

Phenomenological Perspective of Indonesian Student Resilience Post-Conflict Sudan

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Abstract / Abstrak

This study aims to explore the subjective experiences of Indonesian students in developing resilience following the Sudan conflict. A qualitative phenomenological design was applied involving three male Indonesian students (aged 24) who were evacuated from Sudan and continued their studies in Indonesia. Data were collected through in depth interviews (face to face and online) and analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Findings indicate that resilience emerged through three major processes: acceptance, positive meaning-making, and social support. External support from parents, peers, and the Muhammadiyah organization were essential, while internal factors such as optimism, mental endurance, and spirituality reinforced recovery and adaptation. The study demonstrates that resilience functions as a key psychological mechanism that enables students to rebuild educational aspirations and emotional well-being after traumatic conflict experiences.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman subjektif mahasiswa Indonesia dalam mengembangkan resiliensi pasca-konflik Sudan. Desain kualitatif fenomenologis diterapkan dengan melibatkan tiga mahasiswa laki-laki Indonesia (berusia 24 tahun) yang dievakuasi dari Sudan dan melanjutkan studi mereka di Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam (tatap muka dan daring) dan dianalisis menggunakan Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa resiliensi muncul melalui tiga proses utama: penerimaan (acceptance), pembentukan makna positif (positive meaning-making), dan dukungan sosial. Dukungan eksternal dari orang tua, teman sebaya, dan organisasi Muhammadiyah sangat penting, sementara faktor internal seperti optimisme, daya tahan mental, dan spiritualitas memperkuat pemulihan dan adaptasi. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa resiliensi berfungsi sebagai mekanisme psikologis kunci yang memungkinkan mahasiswa untuk membangun kembali aspirasi pendidikan dan kesejahteraan emosional setelah mengalami konflik traumatis.

Keywords / Kata kunci

College student;
Conflict;
Resilience

*Mahasiswa;
Konflik;
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Introduction

Sudan is a country located in northeast Africa that officially gained independence in 1956. However, independence did not make Sudan a country free from conflict and war. From 1955 until now, the turmoil of the Sudanese war seems never-ending. The war that ended with a peace agreement could not end the conflict permanently, so the civil war between Sudan and South Sudan broke out again. Even after the referendum on South Sudan's secession in 2011, the conflict continues between the two countries. According to news reported by **CNN Indonesia (2023)**, clashes between the military and the main Sudanese paramilitary

forces have escalated since April 15, killing 185 people and injuring 1,800 others, where the data was obtained by the head of the UN mission to Sudan, Volker Perthes.

The civil war between Sudan and South Sudan has undoubtedly impacted various aspects of life, including economic, health, social, political, humanitarian, and even psychological impacts on the people. However, the conflict is not limited to the Sudanese population; Indonesian students studying in Sudan are also affected. Indonesian students studying in Sudan are part of the Indonesian student community in the Middle East and Africa. According to data from the

Indonesian Embassy in Khartoum [Kompas.com](#) (2023) and the Special Branch of Muhammadiyah (PCIM) in Sudan, there are approximately 500-600 Indonesian students studying at several universities, such as the International University of Africa (IUA) and Omdurman Islamic University. Most of them are pursuing undergraduate and master's degrees, focusing on Islamic studies, Arabic, and the social sciences and humanities. Indonesian students choose Sudan as their study destination due to the availability of scholarship programs, such as those from the Sudanese government and religious organizations (Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama).

However, the escalating conflict in 2023 had a significant impact on the continuity of Indonesian students' studies. Quoted from [Detik news](#) (2023), PCIM Sudan stated that Indonesian students had been evacuated to several safe locations on campus because the student dormitory building was adjacent to the military headquarters. Meanwhile, quoted from [Antara](#) (2023), based on PCIM's statement, quite large flames were visible from the area around the International University of Africa Sudan. Due to the escalating situation, Indonesian students studying in Sudan from various universities were evacuated to safe places. Even as of Saturday night local time, loud bangs were still heard from the PCIM Sudan da'wah headquarters.

The experience of the traumatic events of the civil war conflict in Sudan was an event that required Indonesian students to face tough challenges and adapt to dangerous conditions. Therefore, through exploratory interviews with students who had been evacuated to Indonesia, we obtained an initial overview of the traumatic impacts they experienced, including psychological impacts, uncertainty about their studies, the presence of danger, and a drastically changed environment. Indonesian students in Sudan experienced the direct impact of the traumatic experience of the conflict in Sudan. Often, when someone faces a traumatic event, they develop a response by trying to adapt, accept, and recover from it. For Indonesian students, they were surviving amidst the conflict.

[Bhattacharyya](#) (2015) stated that one process for dealing with the crisis of a traumatic experience is by building resilience. Resilience plays a crucial role in how individuals cope with and recover from traumatic experiences, including the challenges faced by Indonesian students in Sudan. Resilience is defined as the ability to bounce back and adapt after experiencing

adversity, supported by coping strategies and changes in mindset ([Neufeld & Malin, 2019](#)). Research highlights resilience as both a process and an outcome that helps individuals cope with adversity ([Aryuwat et al., 2023](#)). Skills such as positive attitudes, self-awareness, and time management are crucial in fostering resilience among college students, as these skills enable them to maintain mental health, manage stress, and thrive despite challenging circumstances ([Ang et al., 2022](#)). Furthermore, resilience training programs have also been shown to help students strengthen these skills and manage stress effectively in conflict-affected environments ([Otaki et al., 2025](#)).

At the same time, a supportive educational system is crucial in fostering resilience. Social support and learning create an environment where students feel empowered to apply resilience skills ([Aryuwat et al., 2025](#)). For Indonesian students in Sudan, this support not only contributes to their academic success but also helps them overcome the socio-political challenges in Sudan. Therefore, lecturers, mentors, and peers play a crucial role in building resilience, as they provide guidance and encouragement ([Dwiningrum et al., 2020](#); [Ching & Cheung, 2021](#); [Kuperminc et al., 2020](#)). Thus, resilience emerges as an interaction between individual coping mechanisms, interventions and support to face academic and personal challenges. Studies show that the experiences of Indonesian students in conflict-ridden countries show personal challenges that shape the students' educational journey ([Purwati & Silvia, 2021](#); [Simek & Stewart, 2024](#); [Wachyunni et al., 2023](#)).

Indonesian students studying in Sudan amidst the conflict situation have created complex dynamics for them. The problem faced by Indonesian students due to the conflict in Sudan is the uncertainty of continuing their education. [NUcare.id](#) (2023) reports that the Sudanese war impacted foreign nationals. In terms of education, the Ministry of Higher Education building was burned down, leaving students confused about the fate of files and documents left there, and unsure how to continue their education. [Tanjung et al. \(2024\)](#) in his research that Indonesian students in Sudan who were evacuated due to the conflict, face serious challenges related to the continuation of their education. This conflict has disrupted their academics and they are struggling to determine the future direction of their studies.

As mentioned above, facing these various challenges requires a psychological aspect, namely resilience. Resilience is a factor that can

provide strength and resilience for Indonesian students in Sudan in facing the conflict situation in Sudan and its aftermath. Studies show that individuals with higher resilience are better prepared to face adverse situations, not only maintaining mental health but also a positive outlook on future challenges (Shin et al., 2019; Song et al., 2021). The impact felt by Indonesian students is the uncertainty of continuing their studies, due to the campus fire, which also destroyed their educational documents. Students who had carefully planned their careers must adapt to the uncertainty surrounding their education. In the context of Indonesian students in Sudan, resilience can encourage adaptive coping styles to reduce the impact of educational disruptions, enable students to positively transform their uncertainty and increase their motivation to continue their studies despite significant setbacks (Işıkgoz et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023). Therefore, resilience is very important to help students cope with stress, maintain mental health and keep their minds positive and optimistic. Therefore, the dynamics of resilience in Indonesian students affected by the Sudanese conflict need to be explored in depth, considering the very complex challenges they face in continuing their studies.

Furthermore, research on Indonesian students studying in conflict-affected countries is still limited. (Khairina et al., 2020) found that psychological adjustment and resilience play a crucial role in helping students adapt, with optimism, social support, and self-efficacy being key predictors of their ability to cope with stress and new environments. Meanwhile, Utsumi (2021) in his study of students from the conflict-affected Timor-Leste region demonstrated long-term negative impacts on educational outcomes, although environmental support was shown to minimize these impacts. Similarly, institutional support and government policies play a crucial role in maintaining student engagement, mental health, and international mobility (Abubakari et al., 2022; Inayati et al., 2020; Pramana et al., 2021). However, so far there has not been much research exploring the subjective experiences of Indonesian students studying in countries with active conflict, such as Sudan.

Therefore, this study focuses on exploring in-depth the subjective experiences of Indonesian students after facing the traumatic events of the war in Sudan. This research provides important insights into how Indonesian students studying in Sudan face academic and psychological

challenges after the conflict. Based on the limitations of previous research, which has not yet addressed the resilience aspect of Indonesian students' lived experiences in Sudan, this study seeks to explore the resilience-building process from the lived experiences of three participants through a phenomenological approach. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute to the development of positive psychology literature related to the dynamics of resilience after traumatic experiences. Based on this description, this research aims to explore the subjective experiences of Indonesian students in building resilience after facing conflict in Sudan.

Method

This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological inquiry that aims to explore the subjective experiences of Indonesian students affected by the conflict in Sudan in building resilience after experiencing traumatic events. The participant recruitment process was carried out by identifying Indonesian students who previously studied in Sudan and are currently continuing their studies in Indonesia. Information on potential participants was obtained through social media networks. The researcher then contacted the participants to inquire about their willingness to participate. The study participants were three male Indonesian students studying in Sudan and continuing their education in Indonesia. All three participants were 24 years old and pursued undergraduate education (S1).

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, guided by interview guidelines but supplemented with related questions. Among the questions were, "Have you become a different person after going through this difficult time?" and "Have you ever considered giving up or stopping your education?" Before the interview began, the researcher provided a worksheet of informed consent to the three participants as approval for all data provided, marked by the participant's signature on the informed consent in writing. The three participants were interviewed face-to-face once and interviewed via the platform whatsapp. Two face-to-face interviews were conducted. Each interview lasted 50 minutes for participant 1, 41 minutes for participant 2, and 45 minutes for participant 3. Online interviews were conducted by the researcher to obtain information requiring participant confirmation.

The data analysis for this study consisted of audio interview data and verbatim attachments. The audio interview data consisted of the

following durations: P1 (50 minutes), P2 (42 minutes), and P3 (45 minutes). Other data analysis included verbatim attachments, verbatim analysis attachments consisting of exploratory comments and emergent themes, a master table of all participants, and a recurring theme identification table. The process of ensuring the validity and credibility of the data in this study used techniques member checking. The researcher provided verbatim results and analysis results based on IPA analysis techniques to the three participants, which were then read by the participants and confirmed to be in accordance with the information provided by the participants during the data collection process, marked with an attachment member check signed by all participants.

The data analysis techniques used was Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA) based on [Smith et al. \(2009\)](#) with a level reading, initial noting, developing emergent themes, searching for connections across emergent themes, moving the next case, and looking for patterns across cases. The analysis process that the researcher carried out was; (1) preparing a verbatim transcript by listening to the audio recording and copying it into written form MS. Word, (2) reading the verbatim transcripts repeatedly, (3) checking the implied meaning and providing exploratory marks and comments based on the original transcripts, (4) creating emergent themes based on exploratory comments, and (5) connecting themes from a collection of emergent themes that have similar meanings. Themes that have conceptual relationships are grouped to build a broader understanding of how participants' subjective meanings are based on their experiences in facing changes due to the conflict in Sudan.

This research was conducted in accordance with general ethical principles in psychological research. This research follows ethical principles of research which include respect for autonomy, doing good (beneficence), not detrimental (non-maleficence), and justice (justice). All participants were given an explanation of the purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. Informed consent written consent was obtained from each participant prior to the interview. To maintain confidentiality, participant names were replaced with codes or pseudonyms, and all personally identifiable information was removed from the transcripts, data analysis, and research report. The researchers ensured that all

interactions and data management processes were conducted voluntarily, respectfully, and with integrity.

Results

The findings of this study begin with a participant profile results to provide context for the results obtained. The following table presents the demographic information of the three participants in this study.

The table above shows that the three participants are 24 years old and studying at the International University of Africa (IUA), Sudan, majoring in Hadith Studies. Two participants received scholarships from the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership, while one received a scholarship from a religious institution in Sudan. The similarity in age, university, and field of study indicates a similar academic background, while the differences in funding sources reflect the variations in religious support across countries that play a role in the sustainability of their studies. This similarity in academic background provides a strong context for understanding the subjective experiences and resilience-building processes of Indonesian students in post-conflict Sudan.

Furthermore, based on the results of the interview data analysis of the three participants, similarities were found in the social support received, the process of acceptance, meaning-making, and resilience after the event of study interruption experienced by the participants. The researcher detailed the meaning-making based on the participants' subjective experiences of the post-traumatic experience into ten superordinate themes.

Based on the analysis of the interview transcript, the three participants shared a similar process of acceptance and positive meaning-making regarding the interruption of their studies due to the civil war conflict in Sudan, which was described in the following themes:

Theme 1- Optimism

One important phase post-conflict experienced by the participants was adjusting to the continuation of their studies. The transition from Sudan to Indonesia involved not only technical adaptation (such as transferring credits or finding a linear study program) but also a psychological process of accepting the reality that they could not complete their studies in the place they had planned. However, this sparked the emergence of psychological capability to remain optimistic

about the future, especially regarding the continuation of their studies.

Participant 1 chose to continue his studies at Ahmad Dahlan University (UAD), one of the considerations being that UAD had a major linear with his major in Sudan: "...if at Unismuh there is no major, UAD has exactly the same..." (P1, lines 109). This choice was not only based on academics but was also influenced by a personal dream, which was his long-time aspiration to study in D.I. Yogyakarta. This can be interpreted as how one failed dream allows another dream to grow, proving that the road to a bright future is often winding, but can open windows of opportunity that are even more aligned with his passion and plans.

Participant 2 also showed flexibility in responding to situations. He was given a choice of two campuses and chose based on their suitability to his needs and interests....asked to choose two options. In the end, it matched the choice..." (P2, line 111). This shows that despite the compulsion to move to another country of study, participants still had a direction in determining their desired education. Participant 3 reinforced this picture by admitting that adjustments to their study continuation were made through the assistance scheme promised by Muhammadiyah: "...choose any Muhammadiyah campus, it's up to you, we'll help you convert the scores..." (P3, lines 104-107). Participants chose to be more pragmatic by choosing a more certain and available study path. The great opportunities that participants saw before their eyes led them to a more focused experience.

Theme 2- External Support as a Determinant of Recovery

Following this experience, participants faced a "recovery" phase, both emotionally and socially. In this study, all three participants demonstrated a process of recovering from adversity through external factors, including organizational support. Participant 1 described that after returning to Indonesia, he did not immediately make his own decisions, but instead waited for confirmation from his organization....indeed, I'm just waiting for help from Muhammadiyah, of course..." (P1, lines 187-192). The assistance from the Muhammadiyah organization provided a psychological solution and a practical resource that encouraged him to maintain his faith in continuing his studies, even though he was no longer in Sudan. Muhammadiyah's role was crucial in his revival process, providing a stable

foundation for the participant to resume his academic journey from a point of near collapse.

Participant 2 also revealed that Muhammadiyah gives responsibility to help cadres complete their studies, "...So Muhammadiyah feels responsible for this return..." (P2, lines 107-110). This response demonstrates that institutional support is not only a form of administrative assistance, but also a recognition of identity and value for the participants, accelerating the process of recovering from adversity. Participant 3 affirmed the same thing, "...The central leadership of Muhammadiyah has guaranteed the continuation of the studies of the children of cadres..." (P3, lines 104-107). However, participant engagement is not solely dependent on the institution but is also demonstrated through personal initiative. The combination of organizational assurance and participant confidence is key to success in continuing their studies.

Theme 3- Parental Support as a Determining Factor in the Recovery

Participants received full external social support throughout the recovery process after their traumatic experiences. Parents, as primary supporters, fulfilled their roles well, even at their lowest points. The dream of graduating from abroad was not only a dream for the participants, but also a hope for their parents. However, this event also contributed to their parents' support, regardless of their child's condition.

In addition to providing full support at this point, they also consistently reassured participants when they were worried about the future of their studies. Participant 1 stated, "...They are the ones who actually calm me down, actually, he always says that eventually, the problem will be education..." (P1, lines 151-154). This demonstrates the role of parents who always support their children whenever and whatever their condition. The essence of parental support lies in its symbolic meaning, parents give confidence in their children's ability to make their own choices, not just material assistance.

While participant 2 stated "...just after a few months, a question like that appeared, so how was your study there?" This also demonstrates parental support, prioritizing their child's calm and safety. Parental support for Participant 2 was also demonstrated through their patience in waiting for the right time and prioritizing their child's psychological well-being. Participant 3 stated, "...support" (P3, line 97). Parents fully support

whatever decision their child makes to continue their studies. The word "support" from parents to participant 3 is a symbol but firmly meaningful that they believe in their child's capacity and independence.

Theme 4- Social Reintegration Post-Trauma

Of course, other social support besides parents is the existence of support from significant others from the participants, namely support from family, friends, and relations, which also played a role in the process of participants accepting the events of the Sudanese conflict which had an impact on hindering their studies. Participant 1 stated, "...actually by asking about the actual condition, the form of support is that of friends..." "Support came from caring friends who asked about the participants' circumstances and conditions after experiencing the Sudanese conflict. This interaction also helped participants overcome psychological isolation after the traumatic event, allowing them to reconnect.

Participant 2 received support from relations, namely neighbors, in the form of interactions, "...at most a few days after that, I would leave the house to interact..." "The support received through interactions with neighbors is a natural therapeutic process. The normal flow of life around the participants creates a sense of security. Meanwhile, participant 3 experienced the same thing, as did family support..." "in fact, they (the family) are enthusiastic about arriving..." "The family's support was expressed through their enthusiasm upon learning the participant had arrived safe and sound. The family's positive reaction eased the participant's psychological burden after experiencing a traumatic event, restoring self-esteem and providing positive energy to return.

Theme 5- Acceptance

Acceptance is a crucial step in understanding positive psychology, particularly when dealing with situations beyond one's control. In this context, the three participants demonstrated their ability to come to terms with the harsh reality of having their studies in Sudan interrupted by the civil war. Participant 1 stated that acceptance came after time, "...a month later I realized, oh yes, this is destiny..." (P1, line 183). This statement shows a form of spiritual acceptance, which accepts destiny as something beyond human control.

Participant 2 also showed a similar response, namely feeling deep sadness and disappointment,

but slowly began to understand that this incident was beyond his control, "...this cannot be avoided and is not what we want, so now the focus is to make a new plan and then carry out the new plan targets again..." (P2, lines 139-140). This reflects an understanding of human limitations and the ability to move from a state of loss to a state of renewal.

Participant 3 described his acceptance in a more structural context. He realized that the situation in Sudan made it impossible to continue his studies, and that the campus and government infrastructure had been destroyed....let it go, the main thing is to be able to focus on what's here, there's an opportunity here, right, let's just follow it here, focus on it like that." (P3, lines 112-117). The word "sincere" is not a passive attitude but a cognitive strategy to free oneself from things beyond human control, so that these resources can be utilized towards proactive resilience behavior.

Theme 6- Coping Mechanism

In this case, the mechanism serves not only as a psychological survival strategy but also as a bridge to behavioral adaptation and emotional recovery. Participant 1 chose to undergo a month-long rest period at home as a form of psychological detoxification after the conflict and the long evacuation journey to Indonesia. "...It's true that I'm just resting at home for a month before I want to leave the house to go anywhere..." (P1, lines 127-132). During the break, participants filled their time with simple activities such as reading books and chatting with their families, "...talking to parents... reading books..." (P1, lines 165-167). This strategy is included as emotion-focused coping in that the participant realizes that it is necessary to distance himself from the stressor to regulate his emotional recovery.

Participant 2 chose an active and meaningful coping strategy, namely by teaching and mentoring students at the Islamic boarding school where he had studied from junior high to high school, "...I am looking to go to Gombara to teach. At least three months before getting a campus..." (P2, line 121). This activity provided him with a supportive environment and a sense of usefulness, involving spiritual values. Participant 3 also took a similar path. He chose to go directly to Yogyakarta, return to the Islamic boarding school, and engage in productive social activities: "...I want to go to Jogja first... in Jogja first..." (P3, lines 92-93). This choice is not only a transition strategy, but also an action-based coping.

Table 1

Data Demographic Participants

Participant Code	Age (years)	Universities in Sudan	Study program	Funding Status
P1	24	International of Africa (IUA)	Hadith Studies	PP Muhammadiyah Scholarship
P2	24	International of Africa (IUA)	Hadith Studies	PP Muhammadiyah Scholarship
P3	24	International of Africa (IUA)	Hadith Studies	Religious Institution Scholarships in Sudan

Table 2

Superordinate Themes of All Participants

Theme	Superordinate
1	Optimism
2	External Support as a Determinant of Recovery
3	Parental Support as a Determining Factor in the Recovery Process
4	Social Reintegration Post-Trauma
5	Acceptance
6	Coping mechanisms
7	Endurance and Determination
8	Self-Adjustment
9	Post-Experience Awareness
10	Positive Meaning-Making after Facing Challenges

Theme 7- Endurance and determination

Endurance and determination are key aspects in recovering from a crisis. In this study, the three participants demonstrated strong resilience, continuing their education despite the civil war in Sudan, which subsequently disrupted their studies and career plans. Participant 1 emphatically stated that their interest and enthusiasm for continuing their education never waned, despite facing various obstacles such as the pandemic, a coup, and ultimately, armed conflict. "...interest in continuing education never decreases..." (P1, lines 163-164). This statement shows that there is a life principle that is firmly held, which functions as self-confidence to remain resilient after obstacles.

Participant 2 also demonstrated resilience in the form of a never-give-up attitude. Although he lost his bearings while waiting for confirmation of his studies, he continued to actively pursue his studies, "...never give up..." (P2, line 143), "...what is being attempted is also to always follow up on this..." (line 149). This persistence demonstrates a belief in control over what can be done, even in the face of major issues such as conflict that are beyond the participant's control. Participant 3 demonstrates a more realistic form of resilience, accepting that continuing his studies in Sudan is no longer possible, "...I've already given up on it, you know, I'm already this old..." (P3, line 111). However, the form of "surrender" here

cannot be equated with giving up, because the subject immediately prepared alternative steps and continued his education in Indonesia.

Theme 8- Self-Adjustment

The experience of facing conflict and the interruption of their studies in Sudan forced the subjects not only to accept the new reality but also to readjust their educational goals and career paths. Participant 1 stated that after the conflict, the main change in her educational plans was timing. She realized that her highly structured ambitions in terms of age and stage of study had to be restructured, "...what's different about my current plan compared to yesterday's is the time issue..." (P1, lines 184-186). This adjustment reflects participants learning to align external reality with internal ambitions.

Participant 2 also reformulated his career goals, not only based on his personal desires, but also based on input from his environment, "...targets from yourself and there is input from people around you." (P2, line 144). This shows that goal adjustments are not done in a hurry, but through interaction with the social environment. In addition, buildingsupport systemstrengthening commitment to the participant's new goals. Meanwhile, Participant 3 described her change in goals pragmatically. After losing the opportunity to complete her master's studies abroad, she chose

UAD's master's offer even though it was not aligned with her previous studies: "...What's certain is that in the end I even got an offer to study at UAD for my Masters, but it wasn't linear..." (P3, lines 130-133). This choice shows flexibility in responding to career challenges.

Theme 9- Post-Traumatic Awareness

Post-experience awareness arises when individuals are able to reflect on their experiences, including what was missed and what wasn't fully utilized. Participant 1 expressed deep regret for not utilizing their time in Sudan to deepen their knowledge optimally, saying, "...why don't I study too much about the ka in Sudan, don't study too much about the ka halaqah-halaqah... I don't read too many Arabic books..." (P1, lines 215-218). This awareness indicates that the experience of loss not only triggers disappointment, but also raises a concern for time and opportunity.

Participant 2 also expressed a similar reflection. He realized that while in Sudan, his enthusiasm for learning was lacking. It was only after experiencing conflict and losing his way that this realization dawned on him, "...regretting not studying enough and feeling less than optimal in studying..." (P2, line 165). This reinforces the finding that crisis events can create awareness that doesn't always emerge in normal situations. This awareness of the past becomes a turning point for building a new spirit and commitment to learning.

Participant 3 also said something similar, that if he could turn back time, he would want to focus more on deepening his knowledge, "...if I want to do it again, I want to focus on deepening my knowledge..." "I feel like I'm still lacking." (P3, lines 153-155). This statement demonstrates that the experience of failure or failure doesn't lead to trauma, but rather to self-reflection as a learning process. This reinforces the understanding that education isn't just about degrees, but about the depth of the process and commitment.

Theme 10- Positive Meaning-Making after Facing Challenges

When individuals are able to face crises, persevere through significant changes, and then reinterpret their experiences positively, resilience and post-traumatic growth are truly evident. Participant 1 described the experience of war as a moment that changed his perspective on life. He realized that important lessons don't always come from the classroom, but also from extreme events that shake him, "...We only know how good it is if we leave it, it turns out there are so many lessons to

be learned here, not just learning religion, but also learning life..." (P1, lines 219-222). This statement demonstrates a form of reflective resilience, where individuals not only rise, but also gain new wisdom.

Participant 2 described her resilience as a long process involving time and environmental influences. She didn't force herself to recover immediately, but allowed the process to unfold while maintaining her goals: "...running according to time and because the environment is also the main factor..." (P2, line 158). Participant 2 also indicated that positive environmental support significantly contributed to the return of motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Meanwhile, Participant 3 based his understanding on a verse in the Qur'an, "...The wisdom is that sometimes what we have planned is not better than what Allah has planned..." (P3, lines 154-160). In this context, resilience is not only the ability to survive or re-plan, but also the ability to reconcile expectations with reality, and find peace in greater wisdom.

Discussions

The findings of this study indicate that the resilience process of Indonesian students following the conflict in Sudan is a highly complex psychological and social journey, shaped by the interaction of internal and external factors. The resilience that emerges does not simply reflect the ability to survive adversity, but rather a dynamic process involving intertwined cognitive adjustments, emotional regulation, social support, and spiritual meaning. Participants, who initially faced emotional distress due to the loss of educational opportunities, uncertainty about their future, and the traumatic experiences of the conflict, gradually demonstrated the ability to reinterpret the traumatic experience as a starting point for individual recovery.

This recovery process demonstrates that resilience is not an innate trait, but rather the result of learning and deep reflection on stressful life experiences. The themes emerging from the analysis of interviews with three participants revealed that all three participants experienced resilience processes and components consistent with Connor and Davidson's (2003) resilience theory, namely the individual's ability to face adversity. According to Connor and Davidson (2003), resilience can be built based on five factors: individual competence, trust in others, positive acceptance of change, self-control, and spirituality.

One important aspect of resilience evident in this study is self-acceptance. Acceptance is not only a form of resignation to situations beyond one's control, but also a form of emotional regulation and cognitive restructuring that allows individuals to view traumatic events more rationally and positively. All three participants demonstrated individual competence through their ability to view the difficulties faced during the conflict in Sudan as challenges to be overcome. This aligns with [Connor and Davidson's \(2003\)](#) statement that resilience is strongly influenced by one's ability to cope with adversity. Furthermore, resilience can be viewed as a dynamic process that fosters the development of vital individual competencies in an educational context, particularly in overcoming adversity ([Cade, 2023](#)). Consistent with [Reivich and Shatte's \(2002\)](#) view, the ability to accept reality is at the heart of resilience, as individuals who are able to accept circumstances with open arms can adapt and develop new strategies for dealing with change.

Acceptance accompanied by spiritual reflection also indicates a process of deep meaning-making, in which participants not only endure but also learn to understand that every difficulty carries a lesson. In the context of religious Indonesian culture, self-acceptance is often associated with the value of sincere and trusting Islamic teachings. These values are not only religious beliefs but also psychological strategies for calming oneself, reducing anxiety, and cultivating inner strength that enable individuals to persevere without losing their direction in life. The three participants' positive acceptance of change, particularly regarding the disruptions experienced in the educational process due to the conflict, demonstrated how optimism and the ability to find meaning in traumatic experiences significantly contributed to resilience. ([Kimhi et al., 2022](#)) showed that individuals with high levels of optimism are generally better able to reinterpret negative events positively, leading to greater resilience. This positive adaptation reflects the fundamental principle of resilience: the ability to adjust mindsets to view challenges as opportunities for growth. Research by ([Al Musafiri & Umroh, 2022](#)) confirms this finding: individuals with high levels of optimism are more likely to interpret negative events positively.

Furthermore, social support emerged as a highly significant external element in shaping student resilience. Support from family, friends, and religious organizations such as

Muhammadiyah provided not only practical solutions but also emotional validation that students were not facing difficulties alone. This finding aligns with research by ([Macchi Silva & Ribeiro, 2022](#)), which emphasized that supportive social relationships can be a protective factor in the psychological adaptation process. Through warm and empathetic social interactions, individuals feel valued, heard, and supported, ultimately strengthening their self-efficacy and enthusiasm for life. In the Indonesian cultural context, social support serves not only as a support network but also as a form of solidarity and an expression of shared values (collectivism). The deeply rooted value of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) in Indonesian society makes the post-trauma recovery process not an individualistic personal journey but a communal experience supported by strong social relations. This differentiates the form of resilience in Indonesian society from the Western concept of resilience, which emphasizes aspects of autonomy and individual independence.

The self-regulation factor is also equally important, with participants being able to effectively regulate their emotional responses to trauma and maintain their well-being. This aspect is fundamental to resilience, indicating that self-regulation capacity is crucial for coping with adverse situations ([Haghshenas et al., 2024](#)). Evidence shows that individuals who develop emotional regulation skills show better resilience outcomes, because they can face stressors with higher efficacy ([Rachmawati et al., 2021](#)).

In addition, the aspect of spirituality plays a central role in the positive meanings-making of traumatic experiences. Belief in God's will and religious values provide a framework of meaning that guides participants to understand suffering not as punishment, but as a test that matures. Spirituality helps individuals meaning-focused coping, namely seeking new meaning from difficult experiences to maintain emotional balance ([Folkman, 2008](#)). This finding aligns with the view of ([Rudzinski & Strike, 2020](#)) that spirituality can strengthen the resilience process by increasing an individual's ability to manage emotions and find hope. In the context of Indonesian students, prayer, gratitude, and faith become sources of psychological energy that maintain mental stability and strengthen the spirit to continue education amidst limitations. Thus, spirituality is not merely a religious aspect, but also a source of internal strength that fosters optimism and resilience. Spirituality acts as a

mediator between psychological and social aspects, where individuals reinterpret suffering into wisdom.

Interestingly, the traumatic experiences the participants went through actually resulted in significant personal growth. After overcoming the crisis, they became more self-reflective, more appreciative of time and opportunities, and had a deeper understanding of life. This phenomenon indicates the existence of post-traumatic growth. As explained by (Rudzinski & Strike, 2020) this is a condition where an individual not only recovers from trauma but also experiences positive development in terms of spirituality, appreciation of life, and interpersonal relationships. The three participants no longer viewed their experiences in Sudan as a burden, but as character-building experiences that enriched the meaning of life. This personal growth reinforces the idea that resilience and post-traumatic growth are two interrelated concepts: resilience plays a role in maintaining stability, while post-traumatic growth leads to positive transformation.

Besides psychological and spiritual aspects, the Indonesian cultural context provides its own color to the student resilience process. Their resilience is shaped not only by individual adaptability but also by cultural values that emphasize togetherness, religiosity, and gratitude. Religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah play a crucial role not only in providing academic and administrative support but also in building a sense of community and social identity. This demonstrates that resilience in the Indonesian context is relational and contextual, distinct from Western models that emphasize individual resilience. In this context, social, spiritual, and cultural factors combine to form a comprehensive support system for students to bounce back. Thus, resilience can be understood not only as an individual's psychological capacity but also as a product of social interactions and the collective values inherent in society.

Based on these findings and analysis, it can be concluded that the resilience of Indonesian students after the conflict in Sudan is a combination of internal strengths such as self-acceptance, optimism, and spirituality, as well as external support in the form of social networks and cultural values. This process creates a new balance between loss and hope, and between suffering and growth. Resilience is no longer understood simply as the ability to withstand stress, but rather as a journey toward a more mature and meaningful self-transformation. However, limitations of this

study include the interpretation of the results may not be fully applicable to students from different cultural backgrounds or beliefs, and the study was conducted after the participants returned to Indonesia. Therefore, the experiences shared are retrospective and potentially influenced by memory bias.

Conclusion

The resilience process helps participants endure, overcome stress, and bounce back with hope and the ability to plan their education and career. This research shows the role of spiritual values and religious meaning in building resilience, which broadens the understanding of resilience in the context of conflict-affected students. Meanwhile, external factors, particularly support from parents, friends, and organizations, helped participants understand the impact of traumatic experiences. This research is one of the first contextually relevant studies to explore the experiences of Indonesian students directly affected by the armed conflict in Sudan. The phenomenological approach employed allows for an in-depth understanding of the process of resilience formation following traumatic experiences, particularly after the evacuation to Indonesia. Thus, this research not only contributes to the enrichment of cross-cultural positive psychology literature but also offers practical implications for policy development and psychological support services for students abroad in crisis situations.

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