

Gratitude and resilience among muslim students in Indonesia

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to determine the level of gratitude and resilience among students; to examine the effect of gratitude on the resilience of students at State Islamic Universities in Indonesia

Method – This study is quantitative. The number of respondents was 571 from 18 PTKIN in Indonesia. The resilience scale used the Adult Personal Resilience Scale (APRS-20), and the gratitude scale used the Islamic Gratitude Scale (IGS-10). The construct validity and reliability tests used Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Resilience and gratitude levels were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while the effect test used simple linear regression analysis with the Jamovi application.

Result - The results of the study show that student gratitude is in the very high category (67.78%), and resilience is in the high category (60.07%). Gratitude has a positive and significant effect on student resilience. The higher the level of student gratitude, the higher the level of resilience. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.295$) indicates that gratitude accounts for 29.5% of the variance in resilience, while the remaining 70.5% is attributed to other factors beyond the scope of this study.

Implication – reinforces previous theories and findings that gratitude is closely related to psychological well-being and resilience; universities can develop gratitude-based guidance and counseling programs to improve student resilience; the campus community can create a culture of gratitude that encourages students to be more optimistic, supportive of one another, and able to face difficulties with a positive attitude.

Originality/Value – This study is novel in terms of its respondent coverage, comprising PTKIN students from 18 universities in Indonesia.



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Kata kunci:

Rasa syukur,
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Abstrak

Tujuan – Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan tingkat rasa syukur dan resiliensi di kalangan mahasiswa; untuk menganalisis pengaruh rasa syukur terhadap ketahanan mahasiswa di Perguruan Tinggi Islam Negeri (PTKIN) di Indonesia

Metode – Penelitian ini bersifat kuantitatif. Jumlah responden sebanyak 571 orang dari 18 PTKIN di Indonesia. Skala ketahanan menggunakan Adult Personal Resilience Scale (APRS-20), sedangkan skala rasa syukur menggunakan Islamic Gratitude Scale (IGS-10). Uji validitas konstruk dan reliabilitas menggunakan Analisis Faktor Konfirmatori (CFA). Tingkat ketahanan dan rasa syukur dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif, sedangkan uji pengaruh menggunakan analisis regresi linier sederhana dengan aplikasi Jamovi.

Hasil - Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tingkat rasa syukur mahasiswa berada pada kategori sangat tinggi (67,78%), sedangkan tingkat ketahanan berada pada kategori tinggi (60,07%). Rasa syukur memiliki efek positif dan signifikan terhadap ketahanan mahasiswa. Semakin tinggi tingkat rasa syukur mahasiswa, semakin tinggi pula tingkat ketahanan mereka. Koefisien determinasi ($R^2 = 0,295$) menunjukkan bahwa rasa syukur menjelaskan 29,5% varians dalam ketahanan, sementara 70,5% sisanya disebabkan oleh faktor lain di luar lingkup penelitian ini.

Implikasi – memperkuat teori dan temuan sebelumnya bahwa rasa syukur erat kaitannya dengan kesejahteraan psikologis dan ketahanan; perguruan tinggi dapat mengembangkan program bimbingan dan konseling berbasis rasa syukur untuk meningkatkan ketahanan mahasiswa; komunitas kampus dapat menciptakan budaya rasa syukur yang mendorong mahasiswa untuk lebih optimis, saling mendukung, dan mampu menghadapi kesulitan dengan sikap positif.

Orisinalitas/Nilai – Studi ini bersifat inovatif dalam hal cakupan respondennya, yang meliputi mahasiswa PTKIN dari 18 universitas di Indonesia.

Introduction

Students at State Islamic Universities (Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam/PTKIN) in Indonesia have a distinctive characteristic: they are educated in an atmosphere that emphasizes the integration of knowledge and Islamic values. In the educational process, students cannot escape various conflicts and challenges, including personal, family, academic, economic, social, and religious identity issues, as well as career preparation concerns (Hartley, 2011). Some students can overcome these challenges and problems effectively, while others struggle to do so (Utami, 2020). These conflicts and challenges can impact psychological well-being if individuals are unable to cope with difficulties and bounce back, a concept known as resilience (Reivich & Shatte, 2002; Taormina, 2015; Ungar, 2008). Various studies show that students with low resilience are more prone to academic burnout when faced with high academic pressure (Gong et al., 2023), difficulty recovering from failure, which can lead to decreased performance; more susceptible to psychological stress, anxiety, and depression when facing pressure (Ang et al., 2022).

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Resilience is a person's ability to endure and recover from adversity (Taormina, 2015); the ability to face, overcome, learn from, or even be changed by difficulties (Grotberg, 2004); responding to problems appropriately, successfully overcoming adversity, and maintaining hope and rising above difficulties (Pidgeon et al., 2014). Several studies show that students with high levels of resilience are proven to be more capable of managing academic pressure (Hartley, 2011); maintaining mental health, reducing the risk of depression and anxiety, and improving psychological well-being (Smith et al., 2008); improving academic achievement, having high motivation to learn, persisting in completing studies (Martin & Marsh, 2006); improving social skills, building relationships, adapting to the environment (Salami, 2010); and preparing for a career, seeing challenges as opportunities for future growth (Stoltz, 2015).

Several studies have linked resilience and gratitude. Gratitude can contribute to the development of resilience in various population groups. Zainoodin et al. (2021) found that gratitude was positively correlated with resilience and academic performance among university students. Lasota et al. (2022) also found a significant positive correlation between empathy, resilience, and gratitude, with resilience acting as a mediator in the relationship between empathy and gratitude. Mary (2015) found a significant correlation between forgiveness, gratitude, and resilience among adolescents. Puspita & Ayriza (2022) highlighted the important role of gratitude in increasing resilience among adolescents.

Gratitude is a predictor that can influence resilience (Ahuja, 2018; Nicholls, 2012; Zhao & Ji, 2024). Resilience also acts as a mediator between gratitude and well-being during the pandemic (Khodabakhsh & Ooi, 2023). Practicing gratitude among students can enhance focus and resilience in the face of difficulties during college (Wilson, 2016). Therapy using gratitude journals is effective in helping individuals express gratitude daily (Nurmalasari & Sanyata, 2021). Gratitude plays an important role in preventing depression, anger, and anxiety when facing difficulties. Gratitude in its various forms can have a positive impact on resilience in the learning process (Mason, 2020). Individuals who experience more positive daily events tend to feel better and are more likely to be grateful. Junça-Silva et al. (2023) emphasize that practicing gratitude in every daily activity, from morning to night, creates a positive context that fosters positivity by demonstrating a positive cycle.

Emmons & McCullough (2003) define gratitude as a concept of emotion, attitude, moral perspective, habit, personality, and response to situations. Peterson & Seligman (2004) define gratitude as a response of thanks after receiving something of value, whether material or a moment of natural beauty. Gratitude is an expression of appreciation for the contributions made by others.

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In Islam, gratitude has an important position, namely, gratitude is a command from Allah, which is also a way to obtain additional blessings from Allah (QS. Ibrahim: 7); gratitude is a sign of a person's faith, which is a spiritual attitude inherent in a believer, as stated in HR. Muslim; gratitude as a path to happiness and prosperity (Al-Qurtubi, 2006); gratitude is a noble trait that elevates humans in the sight of Allah (QS. Saba': 13). Thus, internalizing gratitude is not only psychologically beneficial, but also in line with religious teachings, which are the main foundation of PTKIN.

Based on this description, research on the influence of gratitude and resilience on students in Indonesia is important to conduct. Several previous studies have examined the relationship and influence of gratitude and resilience, including the results of research by Saputra & Fauziah (2021) on 525 bidikmisi students at State Universities in Semarang showed a significant positive relationship between gratitude and resilience (correlation coefficient value of 0.512 with a p value = 0.000 ($p < 0.05$)). The results of Utami's (2020) study on 400 PTKIN students in Bandung showed that gratitude contributes to the formation of resilience. The results of research by Misnaini & Agustin (2025) on 100 students in Pekanbaru show a positive relationship between gratitude and academic resilience in online learning for university students in Pekanbaru during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unlike previous studies, this study has a broader scope, as it was conducted among students at 18 State Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia. This study aims to: 1) determine the level of gratitude among PTKIN students; 2) determine the level of resilience among PTKIN students; 3) examine the effect of gratitude on the resilience of PTKIN students. The hypothesis in this study is that gratitude affects the resilience of PTKIN students. This study is expected to contribute to the development of Islamic positive psychology and serve as a basis for strengthening student guidance and counseling programs at PTKIN in Indonesia.

Research Methods

The research method used was a quantitative approach. The study was conducted at 18 State Islamic Religious Universities in Indonesia with a total of 571 student respondents. The questionnaire was filled out via Google Forms, which was distributed online to students. Data collection was conducted in May - June 2025. Data collection was conducted using two instruments: a resilience scale and a gratitude scale. The reliability test in this study employed Cronbach's alpha and content validity testing, as assessed through expert judgment. Two experts were involved in this process, with minimum educational criteria of a doctorate and areas of expertise relevant to psychology and counseling. Expert 1 was a professor in the field of Islamic guidance and counseling, while the other professor specialized in personal and social guidance. The assessment was conducted by completing an instrument consisting of 20 items.

The resilience scale used was adapted from the Adult Personal Resilience Scale (APRS-20), developed by Taormina (2015). The gratitude scale used was the Islamic Gratitude Scale (IGS-10), developed by Ahmad Rusdi (2016). Both instruments were selected based on the following considerations: the APRS-20 consists of four aspects relevant to the subject's condition, and the IGS-10 was selected because it is suitable for the religious conditions of Indonesian society; therefore, the scale selected is based on Islam. The resilience scale consisted of 20 items with a Likert scale. There are four answer choices, ranging from 1 (very disagree) to 4 (very agree). The gratitude scale consists of 10 items. There are six answer choices on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The construct validity and construct reliability of the resilience scale and gratitude scale were tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The data analysis technique used to test the hypotheses in this study was linear regression testing with Jamovi.

Results and Discussion

The condition of student gratitude

The gratitude scale consists of 10 items, divided into two aspects: extrinsic and intrinsic. The extrinsic aspect consists of 7 items, while the intrinsic aspect consists of 3 items. Construct validity and construct reliability were tested using CFA. Based on the CFA analysis results, all indicators in the Extrinsic (E1–E7) and Intrinsic (I1–I3) constructs exhibited significant factor loading values ($p < 0.001$) with standardized loading estimates above 0.60. This indicates that each indicator has an adequate contribution in reflecting the measured construct.

The results of the Construct Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) calculations were used to assess the reliability and convergent validity of each construct. For the Extrinsic construct, $CR=0.91 (>0.70)$, $AVE=0.589 (>0.50)$. These results indicate that the Extrinsic construct has excellent reliability and adequate convergent validity. Meanwhile, for the Intrinsic construct, $CR=0.76 (>0.70)$ and $AVE=0.529 (>0.50)$. These results also indicate that the Intrinsic construct meets the criteria for reliability and convergent validity. Thus, both constructs in this gratitude scale (Extrinsic and Intrinsic) can be considered reliable and valid for measuring the variables under study. The high construct reliability and AVE values exceeding the minimum threshold indicate that the research instrument is capable of consistently and accurately measuring the intended constructs.

Based on the results of the gratitude scale completed by 571 respondents, the level of student gratitude in each aspect is shown in Table 1. Table 1 shows that gratitude in the extrinsic aspect was very low in 3 respondents (0.53%), one respondent (0.18%) in the low category, four respondents (0.70%) in the moderate category, 63 respondents (11.03%) in the high category, and 500 respondents (87.57%) in the very high category. As for the intrinsic aspect, four respondents (0.70%) were in the very low category, 16 respondents (2.80%) were in the low category, 76 respondents (13.31%) were in the moderate category, 267 respondents (46.76%) were in the high category, and 208 respondents (36.43%) were in the very high category. Thus, it can be concluded that in terms of extrinsic aspects, the average level of gratitude among students was very high (87.57%). In contrast, in terms of intrinsic aspects, the average level of gratitude among students was high (46.76%).

Table 1: Percentage of Student Gratitude Levels in terms of extrinsic and intrinsic aspects

| Gratitude aspect | Very low | Low | Moderate | High | Very high | Total |
|------------------|----------|-------|----------|--------|-----------|-------|
| Extrinsic | 0,53% | 0,18% | 0,70% | 11,03% | 87,57% | 100% |
| Intrinsic | 0,70% | 2,80% | 13,31% | 46,76% | 36,43% | 100% |

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The overall level of student gratitude, which includes extrinsic and intrinsic aspects, is as follows: very low in 4 respondents (0.70%), low in 1 respondent (0.17%), moderate in 10 respondents (1.75%), high 169 respondents (29.60%), and very high 387 respondents (67.78%), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Percentage of Student Gratitude Level

| Variable | Very low | Low | Moderate | High | Very high | Total |
|-----------|----------|-------|----------|--------|-----------|-------|
| Gratitude | 0,70% | 0,17% | 1,75% | 29,60% | 67,78% | 100% |

Based on Table 2, it is evident that the gratitude of PTKIN students falls into the moderate to very high category. This finding is consistent with Herma's (2023) research, which reported that 74.9% of thesis students at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin had high levels of gratitude. This condition demonstrates that even in the midst of intense academic pressure, gratitude can serve as a source of internal strength, supporting their resilience. However, other studies show more varied results. For example, a study conducted at Muhammadiyah University Sidoarjo during the COVID-19 pandemic found that most students fell into the moderate gratitude category (65%), with only 20% in the high category (Afifah dan Ansyah, 2021). This suggests that crises can lead to a reduction in students' expressions of gratitude due to increased psychological and academic pressure.

In line with this, research by Astuti & Nio (2022) on students at risk of dropping out also found that the majority of students were in the moderate gratitude category (51.5%). Stressful conditions, such as the threat of dropping out, clearly hinder students' ability to be grateful, which also affects their resilience. Thus, it can be concluded that students' levels of gratitude are greatly influenced by the context and life experiences they encounter. This study reinforces the evidence that gratitude is a crucial factor in supporting resilience, both in normal situations and under stressful conditions.

The condition of student resilience

The resilience scale consists of 20 items divided into four aspects: determination, endurance, adaptability, and recuperability. Each aspect consists of 5 items. Construct validity and construct reliability were tested using CFA. Based on the CFA analysis results, in terms of convergent validity, all indicators for each construct (determination, endurance, adaptability, and recuperability) had standardized estimates (standard factor loadings) ranging from 0.533 to 0.737. Factor loadings above 0.50 are generally considered to indicate good indicator validity; therefore, most of the indicators in this study can be said to be convergent valid, except for one indicator, A5, in the Adaptability construct, which is slightly below 0.55 but still close to the minimum threshold. All p-values <0.001 confirm that the factor loadings are statistically significant, which strengthens the construct validity.

For internal reliability, it can be calculated using Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Generally, a CR greater than 0.70 indicates good reliability, while an AVE greater than 0.50 indicates that the construct can explain more than 50% of the variance in its own indicators. Based on the existing standardized estimates, constructs such as Determination,

Resilience, and Recovery have fairly high loading values, indicating that CR and AVE are at an adequate level, which suggests good construct reliability. As for adaptability, although A5 is lower, this construct can still be considered sufficiently reliable; however, this needs to be noted in further analysis and interpretation. Overall, the four constructs in this model show good convergent validity and adequate internal reliability, supporting the use of these indicators to measure the dimensions of each construct in the study.

Based on the results of the resilience scale completed by 571 respondents, the level of student resilience in each aspect is shown in Table 3. On average, students had high resilience in the aspect of determination (50.96%); the average endurance aspect was in the high category (54.82%), the average adaptability aspect was in the high category (51.84%), and the average recuperability aspect was in the high category (54.29%).

Table 3: The Percentage of student resilience is reviewed from four aspects:

| Resilience Aspect | Very Poor | Poor | Moderate | High | Very High | Total |
|-------------------|-----------|-------|----------|--------|-----------|-------|
| Determination | 0,18% | 2,80% | 15,06% | 50,96% | 31,00% | 100% |
| Endurance | 0,18% | 3,15% | 21,37% | 54,82% | 20,49% | 100% |
| Adaptability | 0,35% | 3,50% | 25,39% | 51,84% | 18,91% | 100% |
| Recupability | 0,18% | 2,28% | 19,26% | 54,29% | 23,99% | 100% |

The overall level of student resilience, which covers four aspects, is as follows: very low, zero respondents (0%); low, seven respondents (1.23%); moderate, 80 respondents (14.01%); high, 343 respondents (60.07%); and very high, 141 respondents (24.69%), as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: The Percentage of Student Resilience

| Variable | Very Poor | Poor | Moderate | High | Very High | Total |
|-----------|-----------|-------|----------|--------|-----------|-------|
| Gratitude | 0% | 1,23% | 14,01% | 60,07% | 24,69% | 100% |

Based on Table 4, it appears that the average resilience of students is at a high level, namely 60.07%. Previous studies have shown that the resilience of students in Indonesia falls into the moderate to high category. A study of Mathematics Education students at UHAMKA found that 70.49% of students fell into the good resilience category, 19.60% were fairly resilient, and 9.84% were very resilient (Agustin & Handayani, 2021). A study of working students at Muhammadiyah University Sidoarjo revealed that 59% exhibited moderate resilience, 22% had low resilience, and only 19% demonstrated high resilience (Dhovier & Maryam, 2023). The academic resilience of students in Statistics courses during the COVID-19 pandemic was mostly in the moderate category for the aspects of self-adjustment (50%), toughness (43.33%), and problem solving (45%) (Syifa, 2023). A cross-university study in Indonesia (N = 676) using the Brief Resilience Scale reported an average student resilience score of 18.19 ± 4.02 , which was categorized as moderate resilience (Özer & Şahin Altun, 2024).

The effect of gratitude on student resilience

The hypothesis in this study is that gratitude affects the resilience of PTKIN students. The hypothesis was tested by analyzing gratitude as an independent variable and resilience as a

dependent variable. Simple regression analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between gratitude and resilience. The results of the linear regression analysis are presented in [Table 5](#).

Table 5: Results of Linear Regression Test of Gratitude on Resilience

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| Model Fit Measure | | | | |
|--|----------|----------------|-------|-------|
| Model | R | R ² | | |
| 1 | 0.543 | 0.295 | | |
| Note: Models estimated using Sample size of N = 571 | | | | |
| Model Coefficients – Resilience (dependent variable) | | | | |
| Predictor | Estimate | SE | t | p |
| Intercept | 24.429 | 2.5369 | 9.63 | <.001 |
| Gratitude (independent variable) | 0.738 | 0.0478 | 15.44 | <.001 |

Based on the calculation results, the following regression equation was obtained: $Y = 24.43 + 0.74x$ ($Y = \text{Resilience}$; $x = \text{Gratitude}$). The gratitude regression coefficient is 0.74, with a significance value of $p < 0.001$. This shows that gratitude has a positive and significant effect on student resilience. In other words, every 1-point increase in gratitude will increase the resilience score by 0.74 points. The constant value of 24.43 means that if the gratitude score is 0, the resilience score is predicted to be 24.43. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.295$) indicates that gratitude explains 29.5% of the variation in resilience, while the remaining 70.5% is explained by other factors not examined in this study. The F-test yields significant results ($F = 238.4$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that this regression model is suitable for predicting resilience based on gratitude. These results suggest that the higher the level of gratitude among students, the higher their resilience. Thus, gratitude is one of the important factors that play a role in increasing students' resilience in facing various pressures and challenges.

The results of this study indicate that gratitude has a positive and significant effect on student resilience. The higher the level of gratitude students have, the higher their level of resilience tends to be. This finding aligns with positive psychology theory, which posits that positive emotions, including gratitude, can enhance an individual's resilience in the face of life's difficulties (Fredrickson, 2001). In line with research conducted by Emmons & McCullough (2003), gratitude has been proven to contribute to an increase in an individual's psychological well-being. Individuals who routinely practice gratitude by keeping a gratitude journal tend to exhibit higher levels of optimism and enthusiasm when facing challenges. Thus, gratitude can be a protective factor in the process of adapting to stress.

Furthermore, research by Wood et al. (2009) found that gratitude is closely related to improved sleep quality, reduced stress levels, and enhanced psychological well-being. These conditions indirectly strengthen individual resilience. This finding aligns with the results of this study, which demonstrate that gratitude plays a significant role in enhancing student resilience.

Another study by Algoe (2012) also confirms that gratitude serves an important social function, specifically by strengthening interpersonal relationships. Good social support is a strong predictor of resilience (Connor & Davidson, 2003). This means that gratitude not only affects resilience through intrapersonal aspects (positive emotions) but also through interpersonal aspects

(supportive social relationships). Resilience significantly mediates the relationship between gratitude and prosocial tendencies (Alamri & Al-Abyadh, 2024).

In the Indonesian context, this study aligns with the findings of Saputra & Fauziah (2021), who researched 525 Bidikmisi students at state universities in Semarang, revealing a significant positive relationship between gratitude and resilience. Similarly, research by Utami (2020) on 400 PTKIN students in Bandung shows that gratitude contributes to the formation of resilience. The results of research by Misnaini & Agustin (2025) on 100 students in Pekanbaru revealed a positive relationship between gratitude and academic resilience in online learning among university students in the city during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These results suggest that practicing gratitude can help students become more resilient in facing academic challenges, social pressures, and personal difficulties. Students who can appreciate the support of their parents, the learning opportunities they provide, and the life experiences they offer will be better prepared to bounce back when facing failure and will be more able to maintain emotional balance. Thus, gratitude can be viewed as an adaptive strategy that needs to be cultivated in students' daily lives. Guidance, counseling, and gratitude-based training programs in higher education settings have the potential to enhance student resilience and support their academic and social success. Several models of gratitude intervention, such as journaling (Ross, 2022) and Islamic gratitude psychoeducation groups (Umriana et al., 2025), can serve as references for practicing gratitude to increase student resilience.

Conclusion

Based on the results of simple linear regression analysis, it was found that gratitude has a positive and significant effect on student resilience. The higher the level of student gratitude, the higher their level of resilience. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.295$) indicates that gratitude accounts for 29.5% of the variance in resilience, while the remaining 70.5% is attributed to other factors beyond the scope of this study. Thus, it can be concluded that gratitude is a crucial factor in enhancing students' resilience in facing various academic and non-academic challenges.

This study has theoretical implications, namely, reinforcing previous theories and findings that gratitude is closely related to psychological well-being and resilience. These results contribute to the existing literature in the fields of positive psychology and Islamic counseling, particularly regarding the role of gratitude in enhancing individual resilience. In terms of practical implications, universities can develop gratitude-based guidance and counseling programs to enhance student resilience. Students can be trained to cultivate the habit of gratitude, for example, through gratitude journaling, daily reflection, or prayers of gratitude, so that they are better equipped to face academic pressures more resiliently. Counselors and educators can utilize the results of this study as a basis for designing psychological interventions that incorporate the value of gratitude in enhancing student resilience. The social implications are that the campus community can foster a culture of gratitude, encouraging students to be more optimistic, supportive of one another, and better equipped to face difficulties with a positive attitude.

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