



Psychological Resilience in the Qur'anic Narrative of Prophet Yusuf: A Developmental Psychology Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the concept of psychological resilience in the Qur'an based on Surah Yusuf. Using a qualitative approach and content analysis method, this research explores the elements of resilience reflected in the life of Prophet Yusuf as a psychological model of endurance, patience, and adaptability. The findings suggest that the narrative of Surah Yusuf contains key principles of resilience aligned with modern psychological theories, particularly those proposed by Reivich and Shatté, including emotional regulation, impulse control, optimism, and empathy. This study contributes to Islamic psychology by bridging classical Qur'anic insights with contemporary psychological frameworks.

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INTRODUCTION

Human life is inseparable from trials and challenges. In the Quran, Allah SWT emphasises that every human being will be tested with both joy and hardship (Quran, Al-Baqarah: 155–156). Facing these trials requires a skill called resilience, namely the individual's capacity to bounce back, survive, and even grow from difficult experiences. From a contemporary psychological perspective, resilience is understood as a dynamic process of adaptation in the face of stress, trauma, and life changes (Denckla et al., 2020). Furthermore, resilience has also been conceptualized as a psychological strength that promotes meaning, self-efficacy, and well-being, enabling individuals to adapt successfully when facing adversity and life challenges (Lightsey, 2006). Resilience is also recognized as a developmental process that enables individuals to adapt positively despite adversity through the interaction of personal strengths and environmental support systems (Grotberg, 1995). Furthermore, resilience is no longer viewed solely as an individual trait, but rather as the result of a complex interaction between psychological, biological, social, and environmental factors (Masten et al., 2021).

With the changing times and pressures of modern life, mental and emotional problems are increasing. Social and economic pressures, as well as family conflict, make individuals, especially the younger generation, vulnerable to stress, anxiety, and depression. Several studies have identified that resilience among adolescents is influenced by various protective factors, including family support, social relationships, personal coping abilities, and a positive environment. These factors enable young people to adapt more effectively to adversity and maintain their psychological well-being (Khotimah, 2018). Previous studies have shown that resilience-based interventions can effectively strengthen adolescents' psychological well-being and improve their ability to cope with various life challenges (Rojas, 2022). Recent research shows that resilience plays a crucial role in maintaining psychological well-being and serves as a protective factor during global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Zhang et al., 2026). Within the framework of modern stress theory, an individual's ability to adapt cognitively and emotionally is key to managing stress and preventing it

from developing into a psychological disorder. Furthermore, a multisystem approach emphasises the role of social, cultural, and spiritual support in shaping individual resilience (Ungar, 2021; Masten, 2021).

Surah Yusuf (Yusuf) is a chapter in the Quran that presents a story full of wisdom and psychological lessons. From childhood, the Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) experienced various traumatic events, such as betrayal by his brother, being sold into slavery, seduction by a noblewoman, and even being imprisoned without fault. However, he faced all of these with patience, determination, and strong optimism. From the perspective of modern resilience theory, adverse experiences can actually be a means of growth if an individual has an effective adaptation system and adequate support (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; Masten, 2021). This shows that resilience is not only about survival but also about positive adaptation.

According to Reivich and Shatté, resilience consists of seven main aspects: emotional regulation, impulse control, optimism, causal analysis, empathy, self-efficacy, and the ability to achieve new opportunities (reaching out) (Reivich & Shatté, 2002). Although this concept was developed earlier, its relevance remains strong in modern resilience studies because it relates to the ability to self-regulate and psychologically adapt, which are part of the resilience system (Masten et al., 2021). These seven aspects are evident in the narrative of Surah Yusuf, which describes how the Prophet Yusuf demonstrated steadfastness, self-control, and the ability to interpret every event positively, even in difficult situations.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyse how aspects of resilience are manifested in the story of the Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) by integrating contemporary psychological approaches and Islamic spiritual values. This finding is consistent with Harefa (2022), who explains that Surah Yusuf contains psychological values that support self-healing and resilience through faith, patience, and trust in Allah.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. This library research was chosen because the objects of study are sacred texts (the Quran) and relevant Islamic and psychological literature. This research is descriptive-analytical, explaining the resilience phenomenon found in Surah Yusuf and analysing it using psychological theory. Primary data in this study were obtained from the Quran, specifically Surah Yusuf, verses 1–111. Secondary data came from tafsir books, such as Tafsir Al-Misbah by Quraish Shihab and Tafsir Ibn Kathir, and from psychological literature on resilience, such as the work of Reivich & Shatté. Scientific articles, journals, and previous research findings were also used to strengthen the analysis.

Research Design

The steps in the analysis include: [1] identifying verses that reflect aspects of resilience; [2] categorising them according to the seven aspects of resilience from Reivich and Shatté's theory; [3] interpreting the meaning of the verses based on psychological interpretation and theory; and [4] drawing conclusions from the analysis results. Data validity was strengthened through source triangulation, comparing several interpretive references and psychological literature. This study used a qualitative approach with a library research method. Primary data came from Surah Yusuf (Surah Yusuf) of the Quran, while secondary data were obtained from interpretation books, psychological literature, and relevant scientific articles. The data analysis technique used content analysis with a thematic approach to verses related to resilience.

Participant and Procedure

The steps in the analysis include: [1] identifying verses that reflect aspects of resilience; [2] categorising them according to the seven aspects of resilience from Reivich and Shatté's theory; [3]

interpreting the meaning of the verses based on psychological interpretation and theory, and; [4] drawing conclusions from the analysis results. Data validity was strengthened by source triangulation through comparison of several interpretation references and psychological literature. This study used a qualitative approach with a library research method. Primary data came from Surah Yusuf (Surah Yusuf) of the Quran, while secondary data were obtained from interpretation books, psychological literature, and relevant scientific articles. The data analysis technique used content analysis with a thematic approach to verses related to resilience.

Data Analysis

The data analysis technique in this study used content analysis with a thematic approach to verses related to resilience. Content analysis is a systematic method for identifying, categorising, and interpreting the meaning of text in an objective and structured manner (Krippendorff, 2018). The thematic approach is used to discover patterns of meaning (themes) that emerge from the text data, allowing researchers to interpret the psychological and spiritual messages contained in the Quranic verses in depth (Braun & Clarke, 2021). This approach is also relevant in qualitative research based on religious texts because it can reveal contextual and reflective dimensions of meaning (Nowell et al., 2017).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

An analysis of Surah Yusuf (The Qur'an, Surah Yusuf) shows that all aspects of resilience according to Reivich and Shatté are reflected in the story of the Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him). The results and discussion obtained from the research are outlined below:

1. **Emotional Regulation**

Yusuf (peace be upon him) demonstrates the ability to manage his emotions from the beginning of the story. When thrown into a well by his brothers (Surah Yusuf: 15), he does not show hatred or anger. Even when he reunites with his brothers, he remains gentle and does not harbour resentment. This demonstrates high emotional maturity.

2. **Impulse Control**

When Yusuf is tempted by Zulaikha (Surah Yusuf: 23–24), he demonstrates extraordinary self-control. He rejects her invitation, saying, "Indeed, my Lord is the Best of Protectors." This indicates that a strong spiritual awareness guides Yusuf's impulse control.

3. **Optimism**

In prison, Yusuf does not succumb to sadness or despair. He continues to use his abilities to interpret the dreams of the two young men who are with him (Surah Yusuf: 36–42). He even continued to convey the message of monotheism to them, reflecting optimism and hope for a better future.

4. **Causal Analysis**

Yusuf understood that everything that happened to him was part of Allah's destiny and plan. In Surah Yusuf: 100, Yusuf stated that Allah had elevated his status and reunited him with his family. He realised that every test holds a greater lesson.

5. **Empathy**

Yusuf demonstrated extraordinary empathy when he revealed his true identity to his brothers. He said, "There is no blame on you today. Allah will forgive you" (Surah Yusuf: 92). He understood their guilt and forgave them with sincerity.

6. **Self-Efficacy**

Yusuf believed in his abilities, as seen when he said to the King of Egypt, "Make me treasurer of this country" (Surah Yusuf: 55). This self-confidence was a sign of readiness to carry out a trust, not arrogance.

7. Reaching Out

Despite the difficult conditions in prison, Yusuf did not isolate himself in his suffering. He actively helped others by interpreting dreams and preaching the teachings of tawhid, demonstrating his ability to reach out and benefit others.

Discussion

From a developmental psychology perspective, the story of the Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) reflects a dynamic process of psychological development throughout the lifespan. Each phase of Yusuf's life childhood, adolescence, and adulthood demonstrates the interaction between adverse experiences and maturing adaptive capacity. From this perspective, resilience does not emerge instantly, but rather develops through a process of learning, interpreting experiences, and internalising spiritual values. The traumatic experiences Yusuf experienced as a child actually laid the foundation for emotional maturity, self-identity, and moral integrity in later stages of development.

Furthermore, this story demonstrates that the development of resilience involves the continuous integration of cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. This aligns with the view of modern developmental psychology, which emphasises that individuals who are able to adaptively overcome life's crises will achieve a higher level of psychosocial maturity. Thus, the life journey of the Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) can be understood as a representation of a positive developmental trajectory, in which an individual is not only able to withstand pressure but also develops into a stronger, wiser, and more meaningful person.

The story of the Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) proves that the spiritual values in the Quran can shape a holistic, resilient character. The seven aspects of resilience in Western psychological theory align with Islamic teachings, making Surah Yusuf a highly relevant source of inspiration for spiritual resilience in modern life. This demonstrates that the Quran not only contains faith-based values but also contains applicable psychological principles, particularly in the context of human development throughout the lifespan.

CONCLUSION

The results of this research show that all aspects of resilience as formulated in Reivich and Shatté's theory namely emotional regulation, impulse control, optimism, causal analysis, empathy, self-efficacy, and achievement are fully reflected in the life journey of Prophet Yusuf AS as recorded in Surah Yusuf. His story is not just a historical narrative, but is a source of learning filled with the values of fortitude, self-control and spiritual strength in facing various forms of complex life tests. Betrayal by siblings, slander from noble women, innocent imprisonment, and constant social pressure did not weaken the faith and identity of Prophet Yusuf AS. On the contrary, he was able to manage his emotions maturely, resist the urge for revenge, be optimistic about God's plans, and continue to show empathy and wisdom in every phase of his life. His ability to survive and recover from various crises is an example of the formation of a strong, resilient character. These findings support previous resilience research suggesting that positive adaptation and supportive life experiences contribute significantly to the development of resilient individuals ([Waxman et al., 2003](#)).

A psychological analysis of the verses in Surah Yusuf indicates that the resilience values contained in the Quran are highly relevant to modern psychological concepts, particularly in the context of mental health and character development. This demonstrates that the Quran serves not only as spiritual guidance but also as a reference source for understanding the dynamics of the human psyche and strategies for coping with the pressures of contemporary life.

Thus, Surah Yusuf makes a significant contribution to strengthening the integration of spirituality and psychology in the context of personality development. The values contained in the

story of the Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) can serve as a model of applicable and contextual Islamic resilience, particularly for individuals or communities facing various forms of life crises and difficulties. This research also opens up space for interdisciplinary development between Islamic studies and psychology, particularly in understanding resilience as a crucial foundation for mental health and holistic individual well-being.

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Authors' Contribution

The author solely conceived the study, conducted the literature review, performed the data analysis, interpreted the findings, and prepared, revised, and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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