



INTEGRATION OF THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION IN STRENGTHENING PARENTAL SELF-EFFICACY AND MANAGING PARENTING STRESS IN MUSLIM MOTHERS: A DESCRIPTIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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Abstract

The role of a mother is a trust (amanah) that involves psychological and spiritual readiness, while parenting demands may contribute to parenting stress and changes in parental self-efficacy (PSE). From an Islamic psychology perspective, spirituality may serve as a resource in responding to parenting challenges, yet how Muslim mothers experience and integrate this dimension remains underexplored. This study describes how Muslim mothers integrate Islamic spirituality in strengthening PSE and managing parenting stress. Using a qualitative descriptive phenomenological design, three Muslim mothers were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) seven stages. Six themes emerged: adaptation to the mother's role, parenting stress, parenting efficacy, spiritual coping, social support, and the meaning of motherhood. Participants described prayer (salat), dhikr, istighfar, supplication, religious study, and support from husbands as resources for emotional regulation and meaning-making. These practices were experienced alongside learning, self-reflection, and efforts to respond to children's needs, contributing to participants' confidence in their parenting abilities. Drawing on the experiences of three participants, the findings suggest that the religious context may shape how existing sources of self-efficacy are experienced and given meaning. Rather than proposing a structural revision of Bandura's theory, this study offers contextual insight into spirituality in parenting that warrants further testing with larger and more diverse samples.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Every mother carries a silent belief regarding her ability to carry out the maternal role. This belief is not always consciously formulated, but it works every time a mother decides how to calm a crying child, assesses whether she has been good enough in educating, or faces the recurring fatigue amidst household busyness. Bandura (1997) calls this kind of belief self-efficacy, which is a person's belief in their ability to organize and execute the actions required to achieve specific goals. When applied to the parenting context, Coleman and Karraker (2000) formulate it as parental self-efficacy (PSE), namely parents' beliefs regarding how capable they are of positively influencing children's development and behavior. Strong PSE is proven to be related to parenting competence, role satisfaction, and children's psychological adjustment (Jones & Prinz, 2005; Wittkowski et al., 2017), while low PSE risks increasing parenting stress which, if not managed well, can trigger unresponsive parenting patterns up to child abuse. This phenomenon is not merely a theoretical assumption.



Data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) recorded 1,714 cases of child abuse by biological parents in 2022, while Susilowati and Azzasyofia (2020) reported that out of 223 mothers with elementary and preschool-aged children, 75.34% experienced moderate parenting stress and 10.31% experienced high stress. Kiranawidhi (2023) also found that most working mothers with early childhood children were in the moderate parenting stress category (52.1%), whereas Spinelli et al. (2021) showed that many mothers, especially those running dual roles as workers and caregivers, still struggle with quite heavy parenting pressures, even though theoretically high PSE should protect them from such conditions (Asiyadi & Jannah, 2021).

Most studies on PSE and parenting stress have focused primarily on psychological, behavioral, and situational dimensions, while the spiritual dimension as a source of inner strength has received less phenomenological attention. Several empirical studies have begun to address this area. Julaieha et al. (2021) examined God-oriented multidimensional spiritual parenting among mothers experiencing high stress, while Muhdiar et al. (2019) specifically examined Islamic religiosity and parenting self-efficacy among mothers of toddlers in Indonesia. These studies indicate growing empirical interest in the relationship between religious or spiritual resources and parenting experiences. However, they do not fully describe how mothers themselves experience and internalize the integration of spirituality with their everyday parenting and self-beliefs. Complementing this empirical gap, Islamic psychology offers a perspective in which religious meaning can be considered alongside established psychological frameworks. Malik Badri (1979), for example, highlighted the importance of considering the religious and cultural context of Muslim experience rather than treating psychology and spirituality as unrelated domains.

From this perspective, low parental self-efficacy may potentially be associated with a sense of disconnection from one's primary source of strength, namely Allah a condition that shares conceptual similarity with what Pargament (1997) describes as religious/spiritual struggle. This interpretation is not intended to imply that low PSE is caused by spiritual disconnection or that all mothers with low PSE experience such a condition. Rather, it provides a tentative conceptual lens for examining whether and how mothers connect their self-beliefs with their religious lives. The belief that parenting is an amanah and a form of worship may also influence how parenting demands are appraised, potentially changing the meaning attached to stress and parental responsibility.

Conceptually, this integration can be understood through at least two possible pathways. First, spiritual practices such as prayer, dhikr, and istighfar may function as emotion-regulation resources that help reduce the intensity of parenting stress before it develops into stronger doubts about parenting competence. Second, religious meaning-making, such as viewing parenting as amanah and worship, may reshape how mothers appraise their parenting role and consequently how they understand their own capabilities. These pathways are proposed as a conceptual rationale rather than established causal mechanisms. Few studies have explored phenomenologically how this integration actually takes place, including when spirituality is brought into parenting, what forms it takes, and how mothers experience its relationship with PSE and parenting stress. Therefore, this study aims to describe and explore how the Islamic spiritual dimension is integrated by Muslim mothers in strengthening parental self-efficacy and managing parenting stress.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive phenomenology method. This approach was chosen because the research objective is to deeply understand and describe the participants' subjective experiences regarding parenting experiences regarding parenting experiences, self-belief as a parent, management of parenting stress, and the meaning of the Islamic Spiritual dimension in daily life, rather than testing causal relationship between variables (Agius, 2013). The researcher strives to live and understand the participants' experiences from their own perspective, without imposing preconceived theories (Creswell & Poth, 2018), in line with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) naturalistic inquiry paradigm which places research reality as something subjective and interactive. As the main research instrument, the researcher applied a bracketing or epoche procedure continuously to hold personal assumptions and experiences so that the understanding of the participants' experiences remains authentic.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling technique with a homogeneous sampling approach, where homogeneity referred to shared core experiences of the phenomenon rather than identical demographic characteristics. Inclusion criteria were: (1) Muslim mothers actively carrying out

parenting roles; (2) experiences related to parental self-efficacy, including both confidence and doubt in parenting abilities; (3) current or previous experiences of parenting stress; (4) some experience of integrating Islamic spiritual values or practices when facing parenting challenges, without requiring that this integration be experienced as positive, successful, or consistent; (5) able to deeply reflect on these experiences; and (6) willing to participate in in-depth interviews and provide consent through informed consent. Prospective participants were screened through initial communication and screening questions before the main interviews. Because the fourth criterion may introduce selection bias toward mothers who already engage with spirituality, the interview protocol used open-ended questions that also invited accounts of doubt, difficulty, inconsistency, or ambivalence in spiritual coping.

The number of participants followed the principle of data saturation, in line with methodological guidance for qualitative phenomenological inquiry, in which a small number of participants may be appropriate when the aim is an in-depth exploration of lived experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data collection was stopped when repeated readings of the transcripts and follow-up clarification no longer produced substantively new meanings or themes. In this study, saturation was judged from the recurrence and convergence of the six themes across the narratives of all three participants, rather than from participant count alone. Because the sample was small and purposively selected, this criterion is treated as analytic sufficiency within this study rather than evidence that thematic saturation would necessarily occur in other populations.

All interview were recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed verbatim. Data analysis followed Colaizzi's (1978) seven phenomenological stages: reading the interview transcripts repeatedly; extracting significant statements; formulating meanings from these statements; grouping words into themes; compiling a comprehensive description of the phenomenon; identifying the essential structure of the structure of the experience; and validating the results to the participants through member checking. Trustworthiness data was maintained through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria, namely credibility achieved through reviewing interview results and clarification to participants; transferability through the presentation of thick descriptions regarding each participant's experience context; dependability and conformability through meticulous and continuous data collection and analysis processes until data saturation was reached.

This research was conducted by upholding the ethical principles of qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Before the interview, the researcher explained the research objectives, procedures, potential risks, as well as the rights and obligations of the participants through an explanation sheet and informed consent compiled in one document, including the participants' right to refuse or withdraw at any time without negative consequences. Interview data is stored securely with access limited only to researchers, and participant identities are disguised using the codes P1, P2, and P3 to maintain confidentiality.

This research has obtained ethical approval from the International Open University Board of Research and Publications (IOUBRP) with Number ETHIC 104/06/26 dated June 4, 2026. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the interviews. Participants' identities are disguised using initials, and participants have the right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Participant Profiles and Variations in Experience

This study involved three Muslim mothers with diverse backgrounds and life contexts. All three actively carry out parenting roles and experience dynamics of parental self-efficacy and parenting stress, but their different life contexts present variations in how each integrates the spiritual dimension in her parenting. A summary of participant profiles is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Profiles and the Variation of Experience

Code	Age	Occupation	Family Context	Distinctive Experience
P1	40	Housewife (former career woman)	Married 15 years, 1 son (10 years)	Transitioned from a career woman to a full-time mother after moving cities; experienced multiple miscarriages before having a child.
P2	31	Islamic Bank Employees	2 closely spaced children (2 years and 1 year)	Working mother with two closely aged toddlers, assisted by two nannies.
P3	30	Teaching staff (PKBM)	2 children (toddler and 4-month-old baby), migrating in Papua	Performs multiple roles as wife, mother, and educator in a migration area without extended family support.

Source: Primary data from the researcher's analysis (2026)

These context differences act as an important backdrop to understand why the six themes discovered (adaptation to the mother's role, parenting stress, parenting efficacy, spiritual coping, social support, and the meaning of motherhood) emerged with different emphases in each participant, even though all three showed a similar experience structure.

Maternal Role, Parenting Stress, and Parenting Efficacy

All three participants described that becoming a mother brought significant changes in their lives, including increased responsibilities, adjustments to various roles performed simultaneously, changes in life priorities, and the demand to be physically and emotionally present for the child.

P1 described the role as a "full mommy" as a heavy responsibility: "Now I can be a full mommy and it turns out to be really heavy." (P1.1.2). P2, who has two children with a very close age gap, described the increased effort she had to put in: "Because I happen to have 2 children too. So I put more effort into preparing the children's needs." (P2.1.1). Meanwhile, P3 interpreted this increased responsibility as a maturation process, especially in emotional and mindset aspects: "When becoming a mother with various responsibilities and burdens, it makes me more mature, especially in terms of emotions and mindset." (P3.2.3).

Role adaptation was also seen in the shrinking of personal space and the complexity of roles that must be carried out simultaneously. P2, who previously had freer social activities, "often traveling with friends, hanging out like that" (P2.2.1), now feels "I have more responsibilities at home" (P2.2.2). P1 described housework and parenting as never-ending activities, "when at home, it seems like the work will never end" (P1.1.5). The most complex adaptation was experienced by P3, who carries out the roles of wife, mother, and educator while migrating without the support of her extended family: "my role is not only as a wife, not only as a mother but also as an educator" (P3.1.1), even bringing her children to her workplace, "I often bring the children to school with me to work" (P3.1.2).

In addition to physical presence, all three participants stressed the importance of emotional presence in accompanying the child's growth and development. P3 emphasized that a mother's role does not stop at raising children physically: "I don't just have to raise them but also I have to be with them. Be present with them physically and emotionally." (P3.12.5–P3.13.1).

These findings align with the transition to motherhood concept which views the process of becoming a mother not merely as a status change after childbirth, but an ongoing process of maternal identity formation, involving adjustments to abilities, behaviors, interpersonal relationships, and parenting responsibilities (Hwang et al., 2022). This adaptation process is also in line with Bandura's (1986) reciprocal determinism concept, which explains that behavior is formed through reciprocal interactions between personal factors, behavior, and the environment: parenting experiences, social support, and beliefs in one's abilities mutually influence each other during the adaptation process to the maternal role. Findings regarding adjustments to the demands of women's roles in the family context are also in line with Permana (2025), which shows that women can face emotional and psychological pressures, as well as complex role management demands.

In the Islamic perspective, this role adaptation is not merely a psychological change, but a form of accepting a trust (amanah). The Qur'an Surah At-Tahrim verse 6 affirms the responsibility of guarding the family from negligence, while Surah Luqman verse 14 honors the struggle of a mother in carrying and raising her child. Thus, the increased responsibilities felt heavily by P1, P2, and P3 can be read not only as a burden of social roles, but also as a spiritual trust inherent in the position of a mother.

The second theme shows that carrying out the role of a mother not only brings changes but also presents experiences of pressure in the form of physical and emotional fatigue, difficulties dealing with children's behavior, and limitations of time and energy. P1 associated physical exhaustion with her vulnerability to stress when facing a child who is difficult to direct: "When we are already tired, already exhausted and then the child doesn't obey, the child can already fight back, can already talk back." (P1.6.1–P1.6.2). This condition also affects P1's relationship with other family members, "the relationship with the child, with the partner. It definitely has an effect. If you're already in a bad mood, having a lot on your plate, it can affect everything" (P1.7.2). For P2, the pressure mostly appeared in the early phases of becoming a mother: "At first I was tired, heavy, couldn't think." (P2.2.4). The emotional impact was seen in mood changes, "more like just being in a bad mood, not wanting to do anything" (P2.7.3), although P2 still felt able to control the situation.

P3's experience shows a different source of pressure, namely the complexity of dual roles and resource limitations when her husband is assigned out of town: "Stress in parenting is when there is pressure or burden both physically and emotionally faced by a mother." (P3.8.1). "When my husband goes on duty, my energy is drained handling two children." (P3.9.1). Parenting stress in P3 even impacts her cognitive function and daily productivity: "the effect of stress can make me less focused" (P3.10.1) and "productivity decreases if, for example, in a state of stress" (P3.10.2).

Besides fatigue, the challenge of dealing with children's behavior and needs becomes its own source of stress. P1 felt pressure when the child "can no longer be managed, can no longer be advised" (P1.6.1–P1.6.2), including when accompanying the child to study before exams: "usually the child doesn't want to study right away so there's a lot of drama first" (P1.6.3). For P2, stress is more related to regulating the child's emotions like tantrums, whereas for P3 the pressure is related to the demands of raising two children with different needs simultaneously without the partner's help, "I am overwhelmed my dividing energy for that if the older brother is not around" (P3.9.3).

These findings are consistent with Abidin's (1992) Parenting Stress Index (PSI) model, which explains that parenting stress is the result of interactions between the parent domain, child domain, and situational domain. The physical and emotional fatigue experienced by all three participants reflects the parent domain, while children's behavior that is difficult to directly reflects the child domain, and the lack of partner support in P3 reflects the situational domain. This view is reinforced by Fang et al.'s (2024) systematic review which asserts that parenting stress is influenced by a combination of parent characteristics, child characteristics, and the parenting environmental conditions.

In the Islamic perspective, this experience of fatigue and feeling overwhelmed can be interpreted through the word of Allah in QS. Al-Baqarah (2): 286 that Allah does not burden a person except according to their capacity. This interpretation has the potential to become a source of psychological strength for mothers in facing parenting pressures, because the difficulties experienced are seen as trials that are within the limits of human capability and can be endured with Allah's help a framework of thinking that, as will be seen in the spiritual coping theme, is indeed actively utilized by all three participants.

After going through the adaptation process and facing various pressures, all three participants made efforts to build self-belief as parents through three pathways: increasing competence through continuous learning, developing emotion regulation, and strengthening through satisfaction with the child's development. P1 interpreted this process simply, "yes, we multiply our knowledge, right" (P1.2.2), while P3 expressed it more explicitly as a never-ending process: "A mother apparently does not just learn once but continues to learn every day." (P3.2.5). P3 also emphasizes that knowledge is the most primary effort in parenting, "the effort is that the most primary is knowledge" (P3.4.1), while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of mental readiness: "I must have mature mental readiness because it is that mature mental readiness that allows me to go through it well" (P3.13.4–P3.13.5).

Emotion regulation becomes the second pathway that helps all three participants remain capable of providing appropriate parenting responses, especially when facing challenging child behaviors. Meanwhile, the third pathway is visible from the satisfaction over the child's development, which the participants perceive as a reflection of their own success as parents. P1 felt this when "the child is academically successful as expected" (P1.3.1) and affirmed, "when the child succeeds, we

automatically feel we have succeeded in becoming parents" (P1.11.1). P3 felt a broader satisfaction, encompassing academic achievements, social behavior, up to the internalization of religious values: "A success that I consider great is when the children memorize prayers and understand their religion." (P3.5.3).

These experiences are consistent with Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy, mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological-emotional states while also showing that participants interpreted their competence through ongoing learning, emotional regulation, and perceived child development. This contextual interpretation is compatible with research showing that parenting self-efficacy is shaped by parenting experiences and interacting situational factors (Fang et al., 2021).

From an Islamic psychology perspective, the participants connected learning, self-control, and successful child development with the meaning of fulfilling an amanah. QS. Al-Mujadilah (58):11 and QS. Ali Imran (3):134 provide a religious frame for knowledge and self-control; in the present study, these references help explain the meaning participants attached to their parenting efforts rather than serving as evidence of a causal relationship.

Spiritual Coping, Social Support, and the Meaning of Motherhood

The fourth theme is the core finding of this study. All three participants use spiritual practices as a way to manage emotional conditions when facing parenting challenges, although the form of integration differs for each. For P1, spiritual practices work through a process of calmness followed by self-reflection. She described the changes she felt sequentially: "calmer, yes" (P1.10.1), "just clearer for thinking" (P1.10.2), up to "maybe the emotional aspect has decreased, already able to do self-introspection (muhasabah)" (P1.10.3), which ultimately made her "better able to manage the stress" (P1.10.4).

For P2, spiritual practices are used more directly as a pause when emotions rise: "If there is time for prayer (salat), pray first, to ease the emotions, after that, thank God, I can be calm again." (P2.8.1). Meanwhile, for P3, dhikr and istighfar have a dual function, namely obtaining calmness while serving as a reminder to control oneself: "Doing dhikr and istighfar makes the heart calmer. Istighfar is a reminder to calm myself down." (P3.12.2–P3.12.3).

Besides functioning to regulate emotions, spiritual practices also help participants reinterpret their maternal responsibilities. For P3, this was seen in the effort to build sincerity, "awakening my sincerity as a mother in raising children" (P3.12.5). The forms of religious practices used also varied according to each individual's needs: P1 highlighted worship and reflection more, "with lots of worship, praying a lot more to Allah" (P1.8.1) through "prayer, Qur'an recitation (tilawah), reflection (tadabbur)" (P1.8.2); P2 used prayer (prayer) as a source of strength, "just pray, pray a lot" (P2.10.1); while P3 attended religious studies to renew her spiritual condition, "attending taklim or studies to recharge my faith again" (P3.12.4).

Viewed through Pargament's (1997) religious coping framework, the participants' use of prayer, dhikr, istighfar, reflection, and religious study functioned as resources for managing pressure, seeking meaning, and restoring a sense of control. The accounts also resemble positive religious coping described by Pargament et al. (1998), although the present phenomenological design does not permit a general conclusion about psychological outcomes beyond the participants' reported experiences.

From an Islamic psychology perspective, P1's sequence of calmness, clearer thinking, and muhasabah can be read alongside the concept of tazkiyatun nafs, while P2's use of salat as an emotional pause and P3's use of dhikr and istighfar as reminders of self-control illustrate how religious practices were embedded in everyday self-regulation. These interpretations suggest a contextual link between spiritual practice and emotion regulation without establishing a causal mechanism.

The fifth theme shows that the ability to carry out the mother role does not solely depend on individual capacity, but also on support from the surrounding environment, especially the husband. For P3, the husband not only helps with parenting tasks but also becomes someone who helps maintain self-control: "I always remind my husband, I tell him always, for example, if I err or I am negligent in managing my child, I say please remind me." (P3.4.4). Community support was also mentioned, although with a much more limited intensity compared to partner support. P1 described, "community, uh sometimes, yes, occasionally" (P1.9.2), indicating that the community serves as an additional source of support outside the nuclear family, not the primary support source.

These accounts are consistent with research describing social support as relevant to women's management of family demands and well-being (Sirajuddin & Permana, 2018). Permana and Aliyyatussa'adah (2024) further highlight the importance of communication and emotional support in

couple relationships. In the present study, husband support was experienced as both practical assistance and a reminder that helped participants maintain self-control, while community support appeared less central in the narratives.

From an Islamic psychology perspective, the participants' descriptions can be understood alongside QS. Ar-Rum (30):21, which associates marriage with tranquility and mutual relational meaning. This provides a contextual interpretation of the husband's support rather than evidence that religious teaching itself caused the reported supportive behavior.

The final theme illustrates that the experience of becoming a mother ultimately shapes a deeper meaning of the motherhood role itself. All three participants interpreted motherhood as a trust (amanah) given by Allah, albeit with different emphases. P1 emphasized that religion must be the top priority in educating children, "religion must be number one, especially for children" (P1.11.2). P2 interpreted the parent's role as a form of trust from Allah: "Being a parent itself is heavy because Allah entrusts us with trust. Entrusted until they grow up, until their manners are good, everything comes from the parents." (P2.3.1–P2.3.2). P3 explicitly stated that "a child is a trust" (P3.4.3), and even interpreted the process of educating children as a deed with worship value, "this is our continuous charity (amal jariyah) too" (P3.6.2), accompanied by a sense of gratitude, "also grateful because Allah makes it easy to educate children" (P3.6.3).

The meaning of motherhood is also reflected in the awareness of the importance of full presence, as affirmed by P3, "be present with them physically and emotionally" (P3.12.3), indicating that the moral responsibility of motherhood does not stop at fulfilling children's basic needs but demands active involvement in every stage of their growth and development.

These findings can be understood through meaning-making perspectives in which values, goals, and beliefs shape how individuals interpret demanding experiences. Within Pargament's (1997) framework, religious meaning-making may provide a way of organizing parenting challenges around valued commitments. In this study, the participants' understanding of motherhood as amanah, worship, and full presence therefore appears to have been part of how they made sense of their parenting responsibilities.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that, for the three participants, becoming a mother involved intertwined psychological, social, and spiritual experiences. Role changes and parenting demands were accompanied by parenting stress, while learning, emotion regulation, social support, and spiritual coping were described as resources for responding to these demands. Spiritual practices such as salat, dhikr, istighfar, supplication, and religious study appeared in participants' accounts as resources for emotional regulation, while the meaning of parenting as amanah and worship provided a framework for understanding their responsibilities. Support from husbands also appeared to reinforce participants' efforts to manage parenting demands.

Rather than proposing a structural revision to Bandura's social cognitive theory, this study offers a contextual proposition: the religious meanings and practices described by these three participants may shape how existing sources of parental self-efficacy are experienced and internalized by Muslim mothers. This proposition should not be generalized beyond the present sample and invites further testing with larger and more diverse participants and, where appropriate, quantitative or mixed-method designs.

Taken together, the six themes suggest a dynamic process rather than a single linear pathway. Changes in the maternal role and new demands were accompanied by parenting stress, while participants described learning, emotional regulation, social support, and spiritual coping as resources for responding to those demands. Across the three narratives, the spiritual dimension appeared particularly in two interconnected forms: emotion regulation through practices such as salat, dhikr, and istighfar, and meaning-making through understanding parenting as amanah and worship. These accounts are consistent with the broader view that religious beliefs and practices can serve as psychological resources in difficult experiences (Pargament, 1997; Hartono & Permana, 2026).

These findings suggest a conceptual proposition rather than an established theoretical revision: in Muslim mothers, religious context may shape how Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy—mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological-emotional states—are experienced and given meaning. Faith in Allah, expressed through daily spiritual practices and the

interpretation of parenting as amanah, appears in this study to function as a contextual layer that colors how the three participants interpreted and internalized these existing sources, rather than as a separate fifth source outside Bandura's framework. This proposition emerges from three participants' experiences and requires further empirical testing before broader theoretical claims can be made.

This study has several limitations. First, the sample consisted of only three purposively selected Muslim mothers, so the findings cannot be generalized and should be understood as context-specific descriptions of lived experience. Second, the data relied on retrospective self-report and did not include source triangulation through spouses or direct observation of parenting interactions. Third, the inclusion of participants with some experience of spiritual integration and the sensitive nature of religious topics may have contributed to selection and social desirability bias, including underreporting of religious doubt, conflict, or experiences that felt spiritually pressuring. Future qualitative research could recruit participants with more varied religious experiences and family contexts, while quantitative or mixed-method research could test the relationships among spirituality, PSE, and parenting stress.

Practically, the findings suggest that family counseling and parenting support for Muslim mothers may benefit from exploring both parenting skills and the spiritual meanings and practices that mothers already use, without assuming that religious coping is always positive or effective. Counselors and parenting practitioners can provide space for mothers to describe whether spiritual practices help, do not help, or sometimes create additional pressure. For couples, the findings also suggest the relevance of husbands' emotional and practical involvement as a complementary resource alongside mothers' individual coping..

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