

The Role of *Khalwat* as a Coping Mechanism for Stress Among Kudus Mountaineers

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Abstract

Some climbers specifically intend to do *khalwat* through climbing. *Khalwat* is solitude to get closer to God. Climbers who do this hope to be able to avoid bad things, get closer to goodness, and get closer to God as a way out of the stress they experience. The purpose of this study was to determine the form or behavior of *khalwat* and to see the role of *khalwat* in the stress coping process carried out by mountaineer in Kudus Regency. The determination of the participants in this study used a purposive sampling technique with a qualitative phenomenological approach and data collection was carried out by in-depth interviews with four participants in July 2024. From the research that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the form of *khalwat* carried out by each respondent is different. Respondents carry out *khalwat* behaviour by being alone, filling their time with positive things and avoiding negative things, and praying. Solitude (*khalwat*) when climbing a mountain can be used as a stress coping. This is based on the output or impact that participants feel after doing solitude on the mountain. Seclusion helps the mountain climbing process to make it easier to find peace, alleviate problems, and increase the spirituality of climbers.

Keywords: Coping, *Khalwat*, Mountaineer, Stress

Abstrak

Beberapa pendaki secara khusus berniat melakukan *khalwat* melalui pendakian. *Khalwat* adalah penyendirian untuk mendekati diri kepada Tuhan. Pendaki yang melakukan hal tersebut dengan harapan untuk bisa menghindari keburukan, mendekati diri dengan kebaikan, serta lebih dekat dengan Tuhan sebagai jalan keluar dari stres yang dialaminya. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bentuk atau perilaku

khalwat dan melihat peranan khalwat pada proses *coping stress* yang dilakukan para pendaki gunung di kabupaten Kudus. Penentuan partisipan penelitian ini menggunakan teknik purposive sampling dengan pendekatan kualitatif fenomenologi dan dilakukan pengumpulan data dengan in dept interview kepada empat partisipan pada bulan Juli tahun 2024. Dari penelitian yang telah dilakukan dapat disimpulkan bahwa bentuk khalwat yang dilakukan tiap responden berbeda-beda. Responden melakukan perilaku khalwat dengan menyendiri, mengisi waktu dengan hal yang positif dan menghindari hal negatif, serta bermunajat. Khalwat, ketika mendaki gunung bisa dijadikan sebagai *coping stress*. Hal ini didasari oleh output yang dirasakan responden setelah melakukan penyendirian di gunung. Khalwat membantu proses pendakian gunung untuk lebih mudah mendapatkan ketenangan, meringankan masalah, serta meningkatkan spiritualitas pendaki.

Kata kunci: *Coping*, Khalwat, Stres, Pendaki Gunung

Introduction

The increasing trend of mountain climbing is also due to the presence of influencers who are driving interest in mountain climbing among the public (Alansyah et al., 2019). The video content (Apat Negeri Gunung Rinjani) on Fiersa Besari's YouTube channel has a big influence on a tourist destination, especially Mount Rinjani National Park. Not only that, public awareness of the importance of maintaining physical and mental health is also a strong reason for people to climb mountains. Mountains are currently a popular location and are chosen by many people to carry out nature exploration activities as a recreational sport, even climbing or mountain climbing may be a source of pride, existence apart from enjoying a vacation (Rahman et al., 2017).

Physical activities carried out in the open air (green areas) have more benefits for physical and psychological health because climbing mountains is a medium for finding a calm and quiet atmosphere because mountains are far from the hustle and bustle of the city (Mahfudhoh et al., 2021). Visiting nature at least once a week was positively associated with key policy goals such as better general health and more pro-environmental behaviours. This advocates the need to protect and invest in pressured natural resources, in order to maximise the health and sustainability benefits that they afford (Martin et al., 2020).

Mountaineer go on a hiking trip with the aim of entertainment or recreation in nature to seek peace and reduce stress. In an effort to reduce or eliminate stress, it is done by solitude and a spiritual approach to God. The ability to be alone allows one to always remember to pray to Allah Almighty, think clearly, and avoid crowds. So that they can devote themselves to God without the denial that has been done. The impact that will be seen is that it can improve their mental health (Putri et al., 2023). Not a few

climbers include spirituality in their climb, but not many of them climb with the intention of being alone in order to get closer to God as a way to overcome their stress.

In addition to being a healthy sport, mountain climbing also provides beautiful scenery, mountain climbing can also lighten feelings. For a more optimal effort to overcome problems, include the spiritual aspect in the ongoing climbing activity. Addition to biological, psychological, and socio-environmental factors, various factors that can be assigned to a spiritual and work cultural dimension also play an important role in the onset of burnout (Listopad et al., 2021). Mountain climbing will become a source of transcendent experience, flow and happiness, which would further affect participants' daily lives so that they can confront challenges in an active and positive manner (Sheng-Hshiang Tsaur, Chang-Hua Yen, 2012).

Stress is a reaction or response of the body in facing external demands that are considered dangerous to the body or mind. Coping is a person's effort to fix external demands that are considered dangerous to the body. Lazarus & Folkman (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) defines coping as a cognitive and behavioral effort that is constantly changing to manage certain external and/or internal demands that are assessed as burdensome or exceed the person's resources. Coping with stress is an effort made by an individual in dealing with a situation that is full of pressure or that can threaten him/herself to reduce the level of stress or pressure experienced or also an effort to minimize the negative effects of a situation that is full of pressure that is considered to be burdensome or exceeds the ability of an individual (Atika & Wardani, 2021). The presented theoretical model assumes that coping refers to both volitional and automatized, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural responses to stress (Stanisławski, 2019).

Stress coping strategies aim to overcome situations and demands that are felt to be pressing, challenging, burdensome both mentally and physically. According to Lazarus and Folkman, coping strategies are generally divided into two parts, namely the first problem-focused coping (coping focuses on problems), cognitive efforts that focus on defining problems, generating alternative solutions, weighing alternatives in relation to effort and results, choosing between alternatives, and taking action. Problem-focused coping focuses on dealing with the stressor effectively (Agha, 2021). Second, emotional-focused coping, a defensive coping strategy that focuses on reducing negative emotions in an effort to deal with stress. An emotion-focused coping strategy regulates emotions by changing the meaning of stressful situations cognitively without changing the stress-producing situation (Fteiha & Awwad, 2020).

According to Lazarus and Folkman, stress coping has 3 stages. The first is anticipation, preparing for things that have not happened and the most important things to assess include whether the event will happen, when it will happen, and what will happen. Second, confrontation, many thoughts and actions that are relevant to the sense of control become irrelevant because the dangerous event has begun or ended. Third, post-confrontation, a series of new anticipatory processes by obtaining assessments and coping aimed not only at the past and present, but also at the future. The strongest predictor was positive thinking for all mental health scales followed with social support, indicating that these coping strategies were found to be the most beneficial for mental health (Budimir et al., 2021).

Previous research explains that there is a positive and significant relationship between religiosity and stress coping in final year students of the Islamic guidance and counseling study program (Nur Laili et al., 2023; Rahmajati, 2021). Sari & Haryati, (2023) indicates that students with high levels of religiosity tend to have high stress coping strategy abilities as well. Spiritual intelligence play a role in coping with unemployment stress and, in turn, relieves the negative effects of it (Arnout, 2020). The other research provides evidence of the significant role spirituality plays in the lives of many people who experience mental health difficulties (Milner et al., 2020).

There are many religious meditation practices to overcome the problems of life today, such as stress. We just need to adjust it to ourselves. If we take it from the aspect of Mountaineer, then *khalwat* can be an option. Etymologically the "*khalwat*" is derived from the word *khala* ("void" when the world before it was created) (Yusna, 2020). *Khalwat* is intended to protect oneself from negative influences both from within oneself and from outside oneself (Wahyudi & Bakri, 2021). In the translation of Ibn Arabi's book, *khalwat* is explained as an activity of being alone (contemplation) with the aim of getting closer physically and mentally to Allah SWT. Because the further the distance from creatures, the closer the distance to the Creator (Arabi, 2005). Ibn Arabi focuses more on seclusion as an effort to get closer to Allah by increasing faith. He said that *khalwat* in sufism theory is a primary need for *sālik* and is an effort that has to be done by *sālik* for cleaning themselves from everything that prevents them to be close to Allah (Munji & Çeyhan, 2018).

Meanwhile, Sheikh Abdil Qodir Jaelani distinguishes *khalwat* into two types, namely the first physical *khalwat* by separating or isolating oneself and physically limiting oneself from people. The goal is so that he does not hurt others with his despicable morals, and leaving things that are his bad habits. Second, spiritual *khalwat* also means maintaining the five senses in order to open the sensitivity of the heart with sincere intentions. Then undergoing death according to the will of Allah SWT and

entering the grave with the intention of achieving Allah's pleasure. (Budiyanto & Hasan, 2022).

In practice, for today's era, people who are new to Sufism are not allowed to do *khalwat* independently or personally. Basically, *khalwat* can be done by anyone by being alone in a place far from the hustle and bustle of urban life and crowds such as caves or other quiet places. The practice of *khalwat* was initially a personal practice but then developed into an institutionalized one with the direction of a tarekat mursyid (Abdullah, 2018). So what will be taken from the context of seclusion as mountain climber coping is based on the theory of seclusion to increase spirituality, not the extent of seclusion practices carried out by mountaineers.

The purpose of distancing oneself from the crowd is not to leave physical friendship with them, but rather to be alone in one's heart and ears, not to become a container for the overflow of words they bring. In his efforts, Ibn Arabi explained the stages of *khalwat*. First, filling in knowledge of sharia, namely moral and ethical teachings to build an orderly life. Examples of sharia actions are by obeying the rules that have been set by Allah such as seeking knowledge, praying, *zakat*, fasting, and working. Second, moral awareness, namely spiritual cleansing and purification by training the mind, character, distancing oneself from negligence and being patient with insults with *zuhud* or prioritizing the afterlife, and *riyadhoh* or training lusts. Third, faith or awareness is deep wisdom or knowledge of spiritual truth by getting closer to Allah (Robert Frager, 2023).

There is a relationship between *khalwat* and emotional control and *khalwat* and the quality of worship, thus the exploration is accepted (proven) (Lailatul Izzah, 2022). This means that the results of the study show that there is a relationship between *khalwat* and emotional control and the quality of worship. After participating in the *khalwat*, the mountaineers said that their feelings changed to be calmer (Rahman et al., 2017). In dealing with all worldly problems, of course we need a support. Withdrawing from the crowd and returning our thoughts to the creator will tend to provide a sense of comfort and calm. The concept of self-isolation is one way to overcome existing problems. *Khalwat* is one effort to carry out self-isolation that has a positive impact, not only on the spiritual aspect, but also on the psychological aspect. The positive impact on the psyche that is received is the return of peace in the heart, a sense of comfort, and reducing anxiety when facing a problem or stress.

After knowing the effectiveness of *khalwat* as a stress coping, we need to know the relationship between *khalwat*, stress coping and mountaineer to be able to implement it in mountain climbing. Mountaineer are people who do outdoor activities,

nature and heavy activities on the mountain. Mountain climbing cannot be equated with ordinary outdoor activities such as camping. Mountain climbing is a fun outdoor activity, but it is full of risks (Reza, 2017). If the climb is a mountain expedition, it will require a lot of preparation, logistics, and time. Therefore, there will be many obstacles and barriers when on the mountain. Mountaineers utilised self-regulation strategies during mountaineering to manage negative affective responses (affective phenomena) and facilitate more rational decision-making (cognitive phenomena) (Jackman et al., 2020).

There are two categories of Mountaineer, group mountaineer and solo Mountaineer. Group mountaineer tend to climb mountains to enjoy the journey with a lively and lively atmosphere. While solo mountaineer will tend to give meaning to the journey they go through during the climb. Regardless of the two different categories of Mountaineer, the goal is still the same, namely to find peace, pleasure, comfort, and happiness.

Afifah, (2019) The experience of flow when climbing a mountain found that mountain climbing can (1) Increases the self-esteem of participants and reconstructs the perception of their social environment around the 'special' Muslim female mountain climber, (2) The goal of Muslim female mountaineer is spirituality to get closer to Allah SWT and also get closer to other human beings or increase brotherhood, by climbing a mountain participants can increase their spirituality (3) Mountain climbing can also bring participants to the experience of being carried away but still remaining focused. Nuzulia, (2024) positive relationship between emotional regulation and self-efficacy in novice mountaineer in East Java. This conclusion verifies that the higher the level of emotional regulation in novice mountaineer in East Java, the higher the level of self-efficacy they have. Mountaineering is at root the attempt to affirm, validate and acquire psychological compensation for the demands of mature and responsible human agency (Duits, 2020).

Some Mountaineer in Kudus Regency consciously climb with the intention of meditating or distancing themselves from worldly matters (ASDP, 2024). This is because they have a religious environmental background. Although there have been several studies that show that climbers also involve spiritual aspects, such as the sense of devotion with often pray for safety, resigned to God when climbing with things that will be encountered especially related to weather and natural conditions, then it will be a lot of looking at nature with its beauty that makes more climbers given the God (Rahman et al., 2018b). The attainment of the peak represents a spiritual connection with the divine that can lead to enlightenment, enabling the climbers to realize the truth

about themselves and their existence (Gautam, 2024). However, this has not specifically involved the role of *khalwat* in the research.

Research on *khalwat* in previous studies still discussed *khalwat* at the level of concepts and literature. In addition, *khalwat* is still studied in the context of tariqah members. There is also no research that specifically discusses the role of *khalwat* in coping with stress. Often mountaineer do their climbing to withdraw from their lives because of problems they experience, whether it is excessive workload, piling up work or boredom. Not a few of them will be sad again when their climb is at the end of the road until they arrive home. For that, withdrawing from the crowd by seclusion for climbers will get more offers than putting their problems down when going to climb a mountain, and carrying those problems again when they arrive home. Seclusion will help climbers to not only find mental peace, but also spiritual peace. Even to be able to remember the creator and straighten the path to return to Allah.

Based on the description above, regarding the motivation of Mountaineer, some of which are seeking peace (Gautam, 2023), avoiding crowds (Naor & Mayseless, 2020), forgetting problems (ERTAS, 2022), seeking new experiences and this leads to *khalwat* behavior. *Khalwat* aims to withdraw from the crowd, be alone, and reject negative things which are quite continuous with the motivation of Mountaineer. In addition, *khalwat* also plays a role in providing peace both mentally and spiritually. Where most of the research has not been explicitly mentioned, So this study will further describe how *khalwat* as a stress coping for Mountaineer. The *khalwat* method as a support for avoiding crowds while still remembering the Creator will help mountaineer to be able to control the stress they experience. The author wants to see to what extent the aspects of Sufism, especially *khalwat*, can be applied to Mountaineer. And to what extent the impact is received by mountaineer when doing *khalwat* during their climb.

To explain how this *khalwat* can play a role in the coping process of climbers in Kudus Regency, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique with a qualitative approach. Researchers collected data using in-depth interviews (in-dept interviews) with the aspect of seclusion as coping with stress. Interviews were conducted once in June with an average interview duration of 30 minutes for each respondent. The aspect of *khalwat* is taken from the thoughts of a Sufi figure named Ibn Arabi with his aspect, namely filling knowledge of the Sharia, moral awareness and faith. The analysis technique used in this research is interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to reveal themes, meanings and explain the experiences experienced by individuals. IPA is a qualitative approach that aims to examine how people make sense of their life experiences (A Smith et al., 2012).

This study uses a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological design to know the form or behavior of *khalwat* in mountaineers and explore *khalwat* as a coping factor for Mountaineer' stress. The determination of the participants in this study used a purposive sampling technique, totally 4 Muslims, having at least 3 years of climbing experience, and having climbed at least 8 times. Participants were taken through the researcher's closest environment who live in Jepara. The first participant, ASDP (initials), is 23 years old, has 9 years of climbing experience, and has climbed 23 times. Second, SC (initials), is 23 years old, has 7 years of climbing experience, and has climbed 11 times. Third, PAS (initials), is 23 years old, has 3 years of climbing experience, and has climbed 8 times. Fourth, MTA (initials), is 23 years old, has 5 years of climbing experience, and has climbed 15 times.

Mountaineer's *Khalwat*

Khalwat is explained as an activity of being alone (contemplation) with the aim of getting closer physically and mentally to Allah SWT (Ibn Arabi, 2005). In an effort to carry out *khalwat*, there are three aspects that accompany it, namely filling in sharia knowledge, moral awareness, and faith.

Filling Sharia is a command that has been required by Allah to creatures through the Prophet Muhammad so that it is always carried out and prohibitions are abandoned. The broad understanding of Sharia, namely in its connection with rules and laws, also includes belief and faith, and the ideals and actions of the apostles in an effort to seek divine approval (Moh. Bakir, 2019). Moral awareness is an aspect that encourages the element of self-awareness in the human person, namely the spiritual aspect. In terms of language, self-awareness is interpreted as remembering, feeling and being aware of oneself (Prastyo & Nawawi, 2023). The last one is faith. For Ibn Arabi, faith is a knowledge and perception including both spiritual aspect of mysticism and posterior aspect. This virtue is the performance of beliefs. In this manner, faith is a path through which heart gathers reason and religion (Babakhani et al., 2017). From this aspect, it can be used as capital or a form of seclusion that will be carried out on the mountain.

Filling in Sharia Knowledge

Sharia is a command that has been required by Allah to creatures through the Prophet Muhammad so that it is always carried out and prohibitions are abandoned. The broad understanding of Sharia, namely in its connection with rules and laws, also includes belief and faith, and the ideals and actions of the apostles in an effort to seek divine approval (Moh. Bakir, 2019).

Before doing solitude, a Sufi must first fill in the knowledge of sharia as a foundation in doing solitude (*khalwat*) namely building morals and ethics for an orderly life. In general, Islamic teachings can be grouped into three categories; first, *Hablumminallah*, which is about the relationship between creatures and Allah SWT, second, *Hablumminannas*, which is about good relations between one human being and another, third, *Hablumminal'alam*, which is the relationship with the surrounding nature (Faliyandra, 2019). Therefore, establishing a relationship with God, others and nature is the basis for filling in knowledge of the Sharia.

In the effort of *Hablumminallah*, PAS, ASDP, SC, and MHTA always maintain their prayer obligations even though some of them experience difficulties such as problems with water, places, and clean clothes. Things that are done to solve the water problem can be done by performing tayammum as PAS usually does (PAS, 2024). The problem of steep or extreme places until the end of the prayer period can be overcome by adjusting the prayer movements that SC does (SC, 2024). Meanwhile, for clean clothes, especially regular pants, MHTA anticipates this by bringing a sarong as a replacement (MHTA, 2024). From these efforts, they continue to carry out their respective prayer obligations. Their efforts in maintaining this *syafiat* are part of *hifz al-din* or maintaining their religion. In the midst of an era of freedom, especially among the younger generation, the choice to maintain religion by fulfilling the sharia among the younger generation is what will maintain their spiritual connection with Allah SWT (Ismail & Mat, 2016). On the other hand, during the solitary journey on the mountain by each participant, it resulted in a spiritual closeness to Allah. (PAS, 2024) felt closeness and always remembered the presence of Allah. (ASDP, 2024) and (MHTA, 2024) felt that they were small and knew the greatness of Allah. SC admired and praised all of Allah's creations. This spiritual closeness is the main goal of a person's *ijtihat* when maintaining the existing sharia (March, 2009).

The fragility of human beings is that they often forgets their identity as social creatures and consider others as enemies and rivals in their lives. In other words, they live together but without appreciating the values of togetherness, arising hatred, envy, jealousy, revenge, anger and so on (Yusuf, 2020). When climbing, we can meet anyone even if we are solo hiking or alone when climbing a mountain. The aspect of the social relations (*Hablumminannas*) built by moral Sufism means a social interaction that influences individuals and the environment mediated by behavior (Muhamad Basyrul Muvid, 2024). The presence of other people or other climbers is not an obstacle to their solitude on the mountain. Three of the four participants often meet fellow climbers in their solitude on the mountain. They do not limit the distance between fellow climbers by greeting each other, exchanging stories, and even getting to know each other further.

On the other hand, ASDP did not meet fellow climbers at all when doing solo hiking because the mountain he climbed was not very popular. And for ASDP himself, he did not mind at all if he had to meet other people or fellow climbers when he was doing solitude on the mountain (ASDP, 2024).

Mountain climbing is closely related to nature. The mountain itself is nature, in the mountain there are trees and plants, there is also an ecosystem that is formed, and for climbers themselves nature is a resting place for all thoughts. Therefore, in general climbers are required to protect the nature that is on the mountain. Central to the Islamic theoretical interpretation of humans and the environment is the relationship between humans and their Creator, God (Shaleh & Islam, 2024). Factors that influence mountaineer to protect the environment are seen from the attitudes, values, and actions of climbers towards the environment when carrying out climbing activities (Putranto et al., 2020). In this regard, the four participants took part in protecting nature while climbing the mountain. For them, nature is a gift from God that must be protected. In fact, MHTA itself often takes part in nature conservation events such as planting trees, reforesting forests, and fertilizing edelweiss flowers which only exist on mountains (MHTA, 2024). Nature is God's creation and proof of His greatness. for the four participants, nature is a medium or means for admiring the greatness of God.

In essence, *Hablumminannas* and *Hablumminalalam* have a vertical goal (*Hablum Minallah*) to obtain the pleasure of Allah SWT (*Hablumminallah*). *Khalwat* or solitude aims to get closer to Allah. The first step in this approach is to provide knowledge of sharia to oneself because sharia is an absolute requirement to achieve salvation in the world and the hereafter, and an important key to achieving closeness to Him (Muzayanah, 2021).

Moral Awareness

In doing *khalwat*, one must have moral or self-awareness by training the mind, character, distancing oneself from negligence and being patient with insults. Self-awareness in a positive sense is self-awareness that is able to find a self-concept that is accompanied by self-improvement and self-improvement and actively uses religious elements and is always able to improve character towards personal perfection (*insan kamil*) (Prastyo & Nawawi, 2023).

Zuhud is the first stage in an effort to grow moral awareness. *Zuhud* is emptying or cleansing the heart from things that can hinder it from Allah, by not being easily carried away by the pleasures of this world and not being boastful (Muqit, 2020). Keeping oneself from the pleasures of the world to be close to God, but not against the

life of the mortal world (Amrullah & Ibrahim, 2021). Doing asceticism does not mean that we leave all worldly matters or even hate them, because that is also in Islam. The concept of solo hiking itself has limitations in its activities. Because of these limitations, it will be easier for climbers to focus their minds and hearts on Allah.

The four respondents felt that their solitude in the mountains was a matter of distancing themselves from worldly life. They could focus more on themselves and their God. ASDP himself felt that it was easier to do *muhasabah* (self-introspection) when doing solitude in the mountains (ASDP, 2024). SC felt that there were only him, nature, and God when doing solitude in the mountains (SC, 2024). And for MHTA, by climbing mountains, he could stay away from social media. He felt that social media was the biggest obstacle that made him trapped to always be attached to worldly desires (MHTA, 2024). By doing this climb, they applied *khalwat*, as a form of asceticism. In the study of ecosufism, the process of one of a person's asceticism is a process of searching for a sense of security in themselves and their environment. This effort led them to a more integrated self-process, called humanistic-theocentric, or a self that is centered on religion. This process of self-change towards a closer spiritual bond is a process that is self-centered, but slowly and surely its dynamics move towards a social environment called togetherness in divinity, humanity, and nature. This means that all human behavior must always be directed solely to obtain the pleasure of Allah and also oriented towards providing safety and welfare for the universe, including humans and the environment (Wirajaya et al., 2021).

While still doing *zuhud*, the next stage is *riyadhoh* or training lust. In terms of *riyadhoh* is a way to train the soul and lust to be able to fight bad tendencies (Basri Junaidin, Sulaiman Husnan, 2024). The tendency to do bad deeds due to negligence or repentance. So that *riyadhoh* training can be done by dhikr or *munajat* as an effort to always remember Allah. PAS usually does *munajat* by chanting dhikr, *shalawat* and listening to *tausyiah* when climbing mountains (PAS, 2024). SC admitted that he did not routinely do dhikr, but often expressed his amazement by saying *masyaallah* and *subhanallah* every time he saw a beautiful view when climbing (SC, 2024). MHTA did *munajat* by praying on every trip he climbed (MHTA, 2024). While ASDP did not recite dhikr or *munajat* at all on his climb. Even so, ASDP and the others still felt protected from worldly matters by just being alone on the mountain (ASDP, 2024). More than that, they could overcome bad habits such as laziness, negative feelings, and bad thoughts. And they replaced them with better and more positive things such as being calmer, avoiding unnecessary things, and becoming more pious. Doing *riyadhoh* by dhikr or *munajat* will indirectly always remind us of Allah. People who always

remember Allah SWT will be saved in their life. People who forget Allah SWT will have life difficulties and other life difficulties (Azhari et al., 2023).

After doing the cleansing of the soul or filling the moral awareness, the main stage is to be alone or *khalwat*. *Khalwat* is the emptying of the body and soul from bad traits and filling it with commendable traits by isolating oneself in a place, breaking off relations with humans and leaving all worldly activities for a certain time, and filling it with dhikr and worship to Allah (Aini, P. F., & Rosyad, 2019). Things that need to be done in solitude have been done at the stages of *zuhud* and *riyadhoh*. So what is discussed in the context of solitude is the reason behind solitude and when is the time that is considered sufficient to do solitude. The four participants have the same problem that is being faced, namely the same problem of mind and feelings. As well as similarities in the motivation to do solitude in the mountains, namely the effort to approach Allah spiritually. Most of them have similarities in determining sufficient time to end solitude, namely when they feel calmer, feel better, and find answers. While MHTA felt the need to end solitude in the mountains because of logistical limitations or food needs that were starting to run low (MHTA, 2024).

Faith

After doing solitude by clearing the heart, clearing the mind, and also purifying the soul. Spiritual reality and relationship with Allah will be opened. The opening of this spiritual reality provides awareness, problem solving, and increased faith in Allah. The things felt after *khalwat* by the four participants were quite varied. PAS felt more pious because of fear and anxiety when leaving obligations (SC, 2024). In other hand, ASDP felt calmer, lighter in doing good, and felt that his affairs were made easier (ASDP, 2024). This finding is in line with the results of other studies which show that deep belief and faith in God and the use of religious coping methods can result in inner peace and a reduction in stress, as well as its accompanying symptoms, such as anxiety (Kharsynniang, 2023).

After climbing the mountain, the climbers realized the existence of God and made themselves more surrendered to all the problems they faced. SC became more aware that he was very small in this live than Allah (SC, 2024). MHTA became more confident and sure of the provisions that Allah gave him (MHTA, 2024). Humanity in religion will produce self-awareness and self-sensitivity towards God's presence in him. From this sense of the presence of God, human beings will naturally be born aware of themselves and their social vigilance (Hajam & Saumantri, 2023).

***Khalwat* as Stress Coping**

In psychology studies, one form of stress coping is spiritual coping. It is described as the use of cognitive and behavioral strategies based on an individual's beliefs and values to cope with stress. (Graça & Brandão, 2024). Lundmark explained that by applying religious coping for handling stress, it can facilitate the transition or movement between the inner subjective world and the outer objective world by being charged with meaning (Lundmark, 2015). In this study, *khalwat*, which is interpreted as a process of self-isolation from various worldly activities for solo mountaineers, has an internal subjective meaning for each mountaineer in their process of dealing with stress which is their external objective world.

Mountaineer's Khalwat Behavior

The role of *khalwat* as a stress coping is as a means aimed at getting closer to God by avoiding worldly things that they have been doing in their daily activities. When someone practices religious coping, they make their belief in God as their main strength in dealing with stress (Chong et al., 2019). Positive religious or spiritual coping may include aspects such as fostering a close and positive relationship with a higher power (God), seeking comfort in religious beliefs, and utilizing spiritual practices for support (Graça & Brandão, 2024). In this *khalwat* is filled with moral awareness or deep spiritual contemplation of a servant to his God by putting aside worldly things, and this implies faith in the climbers.

So that in efforts to do *khalwat* is included in the category of emotional-focused coping because *khalwat* focuses on reducing negative emotions such as the desire to vent lust; filling with good morals by always paying attention to the surrounding conditions when hiking; and spiritual awareness by realizing that the hiking he did was an effort to deal with stress but by involving awareness of Allah SWT. This is in line with a study which found that spiritual coping is associated with many positive effects in the life-line of a person dealing with stress (Whitehead & Bergeman, 2012).

In relation to the positive or good moral aspect that they practice when doing *khalwat*, which is shown by the way they provide care while mountaineering, which the mountaineer apply during seclusion while climbing the mountain, shows that they use spiritual coping as a way to increase social (environment) engagement and interaction, which indicates a more positive quality of life. This is in line with the research of Dunn & Robinson-Lane, (2020) which shows that the use of spiritual coping has also been found to increase social engagement and interactions that are indicative of a more positive quality of life.

The goal of moral Sufism is to shape people to hold *akhlaq al-karimah* (Muhamad Basyrul Muvid, 2024). To achieve good morals, a servant must manage the relationship between fellow human beings, God and the universe. The four participants did all three well. Even though they were on the mountain, they still carried out their obligations such as praying. In their solitude, they also took the time to exchange greetings and even chat with fellow climbers. They also helped preserve the surrounding nature by not littering, taking natural resources carelessly, and one of them, MHTA, even participated in nature reforestation activities (MHTA, 2024).

The application of the methods of *zuhud*, *riyadhoh* and solitude in the practice of *khalwat* while mountaineering, also has a good impact on mountaineers. Ibn al-Qayyim revealed that the *zuhud* is someone who expels the world in his heart. Because the world is a deceptive pleasure deceptive pleasure, then it is inappropriate if it resides in the heart of the *zuhud* (Muqit, 2020). The mountaineers in this research, do solo mountaineering, to distance themselves from the worldly matters that they face daily whether they are pleasant or contain negative conditions.

While the practice of *riyadhoh* that they do during solo mountaineering is by practicing their solitude activities such as *munajat* and trying to eliminate bad habits and bad feelings. This is intended to reduce negative emotions possessed by the mountaineers. *Riyadhah* can be done by Sufis, *mujahadah* is one of them. This is done to educate oneself to be able to control oneself and restrain one's lusts through various exercises, so as to be able to change bad habits and replace them with good habits (Bassar & Hasanah, 2020). The understanding of the religious or spiritual struggles and life satisfaction relationship, mediated by "secular" coping strategies (Szcześniak et al., 2020). By doing *khalwat* they only fill their climbing activities with positive things such as *munajat* or *solawat*, *husnudzon* to God, reading books, writing poetry, singing, listening to music, enjoying the scenery, brewing coffee, or even just breathing fresh air. Keeping away from negative things is not only based on praying to God. Doing small or trivial things as long as they are good can keep us on the straight path.

Khalwat as Coping Mechanism

When problems arise that cause stress, the four participants have different responses. PAS immediately complains about what he feels to God . Only then does he climb to ease his problems (PAS, 2024). ASDP gives himself time by getting away, avoiding the crowd to think about his problems (ASDP, 2024). SC continues to live his life as usual. For him, the problems that occur today are no different from the problems that occurred yesterday (SC, 2024). MHTA believes in himself and his God that every problem will definitely be resolved (MHTA, 2024). The Qur'an explains that stress is a

natural state in human life, because Allah created humans to have a sense of restlessness and complaining as a natural reaction of the body's sensitivity and nervous system to something that is unpleasant to it (Rena, 2019).

In solitude on the mountain as their *khalwat* practice, each participant has a different response to the stress they feel. PAS does not immediately eliminate stress, but it can relieve it (PAS, 2024). ASDP considers solitude when climbing a mountain can eliminate stress or pressure that they experience because they are not distracted by city conditions (ASDP, 2024). In addition, ASDP finds it easier to reflect or introspect and recognize themselves when doing solitude. By examining oneself, a person can become self-aware, which in turn will make him more motivated to improve the quality of his practices in order to gain His approval (Fitri & Budianto, 2022). Meanwhile, SC feels that his solitude on the mountain can only reduce the pressure on him even though when he is on the mountain he does not feel any pressure at all (SC, 2024). MHTA feels that his solitude can completely eliminate his stress, although when he returns from the mountain he will remember it again (MHTA, 2024). The four participants feel that in their solitude on the mountain, they do not feel any stress at all. There is only calm and peace of mind. By loving nature, they will love everything that God has given to this nature which will lead to a sense of gratitude and peace of mind (Prastowo & Rasyid, 2019).

The way participants responded to the problems they faced after doing seclusion while climbing a mountain was quite different. PAS felt that his problems did not disappear, but for him, being alone on the mountain was enough to help ease his problems for a while (PAS, 2024). Likewise for SC, he did not feel that his problems had disappeared, he just felt that his problems were lightened after doing seclusion on the mountain (SC, 2024). For MHTA, being alone on the mountain could make his problems lighter and even eliminate his burden because climbing a mountain brought him peace to face the problems he was experiencing (MHTA, 2024). And ASDP felt that being alone on the mountain could solve some of his problems such as being bored and fed up (ASDP, 2024). However, for most more serious problems, it was not effective. For him, climbing a mountain was just a means to put his problems aside. As soon as ASDP returned home, he was ready to face his problems again (ASDP, 2024). Mountaineering could challenge themselves to make a (better) meaning of their life, or even giving it a new purpose, according to their inner calls (Galiakbarov et al., 2024).

From the four participants, we can conclude that solitude (*khalwat*) when climbing a mountain can be used as a stress coping. This is based on the output or impact that participants felt after doing solitude on the mountain. Not only does it alleviate problems, doing solitude can also provide other positive impacts such as

increased spiritual relationships and good morals or establishing good relationships with God, fellow human beings, and helping to preserve the surrounding environment. Climbers in mountaineering will encounter many unexpected things that it always increases their sense of devotion by praying frequently for their safety, surrendering to God while they encounter many things during the climb as mainly related to weather and natural conditions, then they will enjoy the natural beauty that makes climbers more memorable of the Creator, as well as offer a sense of gratitude when they reach the peak and return home safely (Rahman et al., 2018a).

Conclusion

In their efforts to undergo seclusion, mountaineer carry out various activities such as filling their climbing time while still carrying out existing obligations, filling their climbing activities with something positive, and praying. Mountaineer will always be calm if they can continue to remember their God. Even when they are doing solitude they will meet other climbers, a person who is doing *khalwat* will not forget to maintain their relationship with others. Although the mountain itself is not a very crowded place to visit, efforts to remember Allah and know that fellow humans and nature are created by Him will maintain the solitude carried out by Mountaineer. Mountaineer will still accept the presence of other climbers, even though they are doing solitude. In fact, it does not interfere with the process of solitude at all.

The relationship between mountaineer and *khalwat* is very close. Climbing mountains has brought us closer to solitude. In addition to being a quiet place and far from the crowd, mountains are places that are very limited. So we not only isolate ourselves, but also isolate our hearts and minds so as not to think badly of the Creator. From the research above, it can be concluded that solitude (*khalwat*) when climbing a mountain can be used as a stress coping. This is based on the output or impact that participants felt after doing solitude on the mountain. Not only does it alleviate problems, doing solitude can also have other positive impacts such as increasing spiritual relationships, namely by getting closer to God, good relationships with fellow humans, and helping to preserve the surrounding environment.

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