

The Psychological Framework of the Shahada: An Integrative Model of Faith and Mental Health

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Abstract

The *shahada*, the foundational declaration of faith in Islam, exerts profound influence on the psychological dimensions of a Muslim's life. This article seeks to examine the psychological facets of the *shahada* through a comprehensive literature review. The research identifies three primary dimensions: cognitive beliefs, emotional commitment, and behavioral expression. Cognitive beliefs derived from the *shahada* provide a mental framework that shapes perceptions and decisions, enabling individuals to interpret life experiences within the Islamic worldview. Emotional commitment to the *shahada* fosters emotional stability and well-being, thereby reinforcing spiritual bonds with Allah and His Messenger. Meanwhile, behavioral expression reflects the manifestation of the *shahada* in everyday actions, strengthening self-identity and enhancing social cohesion within the Muslim community. The integration of these three dimensions demonstrates that the *shahada* is not merely a declaration of faith but a profound psychological foundation that supports mental health and well-being. This article underscores the critical importance of a deep understanding of the *shahada* within the context of Islamic psychology and its broader implications for mental health practice and spiritual life.

Keywords: *Shahada, Islamic Psychology, Cognitive Beliefs, Emotional Commitment, Behavioral Expression.*

Introduction

In the life of a Muslim, the *shahada*, the profession of faith, serves as the cornerstone of Islamic belief and practice. As the first of the Five Pillars of Islam, it not only marks the entry point for converts to the faith but also forms an inseparable aspect of daily life for those born into Muslim families.¹ From an early age, the *shahada* is memorized, recited fluently, and repeated during the call to prayer and ritual prayers, embedding itself in the core of a Muslim's identity. Beyond its role as a gateway to Islam, the *shahada* signifies a profound pledge of loyalty (*al-wala*) to Allah and His Messenger.² It offers a liberating spiritual

¹ Ita Umin et al., "Bimbingan Agama Islam Bagi Muallaf Di Muallaf Center Indonesia (MCI)," *Bina 'Al-Ummah* 14, no. 2 (2019): 2, <https://doi.org/10.24042/bu.v14i2.5629>.

² St Johariyah, "Syahadat Membangun Visi dan misi Kehidupan," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islamic Resources* 17, no. 2 (2020): 2, <https://doi.org/10.33096/jiir.v17i2.90>.

foundation, freeing individuals from the enslavement of worldly pursuits such as wealth, status, popularity, and power.³ By internalizing the *shahada*, one is expected to grasp the true essence of Allah's oneness and to distance oneself from any entity that might rival or substitute the divine.

Despite its central place in Islamic life, many Muslims struggle to fully comprehend and internalize the deeper significance of the *shahada*. This is evidenced by the socio-economic conditions of many Muslim-majority countries, which often lag behind their Western counterparts in key areas such as social welfare, education, economy, and technology. Of the 33 countries that make up the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), only nine include Jordan, Algeria, Albania, Turkey, Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, and Saudi Arabia, rank highly on the Human Development Index (HDI).⁴ This disparity suggests that many Muslims have not yet fully harnessed the moral and spiritual potential of the *shahada* to drive widespread progress and prosperity.

There are several reasons why the *shahada* may not be fully internalized by many Muslims, including a superficial understanding of Islamic doctrines, insufficient religious education, and the socio-economic challenges that confront many Muslim communities. Religious practices are often performed mechanically, lacking the depth of spiritual reflection and contemplation.⁵ Consequently, many Muslims continue to adopt materialistic and hedonistic values that are in stark contrast to the core principles of Islam.

From a psychological standpoint, the *shahada* plays a critical role in shaping the mental and spiritual well-being of Muslims. Islamic psychology underscores the importance of aligning spiritual, mental, and emotional needs to achieve holistic well-being.⁶ A strong belief in the oneness of Allah and the role of the Prophet as His Messenger provides a foundation for approaching life's challenges with greater serenity and optimism. However, despite these ideals, mental health issues remain prevalent in many Muslim-majority countries. Research conducted across 46 Muslim-majority nations indicates that suicide rates are still relatively high, often correlating with lower levels of human development and wealth.⁷ Poor quality of life, as reflected by low HDI scores, frequently exacerbates mental and emotional distress within these societies.⁸ While Islamic teachings offer clear pathways to

³ Akhirin Akhirin, "Mengambangkan Kecerdasan Spiritual Melalui Rukun Iman Dan Rukun Islam," *Tarbawi : Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 2 (2013): 2, <https://doi.org/10.34001/tarbawi.v10i2.179>.

⁴ Muhammad Wibowo, "Quality of Human Development Index (HDI) in Muslim Countries (Case Studi of OIC Members)," *JEBI (Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Islam)* 4 (June 2019): 1, <https://doi.org/10.15548/jebi.v4i1.204>.

⁵ Mohammad Ghufran, "Spirituality and Health in Relation to Religious Internalization and Collective Religious Practices," *International Journal of Islamic Psychology* 3, no. 01 (2020): 01, <https://journal.iamphome.org/index.php/IJIP/article/view/6>.

⁶ Amber Haque, "Psychology from an Islamic Perspective," in *Global Psychologies: Mental Health and the Global South*, ed. Suman Fernando and Roy Moodley (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-349-95816-0_8.

⁷ S. M. Yasir Arafat et al., "Association between Suicide Rate and Human Development Index, Income, and the Political System in 46 Muslim-Majority Countries: An Ecological Study," *European Journal of Investigation in Health, Psychology and Education* 12, no. 7 (2022): 7, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ejihpe12070055>.

⁸ UNDP, "Human Development Report 2020: The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene," in *Human Development Reports* (United Nations, 2020), <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2020>.

achieving holistic well-being, the socio-economic obstacles faced by many Muslim communities often hinder the full integration of these spiritual principles into everyday life.

The *shahada* also serves as the cornerstone in the psychology of faith, encompassing three essential components: cognitive beliefs, emotional commitment, and behavioral expression.⁹ Cognitive beliefs relate to the intellectual understanding of Islamic teachings; emotional commitment reflects the depth of spiritual connection with Allah; and behavioral expression manifests in the practical application of these beliefs through everyday actions.

While previous works in Islamic psychology have addressed faith, spirituality, and mental well-being, few have examined the *shahada* as a comprehensive psychological construct that shapes cognition, emotion, and behavior. This study therefore offers an integrative and explanatory theoretical contribution to the field of Islamic psychology. By integrating classical Islamic theology with contemporary psychological theory, it conceptualizes the *shahada* as a dynamic psychological system consisting of three interrelated dimensions, namely cognitive belief, emotional commitment, and behavioral expression. Through this integration, the article provides a theoretical explanation of how faith in the *shahada* can foster psychological resilience and mental well-being, thereby enriching both theological and psychological understandings of faith.

Methods

This study used a qualitative approach with a literature review method to explore the psychological dimensions of the two sentences of the *shahada*. Literature review as a methodology is a systematic approach to identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the results of previous studies in order to answer specific research questions. This method consists of four processes, namely designing the review, conducting the review, analyzing, and writing the review.¹⁰ The literature study in this study was carried out systematically to examine various relevant library sources, both from classical and contemporary Islamic literature, as well as from psychological literature that discusses aspects of faith, spirituality, and mental health.

The data collection process was carried out by tracing literature published in the last fifteen years (2010-2025) for psychological literature, and classical and contemporary Islamic literature that discusses the meaning and dimensions of the *shahada*. Inclusion criteria were: (a) peer-reviewed or academically recognized publications; (b) explicit discussion of faith or *shahada*; and (c) conceptual or empirical relevance to the integration of psychology and Islam. Excluded were sources without theoretical grounding or lacking scholarly credibility. The main sources include: (a) articles from national and international reputable journals; (b) textbooks related to Islamic psychology and Islamic theology; (c) works of interpretation (*tafsir*), *hadith*, and writings by contemporary scholars on the meaning of the *shahada*; and (c) psychology literature that discusses aspects of belief systems, meaning-making, and spiritual commitment.

⁹ Cindy Miller-Perrin and Elizabeth Krumrei Mancuso, *Faith from a Positive Psychology Perspective* (Springer Netherlands, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9436-7>.

¹⁰ Hannah Snyder, "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines," *Journal of Business Research* 104 (November 2019): 333–39, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>.

The analysis procedure was carried out using a thematic analysis approach, namely identifying and grouping the main themes that emerged from the literature analyzed. This analysis focused on three main dimensions, namely cognitive belief in the *shahada*, emotional commitment to Allah and the Messenger, and behavioral expression of the *shahada* in everyday life.

Discussion

Islamic Psychology and Mental Health

Islamic psychology is a scientific discipline that integrates Islamic principles with psychological theory and practice. Unlike conventional psychology, which primarily draws upon empirical and rational sources, Islamic psychology incorporates scriptural sources to explore both the physical and metaphysical dimensions of the human soul and behavior. In this approach, humans are viewed as beings composed of interconnected physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. This holistic understanding of mental health emphasizes that well-being is not solely measured by psychological factors, but by the spiritual and moral balance maintained through one's relationships with Allah (*taqwa*), oneself, and others.¹¹ Islamic psychology posits that individuals can achieve true happiness (*sa'adah*) through closeness to Allah and by fulfilling their duties as His servants.¹²

From an Islamic perspective, mental health encompasses more than the mere absence of mental disorders; it involves preserving one's innate nature (*fitrah*) and cultivating spiritual potential. Ideal mental health in Islam is achieved when an individual balances faith, worship, and virtuous moral conduct.¹³ A central concept in Islamic psychology is the *nafs* (soul), which exists on varying levels, from *nafs al-ammarah* (the soul that inclines toward evil) to *nafs al-mutma'innah* (the tranquil soul).¹⁴ Mental health is attained when one is able to control and purify the *nafs* through worship, *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), and the cultivation of moral excellence.

Acts of worship in Islam, such as prayer, fasting, and *dhikr*, play a crucial role in promoting mental health. For example, *salah* (prayer) not only fulfills a religious obligation but also enhances happiness, instills hope, strengthens the will to live, and has restorative

¹¹ G. Hussein Rassool, *Islamic Psychology: Human Behaviour and Experience from an Islamic Perspective*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429354762>.

¹² Taufik Kasturi, "Positive Psychology: A Review from an Islamic Perspective," in *Contextualising Islam in Psychological Research*, ed. Mariam Adawiyah Dzulkifli and Nor Diana Mohd Mahudin (IIUM PRESS, 2021).

¹³ Mohsen Joshanloo, "Islamic Conceptions of Well-Being," in *The Pursuit of Human Well-Being: The Untold Global History*, ed. Richard J. Estes and M. Joseph Sirgy (Springer International Publishing, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-39101-4_5.

¹⁴ Abdallah Rothman and Adrian Coyle, "Conceptualizing an Islamic Psychotherapy: A Grounded Theory Study," *Spirituality in Clinical Practice* 7, no. 3 (2020): 197–213, <https://doi.org/10.1037/scp0000219>.

effects.¹⁵¹⁶¹⁷ Fasting has been linked to improvements in mental well-being¹⁸, and *dhikr* is known to have a calming effect, alleviating anxiety.¹⁹ Regular engagement in worship fosters a deeper sense of life's meaning and increases life satisfaction and overall well-being.²⁰

Recent studies indicate that integrating religious practices into psychological therapy can lead to more effective outcomes in mental health care, particularly within Muslim communities. Research by Munawar et al. (2023) suggests that approaches combining psychotherapy interventions with Islamic principles, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) with Islamic adaptations, have proven successful in reducing mood and anxiety disorders.²¹ This highlights the significance of a holistic, values-based approach to mental health treatment in Muslim populations.

Psychology of Faith (Iman)

Faith (*Iman*) lies at the heart of a Muslim's life, playing a pivotal role in shaping perceptions, emotions, and behaviors on a daily basis. Four universal dimensions are commonly identified among believers: believing, bonding, behaving, and belonging. Believing refers to faith in a transcendent reality and its relationship with humans and the world. Bonding represents the emotional connection that stems from spiritual experiences, linking individuals to their beliefs. Behaving denotes the moral compass that guides actions, determining right and wrong from a religious perspective. Finally, belonging encapsulates the sense of community and identity associated with one's faith.²²

The psychology of faith explores how deeply internalized beliefs influence mental health, provide inner peace, and serve as a source of strength in overcoming life's challenges.²³ In Islam, faith extends beyond intellectual assent, encompassing emotional commitment and behavioral expression. Thus, faith is understood through three primary

¹⁵ Mohammad Reza Behdar and Reza Sheikh, "Investigating the Effect of Salat (Muslim Prayer) on Mental Health in the Results of Clinical Studies: A Mini Review," *Sport Sciences and Health Research* 15, no. 2 (2023): 267–74, <https://doi.org/10.22059/ssh.2024.369575.1113>.

¹⁶ Septian Wahyu Rahmanto et al., "Khushoo In Salah: An Overview of Nafs (Islamic Psychological Perspective)," *Asian Journal of Islamic Psychology*, 2024, 8–14, <https://doi.org/10.23917/ajip.v1i1.3708>.

¹⁷ Bayu Suseno, "Muslim Prayer (Salah), and Its Restorative Effect: Psychophysiological Explanation," *Asian Journal of Islamic Psychology*, 2024, 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.23917/ajip.v1i1.3702>.

¹⁸ Mohammad Nasiri and Alireza Lotfi, "Effect of Fasting on Spiritual Health, Mental Health, and Control of Aggression," *Journal of Nutrition, Fasting and Health* 8, no. 3 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.22038/jnfh.2020.48854.1266>.

¹⁹ Ririn A Sulistyawati et al., "Dhikr Therapy for Reducing Anxiety in Cancer Patients," *Asia-Pacific Journal of Oncology Nursing* 6, no. 4 (2019): 411–16, https://doi.org/10.4103/apjon.apjon_33_19.

²⁰ Hisham Abu-Raiya and Ali Ayten, "Religious Involvement, Interpersonal Forgiveness and Mental Health and Well-Being Among a Multinational Sample of Muslims," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 21, no. 8 (2020): 3051–67, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-019-00213-8>.

²¹ Khadeejah Munawar et al., "Islamically Modified Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Muslims with Mental Illness: A Systematic Review," *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, ahead of print, August 10, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1037/scp0000338>.

²² Vassilis Saroglou, "Believing, Bonding, Behaving, and Belonging: The Big Four Religious Dimensions and Cultural Variation," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 42, no. 8 (2011): 1320–40, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002202211412267>.

²³ Harold G. Koenig, *Religion and Mental Health: Research and Clinical Applications*, Religion and Mental Health: Research and Clinical Applications (Elsevier Academic Press, 2018), xx, 363.

dimensions: cognitive beliefs, emotional commitment, and behavioral expression.²⁴ These dimensions are interwoven, forming a robust psychological foundation that enables a Muslim to live in harmony with Islamic teachings.

Cognitive Beliefs

Cognitive beliefs encompass the intellectual dimension of faith, where a Muslim acknowledges and comprehends the fundamental truths of Islam.²⁵ In the Islamic context, these beliefs include the oneness of Allah (*tawhid*), the existence of angels, the revealed scriptures, the prophets, the Day of Judgment, and divine decree (*qada* and *qadar*).²⁶ Such beliefs are grounded in knowledge, which is cultivated through study, critical reflection, and contemplation on Islamic teachings. Cognitive beliefs form the bedrock upon which the emotional and behavioral dimensions of faith rest; without a firm intellectual foundation, emotional commitment and behavior may not be deeply rooted in the principles of the religion.²⁷

The development of cognitive beliefs in Islam begins with education and religious instruction from an early age. Children are introduced to the fundamental concepts of faith through the Quran, Hadith, and the guidance of parents and teachers. This process involves internalizing religious teachings through deep understanding and continuous reflection.²⁸ Throughout their lives, Muslims are encouraged to deepen their faith through ongoing study, intellectual discourse, and personal experiences that reinforce their beliefs.

In the context of the two declarations of the *shahada*, cognitive beliefs form the foundational framework that defines a Muslim's faith. This cognitive understanding encompasses the belief that only Allah is worthy of worship, and that a Muslim's entire existence should be devoted to true submission to Him. Additionally, it requires the acknowledgment that Prophet Muhammad serves as a practical model, whose guidance must be followed in all aspects of life. By internalizing the *shahada*, a Muslim cultivates an attitude that aligns with monotheistic principles, shaping their worldview, influencing their relationships, and guiding moral decision-making.²⁹

In cognitive psychology, the concept of schema refers to a mental framework that individuals use to organize information and understand the relationships between concepts. Schemas are built upon past experiences and serve as guides for behavior and understanding. These frameworks are deeply influenced by personal experiences, culture, and perspectives, which in turn shape social behavior.³⁰ On a psychological level, beliefs act as interpretive schemas that organize knowledge and experiences. For example, a person who submits to

²⁴ Miller-Perrin and Krumrei Mancuso, *Faith from a Positive Psychology Perspective*.

²⁵ Miller-Perrin and Krumrei Mancuso, *Faith from a Positive Psychology Perspective*.

²⁶ Tariq Ramadan, *Introduction to Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

²⁷ Justin L. Barrett, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Cognitive Science of Religion*, 1st ed. (Oxford University Press, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190693350.001.0001>.

²⁸ Rahat Bhatti, "Islamic Beliefs in Compulsory Islamic Studies (Islamiyat) and Cognitive Development: An Investigation," *Journal of Education & Social Sciences* 5, no. 1 (2017): 3–18, <https://doi.org/10.20547/jess0421705101>.

²⁹ Mohamed Safiullah Munsoor and Che Zarrina Sa'ari, "Contemplative Framework and Practices: An Islamic Perspective," *Jurnal Usuluddin* 45, no. 1 (2017): 1, <https://doi.org/10.22452/usuluddin.vol45no1.4>.

³⁰ Jeff Pankin, "Schema Theory," Massachusetts Institute of Technology., 2013.

the *shahada* may interpret life events as part of a preordained destiny, decreed by Allah, which serves as a source of comfort, reducing or even eliminating anxiety and providing a sense of security. This corresponds with schema theory in cognitive psychology, wherein core beliefs interact with and shape our perceptions of the world, thereby influencing decisions and guiding behavior.³¹

Moreover, the *shahada* serves as a cognitive stabilizer during times of adversity. When faced with uncertainty or hardship, this deeply held conviction helps individuals maintain psychological balance and composure. Research in Islamic psychology indicates that individuals with strong cognitive beliefs exhibit greater resilience to psychological stress, owing to their clear sense of purpose and well-defined life objectives anchored in faith.³² This enhances emotional stability and strengthens one's ability to navigate life's challenges with greater equanimity.

Emotional Commitment

In the framework of the psychology of faith, emotional commitment refers to the deep emotional attachment a person has to their beliefs, expressed through feelings of love, contentment, and peace.³³ For a Muslim, emotional commitment extends beyond a mere intellectual grasp of Islamic teachings; it involves heartfelt love, respect, and submission to Allah and His Messenger. This commitment binds a Muslim's heart and emotions to their faith, fostering a profound sense of closeness to Allah and the teachings of Islam.³⁴

In developmental psychology, attachment refers to the emotional bond formed between a child and their primary caregiver, which holds critical importance.³⁵ This bond develops as the caregiver provides a secure base from which the child can explore the world and a safe haven in times of distress.³⁶ In the psychology of faith, this concept of attachment extends to one's relationship with God (attachment to God), where God is viewed as a reliable refuge in moments of distress and a steadfast source of support for facing life's challenges.³⁷

This emotional commitment not only drives a person to intellectually acknowledge the existence of God but also fosters a profound sense of His presence in every aspect of life. Feelings of love for Allah (*mababbah*), fear of His majesty (*khayf*), and hope for His mercy (*raja'*) are examples of a balanced and healthy emotional bond. This connection provides a

³¹ Daniel N. McIntosh, "Religion-as-Schema, With Implications for the Relation Between Religion and Coping," *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 5, no. 1 (1995): 1–16, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327582ijpr0501_1.

³² Meguellati Achour et al., "An Islamic Perspective on Coping with Life Stressors," *Applied Research in Quality of Life* 11, no. 3 (2016): 663–85, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-015-9389-8>.

³³ Miller-Perrin and Krumrei Mancuso, *Faith from a Positive Psychology Perspective*.

³⁴ Bagher; Miner Ghobary Bonab, "Attachment to God in Islamic Spirituality," *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 7, no. 2 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.10381607.0007.205>.

³⁵ John Bowlby, "The Bowlby-Ainsworth Attachment Theory," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 2, no. 4 (1979): 637–38, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X00064955>.

³⁶ M. D. Ainsworth, "Patterns of Infant-Mother Attachments: Antecedents and Effects on Development," *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 61, no. 9 (1985): 771–91.

³⁷ Maureen Miner et al., "Development of a Measure of Attachment to God for Muslims," *Review of Religious Research* 59, no. 2 (2017): 183–206, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-016-0281-2>.

powerful motivation for Muslims to remain unwavering in their faith, particularly when faced with temptations or trials that challenge their beliefs.³⁸

In everyday life, emotional commitment acts as a driving force that compels individuals to fulfill God's commands with sincerity and devotion. Whether through prayer, fasting, or other acts of worship, this commitment ensures that these practices are performed not merely out of obligation, but from a deep love and reverence for Allah.³⁹ This emotional attachment also enables individuals to face life's challenges with tawakkul—complete trust in Allah's wisdom and provision.⁴⁰ A strong emotional bond with the *shahada* deepens a Muslim's relationship with Allah, functioning as both emotional and spiritual reinforcement.

Research has shown that individuals who maintain a robust emotional connection to their religious beliefs are more likely to experience higher levels of emotional well-being.⁴¹ This phenomenon can be attributed to their perception of being supported by a transcendent power and their conviction that their life holds profound purpose and meaning. From a mental health perspective, emotional commitment serves as a protective factor against depression and anxiety.⁴² For instance, an individual with a strong emotional attachment to the *shahada* is more likely to experience inner peace and calm in the face of life's adversities, believing that every event unfolds with divine purpose. Empirical studies support this, indicating that individuals with a strong religious commitment tend to exhibit lower anxiety levels and enhanced emotional well-being compared to those without such commitment.⁴³

Behavioral Expression

In the context of the Psychology of Faith, behavioral expression refers to the tangible manifestation of a Muslim's beliefs and emotional commitment through religious practices and daily actions (Miller-Perrin & Krumrei Mancuso, 2015). This encompasses acts such as prayer (salah), fasting, zakat, and other forms of worship that reflect an individual's devotion to Allah and His Messenger. Grounded in the two declarations of the *shahada*, behavioral expression signifies the translation of belief in the oneness of Allah and the prophethood of Muhammad into practical, everyday life. The expression of *shahada* is not limited to ritualistic acts; it extends into interpersonal interactions and societal contributions. Research demonstrates that actions aligned with these beliefs, such as integrity, empathy, and social responsibility, significantly enhance individual well-being and promote communal

³⁸ Robert Audi, *Rationality and Religious Commitment* (Oxford University Press, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199609574.001.0001>.

³⁹ W. Paul Williamson, "The Experience of Muslim Prayer: A Phenomenological Investigation," *Pastoral Psychology* 67, no. 5 (2018): 547–62, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-018-0831-3>.

⁴⁰ Dr Adnan Adil et al., "Tawakkul and Its Dimensions: A Thematic Analysis of Quranic Verses on Tawakkul," *VFAST Transactions on Islamic Research* 12, no. 1 (2024): 1.

⁴¹ Agnieszka Bożek et al., "The Relationship Between Spirituality, Health-Related Behavior, and Psychological Well-Being," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (August 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01997>.

⁴² Giancarlo Lucchetti et al., "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>.

⁴³ David H. Rosmarin and Bethany Leidl, "Chapter 3 - Spirituality, Religion, and Anxiety Disorders," in *Handbook of Spirituality, Religion, and Mental Health (Second Edition)*, ed. David H. Rosmarin and Harold G. Koenig (Academic Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-816766-3.00003-3>.

harmony.⁴⁴ For example, an individual who fully internalizes the *shahada* strives to obey Allah's commands in all facets of life, including social interactions, by serving others, ensuring justice, and avoiding harm. Such conduct not only solidifies one's personal identity but also strengthens social cohesion, fostering environments conducive to the common good.⁴⁵

Moreover, the behavioral expression of the *shahada* serves as a continual reinforcement of one's spiritual commitment, solidifying the resolve to live in accordance with Islamic values. This supports the argument that behaviors aligned with deeply held beliefs contribute to a stronger sense of identity, fulfillment, and peace of mind.⁴⁶ Behavioral expression is also closely aligned with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Icek Ajzen (1991), which posits that actions are driven by intentions shaped by attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control.⁴⁷ Within a faith-based context, attitudes toward behavior reflect the conviction that following divine commandments is inherently beneficial. Subjective norms correspond to the expectations within the Muslim community, while perceived behavioral control relates to one's confidence in their ability to act in ways consistent with Islamic principles.

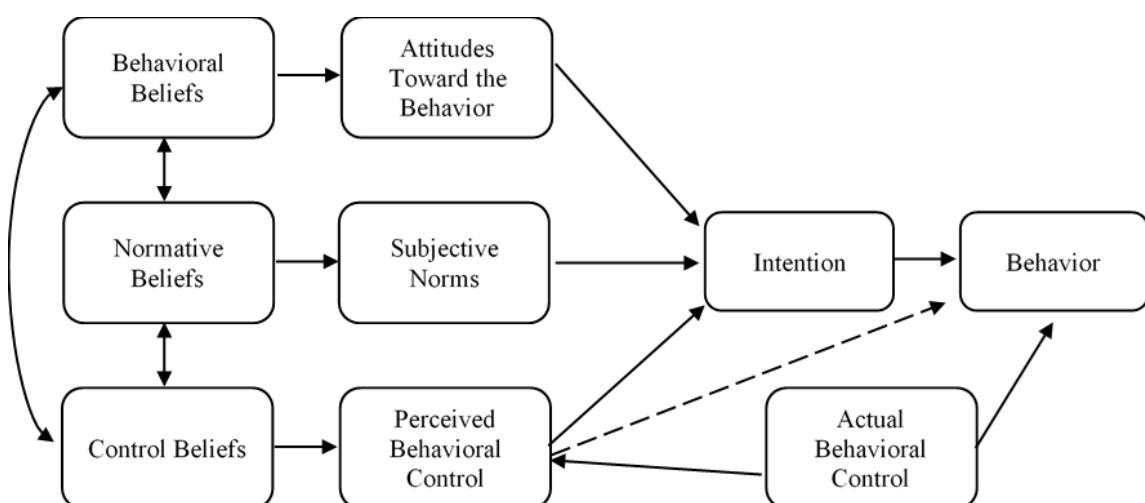


Figure 1. Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991)

Within the TPB framework, the behavioral expression of the *shahada* integrates cognitive beliefs and emotional commitment, which together form the intention to perform righteous deeds (*'amalan salihah*). This intention is driven by a positive attitude toward worship, the presence of sound religious practices within the Islamic community, and confidence in one's

⁴⁴ Miller-Perrin and Krumrei Mancuso, *Faith from a Positive Psychology Perspective*.

⁴⁵ Sukhamjit Kaur, "Effect of Religiosity and Moral Identity Internalization on Prosocial Behaviour," *Journal of Human Values* 26, no. 2 (2020): 186–98, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0971685820901402>.

⁴⁶ Seyma N. Saritoprak and Hisham Abu-Raiya, "Living the Good Life: An Islamic Perspective on Positive Psychology," in *Handbook of Positive Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality*, ed. Edward B. Davis et al. (Springer International Publishing, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-10274-5_12.

⁴⁷ Icek Ajzen, "The Theory of Planned Behavior," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, Theories of Cognitive Self-Regulation*, vol. 50, no. 2 (1991): 179–211, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T).

ability to fulfill these practices effectively. As a result, actions aligned with the principles of the *shahada* are more likely to manifest in daily life. Research has shown that the behavioral expressions of Islamic values significantly contribute to individual psychological well-being and broader social welfare.⁴⁸ When an individual's behaviors align with their core beliefs, it fosters internal congruence and reduces psychological conflict, thereby lowering stress levels and decreasing the likelihood of mental health issues. Furthermore, actions rooted in the *shahada* generate substantial societal benefits, including the formation of resilient and supportive communities that strengthen social networks and promote social cohesion.⁴⁹ By anchoring behavior within the framework of the *shahada*, Muslims ensure the development of a robust personal belief system that enhances both individual well-being and the welfare of the broader community.

Shahada's Contribution to Mental Health

For Muslims, faith serves as the fundamental foundation that shapes every aspect of psychological life. Faith in Islam is not confined to mere intellectual assent but involves deep emotional commitment and practical application in daily living. The *shahada*, as the central pillar of belief in Islam, demands not only verbal affirmation but also a profound understanding and sincere acceptance, grounded in seven essential conditions: *al-ilm* (knowledge), *al-yaqeen* (certainty), *al-ikhlas* (sincerity), *al-sidq* (truthfulness), *al-mahabbah* (love), *al-inqiad* (submission), and *al-qabul* (acceptance).⁵⁰ These conditions affirm the authenticity of the *shahada* and establish a solid foundation of belief that profoundly impacts the psychological makeup of a Muslim.

The interaction between the cognitive belief, emotional commitment, and behavioral expression components of the *shahada* creates a robust and integrated psychological framework that significantly contributes to the mental health and well-being of Muslims. Cognitive beliefs, derived from the *shahada* and reinforced by the assimilation of its seven essential conditions, form a foundational schema or cognitive framework. This schema shapes an individual's worldview, influencing their perceptions, interpretations, and responses to life's diverse events.⁵¹ A firm conviction in the principles of monotheism and prophethood promotes profound psychological and spiritual stability, which is crucial for maintaining mental health, especially in the face of life's stresses and uncertainties.⁵²

Cognitive beliefs in the oneness of Allah and the Prophet's role as His Messenger provide a solid foundation for a Muslim's life. These beliefs impart direction and meaning, shaping a structured worldview that helps individuals navigate life's challenges. Psychologically, such firm convictions can alleviate anxiety and depression. When one

⁴⁸ Abu-Raiya and Ayten, "Religious Involvement, Interpersonal Forgiveness and Mental Health and Well-Being Among a Multinational Sample of Muslims."

⁴⁹ Kaur, "Effect of Religiosity and Moral Identity Internalization on Prosocial Behaviour."

⁵⁰ Obaid bin Abdullah bin Sulaiman Al-Jabiri, *Facilitation by Allah in Explaining The Evidences of The Conditions of "La Ilaha Illa Allah"* (Jam'i'at Ihya' Minhaaj Al-Sunnah, 1995).

⁵¹ Pankin, "Schema Theory."

⁵² Mohsen Joshanloo, "Stability and Change in Subjective, Psychological, and Social Well-Being: A Latent State-Trait Analysis of Mental Health Continuum—Short Form in Korea and the Netherlands," *Journal of Personality Assessment* 105, no. 3 (2023): 413–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223891.2022.2098755>.

believes that all events unfold according to divinely ordained destiny, it fosters inner peace, reduces stress, and facilitates the acceptance of life's circumstances.⁵³⁵⁴

However, faith transcends mere cognitive belief. Emotional devotion to Allah and His Messenger strengthens these convictions, embedding them deeply within the heart. The emotional attachment generated by the *shahada* fosters a profound connection to Allah, forming the cornerstone of psychological well-being.⁵⁵ This emotional bond, marked by love, fear, and hope in Allah, offers a sense of security and optimism. Such attachment is crucial for maintaining emotional balance and reducing the risk of mental disorders, such as anxiety and depression (Koenig, 2012; Rosmarin & Leidl, 2020).⁵⁶⁵⁷ In psychological terms, this attachment parallels the secure attachment found in developmental psychology⁵⁸, where a secure relationship with God provides a foundation of safety and confidence. The interplay between cognitive belief and emotional attachment subsequently manifests in daily behaviors.

Behavioral expression, as a manifestation of the *shahada*, is embodied in actions of righteousness and 'good deeds.' These behaviors reflect an individual's internal convictions and emotional commitment. They include acts of worship, charity, and ethical conduct aligned with Islamic principles, both in one's relationship with Allah (habl min Allah) and in social interactions (habl min al-nas). Actions toward Allah encompass prayer (*salah*), fasting, and almsgiving, while behaviors toward others include prosocial activities, altruism, forgiveness, and ethical conduct.⁵⁹ These actions not only affirm faith and psychological commitment but also reinforce and deepen these dimensions: as individuals consistently perform behaviors aligned with Islamic teachings, they strengthen their beliefs and emotional attachment, fostering psychological stability.

Moreover, virtuous actions play a pivotal role in cultivating and maintaining positive social relationships, which are essential for sustaining mental health. Wickramaratne et al. (2022) note that the integration of cognitive beliefs, emotional commitment, and behavioral expressions grounded in the *shahada* creates a robust internal psychological support system.⁶⁰ This system enables individuals to lead more resilient lives, reduces vulnerability to mental illness, and provides a solid foundation for achieving overall mental health and wellness. The

⁵³ Syed Mohammad Hilmi Syed Abdul Rahman et al., "The Basic Model of Islamic Psychospiritual Treatment Based on Understanding and Appreciating the Concept of Destiny (Al-Taqdir)," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, July 2, 2023, 185–97.

⁵⁴ Wesley C. H. Wu et al., "Does Believing in Fate Facilitate Active or Avoidant Coping? The Effects of Fate Control on Coping Strategies and Mental Well-Being," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17, no. 17 (2020): 17, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17176383>.

⁵⁵ Bożek et al., "The Relationship Between Spirituality, Health-Related Behavior, and Psychological Well-Being."

⁵⁶ Harold G. Koenig, "Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications," *International Scholarly Research Notices* 2012, no. 1 (2012): 278730, <https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/278730>.

⁵⁷ Rosmarin and Leidl, "Chapter 3 - Spirituality, Religion, and Anxiety Disorders."

⁵⁸ Ainsworth, "Patterns of Infant-Mother Attachments."

⁵⁹ Harda Armayanto and Adib Fattah Suntoro, "Managing Religious Diversity: An Ihsan Approach," *Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam* 24, no. 1 (2023): 99–130, <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol25no1.4>.

⁶⁰ Priya J. Wickramaratne et al., "Social Connectedness as a Determinant of Mental Health: A Scoping Review," *PLOS ONE* 17, no. 10 (2022): e0275004, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0275004>.

harmonious interaction of deeply internalized beliefs, profound emotional attachment, and behaviors guided by the *shahada* creates the psychological balance necessary for leading a meaningful and resilient life.

The belief in divine destiny, when combined with contemporary methodologies such as telemental health services, has proven effective in alleviating stress and anxiety, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic in Saudi Arabia.⁶¹

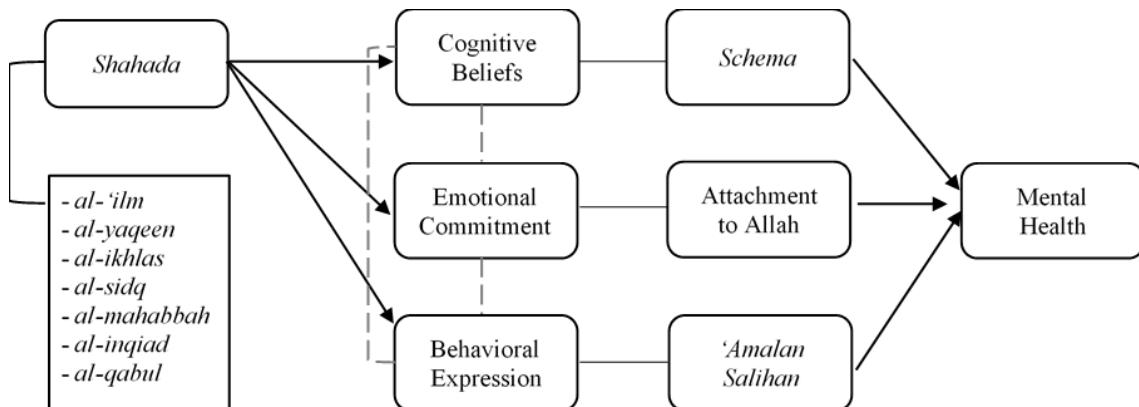


Figure 2. Psychological Model of *Shahada*

Conclusion

This study conceptualizes the shahada as a psychological construct comprising interconnected dimensions of cognitive belief, emotional commitment, and behavioral expression. Integrating classical Islamic theology with contemporary psychology, this model contributes theoretically by framing faith as a dynamic system that supports mental health and spiritual well-being. Future research may empirically operationalize these dimensions through scale development or qualitative inquiry to examine how internalizing the shahada influences psychological resilience and emotional balance. Practically, the model offers a foundation for faith-integrated counseling and mental health interventions, enabling practitioners to incorporate shahada-based reflection and behavioral alignment into therapeutic processes. In essence, the psychological dimensions of the shahada provide both a theoretical framework and a practical pathway for strengthening Muslim mental health through the integration of belief, emotion, and action.

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⁶¹ Fajar Ruddin and Sami Saeed Alzahrani, "Telemental Health Services during COVID-19 Outbreak in Saudi Arabia," *Asian Journal of Islamic Psychology*, 2024, 28–33, <https://doi.org/10.23917/ajip.v1i1.3712>.

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