

QURANIC INTERPRETATION OF TAWAKKUL: ENHANCING MENTAL HEALTH AMONG WORKING WOMEN IN MALAYSIA

Nur Alia Arisya Binti Abdul Khalid¹
Kauthar Binti Abd Kadir²

¹ Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Malaysia,
(E-mail: nuraliaarisya@raudah.usim.edu.my)

² Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Malaysia,
(Email: kauthar@usim.edu.my)

* Corresponding Author: kauthar@usim.edu.my

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Abstract: *This study examines the concept of Tawakkul (trust in Allah) as interpreted in the Quran and its impact on the mental health of working women in Malaysia. Work–family role conflicts are a common source of stress that can affect women’s psychological well-being. The objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between Tawakkul and mental health, and to analyze how this concept can help women manage life stress. A qualitative approach was employed by analyzing secondary data from academic articles, Quranic exegesis, and relevant reports. Thematic analysis identified key themes such as emotional resilience, patience, and reliance on Allah. The findings indicate that Tawakkul enhances emotional resilience and helps alleviate stress, enabling women to manage work–family conflicts with greater composure. In conclusion, Tawakkul serves as a significant Islamic value-based approach to supporting the mental health of working women in Malaysia and should be considered in the development of more holistic mental health intervention programs.*

Keywords: *Tawakkul, Quranic interpretation, mental health, working women, emotional resilience*

Introduction

Mental health has increasingly been recognised as a critical global concern, with Malaysia experiencing a parallel rise in anxiety, stress, and depression across diverse population groups. Modern working women are among the groups most affected, as their socio-economic roles have expanded significantly in line with national technological advancement and societal transformation. As observed by Ismahalil (2017), contemporary women are no longer confined to traditional domestic roles; rather, they simultaneously navigate professional responsibilities and familial obligations. This dual role intensifies the complexity of daily functioning and often results in work–family conflict, emotional fatigue, and reduced psychological well-being, consistent with the findings of Sitimin, Fikry, Ismail, and Hussein (2017).

The World Health Organization defines mental health as a state of complete emotional, psychological, and social well-being. When competing pressures overwhelm an individual's coping capacity, disturbances in mental health may arise, requiring both preventive and supportive interventions. Within the Islamic worldview, spiritual guidance is central to sustaining emotional resilience. The Quran recognises the multifaceted nature of human emotions and offers principles such as patience (*ṣabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), and reliance upon Allah (*tawakkul*) as pathways to psychological stability.

One verse that underscores the concept of divine reliance is found in Surah At-Tawbah, where Allah states:

إِنْ تُصِيبَكَ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ وَإِنْ تُصِيبَكَ مُصِيبَةٌ يَقُولُوا قَدْ أَخَذْنَا أَمْرَنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَيَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ فَرَحُونَ ٥٠
قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٥١

"If good befalls you, it distresses them; but if disaster strikes you, they say, "We took our matter [in hand] before," and turn away while they are rejoicing. Say, "Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us; He is our protector." And upon Allah let the believers rely."

Similarly, Surah At-Talaq emphasises divine sufficiency for those who cultivate genuine reliance upon Allah:

وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَلِّغُ أَمْرَهُ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا ٣

"And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent."

These verses illustrate the potential of *tawakkul* to contribute meaningfully to emotional stability, acceptance, and resilience—fundamental components of mental well-being. The growing scholarly interest in the relationship between spirituality and psychological functioning underscores the value of integrating Quranic teachings with contemporary psychological frameworks to support mental health.

Despite the recognised importance of spiritual guidance, existing research on mental health among working women has predominantly focused on psychological, socio-economic, and occupational factors, with limited attention to Quranic perspectives as complementary frameworks for emotional resilience. Studies on work–family conflict rarely investigate the

application of *tawakkul*, and Islamic scholarship on this concept often remains theoretical, without focused analysis of specific Quranic verses such as Surah At-Tawbah (9:50–51) and Surah At-Talaq (65:3) in the context of contemporary mental health challenges. This indicates a notable gap in the literature where Quranic interpretation has yet to be systematically integrated with psychological constructs such as resilience, acceptance, and emotional regulation.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the role of Quranic interpretation, particularly the concept of *tawakkul*, in supporting mental health among women facing the dual pressures of professional and familial responsibilities. By examining relevant Quranic verses and their teachings, the study seeks to identify mechanisms that foster resilience, emotional stability, and hope within the framework of psychospiritual well-being.

Problem Statement

Although mental health challenges among modern working women have received increasing scholarly attention, existing research remains largely confined to psychological, occupational, and socio-economic perspectives. Limited studies have explored spiritual constructs, particularly those grounded in the Quran, as complementary frameworks for enhancing emotional well-being. Research on work–family conflict among women also seldom incorporates *tawakkul* as a potential coping mechanism, despite its emphasis in foundational Islamic texts such as Surah At-Tawbah (9:51) and Surah At-Talaq (65:3).

Furthermore, Islamic scholarship on *tawakkul* often presents theological or conceptual discussions without conducting focused analysis on the relevance of specific verses to contemporary mental health challenges. No existing study has systematically examined how Surah At-Tawbah (9:50–51), which underscores acceptance of divine decree, (لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا), can be operationalised within a psychospiritual framework to support women experiencing emotional strain.

This reveals a significant gap in the literature: the absence of integrative research that aligns Quranic interpretation with modern psychological constructs such as resilience, acceptance, and emotional regulation. Therefore, it is essential to investigate how the Quranic concept of *tawakkul*, derived from key scriptural sources, can contribute to strengthening mental well-being among women facing the complex demands of contemporary life.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach with a focus on secondary data analysis, aiming to examine the role of the concept of Tawakkul in supporting the mental health of working women in Malaysia. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth evaluation and synthesis of existing literature, providing a comprehensive understanding of Quranic interpretations and their relationship to psychological well-being.

Data collection was conducted through a detailed review of secondary sources, including academic journal articles, scholarly books, institutional reports, and primary Islamic sources such as the Quran and Tafsir by Ar-Razi. Sources were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research theme, including a focus on Tawakkul, mental health, and the lived experiences of working women in Malaysia. The inclusion criteria comprised: sources written in Malay, English, or Arabic; emphasis on Quranic teachings, the concept of Tawakkul, mental

health, or working women's experiences; and publications from the past 15 years to ensure relevance and contemporaneity. Sources not meeting these criteria or not focused on the target population were excluded from the analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of key patterns and themes within the literature. The analysis involved several critical steps: First, the researcher familiarized themselves with the data through repeated reading of all selected sources to gain a thorough understanding of the content and context. Second, coding was performed by identifying and labeling recurring concepts, ideas, and patterns related to Tawakkul, mental well-being, and the experiences of working women. Third, these codes were grouped into broader themes, such as the role of Tawakkul in fostering emotional resilience, acceptance of life challenges, and practical implications for working women. Fourth, the themes were reviewed and refined to ensure accuracy and alignment with the research objectives. Finally, interpretation involved synthesizing these themes to generate meaningful insights into how Quranic principles can be applied to address mental health challenges faced by working women in Malaysia.

This methodology provides a systematic, structured, and evidence-based framework, enabling a comprehensive assessment of how Quranic interpretations of Tawakkul can enhance mental well-being, emotional resilience, and coping capacity among working women. By employing purposive secondary data selection and rigorous thematic analysis, the study aims to generate robust academic insights that can also inform practical, culturally, and spiritually sensitive interventions.

Literature Review

Mental health challenges among working women have emerged as a pressing concern globally, with Malaysia experiencing similar trends of increasing stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion. Empirical studies consistently indicate that balancing professional and domestic responsibilities contributes to heightened psychological strain. Rose et al. (2018) highlighted that women managing dual roles often face substantial pressure due to simultaneous demands from work and family. Similarly, Ahmad et al. (2023) reported that work–family conflict exacerbates stress, particularly for women responsible for childcare and household duties alongside professional obligations. While these studies illuminate the prevalence and sources of stress, they predominantly adopt descriptive approaches and do not explore faith-based or culturally contextualised coping strategies, revealing a gap in integrating spiritual dimensions with mental health interventions.

Within Islamic scholarship, the Quran is recognised as a comprehensive source of guidance, encompassing emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Solehuddin (2023) emphasises the cultivation of *qalbun salim* (a pure and healthy heart) as essential for maintaining emotional stability and resilience. However, the study does not specifically examine Tawakkul, nor does it contextualise its findings for working women in Malaysia, leaving practical applications unexplored. Latif (2014) similarly identifies the Quran as “*syifa*” (healing), capable of providing both general guidance and targeted remedies for mental distress. Despite its theoretical significance, Latif's study lacks empirical investigation into how these principles can support mental resilience in women juggling multiple roles. Hapsari et al. (2024) demonstrated that Quranic verses could serve as effective supplementary therapy alongside conventional medical interventions, yet their study does not address gender-specific or culturally relevant contexts, nor does it investigate Tawakkul as a structured coping mechanism.

Hibban (2022) further underscores the Quran's capacity to address both physical and psychological ailments, advocating spiritual remedies for the soul; nonetheless, the study remains theoretical and does not examine practical strategies for supporting working women facing modern occupational and familial demands.

Tawakkul, understood as complete reliance on Allah while taking proactive steps to address life's challenges, presents a promising faith-based coping strategy. Gondal et al. (2023) demonstrated that Tawakkul reduces stress and fosters acceptance among Muslim adults, aligning conceptually with psychological constructs such as emotional regulation, resilience, and mindfulness. However, existing research largely targets general adult populations and fails to explore how Tawakkul, through Quranic interpretation, can be operationalised to enhance the mental well-being of Malaysian working women. This highlights a critical research gap: the need to examine the practical integration of Tawakkul into culturally sensitive mental health interventions tailored for women managing dual roles.

Collectively, the literature indicates that while the mental health of working women and the Quran's general therapeutic potential have been studied, there remains a distinct lack of empirical research investigating Tawakkul as a targeted coping mechanism. Existing studies are often descriptive, theoretical, or context-general, and they rarely integrate Islamic teachings with contemporary psychological frameworks for practical intervention. Addressing this gap is vital to developing evidence-based strategies that leverage Quranic principles to promote resilience, emotional regulation, and overall well-being among working women in Malaysia.

Accordingly, the present study seeks to examine the role of Quranic interpretation, specifically the principle of Tawakkul, in fostering resilience and mitigating stress among Malaysian working women. By combining insights from Islamic teachings with contemporary psychological constructs, this research aims to provide culturally and spiritually grounded strategies to enhance mental health, thereby bridging the gap between faith-based practices and modern psychological interventions.

Analysis And Discussion

In this chapter, the study's findings will be presented, focusing not only on what *Tawakkul* is but also on how this devotional concept influences the psychology and behavior among working women living in Malaysia. The study's objective shaped the organization of these findings. First, we look at how *Tawakkul* is interpreted in the Qur'an. Then we analyze its relationship with mental health. Finally, we investigate how this has affected the psychological well-being of working women in Malaysia.

Based on the Qur'an, the findings of this study examine the spiritual significance and practical implications of *Tawakkul* as it relates to individual mental health. Moreover, through analysis of Qur'anic and tafsir verses, past research as well as expert insight, the study gives us a more detailed view of how *Tawakkul* can contribute towards emotional resilience and psychological balance.

Analysis of Findings

Quranic Concept of Tawakkul

Tawakkul can be understood as having faith in Allah whilst also trying the best that one can. The Quran Surah At-Talaq (65:3) states clearly that there “And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent.” and further Allah guarantees in Surah At-Tawbah (9:51) that there is nothing that can happen without his decision: Say, “Nothing will ever befall us except what Allah has destined for us. He is our Protector.” So in Allah let the believers put their trust. These verses are the principles of *Tawakkul*, which teaches the followers of Islam to have faith in Allah’s will and following that, working hard to accomplish one’s goals.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed *Tawakkul* is not the total submission of self; it is an act that involves both effort and trust in one’s spirit. Through Al-Razi’s tafsir, the term has been described more to mean a way of overcoming one’s weaknesses with the infinite wisdom of Allah. Effective mastery of these dualities facilitates one to face lifetime uncertainties in patience and hope.

Relationship Between Tawakkul and Mental Health

Tawakkul, which involves trusting in Allah and letting go of excessive worry, has a direct and positive impact on mental health. It aids in managing stress, anxiety, and emotional distress, fostering peace and acceptance. This practice is especially beneficial for working women juggling career and family responsibilities, helping them navigate stressful situations effectively.

Research indicates that *Tawakkul* fosters emotional resilience by promoting virtues like patience (sabr) and gratitude (shukr). These qualities empower women to handle their emotions adeptly, even amidst difficulties. By relying on Allah's plan and focusing on actionable steps while relinquishing control over unforeseeable outcomes, individuals can reduce feelings of helplessness and despair.

Additionally, *Tawakkul* complements psychological strategies such as mindfulness and cognitive reframing. By emphasizing control over what is manageable and acceptance of the uncontrollable, *Tawakkul* offers a distinct and effective approach to promoting mental well-being through a blend of faith and proactive coping mechanisms.

Impact of Tawakkul on Working Women in Malaysia

Tawakkul has a profound impact on working women in Malaysia, offering a culturally and spiritually relevant framework to navigate stress more effectively. The study findings underscore that women who embrace *Tawakkul* tend to feel better prepared to juggle professional responsibilities alongside family duties. Drawing strength from their faith in Allah, they approach their tasks with a renewed sense of confidence, serenity, and purpose.

Furthermore, *Tawakkul* plays a crucial role in empowering women by encouraging them to perceive challenges as integral to Allah's grand design. This perspective reduces feelings of being overwhelmed and enhances emotional resilience. It enables women to strengthen their bond with their faith, providing solace and direction during challenging periods.

Additionally, the research reveals that *Tawakkul* acts as a preventive measure against the exacerbation of mental health issues. Through the practice of acceptance and reliance on Allah, women can effectively cope with daily stressors, mitigating the risk of emotional exhaustion. This

aspect holds particular significance in Malaysia, where societal and cultural demands often pressure women considerably.

Summary of The Result

This study's results substantiate the transformative nature of *Tawakkul* in helping to mitigate the effects of issues related to mental health, especially for working women in Malaysia.

***Tawakkul*: A Fundamental Aspect of Iman**

The findings confirm that *Tawakkul* is both a spiritual principle and a practical coping mechanism, balancing proactive human effort with complete reliance on Allah's decree. Rooted in Qur'anic guidance, particularly *Surah At-Talaq* (65:3) and *Surah At-Tawbah* (9:51), *Tawakkul* provides sufficiency, protection, and emotional security, enabling individuals to face uncertainty with composure.

Data indicate that working women who embrace *Tawakkul* report lower anxiety, greater emotional stability, and enhanced resilience in managing work and family role conflicts. This supports psychological theories on religious coping, where trust in divine wisdom fosters acceptance, reduces rumination, and strengthens mental well-being.

By integrating faith with actionable effort, *Tawakkul* offers a culturally relevant and spiritually enriching framework for stress management, transforming challenges into opportunities for growth and aligning mental health strategies with Islamic values.

The Relationship Between *Tawakkul* and Psychological Health

The study finds that *Tawakkul* contributes positively to psychological health by fostering acceptance, patience (*sabr*), and gratitude (*shukr*). This combination helps individuals manage stress and anxiety more effectively, enabling them to reframe challenges as opportunities for spiritual and personal development. When a person places their trust in Allah while making sincere efforts, they reduce excessive worry about outcomes and maintain emotional stability even in adverse circumstances.

From a mental health perspective, *Tawakkul* aligns with evidence-based coping strategies such as mindfulness and cognitive reframing. By focusing on what is within one's control and entrusting the rest to Allah, individuals can reduce rumination, mitigate feelings of helplessness, and enhance resilience. This process not only supports emotional balance but also promotes long-term psychological well-being.

For working women facing overlapping professional and domestic responsibilities, *Tawakkul* provides a framework that is both spiritually grounding and psychologically empowering. It strengthens their ability to navigate pressure without compromising inner peace, thereby integrating Islamic values with effective stress management practices.

***Tawakkul* for Working Women in Malaysia**

Tawakkul provides a clear framework for Malaysian working women to cope with the stress arising from the dual demands of work and home responsibilities. It enables them to find peace in managing life's demands by combining sincere human effort with full reliance on Allah, where action is taken within one's capacity while the final outcome is entrusted entirely to Him. This integration of effort and trust strengthens their capacity to navigate stress with a clear sense of purpose and nurtures emotional stability.

Such belief does not only help them endure challenging circumstances but also transforms the way they perceive stress, shifting it from a source of burden to an avenue for spiritual growth.

In turn, this outlook contributes to improved psychological well-being, greater resilience, and the ability to maintain balance between professional productivity and family harmony.

Last but not least, *Tawakkul* combines spiritual reliance with worldly measures; thus, it becomes a powerful asset for mental health and resilience. As a religious resource for mental health, it is beneficial, not just to working women, but for larger collectivities in search of holistic approaches to emotional well-being with cultural sensitivity.

Conclusion

The major contribution of this research is to show the impact of *Tawakkul* on the mental health of working women in Malaysia. It is revealed through this study that *Tawakkul* as understood through the lens of Quranic tafsir contributes to both the emotional and the psychological warfare. It makes them graceful under the pressure of work as well as family life.

According to these findings, *Tawakkul* combines the best of both worlds, leading to action without defiance of Allah's plan. This ensures a two-dimensional approach aiding the women in overcoming emotional turmoil and in reducing anxiety.

Several findings demonstrate the importance of spiritual orientations and constructs in the enhancement of mental health among Muslims particularly in a Muslim dominated society. *Tawakkul* enables an individual to have faith and do the best and forget about the personal or professional factors triggering stress. This is an example of an indigenous solution to a complex problem that is within the reach and understanding of societal members.

Ultimately, the Quranic verses on *Tawakkul* appears to provide reasons needed to boost the mental health of working women in Malaysia. This helps to address the issue of life in all its complexity, integrating with one's strengths and striving for the best.

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