

Emotional Disorder Therapy According to Al-Ghazali's Spiritual Theory

Ibrahim I.¹, Omar S.H.S.², Baru R.³, Ali M.S.⁴, Ismail M.S.⁵, Zin E.I.E.W.⁶, & Mat@Mohamad M.Z.⁷

¹PhD Candidate, Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), Terengganu, Malaysia, ^{2,3,4,5,6,7}Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), Terengganu, Malaysia.

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v10-i11/8206>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBS/v10-i11/8206

Published Date: 27 November 2020

Abstract

This study discusses al-Ghazali's theory of spiritual therapy in managing emotional disorders. There are numerous types of emotional disorders but the attention of this study is on the anger emotion. The objective of this study is also to explore the causes of emotional anger in human beings and examine the theory put forward by al-Ghazali regarding the management of anger particularly as an emotional disorder. This study is a qualitative study and among the methods used is to collect and analyse documents to understand or recognise the concept of anger from the psychological point of view and psychotherapy by al-Ghazali. The results of the study show that anger emotion is included in anxiety disorder since it will lead to psychiatric illness and affect social interactions. In fact, studies show that anger emotion is not a disease but an expression of the emotion of a person who is facing many issues and pressures in life that could cause various negative reactions. However, the anger emotion experienced by a person is normal but it is necessary to control the emotion appropriate to the therapy as has been put forward by al-Ghazali through his psychospiritual methods.

Keywords: Emotional Disorder, Anger Therapy, Al-Ghazali's Spiritual Theory, Psychospiritual.

Introduction

Anger emotion is a natural emotion experienced by every human being. The cause of anger emotion is due to internal or external factors that affect a person's anxiety related to personal matters (Nadarajan, 2017) which involves frustration, threats and anxiety over something that may end in aggression (Shahsavarani & Noohi, 2014: 144) . The effects of anger can be seen in several situations, among which are physiological and biological changes, namely when a person is angry, heart rate and blood pressure will increase, as well as the levels of energy and hormones; adrenaline and noradrenaline (<http://www.myhealth.gov.my/>). Then there are also problems with rapid heartbeat, increase in blood pressure, anger and aggressive in action (<https://www.healthline.com/>). Therefore, anger emotion can do more

harm than any other emotion. In other words, anger emotion is very common and can interfere and affect at least two individuals, namely the attacker and the individual being attacked (<http://www.myhealth.gov.my/pengurusan-kemarahan/>). Since anger emotion often plagues the lives of individuals, psychologists and psychotherapists like al-Ghazali are no exception in discussing the issue of anger and methods to overcome it.

Research Methodology

To achieve the set objectives, this study uses the method of document analysis to recognize and understand the concept of angry emotional theory from the perspective of psychology and psychotherapy put forward by Imam al-Ghazali. Besides, this study also examines the methods applied by psychologists in managing the anger emotion of a client and comparing them with the methods presented by al-Ghazali. Each of the data collected was analysed using content analysis methods. Content analysis used is a systematic and objective research technique to draw conclusions from textual data (Yusof, 2004; Krippendorff, 2004; Lebar, 2009). This matter coincides with the data collected from documents involving important works in accordance with the requirements of this study.

The Concept of Anger in Islam

The nature of anger in terms of language means feelings of frustration, irritation, resentment and outrage (Baharom, 2007). This trait occurs because the blood pressure in the heart increases due to something unpleasant (al-Jurjani, 1413M). Among the factors that drive anger are pride in oneself, excessive jokes, mocking, cheating, arguing, hostility, betrayal, the pursuit of worldly wealth, rank and position, related to self-esteem and so on (Majid, 2009), feelings of ego (arrogance) caused by the position held, rank, followers and property owned. The nature of anger is one of the qualities of madhmūmah (negative) that needs to be removed from the soul (Kholilur, 2008). However, if not curbed, it is worrying that over time it will continue to damage the soul. Examining the literature review, most previous researchers focused on the influence of wudu' as a therapy in dealing with anger (Kholilur, 2008). In addition, there are also previous studies on the disadvantages of anger (Tiang & Ting, 2009), how to curb anger (Abdullah, 2011; Tsoutsas et al., 2013) and expression of anger (al-Baqi, 2015). Based on previous studies, anger is not uncommon in human life. This is because, if anger is not curbed properly, this trait will definitely have a negative impact either on the individual involved or on the community around him (al-Baqi, 2015).

The Concept of Anger According to Al-Ghazali

With regard to the nature of anger, al-Ghazali has divided it into three situations namely a little anger, a feeling of excessive anger (to the point of losing sanity and proper boundaries) and anger allowed by sharia. In addition, al-Ghazali also categorizes anger into two main parts, namely praiseworthy anger and reprehensible anger. Praiseworthy and justified anger is anger based on Allah SWT as Allah SWT's anger towards His enemies from among the polytheists and infidels (Majid, 2009).

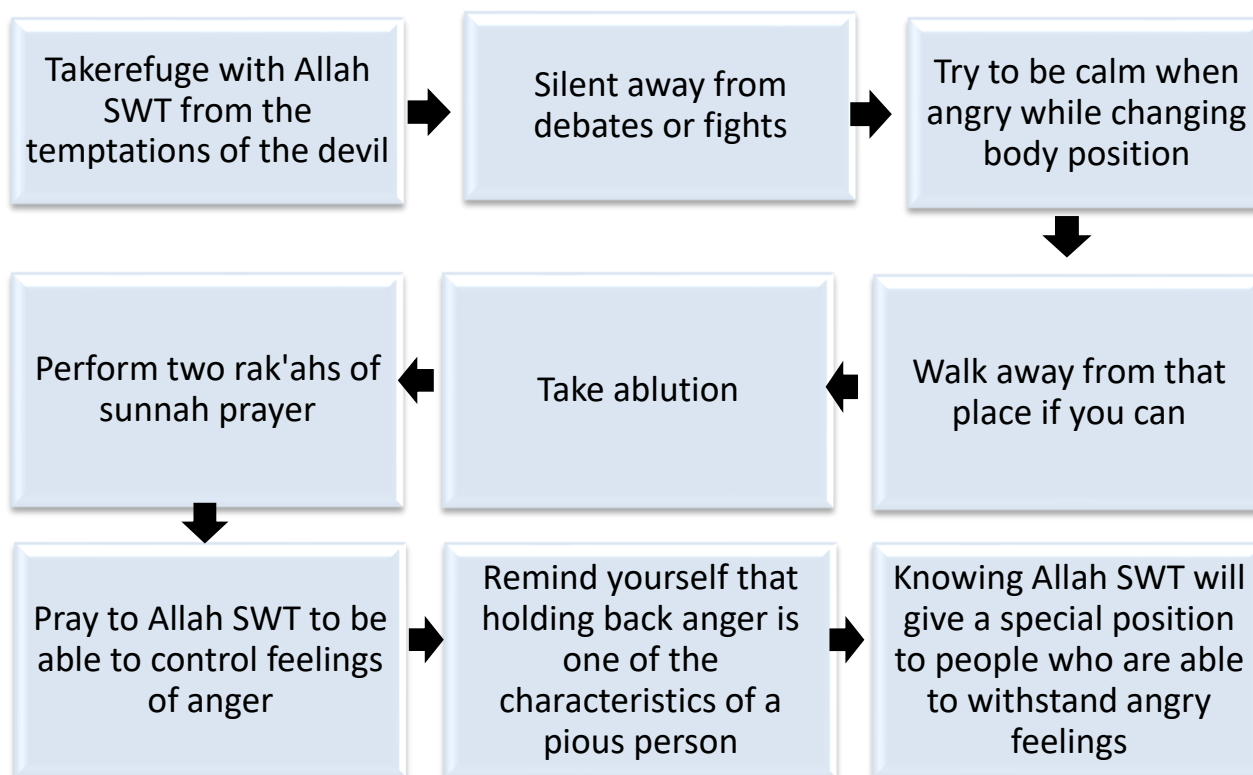
Anger Therapy from the Perspective of Al-Ghazali

In this regard, al-Ghazali has outlined two methods for dealing with anger. First, through continuous training. Feelings of anger cannot be completely eliminated in the short term because anger is a natural trait of every human being and at some point, anger is needed. For example, anger is used as a weapon to fight with people who oppose the path of

righteousness, prevent evil deeds and call for good. In this case, the nature of anger can be likened to a hunting dog that must be trained and accustomed to the logic of reason and sharia. This quality can be trained if you can get used to the nature of patience and continuous effort.

The second method is to restrain the angry person through knowledge and practice. What is meant by the knowledge of restraining anger is to realize that everything that happens is on the will of Allah SWT and not on the will of anyone. As such, anger can be alleviated from continuing to spread. While from a practical point of view, people who are angry must remind themselves that anger is caused by the devil who is fire (hot) and needs to be cooled with water (cold). Among other measures that are organized are sitting when angry if the person is standing, lying down when angry if the person is sitting. If he is still not calm, then he should perform ablution (al-Ghazali, 2003).

In addition, al-Ghazali also outlines the process of dealing with anger (al-Ghazali, 1988), as follows:



The Process of Resisting Anger According to al-Ghazali (al-Ghazali, 1988)

Methods of Anger Emotion Therapy According to The West

In the West, there is an anger management method called *Managing A Client Who Is Angry Or Aggressive* released by the Australian Government Department of Health. This method has put forward two main steps that need to be applied by psychologists in managing anger emotion through the Do & Don't step. In the Do step, there are eight methods that psychologists need to perform as a preparatory process before dealing with client emotions. First, they need to be calm in controlling their emotions first before arranging a therapy session. Second, maintain a passive body posture and do not pose a threat to the client that is by placing the empty palm facing forward and the body position should be at a 45-degree

angle towards the client. Third, let the client post their feelings and acknowledge them without asking any questions. Fourth, the psychologist begins to ask open-ended questions to the client to initiate a pleasant conversation session and engage the client to speak. Fifth, be flexible with the client's emotions and behaviour from time to time. Sixth, use the space for self-protection, i.e. the psychologist places himself close to the exit and do not suffocate the client's condition. Seventh, ensure that the environment of the therapy room is in a safe condition and provide security mechanisms such as alarms and keep away from any form of dangerous objects that could threaten the safety of both parties. Eighth, make sure other customers are not in danger while the therapy session is in progress (<https://cracksintheice.org.au/pdf/download/managing-a-client-who-is-angry-or-aggressive.pdf>).

While in the Don't step, there are 10 methods that have been outlined. First, the psychologist needs to be careful with the tone of voice that is thrown and take care of the way the eyes look towards the client as well as avoid conversations that can threaten or challenge the client's emotions. Second, avoid talking about things or issues that could cause aggression. Third, avoid shouting at the client even if the client has already started not keeping the tone of voice and shouting at you. Fourth, do not turn away or turn the client's position. Fifth, do not urge clients to act quickly in responding. Sixth, do not argue with clients. Seventh, be vigilant if the client has already started to show restless behaviour. Eighth, ignore verbal threats or warnings of violence from clients. Ninth, intolerance to violence or aggression. Tenth, do not act alone like trying to disarm someone or fight alone (<https://cracksintheice.org.au/pdf/download/managing-a-client-who-is-angry-or-aggressive.pdf>).

Conclusion

Anger is a normal emotion and becomes a natural trait to all creatures of Allah SWT. However, in certain circumstances the nature of anger should be curbed from continuing to control oneself because it is feared that it will adversely affect the individual himself and the situation around him. Therefore, psychotherapy figures especially al-Ghazali have stated the steps that need to be taken by someone who is angry. In addition, western psychologists are no exception in discussing this issue. If examined, the method of anger therapy highlighted by al-Ghazali and western psychologists has one thing in common which is to cultivate a calm nature when in a state of anger. However, as a result of research on Western and al-Ghazali methods, it was found that the anger therapy method highlighted by al-Ghazali is more suitable to be applied in daily life because angry individuals need to overcome anger without expecting help from others or psychologist.

Acknowledgement

This article is part of research sponsored by the Center for Research Excellence and Incubation Management (CREIM), Sultan Zainal Abidin University (UniSZA), Gong Badak Campus 21300 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia.

Corresponding Author

Email: sylutfi@uniswa.edu.my

References

- Abdullah, F. (2011). Therapeutic Ethics: Managing Anger, Negative Thoughts And Depression According To Al-Balkhi in *Afkar*, 77-100.
- Al-Baqi, S. (2015). Ekspresi Emosi Marah. *Buletin Psikologi*, 23(1), 22-30.
- Al-Ghazali, A. H. (2003). *al-Arba'in fi Uṣūl al-Din*. Damsyiq: Dar al-Qalam.
- Al-Jurjani, A. M. A. A. (1413M). *Mu'jam al-Ta'rifat*. Kaherah: Dar al-Fadilah.
- Al-Uryan, M. S. (2009). *Adab Marah*. Indonesia: Islamhouse.com.
- Baharom, N. (2007). *Kamus Dewan (Edisi Keempat)*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka.
- Kholilur, R. (2008). *Pengaruh Wudu Dalam Mereduksi Marah*. Jakarta: Fakultas Psikologi Universitas slam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah.
- Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. California: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Lebar, O. (2017). *Kajian Kualitatif*. Tanjong Malim: Universiti Sultan Idris.
- Lucia, M. W., Courtney, B. W., Emily, M. B. H., Amanda, J., and Rinad, S. B. (2018). The Relationship Between Anger and Anxiety Symptoms in *Youth with Anxiety Disorders in HHS Public Access J Child Adolesc Couns*, 4(2): 117–133. doi: 10.1080/23727810.2017.1381930.
- Mahalik, J. R., Good, G. E., Englar-Carlson, M. (2003). Masculinity scripts, presenting concerns, and help seeking: Implications for practice and training in *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 34(2): 123–31.
- Nadarajan, G. (2017). *Pengurusan Kemarahan*. <http://www.myhealth.gov.my/> (Accessed: 12.8.2020: 9.00am).
- Omar, S. H. S., Zin, E. I. E. W., Zin, A. D. M., Syuhari, M. H., & Adam, N. S. (2019). The al-Ghazali's Soul Therapy Model Based on The Works of al-Arba'in fi Uṣūl al-Din in *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 9(11), 915-920.
- Shahsavarani, A. M., & Noohi, S. (2014). Explaining the Bases and Fundamentals of Anger: A literature Review in *International Journal of Medical Reviews*, 1(4), 143-149.
- Tsoutsas, S., Kedraka, K., & Papastamatis, A. (2013). Secondary education Greek philologists as adult learners on ICT. *Multilingual Academic Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 1(2), 91–106.
- Tiang, J. H., & Ting, I. L. (2009). Sikap Marah Menjejaskan Hubungan Interpersonal. pp. 54-62.
- Yusof, R. (2004). *Penyelidikan Sains Sosial*. Kuala Lumpur: PTS Publications & Distributors.