualified studies can be done by identifying specific worships with subjects under supervision.

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