

A Philosophical Study of Stoicism in the Perspective of the Qur'an: A Thematic Analysis of the Concepts of Patience (*Sabr*), Contentment (*Ridha*), and Trust in God (*Tawakkul*)

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the meaning of the concepts of patience (*sabr*), contentment (*ridha*), and trust in God (*tawakkul*) in the Qur'an, as well as to explore their intersections and distinctions with Stoic principles. The background of this study arises from the phenomenon of contemporary Muslim spirituality, which often interprets these three concepts in a narrow sense, whereas in classical Islamic tradition they represent an active form of spirituality imbued with reflection and self-control. This research employs a qualitative approach with the thematic exegesis method (*maudhu'i*), combined with the ethical framework of Stoicism as an interpretative analytical tool. Thematic data analysis revealed five main themes: (1) patience as active perseverance in facing trials, (2) contentment as sincere acceptance of destiny with faith in God's wisdom, (3) trust in God as submission of outcomes after maximal effort, (4) the synergistic relationship of the three concepts in shaping holistic spirituality, and (5) their impact on character maturity and psychological resilience. The findings indicate convergence with Stoic principles *apatheia*, *amor fati*, and *prohairesis* yet remain distinct in their theological dimension emphasizing submission to God.

Keywords: Stoicism, Qur'an, patience, contentment, trust in God, character education.



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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji makna konsep kesabaran (*sabr*), keridaan (*ridha*), dan tawakal (*tawakkul*) dalam Al-Qur'an, serta menelusuri titik temu dan perbedaannya dengan prinsip-prinsip Stoa

(Stoisisme). Latar belakang penelitian ini muncul dari fenomena spiritualitas Muslim kontemporer yang kerap memaknai ketiga konsep tersebut secara sempit, padahal dalam tradisi Islam klasik ia merupakan bentuk spiritualitas aktif yang sarat refleksi dan pengendalian diri. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode tafsir tematik (*maudhu'i*), dipadukan dengan kerangka etika Stoisisme sebagai alat analisis interpretatif. Analisis data tematik mengungkap lima tema utama: (1) kesabaran sebagai keteguhan aktif dalam menghadapi ujian, (2) keridaan sebagai penerimaan tulus terhadap takdir dengan keyakinan atas hikmah Allah, (3) tawakal sebagai penyerahan hasil setelah upaya maksimal, (4) relasi sinergis dari ketiga konsep tersebut dalam membentuk spiritualitas yang holistik, dan (5) pengaruhnya terhadap kematangan karakter dan ketangguhan psikologis. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan adanya titik konvergensi dengan prinsip Stoisisme seperti *apatheia*, *amor fati*, dan *prohairesis*, namun tetap memiliki kekhasan dalam dimensi teologisnya yang menekankan kepasrahan kepada Allah.

Kata kunci: Stoisisme, Al-Qur'an, kesabaran, keridaan, tawakal, pendidikan karakter.

Introduction

In today's increasingly complex and demanding world, humanity faces growing spiritual and psychological challenges. Global phenomena such as the rise of depression, anxiety, and emotional instability have rekindled interest in practical philosophies that offer inner peace and self-mastery. Stoicism, one of the ancient philosophical schools experiencing a revival in modern times, proposes *apatheia* (tranquility of the soul), *prohairesis* (the freedom to choose within one's control), and *amor fati* (acceptance of fate) as principles to confront life's dynamic and uncertain nature.¹ These three doctrines not only encourage individuals to maintain emotional balance and wisdom but also emphasize the importance of accepting events with composure, avoiding excessive suffering, focusing one's energy on what lies within personal control, and embracing reality as it is.

The resurgence of Stoicism reflects the growing attention of modern society seeking inner serenity amidst social pressure, as highlighted in various contemporary studies and publications discussing the relevance of Stoic values in the present age. In Indonesia, the crisis of values and spiritual anxiety is similarly evident in the increasing demand for models of character education and moral reinforcement. Within this context, Islamic virtues such as *ṣabr* (patience), *riḍā*

¹ Avais Aziz, "The Application of Stoic Philosophy to Modern Emotional Regulation," *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology* 10, no. 4 (2025).

(contentment), and tawakkul (trust in God) have become highly relevant to be re-examined both philosophically and thematically.

However, in practical Islamic education, these three concepts are often understood narrowly and normatively. Observations conducted by the researcher at several modern Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in East Java reveal that some students perceive ṣabr merely as “silent endurance,” riḍā as “surrender without effort,” and tawakkul as “giving up after prayer.” In contrast, within the classical Islamic spiritual tradition, these concepts represent active spirituality that requires self-control, awareness, and reflection. Simangunsong highlights the intersection between Stoic self-control and the Qur’anic concepts of tawakkul and qanā‘ah, particularly in managing emotional responses toward fate and external circumstances.² This phenomenon demonstrates the need to re-explore the meanings of ṣabr, riḍā, and tawakkul in a more reflective and contextual manner.

Research shows that depression is the most common mental health problem in the world, with the burden continuing to increase since 1990. The number of global cases of depression rose by almost 50% from 1990 to 2017, and is projected to continue increasing until 2040, especially in countries with high population growth and low socioeconomic indices.³ The prevalence of depression and depressive symptoms in children and adolescents has also increased significantly in the last two decades, with around one in five children and adolescents in the world experiencing depression or depressive symptoms, and this trend continues to increase from year to year.

Several journals assert that Stoicism is often misunderstood or only superficially known. Many people only know Stoicism as “stoicism” or “don't complain,” without understanding its basic philosophical principles such as wisdom, self-control, and the distinction between things that can and cannot be controlled. Some research also shows that the term “stoic” is often used incorrectly to describe the behavior of holding back emotions or not expressing pain, but its true meaning is much more complex.

Philosophical studies that examine Qur’anic values through cross-traditional perspectives remain limited. Most existing studies are normative and textual, failing to uncover the experiential dimensions of spirituality among religious practitioners. Yet, a qualitative phenomenological approach can reveal deeper layers of how individuals internalize and integrate these values into their daily lives. Research by Dahliana indicates that Stoic principles, as reflected in Ibn Qayyim’s teachings such as inner control and acceptance of divine decree play a significant role in shaping spiritual resilience amid crises. Nevertheless, no

² Ahmad Aulia Simangunsong, “Konsep Pengendalian Diri Filsafat Stoikisme Dalam Perspektif AL-Qur’an” (Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, 2024).

³ Andrew Moore et al., “Troubling Stoicism : Sociocultural Influences and Applications to Health and Illness Behaviour,” *Health* 17 (2013): 159–73, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363459312451179>.

comprehensive Qur'anic thematic study has directly connected *ṣabr*, *riḍā*, and *tawakkul* with the framework of Stoicism.⁴

This research is significant not only for enriching thematic Qur'anic exegesis but also for establishing an epistemological bridge between classical Western philosophy and Qur'anic ethics. From social and educational perspectives, the findings may serve as an alternative framework for moral and character education that is more reflective and contextually relevant. In an era that demands mental endurance, the meanings of *ṣabr*, *riḍā*, and *tawakkul* should be approached not merely as moral obligations, but as ethical and spiritual strategies to face life's realities with openness and balanced self-mastery.

Based on this background, this study aims to explore the Qur'anic interpretations of *ṣabr*, *riḍā*, and *tawakkul* through a thematic approach and relate them to the core principles of Stoicism. The research focuses on the spiritual experiences and perceptions of religious practitioners such as *santri* (students), *ustādh* (teachers), and *pesantren* caretakers and how these values are internalized in daily life. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of a dialogical and multidisciplinary thematic *tafsīr*; practically, the findings are expected to serve as a reference for fostering moral education grounded in Qur'anic spirituality and rational ethical reflection.

Literature Review

The philosophy of Stoicism is one of the classical schools of ethics that emphasizes the importance of living in accordance with reason (*logos*) and the order of the universe (*cosmos*). Prominent Stoic figures such as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius emphasize the values of *apatheia* (tranquility of the soul), *prohairesis* (moral autonomy or inner choice), and *amor fati* (acceptance of fate). These values teach humans to distinguish between things that are within their control (virtue, moral decisions) and those that are beyond their control (fate, other people's opinions), and to respond to reality through rationality and virtue. Within this framework, there emerges a strong relevance to Islamic teachings, particularly in the concepts of *ṣabr* (patience in the face of trials), *ṣabr* and Stoic *apatheia* both function to regulate affective responses to external adversity, they diverge in their metaphysical grounding: *ṣabr* is embedded in a theocentric soteriology that frames endurance as a relational virtue oriented to God, whereas *apatheia* is grounded in a cosmological *logos* that privileges rational accord with nature. This distinction has practical implications for moral pedagogy: *ṣabr* prescribes devotional practices (prayer, supplication) as means of affect regulation, whereas *apatheia* prescribes cognitive-ethical training.

Riḍā (acceptance of divine decree), *Riḍā* in Islam is rooted in a personal-spiritual relationship between the servant and Allah, which is built on belief in

⁴ Zidha Khira Himmah and Yeti Dahliana, "Filsafat Stoikisme Ibnu Qoyyim Al-Jauziyah: Sebuah Tawaran Quarter Life Crisis Solution," *AL-AFKAR: Journal for Islamic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2025): 1987–2004, <https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v8i1.2199.Stoicism>.

Divine wisdom, compassion and rubūbiyyah. Al-Ghazālī in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* explains *riḍā* as breath of heart in accepting Allah's decrees because of the knowledge of the perfection of His wisdom, while Ibn Qayyim in *Madarij al-Sālikīn* emphasizes it as a spiritual state that can only be achieved through love and total surrender to God. This view differs fundamentally from the Stoic concept of *amor fati*, which is based on a rational acceptance of a deterministic cosmos without personal theological involvement, as described by Marcus Aurelius in the *Meditations* and Epictetus in the *Enchiridion*. Pierre Hadot's explanation shows that *amor fati* is rational harmony with the natural order, not spiritual submission to God. This theological difference is also confirmed by the comparative work of Izutsu (*Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*) and Leaman (*An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy*), which shows that Qur'anic ethics is theocentric, while Stoicism relies on impersonal cosmic determinism. About *tawakkul* (trust in God after exerting effort), *tawakkul* is inherently theocentric, grounded in belief in *tadbīr ilāhī* (divine governance), as elaborated by Ibn Qayyim and al-Ghazālī. Failure to foreground this ontological difference risks oversimplifying *tawakkul* as merely a psychological technique rather than a theological virtue. The empirical data from participants particularly the contrast between “*tawakkul*” and “*pasrah*” could be more critically integrated with classical sources to show how effort (*asbāb*) and trust interact in Islamic ethics. These concepts hold not only theological significance but also ethical value, closely aligning with Stoic principles of virtuous living and harmony with destiny.

Several studies have shown intersections between Qur'anic values and Stoic principles. Khabibullabiba explains that *ṣabr* and *tawakkul* in the Qur'an share similarities with emotional control and the awareness of inner autonomy in Stoicism.⁵ Meanwhile, Hanifah, in her study of *Tafsir al-Azhar*, notes that Buya Hamka views *riḍā* as an expression of spiritual maturity derived from recognizing human limitations before God's will.⁶ Dahliana further highlight the connection between Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's teachings and Stoic values, such as the integration of sincerity (*ikhhlās*), maximum effort, and *tawakkul* toward divine decree.⁷

Nevertheless, most of these studies remain descriptive and normative, with limited attention to phenomenological interpretations or the lived experiences of spiritual practitioners. This theoretical and empirical gap opens a valuable space for qualitative thematic research capable of uncovering the inner spiritual experiences related to Qur'anic values through a cross-philosophical

⁵ Muhammad Khabibullabiba, “Integrasi Nilai Stoikisme Dan Al-Qur'an Dalam Mengelola Emosi Negatif” (Universitas PTIQ Jakarta, 2023).

⁶ Rofiatul Hanifah, “Konsep Kebahagiaan Perspektif Buya Hamka Dalam Kitab Tafsir Al-Azhar” (Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ponorogo, 2023).

⁷ Himmah and Dahliana, “Filsafat Stoikisme Ibnu Qoyyim Al-Jauziyah: Sebuah Tawaran Quarter Life Crisis Solution.”

framework. Therefore, this study adopts a Qur'anic thematic approach combined with the Stoic philosophical framework as a foundation to construct the meanings of ṣabr, riḍā, and tawakkul in the context of contemporary Muslim spirituality.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using the thematic interpretation method (*tafsīr mawdhū'ī*) combined with the philosophical ethical framework of Stoicism as an interpretative analytical lens. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore the meanings of ṣabr (patience), riḍā (contentment), and tawakkul (trust in God) in a contextual and reflective manner, while also examining their compatibility with the rational virtues of Stoicism, namely *apatheia* (emotional tranquility), *prohairesis* (moral autonomy), and *amor fati* (acceptance of fate).

The research was conducted from January to June 2025 across three Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in East Java: Mambaus Sholihin Gresik, Safinatul Huda Surabaya, and Tahfidzul Qur'an Daarul Huda Malang. The informants consisted of six participants selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: A profound understanding of the concepts of ṣabr, riḍā, and tawakkul; active involvement in spiritual and character education activities at the *pesantren*; and the ability to reflect on spiritual experiences philosophically.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observations during moral development and thematic religious study sessions, and documentary analysis including students' reflective notes, teaching materials, and meeting records. Data validation was conducted using source triangulation (among *ustādh*, *santri*, and *pesantren* caretakers), methodological triangulation (interview, observation, and documentation), and member checking with key informants.

The data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach consisting of several stages: open coding, meaning categorization, clustering into major themes, and reflective interpretation based on Stoic philosophical principles as the theoretical framework. This approach aligns with the studies of Simangunsong⁸ and Dahliana & Himmah,⁹ both of which emphasize the importance of integrating thematic Qur'anic exegesis and ethical philosophy to achieve a deeper and more applicable understanding of Qur'anic spirituality.

Discussion

Based on the analysis of data collected from eleven participants across three Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in East Java, this study identified five major themes that reflect a comprehensive understanding of the concepts of ṣabr

⁸ Simangunsong, "Konsep Pengendalian Diri Filsafat Stoikisme Dalam Perspektif AL-Qur'an."

⁹ Himmah and Dahliana, "Filsafat Stoikisme Ibnu Qoyyim Al-Jauziyah: Sebuah Tawaran Quarter Life Crisis Solution."

(patience), *riḍā* (contentment), and *tawakkul* (trust in God) within the Qur’anic perspective and their philosophical connection to Stoicism.

The Concept of Patience (Ṣabr) as Self-Restraint and Perseverance

The findings of this study indicate that participants understood ṣabr (patience) in three principal dimensions consistent with the Qur’anic conception. As stated in Qur’an, Surah al-Baqarah (2:153);

"يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ"

*"O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with those who are patient."*¹⁰

According to Ibn Kathīr’s tafsīr, this verse explains that patience (ṣabr) and prayer are the primary means through which believers attain divine assistance in confronting life’s trials. Al-Ṭabarī, in his exegesis, further emphasizes three dimensions of ṣabr: patience in facing calamities, patience in performing acts of obedience, and patience in restraining oneself from sin.¹¹

Participant P4 explained *"Patience means restraining oneself from desires, being steadfast in obedience, and being accepting of calamities."* Meanwhile, P8 highlighted the aspect of endurance *"Patience is the ability to remain firm and not act hastily when facing hardship or trials."* These findings reveal a profound understanding that distinguishes ṣabr from mere submission or resignation. As P4 asserted: *"In patience when facing calamity, one must still make an effort (ikhtiyār) before relying upon Allah through tawakkul."* This understanding is consistent with Qur’an, Surah Āli ‘Imrān (3:146),

"وَكَايْنِ مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِثْيُونٌ كَثِيرٌ مَّا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ"

*"And how many a prophet fought and with him fought many religious scholars; but they never lost assurance due to what afflicted them in the cause of Allah, nor did they weaken or give in. And Allah loves those who are patient."*¹²

This verse illustrates that ṣabr is not passive endurance but active steadfastness, reflecting both moral strength and spiritual discipline, aligning closely with the Stoic principle of *prohairesis*—the exercise of rational control over internal states while accepting external circumstances beyond one’s power.

¹⁰ Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur’an, *Al-Qur’an Dan Terjemahannya* (Kementrian Agama RI, n.d.), Q.S.2:153.

¹¹ Muhammad bin Jarir Al-Tabari, “Jāmi‘ Al-Bayān ‘an Ta’wīl Āy Al-Qur’ān, Juz 2” (Kairo: Dar al-Hijr, 2001).

¹² Al-Qur’an, *Al-Qur’an Dan Terjemahannya*, Q.S.3:146.

The Concept of Riḍā as Sincere Acceptance of Divine Decree

The study found that riḍā is understood as a sincere acceptance of Allah's decree that transcends mere resignation or passive submission. This understanding is primarily grounded in Qur'an, Surah al-Bayyinah (98:8):

جَزَاءُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ حَشِيَ رَبَّهُ

*"Their reward with their Lord will be gardens of perpetual residence beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. That is for those who fear their Lord."*¹³

According to As-Sa'dī's tafsīr, this verse illustrates mutual contentment: Allah is pleased with His servants because of their faith and obedience, while the servants are pleased with Allah for the honor and reward He has granted them.¹⁴ Al-Qurṭubī adds that riḍā is not mere acceptance, but acceptance with open-hearted serenity and spiritual calmness.¹⁵

Participant P4 shared a personal reflection: "When my wishes were often at odds with my parents' expectations, I believed there must be wisdom behind it." Meanwhile, P8 expressed a philosophical dimension of riḍā: "When I lost 200 million rupiah, it made me more aware that everything is merely entrusted to us, not truly ours. So, I intend everything I do as an act of worship so that it brings blessings and spiritual value."

This understanding aligns with Qur'an, Surah at-Tawbah (9:59):

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ إِنَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاغِبُونَ

*"If only they had been content with what Allah and His Messenger gave them and said, 'Sufficient for us is Allah; Allah will give us of His bounty, and so will His Messenger; indeed, we are desirous toward Allah.'"*¹⁶

This verse reflects the essence of riḍā as a spiritual equilibrium—a conscious alignment of the human will with divine decree, accompanied by serenity, gratitude, and active trust. It also parallels the Stoic ideal of amor fati, the love of one's fate, which transforms acceptance into inner strength and moral freedom.

The Concept of Tawakkul as Surrender After Effort

Tawakkul emerges as the most complex concept in the study's findings, integrating maximum human effort with complete submission of outcomes to

¹³ Al-Qur'an, 98:8.

¹⁴ Abdur-Rahman Nasir As-Sa'di, "28–30, Tafseer As-Sa'di: Volume 10 - Juz 28-29" (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2018).

¹⁵ Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Al-Qurṭhubī, "Al-Jāmi' Li-Aḥkām Al-Qur'ān, Juz 20" (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2009).

¹⁶ Al-Qur'an, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*, Q.S. 9:59.

Allah. This understanding is primarily grounded in Qur'an, Surah Āl 'Imrān (3:159):

"فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ"

*"Then when you have made a firm decision, put your trust in Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who put their trust in Him."*¹⁷

In his interpretation of this verse, Ibn Kathīr emphasizes that tawakkul should be performed after one has consulted others and made a firm resolution, rather than as a substitute for human effort. This interpretation highlights the balance between worldly endeavor and spiritual dependence, where individuals are expected to plan, consult, and act to the best of their ability before surrendering the outcome to divine will. Such an approach prevents tawakkul from being misconstrued as passive fatalism, instead promoting a form of productive faith rooted in both action and reliance on God.¹⁸

Similarly, al-Ṭabarī, in Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān, explains that tawakkul involves entrusting one's affairs to Allah after undertaking all necessary means, including practical preparation and effort. This approach underscores that tawakkul is not a rejection of human responsibility but rather the culmination of a process that begins with deliberate action thus reflecting harmony between ikhtiar (effort) and qadar (divine will).¹⁹

Participant P8 offered a comprehensive definition: *"Tawakkul is to fully entrust the outcome of all efforts to Allah after doing one's best."* Meanwhile, P7 highlighted the distinction between tawakkul and resignation: *"Tawakkul relies on Allah with effort, while resignation means not trying and merely waiting for fate."* Qur'an, Surah at-Ṭalāq (65:3) provides a divine assurance for those who practice tawakkul:

"وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ ۚ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا"

*"And whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has set a measure for everything."*²⁰

Imam al-Rāzī, in Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, portrays tawakkul as a profound conviction that Allah is the ultimate Sustainer who fulfills every need of those who entrust themselves entirely to Him. According to his perspective, tawakkul is not passive waiting for outcomes without effort but a faith-based confidence that arises from inner peace and certainty knowing that after doing one's utmost, only Allah can determine and grant the best results. Thus, tawakkul represents the pinnacle of hope and spiritual serenity, instilling within believers the strength to

¹⁷ Al-Qur'an, 3:159.

¹⁸ Katsir and Al-Sheikh, "Tafsir Ibnu Katsir Juz II." Hlm.148.

¹⁹ Moh Soim and Muhammad Zahid, "Tafsir Ayat-Ayat Takkdir Dalam Konteks Demokrasi Modern (Studi Analisis Kontestasi Pilpres 2024)," *EL-ADABI: Jurnal Studi Islam* 03, no. 02 (2025): 47–70, <https://doi.org/10.59166/el-adabi.v3i2.227>.

²⁰ Al-Qur'an, 65:3.

strive persistently while maintaining unwavering confidence in divine sufficiency. This equilibrium liberates the heart from anxiety and despair, embodying a form of ethical resilience grounded in both human responsibility and divine trust.

The Synergistic Relationship Between Patience (Sabr), Acceptance (Riḍā), and Trust in God (Tawakkul)

This study identifies a systematic and interconnected relationship among the three Qur’anic concepts sabr, riḍā, and tawakkul. Participant P4 explained: “By being patient in accepting decrees that do not align with our expectations or in facing hardships that befall us, we are helped to reach riḍā toward Allah’s decree, and that in turn leads us to tawakkul.” P4’s reflection on patience as the foundation for riḍā and tawakkul resonates strongly with the teachings of Epictetus, the Greco-Roman Stoic philosopher. In his *Enchiridion* (Handbook of Life), Epictetus advised: “Do not seek for things to happen as you wish, but wish for things to happen as they do, and your life will go smoothly.” This principle echoes the spiritual process described by P4 when life fails to unfold according to one’s plans (such as losing a job or falling ill), one should first respond with sabr (restraint), then cultivate riḍā (acceptance), and finally surrender through tawakkul (trust in God). These steps are not passive resignation but a gradual internal alignment between human will and divine decree. Epictetus, who lived between 50–135 CE, developed this philosophy through his lived experience as a freed slave, demonstrating that Stoicism is not theoretical abstraction but a proven way of achieving resilience and inner peace.²¹ P5 menambahkan: Participant P5 reinforced this sequential relationship: “Patience is the first step, riḍā is acceptance, and tawakkul is the complete surrender of oneself to Allah.” This statement parallels Seneca’s wisdom: “We must learn to accept what cannot be changed and to change what can be changed with wisdom.”²² In essence, Seneca teaches us to discern between what lies within our control (human effort) and what does not (destiny). This Stoic distinction aligns with P5’s understanding sabr represents the initial discernment, riḍā embodies acceptance of destiny, and tawakkul expresses total surrender, recognizing that ultimate control belongs only to Allah.

The Qur’an, Surah al-Baqarah (2:177) provides a comprehensive portrayal of the faithful who embody these virtues:

"وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ"

²¹ Suhandoko, “Kisah Epictetus: Dari Budak Kekaisaran Roma Menjadi Filsuf Stoa Yang Mempengaruhi Dunia,” Wisata Viva, 2025.

²² Mr. William C. Michael, O.P., “Stoic Philosophy. Seneca, On Providence,” Classical Liberal Arts Academy, 2024, <https://classicalliberalarts.com/classical-philosophy/stoic-philosophy/stoic-philosophy-seneca-on-providence/>.

*“And those who are patient in poverty, hardship, and during battle those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.”*²³

Classical exegetes, such as Ibn Kathīr in *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, emphasize that Allah is the Creator and the absolute Sovereign over all things a principle that harmonizes with the Stoic notion of the Logos, the divine rational order governing the cosmos. Just as Stoicism teaches serenity through alignment with the divine order, the Qur’an calls believers to cultivate *sabr*, *riḍā*, and *tawakkul* as an integrated ethical path toward spiritual tranquility and moral integrity under divine providence.²⁴

Spiritual Impact and Character Maturity

All participants reported significant positive effects of applying the three Qur’anic principles *sabr* (patience), *riḍā* (acceptance), and *tawakkul* (trust in God) on their spiritual growth and character development. Participant P4 stated: *“It helps tremendously, but in reality, it is very difficult to apply in daily life.”* Meanwhile, P9 reflected: *“Sabr keeps us grounded during the process, riḍā teaches us to sincerely accept whatever happens, and tawakkul frees us from anxiety about the outcome.”*

These reflections highlight that the internalization of these three values fosters not only emotional stability but also spiritual resilience, aligning human effort with divine reliance. The Qur’an, Surah al-Zumar (39:10) affirms the immeasurable reward awaiting those who remain patient:

"إِنَّمَا يُؤَقِّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ"

*“Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account.”*²⁵

This verse underscores the profound spiritual merit of patience (*sabr*). Allah promises a limitless reward one that transcends human and angelic reckoning signifying divine exaltation of patience as a supreme act of faith and devotion. Classical exegetes explain that those who exhibit true patience will enter Paradise without reckoning, as their endurance and trust have been perfected beyond measure. In this context, patience in Islam extends far beyond passive endurance; it represents an active spiritual discipline, rooted in sincerity (*ikhhlās*) and reliance upon Allah (*tawakkul*). It is an inner posture of strength and serenity that sustains believers amid hardship, transforming trials into pathways toward divine closeness.²⁶ Thus, *sabr*, as emphasized in QS. al-Zumar:10, serves as a foundation for consistent faith, moral excellence, and inner peace a source of blessing (*barakah*) and spiritual maturity throughout life.

²³ Al-Qur’an, 2:177.

²⁴ Suhandoko, “Chrysippus: ‘Menjadi Selaras Dengan Logos Adalah Tugas Utama Manusia,’” *Wisata Viva*, 2025, <https://wisata.viva.co.id/pendidikan/20042-chrysippus-menjadi-selaras-dengan-logos-adalah-tugas-utama-manusia?page=all>.

²⁵ Al-Qur’an, 39:10.

²⁶ Arif Muhammad Nurwijaya, “Kesabaran Yang Terbatas?,” *muslim.or.id*, 2023, <https://muslim.or.id/81860-kesabaran-yang-terbatas>.

Convergence with Stoic Philosophy

This study reveals a significant convergence between the Qur'anic concepts of ṣabr (patience), riḍā (contentment or acceptance), and tawakkul (trust in God), and the core principles of Stoic philosophy. The concept of ṣabr aligns closely with the Stoic notion of apatheia. Both emphasize inner stability and the mastery of desire and emotion. However, a fundamental distinction arises in their metaphysical grounding: ṣabr is inherently theocentric, rooted in the believer's vertical relationship with Allah as the ultimate source of strength and purpose, while apatheia in Stoicism remains philosophical and rational, oriented toward harmony with the natural order rather than divine submission.

The concept of riḍā exhibits strong parallels with amor fati, the Stoic principle of "love of fate." Yet, riḍā encompasses a deeper spiritual dimension. While amor fati involves rational acceptance of what cannot be changed, riḍā reflects a spiritual embrace of divine decree (qaḍā' wa qadar) with full trust in God's wisdom and benevolence. Thus, where Stoicism teaches acceptance as a means of tranquility, Islam elevates it to an act of worship rooted in faith and divine trust.

Similarly, tawakkul resonates with the Stoic idea of prohairesis—the rational will that focuses on what lies within one's control and accepts what lies beyond it. However, unlike prohairesis, which emphasizes human autonomy and rational agency, tawakkul integrates human effort with divine dependence. It embodies both action and surrender, where believers exert effort while entrusting the outcome entirely to Allah. This synthesis distinguishes the Islamic worldview from the purely rationalistic orientation of Stoic ethics, positioning tawakkul as both a moral discipline and a form of spiritual liberation.

Implications for Character Education

This study reveals the significant potential of integrating the Qur'anic concepts of ṣabr (patience), riḍā (contentment), and tawakkul (trust in God) into the framework of character education within Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and other Islamic educational institutions. As expressed by Participant 7: *"During examinations, our effort studying from morning until night with patience, combined with acts of worship to seek God's riḍā and assistance culminates in tawakkul when we submit the results to Allah after doing our best."* This statement exemplifies the holistic interplay between effort, spirituality, and surrender, highlighting that moral formation in Islam must unite intellectual discipline with emotional and spiritual balance.

The findings are consistent with Simangunsong (2024), who emphasizes the integration of Qur'anic spirituality in the development of holistic character education. The combination of thematic Qur'anic interpretation (tafsīr mawḍū'ī) with philosophical frameworks such as Stoic ethics proves effective in deepening contextual and practical understanding of spiritual values. Through this approach,

education is no longer limited to moral indoctrination but evolves into a reflective process that cultivates self-awareness, resilience, and ethical maturity.²⁷

Relevance to The Contemporary Context

In today's modern life, marked by increasing pressure and uncertainty, the three concepts *ṣabr* (patience), *riḍā* (contentment), and *tawakkul* (trust in God) offer a comprehensive psychological-spiritual framework. Participant 8 provided a concrete illustration: "Al-Sha'rāwī's interpretation describes that one's attitude of *riḍā* significantly influences their daily behavior, such as cultivating sincerity in performing righteous deeds."

According to Al-Sha'rāwī, the spiritual state of *riḍā* profoundly shapes one's moral disposition and emotional balance. This attitude fosters inner stability, peace of mind, and sincerity in worship and moral conduct. When a person attains true *riḍā* with Allah, anxiety and fear toward worldly affairs diminish, leading to acts of devotion performed not out of compulsion or the desire for reward but as an expression of genuine spiritual serenity.²⁸

This interpretation aligns with classical *taṣawwuf* perspectives, which view *riḍā* as the pinnacle of spiritual surrender and the ultimate source of happiness in one's relationship with God. Thus, in the context of contemporary life filled with stress and uncertainty, Al-Sha'rāwī's understanding of *riḍā* provides a tangible psychological and spiritual framework for developing emotional resilience and positive behavior. Similarly, a research emphasize the effectiveness of structured spiritual-mental development programs in enhancing religious commitment and spirituality, particularly among the elderly.²⁹ Their findings affirm that the integration of deep religious understanding with sustained spiritual practice yields positive outcomes in addressing contemporary psychosocial challenges improving worship quality,³⁰ fostering behavioral transformation, and strengthening mental readiness to face adversity.³¹

Limitation and Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study provides valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. *First*, the research sample was limited to Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in East Java; therefore, the generalizability of the findings should be approached with caution. *Second*, while the qualitative approach

²⁷ Simangunsong, "Konsep Pengendalian Diri Filsafat Stoikisme Dalam Perspektif AL-Qur'an."

²⁸ Saefuddin Zuhri, "Penafsiran Al-Sy ā'rawi Terhadap Ayat -Ayat Al- Qur'an Tentang Ridha Dan Pe Ngaruhnya Dalam Kehidupan" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2020).

²⁹ Himmah and Dahliana, "Filsafat Stoikisme Ibnu Qoyyim Al-Jauziyah: Sebuah Tawaran Quarter Life Crisis Solution."

³⁰ L. Mutammimah, "Efektivitas Program Pembinaan Mental Spiritual Dalam Meningkatkan Sikap Keagamaan Lansia Di Panti Sosial Tresna Werdha Budi Mulia 1 Cipayung Jakarta Timur" (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2024).

³¹ Himmah and Dahliana, "Filsafat Stoikisme Ibnu Qoyyim Al-Jauziyah: Sebuah Tawaran Quarter Life Crisis Solution."

employed in this study offers depth and richness of understanding, it inherently carries limitations in terms of objectivity and replicability.

Future research is recommended to explore the application of these concepts *ṣabr*, *riḍā*, and *tawakkul* within broader contexts, including urban Muslim communities and diasporic settings. Furthermore, the development of quantitative instruments to measure the degree of internalization of these virtues in daily life would provide a significant contribution to Islamic psychology and character education studies. Ultimately, this research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of Islamic spirituality in comparative dialogue with Western philosophy. It also establishes a robust theoretical foundation for the development of an integrative and holistic model of character education, bridging rational ethics and Qur'anic spirituality.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Qur'anic concepts of *ṣabr*, *riḍā*, and *tawakkul* hold significant philosophical resonance with key Stoic principles while maintaining their distinct theocentric foundations. Through thematic analysis and empirical findings from pesantren contexts, the research shows how these Qur'anic virtues function as active spiritual-ethical practices that strengthen emotional resilience, moral clarity, and surrender to divine wisdom after maximal effort. Theoretically, this study enriches Qur'anic exegesis by integrating cross-philosophical dialogue rarely explored in previous research, addressing a key gap in comparative ethics. Practically, it offers a framework for character education that blends rational discipline with spiritual maturity. Despite limitations in scope and methodology, the study opens clear avenues for future research involving broader contexts and mixed-method designs.

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