

## **THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL COPING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE IN PREVENTING ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS AMONG YOUNG MUSLIMS: AN ISLAMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

Dr. Syeda Baseera Iqbal & Dr. Tajuddeen Sa'ad

International Open University, The Gambia

### **ABSTRACT**

*The issue of Addiction has taken the world by a storm of experiences, tarnishing one's behavior. It is not related to any particular religion, race or ethnicity but is a widespread pandemic. The main objective of this research is to explain the relationship of spiritual practices in coping and resilience to overcome addictive behaviors. A combination of detailed literature review and survey among selected participants was conducted to establish the fact that there is remarkable relationship between addiction and spiritual coping. This was done by framing a questionnaire and randomly circulated electronically via emails and other social media platforms. The survey received responses from 67 participants from different parts of the world. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation analysis. A correlation matrix using a heat map explained the effects. The findings of this research show that there is a remarkable relationship between spiritual practices and addictive behaviors. The study explored a strong connection between Quran, Hadith and opinions of scholars in overpowering the Biopsychosocial aspects of Addiction. This research paper includes discussion, implementation and limitations.*

*Recommendations for future research are also discussed at the end.  
This study explores the necessity of spiritual practices.*

**Keywords:** *Spiritual Coping; Psychological Resilience; Addictive Behaviors; Young Muslims; Islamic and Psychological Assessment.*

**Corresponding author:** Dr. Syeda Baseera Iqbal can be contacted at syedabaseerarafiq@gmail.com

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Addiction is a chronic condition characterized by obsessive, compulsive and excessive dependence on any act or substance despite harmful consequences. It affects people from all walks of life, causing physical, emotional, and spiritual harm. Addiction often manifests as substance abuse or compulsive behaviors, leading to serious health issues like heart disease, cancer, chronic pain, and mental health challenges. Beyond individual harm, addiction creates a shameless society where the addict has no sensitivity about culture, religion or discipline. It is assumed that it stems from a lack of willpower but it is not so. Addiction is something which crosses over the moderation barrier and ignores the line of desires. This is where Islam sets in and provides a balanced outlook on life. Islam recognizes the presence of inner natural desires and sets limitations to fulfil desires without any serious consequences.

Addiction is known to alter the brain and its thinking power is compromised and all foolish actions become a matter of choice for the individual. The whole world and its leaders are trying hard to eradicate addictions as millions have become slaves to their desires by freeing self from the soul. The American Psychiatric Association hopes that addiction can be treated but

the journey of comeback is tiring and requires tailoring treatment according to individuals' culture, religion and beliefs. Islamic perspective, recognizes addiction as a disease in response to unchecked desires known as "Hawa". The Quran warns against this: "And do not follow your desires, for they will lead you astray from the path of Allah. Indeed, those who stray from the path of Allah will have a severe punishment for having forgotten the Day of Account." (Surah Sad 38:26). Islam emphasizes self-discipline and balance.

Islam reminds Muslims to be aware of their souls and watch that he stays at the stage of tranquility by overpowering the evil commanding soul. Allah SWT says in the Quran "And be not like those who forgot Allah, and he made them forget their own souls! Such are the rebellious transgressors." What exactly happens is that the commanding soul wins over the self-reproaching soul and what begins is failure. A quick look at pornography, a sip of alcohol, one shot of cocaine or heroin and other prohibitions is enough to repeat the process again and again for satisfying desires. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) underscored the value of self-control, saying: "The truly strong individual is not the one who can dominate others through physical might, but rather the one who can manage their emotions when provoked." (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 6114). This principle doesn't explain specifically anger but it is to all desires, including those leading to addiction. The slave to desires not only causes disruption of health physically or mentally but it makes the person spiritually weak. Not to speak of one's own life an addict becomes unaware about his creator. The essence of life gets shattered as he lacks mental visibility. The Quran also stresses the importance of purifying the soul

(*Tazkiyah*) for overall well-being: "He has succeeded who purifies it [the soul], and he has failed who instills it with corruption." (Surah Ash-Shams 91:9–10).

Islamic scholars in past have explored addiction and its complexities. Ibn al-Qayyim, a renowned scholar, explained how unchecked desires weaken the intellect and lead to moral decline. He has advocated self-restraint, seeking forgiveness (*Tawbah*), trusting Allah (*Tawakkul*), and self-reflection (*Muhasaba*) as a holistic approach to treat addiction.

Addiction can be classified under two main headings, the substance and non-substance Addictions. The American psychological Association's and Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders addiction have criteria for substance use Addiction but behavioral addiction still lacks research. Addictions defined by behaviors are consuming anything more than intended which includes overeating, addiction to electronic media, gambling, shopping, dieting and exercising in excess. This can be perceived when a person becomes obsessed with self and start neglecting basic responsibilities.

The symptoms are physical dependence, tolerance, and withdrawal. The severity of addiction is classified as mild, moderate, or severe, based on the usage of the quantity of the substance over time. As the usage increases over time the tolerance and withdrawal symptoms become difficult. This results in interference of brain functions, particularly the pathways of seeking rewards and creates a cycle of dependence. Normally the release of dopamine grants pleasure but excessive dopamine is released to gratify pleasure with use

of substances. The clinical model of DSM-5 includes biological and psychological dimensions, but overlook the most important spiritual aspect. This gap can only be bridged by integrating Islamic teachings with some modern therapeutic approaches. The Quran, Hadith, and insights from Islamic scholars, aid in the addiction recovery not only the biological and psychological challenges but also the spiritual needs of individuals. This comprehensive approach provides a path to healing that aligns with both faith and science.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The integration of spiritual practices into psychotherapy for addiction treatment, has gained significant attention in recent years. This approach addresses both psychological and spiritual aspects of mental health. Spiritual practices, such as prayer, Quran recitation, and trust in God, play a central role in Islamic psychotherapy. It aids in emotional, psychological, and spiritual recovery. Studies, including those by Koenig et al. (2012), demonstrate the effectiveness of incorporating religious practices like prayer and recitation in therapy for addiction, anxiety, and depression.

In Muslim majority countries especially in Middle east where spirituality is deeply integrated into daily life, the number of Addicts is low and treatment with inclusion of spiritual practices has shown positive outcomes. Ibn Al-Qayyim, 2010, explained how unchecked desires weaken the intellect and lead to moral decline. He said: "When desires overpower the intellect, they darken the heart and lead to the servant's downfall. But when desires are guided by the light of faith, they illuminate the path to success." Abdul Wahhab et al. 2018, for

recovery, Ibn al Qayyim has advocated a holistic approach of self-restraint, seeking forgiveness (*Tawbah*), trusting Allah (*Tawakkul*), and self-reflection (*Muhasaba*).

The main key to overcome addiction is to address the spiritual void. Clinically, addiction is classified in the DSM-5 as "substance use disorder." Research by Amin et al. (2017) and Ghobary Bonab and Miner (2013) highlights the role of a strong connection to God in providing emotional strength and resilience against addiction. Spiritual disconnection, as noted by Nabil et al. (2016), can hinder addiction recovery, underlining the importance of addressing spiritual needs alongside psychological interventions.

Qur'anic recitation is particularly significant in addiction recovery, as it helps individuals reconnect with God and fosters resilience. Studies by Amin et al. (2017) and Abu-Raiya (2015) support the therapeutic use of Qur'anic teachings in mental health care for Muslim communities. The combination of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) with spiritual practices has proven to enhance outcomes in addiction treatment. Research by Moore et al. (2016) found that CBT improves addiction treatment outcomes, and when integrated with spiritual practices like those proposed by Khalid (2008), it addresses both cognitive and spiritual aspects of addiction. The integration of spirituality in healing is not a new concept. Classical Islamic scholars such as Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Jawzi recognized the importance of spiritual health, emphasizing the need for holistic healing that treats the soul, body, and spirit together. This aligns with modern psychospiritual therapy

models, which focus on both psychological and spiritual well-being.

Addiction is a physical and spiritual condition, which requires spiritual healing in addition to medical treatment. El-Guebaly (2012) notes the growing acceptance of spirituality in addiction recovery, advocating for approaches that integrate both psychological and spiritual care. In conclusion, incorporating spiritual practices like Qur'anic recitation, prayer, and trust in God with psychological therapies such as CBT offers a culturally relevant, comprehensive approach to addiction treatment. This method not only aids recovery but also promotes overall emotional and psychological well-being, especially for individuals who draw strength from their religious beliefs.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Study Design:** This survey-based study explored the role of spiritual practices, specifically prayer and *dhikr*, in treating addictive behaviors by enhancing psychological resilience, managing stress. The aim was to capture perception of the participant's, their attitude and impact towards mental well-being. The survey was conducted from October 26, 2024, to December 5, 2024, with 67 participants from diverse backgrounds, including various countries, age groups, genders, and educational levels.

**Survey Instrument:** The survey assessed perceptions of the effectiveness of spiritual practices in managing stress, emotional regulation, resilience, and coping behaviors. It includes, Demographic Information, Likert Scale Statements on

a 5-point scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) covering topics like stress management through prayer, emotional regulation via dhikr, handling unexpected problems, faith's role in resilience, perseverance through adversity, coping behaviors including addiction, and overall mental well-being related to spiritual practices.

**Data Collection and Analysis:** Data was collected electronically via an online survey platform. Participants provided informed consent, and the survey was conducted anonymously to ensure honest responses. Statistical software in excel sheet calculated descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for each survey item. A correlation matrix was generated to explore relationships between variables like prayer, dhikr, resilience, coping behaviors, and mental well-being, with coefficients ranging from -1.0 to 1.0.

**Visualization:** A heatmap was used to visually represent the correlation matrix, with color gradients from blue (negative correlation) to red (positive correlation). Pie charts were created to visualize demographic information and key variables, to help in understanding of the data.

**Ethical Considerations:** The study followed ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained, and participant anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study.



## 4. ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Analysis and interpretation

Analysis is done by integrating quantitative data and visual representation. It presents a comprehensive overview as to how Islamic based spiritual activities enhance resilience and resistance towards addictive behaviors. The key demographic distribution details are tabulated below.

Table 1. The key demographic distribution details

Age		Gender		Geographic		Education	
25 & >	40	Male	31	India	24	Graduates	24
				Qatar	13	Undergraduates	22
20-24	23	Female	36	USA	3	others	18
16-19	4			Others	3	High	3

Source: The author(s) own work.

These demographics provide a broad representation of young Muslims across different age groups, genders, and educational backgrounds, offering diverse perspectives on the role of religious practices in mental well-being. The identity of the participants is respected and not disclosed considering the ethical guidelines of research.

## 4.2 Statistical Analysis and Findings

Table 2. Statistical Analysis

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Prayer for Stress Management	4.417	0.869	Strong agreement on prayer's effectiveness for stress management
Dhikr and Emotional Regulation	4.567	0.759	High consensus on Dhikr's calming effects
Confidence in Handling Problems	4.12	0.845	Mixed responses on confidence in dealing with unexpected issues
Faith and Resilience	4.328	0.927	Majority believe faith strengthens resilience
Perseverance through Adversity	4.423	0.750	Strong belief in faith's role in motivating perseverance
Addiction and Coping	3.34	1.344	Significant variability in coping behaviors
Religious Beliefs and Addiction	4.433	0.798	Strong belief that religious faith helps resist addiction
Avoiding Unhealthy Coping	4.12	0.953	Variation in ability to avoid unhealthy coping mechanisms
Spiritual Practices and Well-being	4.57	0.739	Strong agreement that spiritual practices improve mental health

Source: The author(s) own work.

**Pearson's Correlation Analysis:**

Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated to understand the relationships between these variables:

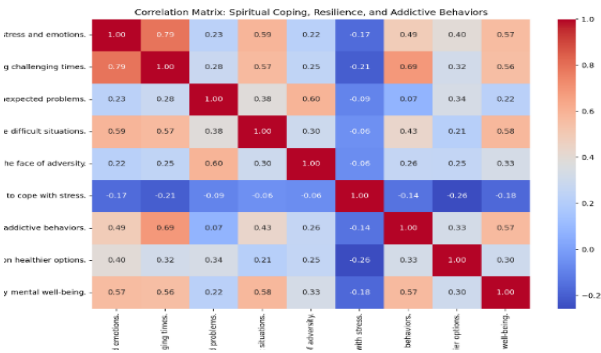
Table 3. Pearson's correlation coefficient

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Interpretation
Prayer and Dhikr	0.7	Strong positive correlation; frequent prayer linked to Dhikr benefits
Faith and Resilience	0.59	Faith significantly strengthens resilience
Spiritual Practices and Mental Well-being	0.56	Moderate-to-strong correlation between spiritual practices and mental health

Source: The author(s) own work.

**Heatmap Visualization:**

Figure 1.  
Heatmap  
illustrating  
the  
correlation  
matrix  
between  
factors  
related to  
spiritual  
coping,  
resilience,  
and  
addictive  
behaviors.



(The color gradient from blue (negative correlation) to red (positive correlation) allows for quick identification of key patterns and insights: Darker Red Areas: Indicate strong positive correlations, such as between "Prayer for Stress Management" and "Spiritual Practices and Mental Well-being." "Darker Blue Areas: Indicate strong negative correlations, such as between "Addiction and Coping" and "Mental Well-being.").

**Strong Positive Correlations:** Spiritual practices like prayer and Dhikr are strongly correlated with resilience factors such as confidence in handling problems and perseverance. Religious beliefs and spiritual practices positively impact mental well-being and the ability to resist addictive behaviors.

**Negative Correlations:** There is a negative correlation between engaging in addictive behaviors and reliance on spiritual coping mechanisms, indicating that stronger spiritual practices are associated with lower addictive tendencies.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

Addiction is a global issue affecting millions regardless of their religious or cultural backgrounds. The findings from a survey conducted among young Muslim demographic are quite promising, as many individuals with a strong religious foundation exhibit greater resilience and resistance to addictive behaviors. There is a considerable potential for conducting more extensive surveys across larger populations, providing guidance, to effectively tackle this problem. The survey results highlight the crucial role that spiritual practices play in boosting psychological resilience, managing stress, and resisting addictive behaviors. These findings align with previous research

that illustrates the positive impact of spirituality on mental health and overall well-being. The high average scores for prayer and dhikr suggest that participants strongly believe in the effectiveness of these practices for managing stress and regulating emotions. Both prayer (Mean = 4.417, SD = 0.869) and dhikr (Mean = 4.567, SD = 0.759) are viewed as vital tools for emotional stability and stress management. Integrating these practices into day-to-day life may serve as a protective measure against disorders related to stress.

The association between spiritual practices and addictive behaviors is significant. Although there is considerable variability in coping behaviors (Mean = 3.34, SD = 1.344), a high mean score (Mean = 4.433, SD = 0.798) reflects that a strong adherence to religious beliefs aids in resisting addictive actions. The negative correlations found between spiritual practices and addiction imply that consistent participation in spiritual activities can help prevent the emergence of addictive behaviors. Pearson's correlation analysis revealed more profound insights into the relationships among the variables. The strong positive correlation between reliance on prayer and the perceived helpfulness of dhikr ( $r = 0.7$ ) underscores the meaningfulness of these practices. The heatmap visualization further clarified these relationships, providing a comprehensive view of how various factors intertwine.

These findings carry significant implications for psychological support initiatives and intervention programs aimed at young Muslims. As such, the integration of spiritual practices into therapeutic methods can significantly boost the effectiveness of stress management without resorting to addiction. Interventions should be customized in accordance with each

participant's individual level of faith, religiosity, and comprehension of spiritual practices, as well as their responses. These findings highlight the importance of spiritual practices, including prayer (Salah) and dhikr, in strengthening psychological resilience, managing stress, and averting addiction. The elevated average scores for both practices indicate that they are widely perceived as beneficial during difficult times. This aligns with existing literature on how prayer and meditation can alleviate stress and enhance emotional well-being (Koenig, 2012; Haque, 2017).

Faith is identified as a crucial element contributing to psychological resilience. The significant positive correlation between faith and resilience ( $r = 0.59$ ) suggests that individuals with a strong faith are better equipped to handle challenging situations. These findings indicate that faith provides an invaluable sense of purpose, meaning, and hope in life, as observed in other studies. The high mean score for motivation to endure through challenging times (Mean = 4.423, SD = 0.750) confirms a positive outlook among those with strong faith, enabling them to overcome difficulties with perseverance and dignity. The survey indicated that faith is pivotal in enhancing resilience. A significant proportion of participants (Mean = 4.328) believed that their faith aided them in persevering through challenging circumstances. The moderate variability in responses suggests that the intensity of this belief might differ due to personal experiences. This supports the notion that religious coping strategies, like reliance on God's will (Tawakkul), enhance resilience during hardships (Pargament et al., 2000). While there was variability in how participants perceived addiction as a coping strategy (SD = 1.344), the

general trend indicated that spiritual practices serve as a safeguard against addiction. Numerous participants (mean = 4.433) indicated that their faith played a role in helping them steer clear of damaging behaviors, which aligns with previous research showing that spirituality and faith can serve as protective factors against substance abuse. The survey also demonstrated that although many participants refrain from unhealthy coping mechanisms, some continue to face challenges, suggesting that spirituality by itself may not be enough to eliminate the risk of addiction. Tackling addictive behaviors may need a holistic approach that merges spiritual, psychological, and social support (Sinha, 2001).

The strong positive relationship between prayer and dhikr ( $r = 0.7$ ) indicates that these practices enhance one another, assisting in emotional regulation and resilience building. This underscores the significance of consistent engagement in spiritual activities for overall mental health. Incorporating spiritual practices into therapy may benefit Muslim clients, with therapists being encouraged to include prayer or dhikr within treatment plans to aid emotional regulation and strengthen resilience. Furthermore, utilizing religious coping strategies could assist clients dealing with addiction.

## **6. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

This survey emphasizes the vital role that spiritual practices play in enhancing psychological resilience, managing stress, and combating addiction among young Muslims. While there are individual variations, the overall trend advocates for the inclusion of spiritual practices in psychological treatment methods. By recognizing and utilizing the affirmative effects of these practices, mental health professionals can create more effective, culturally appropriate interventions that benefit the mental health of young Muslims.

### **6.1 Recommendations**

Practices like prayer and Dhikr must be incorporated into therapeutic approaches to address mental health concerns comprehensively.

Interventions must be tailored to suit individual beliefs and understanding for effectiveness.

Encourage the use of faith-driven strategies, such as reliance on God (Tawakkul), to enhance psychological resilience.

Implement programs to inform individuals about the mental health advantages of integrating spiritual practices into everyday routines.

Embrace a comprehensive approach that blends spiritual, psychological, and social methods to tackle addictive behaviors.

Create peer-support groups that merge faith-oriented practices with traditional addiction recovery methods.



## **6.2 Future Research Directions**

Expand research to encompass a wider and more diverse demographic for enhanced generalizability.

Carry out longitudinal studies to assess the lasting effects of spiritual practices on resilience and addiction prevention.

Explore the specific mechanisms through which spiritual practices, such as prayer and dhikr, exert influence on mental health results.

These recommendations stress the importance of incorporating spiritual practices into mental health care, enhancing resilience, and addressing addiction through a comprehensive approach tailored to the distinct needs of young Muslims.

## REFERENCES

- Abdul Wahhab, M., Wan Chik, W. M. Y. bin, Wan Jusoh, W. H. bin, & Mokhtar, M. S. bin. (2018). An analysis on stages of addiction according to Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah's theory of al-Ishq. *Man India*, 97(22), 425–432.
- Abu-Raiya, H. (2015). Working with religious Muslim clients: A dynamic, Qur'anic-based model of psychotherapy. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, 2(2), 120–133. <https://doi.org/10.1037/scp0000068>
- Ali, M. (2014). Perspectives on drug addiction in Islamic history and theology. *Religions*, 5(3), 912–928. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel5030912>
- Amin, M. Z. M. Z., Zohdi, M., et al. (2017). A literature review of spiritual psychotherapy using Qur'an recitation in the treatment of drug addiction. *Advanced Science Letters*, 23(5), 4865–4868. <https://doi.org/10.1166/asl.2017.8929>
- Badri, M. (2009). The AIDS crisis: An Islamic perspective. In F. Esack & S. Chiddy (Eds.), *Islam and AIDS: Between scorn, pity and justice* (pp. 28–42). Oxford: Oneworld.
- Bensaid, B., Machouche, S. B. T., & Tekke, M. (2021). An Islamic spiritual alternative to addiction treatment and recovery. *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 59(1), 127–162. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2021.591.127-162>

- Cook, C. C. (2015). Religion and spirituality in clinical practice. *BJPsych Advances*, 21(1), 42-50.  
<https://doi.org/10.1192/apt.bp.114.013276>
- El-Guebaly, N. (2012). The meanings of recovery from addiction: Evolution and promises. *Journal of Addiction Medicine*, 6(1), 1-9.  
<https://doi.org/10.1097/ADM.0b013e31823ae540>
- Fatayer, J. (2008). Addiction types: A clinical sociology perspective. *Journal of Applied Social Science*, 2(1), 88-93.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/193672440800200107>
- Ghobary Bonab, B., & Miner, R. (2013). Attachment to God in Islamic spirituality. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, 7(2).  
<https://doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.10381607.0007.205>
- al-Jawziyyah, I. Q. (2011). *Kitab Ar-Ruh* (M. A. Ayub al-Islahi, Ed., Vol. 2). Jeddah: Dar 'Alam al-Fawa'id.
- Khalid, M. (2008). Psychospiritual therapy in drug addiction rehabilitation. *International Journal of Addiction Therapy*, 6(4), 215-227.
- Koenig, H. G., King, D. E., & Carson, V. B. (2012). *Handbook of religion and health* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Mohamed, M. N., et al. (2017). Validation of Addiction Severity Index (5th edition) Bahasa Melayu Version (ASI-5-BM). *MOJ Addiction Medicine & Therapy*, 4(2), 243-247.  
<https://doi.org/10.15406/mojamt.2017.04.00075>

---

Rassool, G. H. (2021). Psychology of addiction. In Islamic psychology (1st ed., pp. 25). Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429354762>

Rothman, J. (2000). The integration of spirituality in psychotherapy: A model for mental health care. *Psychotherapy and Spirituality Journal*, 14(4), 305–317.  
Link for reference:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1MgZejh6ySbItS7NF1fwVCXmKd8KCi8z5hm-R7AoJhRo/edit>