

## Factors of Suicide Attempts: A Case Study According to Islamic Perspective Counseling

Nurhikmah Mubarak Ali<sup>1</sup>, Mariny Abdul Ghani<sup>2</sup> & Muhamad  
Zahir Othman<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Centre For Counselling Studies & Psychology And Services Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah International Islamic University, (UniSHAMS), <sup>2</sup>School of Applied Psychology, Social Work and Policy, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Sintok, Kedah, <sup>3</sup>Kulliyah Usuluddin and Science of al Quran Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah International Islamic University, (UniSHAMS)

Email: nurhikmah@unishams.edu.my<sup>1</sup>, mariny@uum.edu.my<sup>2</sup> & muhamadzahir2015@gmail.com<sup>3</sup>

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### Abstract

Lately, the issue of suicide in Malaysia has increasing, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic. Data from the Malaysian Ministry of Health reports that suicide is among the 10 leading causes of death in the world and the fourth leading cause of death for those aged 15 to 29 years. This article explains how the life of a respondent who tried to commit suicide. The objective of this study is to explore the factors that cause suicide attempts and suicide laws according to the Islamic perspective. The methodology of this study uses a qualitative approach that is by using case studies. Snowball sampling is used in this study by focusing on a respondent who has a history of suicide attempts. The participant is a male student studying at IPTS in Kedah. The analysis of the data obtained from the respondents shows that the occurrence of family factors, love break-ups, failure in academics, being influenced by the media that spread the news of suicide, lack of knowledge related to aqidah and not understanding the concept of tests. These factors can be used to help counselors formulate strategies according to an Islamic perspective that are effective to help this special population either at the level of protection, prevention, or recovery.

**Keywords:** Suicide Attempts, Covid-19 Pandemic, Islamic Perspective Counseling.

### Introduction

According to a report by the Malaysian Ministry of Health (2022), suicide cases in Malaysia have increased by 81% in 2021 with 1,142 cases compared to 631 cases in 2020. The number is based on PDRM records which also reported 467 suicide cases in the first six months of the year 2022. A total of 638 suicide cases were reported in Malaysia between January and July

2021, which is a 143 percent increase compared to the same period in 2020. According to a report by the Ministry of Health Malaysia (2021), suicide is among the 10 leading causes of death in the world. and the fourth leading cause of death for those aged 15 to 29. In addition, the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic around the world has had a huge impact on the mental health of individuals in Malaysia. Social factors cause excessive stress, including losing a job or source of income, and isolation from the support network of family and friends can also affect some individuals who are at high risk of experiencing mental health problems including depression. If this depression is not properly identified and treated, it is at risk for suicidal behavior. Suicidal behavior includes thoughts, plans, attempts, and death as a result of suicide.

Aziz & Razak (2021) shows that the statistics of suicide cases in Malaysia have experienced a sudden increase. His study was conducted to see the level of suicidal thoughts and ideas among young people who are students. Meanwhile, a study by Hasanuddin & Ahmad (2022) explores the adolescent crisis from the aspect of the type, cause, and effect of the crisis. His research explores effective crisis intervention in dealing with adolescent crisis issues. In addition, the study conducted by Molkan & Amat (2018) aims to see the knowledge and understanding of college students on suicidal intentions. The results of his research show that the respondents have knowledge and understanding about the intention to commit suicide and that the intention has existed in the respondents since their school days. The findings of the study generally show that external and internal stress factors cause respondents to have suicidal intentions.

The study conducted by Jamal et al (2019) looked at the factors of suicide attempts among gays and lesbians. Heng et al (2019) found that media reports related to suicide are also a contributing factor to the increase in the rate of suicide attempts. Adolescence is a critical stage of transition from childhood to adulthood where during this period teenagers have to adapt to emotional and behavioral development. There is a study that found that the respondents did not agree with the thought of having the intention to commit suicide. This is because, based on the analysis of interviews conducted, it was found that the presence of the theme of suicide is not the best solution and suicide also causes harm to others (Molkan & Amat, 2018). Based on a study by Aziz & Razak (2021), it was found that not all respondents have the intention to commit suicide seriously and can still think sanely to handle the situation and the problem faced.

A study conducted by Ahmad et al (2022) looked at the effect of psychological well-being on depression, anxiety, and stress of university students on online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of his research show that the burden borne by university students and institutions of higher learning can play a fundamental role in helping students cope with depression, anxiety, and stress. There is a link between depression, anxiety, and stress with the issue of suicide as in a study conducted by (Malek et al., 2020). A study by Bakar (2021) links the phenomenon of suicide with the financial pressure experienced by the community. The situation is caused by the economic situation which is not encouraging due to the Covid 19 pandemic which has attacked almost all the countries of the world.

### **Suicide According to Islamic Perspective**

According to Dewan (2004), suicide is taking one's own life on purpose. Bakri (2016) stated that the law of suicide is illegal and those who have the intention to die because of the ordeal

they are facing are also not allowed. This act is not allowed in Islamic law. The test that comes must be faced with patience and the practices recommended by Islam. As Allah SWT says in the Quran surah an-Nisa: verses 29-30:

يَتَّيِّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ  
تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ

رَحِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾

Translation: O ye who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves in vanities: But let there be amongst you traffic and trade by mutual goodwill: Nor kill (or destroy) yourselves: for verily Allah hath been to you Most Merciful!

وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ عُدْوَانًا وَظُلْمًا فَسَوْفَ نُصَلِّيهِ نَارًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى

اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾

Translation: "If any do that in rancor and injustice,- soon shall We cast them into the Fire: And easy it is for Allah".

Furthermore, Allah SWT say in the Quran surah al An'am: verse 151:

﴿قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَنزِلْ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ  
شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِمَّنْ أَمَلَقِي نَحْنُ  
نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَلَا  
تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَمُ وَصَّيْتُكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ

تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

Translation: Say: "Come, I will rehearse what Allah hath (really) prohibited you from": Join not anything as equal with Him; be good to your parents; kill not your children on a plea of want;- We provide sustenance for you and them;- come not nigh to shameful deeds. Whether open or secret; take not life, which Allah hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law: thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom.

This is added to the hadith of the Prophet SAW which means:

Has narrated to me [Muhammad] said, has narrated to me [Hajjaj] has narrated to me [Jarir] from [Al Hasan] has narrated to us [Jundab bin 'Abdullah] in this mosque and we have not

forgotten since he narrated and we are not worried that Jundab lied in the name of Rasulullah SAW, he said; The Prophet SAW said: "There was a person among the people before you who suffered injuries but he was impatient so he took a knife and cut his hand which caused the blood to flow and did not stop until he finally died. Then Allah Ta'ala said: "Servant -I preceded me by killing him, so I forbade his paradise".

(Hadith Narrated by Bukhari: No. 3204)

Narrated to us [Abdullah bin Abdul Wahhab] narrated to us [Khalid bin Al Harith] narrated to us [Shu'bah] from [Sulaiman] he said; I heard [Dzakwan] narrate from [Abu Hurairah] radillallahu 'anhu from the Prophet SAW; he said: "Whoever throws himself from a mountain, until he kills his soul (suicide), then he will fall into hell, he will remain and be eternal in it forever. Whoever swallows poison, until he dies, then the poison will be in his hand, and he will establish him in hell, he will remain and be eternal therein forever. And whoever kills himself with (piercing himself with) an iron, then the iron will be in his hand, with which he will stab his stomach in hell, it is eternal and eternal in it forever."

(Hadith Narrated by Bukhari: No. 5333)

Based on the hadith, the act of suicide includes things and acts of self-destruction. Individuals who do it have violated the nature that Allah SWT created for them. Islam forbids any form of action that leads to suicide.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The research design is qualitative using a case study. The data and information required to meet the objectives of the study were collected through interviews. The interview questions are prepared in a general way, without guiding the answers to allow the respondents to share their experiences and feelings. Interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of the respondents.

Interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of the respondents. Among the interview guides that the researcher has prepared before the interviews are conducted with the respondents are:

1. What drove you to commit suicide?
2. What is the family's reaction to you?
3. What creates complexity in your life?
4. What are the implications for family members after you try to kill yourself?

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 needs to be given to the respondent because during the interview period, the situation where the respondent is sometimes unable to continue the conversation because he still feels traumatized when recounting the experience he went through.

According to Lebar (2015), interviews are conducted in the conduct of a study, not to answer research questions or deeply understand life experiences or events. Written consent from the respondent is required to record the interview. If the respondent does not allow the interview to be recorded or does not feel comfortable using the recorder, notes will be taken during the interview session. The benefits of taking notes compared to using a recorder, the

researcher will give more focus and attention to what the respondent told than depending on the recorder alone. Apart from understanding through verbal communication, the respondent's feelings also need to be understood through non-verbal communication shown.

## **Findings**

### **Respondent background**

The respondent in this study is Hawa (not her real name), aged 33 and born in the state of Kelantan. Hawa is a Bachelor of Islamic Studies student in a Muslim country abroad. He then continued his Master's studies at an IPT in northern Malaysia. He is a native Malay Muslim who was born in Kelantan. His educational background was very good when he was in primary school. The respondent is now married and has two daughters. The respondent is a full-time housewife but is involved in a small-scale online business. Her husband works and is a civil servant in a department in the state of Kelantan. The respondent is a client of the counselor who also acts as the author of this article. Respondents met with counselors three times and were interviewed during the sessions. The time of each meeting is between 40 minutes to one hour. Respondents have also been in contact with counselors via WhatsApp four times. The interview session went casually because the respondent also brought his children to this meeting.

## **Factors in Suicide Attempts**

### **1. Family Factors**

The respondent's parents are natives of the state of Kelantan. However, when the respondent was 12 years old, the respondent's biological father died. After a year passed, his mother remarried. The peak of the problem occurred when the respondent began to be depressed because of having an irresponsible stepfather. The respondent's stepfather often beat his mother in front of the respondent and his younger siblings. This caused him to hate his stepfather too much and traumatized the respondent. The respondent's situation became worse when he was beaten by his stepfather when he was 15 years old for siding with his mother. He has started to release words that hurt his stepfather. The respondent's stepfather was a hot-tempered person, so he responded to those words with a very painful blow. The respondent cried in fear at first with this situation and did not tell anyone about this. He went to school as usual as if nothing had happened. The respondent's performance at school began to decline at that point. However, his mother often persuaded him to be patient with this test and be more diligent in his studies at school.

He begged his mother to continue his education at a religious school in Kelantan so that he could live in a dormitory. He did not want to be depressed by his stepfather's attitude. The respondent pitied her mother and always asked to divorce her stepfather, but her mother could not demand a divorce because her stepfather threatened to hurt her younger siblings. Therefore, the respondent continued his studies at a religious school in Kelantan and lived in a boarding school, but his heart was always disturbed by the worries of his mother who was at home. He always thinks about his mother who is often beaten by his stepfather. Until the respondent finished STAM with the rank of Jayyid Jiddan at the age of 19 he returned home to wait for an offer from the University. He applied a lot to get into HEIs in Malaysia and outside Malaysia. He wanted to escape as far as possible from his family's situation. At this time there is also a feeling of wanting to die. The respondent always prays to God to take his life as soon as possible.

### **Breakup of Fiance**

He was very happy to be able to continue his studies in an Islamic country in the Middle East. He felt he was free, but he did not expect what the respondent went through to affect him when he first arrived at the university. She met a male student there and over time began to get serious when the man asked her to marry him. However, the respondent was quite impressed by what he went through. He felt it was impossible to trust all the men he met let alone become his life partner. He felt unsure of the man and felt he would behave like his stepfather too. However, the respondent had a good friend who always gave him good words until he agreed to get engaged to the male student. After all, this situation makes it easier for them as students to study there together if they are married. However, the respondent's happiness did not last long when he found out that his fiance had a relationship with another woman who had just entered the university. The respondent was unable to accept this situation and continued to break off the engagement. The respondent felt hatred towards men more and more since he found out about his fiance's attitude like that.

The respondent was quite stressed because he had to face his ex-fiancé during the final year. After all, they were both in the same field at the university. For the first time, the respondent had tried to cut his wrist. Blood started to flow and the respondent's luck was quite good when he was saved by a housemate who had just entered the respondent's room after hearing a scream. The respondent was taken to the hospital for further treatment. Alhamdulillah, the respondent stated that at that time, he felt very stressed by the issue of breaking up the fiance. His heart is getting sicker and more hateful when he sees his ex-fiancé having fun with another woman without paying attention to the respondent anymore. Respondents were helped a lot by their housemates from the aspect of motivation and enthusiasm to complete their studies well. This is because the study period is about to end.

### **Failing In Academic Studies**

After the respondent was discharged from the hospital, he tried to continue his studies well so that he could return to his hometown to see his mother and younger siblings. However, the respondent could not focus on his studies because he often met with his ex-fiancé. His situation is quite unstable to give attention and commitment throughout the final semester. The respondent had failed the final semester and had to repeat the semester. This has caused the respondent to be more stressed by the test that hit him. He felt that God did not love him because he always tested him many times. Respondents feel very weak and unable to behave well. He was tempted to try to kill himself at this point but was suddenly stopped by a phone call from his mother. His mother informed the respondent that his younger brother is now sick and needs high treatment costs. His mother also advised the respondent to study well and successfully graduate. So, at that moment the respondent suddenly felt that he had woken up intending to try to commit suicide.

The respondent felt that he was very needed by his mother and sister. The respondent immediately got up and prepared to go to the campus to meet the university to ask about the procedure to repeat the semester. He is determined to graduate successfully so that he can return to his hometown to help his mother and younger sister who are in dire need. At the start of the new semester, the respondent's ex-fiancé was no longer on campus because he had finished his studies. The respondent is in a calm state for this final semester because all his friends have returned to their hometowns. However, the spirit to continue studying is still well done. Finally, the respondent managed to pass well in this final semester.

### **Influenced by the media that spread the news of suicide**

After completing his studies he returned to Malaysia and settled back at his mother's house for a year because he had not found any job suitable for his field of study. He tried to do business online to meet the needs of his mother and sister. To summarize the story, during the time he was at home, he was often beaten by his stepfather even though he was 25 years old at the time. The respondent was often beaten because the respondent would say whatever was on his mind as a sign that he was not satisfied with his stepfather. News related to suicide cases is also widely included in the mass media, thus disturbing the respondents. Many news items were read by the respondents such as "child kills biological mother", "a worker committed suicide by jumping from a building" and so on. The media that reported the news of this suicide at the same time put pressure on the respondents. The situation this time is even worse where the respondent has started being aggressive towards his stepfather. The respondent would start taking sharp weapons such as knives to stab his stepfather. His stepfather was quite surprised by the behavior of the respondent who wanted to hurt him. However, his stepfather dodged and pointed the knife at the respondent again.

This situation became more critical beginning where the respondent had started to feel very depressed and tried to commit suicide. The respondent could no longer bear to live with his stepfather. The respondent was no longer able to defend his mother and younger siblings who were victims of his stepfather's beating because the respondent had begun to experience high levels of depression. The respondent had tried to commit suicide by swallowing 30 panadol pills but was still safe but the effect of the medicine was that he experienced swelling on his lips. No one knows the respondent's act of swallowing panadol. This is the second suicide attempt in his life. The respondent felt that he could no longer continue to live like this. He is determined to meet with a psychiatrist at the respondent's district hospital to treat himself. The respondent felt that he was quite unstable when he saw and confronted his stepfather. The respondent also felt like killing his stepfather and felt a lot of hatred. The respondent underwent therapy in the hospital with psychiatry and the respondent has told everything that has happened in his life since the presence of his stepfather. Respondents were given sedatives to eat so that they would be calmer when facing the situation at home. Respondents are also advised to do some actions that save themselves and their families.

The respondent felt stronger to bring his stepfather to court. Summarized the story of the respondent's mother being severely beaten by her stepfather and then the respondent intervened by banging a heavy pan on her stepfather's head. His stepfather continued to slap and choke the respondent until the respondent felt suffocated. The respondent's younger brother immediately left the house and called a neighbor to rescue the respondent. Neighbors who came called the police. The police came and immediately arrested the respondent's stepfather. The condition of the respondent was very weak because he was beaten and strangled very strongly. The respondent was admitted to the hospital by ambulance. His mother is also in an unstable condition because she was beaten in the beginning.

For the first time, his stepfather was arrested by the police after not taking action for a long time due to fear. The respondent was in the hospital for 3 days and was also referred to psychiatry for a follow-up appointment. When he returned home, the respondent felt quite calm because this time his stepfather was not at home. He can do many things with stable emotions. The respondent works as a boutique assistant in a shop near his home while waiting

for a more stable and permanent job. After six months of work, he began studying at the Master's level at an IPT in Malaysia. The Most Just God's plan has found him with his soul mate at the same IPT where he continues his studies. He accepted God's proposal and order well considering that the man also understood the respondent and accepted the respondent's situation as it was.

### **Not Understanding the Test Concept**

All the tests that the respondent went through before were told to his counselor and psychiatrist only. Now, she is a wife and shares a lot of what she goes through with her husband. The respondent's husband is very kind and supports the respondent to always do the best for the respondent and his family. The respondent became pregnant after 4 months of marriage. However, this news was followed by the exchange of the respondent's husband to another state. The respondent had to live alone. This situation began to make the respondent lonely and began to feel depressed because there was no one in his house. The respondent said that sometimes he would start talking to himself and cry suddenly. The respondent referred to the counselor at the IPT to feel calmer. Respondents spend a lot of time during pregnancy at IPT because respondents are worried they return home and behave abnormally again.

Since the respondent got married, the respondent no longer takes the drugs given by the psychiatrist in the hospital. This action is also the cause of the respondent's return to depression and loneliness. Respondents began to blame Allah and felt dissatisfied with Allah. The respondent began to complain about the test he faced. Respondents feel that the period respondents feel happiness is too short. The respondents felt that Allah did not see what the respondents were facing. Respondents began to abandon the circumcision prayers that had been done all this time. Respondents also started to abandon the recitation of the Qur'an and only the obligatory prayers. The respondent's heart began to turn back and forth and felt uneasy. He began to hear voices whispering in his ear. This situation makes the respondent more afraid as if someone is bothering him. He started punching his stomach because he hated the unborn child. According to the respondent, at that time he felt the child was a huge burden. The respondent felt very anxious about the presence of a child in her womb. He could not bear this situation alone and kept crying. Suddenly the respondent punched his stomach many times with force and the respondent found that blood started to come out. The respondent laughed at the incident and then started crying when he suddenly realized that his son might be dead. The respondent immediately called an ambulance to be taken to the hospital. The respondent's child could not be saved because it miscarried due to a very strong blow.

The respondent was referred to psychiatry. The respondent's husband continued to return home to take care of the respondent. The respondent apologized to her husband for not being able to take care of himself and causing their child to die. The respondent's husband always gives positive words and encouragement to the respondent. The respondent's husband did not blame the respondent. The respondent's husband began to arrange steps to bring the respondent to live together so that they could take care of each other. The respondent had to postpone the semester to follow her husband abroad. The respondent felt that he needed support and could not live alone anymore. Many respondents attend religious lectures related to tests. The respondent shed tears upon hearing the lecture. He felt ashamed of God and felt the need to be strong to fight negative things. He always blames God



for what happened to him while this test is a sign of God's love for him. He returned to perform circumcision prayers and read the Quran. He also always contacts his counselor via WhatsApp to inform him of his current progress. He feels better when he is with his family.

### **Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations**

The issue of suicide is one of the challenges for preachers and families involved in dealing with it. This issue is getting worse when society does not care about them and continues to label them as people who have no religious beliefs. This article allows future researchers to understand the factors of individuals who attempt suicide and allows them to design strategies that are in line with the needs of those individuals. Not all individuals who have attempted suicide will tell the researcher. Some of them just kept quiet so as not to be known to the public. The issue of suicide is associated with problems that affect the individual and cause the individual to lose the function of self-balance.

From the results of interviews and observations conducted, the factors that cause suicide are family factors, trials that befall oneself and begin to blame God and are not confident in God's provisions, failure in academic studies, and social media as triggers also spread of news related to suicide at the same time causing individuals who have suicidal intentions to start trying to commit suicide.

Many strategies can be done by various parties, especially the Malaysian Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development, and the Department of Islamic Religion in preventing suicide attempts. Future studies can focus on counseling interventions and not just look for factors that cause suicide.

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