
INTERNALIZATION OF TAWHID VALUES IN THE FORMATION OF SELF-ESTEEM: A RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY APPROACH

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Abstract

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The values of tawhid constitute the core of Islamic teachings, forming the foundation of all aspects of human spiritual and psychological life. In the study of religious psychology, the internalization of tawhid values is believed to play a significant role in shaping an individual's self-esteem. This article aims to explain how the principles of tawhid can foster healthy and stable self-esteem through an integrative approach that combines concepts from religious psychology and Islamic theology. The study employs a literature review method, examining Islamic texts and contemporary psychological works. The findings indicate that a deep understanding of tawhid fosters a sense of connection with God, reduces dependence on external judgments, and strengthens a complete and empowered self-identity.

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is one of the key elements in an individual's psychological well-being. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to have self-confidence, emotional stability, and the ability to build healthy social relationships. Conversely, low self-esteem can lead to anxiety, depression, and even deviant behavior.¹ In Islam, the development of self-esteem is viewed not only from a psychological perspective but also rooted in the spiritual dimension, particularly the values of *tawhid*. *Tawhid* is not merely a theological concept but also a guiding principle of life that shapes a person's perspective on themselves and their surroundings.²

Religious psychology, as a branch of psychology that integrates religious aspects into the understanding of personality, offers a holistic approach to explaining the relationship between *tawhid* values and the development of self-esteem.³ The internalization of these values serves as a framework for understanding a person's position before God, others, and themselves. A comprehensive understanding of *tawhid* instills the awareness that human beings are created with

¹ Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*. Princeton University Press.

² Al-Attas, S. M. N. (1979). *Islam and Secularism*. Kuala Lumpur: ABIM.

³ Jalaluddin, R. (2000). *Psikologi Agama*. Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada.

a purpose, honored as khalifah (vicegerents), and possess intrinsic value that does not depend on the recognition of others.⁴ These values shape...

This situation is further exacerbated by a competitive and individualistic culture that erodes spiritual values. This is where the importance of a religious approach comes into play in building stable self-esteem—through a deep understanding of *tawhid* values in both personal and social life.

The understanding of *tawhid* teaches that every human being is created with a clear purpose and intent. This fosters a positive self-perception, as one feels they hold an important place within the scheme of creation.⁵ Such awareness can reduce feelings of worthlessness, which often serve as a root cause of low self-esteem. *Tawhid* also provides a transcendental direction in life. From this perspective, life is not merely about seeking human approval but about attaining the pleasure of Allah. This liberates individuals from social pressures that impose unrealistic standards of self-worth.⁶

The integration of *tawhid* values in personality development leads individuals toward spiritual wholeness and emotional balance. A person who understands themselves as a servant of Allah and a *khalifah* on earth will find it easier to accept their shortcomings while continuously striving toward moral perfection.⁷ The strengthening of self-esteem through religious values is also consistent with the findings of several psychologists, which show that healthy religious beliefs correlate positively with higher levels of self-esteem. Faith in God fosters a sense of security, hope, and self-respect.

Religious education that incorporates the internalization of *tawhid* values from an early age serves as an important strategy in shaping a generation with mental resilience and self-confidence. Lessons on *tawhid* are not only aimed at strengthening *aqidah* but can also be optimized as a psychopedagogical approach. However, there is still little scientific research that specifically examines the relationship between the internalization of *tawhid* values and the formation of self-esteem from the perspective of religious psychology.⁸ In fact, the combination of Islamic spirituality and psychological theory can open new avenues for the development of Islamic-based educational and counseling interventions.

This study seeks to address that need by exploring in depth how the fundamental concepts of *tawhid* can serve as the foundation for developing strong, stable, and authentic self-esteem. The discussion is carried out through a conceptual and integrative interdisciplinary approach.⁹ By examining the relationship between *tawhid* and self-esteem, this article aims to contribute to the development of Islamic psychology theory as well as to educational and character-building practices rooted in spiritual values. In addition, this work is expected to encourage educators, counselors, and *da'wah* practitioners to strengthen the psychological dimension in the teaching of *tawhid*.¹⁰ Thus, the understanding of God's oneness does not merely stop at doctrine but becomes a force that shapes a healthy and noble self-identity.

Research Method

⁴ QS. Al-Isra: 70

⁵ Twenge, J. M. (2013). *Generation Me*. New York: Atria Books

⁶ Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*. Princeton University Press.

⁷ Jalaluddin, R. (2000). *Psikologi Agama*. Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada.

⁸ Al-Attas, S. M. N. (1979). *Islam and Secularism*. Kuala Lumpur: ABIM.

⁹ QS. Al-Hujurat: 13

¹⁰ Twenge, J. M. (2013). *Generation Me*. New York: Atria Books

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in library research to comprehensively explore the relationship between *tawhid* and self-esteem from the perspective of religious psychology. Data were meticulously gathered from a broad range of authoritative sources, including classical and contemporary Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir), authentic collections of hadith, foundational and advanced texts on religious psychology, as well as peer-reviewed scholarly articles addressing the core concepts of *tawhid* and self-esteem. The research process involved systematic literature review and critical analysis to ensure the validity and depth of the findings. To analyze the collected data, the study utilizes an integrative hermeneutic method, which merges traditional Islamic textual interpretation with contemporary psychological theories.

This method facilitates a nuanced understanding of the interplay between theological principles and psychological constructs, enabling the study to reveal how internalizing *tawhid* values shapes psychological well-being, particularly self-esteem. The integrative hermeneutics approach not only deciphers the spiritual meanings embedded in Islamic texts but also contextualizes them within modern psychological frameworks, allowing for an interdisciplinary dialogue. This analytical strategy supports the identification of thematic patterns, conceptual linkages, and practical implications for educational and counseling settings. By bridging religious insights and psychological analysis, the study aims to offer a holistic perspective on self-esteem formation grounded in Islamic spirituality.¹¹

Results and Discussion

The Concept of *Tawhid* as the Foundation of Psychospiritual Values

Literally, *tawhid* means the oneness of God.¹² In the context of the psyche, *tawhid* instills the understanding that everything originates from and ultimately returns to Allah. This awareness provides existential peace and a sense of security in navigating life..¹³ The internalization of *tawhid* values teaches that a person's worth is not determined by social status, wealth, or praise, but by piety and sincerity in living life.¹⁴ This concept essentially corrects the modern human tendency to evaluate oneself through materialistic standards.

Tawhid, as the core of Islamic teachings, not only carries a theological dimension that emphasizes the oneness of Allah but also holds psychospiritual power that influences the formation of human personality.¹⁵ *Tawhid* provides the foundation for a worldview that integrates the existential, moral, and emotional aspects of human life into a divine consciousness.¹⁶ The awareness of God's oneness fosters an attitude of humility, hope, and surrender in a healthy measure, while distancing humans from dependence on worldly, transient matters. This is the core psychospiritual value of *tawhid*: bringing inner stability through submission to the One and Only. This concept frees humans from the burden of seeking recognition solely from fellow beings, as *tawhid* teaches that a person's worth is determined by their relationship with Allah, not by material achievements or social status. This offers a new meaning in building self-esteem that is not dependent on external validation.¹⁷

¹¹ Pargament, K. I. (1997). *The Psychology of Religion and Coping*. New York: Guilford Press.

¹² QS. Al-Mu'minun: 115

¹³ Rahman, F. (1982). *Islam and Modernity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

¹⁴ Abu-Raiya, H., & Pargament, K. I. (2011). Religious Coping among Diverse Populations. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 3(1), 19–32.

¹⁶ Ricoeur, P. (1981). *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

¹⁷ Nasution, H. (2003). *Islam Rasional: Gagasan dan Pemikiran*. Bandung: Mizan

This concept liberates humans from the burden of seeking recognition solely from others, as *tawhid* teaches that a person's worth is defined by their relationship with Allah, not by material achievements or social status. This provides a new perspective on building self-esteem that is independent of external validation.¹⁸ When a person believes that they are a creation of Allah with a noble purpose, they are less likely to be drawn into an identity crisis. They know the direction of their life, feel they have a mission, and recognize their meaningful place within the scheme of creation. *Tawhid* becomes a source of values that affirms the meaning of existence.¹⁹

The values of *tawhid* also teach that everything belongs to Allah and is under His supervision. This provides peace of mind for those facing uncertainty, failure, or social rejection. *Tawhid* fosters the belief that no misfortune occurs except by His permission and under His control, thus making individuals psychologically stronger.²⁰ From the perspective of religious psychology, spiritual values such as *tawhid* function as a meaning system that governs human thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.²¹ When one internalizes *tawhid* as a way of thinking, values such as kindness, patience, sincerity, and hope become an integral part of their soul. This makes them more resilient to social pressure and inner turmoil.

Tawhid also encourages individuals to build healthy social relationships, as the awareness that all humans are creations of God fosters egalitarianism, tolerance, and compassion.²² Thus, *tawhid* serves not only as a belief system but also as a foundation for ethics and social regulation.²³ From this discussion, it can be concluded that *tawhid* is a fundamental value with great strength in shaping human psychological balance.²⁴ In the context of religious psychology, *tawhid* serves as a primary source for developing self-esteem that is stable, meaningful, and resistant to the fluctuations and pressures of the world.²⁵

Self-Esteem in the Perspective of Religious Psychology

In psychology, self-esteem is understood as a subjective evaluation of one's own worth and value. William James distinguishes between self-esteem derived from the "social self" and the "spiritual self," with the spiritual self being considered more stable and less dependent on external evaluations. Religious psychology emphasizes that spiritual values such as faith, gratitude, and *tawhid* serve as protective factors in maintaining the stability of an individual's self-esteem, especially when facing stress, failure, or social criticism. In general psychology, self-esteem is understood as a person's subjective assessment of their own worth. This concept is closely related to how individuals see themselves as valuable, capable, and worthy of love. In simple terms, self-esteem reflects whether a person feels "good enough" in navigating life.

In secular psychological theory, self-esteem is often associated with achievement, social recognition, and personal competence. A person with high self-esteem is generally confident, highly motivated, and capable of maintaining healthy relationships. Conversely, those with low self-esteem tend to feel unworthy, anxious, and dependent on external validation.²⁶

¹⁸ Rahman, F. (1982). *Islam and Modernity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

¹⁹ Al-Attas, S. M. N. (1979). *Islam and Secularism*. Kuala Lumpur: ABIM.

²⁰ Jalaluddin, R. (2000). *Psikologi Agama*. Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada

²¹ Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*. Princeton University Press

²² Mruk, C. (2006). *Self-Esteem: Research, Theory, and Practice* (3rd ed.). Springer Publishing Company.

²³ Pargament, K. I. (1997). *The Psychology of Religion and Coping*. New York: Guilford Press

²⁴ Abu-Raiya, H., & Pargament, K. I. (2011). Religious Coping Among Diverse Populations. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 3(1), 19–32.

²⁵ QS. At-Tin: 4

²⁶ Pargament, K. I. (1997). *The Psychology of Religion and Coping*. New York: Guilford Press

However, the religious psychology approach offers a deeper dimension to the understanding of self-esteem. In this perspective, self-worth is shaped not only by social environment and worldly achievements but also by a transcendental relationship with God. A strong spiritual connection is believed to strengthen self-respect, even in the midst of limitations and failures.²⁷ Religious psychology views healthy religious beliefs as a source of meaning, life direction, and identity.²⁸ When a person feels loved and cared for by God, they are more able to accept their shortcomings and see life as a process of spiritual growth rather than merely a worldly competition. In Islam, self-worth cannot be separated from the awareness of being a creation of Allah, made in the best form (*absani taqwim*). This perspective serves as a spiritual foundation that every human being inherently possesses noble value and potential, regardless of how the world judges them.

Self-esteem within a religious framework is also characterized by sincerity and gratitude. A sincere person does not measure their worth by human judgment but by the pleasure of Allah. Likewise, gratitude strengthens appreciation for the blessings within oneself, fostering positive feelings toward one's own existence. This religious dimension is especially important in facing the dynamics of modern life, which is full of pressure. Narrow social standards—such as appearance, wealth, or popularity—often become sources of stress and self-doubt. Healthy spirituality offers a way out by fostering self-esteem that is stable and not easily shaken. Contemporary psychological research also shows a positive correlation between religious involvement and high levels of self-esteem. Individuals who are active in religious activities, possess a religious sense of life meaning, and rely on God when facing challenges tend to have a healthier self-perception.

In the context of character development, the religious psychology approach can be utilized to shape students' self-esteem by strengthening their spiritual dimension. Education on *tawhid*, acts of worship, and the introduction to Allah's attributes function not only to increase faith but also to reinforce students' identity and self-worth.²⁹ Thus, religious psychology offers the understanding that true self-esteem stems from spiritual awareness and self-conception as a servant of Allah. This is a form of self-worth that is not easily swayed by praise or criticism, as it is grounded in values that are transcendent and eternal.³⁰

The Value of *Tawhid* as a Pillar in Shaping Self-Esteem

A properly internalized concept of *tawhid* will foster the belief that humans have a noble mission as servants of Allah and as khalifah on earth. This awareness shapes a positive and meaningful self-perception. When a person feels valued in the sight of Allah, they are not easily shaken by human judgment. Their self-esteem is rooted in spiritual values rather than solely in praise or social recognition.³¹

The values of *tawhid* in Islam encompass the acknowledgment that only Allah is worthy of worship and the sole source of reliance. This acknowledgment has a profound impact on how humans perceive themselves. From a psychological perspective, *tawhid* shapes self-esteem that is rooted in spiritual awareness rather than solely in external benchmarks. A believer who realizes that they are an honored creation of Allah will develop a positive view of themselves. They understand that their existence is not accidental but part of a meaningful divine plan. This

²⁷ Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*. Princeton University Press.

²⁸ Mruk, C. (2006). *Self-Esteem: Research, Theory, and Practice* (3rd ed.). Springer Publishing Company.

²⁹ Pargament, K. I. (1997). *The Psychology of Religion and Coping*. New York: Guilford Press.

³⁰ Abu-Raiya, H., & Pargament, K. I. (2011). Religious Coping Among Diverse Populations. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 3(1), 19–32.

³¹ QS. At-Tin: 4

awareness instills the value that their worth is not determined by human judgment but by the honor bestowed upon them by their Lord.³²

Tawhid instills the principle that humans have responsibilities as servants of Allah and as *khalifah*. This responsibility creates a strong psychological structure, as a person understands that their life has a purpose. Such a sense of responsibility becomes the foundation of healthy self-esteem: the conviction that their life is meaningful and significant in the sight of Allah. Moreover, *tawhid* teaches that the measure of a person's nobility in the sight of Allah is piety, not wealth, beauty, or status. By understanding this principle, individuals are not trapped in the desire to constantly please others. They focus on living with integrity, knowing that their worth is determined by their Lord.³³

The value of *tawhid* allows individuals to accept their shortcomings and weaknesses without losing self-respect. From the perspective of *tawhid*, humans are indeed created imperfectly, and this is part of Allah's decree. Recognizing these limitations is part of spiritual awareness that frees a person from the pressure to appear "perfect" in the eyes of others, while also fostering gratitude and inner peace. The internalization of *tawhid* values shapes a complete and stable self-perception. Individuals do not build their self-worth based on praise or social recognition, which can change at any time, but on a conviction rooted in faith and an intimate relationship with Allah. This is a form of self-esteem that is not easily shaken by the fluctuations of life's circumstances.

In practice, the values of *tawhid* can be instilled through education, habitual worship, and contemplation of Allah's creation. These activities strengthen the spiritual bond with God while deepening the meaning of one's existence as part of a larger life system. Research also shows that Muslim adolescents with a strong understanding of *tawhid* exhibit higher levels of self-esteem. They feel more confident, are better able to resist negative pressures from their environment, and have a clear life orientation.³⁴

The value of *tawhid* teaches that even when a person makes mistakes, the door of repentance is always open. This concept provides psychological space for individuals to avoid getting trapped in excessive guilt that can damage self-esteem. Instead, they are encouraged to keep improving themselves with hope, rather than engaging in destructive self-blame. Thus, the values of *tawhid* serve not only as the foundation for a vertical relationship with Allah but also as a primary pillar in building self-respect. *Tawhid* brings meaning, stability, and wholeness to the soul, which become the essential foundations of strong and healthy self-esteem.³⁵

The Impact of *Tawhid* on Emotional and Behavioral Regulation

³² Krause, N. (1995). Religiosity and self-esteem among older adults. *The Journals of Gerontology*, 50(5), P236-P246.
QS. Al-Baqarah: 30

³³ QS. Al-Baqarah: 30

³⁴ Abu-Raiya, H., & Pargament, K. I. (2011). Religious Coping among Diverse Populations. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 3(1), 19-32.

³⁵ Jalaluddin, R. (2000). *Psikologi Agama*. Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada.

The values of *tawhid* encourage emotional regulation through the awareness of human limitations and the sovereignty of Allah as the All-Regulator. This awareness creates inner peace, patience, and resilience in facing life's trials. A person with self-esteem rooted in *tawhid* tends not to easily hate themselves, feel inferior, or see themselves as a failure simply because of worldly standards. They perceive life as a valuable process of worship in the sight of Allah. *Tawhid*, as the core of Islamic teachings, not only shapes theological beliefs but also plays a crucial role in regulating human emotions and behavior. In religious psychology, understanding the values of *tawhid* can help individuals manage negative emotions and develop adaptive behaviors that align with moral and spiritual principles.³⁶

One of the main impacts of understanding *tawhid* is the creation of inner peace (*sakinah*). The belief that everything is under Allah's control and occurs by His permission helps individuals overcome anxiety, fear, and panic when facing life's trials. This fosters a more stable emotional balance, especially when confronting unexpected events. Emotional regulation through *tawhid* is also reflected in the attitude of *tawakkul* (trust in Allah). *Tawakkul* is not a passive stance but a conviction that after making one's best effort, the final outcome is entrusted to Allah. This attitude is highly effective in reducing excessive anxiety, despair, and anger caused by failure. In other words, *tawakkul* serves as a positive spiritual stress management mechanism.³⁷

Individuals with a strong awareness of *tawhid* tend to be more patient and tolerant in facing social pressures and interpersonal conflicts. Because their life orientation is not merely about seeking social recognition, they are better able to manage anger, envy, or grudges that often arise in social interactions. *Tawhid* reinforces self-control by bringing divine consciousness into every action. Behaviorally, the understanding of *tawhid* motivates individuals to maintain consistency between their thoughts, words, and actions. A believer who is aware that Allah is All-Seeing will be more cautious in their behavior, more honest, and more responsible.³⁸ This awareness shapes a strong moral character that is not easily influenced by external circumstances. *Tawhid* also gives rise to intrinsic moral awareness—that is, the motivation to do good driven by spiritual encouragement rather than by rewards or praise. This creates integrity within a person—they will continue to do good even when no one is watching. Here, it is evident that *tawhid* influences behavioral regulation from within, rather than through external pressure.³⁹

Another impact of *tawhid* is the emergence of genuine empathy and compassion toward others. When a person understands that all humans are creations of Allah, they become more willing to forgive, help, and refrain from acting superior. These positive emotions foster healthier and more peaceful social relationships. *Tawhid* also teaches that every action will be held accountable in the hereafter. This awareness creates strong self-control, especially in preventing deviant behavior. In this context, *tawhid* acts as an internal “filter” that influences actions without the need for constant external supervision.⁴⁰

From the perspective of religious psychology, *tawhid* serves as a spiritual resource (spiritual coping) that helps individuals endure stressful situations. People with strong faith tend

³⁶ Abu-Raiya, H., & Pargament, K. I. (2011). Religious Coping among Diverse Populations. *Psychology*

³⁷ Jalaluddin, R. (2000). *Psikologi Agama*. Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada.

³⁸ QS. Al-Isra: 70

³⁹ QS. Al-Baqarah: 30

⁴⁰ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah. (2002). *Madarij as-Salikin*. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr

to be more resilient, less prone to despair, and able to recover from setbacks.⁴¹ This demonstrates a direct connection between *tawhid* and internal psychological strength. Thus, it can be concluded that the values of *tawhid* function as mechanisms for regulating emotions and guiding behavior in daily life. *Tawhid* shapes a spiritual awareness deeply rooted in the soul, brings emotional tranquility, and guides individuals to live ethically, purposefully, and meaningfully.⁴²

CONCLUSION

The internalization of *tawhid* values is a crucial foundation in forming a stable and authentic self-esteem. Through awareness of the oneness of God and spiritual self-worth, individuals can build self-respect that does not depend on external judgment. The approach of religious psychology offers a strong conceptual framework to explain the connection between faith and psychological well-being, especially in the context of self-esteem. In an era full of distractions and social pressures, the internalization of *tawhid* values becomes an urgent necessity in education and character development.

⁴¹ QS. Al-Hujurat: 13

⁴² Al-Attas, S. M. N. (1979). *Islam and Secularism*. Kuala Lumpur: ABIM

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