

Intervention of Islamic Cognitive Behavioral Theory (I-CBT) Against Jealous Women in Polygamy

Nurhikmah Mubarak Ali¹, Mariny Abdul Ghani² & Farah Hanani Kamaruddin³

Centre For Counselling Studies & Psychology And Services, Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah International Islamic University, (UniSHAMS) Kuala Ketil, Kedah¹, School of Applied Psychology, Social Work and Policy, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Sintok, Kedah², Faculty of Cognitive Science & Human Development, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Sarawak³

Email: nurhikmah@unishams.edu.my, mariny@uum.edu.my & hanankamaruddin99@gmail.com

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v12-i8/14677> DOI:10.6007/IJARBS/v12-i8/14677

Published Date: 17 August 2022

Abstract

Jealousy is one of reaction to women in polygamous or monogamous marriages. Jealousy is necessary but must be controlled so as not to adversely affect behavior. The purpose of this study was to explore the category of jealousy faced by applying the intervention of the Islamic Cognitive Behavior Theory(I-CBT). The research methodology is qualitative by using a case study approach on three respondents who are women in polygamy. Analysis of the findings shows there are several themes formed and how I-CBT is applied to help respondents to control the jealousy they face. The proposal of the next study, the researcher can perform the intervention using quantitative methods with a larger number of respondents.

Keywords: Islamic Cognitive Behavioral Theory (I-CBT), Jealousy.

Introduction

Jealousy is part of human nature. Jealousy can occur in any form of relationship whether it is a relationship between siblings, colleagues, spouses, between friends and so on. Jealousy in intimate relationships can occur through i) comparison, ii) competition and iii) fear of being replaced by others (Attridge, 2013). Jealousy can be defined as thoughts, emotions, and complex reactions felt due to the loss of a loved one, which becomes a threat to self-esteem, and the quality of such an intimate relationship (Duma, 2009). Jealousy in an intimate relationship appears in the form of emotions of fear and a person's worry of the presence of a third person and perceived as rival threatens their relationship or themselves.

Thus, they act to keep an eye on the partner, be suspicious, become more protective and so on. Such reactions are known as jealousy. Relationship quality refers to how individuals rate their relationship whether positive or negative and satisfied or feel happy with their relationship and partner (Morry et al., 2010). The quality of intimate relationships can be affected when the partner has an outrageous attitude of jealousy. Furthermore, if such jealousy leads to bad things like violence, murder and so on. On the other hand, jealousy is also seen as something positive when it helps to improve the quality of the relationship which jealousy that shows the partner cares about his or her partner and proves the strength of the couple's love.

Islamic Behavioral Cognitive Interventions can help clients who are in polygamy to deal with the challenges of jealousy by helping them to form healthy thinking patterns related to their life situations. According to the cognitive behavioral approach, counselors can identify the client's negative thoughts and help the clients change their thoughts such as automatic thinking, conjecture, and belief (See, 2009). This therapy focuses on thinking, and how it affects the client's feelings, and behavior (Joseph, 2009). When thinking regarding of polygamy and the situation of being in polygamy is corrected, the client will be able to change their feelings to be calmer and accepting, as well as strategize more effective actions.

Islamic Behavioral Cognitive Intervention (I-CBT)

The approach of Islamic Cognitive Behavioral Theory is a therapy oriented to change the pattern of superior thinking that according to the Islamic perspective. Counselors who use this approach should position the client as a selected and noble person in the presence of Allah SWT as stated by Allah SWT in surah At Tin verse 4 which means: "We have certainly created man in the best of stature". The cognitive theoretical approach of Islamic behavior puts this human freedom limited and there are limits (Elias, 2007). According to the Islamic perspective, true freedom is the freedom to seek knowledge and carry out the responsibilities of being a servant of Allah SWT. Then the man will choose the responsibility to be taken towards good or evil. This is because, Allah SWT created man to think about the purpose of the creation of Allah SWT in himself (Abd Manaf, 1996).

Therefore, through this therapeutic approach, researcher tries to link and practice the elements that exist in Islam into this therapy to help the clients have a sense of responsibility and fulfill the human needs based on Islam. Among the problems that have been discussed using this approach are identity crisis (Elias, 2005), smoking (Elias, 2007), sexual addiction on the internet (Elias, 2012).

Methodology

Researchers use qualitative method which is interview to obtain data on respondents' thinking patterns. Interviews are conducted to understand the experiences the respondents have been through more deeply. Among the interview guides that the researchers had prepared before the interview with the respondents were:

1. What was your view of polygamy before going through it?
2. What motivates you to stay afloat?
3. How do you feel after polygamy?
4. What makes it difficult for you to live a polygamous life?

5. What kind of jealousy dominates you and how do you control it?
6. What are the implications to your family members after polygamy?

However, this question guide is not too binding and needs to be flexible based on the response given by the respondent and their willingness to continue the conversation. Freedom should be given to the respondent because during the interview session, there are respondents who are unable to continue the conversation because they still feel sad when recalling moments of suffering that they have been through.

Findings of Study

Here are some of the findings of jealousy faced by women who were in polygamy. Researchers will show how I-CBT can be applied to help clients deal with those thinking patterns. The suggestions of a positive Islamic thought mold are proposed below:

Theme 1: Jealousy Towards Husband

Wives who are in polygamy feel jealous of their husbands because they feel unfair that husbands can have another spouse or lover while the wife cannot. Wives also often feel envy and unfairness when they need to be alone by themselves and take care of the children during the husband's other spouses' turn and the fact that the husbands never take turns, they even having fun with other spouses. This thought provokes jealousy and anger towards the husband.

To control the feeling of jealousy to the advantages of a partner as a man, the client can remind herself that such advantages are a gift from Allah SWT, and not the choice of a man or woman. As a Muslim woman, clients have accepted Islamic rules that allow men to marry more than one while limiting women to marrying only one. Therefore, among the words that can be repeated is: The ruling of Allah SWT has wisdom. Allah SWT says:

Means: "Men are guardians of women, because Allah has made one superior to the other, and (also) because men spend their wealth (on them)" (An-Nisa': 34)

To heal the heart when it hurts on their own alone the client can hold to the promise of Allah SWT to every individual Muslim who is affected by misfortune. Recommendations of words to yourself: "Allah SWT will surely repay my sacrifice with forgiveness and reward."

Hadith of Aisyah r.a said: I heard the Prophet said: Every Muslim who is pierced by a thorn or more than that, he will be recorded a degree for him because of the calamity that befalls him and be removed from him an offence due to the calamity. (Hadith narrated by Muslim)

Theme 2: Jealousy When Husband's Share His Love To Other Wives

There are three situations regarding lack of affection. The first situation is lack of affection because the husband has already had another wife and the first wife feels jealous of having to share love such as sharing time and financial resources. Second is the first wife's concern for the possible reduction of the husband's affection for her due to the services given by the second wife. Third is a situation in which the wife feels that her husband loves his other wives more than herself.

For the first situation, the client needs to accept that the lack of time, attention, and financial resources occur because of the addition of members in the family. Among the things that can be think of is the evident and inner sustenance is the provision of Allah SWT. If the client feels lacking, she can pray for an addition from Allah SWT.

For the second situation, the client can place the confidence that sustenance is the provision of Allah SWT. Although it is evident that love comes from the husband, however, the one who intends the love is Allah SWT. The client can also change the mindset that affection is not like time and money. It is not necessarily divided but can be equal or increase even with the presence of others. To ensure whether an individual will love us or not, the client can ask from Allah SWT to control it.

For the third situation where the client has convincing evidence that the husband loves the other wife more, the counselor can invite the client to be rational in accepting the reality of the situation. Among the words that can persuade oneself is, "I consider this lack of love as a test from Allah SWT, and I will use it to gain pleasure and love from Allah SWT." Refer also to the above, the part of persuading the heart when accepting a misfortune.

It needs to be distinguished between the right to love and the right to get an equal turn. A wife can complain to the authorities for the rights of equal turn but must deal with her own feeling if she does not get the same affection.

In addition of being calm in accepting the situation of not getting more love, individuals can also make action plans in the pursuit of love. I-CBT also includes realistic and evidence-based action planning and experimentation.

Clients can be trained to learn from history, behaviors that lead to better relationships and improve such behavior. For example, if the client finds from the history of the relationship that cooking or going on a vacation together will lead to a more intimate relationship, the client can plan to do more of the activity. If from history, the client has found that chattering does not bring the desired effect then the client will plan on how not to do so.

Doing outdoor activities together or going on vacation together so that the relationship can be more intimate. Accept that love is not like time and money. If the spouse feels a lack of affection, it is possible to ask for love from God to be channeled through the spouse.

Theme 3: Jealousy When Being Compared To

Women are often jealous when compared to the other wives. This is a normal reaction because everyone wants to feel themselves being more, yet constantly worried and fear about themselves being lacking. This tendency causes the individual to usually compare herself with the other wives, and often focuses on aspects of herself that are lesser than them. Among the aspects seen on the other wives are beauty, education, career, creativity and so on. This sense of inferiority and jealousy intensifies when the husband mentions something about it.

Among the strategies of I-CBT is the client focuses fairly on all aspects of the comparison scientifically and does not engage in thinking '*all - or nothing*' which is black and white thinking (Beck, 1995). A systematic comparison of the first stage is to look at the dimensions of beauty

itself. For example, if the other wife is fairer in the aspect of the skin, she may be better in terms of body shape or have a sloping nose or has more beautiful hair. If the client feels that she has lost overall, then the client needs to make a systematic comparison at the second level, which is, find other advantages in herself of other dimensions apart from beauty such as being good at cooking, having more income and so on. Every human being has their advantages and weaknesses.

For those who keep on facing the other wives who are younger than herself, the client can say that beauty does not last forever, everyone will go through golden age as well. Remind yourself that such advantages are a gift from God, and not the property of human being. Assuming the advantages that a partner has will bring good to yourself and the family. Holds onto the philosophy that each human being has their own advantages. Individuals have advantages too, which can be appreciated by a partner. (Because the partner has chosen to marry them once upon a time too). Convince yourself that every couple that God has made is to complement each other.

Theme 4: Jealousy of Finances Spent by Husbands

Jealous of the finances that the husband spends on his other wives, clients who are too worried about finances in the future. Clients will always think about whether money will be enough for them or not. A partner's extreme anxiety can lead to thoughts of unconscionability and non-trust in Allah. As Muslims, we should believe in the promise of Allah regarding the sustenance that He has set for His servant as in a hadith the Prophet said:

"If you put your trust in Allah with true tawakkal, then Allah gives You sustenance as Allah provides for the birds, out of the nest in early morning on an empty stomach and return to the nest in the evening with full stomach ". (Narrated by At Tirmizi, Ibn Majah and Ahmad)

Understand the concept and understanding of the Islamic faith in the aspect of Allah's Qada' and Qadar. Believe that every blessing and sustenance comes from Allah. Put your trust in Allah on His sustenance after striving and there is no need to worry about the sustenance you will receive. The expectation of what will happen in the future is only God who is more knowing and unreachable by the intellect of the individual's thinking. Giving the benefit of the doubt to Allah The All-Provider who provided for His servant. The other wives also deserve a living from the husband.

Theme 5: Jealousy through Image

Jealousy through image towards the other wives is a reaction of thoughts, feelings and physiology that sharply attacks the individual. It is related to all the thoughts discussed; however, it is specially discussed here because the feeling of jealousy can be present without the spread of other additional factors. This is because it strikes sharply, the feeling of jealousy often encourage clients to do things that will be regrettable later. Therefore, controlling the attack of jealousy is an important component of the I-CBT intervention for women (Abdullah, 2008). Imagining a partner having an intimate relationship with the other wives is an aspect of the problem of wrong thinking patterns. This severe negative image can lead to a quarrel between the spouses. Jealousy that is disliked by God is one that is not based on clear facts and only makes mere conjectures. There is a hadith in which the Prophet said that:

The preventive measures to be taken to reduce the attack of jealousy and minimize the impact of negative behavioral reactions is to improve the patterns of behavior as described in the above measures. In addition, special measures should also be taken to minimize the onset of negative behavior because of the reaction from the attack.

Feelings of jealousy can be broken down into components of feelings of anger and frustration. The step to take to get rid of anger is to use a *time-out* strategy (Mayo, 2012), which are checking and stopping spontaneous behavior - and giving yourself time to be alone first. This will prevent the client from accidentally performing undeserved reactions such as raging or scolding others.

For the I-CBT mold pattern, the step to end the anger is to follow the guidelines given by the Prophet; which are by taking ablution, praying, and performing sunnah repentance or other sunnah prayers. "Indeed, anger is from Satan, and Satan is made out of fire, and indeed it is extinguished with water. But if any of you are angry, hasten to take ablution." (*Hadith Narrated by Imam Ahmad*).

The habit of water is to extinguish the fire. Likewise, ablution can extinguish the flames of anger. Thus, the Prophet commanded his ummah to perform ablution when in anger as stated in the hadith of the Prophet. "*When one of you is angry, and he is in a standing position, let him sit down. Because it will take away his anger. And if not, then let him lie down.*" (*Hadith Narrated by Muslim*)

If the situation is being jealous of the other wives by the imagination of them feeding the husband then the intervention that can be made to take care of jealousy at that point is to turn the imagination into a positive image where the client can also feed her husband with food as well when it is the client's turn.

Jealous of the other wives going on a vacation with the husband, then the client can imagine that she can also go on vacation with the husband wherever the client wants so that the negative jealousy is treated in a good and healthy way. The client can do what the other wives do with her husband and may be able to do more than that when it's her turn.

Giving the benefit of the doubt which is having good thoughts of an innocent partner - it is the right of the husband and the other wives. Clients can also use behavioral control strategies such as exercising, socializing activities such as going out with friends, reading motivational books, or doing fun activities such as shopping and going out with kids.

Conclusion

Researchers have chosen to study Islamic Cognitive Behavioral Theory because researchers are motivated to adjust the values related to spiritual elements and values introduced by Imam Al Ghazali in his book *Ihya Ulumuddin*. Man needs to adorn himself with praiseworthy qualities (*mahmudah*) and abstain from reprehensible traits (*mazmumah*). Women in polygamy faced a great challenge. According to the cognitive perspective of Islamic Behavior, the problem is exacerbated by unhealthy thinking patterns. Islamic Cognitive Behavioural Theory (I-CBT) uses a strong and effective thought pattern mould to address any life challenges. This article sheds light on examples of unhealthy thinking that occur in women and

describes how I-CBT can be carried out to form more positive thinking patterns and effectively deal with situations that involved jealousy.

Acknowledgement

I am thankful to God for simplifying all my affairs and I am sure everything we do only happens because with God's permission. I got a lot of support from my family especially my parents in preparing this article. I would like to thank my three co-researchers in completing this study, namely Dr Mariny binti Abdul Ghani and Farah Hanani binti Kamaruddin. I also take this opportunity to thank Kaizen Sdn Bhd for giving me the opportunity to publish and present this writing review.

Co-author

Mariny binti Abdul Ghani

School of Applied Psychology, Social Work and Policy, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Sintok, Kedah.

Email: mariny@uum.edu.my

References

- Curman, A. S., & Kniskern, D. P. (1991). *Handbook of Family Therapy* (Editor) Volume 2. 1st Edition, New York : Routledge.
- Attridge, M. (2013). Jealousy and Relationship Closeness: Exploring the Good (Reactive) and Bad (Suspicious) Sides of Romantic Jealousy. *SAGE Open*, 1-16.
- Joseph, A. (2009). *Cognitive Behavior Therapy*. Capstone Publishing Ltd: UK.
- Beck, J. S. (1995). *Cognitive therapy: Basics and beyond*. Guilford Press: New York.
- Duma, U. (2009). Jealousy and Compersion in Close Relationships: Coping Styles by Relationship Types. GRIN Verlag.
- Mayo, C. (2012). *Anger management: 10 tips to tame your temper*. www.mayoclinic.com
- Morry, M. M., Reich, T., & Kito, M. (2010). How do I see you relative to myself? Relationship quality as a predictor of self- and partner-enhancement within cross-sex friendships, dating relationships, and marriages. *Journal Social Psychology*. 150(4), 369-92. doi: 10.1080/00224540903365471.
- Elias, N. (2005). *An Islamic cognitive behavioral therapy approach (CBT) for Helping clients with gender identity and sexual orientation problems*. Paper presented at the National Seminar on Applied Psychology 2005, organized by Applied Psychology Centre, IIUM, at Cultural Activity Centre, IUM, Gombak, Selangor, on 3rd and 4th September.
- Elias, N. (2007). *Program pencegahan merokok menggunakan integrasi pendekatan penerapan nilai Islam dan program psikopendidikan*. Kertaskerja dibentangkan di Seminar Kaunseling dan Pendidikan Moral 2007, 26-27 Mei, di Hotel Sri Malaysia, Sungai Petani, anjuran Fakulti Sains Kognitif dan Pendidikan, Universiti Utara Malaysia.
- Elias, N. (2012). *Kaunseling Islam: Strategi intervensi bagi ketagihan seksual internet*. Kertas kerja dibentangkan di Konvesyen Kaunseling PERKAMA Kebangsaan Ke 18, 19-21 Jun, 2012; di INTAN, Sabah.
- See, C. M. (2009). *Pendekatan kaunseling*. Lembaga Kaunselor: Kuala Lumpur.
- Abdullah, W. S. A. (2008). *Cemburu bagi wanita bersedu*. Tesis Sarjana. Universiti Utara Malaysia.
- Sarmani, Y., & Minggal, M. T. (2008). *Teori kaunseling al Ghazali*. Selangor Darul Ehsan: HIZBI Sdn Bhd.