



Thematic Analysis of the Hadith on Patience as a Coping Mechanism Against Life's Pressures

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Abstract

The increasing pressures of modern life, characterized by fluctuating social demands, economic instability, and rising psychological distress, call for more integrative coping strategies; however, the systematic study of patience in the hadith as a comprehensive coping framework remains underexplored, thus opening up new research opportunities. This study aims to analyze the representation of patience in the hadith thematically and interpret it as a coping mechanism encompassing emotional, cognitive-behavioral, and spiritual dimensions in dealing with life's pressures. The method employed is qualitative research with thematic analysis, which involves selecting hadiths from the main books based on the relevance of the theme, initial coding, thematic categorization, and cross-disciplinary interpretation through Islamic psychology literature and coping theory to build an integrative understanding. The results of the study indicate three main themes: first, patience as emotional management, as evident in the hadiths regarding anger control, regulating affective responses, reducing impulsive reactivity, and establishing emotional stability; second, patience as a rationalization of adaptive actions, as evident in the hadiths that emphasize firmness in clear thinking, proportional assessment of difficult situations, strengthening realistic mindsets, and establishing constructive behavior; third, patience as the foundation of spiritual strength, through hadith that lead to positive meaning, value orientation, and inner peace that increase empowerment in facing stress. In conclusion, this study presents a new synthesis between thematic hadith studies and psychological coping models, offering both theoretical contributions and practical relevance for developing coping approaches tailored to the context of modern society.

Keywords: Patience; Hadith; Coping; Islamic Psychology; Thematic Analysis

Abstrak

Peningkatan tekanan hidup modern yang ditandai oleh tuntutan sosial yang fluktuatif, ketidakstabilan ekonomi, dan peningkatan distress psikologis menuntut adanya strategi

coping yang lebih integratif; namun kajian mengenai sabar dalam hadis sebagai kerangka *coping* komprehensif masih kurang dieksplorasi secara sistematis, sehingga membuka ruang penelitian baru. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis representasi sabar dalam hadis secara tematik dan menafsirkannya sebagai mekanisme *coping* yang meliputi dimensi emosional, kognitif-perilaku, dan spiritual dalam menghadapi tekanan hidup. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan analisis tematik, mencakup tahap pemilihan hadis dari kitab-kitab induk berdasarkan relevansi tema, pengodean awal, kategorisasi tematik, serta interpretasi lintas-disiplin melalui literatur psikologi Islam dan teori *coping* untuk membangun pemahaman integratif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga tema utama: pertama, sabar sebagai pengelolaan emosi, yang tampak dari hadis-hadis mengenai pengendalian amarah, penataan respons afektif, penurunan reaktivitas impulsif, serta pembentukan stabilitas emosional; kedua, sabar sebagai rasionalisasi tindakan adaptif, terlihat melalui hadis yang menekankan keteguhan berpikir jernih, penilaian proporsional terhadap situasi sulit, penguatan pola pikir realistis, dan pembentukan perilaku konstruktif; ketiga, sabar sebagai fondasi kekuatan spiritual, melalui hadis yang mengarahkan pada pemaknaan positif, orientasi nilai, dan ketenangan batin yang meningkatkan keberdayaan dalam menghadapi tekanan. Kesimpulannya, penelitian ini menawarkan sintesis baru antara kajian hadis tematik dan model *coping* psikologis, sekaligus memberikan kontribusi teoretis dan relevansi praktis bagi pengembangan pendekatan *coping* yang sesuai konteks masyarakat modern.

Kata Kunci: Sabar; Hadis; *Coping*; Psikologi Islam; Analisis Tematik

Introduction

The increasing stress of modern life is showing measurable signs of escalation. A WHO report (2023) indicates that global depression rates have increased by approximately 28% since the pandemic, while anxiety prevalence has surged by 26%, fueled by work pressure, economic instability, and excessive digital exposure. These data illustrate that individuals face vulnerable situations that require adaptive and sustainable coping mechanisms. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) coping theory emphasizes that adaptive responses require processes of emotional regulation, cognitive reinterpretation, and strengthening of meaning. The integration of religious values has emerged as a source of psychological empowerment, including the concept of patience in Islam, which offers a spiritually based mental foundation. The teaching of patience does not stop at surrender but represents an active psychological process, encompassing emotional control, cognitive resilience, and behavioral stability relevant to contemporary stress dynamics (Dolcos, Hohl, Hu, & Dolcos, 2021). The placement of patience in the hadith as a moral value and a guideline for character building is the primary basis for the urgency of research examining patience as a coping mechanism through a thematic approach.

The relationship between religiosity and mental health has received significant academic attention, as empirical evidence demonstrates the role of spiritual values in strengthening resilience. A cross-cultural survey by de Abreu Costa and Moreira-Almeida (2022) revealed that religiosity is associated with

enhanced emotional regulation and stress management. The concept of patience in Islam aligns with modern coping approaches because it requires processing meaning, controlling impulses, and structuring perceptions of stress (Syafii & Azhari, 2024). The thematic hadith approach offers a systematic method for mapping the holistic meaning structure of patience, enabling the integration of normative theological values and psychological theory.

Previous studies have shown that discussions about patience still leave theoretical and methodological gaps. Gani's (2020) study emphasized the ethical dimension of patience as a *tazkiyah* process, but did not connect it to a contemporary psychological context. Sevilgen and Tolan's (2024) study found a relationship between patience and resilience, but did not systematically explore the basis of the hadith. Alfain, Soleh, and Yamani's (2023) study described patience as a religious coping strategy; however, they did not employ thematic mapping in their analysis of the hadith. Basharat, Fatima, and Yousaf's (2023) study highlighted the relationship between patience and emotional regulation, but focused on only one hadith without comparative analysis. Suriyati, Mubhar, and Ni'mah's (2022) philological study mapped the wording of the hadith on patience, but did not connect it to a modern psychological framework. A synthesis of these five studies shows that no study has comprehensively integrated thematic analysis of hadith with coping theory. This gap serves as the main foundation for this research.

The research formulation aims to answer two questions: What is the structure and meaning of patience in the Prophet's hadith, and how can the concept of patience be interpreted as a coping mechanism against the pressures of modern life, based on emotional, cognitive, and behavioral coping theories? The research objectives comprise three key achievements: identifying and mapping the primary themes of patience in the hadith; analyzing the depth of the meaning of patience through a thematic approach; and interpreting this meaning as a coping mechanism that aligns with modern psychological theory. The initial argument of the research emphasizes that patience is not a passive value, but rather an active psychological tool that functions to direct an individual's response to stress through processing meaning, structuring perceptions, and stabilizing emotions. Research contributions are expected to be present in two domains. The domain of hadith science is enriched through thematic mapping that positions patience as a psychological construct, not just an ethical norm. The domain of religious psychology develops a conceptual model that illustrates the function of patience as a coping mechanism, including its potential application in mental health literacy based on religious values and the development of psychosocial intervention strategies that are sensitive to spiritual contexts.

Method

This research method employs a qualitative approach based on a literature study with a thematic analysis design, drawing on the Braun and Clarke thematic

analysis framework, and combined with Lazarus and Folkman's coping theory as an interpretative basis. Primary data sources include hadiths on the theme of patience obtained through systematic searches using *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras*, as well as thematic indexes in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, and *Sunan al-Tirmizī*, which are then verified for their authenticity through *sanad* evaluation based on the *jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* principle and *matn* criticism by referring to authoritative works of commentary such as *Fath al-Bārī*, *al-Minhāj*, and *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwāzī*. Secondary sources included contemporary psychological literature on coping, emotion regulation, and resilience theory. Data collection techniques included identifying the keyword "patience," selecting hadiths based on thematic relevance, examining the quality of the narratives, and determining the normative context to avoid interpretive bias. Data analysis involved open coding, axial coding, and selective coding to generate themes of "patience," which were then systematically mapped into the dimensions of emotional, cognitive, and spiritual coping. The findings were integrated through validation procedures, including peer debriefing, concept triangulation, and an audit trail, to ensure that the final interpretation was objective, coherent, and academically accountable.

Results and Discussion

Representation of Patience in Hadith

The term patience linguistically refers to the ability to restrain oneself (*ḥabs al-Nafs*) and steadfastness in the face of impulsive urges (Al-Ifrīqī, 1999). This conceptual basis is clearly evident in the hadith, which states: "There is no better and more extensive gift to a servant than patience" (Al-Bukhārī, 1993). Ibn Ḥajar (1970) interpreted patience as *quwwah rāsikhah*, an intrinsic strength that sustains obedience and controls destructive tendencies. This analysis reveals that patience is not merely understood as passive fortitude, but rather as a regulatory mechanism that governs inner responses, upholds moral integrity, and fosters the orientation of *tawḥīd* (Qomari & Ghofur, 2024). The affirmation of this ethical structure positions patience as the foundation of religious character, which guides behavior in various conditions.

The dimension of patience is clearly evident in the context of calamities, which frequently appear in hadith. The Prophet said: "Indeed, patience is at the first shock" (Al-Naisābūrī, 1955). Al-Nawawī (1976) explains that the first response is an indicator of authentic patience (*ṣidq al-Ṣabr*) because it demonstrates spiritual readiness before the psychological adaptation process. Another hadith states that every suffering, fatigue, worry, and injury will erase sins (Al-Bukhārī, 1993). Ibn Baṭṭāl (2003) interprets calamities as having a moral cleansing function, whereby bitter experiences are understood as a process of enhancing the quality of faith. These two hadith construct the understanding that patience in the face of calamities encompasses textual and ethical dimensions: first, controlling spontaneous

reactions; second, reading calamities as part of spiritual education that affirms the servant's relationship with God.

The context of obedience presents a different spectrum of patience. The hadith that states, "Help comes with patience" (Al-Tirmizī, 1975) suggests that the continuity of good deeds requires spiritual strength based on steadfastness. Al-Kishmīrī (2004) outlines three components of patience in obedience: steadfastness in initiating good deeds, consistency in maintaining them, and purity of intention free from worldly motivations. Another hadith praising night prayer (Al-Tirmizī, 1975) shows that advanced worship requires self-control that transcends physical comfort. Analysis of the various narrations reveals a uniformity of meaning regarding the spiritual burden of night prayer, so that patience functions as an internal energy that maintains the continuity of worship. Patience in obedience emerges as a structural instrument that strengthens the continuity of good deeds, regulates spiritual rhythms, and balances inner inclinations with religious demands (Nasr, 1987). This component broadens the scope of patience from responding to external trials to managing the internal dynamics involved in fulfilling obligations.

Patience in the aspect of avoiding sin is reflected in the hadith about seven groups who Allah protects, especially men who reject the invitation to commit adultery from a woman of high status while expressing their fear of Allah (Al-Bukhārī, 1993). Ibn Ḥajar (1970) emphasized that this expression is a manifestation of patience, achieved through controlling lust by cultivating awareness of piety. Another hadith states: "The *Mujāhid* is the one who strives against himself" (Al-Tirmizī, 1975). Al-Kankūhī (1993) interprets the meaning of this hadith as an ethical encouragement to overcome destructive impulses and organize inner tendencies in accordance with sharia law. Structural analysis of these two categories of hadith leads to the conclusion that patience in the realm of sin focuses on the mechanism of controlling impulses that is connected to Islamic ethical tools such as *mujāhadah al-Nafs* and maintaining self-respect. This realm embodies patience as an active response to rejecting destructive stimuli through moral control mechanisms informed by theological awareness.

The representation of patience in social relations is evident in the hadith: "The strong man is not the one who wins in wrestling, but the one who controls his anger" (Al-Bukhārī, 1993). Al-Kirmānī (1981) views this definition as affirming that true strength is rooted in the ability to control emotions. Another hadith states that controlling anger can bring protection from punishment (Al-Bayhaqī, 1997). The interpretation of these hadiths emphasizes that patience at the social level is the ability to regulate emotional responses to maintain community harmony, rather than silencing emotions. Contemporary perspectives in Islamic psychology view anger control as part of spiritual emotional intelligence, which aligns with the values of the hadith (Wijaya, Tahir, Armella, & Abdi, 2025). The finding of patience's representation in the social realm strengthens the thematic construct that patience

plays a regulatory function in human interactions, maintaining social stability through emotional control based on prophetic ethics.

The four dimensions of patience emerging from the study of hadith—calamity, obedience, avoiding sin, and social relations—form an interconnected thematic framework. Each context displays a self-control function with specific characteristics: inner stabilization during trials, perseverance in carrying out commands, self-preservation from transgressions, and emotional regulation in social relationships. Strengthening the various meanings of patience through interpretations by classical scholars and conceptual analysis of authentic narrations creates a strong theoretical framework for understanding patience's position as a comprehensive ethical mechanism within the Prophet's teachings.

Patience as an Emotional Coping Mechanism

The concept of patience in the hadith displays a structure of emotional regulation that can be explained through emotional coping theory. The hadith "*al-Ṣabr ḍiyā*" (patience is light) (Al-Naisābūrī, 1955) provides a textual basis that emphasizes the function of patience as a process of structuring perceptions of stressful situations. Al-Nawawī (1976) defines "light" as an inner guide that directs individuals to clarity of response. This mechanism can be understood as cognitive emotion regulation, specifically the restructuring of internal assessments to prevent negative emotions from dominating (Flores-Kanter, Moretti, García-Batista, & Medrano, 2025). The Prophet's command to restrain impulsive reactions when a calamity first occurs indicates a phase of automatic response control that allows for a more adaptive situational evaluation. This process overlaps with the emotion-focused coping model, which emphasizes the inhibition of initial reactions as a prerequisite for a more rational reappraisal (Stover, Shulkin, Lac, & Rapp, 2024). The integration between the meaning of the hadith and coping theory reveals that patience serves as a cognitive-based emotional regulation mechanism, not merely a moral exhortation.

The hadith, "Strength is not being able to defeat others, but strength is being able to control oneself when angry" (Al-Bukhārī, 1993), demonstrates a framework for emotional regulation that emphasizes impulse management, rather than emotional repression. Psychological literature distinguishes between inhibition and regulation, where inhibition refers to suppressing the expression of an emotion, while regulation involves modifying the quality of the emotion itself (Gross, 2015). This hadith does not refer to repression because it does not require denying feelings; instead, it emphasizes managing impulses to prevent them from developing into destructive expressions. The instructions to refrain from swearing, not venting anger, and suppressing excessive complaints indicate an affective filtering process that aligns with the concept of emotion regulation (Boemo, Nieto, Vazquez, & Sanchez-Lopez, 2022). This mechanism facilitates the emergence of internal stability, preventing emotional distress from triggering maladaptive responses. This

explanation highlights the relevance of the hadith to modern models of emotion regulation, which evaluate the moral and psychological consequences of an action before it is expressed.

The acceptance aspect of patience is also strongly embedded in the hadiths about victory with patience (Al-Tirmizī, 1975). Acceptance in this context is understood as acceptance-based coping, namely, the willingness to accept reality without passivity (Konstantinou et al., 2024). Modern psychology distinguishes acceptance from resignation; acceptance is an active and directed process that integrates experiences into a broader meaning scheme (Lindsay & Creswell, 2019). This concept aligns with meaning integration, specifically the process of incorporating negative experiences into a framework of values and beliefs, thereby decreasing emotional distress and increasing evaluative clarity (Karnick, Bauer, & Capron, 2024). The hadith emphasizing the virtue of patience in the early stages of loss (Al-Naisābūrī, 1955) suggests that meaning integration works through a spiritual reframing of events, not simply a reduction of feelings. This explanation confirms that patience facilitates emotional reorganization by strengthening a meaningful perspective.

The hadith, which promises spiritual rewards for those who are patient in the face of suffering, reflects the mechanism of positive reappraisal. The positive reappraisal model explains that individuals reappraise bitter experiences as opportunities for existential growth through cognitive restructuring (Lau & Tov, 2023). The hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī (1993) that no fatigue, illness, or sadness befalls a believer except that it expiates sins demonstrates a reinterpretation of suffering as a process of spiritual elevation. This textual reinterpretation aligns with the findings of Söylev, Kaya, and Okan (2025), who suggest that religious meaning can shift emotional orientation from a burden to a value. This concept also aligns with Pargament's (1997) theory of religious coping, which posits that belief in wisdom serves as a transformative force that enhances emotional resilience. This transformation does not arise from denial of pain, but from positive interpretations that provide a new direction for the psychological adaptation process.

All the mechanisms described in the hadith—from impulse control, affective regulation, active acceptance, to spiritual reappraisal—form an integrative emotional coping structure. The hadith not only emphasizes self-restraint but also depicts internal processes involving reinterpretation, perceptual structuring, and the integration of meaning. This model aligns with the religious coping literature, which posits that spiritual beliefs play a role in mediating distress and facilitating more stable emotional reorganization (Graça & Brandão, 2024). Patience in the hadith functions as an emotional management system that integrates cognitive, affective, and meaningful dimensions in a mutually reinforcing manner. This conception avoids passivity because patience is intended to be active, reflective, and adaptive. The analysis reveals that patience serves as an emotional coping

mechanism that can be explained scientifically and exhibits structural coherence with modern psychological approaches.

Patience as a Cognitive and Behavioral Coping Mechanism

The cognitive process underlying patience in the hadith functions to restructure perceptions of stressful situations through rational evaluation, fact-based judgment, and understanding of causality. The principle of intention (*niyyah*) in the hadith—such as “deeds depend on intentions” (Al-Bukhārī, 1993)—strengthens goal orientation and helps individuals frame stress more objectively. This restructuring aligns with the cognitive reappraisal mechanism, which emphasizes constructive interpretation of events (Riepenhausen et al., 2022). The prohibition on excessive complaining in al-Bukhārī (1993) requires individuals to filter speculative thoughts and maintain clarity of judgment, so that affective impulses do not drive responses. This mechanism positions patience as an active cognitive process distinct from emotional coping, as it focuses on accurately assessing reality, reducing perceptual biases, and structuring action orientations.

The steadfastness of attitude described in the hadith—such as the admonition to refrain from haste (*al-'Ajalah min ash-Shayṭān*) (Al-Tirmizī, 1975)—demonstrates the function of patience in strengthening cognitive control when facing pressure. This process involves a series of steps: evaluating conditions, considering alternatives, and ensuring consistency in selecting a course of action. This steadfastness is not rigid, but rather a stability of judgment that minimizes impulsive reactions. Within a psychological framework, this function is related to executive function, which regulates inhibition and deliberative reasoning. Individuals are encouraged to balance moral considerations and rationality when facing uncertainty, ensuring that decisions are not driven by situational pressure (Friedman & Robbins, 2022). This cognitive structure marks a clear distinction from emotional coping, as the focus is not on controlling feelings, but on strengthening the assessment process and maintaining consistency in steps.

The behavioral dimension of patience is evident in several hadiths on prudence (*al-Anāh*) (Al-Tirmizī, 1975) and thoroughness in action (Al-Ṭabrānī, 1995). This principle guides individuals in mapping out problems, formulating plans, and monitoring the results of their actions. This pattern aligns with problem-focused coping, which emphasizes active efforts to change stressors. The relationship between cognition and behavior operates sequentially: perceptions are organized through rational evaluation, then translated into planned actions that reduce the risk of premature decisions (Agbaria & Mokh, 2022). The hadith on the recommendation to strive (Al-Bukhārī, 1993) demonstrates that patience is not a passive state, but an adaptive process that combines inner calm with strategic action. This mechanism refines the distinction from emotional coping because it does not stop at stabilizing affect but moves toward concrete problem management.

The reinterpretation of situations taught by the hadith enhances cognitive-behavioral coping mechanisms by establishing a broader perspective based on cause-and-effect evaluation. The invitation to reflect on the wisdom of events prompts individuals to engage in meaning-making, aligning with the psychological model of constructive reinterpretation. This mechanism serves to reduce cognitive distortions, such as negative generalizations or absolutist thinking, because individuals are encouraged to assess facts proportionally. This framework strengthens the ability to make more accurate and adaptive decisions (Kroemeke, Dudek, & Sobczyk-Kruszelnicka, 2022). The hadith presents patience as a reflective process that organizes perceptions, clarifies orientation, and guides measured actions. This structure demonstrates the rational and systematic character of cognitive-behavioral coping in patience, clearly distinguishing it from emotional forms of coping.

Conclusion

Patience in the hadith is a multidimensional model of religious coping, providing a new conceptual framework through the integration of mutually reinforcing emotional, cognitive-behavioral, and spiritual aspects in responding to life's stresses. Theoretically, this finding expands the study of Islamic psychology by offering a coping framework that transcends the problem-focused and emotion-focused dichotomy through a thematic analysis of the hadith, providing a conceptual contribution to the understanding of psychological resilience mechanisms. Practically, the research findings offer potential for implementation in counseling services, character education, and stress management interventions based on religious values, which can be designed as a structured mentoring model. However, this study has limitations in terms of the limited corpus of hadith, the scope of thematic analysis, and the challenge of interpretive subjectivity in linking normative texts to contemporary psychological phenomena. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the source corpus, integrate interdisciplinary approaches, apply empirical methods to test the validity of the patient coping model, and develop comparative analyses with modern coping theories to strengthen conceptual generalization.

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