

Review Article

Spirituality and Religious Practices as Resilience of Urban Poor Families: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Studies on urban poor families often focus on physical, economic, financial, and educational aspects with a lesser emphasis on spiritual and religious growth. Nonetheless, the spiritual and religious growth of the family is fundamental to the family's resilience. Previous studies have demonstrated that incorporating spiritual and religious aspects into the support framework for urban poor families can enhance their overall resilience and well-being. Neglecting spiritual and religious aspects presents an incomplete picture of urban poor family support and development. Hence, this review aims to examine the relationship between spirituality and religious practices, and urban poor family resilience by employing a systematic literature review approach. The PRISMA method is used to provide a structured framework for the review. Following an analysis of 31 articles, six distinct themes were identified: spirituality as a source of inner strength, the strength of social relationships, the meaning of life and hope, religious practice and spiritual strengthening, religious education in the family, and religion and coping skills. This review contributes to current knowledge by understanding the significant relationships that exist between spiritual and religious aspects and resilience. It also offers recommendations for future research directions and informs the authorities, communities, and family organizations in improving aid programs by focusing on spiritual development and the well-being of urban poor families.

Keywords: Religious practices, resilience, spirituality, urban poor families

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INTRODUCTION

The quality of familial life depends greatly on several family dynamics and the surrounding environment. These elements include family relationships, effective communication, family members' commitment to their roles and responsibilities, as well as values which

encompass norms, customs, traditions, and established family rules.

For families that value religion as a way of life, it serves as a foundation for achieving prosperity and happiness. Religion significantly influences the development of the family ecosystem because religious and spiritual values imbue family life with meaning. Religiosity refers to the formal, community-oriented expression of faith, often linked to adherence to organized religious doctrines and practices, such as rituals, worship, and teachings (Arrey et al., 2016; Koenig et al., 2001). It involves interpersonal and institutional engagement, reflecting structured, society-based beliefs and practices related to a higher power, often guided by religious institutions or cultural norms (King & Crowter, 2004; Peterman et al., 2002). In Islam, it includes dimensions such as belief in Allah, the Five Pillars, religious experience, and adherence to Islamic principles in daily life (El-Menouar, 2014). These values encompass reliance on God, the cultivation of a balanced lifestyle, nurturing interpersonal relationships, and effective problem-solving skills. In essence, religion closely intertwines with aspects of familial well-being and mental health.

However, spirituality is not necessarily related to the concept of the divine (Asih et al., 2020). Spirituality emphasizes individual experiences and personal quests for meaning, purpose, and transcendence beyond material concerns, which may or may not connect to organized religion (Brinkerhoff & Jacob, 1987; Hill et al., 2000). It includes practices like meditation or prayer and fosters a relationship with the sacred, focusing on

interconnectedness with a transcendent being (Chaves & Gil, 2015; Dein, 2005). In the Islamic perspective, spirituality is deeply tied to the concept of ruh (spirit) and vicegerency (khalifah), fostering a connection between humans, God, and the universe (Abdullah, 2022). Spiritual aspects can be associated with the elements of human experience that relate to the non-physical or metaphysical dimensions of life. These aspects are often deeply personal and can vary between individuals and cultures. Different individuals, cultures and beliefs describe varying natures of spiritual dimensions, such as exploring oneself, being mindful, finding inner peace and showing compassion (Mata-McMahon et al., 2020).

In families experiencing poverty, the risk of stressful episodes is elevated because family stability is largely dependent on the availability of financial resources. Families experiencing financial struggles are prone to displaying signs of distress, such as physical and mental health issues, children dropping out of school, social challenges, and difficulties in planning for the future (Jamil & Che Mat, 2014; Mohd Zin et al., 2019).

In the context of urban poor families residing in large cities, life is more complex than in conventional poverty situations. Khalid (2016) noted that families living in urban areas often face challenges such as inadequate access to housing, physical infrastructure, essential services, economic resources, healthcare, social safety nets, and opportunities for family development. In addition, the rapid pace of urban development, rising population

density and increased competition for job opportunities have contributed to making life more challenging for the urban poor, even in relatively prosperous and developed cities (Asian Development Bank, 2014; Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2019). Due to the high cost of living, individuals experiencing urban poverty often struggle to meet their primary needs, such as a balanced and nutritious diet, appropriate clothing, a proper place to live, and other basic non-food needs like quality education (Dora & Halim, 2011; Rosida, 2018). These issues must be efficiently addressed to ensure that the social structure or ecosystem among urban poor families is not weakened.

A weak family ecosystem can have a negative implication on the psychological health of its members. Emotions that are disturbed by urban poverty can lead to feelings of restlessness, fear, and anger towards one's situation. This may also affect self-stability, resulting in a lack of self-confidence, poor problem-solving ability, and a lack of tolerance for disappointment (Banovcinova et al., 2014; Dora, 2000). The factors directly relate to the concept of family resilience when faced with life's problems. Family resilience refers to the ability of poor families to rise above hardships and the pressures of poverty. This is because the psychological impacts caused by poverty on poor families require strong resilience to address effectively (Arshat et al., 2018). It plays a vital role in ensuring that a family can maintain stability and enjoy family harmony and happiness. According to Richardson (2002), resilience in the face of poverty brings feelings of hope

and control over life, as it empowers family dynamics. Through resilience, a family gains the foundation to act, which in turn strengthens each member's self-efficacy.

Resilient families are typically able to adapt to risky situations and life's stressful challenges (Subra et al., 2019). Conversely, members of families with low resilience are often seen to be scattered or disorganized, and less able to overcome the intriguing factors facing themselves and their families. Therefore, each aspect of family development is vital to ensure that family members have the resources to build and strengthen their family's resilience. The ability to remain steadfast when dealing with poverty and to adapt to difficult circumstances is a key factor in maintaining and improving aspects of familial well-being.

With that being said, this article will focus on spiritual and religious aspects, which are one of the most important criteria of family development, in the context of improving the resilience of urban poor families.

PRIOR STUDIES

As stated earlier, poverty negatively impacts the family system, particularly the relationship among its members. A study by Yusof et al. (2020) found that poverty and hardship are the primary contributors to conflict between spouses and often lead to domestic abuse. In addition to affecting parents, poverty also impacts their children's well-being. It is reported that children living in poverty suffer from increased deficits

in memory, language use, learning, and cognitive abilities (Jakovljevic et al., 2016).

The crisis of poverty disrupts not only the quality of life of a single family but also the well-being of a society as a whole. Social problems such as drug abuse, domestic violence, pregnancy out of wedlock, baby abandonment, family disputes, excessive jealousy among spouses, and infidelity are reported more frequently among vulnerable families living in poverty (Manshor et al., 2020). These issues underscore the multifaceted impact of poverty on family dynamics and societal health. Therefore, it is vital for poor families to ensure that their sustainability and dynamics can be maintained even under severe pressure or crises (Foy et al., 2011). Adapting to stressful circumstances must occur quickly in order to minimize adverse consequences for the family.

Despite the challenges of high living costs, urban poor families are generally able to survive, due to the adequate support from both government and non-governmental organizations. This support plays a crucial role in helping these families navigate and endure difficult circumstances. The allocation of cash aid, housing programs, educational and entrepreneurial training, as well as healthcare services, is a critical form of such support (Chamhuri & Ismail, 2019). However, according to Chamhuri and Ismail (2019), this support may not always be fully effective, since it sometimes leads to a lack of self-reliance among poor families due to an over-dependence on the aid.

Initiatives for strengthening the resilience of urban poor families should not focus solely

on physical needs but should also prioritize spiritual factors and elements of religious behavior. Spiritual and religious elements could be one of the keys in encouraging poor families to face their poverty. For example, religious behavior has an effect on mental health, which leads to positive attitudes and lifestyles among individuals (Wahid et al., 2011). Additionally, the increased score of the Indeks Kesejahteraan Keluarga from 2016 to 2019 is attributed to spiritual and religious behavior (National Population and Family Development Board, 2019). The findings indicate that the measured indicators of spiritual and religious behavior, such as religious beliefs and convictions, religious actions and practices, including worship, rituals, and morality, are pivotal in enhancing the well-being of families in Malaysia.

In a wider context, studies have shown that spirituality and resilience have a dynamic relationship in other regions and cultures. (Gava, 2013; Kumar et al., 2023; Mtapuri & Mazengwa, 2013; Singh, 2015; Wodon, 2018). However, the impact of spirituality on resilience varied depending on cultural and religious contexts. In certain cultures, communal religious practices and strong social integration within religious communities provide significant support, enhance resilience and facilitate growth and healing. In other instances, personal spiritual practices, including meditation and spiritual personal reflections, played a significant role. These studies indicated that spiritual beliefs and practices, either internal or external, appeared to be present throughout humans' lives.

Thus, this article is written to seek a better understanding of the importance of spirituality and religious practices in ensuring the sustainability of urban poor families by exploring the literature associated with this matter. The questions addressed in the article are as follows:

- (1) What is the relationship between spiritual aspects and the resilience of urban poor families?
- (2) What is the relationship between religious practice and the spirituality of urban poor families?

METHODS

This is a qualitative study employing the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. This approach is used to identify, evaluate, and interpret the findings related to the topic in an in-depth and structured manner. The texts sampled for this article relate to empirical studies that include discussions and critical debates on spirituality, religion, spiritual values, and religious practices, as well as the relationships between these aspects and the concept of resilience among urban poor families. This SLR approach is beneficial as it provides a detailed picture of a situation, issue or phenomenon, enabling a comprehensive and structured analysis of existing research by synthesizing findings from multiple studies. Unlike the conventional literature review approach, the SLR approach focuses on specific texts to address predetermined research questions, offering a more structured and comprehensive analysis. When reporting the literature review, the Transparent Reporting

of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method is used to provide a structured framework for the review (Moher et al., 2015; Salleh et al., 2023; Shaffril et al., 2018). It includes a flow diagram to visually present the study selection process and guides the reporting procedure of the review. This method allowed a thorough search for terms related to spirituality, religion, and religious practices, and mapped out existing empirical studies on urban poor families' resilience.

Systematic Literature Analysis Procedure

The study employed a three-step process for SLR, consisting of identification, screening, and eligibility (Shaffril et al., 2018). The first step, identification, involves searching for articles that discuss spiritual and religious aspects, religious practice, and their relationship with the concept of resilience among urban poor families. This procedure utilized multiple and varied keywords to search for pertinent articles.

There are five main keywords with subcategories. Each text sample is carefully selected in accordance with the research questions. Journal texts are extracted from authoritative databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, APA PsycNet, PubMed, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, and other peer-reviewed journals that emphasize the research topic.

The databases selected for this study were chosen for their reputation and recognized credibility in the academic community. Scopus and Web of Science are renowned

for their rigorous indexing processes and high-quality standards (Pranckutė, 2021), offering extensive coverage of journals across various fields, including sociology, religion and psychology. APA PsycNet and PubMed, which focus on psychology and mental health (Falzon et al., 2010), are relevant for exploring resilience and coping skills among urban poor families. ERIC contributed educational articles, while Google Scholar and Semantic Scholar were

used as supplementary tools to identify additional relevant studies not indexed in the other databases. Table 1 delineates the keywords of the searched method.

The second phase is the screening process, which focuses on relevant criteria before accepting or discarding selected articles. The selection of criteria, including the publication period from 2010 to 2024, aims to prioritize contemporary discussions that are pertinent to the evolving

Table 1
The search strings

Database	Search String
Web of Science	TS= ((spiritual*) AND (religio*) AND (resilien* OR endurance OR perseverance) AND (poverty OR poor) AND (family))
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ((“spiritual”* “resilien”* “urban poor family”*) AND (“religio”* OR “religious practices” OR “religious beliefs” OR “religious affiliation”) AND (“resilien”* OR “coping, endurance” OR “perseverance” OR “coping strategies” OR “coping skills”) AND (“poverty” OR “urban poor” OR “extreme poverty” OR “ <i>asnaf</i> ” OR “ <i>fakir</i> ” OR “ <i>daiif</i> ”) AND (“intervention” OR “spiritual therapy” OR “spiritual recovery” OR “religious therapy”))
APA PsycNet	Any Field: spiritual AND Any Field: religion OR Any Field: religious AND Any Field: belief AND Any Field: resilience AND Any Field: urban AND Any Field: poverty
Pubmed	((“spiritual”[All Fields] OR “spirituality”[MeSH Terms] OR “spirituals”[All Fields]) AND (“religion”[MeSH Terms] OR “religion”[All Fields] OR “religion s”[All Fields]) AND (“resilience, psychological”[MeSH Terms] OR “psychological resilience”[All Fields] OR “resilients”[All Fields]) AND (“poverty”[MeSH Terms] OR “poverty”[All Fields]) AND (“intervention s”[All Fields] OR “methods”[MeSH Terms] OR “interventional”[All Fields]))
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)	“Spirituality and Religious Practices” Spirituality and religion poor families Spirituality, religion, resilience poor families Spirituality, religion, resilience, coping skill urban poor families
Google Scholar	“Spiritual” AND “religious” AND “resilience” OR “endurance” AND "family" AND "poor" AND “coping strategies” OR “coping skills” AND “poverty” OR “poor” OR “urban poor” OR “extreme poverty” OR “ <i>asnaf</i> ” OR “ <i>fakir</i> ” OR “ <i>daiif</i> ” OR “pressures of poverty” AND “intervention” OR “spiritual therapy” OR “spiritual recovery” OR “psychosocial” OR “religious therapy” OR “psychological therapy
Semantic Scholar	“Spiritual” AND “religious behaviour” OR “religion” AND “resilience” OR “endurance” AND "family" AND "poor" AND “coping strategies” OR “coping skills” AND “poverty” OR “poor” OR “urban poor” OR “extreme poverty” AND “intervention” OR “spiritual therapy” OR “spiritual recovery” OR “psychosocial” OR “religious therapy” OR “psychological therapy

dynamics of urban poverty and family resilience. The inclusion of English and Malay as the languages of analysis aligns with the local context and researchers’ linguistic proficiency, thereby ensuring effective comprehension and interpretation. Furthermore, the focus on original research guarantees that the data utilized is primary and directly addresses the phenomenon under investigation. Meanwhile, the chosen fields of study, such as religion, social sciences, humanities, and psychology,

offer multidisciplinary insights essential for exploring the intricate relationship between spirituality, resilience, and urban poverty. In this process, a total of 389 out of 499 texts were analyzed using the above approach. The accepted articles met a set of criteria, as shown in Table 2.

In selecting the articles from relevant literature, the eligibility phase was conducted manually. Figure 1 shows a flow diagram of the article selection process as adapted by Shaffril et al. (2019). This phase is used to

Table 2
The inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Year of Publication	2010–2024	Before 2010
Type of Research	Original research: PhD thesis, journal article, conference proceedings.	Other than original research.
Language	English or Malay	Other than English or Malay
Field of Study	Religion, social science, the humanities, psychology.	Other than religion, social science, the humanities, psychology.

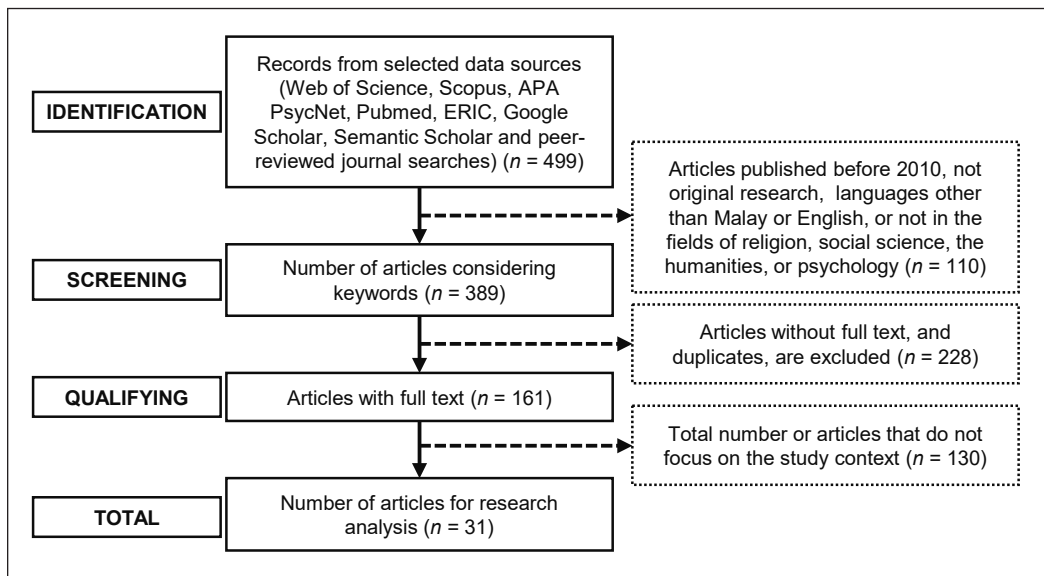


Figure 1. Article selection process flowchart
Source: Shaffril et al. (2019)

identify any repeated articles or those that did not fit the research theme or selection criteria. The study found that only 31 articles were relevant for SLR analysis. The texts are analyzed using descriptive synthesis which involves describing the contents of the text in a narrative fashion. This analysis approach allows the findings to be discussed in relation to the research questions.

Quality Appraisal

The quality appraisal was conducted using the Mixed-Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) developed by Hong et al. (2018) to ensure the methodological rigor and analysis of the selected studies were completed satisfactorily. In this study, the quality appraisal focused on two types of research, namely qualitative research and quantitative descriptive research as shown in Table 3.

For qualitative studies, the MMAT emphasized key criteria, including the alignment of research questions with the

provision of sufficient data, the adequacy of qualitative data collection to address the research questions, and the coherence between data sources, data collection methods, analysis, and interpretation. These criteria were applied to ensure the inclusion of studies with a robust methodological framework and thorough analysis.

In evaluating quantitative descriptive studies, the MMAT applied criteria such as the suitability of the sampling strategy to the research questions, the sample’s representativeness to the target population, the appropriateness of measurement tools, and the adequacy of the analytical techniques. Each article was assessed based on five criteria, with responses categorized as “yes,” “no,” or “can’t tell.” Articles were included in the review when they passed at least three of the five criteria. Based on this assessment, 24 articles met all five criteria, four articles fulfilled four, and three articles satisfied three criteria as shown in Table 4.

Table 3
The criteria used to determine the rigor of the methodology and analysis used in the selected articles

Research Design	Assessment Criteria
Qualitative	QA1: Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?
	QA2: Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?
	QA3: Are the findings adequately derived from the data?
	QA4: Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?
	QA5: Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?
Quantitative	QA1: Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question?
	QA2: Is the sample representative of the target population?
	QA3: Are the measurements appropriate?
	QA4: Is the risk of nonresponse bias low?
	QA5: Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?

Source: Hong et al. (2018)

Table 4
Results of the quality assessment

Study	Research Design	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	Number of criteria fulfilled	Inclusion in the review
Mahoney (2010)	QL	√	√	X	√	√	4/5	√
N. A. A. Aziz (2011)	QL	√	√	X	√	√	4/5	√
Laher & Khan (2011)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Yalawae et al. (2011)	QL	√	X	√	√	√	4/5	√
Wahid et al. (2011)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Rahman (2012)	QL	√	X	X	√	√	3/5	√
Mohd Nor (2013)	QL	√	X	X	√	√	3/5	√
Jodi et al. (2014)	QN	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Doolittle et al. (2015)	QN	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Hamren et al. (2015)	QN	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Puteh & Mamat (2015)	QN	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Munawiroh (2016)	QL	√	√	X	X	√	3/5	√
Mustaffa et al. (2017)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Hussin et al. (2017)	QN	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
St. Vil et al. (2017)	QL	√	√	√	X	√	4/5	√
Borgia et al. (2018)	QN	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Finka & Prasetya (2018)	QN	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Leng et al. (2018)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Ahmad & Mohd Noor (2018)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Wahidah (2018)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Zaim & Salleh (2019)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Musa & Sa'ari (2019)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Khan & Tantray (2019)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Villani et al. (2019)	QN	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
A. R. A. Aziz et al. (2020)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Hamilton et al. (2020)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Sahid et al. (2020)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Suhaimi et al. (2021)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
El-Khani et al. (2023)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Meitasari et al. (2023)	QN	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
Peleg & Peleg (2024)	QN	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√

Note. QA= Quality assessment; QN= Quantitative; QL= Qualitative

Data Extraction and Analysis

The articles in the review were thematically analyzed to synthesize data from diverse research designs, using Flemming et al. (2019) thematic synthesis approach due

to its flexibility. The process followed the steps outlined by Kiger and Varpio (2020). First, researchers familiarized themselves with the data through repeated readings to understand the dataset. This

approach provided them with a thorough understanding of the raw data, forming the groundwork for subsequent stages.

In the second step, the researchers generated initial codes. At this stage, they systematically organized the data into detailed and specific components. They carefully reviewed all selected articles to extract any information relevant to the primary research question. The third step focused on generating themes. Using an inductive coding framework, the researchers identified patterns, similarities, and relationships within the extracted data. Themes were developed directly from the coded data, ensuring alignment with the original dataset and accurately reflecting its content. This process resulted in the identification of nine main themes. The next stage involved evaluating and refining the developed themes to ensure their relevance and coherence.

FINDINGS

Out of the 31 articles which were analyzed, 16 research project were carried out in Malaysia (Ahmad & Mohd Noor, 2018; A. R. A. Aziz et al., 2020; N. A. A. Aziz,

2011; Hussin et al., 2017; Jodi et al., 2014; Leng et al., 2018; Mohd Nor, 2013; Musa & Sa’ari, 2019; Mustaffa et al., 2017; Puteh & Mamat, 2015; Rahman, 2012; Sahid et al., 2020; Suhaimi et al. 2021; Wahid et al., 2011; Yalawae et al., 2011; Zaim & Salleh, 2019); four in Indonesia (Finka & Prasetya, 2018; Meitasari et al., 2023; Munawiroh, 2016; Wahidah, 2018); five in the United States (Borgia et al., 2018; Doolittle et al., 2015; Hamilton et al., 2020; Mahoney, 2010; St. Vil et al., 2017), two in South Africa (Hamren et al., 2015; Laher & Khan, 2011); and, one in Italy (Villani et al., 2019), in United Kingdom (El-Khani et al., 2023), in India (Khan & Tantray, 2019), in Israel (Peleg & Peleg, 2024). The number of articles is summarized in Figure 2.

As shown in Figure 3, the majority of the studies employed a qualitative design, comprising of 21 research projects (Ahmad & Mohd Noor, 2018; A. R. A. Aziz et al., 2020; N. A. A. Aziz, 2011; El-Khani et al., 2023; Hamilton et al., 2020; Mahoney, 2010; Mohd Nor, 2013; Munawiroh, 2016; Mustaffa et al., 2017; Khan & Tantray, 2019; Laher & Khan, 2011; Leng et al., 2018; Rahman, 2012; Musa & Sa’ari, 2019;

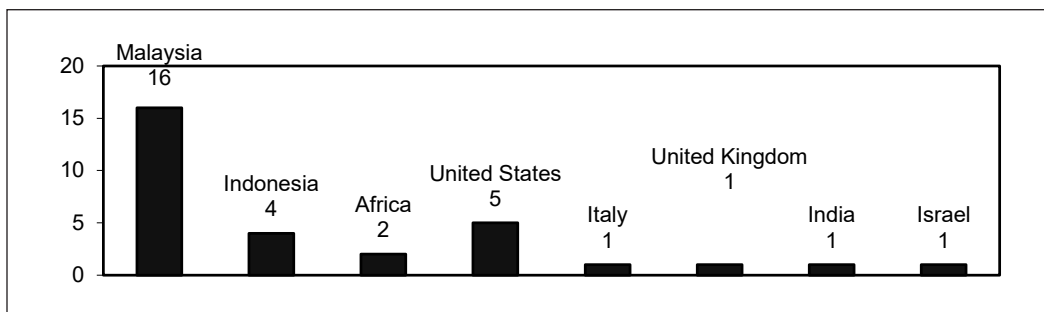


Figure 2. The number of articles in terms of place of publication

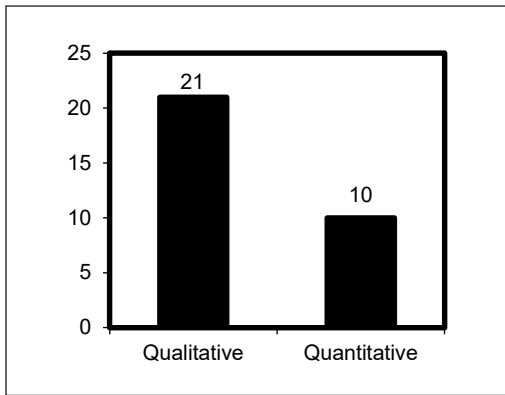


Figure 3. The number of articles according to study type

Sahid et al., 2020; St. Vil et al., 2017; Suhaimi et al., 2021; Wahid et al., 2011; Wahidah, 2018; Yalawae et al., 2011; Zaim & Salleh, 2019). The remaining 10 studies used quantitative design (Borgia et al., 2018; Doolittle et al., 2015; Finka & Prasetya, 2018; Hamren et al., 2015; Hussin et al., 2017; Jodi et al., 2014; Meitasari et al., 2023; Peleg & Peleg, 2024; Puteh & Mamat, 2015; Villani et al., 2019).

In terms of publication year, Figure 4 shows that five articles were published in 2018; four in 2011; three in 2015, 2017 and 2020 respectively; and two in 2023. In the

years 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2021 and 2024, only one article was published for each year. There was no article published in 2022.

DISCUSSION

Based on the 31 selected articles, six themes have been identified for the research objectives. Below, the research objectives along with the corresponding themes are outlined.

Spirituality and its Relationship to the Resilience of Urban Poor Families

Spirituality as a Source of Inner Strength

Spirituality and resilience are transcendental components that are interconnected. These components possess significant implications for both individual and family growth with their influence often playing a reciprocal role in individual and family development. Spirituality can enhance resilience by providing a sense of purpose and inner strength, whereas resilience can strengthen spiritual beliefs by helping individuals navigate and overcome challenges. This inner strength can help people cope with

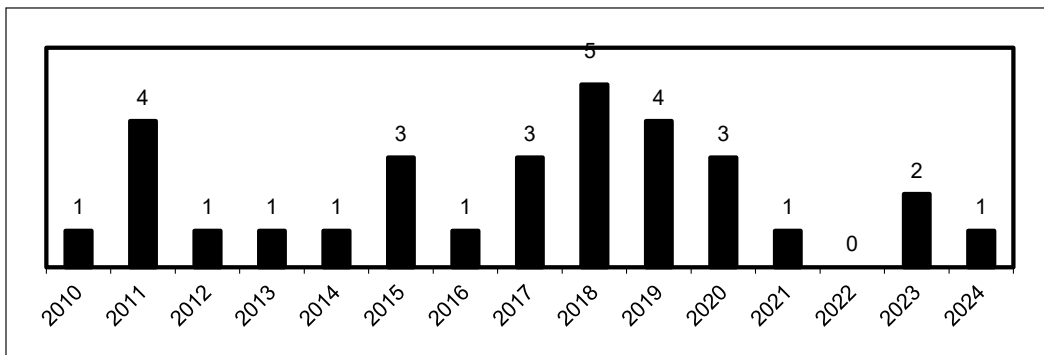


Figure 4. The number of articles based on publication year

adversity, maintain hope, and foster a sense of purpose. In the context of poverty, spirituality can offer comfort and guidance, support perseverance, and inspire individuals to seek improvement in their lives while maintaining faith in a higher power (Hamilton et al., 2020).

Although spirituality is usually associated with religion, it is not necessarily related to the concept of the divine (Asih et al., 2020). In a wider definition, spirituality is aimed at understanding the meaning of life, acting according to social norms and beliefs, and making the most of one's life in an effort to reach their purposes (Rashid et al., 2019). Therefore, the meaning of spirituality differs from person to person.

In Islam, it is imperative to prioritize and guide spiritual components such as the mind, soul, and spirit, as each of these components plays a significant role in providing inner strength to a family (Jodi et al., 2014). Islam believes that spirituality is a medium that exerts an impact on both the physical and mental health of its adherents. According to Laher and Khan (2011), a fervent belief in spiritual concepts motivates Islamic adherents to establish the foundation for a shift towards more positive behaviors and mindsets, especially during difficult times.

Islamic spiritual concepts, such as the relationships between life fate and divine will (*qada'* and *qadar*), effort and trust, sincerity and patience, gratitude and satisfaction (*qana'ah*), as well as *rahmah* (Allah blessings) form the basis for resilience in a Muslim family facing

poverty (Rahman, 2012). These concepts are grounded in the expression of *La ilaha illallah*, which means 'There is no God but Allah'. This is a declaration of Muslims' faith and a testimony to whom they worship. This testimony of faith encapsulates the basic essence of what it means to be a believing servant of Allah, commonly known as *tauhid*. The verse indirectly encourages Muslims to rely on, take refuge in, and place hope in Allah, while also emphasizing to them the need to work hard to achieve the best possible life (Rahman, 2012).

The above indicates that families dealing with urban poverty must be guided towards cultivating and appreciating Islam. The concept of *tauhid*, or the oneness of God, nourishes the soul and increases mental strength. It also cultivates positive values, which then lead to resilience. Families with high levels of resilience experience greater control over their circumstances because a greater spiritual understanding helps ease the burden of poverty (Wahidah, 2018).

The Strength of Social Relationships

Social relationships play a crucial role in enhancing resilience among families facing urban poverty. Strong social connections provide emotional support, practical assistance, and a sense of community, all of which are vital in navigating and overcoming the challenges associated with urban poverty. These relationships can offer encouragement, resources, and a shared sense of purpose, contributing to improved mental well-being and stability

(Peleg & Peleg, 2024). From this aspect, urban poor families often choose a religious community as a social unit, where they receive emotional support and motivation to persevere (Borgia et al., 2018; Hamren et al., 2015; St. Vil et al., 2017).

Based on a study by Meitasari et al. (2023), spiritual practices that involve group participation help form a solid foundation for the resilience of the urban poor. For example, congregational prayer in the mosque strengthens togetherness and fosters a sense of community, contributing to greater resilience. In addition, Suhaimi et al. (2021) suggest that spiritual development programs organized in mosques have a positive impact on the urban poor. These programs boost their confidence to engage socially and encourage them to give back to the community. Likewise, Puteh and Mamat (2015) indicate that involvement in religious communities helps poor families overcome urban poverty issues by fostering relationships and community support. The interconnection of these social relationships within religious communities strengthens the resilience of these families, enabling them to pool resources and support each other effectively.

The Meaning of Life and Hop

The importance of spiritual aspects in the lives of urban poor families cannot be overstated, as they provide them with deep meaning and newfound hope, which is crucial for enduring hardships. Faith in a spiritual purpose can act as a beacon of hope, motivating individuals to persevere

through difficulties. On this, Meitasari et al. (2023) reported that spiritual values, such as the belief in the goodness of God and the belief in spiritual rewards for acts of generosity, encourage charitable behavior even within financially challenged families. This act has a positive influence on attitudes and leads to long-term improvements in quality of life. This is due to psychological benefits derived from having a sense of purpose and direction rooted in such actions (Wahid et al., 2011). These beliefs can enhance resilience by fostering a positive outlook and reducing the impact of life's difficulties (Finka & Prasetya, 2018).

For urban poor families, a spiritual framework can provide a practical and accessible means to discover significance and optimism. Spiritual values that are centered on hope, opportunity, and divine love promise not only emotional and psychological relief but also a sustainable model for building resilience. By embracing these principles, individuals can effectively confront obstacles with greater tenacity and uphold a sense of tranquility and purpose. This suggests that spirituality can help foster a sense of altruism, provide a profound foundation for resilience and hope, offering them a pathway to endure and thrive despite the challenges they face.

Based on the aforementioned findings, it can be inferred that spirituality and its prominent aspects provide a solid foundation for urban poor families in shaping their perspectives when confronting the challenges of poverty. The significance of spirituality as a source of comfort and

strength for the urban poor not only serves as a form of emotional support but also as a form of energy that enhances resilience.

Religious Practice and Its Relationship with the Spirituality of Urban Poor Families

Religious Practice and Spiritual Strengthening

Religious practice encompasses a wide range of activities and rituals that individuals or communities perform in adherence to their faith. These practices can vary significantly between different religions and cultures, but generally include worship, prayer, rituals, sacraments, and moral conduct, to name a few.

Religious practice is vital for strengthening the spiritual aspects of individuals when meeting with hardships and trials. For example, religious practices such as prayer, recitation, and *dzikr* (remembrance of God) can build a closer relationship with the Creator, increase patience and contentment, and help individuals choose the best steps to work with their problems (Sahid et al., 2020). The same applies to religious values held by individuals, which further enhance motivation for those engaged in religious activities (Suhaimi et al., 2021).

Subsequently, religious practice emphasizes the importance of human values such as compassion, honesty, kindness, and respect for others. Many religions teach that living according to these values is essential for spiritual growth and fulfilling one's moral obligations (Khan & Tantray, 2020).

In Islam, for example, Allah SWT explains that with sufficient piety, the poor are less likely to envy the rich or harbor grudges against them (Mohd Nor, 2013). This practice is seen as fundamental to creating a harmonious society. Fraternal relationships must be maintained for the benefit of families in the context of urban poverty. Bonds of brotherhood lead to helping one another and sharing life's burdens and happiness (Yalawae et al., 2011).

A study by Hussin et al. (2017) found that religious practices that help ensure the formation of a prosperous family unit include listening to the Quran and the Hadith, speaking gently, practicing prayer and supplication, instilling love among family members, and cultivating gentleness and tolerance. These practices promote a peaceful and supportive family environment, emphasizing the importance of spiritual and religious teaching within the family context. In addition, Zaim and Salleh (2019) reported that one of the most important elements of a prosperous family is the reinforcement of faith and morals. The results of this study suggest that religious practices should be applied to nourish the family with religious values and maintain the family's well-being. By incorporating these practices into their daily life, families can establish a solid foundation of shared beliefs and values, thereby enhancing their overall harmony and resilience (Doolittle et al., 2015). This approach underscores the importance of a consistent and intentional application of religious teachings to foster a supportive and nurturing family environment.

These studies demonstrate that religious practices in a family are partly responsible for a family's well-being. The integration of religious practices into family life can foster a sense of unity, provide moral guidance, and create a supportive environment (Mahoney, 2010).

Religious Education in the Family

Religious education in a family is important in shaping the values, beliefs, and behaviors of its members. Some of its importance is to develop a moral and ethical foundation, self-identity, a sense of belonging, emotional and spiritual support, as well as strengthening family bonds. A spiritual approach emphasizes that religious education must begin as soon as the family is formed. Parents and older family members serve as role models in demonstrating religious practices and values. By observing and participating, children learn the importance of these practices and are more likely to incorporate them into their own lives (El-Khani et al., 2023; Mustaffa et al., 2017).

In the Islamic faith, the development of a family within the framework of reverence for God and the Prophet will result in attitudes of faith and repentance. An appreciation for Islam helps a family live a life based on religion and not on human desire alone (Syahbudin et al., 2022). All of these are part of efforts to protect family members from conducting activities that are not beneficial, as understood in the faith. In Surah al-Tahrim, verse 6, Allah SWT states:

Translation: "O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded." (*The Qur'an*, 2004: At-Tahrim 66: 6)

According to the above verse, the primary command is to protect oneself and one's family from hellfire. This is a call for individual and collective responsibility within the family unit. Individuals are therefore responsible for their well-being and are also responsible for guiding and safeguarding their families against behaviors that could lead to punishment in the hereafter.

On this basis, parents hold a crucial responsibility in ensuring that each child's self-development process aligns with the requirements of religion (Munawiroh, 2016). Grounding in religious teachings encourages individuals to consider the long-term consequences of their actions instead of seeking immediate satisfaction. This perspective helps families to make more thoughtful and beneficial decisions and avoid actions driven by temporary or harmful impulses. The principles and values imparted by religious teachings have the potential to enhance motivation toward self-improvement among the urban poor.

Despite the fact that urban poverty leads to children dropping out of school due to financial concerns, it is important that parents continue their religious education at home,

as it serves as the basis for the formation of a child's personality and the cultivation of appropriate manners and behaviors. In these challenging circumstances, religious teachings can provide hope and resiliency. This religious and spiritual support can help children cope with difficulties and remain motivated (Khan & Tantray, 2020).

Religion and Coping Skills

Religion and spirituality play a significant role in developing coping strategies and increasing the mental resilience of poor families confronted with economic and social pressures. Individuals who experience stress due to poverty often experience internal disturbances that affect their outward behaviors, such as becoming irritable easily, withdrawal or mood swings (Muriel & Christopher, 2021). They may become more defensive, less communicative, or more critical, which could lead to conflicts, strain their relationships with family and friends, and weaken their social support networks (Ho et al., 2022). In this situation, developing coping skills is essential for navigating life's challenges and sustaining a balanced life.

According to Musa and Sa'ari (2019), reflecting on and understanding the Quranic verses provides spiritual comfort and guidance. The act of reading the Quran is known to bring peace to individuals in difficult times. Making specific *dua* (supplications) and engaging in *munajat* (intimate prayers) are said to be effective in managing or reducing stress. Asking Allah for help and expressing concerns through

dua can also be a source of comfort and reassurance, helping individuals manage their worries. Similarly, regular prayers (*salah*) structure the day with moments of reflection and connection to Allah. This routine can provide stability and a sense of peace, helping to alleviate feelings of anxiety (N. A. A. Aziz, 2011).

Participating in obligatory worship, as required by Islam, demonstrates an individual's gratitude towards the sustenance they received, despite its inadequacy. It shows that one has faith in God's ability to provide (A. R. A. Aziz et al., 2020). Since poverty may be a factor for crime, social, and mental health problems, religious activities can be a valuable tool for managing stress among urban poor families.

In summary, the results of the second objective indicated that religious practices and teachings in urban families have benefits for strengthening resilience. Meaningful religious rituals and values, such as connecting with God, meditation, performing prayers, giving *sadaqah* (charitable giving), honesty, and kindness, among others, proved to be beneficial to families living in poverty. These practices possess significant personal values, provide spiritual solace to families, and align with the religious coping model.

CONCLUSION

This study conducted a systematic literature review (SLR) of 31 articles related to spirituality and religious behavior as they pertain to the resilience of urban poor families. This review analyzed publications

from several databases, including Web of Science, Scopus, APA PsycNet, and PubMed. Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, and peer-reviewed journals, spanning the period from 2010 to 2024. The review reveals that both spiritual aspects and religious behavior are important for strengthening and increasing the resilience of urban poor families. For religious adherents, the concept of spirituality ties into the meaning of their religion, providing a framework for understanding and coping with life's challenges. For those who are not affiliated with a religion, spiritual appreciation may involve exploring reality through daily activities and serving as a guide for relieving emotions during crises. In any case, spirituality and religious behavior influence resilience, as they provide a positive framework that offers strategies to enhance the well-being of both the family and its members. In this article, the SLR approach revealed that one important aspect that could be considered to improve the well-being of urban poor families is fostering resilience through spiritual and religious means. Spirituality and religion, in relation to urban poverty, provide a framework for understanding life's obstacles and offering hope that difficulties are a natural consequence of human existence and part of a greater divine plan. This framework employs the beliefs, practices, and community support systems inherent in many religious traditions, particularly in contexts where material resources may be limited for the urban poor, to strengthen their

inner selves. Therefore, this review, which included both qualitative and quantitative studies, supported the positive associations among all variables examined.

Implications for Theory and Practice

The overview of 14-year published studies provides fundamental insights that aid in the well-being and welfare of urban poor families. Understanding the life complexities of poor families living in urban areas in terms of analyzing existing knowledge surrounding the urban poor highlights the necessity of prioritizing internal factors such as spiritual values and religious practices. Identifying these internal factors provides a foundation for addressing the challenges faced by urban poor families in relation to resilience. These factors can be a powerful source for the urban poor in sustaining their mental health and stability.

The results of the review analysis regarding spirituality, spiritual values, religious behavior and practices may help the urban poor to recognize and appreciate the importance of incorporating these aspects into their daily lives. This understanding will provide them with valuable insights and tools for improving their resilience and coping with their circumstances. The findings of this study align with the Family Resilience Theory (FRT), demonstrating how spirituality and religious practices serve as protective mechanisms that strengthen family bonds, instill hope, and enhance problem-solving abilities. According to this theory, resilience is a dynamic process shaped by family

belief systems, organizational patterns, and communication and problem-solving processes (Walsh, 2003). It is not merely an individual trait, but a collective process within the family, where shared strengths, such as religious beliefs, hope, and the search for meaning in life, help families overcome life challenges (Walsh, 2016).

Spiritual and religious elements enable families to view adversity from a more positive perspective, maintain emotional stability, and develop effective coping strategies. By incorporating FRT principles, this study underscores the importance of reinforcing spiritual and religious foundations as essential components in building resilience among urban poor families. Furthermore, the application of FRT in this study confirms that spirituality and religious practices contribute to strengthening family functioning, particularly in problem-solving, emotional stability, and social support. Recognizing and integrating these aspects into daily life can provide urban poor families with valuable insights and practical tools to enhance their resilience and overall well-being.

Subsequently, the review also assists the government, communities, and family organizations in improving aid programs by focusing on spiritual development and the well-being of target groups, extending beyond material aid. It also contributes to the improvement of existing family models by enhancing the planning and implementation of programs aimed at the holistic and productive development of urban poor families. For example, the programs could develop group activities that encourage

family members to share their spiritual perspectives and sources of hope, integrate guided reflection exercises that help families process challenges through a spiritual lens of growth and meaning-making, or create mentorship opportunities with spiritual leaders or experienced community members that incorporate spiritual perspectives on resilience. This study is expected to serve as a resource for future research related to family dynamics, particularly in designing models and interventions to strengthen the resilience of urban poor families. This aligns with the Malaysian National Family Policy, which aims to develop prosperous, healthy, and resilient families and to ensure social stability.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

As with all studies, these research findings have their limitations. It is most important to note that most of the publications derived from the databases were in local contexts since there were limited studies in other countries pertaining to the exact issues. This situation may restrict the applicability of the findings regarding the resilience of poor urban families and their relationship to spirituality. Therefore, by default, the publications were likely discussing this issue according to the local spirituality and religion. Hence, in the future, studies regarding different cohorts of regions and population demographics could be conducted for further analysis and theoretical advancement. Future studies may include more nuanced groups to investigate

the experiences of urban poor families from other cultural backgrounds who practice diverse religious traditions. This article reviews 31 articles, many of which focus on Malaysia, but few specifically address the urban poor families. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct studies on the influence of spirituality and religious behavior on the urban poor, whether through systematic literature reviews, surveys, or interviews. Furthermore, six themes were analyzed, one of which emphasizes coping strategies for urban poor families to enhance resilience, rather than focusing on the factors and causes behind the selection of these strategies. Therefore, future researchers may further investigate the resilience needs of urban poor families and the factors influencing the choice of religious or spiritual coping strategies. Understanding these needs is crucial to effectively addressing them prior to initiating any spiritual intervention programs.

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