



The Hadith on *Husn al-Zan* as a Basis for Psychological Intervention to Reduce Overthinking in Adolescents

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Abstract

The phenomenon of overthinking in adolescents shows a significant increase, as indicated by a UNICEF report that noted an increase in anxiety symptoms in the 15–19 age group, primarily triggered by academic pressure, intense digital media use, and emotional instability during developmental transitions. This condition requires interventions that are not only cognitive but also rooted in values that can shape a more in-depth adaptive perspective. This study aims to describe the formulation of the concept of *husn al-Zan* in primary hadith sources according to authenticity criteria and to design a conceptually relevant cognitive-spiritual intervention model to reduce adolescents' tendency toward overthinking. The research method uses a qualitative-descriptive approach, tracing hadith from the *Kutub al-Tis'ah*, applying thematic analysis, and then mapping them against modern psychological frameworks, specifically cognitive reframing, emotional regulation, and positive attribution. The results show that *husn al-Zan* provides a systematic cognitive restructuring framework through strengthening adaptive beliefs, reducing negative bias, increasing tolerance for uncertainty, and forming positive attributions towards oneself, situations, and others. These findings yield an intervention model that includes identifying maladaptive thought patterns, internalizing the principle of *husn al-Zan* based on hadith texts, guided reflective practice, and positive reinterpretation strategies. Conceptually, this model has the potential to reduce rumination frequency, improve emotional regulation, and strengthen mental resilience in adolescents. Although not yet empirically tested, this model offers a robust conceptual foundation for developing preventive interventions rooted in Islamic values and encourages further research through quasi-experimental testing.

Keywords: *Husn al-Zan*; Hadith; Overthinking; Psychological Intervention; Teenagers

Abstrak

Fenomena *overthinking* pada remaja menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan, ditunjukkan oleh laporan UNICEF yang mencatat kenaikan gejala kecemasan pada kelompok usia 15–19,

terutama dipicu tekanan akademik, intensitas penggunaan media digital, dan instabilitas emosi pada masa transisi perkembangan. Kondisi ini menuntut intervensi yang tidak hanya kognitif, tetapi juga berakar pada nilai yang mampu membentuk cara pandang adaptif secara lebih mendalam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan formulasi konsep *husn al-Zan* dalam sumber hadis primer berdasarkan kriteria otentisitas dan merancang model intervensi kognitif-spiritual yang secara konseptual relevan untuk mengurangi kecenderungan *overthinking* pada remaja. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif melalui penelusuran hadis dari *kutub al-Tis'ah* dengan teknik analisis tematik, kemudian dipetakan terhadap kerangka psikologi modern, khususnya *cognitive reframing*, regulasi emosi, dan atribusi positif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *husn al-Zan* menyediakan kerangka restrukturisasi kognitif yang sistematis melalui penguatan keyakinan adaptif, reduksi bias negatif, peningkatan toleransi terhadap ketidakpastian, dan pembentukan atribusi positif terhadap diri, situasi, dan orang lain. Temuan ini menghasilkan model intervensi yang mencakup identifikasi pola pikir maladaptif, internalisasi prinsip *husn al-Zan* berbasis teks hadis, praktik reflektif terarah, dan strategi reinterpretasi positif yang secara konseptual berpotensi menurunkan frekuensi ruminasi, meningkatkan regulasi emosi, serta memperkuat ketahanan mental remaja. Meskipun belum diuji empiris, model ini memberikan landasan konseptual yang kuat untuk pengembangan intervensi preventif berbasis nilai Islam dan mendorong penelitian lanjutan melalui uji empiris kuasi-eksperimental.

Kata Kunci: *Husn al-Zan*; Hadis; Overthinking; Intervensi Psikologis; Remaja

Introduction

The increasing prevalence of overthinking in adolescents reflects complex psychological vulnerabilities associated with the penetration of digital technology. UNICEF (2025) reports that academic pressure, the expansion of social media, and uncertainty about the future are triggering increased cognitive rumination in the 15–19 age group. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health (2024) indicate that 48% of adolescents exhibit overthinking tendencies, which are associated with sleep disturbances, decreased academic performance, and weakened emotional regulation. The American Psychological Association (2023) notes that repetitive negative thinking—which includes worry and rumination—impairs executive functions, such as focus, decision-making, and problem-solving. This situation indicates that psychological interventions based on modern techniques, such as CBT, although effective, do not fully reach the internal value dimension of adolescents, which plays a crucial role in the coping process. Therefore, an integrative approach that combines cognitive strategies and religious values is needed.

The relevance of religious integration is reinforced by findings that Muslim adolescents use religious values as an emotional orientation and framework for meaning when facing psychological stress (Sharaja, Gultom, & Gaol, 2025). The concept of *husn al-Zan* in the hadith, which emphasizes positive assessments of situations and God's will, shares a mechanism with cognitive reappraisal, namely the restructuring of negative interpretations into adaptive ones (Wang & Yin, 2023). Cognitive psychology literature suggests that overthinking arises from the repeated

activation of negative schemas (Moulds & McEvoy, 2025). The concept of *ḥusn al-Ẓan* has the potential to intervene in these schemas through the formation of positive attributions, belief restructuring, and reinterpreting ambiguities. This mechanism positions *ḥusn al-Ẓan* not simply as a moral value but as a cognitive strategy compatible with CBT approaches and relevant to the psychological needs of Muslim adolescents.

Interdisciplinary studies on psychological interventions grounded in religious values demonstrate a strong theoretical basis for developing a hadith-based model. Afifah et al. (2024) showed that internalizing *tawakkal* (religious obedience) reduces academic anxiety through cognitive acceptance and an optimistic orientation. Kong et al. (2021) demonstrated that the values of patience and gratitude increase adolescents' mindfulness when facing social pressure. Graça and Brandão (2024) confirmed that positive religious coping is a significant predictor of reduced stress among secondary school students. Filice et al. (2024) found that *dhikr* practice reduces rumination by stabilizing affective states. Park (2021) explained that intrinsic religious orientation is negatively correlated with overthinking. However, none of these studies have specifically addressed *ḥusn al-Ẓan*, constructed its cognitive mechanisms, or developed an integrative hadith-based model to reduce overthinking. This gap highlights the need for a new approach that integrates theological, psychological, and clinical dimensions.

The research formulation is directed at the main question: how can the hadith about *ḥusn al-Ẓan* be formulated into a conceptual and technical basis for psychological interventions to suppress adolescent overthinking? The objectives of the study include constructing a theoretical understanding of the cognitive function of *ḥusn al-Ẓan*, mapping its relevance to reframing techniques in CBT, and developing a contextual intervention model for the psychological development of Muslim adolescents. The initial argument of the study asserts that the concept of *ḥusn al-Ẓan* can serve as a cognitive restructuring mechanism, shifting repetitive negative interpretations toward adaptive thought patterns and thereby minimizing the intensity of overthinking. The research contribution is expected to cover three main areas. First, a theoretical contribution: developing an epistemological framework to explain the position of *ḥusn al-Ẓan* on the spectrum of cognitive regulation. Second, a practical contribution: an intervention model based on *ḥusn al-Ẓan*, implementable in adolescent counseling. Third, a methodological contribution: mapping analytical steps that combine hadith studies and CBT mechanisms to produce an evidence-based, appropriate intervention approach for adolescents.

Method

This research method employs a qualitative approach, combining an integrative literature review with thematic hadith analysis, which utilizes an analytical-interpretive approach, to address the need for integration between the values of *ḥusn al-Ẓan* in the hadith and the cognitive mechanisms that contribute to

overthinking in adolescents. Data sources include hadith books in *Kutub al-Tis'ah*, selected based on their authority and relevance to the theme, accompanied by classical and modern syarah works that meet the credibility standards of *mu'tabar* scholars, as well as empirical psychology articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science that examine cognitive regulation and overthinking tendencies in adolescents. Data collection techniques were carried out through literature searches using structured keywords in databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and PsycINFO, accompanied by the application of inclusion-exclusion criteria, the *takhrīj al-Ḥadīṣ* process, verification of *sanad* quality, and extraction of normative meanings. All findings were recorded thematically and arranged in a concept mapping matrix. Data analysis was conducted through thematic coding to categorize hadith values, crosswalk analysis to connect the concept of *ḥusn al-Ẓan* with psychological variables, and subjectivity control mechanisms through source triangulation. The final stage was a conceptual synthesis that produced a coherent, systematic, and relevant model of psychological intervention grounded in religious values to develop strategies to reduce overthinking in adolescents.

Results and Discussion

The Concept of *Ḥusn al-Ẓan* in the Hadith

In Islam, *ḥusn al-Ẓan* refers to an inner tendency that views God and fellow human beings as objects of positive evaluation, grounded in a strong theological foundation (Rajab, 2008). This operational definition marks *ḥusn al-Ẓan* as a belief scheme that influences how one constructs expectations of reality. Prophetic traditions provide the primary conceptual foundation for this trait, one of which is the narration of Muslim (1955): "I am as My servant expects Me." Al-Nawawī (1976) interpreted this hadith as affirming that positive beliefs function as an inner tool that shapes spiritual readiness while simultaneously organizing thought patterns. This inner orientation has cognitive implications, as it fosters a scheme of expectations that aligns with a constructive outlook on life (Cleary et al., 2025). This connection serves as an important starting point in understanding the potential of *ḥusn al-Ẓan* as a foundation for psychological interventions based on mind restructuring.

The structure of the meaning of the hadith regarding good assumptions contains layers of emphasis that highlight the relationship between inner states and theological beliefs. The first layer demonstrates God's appreciation for human positive expectations, thereby fostering a mindset of trust and hope. Al-Nawawī (1976) emphasized that the phrase '*indā ẓannī 'abdī bī*' reflects God's closeness to the psychological construct of His servants. The second layer relates to the principle of tawhid, which affirms humanity's total dependence on Divine power. Ibn Ḥajar (1970) viewed *ḥusn al-Ẓan* as the internalization of God's compassionate nature, which fosters the formation of stable, positive expectations. These two layers of meaning align with the theory of positive expectancy in cognitive psychology

because they both build a framework of beliefs that guides a person in interpreting events with an adaptive mindset (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020).

Another narration from Muslim (1955), “None of you should die unless he thinks well of Allah,” strengthens the position of *ḥusn al-Ẓan* as an indicator of mature faith. Al-Hararī (2009) explains that a positive inner orientation is a form of spiritual readiness that influences the integrity of faith. This emphasis can be understood from a positive psychology perspective as the process of forming core beliefs that stabilize one’s thought process (Burgoyne, Hambrick, & Macnamara, 2020). Such positive beliefs do not stop at the spiritual aspect, but rather structure long-term expectations that help one construct a more proportional interpretation of reality. This mechanism is related to the concept of cognitive appraisal, which determines how individuals assess daily experiences (Yang, Dane, van den Berg, & Arentze, 2024). Scholars’ explanations of the relationship between faith, hope, and inner orientation provide a foundation for understanding that *ḥusn al-Ẓan* works as a mitigator of negative thought tendencies, including the rumination patterns that often appear in adolescents.

Several hadith also emphasize the social dimension of *ḥusn al-Ẓan*. A narration by al-Tirmizī (1975) states that having good thoughts about Allah is a sign of good quality worship. Al-Mubārakfūrī (1993) explains that the concept of worship in this context encompasses social attitudes aligned with moral values. A positive orientation in interpersonal relationships forms a pattern of relationships that strengthens trust and reduces the potential for conflict. This perspective can be interpreted through social psychological theories of trust development and the formation of positive interaction values. Healthy interpersonal relationships contribute significantly to adolescents’ emotional stability and reduce the intensity of social anxiety that often triggers overthinking (Ernst et al., 2024). The integration of hadith explanations and psychological theory confirms that *ḥusn al-Ẓan* directly shapes the cognitive and social environment that supports the development of adaptive thinking patterns.

Scholars also place *ḥusn al-Ẓan* in a moderate position between naivety and suspicion. Ibn Ḥajar (1970) emphasized that positive prejudice does not mean abandoning critical judgment, but rather serves as an ethical standard for maintaining the quality of interactions until evidence substantiates a negative judgment. This positioning of moderation aligns with the concept of realistic optimism in psychology, namely, a positive outlook that remains within reasonable limits (Rincón Uribe, Neira Espejo, & Pedroso, 2022). This moderation is particularly relevant for adolescents who often exhibit extreme thought patterns, including excessive suspicion and unexamined beliefs (Fairbank, Borenstein-Laurie, Alberts, & Wrosch, 2024). *Ḥusn al-Ẓan* offers a balanced framework that guides the assessment of information, directs interpretation toward adaptive thinking patterns, and helps mitigate cognitive distortions associated with overthinking. This practical

contribution positions *ḥusn al-Ẓan* as an ethical-cognitive component that can be developed into a thought regulation strategy.

A comprehensive interpretation of *ḥusn al-Ẓan*, through a study of hadith and scholarly explanations, reveals that this concept serves as a theological principle and a mechanism for fostering positive cognition. Positive prejudice operates as an interpretive framework that fosters spiritual dependence, stabilizes thought patterns, and enhances the quality of social relationships. This construction provides a foundation for developing psychological interventions grounded in religious values that emphasize the formation of positive expectations, strengthening adaptive cognitive schemes, and restructuring how individuals assess events. This strategic position provides a conceptual bridge to the analysis of overthinking in adolescents, particularly regarding how beliefs and inner orientations can be directed to serve as a control force against maladaptive rumination tendencies.

Overthinking in Teenagers: Factors, Impacts, and Challenges

In contemporary psychology, overthinking is understood as an excessive thought process involving repetitive, unproductive, and difficult-to-stop cognitive activity. This concept encompasses two main components: rumination, which focuses on repeated evaluations of past events, and worry, which emphasizes negative predictions (Proulx & Morey, 2021). In adolescents, overthinking occurs as a response to unstable cognitive and emotional development, which is in the reorganization phase (Basso et al., 2022). A study by Pizzagalli and Roberts (2022) demonstrated that the prefrontal cortex—the brain region responsible for regulating executive functions, including impulse control, logical processing, and risk assessment—is still maturing, resulting in its ability to inhibit intrusive thoughts not yet being optimal. The findings of Stewart et al. (2025) reinforce that this neurocognitive condition makes adolescents more susceptible to rumination and repetitive worry, especially when they face identity demands, academic pressures, and the dynamics of social relationships. This process forms a cognitive tendency that easily shifts toward negative hypothetical scenarios, triggering a cycle of overthinking.

The internal tendencies that shape overthinking in adolescents are closely related to personality structure and self-regulatory mechanisms. The neuroticism dimension within the Big Five Personality framework is a strong predictor of sensitivity to psychological threats and a tendency to focus on uncertainty (Weiss & Deary, 2019). Adolescents with high levels of neuroticism exhibit more intense cognitive responses to stress, particularly when self-efficacy is low (Fürtjes et al., 2023). From Bandura's (1986) theoretical perspective, low self-efficacy leads to a perception of inability to face challenges, so that even small risks are perceived as significant threats. The inability to manage emotions reinforces this pattern; according to Gross (2015), failing to use adaptive emotion regulation strategies

leads adolescents to resort to repetitive processes, such as rumination, as a compensatory mechanism. The interaction of neuroticism, low self-efficacy, and dysfunctional emotion regulation forms a cognitive-affective pathway that facilitates the emergence of overthinking. Research by Ji, Qi, Tu, Wu, and Wang (2025) shows that these three factors can function as mediators and moderators in explaining the intensity of repetitive thoughts in adolescents, so that overthinking is not just a habit, but the result of systemic interactions between personality structure and internal evaluative processes.

The external environment plays a significant role in reinforcing adolescents' tendency to overthink. Critical parenting, high levels of parental psychological control, and minimal emotional support increase fear of failure and social evaluative threat, two conditions proven to trigger recurring negative predictive patterns (Deneault et al., 2020). Academic environments with high performance standards also increase cognitive stress, especially when the balance between demands and institutional support is inadequate (Benítez-Agudelo et al., 2025). Digital exposure amplifies external pressure through social comparison, information overload, and exposure to unattainable ideal standards. Based on Social Comparison Theory, this exposure increases adolescents' focus on personal shortcomings, thereby strengthening ruminative mechanisms (Gkeredakis, Lifshitz-Assaf, & Barrett, 2021). A study by Ohannessian et al. (2021) found that intense social media use is associated with increased rumination, FoMO, and negative self-evaluation. In this context, overthinking is formed through a combination of physical-environmental stress and psychosocial stress extended by the digital ecosystem.

The impact of overthinking on adolescents is multidimensional, affecting their emotional, cognitive, social, and existential functioning. Emotionally, repetitive activities focused on threats increase anxiety, psychological tension, and mood swings that are difficult to stabilize. A meta-analysis of rumination in adolescents showed a significant association between overthinking and the emergence of mild to moderate depressive symptoms (Lisk et al., 2020). Cognitively, the absorption of mental energy in repetitive thoughts decreases focus, cognitive flexibility, and decision-making efficiency, consistent with the executive dysfunction model (Zetsche, Bürkner, & Schulze, 2018). Social impacts are evident in increased tendencies towards withdrawal, excessive concern about social judgment, and rigid interaction patterns (Teo et al., 2020). Existential impacts are apparent in the loss of inner peace and a diminished sense of meaning, which, in the positive psychology literature, are identified as important factors in the development of adolescent well-being (Brijan, Strijbos, & Körver, 2025). These four impacts indicate that overthinking can influence the trajectory of long-term psychological development.

The increasing prevalence of overthinking in adolescents underscores the need for evidence-based interventions. The complexity of modern social pressures, academic competition, and intense digital exposure exacerbates these risks, making

protection through strengthening self-regulation, increasing psychological resilience, and providing environmental support urgent. A developmental psychopathology perspective explains that early intervention can reduce long-term risks by strengthening protective factors and controlling risk factors (Aazami, Valek, Ponce, & Zare, 2023). This urgency provides an empirical and theoretical basis for developing more adaptive and contextual psychological intervention approaches.

Integration of *Husn al-Zan* as a Psychological Intervention

The *husn al-Zan* orientation functions as a primary appraisal modifier that helps adolescents interpret mental experiences more proportionately. This framework aligns with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) appraisal theory, which emphasizes that emotional responses are largely determined by how individuals assess situations from an early stage. *Husn al-Zan* provides a direction for assessment that encourages adaptive interpretations, preventing the appraisal process from shifting toward an exaggerated threat schema. This mechanism can be operationalized through guided appraisal restructuring, which involves training to evaluate situational facts, distinguish assumptions from evidence, and establish limits to rational interpretation (Wang & Yin, 2023). This approach clarifies the role of *husn al-Zan* as a trainable cognitive orientation, rather than simply a religious norm, enabling counselors to use it as a basis for developing more stable evaluation patterns.

The integration of *husn al-Zan* with Beck's (1970) theory of automatic thoughts emphasizes that adolescents often form automatic, unconscious negative interpretations. Interventions aim to identify these distortions and develop more constructive alternative meanings. The uniqueness of the *husn al-Zan*-based approach lies in the tendency to create a benevolent interpretation bias, namely the tendency to interpret stimuli in a more positive yet realistic manner (Chan, Takano, Lau, & Barry, 2020). This mechanism expands the basic framework of CBT by incorporating value orientations that guide reinterpretation, so that reframing focuses not only on logical accuracy but also on the quality of meaning that supports psychological resilience. Interventions can be structured into structured steps: identifying biased automatic thoughts, delaying cognitive responses to inhibit emotional reactivity, and developing alternative arguments that emphasize positive possibilities with a factual basis.

The value of *husn al-Zan* also plays a role in regulating top-down processing in perception. Bruner's (1957) theory of perception suggests that internal expectations influence what individuals perceive. Adolescents who experience overthinking tend to focus on signs of threat, even when the stimulus is neutral (Lisk et al., 2020). An intervention based on *husn al-Zan* directs the formation of measurable positive expectations, resulting in a more balanced perceptual system. The technique used is perceptual monitoring to recognize the tendency to select negative information, followed by a threat interpretation delay technique that delays

rapid judgments, allowing perception to return to its foundation in objective data. This exercise is combined with cognitive grounding to return attention to concrete facts when thoughts are again influenced by speculative assumptions. Value orientation provides an ethical dimension, namely a commitment to seeking the most plausible explanation without harming oneself, so that the process of perceptual regulation is not mechanical but is bound by the principle of moral responsibility.

The integration of *ḥusn al-Ẓan* with Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory emphasizes the role of positive emotions in expanding cognitive capacity. Adolescents with a *ḥusn al-Ẓan* orientation more easily develop a sense of psychological security, enabling executive functions such as attentional control and impulse inhibition to function more optimally. The intervention is formulated through value-based affirmations, reflective statements that reinforce constructive beliefs based on *ḥusn al-Ẓan* values (Batory-Ginda, 2022), and self-compassion techniques that suppress the tendency to blame oneself when facing obstacles (Wakelin, Perman, & Simonds, 2022). This mechanism establishes a stable emotional pattern so that the reasoning process does not shift to worst-case scenarios. This framework distinguishes value-based affirmations from general affirmations because their moral content serves to maintain a balance between positive expectations and the limits of reality.

This series of mechanisms confirms that *ḥusn al-Ẓan* can be constructed as an operational cognitive framework through the integration of concepts related to appraisal, automatic thoughts, perception, and positive emotions. This model does not simply integrate religious values with psychological theory, but rather forms a systematic pathway of change: appraisal modification, automatic thought correction, perceptual regulation, and cognitive capacity expansion. The uniqueness of this approach lies in the integration of moral values with cognitive techniques, making *ḥusn al-Ẓan*-based interventions a potentially culturally grounded therapeutic model that still meets scientific standards. Model development requires empirical testing in adolescent contexts to assess their effectiveness, limitations, and the conditions under which value orientations operate optimally.

Conclusion

The integration of the principle of *ḥusn al-Ẓan* in the hadith with a cognitive restructuring framework provides a theoretical basis for understanding how a positive prejudice orientation can reduce the tendency to overthink in adolescents by improving self-appraisal, social perception, and emotional regulation. Theoretically, these findings broaden our understanding of the role of religious values as cognitive constructs aligned with cognitive-behavioral intervention mechanisms, while also contributing to the study of hadith by demonstrating its ethical relevance in the context of developmental psychology. The practical implications encourage counselors, educators, and parents to implement structured

intervention strategies such as hadith-based cognitive reframing, guided reflection, positive self-talk, and *ḥusn al-Ẓan* journaling to strengthen adolescents' mental resilience. However, this study has limitations due to the dominance of theoretical approaches, limited literature sources and coverage of hadith, and the lack of empirical testing, thus limiting validity and generalizability. Further research is needed to test the effectiveness of the intervention model through experimental design, develop psychometric instruments based on the values of *ḥusn al-Ẓan*, and explore supporting variables such as emotion regulation, self-compassion, and coping strategies to perfect more applicable and robust interventions.

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