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Tawakkul in the Qur'an and Stoicism: A Thematic-Comparative Tafsir Study Toward Spiritual Resilience

Tawakkul dalam Al-Qur'an dan Stoisisme: Studi Tafsir Tematik-Komparatif Menuju Resiliensi Spiritual

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Abstract

The escalation of anxiety and the erosion of existential meaning in contemporary life have renewed interest in spiritual resources that reconcile human effort with acceptance of what lies beyond human control. Two traditions offer influential answers to this problem: the Qur'anic concept of *tawakkul* and the ethical system of Stoicism. This study analyzes *tawakkul* thematically through the *tafsir maudhu'i* (thematic exegesis) method and compares it with the Stoic principles of the *dichotomy of control* and *amor fati*, then extends the comparison toward contemporary resilience psychology. Using qualitative library research, the study examines Qur'anic verses containing the root *w-k-l* together with primary Stoic texts by Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius, read alongside classical and contemporary tafsir. The findings show that *tawakkul* and Stoicism converge functionally around self-regulation and the acceptance of fate, yet diverge epistemologically: *tawakkul* is anchored in revelation and a personal, trusting relationship with God, whereas Stoicism rests on impersonal cosmic rationality (*logos*). Building on this comparison, the study proposes a *Tawakkul-Stoic Resilience Model* that reframes both traditions as complementary, theologically distinct pathways to what modern psychology terms meaning-based coping, offering a framework with practical implications for Islamic counseling and character education.

Keywords: Al-Qur'an; Stoicism; Tawakkul; Spiritual Resilience; Tafsir Maudhu'i

Abstrak

Meningkatnya kecemasan dan mudarnya makna eksistensial dalam kehidupan kontemporer telah menghidupkan kembali minat terhadap sumber-sumber spiritual yang menyeimbangkan usaha manusia dengan penerimaan atas hal-hal di luar kendalinya. Dua tradisi pemikiran menawarkan jawaban berpengaruh atas persoalan ini, yakni konsep *tawakkul* dalam Al-Qur'an dan sistem etika Stoikisme. Penelitian ini menganalisis *tawakkul* secara tematik melalui metode *tafsir maudhu'i* dan membandingkannya dengan prinsip Stoik *dichotomy of control* dan *amor fati*, kemudian memperluas perbandingan tersebut ke ranah psikologi ketahanan (resilience) kontemporer. Dengan pendekatan penelitian kepustakaan kualitatif, kajian ini menelaah ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an yang memuat akar kata *w-k-l* bersama teks-teks primer Stoik karya Epictetus, Seneca, dan Marcus Aurelius, dibaca bersama tafsir klasik dan kontemporer. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa *tawakkul* dan Stoikisme memiliki kesamaan fungsional dalam pengendalian diri dan penerimaan takdir, namun berbeda secara epistemologis: *tawakkul* berakar pada wahyu dan relasi personal-penuh-kepercayaan kepada Allah, sedangkan Stoikisme bertumpu pada rasionalitas kosmik yang impersonal (*logos*). Berdasarkan perbandingan ini, penelitian mengajukan *Model Ketahanan Tawakkul-Stoik* yang memposisikan kedua tradisi sebagai jalan yang saling melengkapi namun berbeda secara teologis menuju apa yang dalam psikologi modern disebut *meaning-based coping*, serta menawarkan kerangka dengan implikasi praktis bagi konseling Islam dan pendidikan karakter.

Kata Kunci: Al-Qur'an; Stoikisme; Tawakkul; Ketahanan Spiritual; Tafsir Maudhu'i



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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary life presents a spiritual paradox: as material and technological conditions improve, inner peace becomes harder to sustain. Burnout, anticipatory anxiety about the future, and a diminished sense of meaning are widely reported among young people navigating fast-paced, achievement-driven cultures, and recent systematic reviews of Islamic counseling literature confirm that anxiety and depression remain persistent concerns addressed through the concept of *tawakkul*.¹ Against this backdrop, *tawakkul*, understood as entrusting outcomes to God after exhausting one's own effort, is often dismissed by secular audiences as passive resignation rather than an active ethical stance.² At the same time, Stoicism has undergone a marked revival in Western self-help and clinical psychology, reflecting a collective longing for composure grounded in the acceptance of what lies outside one's control.³ The convergence of Islamic spirituality and Stoic rational ethics therefore opens a timely avenue of inquiry: how can contemporary individuals balance deliberate effort with surrender in an unpredictable world, and what can two historically unconnected traditions teach one another about that balance?

Scholarship on *tawakkul* is extensive within tafsir, Sufism, and Islamic psychology. Maulidiyah's study of Ibn 'Arabi's *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim* shows that surrender built on inner awareness carries implications for mental health.⁴ Eggen's philological analysis of trust vocabulary in the Qur'an demonstrates that *tawakkul* denotes an unconditional, unambiguous trust in God as the absolute *wakil*, distinct from the more circumstantial inter-human trust expressed through *amana*.⁵ Zahrotin's thematic survey counts 68 occurrences of the root across 60 verses, underscoring its centrality to Qur'anic ethics.⁶ Sandria situates *tawakkul* as the culmination of total dependence on God after *ikhtiar* in the teaching of Syekh Abdus Shomad al-Palembani,⁷ while Al-Faruqi, Ma, and Haibaiti link Hamka's reading of *tawakkul* to patience and gratitude.⁸ Nurmianti, Abubakar, and Parhani similarly stress that Qur'anic *tawakkul* is inseparable from rational effort, not a substitute for it.⁹ Wahyuni, Zulmuqim, and Hasnah, and separately Sulaiman's reading of al-Ghazali, extend this discussion into pedagogy and Sufi ethics, arguing that internalizing *tawakkul* shapes religious character in teachers and students alike.¹⁰ Alhafiza,

- 1 Nurul Widyamirza Sujana, Jan, Salasiah Hanin Hamjah, and Sabiruddin bin Juli, "Systematic Literature Review on the Use of the Concept of Tawakkal in Islamic Counseling to Address Anxiety and Depression," *Al-Hikmah* 17, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.17576/alhikmah.2025.1701/566>.
- 2 Johannes Alfons Karl, Paul Verhaeghen, Shelley N. Aikman, Stian Solem, Espen R. Lassen, and Ronald Fischer, "Misunderstood Stoicism: The Negative Association between Stoic Ideology and Well-Being," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 23, no. 7 (2022): 3531–47, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-022-00563-w>.
- 3 Christopher Gill, ed., *Learning to Live Naturally: Stoic Ethics and Its Modern Significance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198866169.003.0007>.
- 4 Izatul Muhidah Maulidiyah, "Konsep Tawakal Syaikh Al-Akbar Muhyiddin Ibnu 'Arabi: Studi atas Kitab Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim," *Jurnal Moderasi* 2, no. 1 (2022): 60–71, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jm.2022.21.05>.
- 5 Nora S. Eggen, "Conceptions of Trust in the Qur'an," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 13, no. 2 (2011): 56–85, drawing on Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1966).
- 6 Novia Niken Zahrotin, "Tawakkul dalam al-Qur'an (Studi al-Qur'an Tematik)" (undergraduate thesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2016).
- 7 M. Sandria, "Konsep Tawakal Menurut Syekh Abdus Shomad Al-Palembani dalam Kitab Hidayatussalikin" (undergraduate thesis, IAIN Pekalongan, 2023).
- 8 Achmad Reza Hutama Al-Faruqi, Husnul Ma, and Rais Tandra Haibaiti, "Konsep Tawakal Menurut Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah dan Relevansinya," *Jurnal Tasawuf dan Psikoterapi* 3, no. 2 (2022): 80.
- 9 N. Nurmianti, A. Abubakar, and A. Parhani, "Nilai Tawakal dalam al-Qur'an," *Palita: Journal of Social Religion Research* 6, no. 1 (2021): 81–98, <https://doi.org/10.24256/pal.v6i1.1985>.
- 10 Oktavia Wahyuni, Zulmuqim, and Radhiatul Hasnah, "Konsep Tawakkal dalam Q.S. Ali 'Imran dalam Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Cerdas Mahasiswa* 3, no. 1 (2023): 45–53; S. Sulaiman, "Konsep Tawakal Menurut Imam Ghazali dalam Kitab Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din," *Ameena Journals* 1, no. 1 (2023): 44–55.

Hanum, and Funun's study of Malaysian university students during the COVID-19 pandemic further shows *tawakkul* functioning empirically as a coping mechanism under uncertainty.¹¹

These studies, however, remain largely confined to normative and theological dimensions of *tawakkul* without extending the analysis into cross-traditional ethical dialogue. Stoicism, meanwhile, has attracted growing attention in Indonesian Islamic scholarship. Ilhami and Subakti's review of Henry Manampiring's *Filosofi Teras* finds structural affinities between *amor fati* and the Islamic concepts of *takdir*, *tawakkal*, *busnudzan*, and *ikhlās*.¹² Fajrin, Mud'is, and Yulianti compare Sufi psychology with Stoic self-control literature and likewise find convergence without addressing epistemological grounding.¹³ Gusti, Rusydi, and Saputra argue for integrating Stoic values into modern Islamic education as a means of character formation, again without a sustained epistemological comparison with Qur'anic teaching.¹⁴ Pambudi, Matsania, and Fathony, and Rahman, Pertiwi, and Batubara, both pursue implementation-oriented comparisons of *tawakkul* and Stoicism, but none of these studies connects the comparison to contemporary resilience science or to applied Islamic counseling.¹⁵ This is the gap the present study addresses: no existing research uses *tafsir maudhu'i* to systematically extract the meaning of *tawakkul* from the Qur'an, align it philosophically with Stoic ethics, and then translate the comparison into a framework usable by counselors and educators.

This research therefore poses two questions: how is *tawakkul* understood in the Qur'an through the lens of *tafsir maudhu'i*, and how does this understanding compare with the core Stoic principles of the *dichotomy of control* and *amor fati*? Building on this comparison, a third and more applied question follows: what would an integrative framework linking *tawakkul* and Stoic ethics to contemporary resilience psychology look like, and what could it offer Islamic counseling practice? The study's contribution is therefore twofold. First, it offers a systematic thematic-exegetical reading of *tawakkul* compared rigorously with primary Stoic sources rather than secondary popularizations. Second, and this constitutes its principal novelty relative to prior comparative work, it proposes a *Tawakkul–Stoic Resilience Model* that bridges classical tafsir scholarship with the psychological literature on resilience and cognitive coping, offering both theoretical depth and practical relevance for the spiritual resilience of modern believers.

Method

This study employs a qualitative library research (*library research*) design centered on textual analysis of Qur'anic and philosophical sources, chosen because the aim is not to test an empirical hypothesis but to excavate conceptual and philosophical meaning. Primary data consist of Qur'anic verses containing the term *tawakkul* and its derivatives, together with the principal works of Stoic philosophers, namely Epictetus's *Handbook and Discourses*, Seneca's *Letters from a*

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- 11 Rahma Ghania Alhafiza, Sarmida Hanum, and Fatima Funun, "Tawakkul in the Qur'an as Coping Mechanism for IUM Student Mastery in Coping with the COVID-19 Challenges," *Mashdar* 4, no. 2 (2022): 205–18.
 - 12 Maulida Ilhami and Ganjar Eka Subakti, "Islam dan Filsafat Stoisisme: Kajian Buku Filosofi Teras Karya Henry Manampiring," *Cakrawala: Jurnal Studi Islam* 18, no. 1 (2023): 39–48, <https://doi.org/10.31603/cakrawala.8399>.
 - 13 Dea Indriani Fajrin, H. Mud'is, and Y. Yulianti, "Konsep Pengendalian Diri dalam Perspektif Psikologi Sufi dan Filsafat Stoisisme: Studi Komparatif dalam Buku Karya Robert Frager dan Henry Manampiring," *Jurnal Riset Agama* 2, no. 1 (2022): 162–80, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v2i1.17122>.
 - 14 Yelliza MA Gusti, Rusydi AM, and Riki Saputra, "Teras Philosophy: The Concept of Stoicism in Guiding Modern Life and Islamic Education," *Al-Mudarris (Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Islam)* 8, no. 1 (2025): 175–88, <https://doi.org/10.23971/mdr.v8i1.9860>.
 - 15 Muhammad Sidiq Pambudi, Sab'ati Mela Matsania, and Bimba Valid Fathony, "Keterkaitan Konsep Tawakal dalam Islam dan Filsafat Stoikisme: Sebuah Analisis Implementatif," *Canonika Religia* 3, no. 1 (2025): 49–62, <https://doi.org/10.30762/cr.v3i1.3139>; Taufik Rahman, Lola Pertiwi, and Ariyandi Batubara, "Hakikat Kebahagiaan Hidup: Konsensus antara al-Qur'an dan Filsafat Stoikisme," *Jurnal Riset Agama* 2, no. 3 (2022): 807–821, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v2i3.19326>.

Stoic, and Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*, which articulate the *dichotomy of control* and *amor fati*.¹⁶ Secondary data include classical and contemporary tafsir, among them Ibn Kathir's *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Ibn 'Arabi's *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim*, M. Quraish Shihab's *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, and Muhammad Afifuddin Dimiyathi's *Hidayat al-Qur'an fi Tafsir al-Qur'an bi al-Qur'an*,¹⁷ as well as peer-reviewed scholarship on *tawakkul* and Stoicism. To support the study's applied contribution, secondary literature on psychological resilience and Stoic-informed cognitive therapy was also consulted, including Southwick and Charney's clinical synthesis of resilience factors and Robertson's account of Stoicism's relationship to cognitive-behavioral therapy.¹⁸ All sources were examined critically to identify points of convergence and divergence between the two systems of thought.

Data analysis follows the *tafsir maudhu'i* (thematic exegesis) method as formulated by 'Abd al-Hayy al-Farmawi, comprising the collection of all relevant verses, linguistic analysis, review of the context of revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*), correlation between verses (*munasabah*), and the synthesis of a comprehensive Qur'anic position on the theme under study.¹⁹ A final thematic synthesis then compares this Qur'anic position philosophically with Stoic ethics through qualitative comparative analysis, an approach chosen for its capacity to reveal conceptual and ethical relationships between two intellectual traditions without collapsing their distinct theological identities. Beyond this comparative step, the analysis proceeds to a third, integrative stage: mapping the resulting comparative findings onto established constructs in resilience psychology, in order to test whether the theological comparison yields a coherent, applicable model. This additional step, uncommon in prior tafsir-based comparative studies, is intended to produce an account of *tawakkul*'s position in Qur'anic exegesis that is systematic and integrative while also remaining practically relevant to the spiritual and psychological challenges of contemporary believers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theoretical Foundations: Stoic Ethics and the Principle of Tawakkul in Islamic Philosophical Perspective

Stoicism is one of the most influential schools of ancient Greek philosophy in the history of Western ethical and spiritual thought. Founded by Zeno of Citium around 300 BCE in Athens, Stoicism developed through three main phases: Early Stoa (Zeno, Chrysippus), Middle Stoa (Panaetius, Posidonius), and Late Stoa (Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius).²⁰ The philosophy rests on the view that the universe is governed by *logos*, a rational cosmic principle that is the source of order and harmony in the world. For the Stoics, a happy life is attainable only when a

16 Epictetus, *The Complete Works: Handbook, Discourses, and Fragments*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022); Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic*, trans. Robin Campbell (London: Penguin Classics, 1969); Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, trans. Robin Hard, intro. Christopher Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

17 Isma'il ibn 'Umar Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, ed. Sami ibn Muhammad Salamah (Riyadh: Dar Tayyibah, 1999); Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.); M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002); Muhammad Afifuddin Dimiyathi, *Hidayat al-Qur'an fi Tafsir al-Qur'an bi al-Qur'an*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Dar al-Nibras, 2023).

18 Steven M. Southwick and Dennis S. Charney, *Resilience: The Science of Mastering Life's Greatest Challenges*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Donald J. Robertson, *How to Think Like a Roman Emperor: The Stoic Philosophy of Marcus Aurelius* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2019).

19 'Abd al-Hayy al-Farmawi, *Al-Bidayah fi al-Tafsir al-Mawdu'i: Dirasah Manhajiyah Mawdu'iyyah* (Cairo: Maktabah Jumhuriyyah, 1977).

20 John Sellars, *Stoicism*, Ancient Philosophies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); J. M. Rist, "Zeno and Stoic Consistency," *Phronesis* 22, no. 2–3 (1977): 161–74, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156852877X00056>.

person lives “in accordance with nature,” aligning the will with the rational law that governs the cosmos. Within this framework, Stoicism emphasizes three core ethical principles: the *dichotomy of control* (the distinction between what can and cannot be controlled), *amor fati* (acceptance and love of fate), and *ataraxia* (inner tranquility achieved through rationality and self-mastery).²¹

The *dichotomy of control*, as articulated by Epictetus in the *Handbook*, holds that human suffering does not arise from events themselves but from the judgments people form about those events.²² He writes that some things are within our power while others are not, so that only our own minds truly belong to us. From this premise emerges an ethics of self-regulation: the wisdom to distinguish between what lies within human control, such as attitude, will, and response, and what lies beyond it, such as fate, others’ opinions, or natural conditions. This distinction became the foundation of Stoic ethics, in which true wisdom consists in focusing exclusively on what can be controlled while accepting everything else with equanimity. *Amor fati* extends this logic further, demanding that a person not merely accept fate but actively love each event as part of a perfect natural order.²³ Seneca captures the same disposition when he observes that anticipated misfortunes strike with less force than sudden ones, a reflection of the Stoic practice of mental rehearsal for adversity, or *premeditatio malorum*.²⁴

Within Islamic thought, these Stoic principles find conceptual resonance in the teachings of *tawakkul*, *sabr* (patience), *ridha* (contentment), and *qana’ah* (sufficiency) as affirmed in the Qur’an and in the exegesis of Muslim scholars. *Tawakkul* in Islam is not passive resignation but a synthesis of maximal effort (*ikhtiar*) and total trust in God regarding the outcome. Ibn ‘Arabi interprets *tawakkul* as a spiritual process in which a person directs all effort toward God without attaching the result to any created being.²⁵ In his *Tafsir al-Qur’an al-Karim*, he explains that *tawakkul* is exercised “*bi ru’yah a’falik minhu*”—by recognizing that all capacity for action originates from God, while human effort is merely the instrument. This formulation balances active engagement in the world with metaphysical awareness that every outcome remains within divine decree (*qadar Allah*). Theologically, *tawakkul* becomes the manifestation of mature faith, as affirmed in Q.S. Al-Anfal (8): 2, which states that believers place their trust in their Lord alone.

Philosophically, the relationship between Stoicism and *tawakkul* can be understood as a meeting point between two ethical traditions that differ in epistemological source yet converge functionally. Stoicism proceeds from human rationality and the orderliness of nature (*logos*), whereas Islam is rooted in revelation and a transcendent relationship between servant and Lord. Despite this difference in foundation, both emphasize the importance of inner equilibrium and acceptance of reality. In the contemporary context, this convergence becomes increasingly relevant as modern individuals confront a crisis of meaning and a loss of control over complex social dynamics. Recent studies, including those by Ilhami and Subakti and by Gusti, Rusydi, and Saputra, indicate that Stoic values can be adapted within modern Islamic education to cultivate resilient character and a disposition of calm.²⁶ Such integration, however, requires clear epistemological boundaries so that the principle of *tauhid* is not obscured, situating the dialogue between Stoicism and *tawakkul* within a cross-traditional ethical conversation that honors both rationality and revealed spirituality.

21 Sellars, *Stoicism*.

22 Epictetus, *Complete Works, Handbook 1*; Phillip de Lacy, “The Logical Structure of the Ethics of Epictetus,” *Classical Philology* 38, no. 2 (1943): 112–25, <https://doi.org/10.1086/362698>.

23 Gill, *Learning to Live Naturally*.

24 Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic*.

25 Ibn ‘Arabi, *Tafsir al-Qur’an al-Karim*, on Q.S. *Al-Ahzab* (33): 48; Maulidiyah, “Konsep Tawakal.”

26 Ilhami and Subakti, “Islam dan Filsafat Stoisme”; Gusti, AM, and Saputra, “Teras Philosophy.”

Overview: Verses on Tawakkul and Interpretive Patterns in Tafsir Maudhu'i

Tawakkul is among the most frequently repeated themes in the Qur'an, expressed through a rich variety of derivational forms. Based on the *al-Mu'jam al-Mufabras li Alfaz al-Qur'an al-Karim*, the root *w-k-l* and its derivatives occur 68 times across 60 verses distributed over 29 different surahs. These variations include the perfect verb (*wukkilu*), imperfect verb (*yatawakkalun*), imperative (*tawakkal*), and nominal forms (*wakil* and *mutawakkilun*). This morphological diversity indicates that *tawakkul* is not merely a theological abstraction but a value that lives across multiple contexts of faith, morality, and social life. Broadly, these verses depict *tawakkul* as an inner disposition accompanying human effort, an acknowledgment of human limitation, and an expression of mature faith in God's decree.

From the full corpus of relevant verses, this study focuses on three that are most representative: Q.S. *An-Nisa'* (4): 81, Q.S. *Ibrahim* (14): 12, and Q.S. *Al-Ahzab* (33): 48. These verses were selected through three methodological considerations: their linguistic context expresses *tawakkul* explicitly and unambiguously; their context of revelation depicts situations that demand a clear distinction between human effort and divine decision; and their thematic focus intersects directly with uncertainty, human limitation, and the demand for surrender to God. Q.S. *An-Nisa'* (4): 81 addresses the Prophet's confrontation with hypocrites who feign obedience while plotting against him, commanding him to disregard their scheming and entrust the outcome to God, showing *tawakkul* as steadfastness in continuing one's duty despite betrayal. Q.S. *Ibrahim* (14): 12 presents *tawakkul* as the collective faith of the messengers, who refuse submission to tyranny while trusting fully in God's guidance. Q.S. *Al-Ahzab* (33): 48 commands the Prophet to disregard the slander of hypocrites and entrust all matters to God, marking *tawakkul* as psychological steadfastness under social pressure. Read together, these three verses portray *tawakkul* as an active, strategic spiritual principle for confronting life's uncertainty.²⁷

The *tafsir maudhu'i* method is applied here to interpret these verses thematically and integratively. Following the procedure articulated by al-Farmawi, this involves collecting all relevant verses, conducting linguistic analysis, examining the context of revelation, tracing correlations between verses, and formulating a comprehensive conclusion representing the Qur'an's view of the theme in question.²⁸ Through this method, the study traces how *tawakkul* is never isolated from related concepts such as *iman* (faith), *sabr* (patience), and *ikhtiar* (effort). For instance, Ibn Kathir's exegesis of Q.S. *An-Nisa'* (4) shows that God commands believers to remain vigilant against enemies and to complete every preparation for battle before surrendering the outcome to Him.²⁹ This reading demonstrates that *tawakkul* presupposes rational readiness and concrete action prior to inner surrender, making it a synthesis of spirituality and practical strategy rather than an alternative to either.

The thematic interpretation of the three selected verses yields three principal patterns of meaning. First, *tawakkul* functions as an inner disposition affirming total faith in God, the conviction that all affairs remain under His authority, as expressed in Q.S. *Al-Anfal* (8): 2 and reinforced by the steadfast defiance of the messengers in Q.S. *Ibrahim* (14): 12. Second, *tawakkul* functions as an ethical guide for action, urging believers to persist in their duty despite betrayal or opposition rather than withdraw from it, as shown in Q.S. *An-Nisa'* (4): 81, where the Prophet is instructed to continue his mission and entrust the schemes of hypocrites to God. Third, *tawakkul* functions as a mechanism of psychological steadiness and spiritual firmness, as reflected in Q.S. *Al-Ahzab* (33): 48, where mature faith generates strength against external

27 Dimiyathi, *Hidayat al-Qur'an*, on Q.S. *An-Nisa'* (4): 81; Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, on Q.S. *An-Nisa'* (4): 81.

28 Al-Farmawi, *Al-Bidayah fi al-Tafsir al-Mawdu'i*.

29 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, on Q.S. *An-Nisa'* (4).

pressure. Together these meanings show that *tawakkul* is a dynamic concept linking faith, reason, and action, and that it constitutes a moral foundation for the psychological equilibrium of the believer. Through the *tafsir maudhu'i* framework, *tawakkul* emerges not only as a theological principle but as a practical ethical system governing a person's relationship with the self, with others, and with God.

Comparative Analysis: Tawakkul in the Qur'an and Stoic Ethics

A comparative analysis of *tawakkul* and Stoic ethics shows that both traditions emerge from the human need to find calm amid the limitations and uncertainties of life. Both *tawakkul* and Stoic virtue ethics locate true happiness not in external outcomes but in an inner condition aligned with divine order or natural rationality. The *dichotomy of control* in Epictetus's teaching, distinguishing between what is and is not within human power, corresponds functionally to *tawakkul*'s guidance that a person exert maximal effort (*ikhtiar*) and then entrust the result to God. In the Qur'an, this principle is reflected in Q.S. *Ibrahim* (14): 12, which asks rhetorically why believers would not place their trust in God when He has shown them the way, affirming the priority of rational effort before spiritual surrender. Both Stoicism and Islam thus teach self-regulation and wise acceptance of fate, functioning as mechanisms of spiritual coping in the face of suffering and uncertainty.

Despite these ethical points of convergence, the epistemological difference between the two traditions is fundamental. In Stoicism, inner calm is achieved through obedience to natural law and alignment with *logos*, the rational principle regarded as the ordering force of the cosmos. Humanity is understood as part of the whole of nature, and virtue is attained through rational thought and acceptance of fate as part of a universal order (*heimarmene*). In Islam, by contrast, *tawakkul* is rooted in a theocentric relationship that places God as the absolute source of will and the determiner of all affairs. Acceptance of fate in Islam is not deterministic but arises from the consciousness of faith and total dependence on God following genuine human effort. Stoicism, in other words, emphasizes submission to universal reason, while *tawakkul* emphasizes surrender to divine will. This marks the ontological and theological distinction separating Stoic rationality from Islamic spirituality.

Tawakkul in the Qur'an also carries a social and prophetic dimension absent from Stoicism. In verses such as Q.S. *An-Nisa'* (4): 81 and Q.S. *Al-Ahzab* (33): 48, *tawakkul* is tied to leadership, social responsibility, and steadfastness under external pressure. The Prophet Muhammad is commanded to continue his mission despite the hypocrisy and slander of his opponents, and only then to entrust the outcome to God. This pattern shows that *tawakkul* is not an escape from social reality but a moral foundation for wise action amid life's challenges. Stoicism, by contrast, emphasizes the personal and individual dimension of inner tranquility, with comparatively little attachment to prophetic mission or collective social responsibility. *Tawakkul* can therefore be viewed as a spiritual extension of the Stoic principle, since it governs not only a person's relationship with the self and nature but also with God and with the surrounding community.

From these comparative findings it can be concluded that *tawakkul* and Stoicism both guide human beings toward wisdom in confronting reality, though along different spiritual trajectories. *Tawakkul* builds inner calm through theological awareness of God's power and human limitation, while Stoicism builds calm through rational discipline and acceptance of the natural order. Placed within a cross-traditional ethical dialogue, the two perspectives complement one another: Stoicism sharpens rationality and self-discipline, while *tawakkul* affirms spiritual depth and transcendence. A reflective integration of both perspectives has the potential to enrich contemporary Islamic ethics with a rational spiritual foundation, offering an understanding of spiritual resilience that unites rational effort with total dependence on divine will.

Toward a Tawakkul–Stoic Resilience Model: Novelty and Contemporary Relevance

The comparative findings above invite a further, more applied step that prior studies of *tawakkul* and Stoicism have not systematically pursued: connecting the theological comparison to the empirical literature on psychological resilience. Contemporary clinical psychology has in fact already recognized Stoicism's practical value. Robertson and Codd argue that Stoic techniques anticipated core elements of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), noting that Albert Ellis built his ABC model of emotion directly on Epictetus's dictum that people are disturbed not by events but by their judgments about them.³⁰ Robertson further shows how Marcus Aurelius used Stoic reflective practices to sustain emotional resilience under sustained adversity, offering a template later formalized in cognitive therapy.³¹ Reading *tawakkul* alongside this literature suggests that the *dichotomy of control* functions, in modern clinical terms, as a technique of cognitive reappraisal, while *tawakkul* supplies a parallel yet theologically distinct reappraisal grounded not in impersonal rationality but in trust toward a personal God.

Southwick and Charney's clinical synthesis of resilience research identifies religion and spirituality as one of several empirically associated factors that help individuals withstand major adversity, alongside optimism, social support, and cognitive flexibility.³² This finding provides an evidentiary bridge between the present tafsir-based comparison and applied psychology: where Stoicism contributes a rationalist technique for reframing adversity, *tawakkul* contributes precisely the spiritual and relational resource that resilience science identifies as protective, but which purely rationalist frameworks such as Stoicism cannot, by their own premises, supply. This is consistent with earlier findings that Sufi psychology and Stoic self-control converge functionally while remaining grounded in different anthropologies,³³ and with empirical evidence that university students facing acute uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic drew on *tawakkul* as an active coping resource rather than a passive one.³⁴

On this basis, the study proposes a *Tawakkul–Stoic Resilience Model* comprising three interlocking layers: a cognitive layer, in which the Stoic *dichotomy of control* and the Qur'anic pairing of *ikhtiar* and *tawakkul* jointly train the believer to distinguish controllable effort from uncontrollable outcome; an affective layer, in which *amor fati* and *ridha* jointly cultivate acceptance rather than resistance toward adversity; and a theological layer, unique to *tawakkul*, in which outcomes are relationally entrusted to a personal God rather than merely accepted as impersonal necessity. Unlike prior comparative studies, which conclude at the level of identifying conceptual affinity, this model specifies how the two traditions could be sequenced in practice, positioning Stoic-style cognitive reframing as a preparatory technique and *tawakkul* as its theological completion. This offers Islamic counselors and religious educators a structured, textually grounded, and psychologically informed framework for cultivating spiritual resilience, constituting the principal novel contribution of this study relative to earlier textual or theological treatments of the same theme.

30 Donald J. Robertson and Tim Codd, "Stoic Philosophy as a Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy," *The Behavior Therapist* 42, no. 2 (2019): 40–45.

31 Robertson, *How to Think Like a Roman Emperor*.

32 Southwick and Charney, *Resilience*.

33 Fajrin, Mud'is, and Yulianti, "Konsepsi Pengendalian Diri."

34 Alhafiza, Hanum, and Funun, "Tawakkul in the Qur'an as Coping Mechanism."

CONCLUSION

This study finds that the concept of *tawakkul* in the Qur'an, when analyzed through *tafsir maudhu'i*, is not a form of passive resignation but a dynamic integration of *ikhtiar* and surrender to God. Verses such as Q.S. *An-Nisa'* (4): 81, Q.S. *Ibrahim* (14): 12, and Q.S. *Al-Ahzab* (33): 48 affirm that *tawakkul* carries spiritual, moral, and social dimensions that complement one another. In comparative terms, the Stoic principles of the *dichotomy of control* and *amor fati* show functional similarity to *tawakkul* as mechanisms of self-regulation and acceptance of fate. The two traditions nonetheless remain epistemologically distinct: *tawakkul* is rooted in faith and transcendent dependence on divine will, while Stoicism rests on cosmic rationality and human autonomy.

The principal contribution of this study lies in opening a cross-traditional dialogue between Islamic spirituality and Western ethical philosophy, using *tafsir maudhu'i* as a methodological bridge between sacred text and rational ethical frameworks, and, beyond that, in translating this dialogue into the *Tawakkul–Stoic Resilience Model*, which connects classical exegesis to contemporary resilience psychology. This model demonstrates that *tawakkul* can engage productively with Stoicism without losing its theological roots, extending the relevance of Qur'anic ethics to contemporary discourse on mental health and resilience. Even so, the study remains limited to textual and conceptual analysis; it has not tested the proposed model empirically, whether in Islamic psychotherapy, character education, or the everyday social dynamics of modern believers.

Building on these findings, future research is recommended to pursue interdisciplinary approaches linking *tafsir*, psychology, and moral philosophy so that the relationship between *tawakkul* and Stoic values can be examined in practical, empirically testable contexts. Approaches drawing on empirical theology or Islamic positive psychology could assess how far this integration contributes to inner calm and spiritual resilience among individuals, for instance through instrument development or intervention studies based on the three-layer model proposed here. Further exploration of classical and modern Islamic scholarship linking *tawakkul* to rational discipline could likewise enrich an Islamic ethical framework adaptive to changing times. This study thus affirms the continuing relevance of *tawakkul* in the spiritual life of Muslims while positioning it as a universal paradigm for modern humanity in confronting life's uncertainty through a balance of reason and faith.

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