

EFFECTIVENESS OF ISLAMIC SPIRITUAL COUNSELING ON EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE OF BROKEN HOME STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of Islamic spiritual counseling in strengthening emotional resilience among students from broken home backgrounds in an Islamic secondary school. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis involving students, counselors, and Islamic education teachers, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that Islamic spiritual counseling improves emotional regulation, adaptive coping, interpersonal adjustment, and psychological stability through spiritual reflection, value-based guidance, and empathetic counseling. Students showed increased self-awareness, better emotional control, stronger meaning-making, and higher social engagement, reflecting sustained resilience development. This study offers novelty by extending resilience theory into culturally grounded Islamic counseling practices in formal school settings and positioning spirituality as an internal regulatory and developmental resource. The results also demonstrate that institutional integration of spiritual counseling supports continuous emotional growth and positive behavioral change among adolescents experiencing family disruption. Practically, the findings provide evidence-based guidance for schools and counselors to implement holistic and culturally responsive counseling models that align psychological support with students' spiritual identities to enhance effectiveness and sustainability.

Keywords: Broken Home Students, Emotional Resilience, Islamic Spiritual Counseling



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INTRODUCTION

Family disruption and parental separation are recognized as significant stressors that adversely affect adolescents’ emotional stability and psychological well-being worldwide (Hartanto et al., 2025). Broken home students often display emotional dysregulation, anxiety, and social maladjustment, which correlate with lower academic engagement (Purwanto et al., 2023). Research has shown that adolescents experiencing family breakdown are more prone to psychological distress and maladaptive coping strategies, emphasizing the importance of supportive interventions within school environments (Shrestha et al., 2022). Emotional resilience is defined as the capacity to rebound from adversity, regulate emotions effectively, and maintain adaptive functioning in the face of stress (Ungar, 2021). In adolescent populations, resilience is strongly associated with emotional regulation, academic persistence, and interpersonal competence (Masten, 2021). Current studies highlight that interventions targeting resilience development can lead to improved mental health outcomes by equipping adolescents with adaptive coping skills (Sun et al., 2020).

Given the emotional vulnerabilities experienced by broken home students such as emotional dysregulation, anxiety, and social maladjustment there is a critical need for structured and contextually relevant interventions that can strengthen adolescents’ emotional resilience. While resilience has been theoretically linked to adaptive coping, emotional regulation, and psychological well-being, its development requires intentional support mechanisms within educational settings. To illustrate how emotional challenges faced by broken home students can be addressed through a structured and faith-oriented intervention, this study presents a conceptual framework that positions Islamic spiritual counseling as a central mechanism for fostering emotional resilience, as depicted in Figure 1.

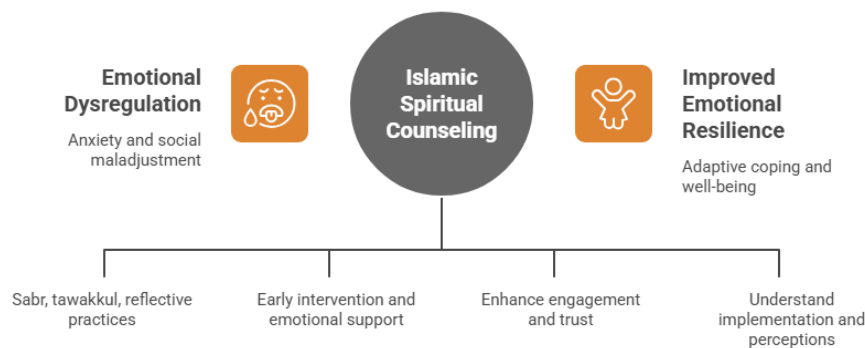


Figure 1. Fostering Resilience in Broken Home Student

Figure 1 conceptualizes the process of fostering emotional resilience among broken home students through Islamic spiritual counseling. The model begins with emotional dysregulation as a primary condition, characterized by anxiety and social maladjustment resulting from family disruption. Islamic spiritual counseling is positioned as the core intervention that bridges emotional vulnerability and adaptive outcomes. Through spiritually grounded practices such as sabr (patience), tawakkul (reliance on God), and reflective self-awareness, counseling facilitates early emotional intervention, strengthens trust between students and counselors, and enhances students’ engagement in the counseling process. These mechanisms collectively contribute to improved emotional resilience, enabling students to develop adaptive coping strategies and emotional well-being. This conceptualization underscores the relevance of

school-based counseling programs that integrate cultural and religious values, providing a foundation for understanding how spiritually informed counseling practices can be effectively implemented within educational environments, as discussed in the subsequent section.

From an Islamic perspective, spiritual coping mechanisms such as *sabr* (patience), *tawakkul* (reliance on God), and reflective practices play a crucial role in bolstering emotional stability (Abo-Zena & Newcomb, 2021). Research within Muslim adolescent communities has found that spiritually grounded coping strategies are positively correlated with higher resilience and psychological well-being (Saleem et al., 2024). These spiritual resources contribute to meaning-making in adversity, which enhances constructive emotional responses and reduces distress (Koenig & Al-Zaben, 2022). Islamic spiritual counseling integrates psychological counseling principles with Islamic values to address emotional and spiritual needs concurrently (Mahmood & Khalid, 2023). Empirical evidence indicates that spiritual counseling interventions based on Islamic teachings improve emotional regulation, enhance resilience, and strengthen students' overall psychological well-being (Al-Hashimi, 2024). Furthermore, spiritually oriented counseling programs have shown effectiveness in promoting adolescents' coping mechanisms and reducing psychological distress in educational settings (Bukhari et al., 2021).

School-based counseling programs play a critical role in providing early psychological intervention and emotional support for vulnerable student populations (Gysbers & Henderson, 2020). Integrating culturally responsive counseling approaches enhances student engagement, trust, and intervention effectiveness within diverse educational contexts (Litam & Hipolito-Delgado, 2021). Preventive counseling models implemented in schools have been shown to reduce long-term emotional risk and improve adaptive functioning among adolescents (Hoagwood et al., 2022). Spirituality-integrated interventions are increasingly recognized in educational psychology as protective factors that foster emotional regulation, optimism, and psychological stability (Vieten et al., 2022). Adolescents who engage in spiritual meaning-making demonstrate higher levels of emotional coherence and adaptive stress responses (Park et al., 2023). Faith-based counseling approaches also support moral development and identity coherence during critical developmental stages (King & Boyatzis, 2021).

In Muslim educational environments, Islamic values provide a culturally congruent framework that supports emotional healing and moral development (Azhar & Varma, 2021). Counseling models that align with students' religious identity demonstrate higher acceptance and therapeutic alliance compared to culturally neutral approaches (Rassool, 2022). The integration of Islamic pedagogy with counseling practices strengthens internal motivation, discipline, and emotional responsibility among students (Huda & Kartanegara, 2023). Qualitative approaches are essential for capturing students' lived experiences, emotional meaning-making processes, and perceived transformation within counseling contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2021). Phenomenological and descriptive qualitative studies provide deeper insight into how interventions are internalized and operationalized at the individual level (Merriam & Tisdell, 2022). Such approaches enable researchers to explore contextual, spiritual, and emotional dynamics that are often underrepresented in quantitative studies (Tracy, 2020).

Despite these advancements, research specifically examining the effectiveness of Islamic spiritual counseling on emotional resilience among broken home students in formal school contexts remains limited (Nidiyanti et al., 2023). While studies have explored general adolescent resilience or psychological support programs, few have addressed how spiritual

counseling processes unfold among students facing family breakdown challenges (Sulaiman et al., 2024). Moreover, little is known about how Islamic education teachers and school counselors operationalize spiritual counseling in practice to enhance resilience (Davies et al., 2022). Therefore, this study explores the effectiveness of Islamic spiritual counseling in fostering emotional resilience among broken home students within an Islamic secondary school context. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach, the research aims to understand the implementation processes of counseling, students' perceptions of emotional change, and how Islamic spiritual practices are integrated to promote adaptive coping. The findings are expected to contribute to theory development in Islamic counseling models and offer evidence-based recommendations for school counseling practices that holistically support adolescent emotional and spiritual well being.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the effectiveness of Islamic spiritual counseling in enhancing emotional resilience among students from broken home backgrounds, as it enables comprehensive description and interpretation of human experiences in natural settings. Practical thematic analysis is increasingly recognized as a flexible and rigorous method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data, especially in applied research contexts where understanding lived experiences is critical to developing contextually grounded insights (Saunders et al., 2023). The research was conducted from March to June 2025 at an Islamic secondary school that integrates structured spiritual counseling into its formal guidance and educational programs. Conducting the study in the natural school environment allowed the researcher to integrate data collection with students' daily activities and observe emotional expressions and counseling processes as they occurred.

Research Target/Subject

The research participants were students who experienced family disruption due to parental separation or divorce and were actively participating in school-based Islamic spiritual counseling. Purposive sampling was used to select information-rich cases relevant to the research focus because it enables intentional selection of participants based on relevance and depth of knowledge, which enhances the richness of qualitative inquiry (Bouncken et al., 2025). In addition to students, school counselors and Islamic education teachers who played direct roles in implementing spiritual counseling were included as key informants to provide multi-perspective data. All participants voluntarily provided informed consent, and pseudonyms were used to maintain confidentiality.

Research Procedure

The research process began with obtaining institutional permission and ethical approval and coordinating with school administrators and counselors to establish data collection schedules and protocols. Students who met the inclusion criteria were identified by school counselors and invited to participate, with detailed explanations of the research objectives and ethical safeguards. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews designed to explore participants' emotional experiences, coping strategies, and perceived changes in resilience, allowing flexibility to pursue emergent issues while maintaining consistency across interviews. Non-participant observations were conducted during counseling sessions and relevant school religious activities to capture behavioral and interactional dynamics, contributing to contextual

depth. Institutional documents such as counseling logs and program summaries were reviewed to triangulate findings and corroborate participant narratives.

Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

In this qualitative study, the researcher served as the primary instrument responsible for planning, data generation, and interpretive analysis. Semi-structured interviews elicited rich, descriptive narratives, while observation protocols facilitated the collection of naturalistic behavioral and contextual data. Document review provided procedural and organizational context supporting interview and observational data. Methodological triangulation among interviews, observations, and documents enhanced the credibility and completeness of the findings by cross-validating evidence from multiple sources. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved, meaning additional data no longer yielded new conceptual insights (Ahmed et al., 2024). All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim to ensure data accuracy and analytical transparency.

Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis framework, a method that enables systematic identification, categorization, and interpretation of patterns within qualitative data and is widely used in qualitative research for generating robust descriptive insights (Saunders et al., 2023). The process involved repeated reading of transcripts, inductive coding, theme development, and interpretive synthesis aligned with research objectives. Reflexive engagement and documentation of analytic decisions supported analytic rigor. Trustworthiness of findings was also strengthened through member checking and peer consultation to confirm the credibility and accuracy of interpretations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strengthening Emotional Regulation through Spiritual Awareness

The findings indicate that Islamic spiritual counseling significantly contributed to students' ability to regulate emotions and manage psychological distress arising from family disruption. Participants reported increased awareness of emotional triggers, improved self-control, and reduced impulsive reactions after engaging in structured counseling sessions that incorporated reflective prayer, self-evaluation (muhasabah), and guided spiritual dialogue. Several students described feeling calmer when confronting academic pressure and interpersonal conflict, suggesting a gradual internalization of emotional regulation strategies grounded in spiritual meaning. These findings align with evidence showing that spiritually oriented interventions enhance emotional self-regulation by strengthening meaning-making processes and adaptive coping mechanisms (Koenig, 2020). Emotional regulation mediated by spiritual awareness has also been shown to reduce anxiety and emotional exhaustion among adolescents facing chronic stressors (Abdullah & Razak, 2022).

From a developmental perspective, emotional regulation is a core component of resilience that enables adolescents to maintain psychological stability despite environmental adversity. Spiritual frameworks provide adolescents with interpretive schemas that transform negative experiences into opportunities for personal growth and acceptance, which supports emotional stability over time (Vishkin et al., 2020). In Islamic counseling contexts, values such as sabr (patience), tawakkul (trust in God), and gratitude reinforce emotional restraint and constructive cognitive appraisal, allowing students to reinterpret family adversity more adaptively (Rassool, 2021). The integration of these spiritual values into counseling sessions

appears to function as an internal regulatory system that complements psychological techniques.

An additional observation emerging from the data is that students increasingly demonstrated emotional self-monitoring and reflective pause before reacting to emotionally charged situations. Participants reported consciously recalling spiritual reminders provided during counseling sessions when experiencing anger or sadness, which enabled them to delay impulsive responses and choose calmer reactions. This internalization process reflects the development of metacognitive emotional awareness, a key indicator of sustainable emotional resilience. Empirical research confirms that adolescents who develop reflective emotional awareness show greater long-term emotional stability and reduced vulnerability to behavioral problems (Zimmermann & Iwanski, 2021). The counseling process thus not only improved immediate emotional regulation but also fostered enduring self-regulatory capacities that extend beyond counseling sessions.

Development of Adaptive Coping and Meaning-Making

Participants consistently reported a shift from avoidant or maladaptive coping strategies toward more reflective and solution-focused behaviors. Prior to counseling, several students described withdrawing socially, experiencing persistent anger, or engaging in negative self-talk. Following counseling engagement, students demonstrated greater openness in expressing emotions, improved communication with peers and teachers, and enhanced willingness to seek constructive solutions when facing difficulties. These behavioral changes reflect an expansion of adaptive coping capacity facilitated by spiritual reflection and counselor guidance.

Recent studies indicate that spiritual coping enhances resilience by promoting meaning-focused coping and emotional acceptance, which buffer the psychological impact of family instability and social stress (Pargament & Exline, 2022). Adolescents who integrate spiritual meaning into their coping processes tend to exhibit stronger emotional endurance and lower vulnerability to depressive symptoms (Pirutinsky et al., 2021). In school settings, spiritually integrated counseling has been shown to strengthen students' self-efficacy and moral reasoning, which further supports adaptive decision-making and interpersonal functioning (Sulaiman et al., 2023). The present findings reinforce these conclusions by demonstrating that Islamic spiritual counseling facilitates internal cognitive restructuring that empowers students to reinterpret adversity as manageable and purposeful.

Beyond cognitive restructuring, students also reported increased behavioral initiative, such as seeking academic support, engaging in extracurricular activities, and rebuilding peer relationships. These proactive behaviors indicate a transition from passive coping toward agentic coping orientations. Contemporary resilience research emphasizes that agency and perceived control play a central role in sustaining adaptive functioning under chronic stress conditions (Masten & Barnes, 2021). When adolescents perceive themselves as capable of influencing outcomes through effort and faith-based perseverance, they are more likely to sustain motivation and emotional persistence. Islamic spiritual counseling appears to nurture this sense of agency by linking personal responsibility with spiritual accountability, strengthening students' confidence in navigating life challenges constructively.

Enhancement of Interpersonal Behavior and Social Adjustment

Beyond intrapersonal regulation, participants experienced notable improvements in interpersonal relationships and classroom engagement. Students reported greater patience, reduced conflict behavior, and increased empathy toward peers and teachers. Counseling

sessions emphasizing forgiveness, gratitude, and ethical reflection encouraged students to rebuild trust and social confidence, which are often impaired in adolescents experiencing family disruption. Improved social adjustment was reflected in increased classroom participation and willingness to collaborate with peers. To further illustrate the social outcomes of Islamic spiritual counseling observed in this study, Figure 2 presents a conceptual depiction of how spiritually grounded counseling contributes to improvements in students' social adjustment. While previous findings highlighted changes in interpersonal behavior and classroom engagement, this figure visually synthesizes the mechanisms through which spiritual counseling facilitates relational repair, emotional openness, and adaptive social functioning among students from broken home backgrounds.



Figure 2. Spiritual Counseling Improves Social Adjustment

Figure 2 demonstrates that Islamic spiritual counseling serves as a central intervention that promotes social adjustment through interconnected relational processes. The model illustrates how counseling practices emphasizing forgiveness, gratitude, and ethical reflection foster positive interpersonal behavior, such as increased patience and reduced conflict. These behavioral changes contribute to greater social adjustment, reflected in enhanced participation and collaboration within the school environment. Additionally, the figure highlights trust restoration as a key outcome, indicating that spiritually informed counseling helps students feel more comfortable approaching authority figures and engaging in supportive relationships. Collectively, the model suggests that social adjustment is not an isolated outcome but the result of a cumulative relational process, where spiritual counseling strengthens emotional safety, interpersonal competence, and institutional trust. This interpretation reinforces the argument that faith-based counseling functions as a protective social mechanism that supports adolescents' social integration and resilience in educational settings.

Empirical research confirms that resilience-focused interventions enhance adolescents' social competence and emotional intelligence, leading to healthier peer relationships and academic engagement (Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2020). Spiritual identity development has also been linked to prosocial behavior and emotional maturity among adolescents, particularly in collectivist and religious educational contexts (King et al., 2021). Islamic counseling approaches that emphasize moral responsibility and community belonging may therefore serve as protective socialization mechanisms that buffer relational instability associated with broken home experiences (Ali & Milstein, 2022). These findings highlight the social dimension of resilience development facilitated by spiritually grounded counseling.

A further dimension observed in this study is the gradual restoration of trust toward authority figures and institutional structures. Students reported feeling more comfortable approaching teachers and counselors for guidance after repeated counseling sessions fostered emotional safety and relational openness. This relational repair is particularly important for adolescents from disrupted family environments who often experience attachment insecurity and social withdrawal. Research indicates that supportive school relationships significantly predict adolescents' social adjustment and emotional security in high-risk populations (Longobardi et al., 2020). The relational climate created through Islamic spiritual counseling thus functions as a protective relational buffer that strengthens students' social integration and academic engagement.

Institutional Implications and Counseling Effectiveness

The effectiveness of Islamic spiritual counseling observed in this study underscores the importance of institutional support and counselor competence in integrating spiritual values into professional counseling practice. Counselors who demonstrated consistency in spiritual modeling, empathetic communication, and ethical sensitivity created psychologically safe environments that fostered trust and openness among students. The structured integration of religious reflection with counseling techniques strengthened continuity between students' spiritual identity and emotional development.

Contemporary research emphasizes that school-based mental health interventions are most effective when culturally responsive and aligned with students' belief systems (García-Coll et al., 2021). Spiritually sensitive counseling frameworks have been shown to improve engagement and sustainability of interventions in religious school contexts (Captari et al., 2022). The present findings contribute to this literature by illustrating how Islamic spiritual counseling operationalizes culturally grounded therapeutic mechanisms that enhance resilience and emotional well-being among vulnerable adolescents.

An additional institutional implication concerns the role of collaborative synergy between counselors, teachers, and school leadership in sustaining program effectiveness. Participants benefited not only from individual counseling sessions but also from consistent reinforcement of spiritual values within classroom instruction and extracurricular activities. Integrated institutional ecosystems have been shown to strengthen intervention fidelity and long-term behavioral impact in school-based mental health programs (Domitrovich et al., 2021). This suggests that Islamic spiritual counseling should not be isolated as a standalone intervention but embedded systematically within school culture to maximize sustainability and developmental impact.

Theoretical Contribution and Novelty

This study contributes theoretically by extending resilience research into the domain of Islamic spiritual counseling within formal school environments, a context that remains underrepresented in international literature. While prior studies have examined resilience interventions broadly, limited empirical attention has been given to how Islamic spiritual practices function as psychological regulatory mechanisms in adolescent populations affected by family disruption. The integration of spiritual meaning-making, emotional regulation, and adaptive coping demonstrated in this study offers a conceptual model that bridges psychological resilience theory with Islamic counseling paradigms.

Recent resilience scholarship increasingly acknowledges the role of cultural and spiritual resources in shaping adaptive capacity (Ungar & Theron, 2020). However, empirical models

grounded in Islamic educational contexts remain scarce. By documenting counseling processes and students' experiential transformations, this study advances culturally embedded resilience frameworks and provides evidence-based guidance for developing holistic school counseling models in Muslim educational settings.

Integrative Perspective

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Islamic spiritual counseling facilitates emotional regulation, adaptive coping, social adjustment, and institutional engagement among students from broken home backgrounds through an interconnected developmental process. Emotional awareness nurtures self-control, which strengthens adaptive coping and agency, subsequently enhancing interpersonal functioning and academic engagement. The alignment between spiritual values and counseling practices creates internal coherence that supports sustained behavioral transformation. These interconnected outcomes illustrate how culturally grounded spiritual counseling can serve as a holistic developmental mechanism that addresses psychological vulnerability while cultivating long-term resilience within adolescent educational contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Islamic spiritual counseling plays a significant role in strengthening emotional resilience among students from broken home backgrounds by fostering emotional regulation, adaptive coping, interpersonal adjustment, and meaningful engagement within the school environment. The integration of spiritual reflection, value-based guidance, and empathetic counseling practices enables students to reinterpret family-related adversity through constructive cognitive and emotional frameworks, supporting sustained psychological stability and positive behavioral transformation.

The findings contribute to resilience scholarship by expanding empirical understanding of culturally grounded counseling models in formal educational contexts, particularly within Islamic schools. By illustrating how spiritual values function as internal regulatory mechanisms and socialization resources, this study bridges psychological resilience theory with Islamic counseling paradigms and highlights the importance of aligning therapeutic approaches with students' cultural and spiritual identities.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used Google Gemini solely to assist with text translation. After using these tools/services, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests of personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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