

UNRAVELING ANXIETY: A QUR'ANIC MAQASID APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety disorder stands as a prevalent mental health challenge, significantly impacting global well-being. Divergent perspectives on anxiety exist, rooted in Western and Islamic ideologies. Freud's exploration linked childhood desires with anxiety, positing it as a defensive mechanism. In contrast, Al-Ghazali conceptualized anxiety as a mental ailment stemming from the heart's conditions. This paper seeks to elucidate anxiety through the lens of the Qur'anic Maqasid Approach, treating anxiety as a systemic phenomenon. Employing the Maqasid Approach involves a holistic examination, grounding the understanding of variables in a systematic philosophical framework. This method meticulously analyzes Qur'anic verses pertaining to a specific domain, exploring their original Arabic semantics and interconnections. Within the Qur'an, 40 verses reference "khauf." The Qur'anic depiction of "khauf" involves negative anticipations of the future accompanied by discernible physical manifestations. Thus, this paper endeavors to uncover the essence of anxiety through the Qur'anic Maqasid Approach, shedding light on its intricate dimensions.

Key words: Anxiety, Khauf, Qur'anic Maqasid Approach

INTRODUCTION

As highlighted by the World Health Organization (1), anxiety disorder stands out as a pervasive mental health concern with a global prevalence of 3.6%, totaling an estimated 264 million individuals affected worldwide in 2015. This marked a 14.9% increase since 2005, attributed to population growth and aging. Regions experiencing over 20% prevalence include the South-East Asia Region (23% or 60.05 million population), Region of The Americas (21% or 57.22 million population), and Western Pacific Region (20% or 54.08 million population). Anxiety disorder, ranking as the sixth contributor to significant health loss and global disability, demands thorough consideration based on these compelling statistics.

Defining anxiety, Crocq (2) traces its etymology to the Latin substantive "angor" and the corresponding verb "ango" (to constrict), with linguistic connections to modern German, Dutch, Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish. In French, "anxiété" and "angoisse" represent nuanced distinctions between psychological feelings and somatic experiences, respectively. Historical perspectives from Stoics and Epicureans underscored the pursuit of ataraxia, a

state free from worry, as integral to a happy life. Freud (3) contributed by associating childhood wishes with anxiety, emphasizing repression as a primary defense mechanism to mitigate associated fears. In Islamic scholarship, Al-Ghazali (4) defined anxiety as a mental ailment arising from the conditions of the heart, akin to other diseases such as anger, hatred, and sadness.

Divergent perspectives on anxiety emerge between Western and Islamic views. Freud's emphasis on childhood origins contrasts with Al-Ghazali's characterization of anxiety as a disease of the soul. This paper aims to elucidate anxiety through the Qur'anic Maqasid Approach, treating it as a systemic phenomenon. Auda (5) defines Maqasid as the objectives, purposes, or intents behind Islamic roles, synonymous with 'people interest' (masalih). Zulaifah (6) underscores the holistic nature of the Qur'anic Maqasid Approach, offering a systematic philosophical foundation for conceptual development based on the Holy Qur'an. This approach examines Qur'anic verses related to a specific domain, exploring their semantics in the original Arabic and their interconnections, providing a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

MAIN RESULTS

The Application of Qur'anic Maqasid Approach in Understanding Anxiety

Moneim (7) proposes that the Maqasid approach perceives phenomena as integral components of a broader system. Consequently, anxiety is approached as a system, aligning with system philosophy. This involves conceptualizing anxiety as an entity mentioned in the Qur'an, termed as "wahy," possessing contemporary relevance. The method's objective is to elevate reality by grounding wahy, rendering it comprehensible and applicable. Key tools in this approach include *xmind* for concept mapping and *zkr* for exploring the roots of the Qur'an and identifying verses related to anxiety. The methodology encompasses "bina al-haqiqah" or constructing truth based on evidence to discern "what anxiety is," "bina al-haqq" or constructing what ought to be from anxiety, and "bina al-nafs al muzakkah" or building the ever-purified, enriched, and developed character of anxiety as a system. The goals include understanding the cognitive nature, wholeness, openness, interrelated hierarchy, multidimensionality, and purposefulness of the anxiety system.

To formulate a theory using the Qur'anic approach, Moneim (7) outlines several steps. First, gather information about existing theories in mainstream psychology, comprehending their logical implications in reality. Next is "*Qira'ah*," a process of constructing the truth about the Qur'an using Arabic logic and perspective, aimed at collecting, relating, and connecting verses addressing anxiety. Subsequently, "*Tilawah*" involves reading the Qur'an sequentially, while "*Tartil*" entails reciting quickly and grouping verses according to related themes. "*Tadabbur*" follows, explicating moral messages and integrating them to discover consistencies. Finally, "*Tazkiah*" focuses on purifying, developing, and enriching the theory. These steps contribute to a comprehensive theoretical framework rooted in the Qur'anic Maqasid Approach, offering a nuanced understanding of anxiety as a complex and purposeful system.

The Notion of Anxiety in Mainstream Psychology

Freud's perspective on anxiety underscores repression as a fundamental defense mechanism, involving diverting attention from tempting yet perilous desires. As awareness of these wishes diminishes, so does the associated fear. Consequently, a child learns to recognize the onset of anxiety and utilizes it as a defense mechanism to impede its development. Four primary categories determine the type of fear, each associated with specific dangers:

1. loss of an object (such as the mother or primary caretaker),
2. loss of the love of the object,
3. Punishment, particularly castration or genital mutilation, and
4. fear of being a 'bad' child deserving punishment (fear of conscience or superego).

The dynamic process unfolds when a wish is linked to any of these dangers, triggering mounting anxiety. If not alleviated by reassurance from protective caretakers or independent measures, this anxiety may escalate to traumatic levels. Over time, the child learns various ways to reduce anxiety, termed defenses. When anxiety serves as a signal of danger, it is termed signal anxiety (8). Freud's classification of anxiety, as outlined by Feist and Feist (9), includes three types:

1. Neurosis Anxiety, arising from the id's urges but affecting the ego;
2. Moral Anxiety, rooted in conflicts between the ego and superego; and
3. Realistic Anxiety, an unpleasant feeling encompassing potential danger itself.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in 2013, a seminal psychological reference, defines anxiety as the anticipation of future threats. Distinguishing it from fear, which is an emotional response to an immediate or perceived imminent threat, anxiety is characterized by apprehension about unpredictable dangers lying in the future. The term "worry" in DSM-5 adds nuance by referring to the cognitive aspects of apprehensive expectation. Anxiety disorders involve excessive fear and anxiety linked to behavioral disturbances. Fear responds to real threats or those happening immediately, while anxiety anticipates future threats. Although there is overlap, fear is more connected to autonomic arousal for fight or flight, immediate danger, and escape behavior, whereas anxiety is associated with muscle tension, vigilance for future dangers, and cautious or avoidant behaviors. Pervasive avoidance behaviors can sometimes reduce the levels of fear or anxiety (10).

In the DSM-5, disorders are grouped based on a lifespan perspective and specific criteria, including separation anxiety disorder, selective mutism, specific phobia, social anxiety disorder, panic disorder, agoraphobia, generalized anxiety disorder, substance/medication-induced anxiety disorder, and anxiety disorder due to another medical condition. Furthermore, anxiety disorders often coexist with other disorders, but careful examination of feared or avoided situations and associated thoughts or beliefs can help distinguish specific types of anxiety disorders (10).

The Qur'anic Maqasid Approach to Understanding Anxiety

In contrast to mainstream psychology's definition of anxiety as a negative emotional state characterized by foreboding and somatic tension, such as a racing heart, sweating, and breathing difficulties, the Qur'anic Maqasid Approach provides a unique perspective. In the Arabic lexicon, anxiety is closely related to the root word خوف (khauf), which translates to fear (11). Utz (12) notes that Islam views anxiety as a natural response designed to

protect humans from pain, injury, or death. While generally perceived as a negative emotion in response to a threat, anxiety can lead individuals to either avoid situations positively or negatively.

The Qur'an extensively addresses the theme of fear in spiritual contexts, including fear of Allah, the day of judgment, and hellfire. When one fears Allah, seeking refuge in Him and striving for His pleasure through acts of obedience becomes paramount. Similarly, believers fear the day of judgment and eternal punishment, guiding them to adhere to the righteous path and avoid disobedience (12).

Within the Qur'an, 40 verses explicitly mention "khauf." These verses highlight the use of khauf to describe negative emotions about future imaginings, often accompanied by physical signs. Various themes of khauf encompass fear of God, fear of the hereafter, fear of punishment, fear of death, fear of natural phenomena, fear of wild animals, fear of unusual behavior, fear of regret for past wrongs, fear of separation from significant others, fear of a higher power, fear of mistrust, fear of poor performance, fear of non-acceptance, and fear of losing wealth and position. The Qur'anic Maqasid Approach, with its nuanced exploration of khauf, offers a comprehensive understanding of anxiety, emphasizing its spiritual, moral, and existential dimensions.

The Elaboration of Anxiety through the Qur'anic Maqasid Approach

In constructing the concept of anxiety through the Qur'anic Maqasid Approach, it is imperative to consider it as a system, encompassing philosophical elements, relations, values, purposes, and its environmental context (6). Addressing issues referenced in the Holy Qur'an, the following dimensions are taken into account:

1. **The Concept of Anxiety as Human Nature:** Anxiety, considered one of the emotions, is viewed as part of the bounty bestowed by Allah (12). Emotions, with their internal components of subjective feelings and behaviors, are universal and innate. While positive emotions bring pleasure, negative emotions imply distress. Islam perceives emotions as a test from Allah, emphasizing success as the ability to control and channel emotions in accordance with divine commandments. Early anxiety is seen as a negative emotion triggered by imagining future events leading to negative feelings or fear. Basic anxieties include the fear of death, regret, separation from significant others, and threats from natural phenomena.
2. **The Concept of Anchor as Human Being:** Anchors, as mentioned in Qur'anic verses, play a pivotal role in addressing anxiety. For example, the story of Prophet Moses facing the superpower figure Pharaoh illustrates the importance of anchoring one's faith in Allah. Anchors can be categorized into materials, self, others, and virtues, with those who believe in God anchoring themselves to the ultimate virtue of monotheism in worship (tauhid uluhiyah). Anxiety arises when individuals fear something more than Allah, leading to persistent anxiety reinforced by evil whispers. Strengthening one's faith through consistent remembrance of Allah is crucial for alleviating anxiety.
3. **The Concept of Ethics Related to Task and Responsibility (Tawakkal and Ihsan):** The Qur'an emphasizes surrendering to Allah's will in facing challenges. Tawakkal, or reliance on Allah, involves focusing on the process with the best effort, leaving the result to Allah. This process leads to Ihsan, where individuals fear Allah as if seeing

Him, resulting in hope. The dynamic process aligns with human motivation theory, incorporating freedom to choose, urge, meaning, challenge, and incentive as sources of motivation.

4. The Concept of Human Motivation: Qur'anic verses motivate believers through a dynamic cognitive process, aligning with human motivation theory. The five sources of motivation—freedom to choose, urge, meaning, challenge, and incentive—interact holistically. These motivations guide individuals in transforming themselves into meaningful beings through choices and interactions with their environment.
5. The Concept of Human Socialization: Loneliness over time is identified as a crucial factor in anxiety (13). The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of community and socialization for believers. Those who save themselves from anxiety and depression are described as God's guardians (waliyulloh) with characteristics of faith and piety (taqwa). Believers are encouraged to engage in shared activities, share goodness, and practice patience.
6. Qur'an Prescription about Anxiety: The Qur'an provides multidimensional treatments for anxiety, acknowledging it as a test from God. Remedies include remembering Allah through Islamic practices like dhikr, reading Qur'an, and prayer. Cognitive-behavioral therapy is implied in stories such as that of Prophet Moses, involving self-concentration techniques, relaxation training, and teaching problem-solving skills. Comorbidity of anxiety with other disorders is addressed, emphasizing the need for a deeper understanding to distinguish anxiety from other mental illnesses. Social well-being is promoted through communal practices like praying together, and pious individuals are described as those involved in good deeds, such as helping others, controlling emotions, practicing forgiveness, and loving those who do good deeds.

CONCLUSION

This paper critically reviewed the existing discourse on anxiety within mainstream psychology and proposed the Qur'anic Maqasid Approach to address identified gaps. Mainstream psychology often portrays anxiety as a negative emotion to be avoided for achieving happiness in this life, with Freudian dynamics seeking pleasure as a primary motive. DSM-5 categorizes anxiety as a disorder, attributing causation to the object of anxiety without delving into transcendental matters. While clinical medications may alleviate symptoms, the root issues, such as anxiety, may persist (14), (15).

In contrast, the Qur'anic Maqasid Approach views the concept of anxiety as a comprehensive system. This approach involves grounding revelations from Qur'anic verses and Hadiths, providing an elevated understanding of contemporary anxiety. The aim is not to contest existing theories but to complement them. Embracing the idea that theories consistent with Islamic perspectives are signs of God's presence, this approach encourages an open dialogue with previous theories. By interrelating hierarchies, exploring multidimensional aspects, and uncovering the purposefulness of the anxiety system, this paper contributes to a holistic understanding.

The conceptualization of anxiety within the Qur'anic Maqasid Approach spans several dimensions:

1. The Concept of Anxiety as Human Nature: Recognizing anxiety as an emotion inherent in human nature, influenced by the fear of various future events, reflects a nuanced understanding.
2. The Concept of Anchor as Human Being: Anchors, such as faith in Allah and monotheistic worship (tauhid uluhiyah), play a crucial role in mitigating anxiety. Recognizing anxiety as a challenge to be faced with trust in Allah creates stability.
3. The Concept of Ethics Related to Task and Responsibility (Tawakkal and Ihsan): Surrendering to Allah (Tawakkal) and striving for excellence (Ihsan) provide a framework for managing anxiety. Balancing faith and effort leads to positive outcomes.
4. The Concept of Human Motivation: Qur'anic verses motivate believers through a dynamic cognitive process, aligning with human motivation theory. The holistic interaction of freedom to choose, urge, meaning, challenge, and incentive guides transformative choices.
5. The Concept of Human Socialization: Emphasizing the importance of community and socialization, the Qur'an portrays believers as those who engage in shared activities, fostering resilience against anxiety.
6. Qur'an Prescription about Anxiety: Multidimensional treatments for anxiety, including Islamic therapies like dhikr, reading Qur'an, and prayer, align with cognitive-behavioral therapy principles. The Qur'an distinguishes anxiety from other mental illnesses, emphasizing the importance of social well-being.

In conclusion, the Qur'anic Maqasid Approach contributes a holistic perspective to the discourse on anxiety, enriching existing theories with a deeper understanding rooted in Islamic principles. This approach encourages an inclusive dialogue that transcends disciplinary boundaries, fostering a comprehensive comprehension of anxiety as an integral aspect of the human experience.

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