

Postgraduate Students' Understanding of Qur'anic Verses Associated with Feelings of Insecurity

*Khusnul Mahda¹, Salman Abdul Muthalib², Misnawati³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: mahdahsnl@gmail.com

Abstract: This study examines how postgraduate students of Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir at UIN Ar-Raniry understand Qur'anic verses associated with feelings commonly described as insecurity and how they interpret Qur'anic responses to such experiences. It employed a qualitative, descriptive-interpretive field research design involving six purposively selected participants. Data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews and analyzed by identifying recurring patterns of interpretation. The revised Bloom's taxonomy was used heuristically to organize variations in the participants' understanding rather than to rank or score their cognitive abilities. The findings show that their understanding ranged from textual recognition to contextual, reflective, and practical interpretation, although this progression was neither uniform nor linear. The participants associated *khawf* (fear), *huzn* (sadness), and the root *w-h-n* (weakness or loss of resolve) with experiences of insecurity without treating these Qur'anic concepts as direct equivalents of a modern psychological category. They identified several Qur'anic responses, including acknowledging emotional vulnerability, strengthening faith, practicing gratitude, taking constructive action, seeking social support, and maintaining awareness of God's presence. These findings represent the participants' interpretations and do not establish the clinical or therapeutic effectiveness of Qur'anic verses. The study contributes an empirical account of how students formally trained in Qur'anic studies relate scriptural interpretation to contemporary emotional experiences.

Keywords: *Insecurity; Qur'anic reception; Postgraduate students; Religious coping*

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A. Introduction

In Indonesian public and academic discourse, the English adjective *insecure* is frequently used as a label for feelings of insecurity. In this study, the term refers to experiences of self-doubt, inadequacy, fear of negative judgment, social comparison, and uncertainty about one's abilities or social position. It is not treated as a psychiatric diagnosis or used as a direct synonym for anxiety disorders or depression. This distinction is necessary because the term is used broadly in Indonesian literature, whereas the psychological conditions associated with it may vary across individuals and contexts.¹

Studies in Indonesia have examined feelings of insecurity in relation to social media use, loneliness, self-evaluation, and interpersonal experiences. Abidah and Maryam reported an association between the intensity of social media use, loneliness, and feelings of insecurity among adolescents. In their qualitative study of university students experiencing TikTok addiction, Harnata and Prasetya also identified experiences of social comparison, fear of others' judgment, and dissatisfaction with oneself. These findings, however, do not establish that social media uniformly causes insecurity. International reviews indicate that the relationship between social media use and psychological distress varies according to patterns of use, social comparison, individual vulnerability, and user context.² A study of Indonesian university students during the COVID-19 pandemic likewise found an association between social media addiction and poorer mental health indicators, although it measured depressive symptoms rather than insecurity specifically.³

For Muslim university students, emotional experiences may also be understood through religious concepts and engagement with the Qur'an. The Qur'an does not directly employ the modern psychological category of insecurity. This study therefore approaches *khawf* (fear or apprehension), *huzn* (sadness or grief), and the root *w-h-n* (weakness or loss of resolve) as interpretive points of contact rather than psychologically identical equivalents. These concepts are explored through Qur'an 2:155, which describes fear as part of human trials; Qur'an 9:40, which contains the expression *lā taḥzan* ("do not

¹Isna Maulida Abidah and Effy Wardati Maryam, "Intensitas Penggunaan Media Sosial, Loneliness, dan Insecure pada Remaja," *Jurnal Psikologi: Jurnal Ilmiah Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Yudharta Pasuruan* 11, no. 1 (2024): 193–210, <https://doi.org/10.35891/jip.v11i1.4911>; Agresta Armando Harnata and Berta Esti Ari Prasetya, "Gambaran Perasaan Insecure di Kalangan Mahasiswa yang Mengalami Kecanduan Media Sosial TikTok," *Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy* 4, no. 3 (2022): 823–830, <https://doi.org/10.51214/bocp.v4i3.437>.

²Betul Keles, Niall McCrae, and Annmarie Grealish, "A Systematic Review: The Influence of Social Media on Depression, Anxiety and Psychological Distress in Adolescents," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 25, no. 1 (2020): 79–93, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1590851>; Patti M. Valkenburg, Adrian Meier, and Ine Beyens, "Social Media Use and Its Impact on Adolescent Mental Health: An Umbrella Review of the Evidence," *Current Opinion in Psychology* 44 (2022): 58–68, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2021.08.017>; Philippe Verduyn et al., "Social Comparison on Social Networking Sites," *Current Opinion in Psychology* 36 (2020): 32–37, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.04.002>.

³Sujarwoto, Rindi Ardika Melsalasa Saputri, and Tri Yumarni, "Social Media Addiction and Mental Health among University Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia," *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction* 21, no. 1 (2023): 96–110, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-021-00582-3>.

grieve”); and Qur’an 3:139, which uses the expression *lā tahinū* (“do not lose heart” or “do not become weak”).

One of the verses examined in this study is Qur’an 3:139:

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمُ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

“Do not lose heart or grieve, for you shall have the upper hand, if you are believers.”

This verse addresses the condition of the Muslim community following the Battle of Uhud. Nevertheless, al-Zuhaili explains that the injunction against weakness and grief also encourages believers not to surrender, to restore their resolve, and to face adversity with optimism and *tawakkal*—reliance upon and trust in God. M. Quraish Shihab similarly emphasizes the verse’s message of restoring inner strength and avoiding prolonged despair.⁴ The verse therefore does not deny the existence of grief or fear. Instead, it directs individuals not to allow such experiences to eliminate their capacity to act and improve their circumstances.

Previous Indonesian studies have approached insecurity from several perspectives. Qatrunnada and colleagues examined the relationship between an understanding of Islamic creed and levels of insecurity among adolescents using a quantitative descriptive-associative design.⁵ Mamlu’ah discussed Qur’an 3:139 in relation to self-confidence, while Maslachah and Chozin employed *tafsir mawdū’i*—a thematic method of Qur’anic interpretation—to examine *tawakkul* as a source of personal strengthening for people experiencing insecurity.⁶ Psychological studies, meanwhile, have focused primarily on adolescents, social media use, loneliness, and self-evaluation. Although these studies demonstrate the relevance of the subject, they generally emphasize relationships between variables or formulate normative Qur’anic responses to insecurity.

Within the literature reviewed for this study, limited attention has been given to how students with formal academic training in Qur’anic studies understand these verses in relation to their own emotional experiences. Postgraduate students in the Qur’anic Studies and Tafsir Program constitute a relevant group because their engagement with the Qur’an takes place in both spiritual and academic settings. Such proximity to the Qur’an does not necessarily exempt them from self-doubt, fear, or sadness. Instead, their academic background provides a distinctive context for examining how textual

⁴Wahbah al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir*, jil. 2 (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2014), 435; M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur’an*, jil. 2 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 227.

⁵Jihan Insyirah Qatrunnada et al., “Fenomena Insecurity di Kalangan Remaja dan Hubungannya dengan Pemahaman Aqidah Islam,” *Ilmu Al-Qur’an (IQ) Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 2 (2022): 139–152, <https://doi.org/10.37542/iq.v5i02.655>.

⁶Aya Mamlu’ah, “Konsep Percaya Diri dalam Al-Qur’an Surat Ali Imran Ayat 139,” *Al-Aufa: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kajian Keislaman* 1, no. 1 (2019): 30–39, <https://doi.org/10.32665/alaufa.v1i1.1176>; Ana Firdatul Maslachah and Fadhrul Hakam Chozin, “Integrasi Nilai Tawakal dalam Al-Qur’an sebagai Metode Penguatan Diri bagi Penderita Insecure: Studi Maudhu’i,” *AT-TAISIR: Journal of Indonesian Tafsir Studies* 5, no. 1 (2024): 41–56, <https://doi.org/10.51875/attaisir.v5i01.312>.

knowledge is translated into understanding, reflection, and practical guidance in responding to personal experiences.

On the basis of this gap, the study addresses two questions. First, how do postgraduate students in the Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir Program at UIN Ar-Raniry understand Qur'an 2:155, Qur'an 9:40, and Qur'an 3:139 in relation to feelings of insecurity? Second, how do they interpret the responses offered by the Qur'an for dealing with such feelings? This study does not diagnose students' psychological conditions, measure the prevalence of mental disorders, or test the clinical effectiveness of Qur'an-based interventions. Its contribution lies in providing empirical evidence of how students formally trained in Qur'anic studies and tafsir relate selected verses to contemporary emotional experiences.

B. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive-interpretive field research design. This approach was selected to examine how students interpreted Qur'anic verses that they associated with feelings of insecurity, rather than to measure prevalence, establish a psychological diagnosis, or test the effectiveness of a particular intervention. Qualitative inquiry enables researchers to examine participants' interpretations within the contexts of their experiences and social environments.⁷

The study involved postgraduate students enrolled in the Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir Program at UIN Ar-Raniry. Participants were selected purposively on the basis of their academic engagement with Qur'anic studies and tafsir and their willingness to explain their understanding and experiences related to the research focus. The primary dataset comprised accounts attributed to six participants, identified by the codes IP, DM, AZ, FA, NA, and JA. Their personal identities were not disclosed and were replaced with codes to protect confidentiality.

Primary data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews. The interviews addressed three areas: participants' familiarity with Qur'an 2:155, Qur'an 9:40, and Qur'an 3:139; their interpretations of these verses; and the relevance they attributed to the verses in relation to experiences of fear, sadness, low self-confidence, or insecurity. The interviews quoted in this article were conducted between January 19 and 21, 2026. Secondary sources included works of Qur'anic exegesis, methodological books, and scholarly articles concerning Qur'anic interpretation, feelings of insecurity, and religious coping.

The three verses were selected purposively and were not intended to constitute an exhaustive inventory of Qur'anic passages addressing human emotions. They were chosen because they provide three conceptual points of entry: *khawf* (fear) in Qur'an 2:155, *huzn* (sadness) in Qur'an 9:40, and the root *w-h-n*, which denotes weakness or loss of resolve and appears in the expression *lā tahinū* in Qur'an 3:139. These concepts were

⁷John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018).

treated as interpretive categories that intersect with experiences described as insecurity, rather than as lexically or clinically identical equivalents.

The analysis proceeded through two complementary processes. First, the interview and observation notes were condensed, grouped, and organized according to recurring patterns before the researchers interpreted the data and reviewed the resulting conclusions.⁸ Second, variations in participants' understanding were organized using the revised Bloom's taxonomy: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.⁹ The taxonomy served as a heuristic framework for organizing different forms of understanding rather than as a test, measurement scale, or instrument for hierarchically ranking participants.

For analytical purposes, remembering referred to recognizing a verse or its key terms; understanding to restating its general message; applying to relating its message to a personal response or situation; analyzing to connecting an emotional experience with the structure, message, or context of a verse; evaluating to assessing the relevance or limitations of a particular interpretation; and creating to formulating a principle of action by integrating a verse with personal experience. These categories were allowed to overlap because remembering, understanding, applying, and evaluating do not necessarily occur in a fixed or linear sequence.¹⁰

Analytical traceability was maintained by distinguishing participants' statements, observational notes, and the researchers' interpretations; comparing interpretations across participants; and discussing the findings in relation to works of Qur'anic exegesis and previous studies. Because the study involved a small purposive sample, its findings are not intended to represent all students of Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir. The study did not assess participants' mental health conditions and cannot support causal conclusions regarding the effects of Qur'anic understanding on psychological well-being. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian, and the excerpts presented in this article were translated into English by the authors while preserving their original meaning.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Insecurity as an Interpretive Framework for Reading the Qur'an

In this study, insecurity is used as an everyday term describing experiences of feeling unsafe, inadequate, lacking in self-confidence, or concerned about one's own or others' judgments. This usage must be distinguished from clinical diagnoses and the psychological concept of insecure attachment. Previous studies in Indonesia indicate that experiences described as insecurity may be associated with loneliness, social comparison,

⁸Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2020).

⁹Lorin W. Anderson and David R. Krathwohl, eds., *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, complete ed. (New York: Longman, 2001).

¹⁰David R. Krathwohl, "A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy: An Overview," *Theory into Practice* 41, no. 4 (2002): 212–18, https://doi.org/10.1207/S15430421TIP4104_2.

social media use, and negative self-evaluation.¹¹ The present study, however, does not investigate the psychological causes or severity of these experiences.

The Qur'an does not employ insecurity as a modern psychological category. Accordingly, this study does not treat *khawf*, *huzn*, and the root *w-h-n* as its direct synonyms. Instead, they serve as interpretive points of contact. *Khawf* refers to fear or apprehension, *huzn* to sadness or grief, and *w-h-n* to weakness or loss of resolve. The context, object, and moral significance of each emotional state must therefore be interpreted in relation to the verse in which it appears and its exegetical context.

Table 1. Operational Framework for Feelings of Insecurity in This Study

Everyday psychological domain	Interpretive points of contact in the Qur'an
Subjective feelings of being unsafe, inadequate, lacking in self-confidence, or concerned about oneself and one's surroundings. The term is not used as a clinical diagnosis.	These experiences are interpreted through the Qur'anic vocabulary of <i>khawf</i> , <i>huzn</i> , and <i>w-h-n</i> . The Qur'an acknowledges fear, sadness, and weakness as part of human experience while offering orientations toward patience, hope, <i>tawakkul</i> , and constructive action.
Such feelings may be associated with self-evaluation, social comparison, loneliness, relational experiences, and environmental pressures.	They do not automatically indicate weak faith. Religious responses to emotional pressure may provide strength, but they may also need to be accompanied by social support and other forms of assistance when necessary.

Source: Compiled by the authors based on Abidah and Maryam; Harnata and Prasetya; al-Zuhaili; and Shihab.¹²

This framework avoids directly attributing insecurity to weak faith or insufficient gratitude. Such an attribution would not adequately reflect the interview data. The participants instead understood fear, sadness, and worry as human experiences that also appear in Qur'anic narratives. The relevant issue was not the mere presence of these emotions but how individuals understood and responded to them.

¹¹Isna Maulida Abidah and Effy Wardati Maryam, "Intensitas Penggunaan Media Sosial, Loneliness, dan Insecure pada Remaja," *Jurnal Psikologi: Jurnal Ilmiah Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Yudharta Pasuruan* 11, no. 1 (2024): 193–210, <https://doi.org/10.35891/jip.v11i1.4911>; Agresta Armando Harnata and Berta Esti Ari Prasetya, "Gambaran Perasaan *Insecure* di Kalangan Mahasiswa yang Mengalami Kecanduan Media Sosial TikTok," *Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy* 4, no. 3 (2022): 823–30, <https://doi.org/10.51214/bocp.v4i3.437>.

¹²Abidah and Maryam, "Intensitas Penggunaan Media Sosial," 193–210; Harnata and Prasetya, "Gambaran Perasaan *Insecure*," 823–30; Wahbah al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir*, vol. 2 (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2014), 435; M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, vol. 2 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 227.

Table 2. Qur'anic Verses Examined in the Study

Arabic Expression	Transliteration and Meaning	Verse
الْخَوْفُ	<i>al-khawf</i> : fear or apprehension	Qur'an 2:155
لَا تَحْزَنْ	<i>lā tahzan</i> : do not grieve	Qur'an 9:40
لَا تَهِنُوا	<i>lā tahnū</i> : do not become weak or lose resolve	Qur'an 3:139

Source: Compiled by the authors based on *Qur'an 2:155, Qur'an 9:40, Qur'an 3:139*, and the interpretations of *al-Zuhaili* and *M. Quraish Shihab*.¹³

Qur'an 2:155 recognizes fear as one form of human trial, while Qur'an 9:40 places the injunction not to grieve within the context of reassurance offered to the Prophet Muhammad while he was in the cave with Abu Bakr. Qur'an 3:139 was revealed in the context of the Muslim community's setback following the Battle of Uhud and calls on believers not to lose their resolve. Because these verses emerged in different contexts, they should not be detached from their exegetical settings and treated as a uniform psychological formula. Their relevance lies in how they acknowledge emotional vulnerability while directing individuals toward renewed resolve and action.

2. Variations in Students' Understanding of the Selected Verses

The revised Bloom's taxonomy was used to organize variations in the participants' understanding. The framework was not intended to establish an absolute ranking because a single response could reflect more than one cognitive process. A participant could, for example, remember a verse while also evaluating its relevance through personal experience.

a. Remembering

At the remembering level, several participants could recognize verses or key terms related to fear, sadness, and weakness. This recognition was shaped by their experiences of reading, memorizing, or hearing the verses in religious activities and studying Qur'anic exegesis. Nevertheless, recognition was not always accompanied by an ability to explain the verses' broader meanings or contexts. The findings therefore indicate the presence of textual knowledge but do not, by themselves, demonstrate contextual understanding.

b. Understanding

At the understanding level, IP, DM, AZ, and FA were able to restate the general messages of the verses in their own words. They interpreted the verses as acknowledging life's pressures while encouraging individuals not to remain overwhelmed by fear, sadness, or feelings of inferiority. The depth of their explanations, however, varied. Some responses remained general and normative, whereas others began to relate the verses to everyday circumstances and other religious sources.

¹³Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir*, 2:435; Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, 2:227.

These variations indicate that academic training in Qur'anic exegesis does not automatically produce a uniform level of understanding. Personal engagement with the verses and experiences of emotional pressure also shaped how participants explained their relevance.

c. Applying and Analyzing

At the applying level, participants began to use the messages of the verses as points of reference when responding to failure, academic pressure, fear, or social comparison. The verses were not merely recalled but were used to guide personal responses, such as calming oneself, reassessing negative thoughts, or continuing one's efforts.

At the analyzing level, some participants connected their emotional conditions with the structure of the Qur'anic messages: the acknowledgment of trials, the injunction not to remain trapped in weakness, and the encouragement to restore one's resolve. In these interpretations, insecurity was not regarded solely as an individual deficiency. It was understood as an experience that needed to be considered in relation to life pressures, self-evaluation, social relationships, and religious sources of meaning.

d. Evaluating

At the evaluating level, participants assessed the extent to which the selected verses were relevant to their emotional experiences. IP stated that the messages of the verses helped strengthen trust in Allah and acceptance of personal circumstances. NA and JA noted that other passages, including Qur'an 13:28 and Qur'an 94:5–8, were also important sources of reassurance. DM emphasized the importance of family support.

These findings suggest that participants did not necessarily regard a single verse as the sole response to a complex emotional condition. Spiritual interpretation could operate alongside family and social support. Research involving Indonesian Muslim adolescents similarly indicates that religiosity and religious coping develop within social relationships rather than in a personal sphere isolated from others.¹⁴

e. Creating

The creating category was evident when participants integrated the messages of the verses with personal experience and formulated them as principles for action. These principles included strengthening faith, accepting one's circumstances, practicing gratitude, pursuing self-improvement, and becoming willing to recover after experiencing emotional pressure. At this level, the verses were not merely recognized or explained; they were used to formulate an orientation toward life.

The available data, however, are insufficient to establish that these principles were consistently practiced or produced particular psychological changes. The findings show

¹⁴Mengqian Shen, Dawn DeLay, Urip Purwono, and Doran C. French, "Peer Relationships and Indonesian Muslim Adolescents' Religiosity and Religious Coping: Selection and Influence," *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 33, no. 1 (2023): 127–40, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12787>; Doran C. French, Urip Purwono, and Mengqian Shen, "Religiosity and Positive Religious Coping as Predictors of Indonesian Muslim Adolescents' Externalizing Behavior and Loneliness," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 14, no. 2 (2022): 189–99, <https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000300>.

only how participants articulated the relevance of the verses through the available interview and observation data.

Overall, participants' understanding ranged from textual recognition to reflective and practical interpretation, although this movement was neither uniform nor necessarily linear. The contribution of these findings is not to demonstrate the effectiveness of Qur'anic verses as therapy but to show how students of Qur'anic exegesis received and interpreted Qur'anic vocabulary and messages when reflecting on experiences they described as insecurity.

3. Students' Understanding of Qur'anic Responses to Insecurity

a. Acknowledging Human Emotional Conditions

The first theme concerns the understanding that the Qur'an does not deny fear, sadness, or worry. JA explained:

"This can be seen in the story of Mary. She was accused of adultery and had to give birth alone beneath a date-palm tree, far from her family. Logically, she would have been sad, afraid, and worried about facing that situation. But what happened was the opposite. This means that by telling this story, the Qur'an acknowledges those feelings and also strengthens us."¹⁵

This statement indicates that JA interpreted the story of Mary as acknowledging human emotional vulnerability. However, the phrase "what happened was the opposite" requires careful interpretation because the Qur'anic account of Mary still portrays genuine sadness and distress. A more precise understanding is not that Mary experienced no sadness, but that the Qur'an presents her distress while also describing the guidance and assistance she received.

This finding also challenges the assumption that insecurity necessarily signifies weak faith. In the research data, negative emotions were understood as part of human experience. The participants' primary concern was how individuals responded after such emotions emerged.

b. Strengthening Faith

The second theme concerns the use of faith as a source of meaning and resolve. AZ and IP stated:

"If we have faith, feelings of insecurity can be managed properly."¹⁶

"Faith serves as the primary foundation within oneself. It enables us to respond firmly when facing feelings of insecurity."¹⁷

These statements show that the participants understood faith as a source of meaning and emotional strength. The interview data, however, cannot establish that faith directly resolves every form of insecurity. A more proportionate interpretation is that

¹⁵Interview with JA, 19 January 2026.

¹⁶Interview with AZ, 21 January 2026.

¹⁷Interview with IP, 20 January 2026.

participants regarded faith as one resource for interpreting pressure, sustaining hope, and determining an appropriate response.

The psychology of religion distinguishes positive from negative religious coping. Positive religious coping may include seeking spiritual support, reinterpreting difficult circumstances through hope, and maintaining what is perceived as a secure relationship with Allah. Conversely, interpreting emotional distress solely as divine punishment or evidence of failed faith may intensify psychological struggle.¹⁸ A recent meta-analysis also indicates that relying exclusively on religious strategies is not consistently associated with lower psychological symptoms; social support and other coping strategies remain important.¹⁹

c. Practicing Gratitude

The third theme is gratitude as a means of reassessing one's circumstances. NA stated:

"Faith plays an important role because when faith is strong, gratitude also increases and makes it easier for us to place our trust in Allah."²⁰

In this statement, gratitude was not understood merely as a verbal expression but as a way of redirecting attention from perceived shortcomings toward one's capacities and available resources. A study involving Indonesian adolescents found an association between gratitude and levels of insecurity, but its correlational design does not establish that gratitude directly reduces insecurity.²¹ The present findings should therefore be interpreted as participants' understandings of the function of gratitude rather than evidence of its therapeutic effectiveness.

d. Taking Constructive Action

The fourth theme indicates that spiritual reassurance was not understood as passivity. JA and IP stated:

"For me, Qur'an 94:5–8 is more motivating because it encourages me to continue striving in all circumstances, including when dealing with insecurity."²²

"Keep improving yourself, even when the outcome is not yet perfect."²³

These statements reflect an action-oriented interpretation. JA understood Qur'an 94:5–8 as encouragement to continue making an effort, whereas IP framed self-

¹⁸Kenneth I. Pargament, Margaret Feuille, and Donna Burdzy, "The Brief RCOPE: Current Psychometric Status of a Short Measure of Religious Coping," *Religions* 2, no. 1 (2011): 51–76, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel2010051>; Gene G. Ano and Erin B. Vasconcelles, "Religious Coping and Psychological Adjustment to Stress: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 61, no. 4 (2005): 461–80, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20049>.

¹⁹Cecilia Cheng and Weijun Ying, "A Meta-Analytic Review of the Associations between Dimensions of Religious Coping and Psychological Symptoms during the First Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 14 (2023): 1097598, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2023.1097598>.

²⁰Interview with NA, 21 January 2026.

²¹Cahya Galuh Rahmadyani, Abdal Rohim, and Nur Wulan, "Hubungan antara Rasa Syukur dengan Tingkat *Insecure* pada Remaja di SMA Negeri 1 Kuningan Tahun 2023," *National Nursing Conference* 1, no. 2 (2023): 243–52, <https://doi.org/10.34305/nnc.v1i2.893>.

²²Interview with JA, 19 January 2026.

²³Interview with IP, 20 January 2026.

improvement as a process that does not require immediate perfection. This orientation is consistent with interpretations of Qur'an 3:139 that understand its injunction not merely as a prohibition against weakness but also as encouragement to restore resolve after a setback.²⁴

Nevertheless, “self-improvement” should not be taken to mean that individuals must conform to every social standard that contributes to feelings of inadequacy. Constructive development must be distinguished from excessive social comparison and demands for perfection, which may instead reinforce negative self-evaluation.

e. Awareness of Allah's Presence

The final theme concerns awareness of Allah's presence. NA and IP stated:

“Allah is with us. Allah never leaves us, so there is no need to feel insecure.”²⁵

“Hearing that verse can bring a sense of calm and help me not to worry about anything.”²⁶

These statements show that the phrase *inna Allāha ma‘anā*—“indeed, Allah is with us”—was understood as a source of security and reassurance. Nevertheless, the expression “not to worry about anything” should be treated as the participant's subjective experience rather than a universal conclusion. Research indicates that the relationships among religiosity, spirituality, and mental health are complex, may operate in both directions, and are shaped by the forms of coping employed and by an individual's social context.²⁷

Taken together, the five themes reveal two interconnected dimensions. The first is the acknowledgment of human emotions: fear, sadness, worry, and weakness were not automatically regarded as failures of faith. The second is the formation of responses: faith, gratitude, constructive action, social support, and awareness of Allah's presence were used by participants to interpret and respond to these emotional experiences. Because this study did not conduct a clinical assessment, the Qur'anic responses identified in the findings should not be positioned as substitutes for psychological or psychiatric care when emotional distress is persistent, severe, or disruptive to everyday functioning.

²⁴Al-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al-Munir*, 2:435; Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, 2:227.

²⁵Interview with NA, 21 January 2026.

²⁶Interview with IP, 20 January 2026.

²⁷Giancarlo Lucchetti, Harold G. Koenig, and Alessandra Lamas Granero Lucchetti, “Spirituality, Religiousness, and Mental Health: A Review of the Current Scientific Evidence,” *World Journal of Clinical Cases* 9, no. 26 (2021): 7620–31, <https://doi.org/10.12998/wjcc.v9.i26.7620>.

D. Conclusion

This study shows that postgraduate students of Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir understood insecurity as an experience of fear, sadness, weakness, or feeling unsafe that could be interpreted in dialogue with Qur'an 2:155, Qur'an 9:40, and Qur'an 3:139. Khawf, ḥuzn, and the root w-h-n are not psychologically identical equivalents of insecurity. Instead, they provide interpretive points of contact for understanding how the Qur'an acknowledges emotional vulnerability while directing individuals toward renewed resolve.

Participants' understanding ranged from textual recognition to reflective and practical interpretation. Some participants recognized and explained the general messages of the verses, while others related them to personal experiences and formulated principles for responding to emotional pressure. The Qur'anic responses they identified included acknowledging emotional conditions, strengthening faith, practicing gratitude, taking constructive action, seeking social support, and maintaining awareness of Allah's presence. These findings suggest that spiritual interpretation and social support need not be understood as mutually exclusive.

Because the study involved six purposively selected participants, its findings cannot be generalized to all students of Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir. It neither assessed participants' mental health conditions nor tested the effectiveness of Qur'anic verses as psychological interventions. Future studies could involve more diverse participants, examine their experiences in greater depth, and combine Qur'anic reception analysis with validated psychological approaches without reducing Qur'anic verses to clinical categories.

Declarations

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Author Contributions: Khusnul Mahda contributed to the conceptualization of the study, participant recruitment, data collection, data analysis, and preparation of the original manuscript. Salman Abdul Muthalib contributed to the development of the research design, supervision of the study, validation of the analysis, and critical revision of the manuscript. Misnawati contributed to the interpretation of the findings, validation of the analysis, and critical review and editing of the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for the integrity and accuracy of the work.

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AI Use Declaration: OpenAI's ChatGPT was used solely to assist with language editing and the improvement of academic readability. It was not used to recruit participants, collect data, generate interview responses, determine research findings, or replace the authors' analysis and interpretation. All AI-assisted content was critically reviewed,

verified, and revised by the authors. The authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, citations, interpretations, and integrity of the manuscript.

Data Availability: The primary data consist of anonymized interview transcripts and observation notes involving six participants. Because these materials contain potentially identifiable and sensitive information concerning participants' personal and emotional experiences, the complete dataset is not publicly available. Anonymized excerpts necessary to support the findings are presented in the article.

Ethical Considerations: This study involved minimal-risk qualitative interviews with adult postgraduate students. Before data collection, all participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, the protection of confidentiality, and their right to decline to answer any question or withdraw without penalty. Written or recorded informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participants' identities were replaced with codes, and identifying information was removed from the interview excerpts used in this publication.

Informed Consent: All participants received information about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, the procedures for protecting confidentiality, and their right to decline to answer questions or withdraw from the study without penalty. Written or recorded informed consent was obtained from all participants before the interviews and observations were conducted.

Consent for Publication: Participants consented to the use of anonymized interview excerpts for academic publication. Identifying information was removed or modified to protect their privacy.

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