



Faith and Mental Health: Islamic Psychology Perspective

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Abstract

Islam has various values and teachings regarding mental health. Islam believes in the connection between faith and mental health. This research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between faith and mental health, with a focus on the study of the conditions of faith that can lead to a healthy mentality. This is a qualitative study utilizing literature review, with the main objects of research being verses from the Quran and hadiths that mention faith and tranquility of the heart. The study adopts the perspective of Islamic psychology. The research findings indicate that faith conducive to mental well health is one that exists in a good quality, often referred to as takwa. Another notable discovery is that the qolb (heart) serves as the central control for a Muslim's life. Qolb has cognitive, emotional, and spiritual functions.

Keywords: *Faith; Mental Health; Takwa; Qolb*

Introduction

Neglecting mental health is equivalent to neglecting human life. Individuals who disregard their mental health will not become whole human beings. This is because humans consist not only of physical dimensions but also of mental dimensions, and the two influence each other. The mental health condition of an individual affects their physical condition, and vice versa, the physical health condition of an individual influences their mental condition. Therefore, mental and physical health deserve equal attention. The mental health condition should not be ignored or underestimated.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as an individual's state of well-being, where they are aware of their abilities, capable of coping with life's pressures, productive at work, proficient in learning, and able to contribute positively to society (<http://bem.fppsi.um.ac.id/kesehatan-mental/>). Mental health is also interpreted as a psychological state indicating a person's ability to adapt or adjust to life's challenges (Hanurawan, 2012).

The Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) in 2018 found that more than 19 million Indonesians aged 15 and above experienced emotional mental disorders, and over 12 million individuals aged 15 and above suffered from depression (<https://sardjito.co.id/2022/03/09/>). This situation has been exacerbated by the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has increased the incidence of mental disorders and added to mental health problems. Hence, contributions from various parties are needed to find solutions to these issues. Public mental health needs to be realized through various approaches.

One factor that plays a role in and influences mental health is religion (Rosyad, 2016). Religion plays a role in influencing one's perspective and shaping behavior (Mildaeni, 2014). There are two perspectives on the influence of religion on mental health. Religion not only has positive effects but can also have negative effects on an individual's mental health (Ghadirian, 2021), (Papaleontiou-Louca, 2021). These differing views are due to variations in religious attitudes, namely intrinsic and extrinsic orientations. Intrinsic orientation leads to a commitment to practicing religious values and teachings that have a positive impact on mental health. On the other hand, extrinsic orientation, which emphasizes dogmatic, egoistic, personal motives, and prejudices, has a negative impact on mental health (AS & Khair, 2018).

From a positive perspective, religion serves not only as a form of treatment for an individual's mental disorders but also as a preventive aspect (Lubis, 2016). Religion can also function as a stress coping strategy (Sari & Sutarto, 2023). The application of religious values in life significantly helps reduce mental health problems (Hamid, 2016). Through a religious approach involving beliefs, faith, and religious experiences, various mental illnesses can be reduced and healed (Rosyad, 2016).

One religion that demonstrates concern for the mental health of its followers is Islam. Islam has various values and teachings regarding mental health. In the Islamic perspective, mental health is assessed as an individual's ability to harmonize mental functions to adapt to others and the environment, as regulated in the Quran and Sunnah, creating a dynamic and harmonious life (Ariadi, 2019). As the primary source of Islamic teachings, the Quran and Sunnah provide guidance on mental health, such as patience, optimism, remembrance, prayer, and more. Islam teaches a Muslim to achieve mental health through the guidance of the Quran and Sunnah, believed to hold undeniable truth (Samain, 2020).

Studies on the influence of religion on mental health continue to evolve. Rosyad (2016) states that religious individuals are healthier than non-religious individuals. Ariadi (2013) examines various forms of worship in Islam that have psychotherapeutic effects. Practices such as prayer and fasting have been proven to benefit mental health. Rozinah & Khair (2018), in their research on religious attitude orientations, conclude a connection between faith and mental health. Faith shapes attitudes, behaviors, and how an individual adapts to life's challenges and emotional issues. The presence of faith even becomes a primary characteristic of mental health (Lathifah et al., 2021). In Islamic psychotherapy applied by Badi'uzzaman Said Nursi, a faith-based approach is introduced as a solution to moral problems (Zarkasyi et al., 2020). This approach illustrates the influence of faith in a Muslim's life, including in shaping mental health.

The term "iman" comes from the Arabic language, derived from the root word "amana-yuminu-iman," meaning belief. Iman also originates from the three basic letters hamzah-mim-nun, signifying tranquility, calmness, security, honesty, and non-betrayal. Fazlur Rahman describes iman as an act of the heart, involving a servant's surrender to God and His guidance to attain security and peace in life and act as a defense against disturbances (Intan Fitriya, 2019). From this explanation, it can be understood that a person with iman is one who consistently feels safe, both physically and spiritually (Maysitoh, 2019).

The perspective on the connection between faith and mental health has been acknowledged by experts. Nevertheless, faith is not the sole determinant of an individual's mental health. Seeking psychological assistance for mental disorders does not necessarily indicate a lack of faith (Namiroh et al., 2023). Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed on the relationship between faith and mental health. This research aims to explain the connection between faith and mental health, focusing on examining the conditions of faith that contribute to mental well-being. Studying faith as an essential aspect in Islam is more appropriate when approached from a religious perspective. The religious approach in psychology aligns with the Islamic psychology perspective, which is the science of human beings built on the concepts of the Quran and hadith, meeting scientific criteria (Ancok & Nashori, 2008).

Methods

This research is a qualitative study that utilizes literature review, including primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are verses from the Quran and hadiths, while the secondary sources are previous studies related to the research theme of faith and mental health. There are several patterns in constructing Islamic psychology, namely: 1) Islam explains psychology, 2) psychology explains Islam, 3) the comparison between psychology and Islam, and 4) building psychological concepts based on Islamic teachings. This research adopts the fourth pattern, which involves constructing psychological concepts based on Islamic teachings.

In Islamic teachings, understanding human beings and the universe can be achieved through qouliyah verses (the Quran and hadiths) as well as through kauniyah verses, which are reflections of things and events that occur in human beings and the universe using reason, senses, and intuition (Nashori, 2002). The Islamic teachings used in this research are qouliyah verses contained in the Quran and hadiths to examine the connection between faith and mental health. The main objects of the study are the verses from the Quran and hadiths that mention faith and tranquility of the heart. The researcher will explore explicit verses from the Quran and hadiths that mention the association between faith and tranquility of the heart. The researcher is guided by the Islamic belief that the heart (qalb) is the central aspect determining the goodness or badness of human life. Tranquility of the heart is the result of a good qalb and is considered one of the indicators of mental health.

Constructing the concept of Islamic psychology based on Islamic teachings is a differentiating factor from previous research that discussed the influence of faith on mental health. The researcher views the ideal way to build Islamic psychology as directly extracting psychological concepts from Islamic teachings about human beings and their lives according to the guidance of the Quran and hadiths.

Result and Discussion

Faith and Tranquility of the Heart (Qalb)

Everyone desires a life that is calm, peaceful, and serene. The Quran, as a source of Islamic teachings, provides guidance to achieve this. Implicitly and explicitly, the Quran conveys information that an individual's faith can influence the condition of their heart. Etymologically, faith means calm and peaceful. This signifies that ideally, a person of faith lives in a state of calm and peace.

Within the Quran, there are several verses that mention the words faith and tranquility of the heart simultaneously. This further strengthens the connection between faith and tranquility of the heart. One example is found in Surah Al-Fath, verse 4, where Allah says:

“It is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their (present) faith...” (QS. Al Fath: verse 4).

This verse from the Quran provides information that tranquility of the heart is a gift from Allah to the believers, those who have trust and faith in Allah. Allah bestows this tranquility to enhance the existing faith within the believers. Only Allah, the Almighty, can make someone's heart tranquil. A person who seeks tranquility of the heart but pursues it through means that are not approved by Allah will not be able to attain tranquility. Furthermore, in the Quran, in Surah Ar-Ra'd, verse 28, there is also mention of tranquility of the heart.

Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured”. (QS. Ar Ra'd: verse 28).

The second verse explains that those who believe and constantly remember Allah will attain tranquility of the heart. The word "tathma'innu" in this verse uses the present tense verb form, indicating

that this tranquility is not a one-time event but continuous. Essentially, faith is not just knowledge about the object of belief but knowledge accompanied by deep awareness and conviction. This indicates that mere knowledge is not sufficient to bring about peace and tranquility of the heart. The tranquility of the heart mentioned in this verse is produced through remembrance (dhikr) grounded in faith, not solely based on knowledge (Tabataba'i, 2021).

In Al-Misbah's interpretation, it is explained that a believer will experience peace and tranquility. Believers are constantly engaged in dhikr, remembering Allah both in their hearts and with their tongues. Through dhikr, one can be shielded from anxiety, fear, and worries. Dhikr can mean uttering or mentioning with the tongue. It can also mean remembrance, as when someone remembers something, that remembrance will manifest in speech. Similarly, when someone mentions frequently with their tongue, it leads the heart to remember more (Shihab, 2011).

A person who engages in dhikr, meaning constant remembrance of Allah, demonstrates self-awareness as a servant while acknowledging that Allah is the owner, organizer, and ruler of life. This awareness as a servant is the key to realizing one's shortcomings, weaknesses, and limitations as a human being. Thus, a servant entrusts all aspects of life to the Lord who possesses sublime attributes. Full surrender to the owner and organizer of life brings peace and tranquility to the heart, a sense of security in facing life's trials and challenges. A faithful servant believes that everything happening in life is Allah's will. Life's difficulties are viewed positively because of the conviction that Allah determines what is best for His servants and the belief that Allah will provide a way out for all hardships. It is this trust in Allah (faith) that brings tranquility to a Muslim.

The faith mentioned here is not just knowledge and acknowledgment of God but faith accompanied by self-awareness as a servant, as well as faith accompanied by perfect or high-quality conviction. In Islam, a state of faith that is perfect and high-quality is called "takwa."

Faith and Takwa

From the explanation in the previous section, it can be concluded that Islam teaches the key to attaining tranquility of the heart is by safeguarding the quality of faith (takwa). However, the existing reality shows that a Muslim's faith is not always in a static condition. When a Muslim declares their faith, it does not mean that the condition of their faith is always constant or consistently of good quality. A Muslim's faith can experience fluctuations, at times being in good condition or increasing (yazid), and at other times, a Muslim's faith may decrease (yanqus). The explanation in the Quran, in Surah Al-Fath, verse 4, states that Allah grants tranquility in the hearts of the believers to "increase" (liyazdaadu) the existing faith within them, simultaneously indicating that a person's faith can increase. Several other verses in the Quran also mention this, such as in Surah Al-Anfal, verse 2, which means:

“The believers are only those who, when Allāh is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely” (QS. Al Anfal: verse 2).

This verse explains about "increasing faith" (zaadathum iimaanaa) when the signs of Allah's greatness are recited as a sign of believers. The verse also describes the characteristics of those with perfect faith, wherein, upon hearing the signs of Allah's greatness, the hearts of the believers tremble, and their faith becomes even more steadfast. They have full conviction in Allah, and they surrender and seek help only from Allah. The explanation of this verse further emphasizes that faith can indeed increase, and those with perfect faith entrust all life's issues solely to Allah, thus finding tranquility in navigating life.

The explanation about the urgency of takwa in living life and achieving peace of heart serves as guidance that a Muslim must safeguard the quality of their faith (takwa). Just as guided by the Quran in one of its surahs:

“O believers! Be mindful of Allah in the way He deserves, and do not die except in a state of full submission to Him”. (QS. Ali Imran: verse 102)

This verse is addressed to the believers, urging them to observe takwa with the best of their ability. A believer must make maximum efforts to fulfill all of Allah's commandments, avoid His prohibitions, engage in actions that bring Allah's pleasure, and stay away from sins that provoke His wrath.

This is emphasized in other verses of the Quran regarding the proof of a Muslim's faith. A Muslim who has professed belief in Allah must not only believe but also demonstrate this faith. The demonstration of a Muslim's faith can be shown by having belief in the unseen, establishing prayers, giving charity, having faith in the Quran and the books revealed to the prophets before Prophet Muhammad (QS. Al-Baqarah: verse 3-4), spending wealth in times of ease and hardship, restraining anger, and forgiving others' mistakes (QS. Ali Imran: verse 133-134).

The Quran also conveys the virtues of those who observe takwa. For a Muslim, these virtues are a guarantee bestowed by Allah upon those who observe takwa, strengthening their faith and enabling them to live peacefully and serenely, akin to someone who lives peacefully under the guarantee and protection of their master.

Some of the virtues that Allah promises to those who observe takwa include:

- a. Allah will provide a way out for all life's problems and grant sustenance from unexpected sources.
“And whosoever keepeth his duty to Allah, Allah will appoint a way for him. And will provide for him from (a quarter) whence he hath no expectation”. (QS. At Tholaq: verse 2-3).
- b. Allah will teach them understanding or knowledge.
“Observe your duty to Allah. Allah is teaching you. And Allah is knower of all things” (QS. Al Baqarah: verse 282).
- c. They will attain good fortune in both the worldly life and the Hereafter.
“and observe your duty to Allah, that ye may be successful (QS. Al Baqarah: verse 189).
- d. Allah will grant them the ability to distinguish between right and wrong.
“O ye who believe! If ye keep your duty to Allah, He will give you discrimination (between right and wrong) and will rid you of your evil thoughts and deeds, and will forgive you. Allah is of Infinite Bounty” (QS. Al Anfal: verse 29).
- e. Allah will provide guidance and direction in navigating life.
“These depend on guidance from their Lord. These are the successful (QS. Al Baqarah: verse 5).

Qalb as the Center

Qalb is synonymous with lubb (heart, innermost being, core), 'aql (intellect), quwwah and saja'ah (strength, spirit, or courage), bathin (inner part), wasath (center, middle, or midst), as well as al-mahdh wa al-khalis (pure part) (Al Munawwir, 1984). Etymologically, Qalb is derived from the word "qolaba," which means to change, shift, or turn around. In a physical sense, qalb refers to the heart. Physically, the heart continuously beats, pumping blood to meet the body's need for oxygen and nutrients. If the heart experiences disturbances or issues, the overall health of the body may be affected. Psychologically, qalb is a spiritual state that constantly changes in deciding or determining something.

In Islamic teachings, it is believed that qalb plays a central role in a person's life. Qalb serves as the center that regulates an individual's behavior. The goodness or badness of one's behavior is determined by qalb. If a person's qalb is good, their behavior will be righteous. Conversely, if a person's

qalb is corrupted, their behavior will also be corrupted. This belief is based on the hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW:

"Remember, indeed in the body, there is a piece of flesh. If it is sound, the whole body is sound; and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. It is the heart" (Muttafaqun Alaih).

From this explanation, it can be understood that qalb does not only refer to the physical aspect that determines the health or sickness of a person's body. Qalb also refers to the psychic function, which is a dimension of the soul that has the ability to weigh, understand like the intellect (aql), and at the same time, has the ability to experience and feel. On the other hand, qalb also serves as the center of goodness and evil in a servant, indicating the closeness of a servant's relationship with their Lord. This demonstrates that qalb also has a spiritual function. From here, it can be concluded that qalb has cognitive, emotional, and spiritual functions.

Conclusion

Based on the various findings discussed earlier, which are grounded in the study of verses Al Quran and hadiths to find the connection between faith and mental health, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, an explanation of the connection between faith and mental health. Faith that brings mental health is based on self-awareness as a servant, so a servant always remembers Allah (dhikr) and relies on life only on Allah, the Almighty. This makes a muslim have a positive outlook on life, leading to tranquility in living. This explanation can be seen in the diagram below.

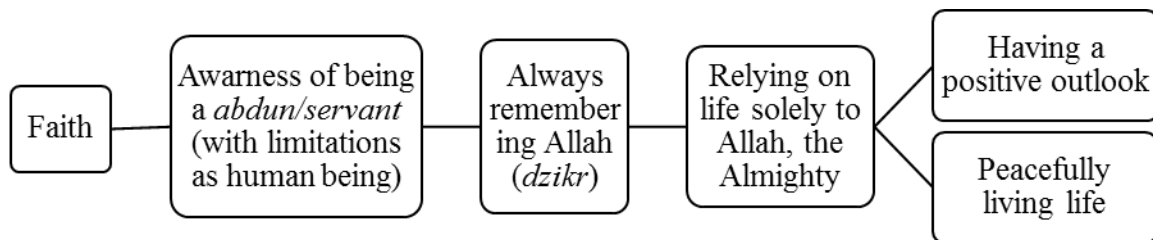


Figure 1. Connection between faith and mental health

These findings are in line with Burhanuddin's (2020) perspective that someone with inner peace is a person whose soul functions harmoniously and cohesively, resulting in a well-integrated personality. Such individuals can handle tension and problems, solve issues, and adapt to their environment. This also reinforces the view of the human fitrah, always in need of life guidance. Islam, as a merciful religion, provides guidance for life, psychological therapy, and advice for human well-being (Nisa, 2022), allowing those with strong faith to lead a good life and attain inner tranquility. Inner tranquility becomes one of the indicators of a person's mental health. Mental health is a psychological condition when someone is calm, safe, and peaceful, achieved through complete surrender to the Supreme Power. Ultimately, this results in optimistic attitudes, feelings of happiness, and positivity (Ariadi, 2019).

Secondly, it is highlighted that the condition of a Muslim's faith is not always in a good state. Faith that can manifest healthy mental well health is faith of good quality, termed takwa in Islamic terminology. According to Kuning (2018), takwa refers to a positive mental attitude that combines love and fear, consistently following Allah's commands and avoiding His prohibitions. Takwa encompasses faith, Islam, and ihsan simultaneously, representing perfect quality of faith. This supports the research finding that someone who is takwa has a close relationship with Allah, receiving various virtues and assurances from Him. Therefore, it can be understood that a person with takwa will have a healthy mental state.

Thirdly, it is emphasized that the qalb is the center that controls the goodness or badness of a Muslim's life. This study reveals that qalb has cognitive, emotional, and spiritual functions. It functions cognitively as a place to weigh the good and bad aspects of something. It serves emotionally as a standard for feelings and spiritually as the center of a servant's closeness to their Lord. This strengthens the research by Khotimah & Hilmi (2023), which concludes that qalb is a spiritual dimension with cognitive, emotional, and spiritual functions. Tranquility of the heart is the result of a good qalb and is considered one of the indicators of mental health.

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