

How to deal with anger: A psychology and Islamic perspective

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ABSTRACT Anger management is a strategy used to minimize the emotional and physiological impacts that arise from anger. Managing anger involves a complex interaction between thoughts, feelings, behavior, and physiology. Anger management is considered important from the perspective of psychology and an Islamic perspective, so it is essential to pay attention to the study of anger management in both perspectives. This study uses a systematic literature review method by examining anger management from psychology and Islam. The results show that anger management is seen in line with a psychological and Islamic perspective as an appropriate strategy to respond to anger to be something more positive and environmentally acceptable. However, in practice, the psychological perspective is more oriented towards controlling emotions through more general techniques such as behavior-changing techniques and cognitive restructuring. From an Islamic perspective, its application tends to lead to emotional control through spiritual activities such as ablution, dhikr, prayer, and reading the Al-Quran.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Anger is not always related to harsh and rude things such as cursing or throwing things and withdrawal and complaints of physical pain that arise in individuals (Irfan & Mujahid, 2015). Most anger emotions arose through affective rather than cognitive assessments caused by feelings of hurt, with a percentage of 50.3%. Anger will appear as a strong feeling when individuals experience bad things, get hurt, get injustice, or feel unhappy because of others, such as humiliation, slander, and being belittled (Susanti, Husni, & Fitriyani, 2014).

Angry emotions with excessive intensity can be dangerous, even trigger the development of problems in aspects of life in the work environment, personal social relationships, or the individual's quality of life as a whole. Angry emotions are also considered a factor that has a role in the phenomenon of aggression or violence (Averill, 1984; Levey & Howells, 1990). Based on data from the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), Indonesia's aggressive behavior has increased every year. In 2013 the number of aggressive behavior reached 6325 cases, 2014 reached 7007 cases, 2015 reached 7762 cases, 2016 reached 8597.97 cases, and in 2017 amounted to 9523.97 cases. That shows an increase in adolescents' aggressive behavior from 2013 to 2017, with a difference of 10.7% (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2017).

Angry that appear excessively will have a biological and psychological impact on the individual. Biological changes include increased heart rate, respiratory rate, blood pressure, energy levels due to increased blood flow in the muscle, hormonal activity (adrenaline and noradrenaline), muscle tension or contraction, and increased body tempera-

ture the vital human system. Psychological changes occur, such as loss of concentration, decreased tolerance, patience, restlessness or pacing, increased feelings of tension, and decreased decision-making abilities. The angry reaction can lead to changes in the individual's health's various physiological functions and psychological activities (Pashupati & Vidya, 2011).

Islam views anger as a gift from Allah that must be controlled. Individuals are allowed to be angry when they encounter neglect, violation, insulting the law and sharia of Allah SWT, defending self-respect, property, rights in general, or to help someone who is wronged. Anger that is considered despicable is anger as a form of revenge for one's own sake (Wigati, 2013). Angry is a signal of self-defense for individuals from harassment or deprivation of personal rights. Anger has a variety of characteristics, depending on how the emotion is manifested. Not always destructive but also protective and constructive. Individuals cannot separate their lives from anger, but this anger can be controlled and directed for constructive purposes (Greenberg & Watson, 2006).

Individual efforts to control anger are called anger management. American Psychological Association (APA) describes anger management as an effort to avoid aggression, including improving communication skills, using relaxation techniques, changing the environment, cognitive reconstruction, a sense of humor, and finding alternative problem solving to get the right way to respond to anger (Shahsavarani, Noohi, Heyrati, Mohammadi, & Mohammadi, 2016). Anger can be controlled by many things such as medical treatments, relaxation techniques, simple breath-

ing control, cognitive restructuring, or changing the way individuals think, changing individual environments, using humor to use better communication methods (Irfan & Mujahid, 2015). The main goal of anger management is to minimize the emotional and physiological impacts of anger (Pashupati & Vidya, 2011).

The results of the study by Parnell et al. show that anger management can make individuals able to control actions and reactions in the face of potential conflicts. Anger management has generally been shown to positively affect delinquency, aggressive behavior, drug, and alcohol use in students at school. Anger management can also increase self-esteem and reduce problematic behavior at school so that it can be one of the interventions used to help reduce disruptive behavior and aggression in students (Parnell, Skiba, Peterson, & Fluke, 2013). Research by Hendrick et al. shows that individuals who can manage anger effectively can motivate individuals to adopt practical, assertive skills and increase life expectancy (Hendricks & Aslinia, 2013).

Islam commands believers to restrain (mumsik) and prevent (kaff) from getting angry even though they can vent their anger. The hadith narrated by Bukhori and Muslim, Rasulullah SAW, stated that a strong person is not someone who wins in a struggle but can control himself when he is angry. Islam also teaches us to forgive someone who has hurt. It is much more challenging to hold back anger. A person will be glorified by Allah with a magnificent building in heaven and will be elevated in rank if he can forgive those who do wrong to him, give those who reject him, and continue the relationship of those who break him (An-Nawawi & Al-Imam, 1999).

Based on the description above, it is known that anger management can prevent the negative impact of uncontrollable anger. Besides that, it is also able to have a positive effect on other aspects of life. It is essential to carry out further studies to examine more deeply anger management from psychology and Islam.

2. METHOD

This study used a systematic literature review method. This method is a means of identifying, evaluating, and interpreting all relevant and available research with a specific research question, or topic area, or phenomenon of interest (Kitchenham, 2007). The systematic literature review method aims to identify research results that can answer the researcher's questions to provide a balanced literature summary (Nightingale, 2009).

In a systematic literature review, there are three stages to do this. The first stage is planning the review; at this stage, identifying the need for a review through a literary search process is carried out by finding international journals or proceedings and individual textbooks with anger management. The second stage is called conducting the review; This stage involves identifying and classifying international journals or proceedings and textbooks that have been found by discussing anger management from a psychological and Islamic perspective. The final stage is review reports, reviewing journals, international proceedings, and textbooks discussed and discussing anger management from a psychological and Islamic perspective (Kitchenham, 2007).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Anger management from psychological perspective

Angry often leads to a tendency towards aggression and other negative consequences such as murder or violence (Nasir & Ghani, 2014). To develop the ability to be angry without damaging himself and his environment, it is necessary first to recognize and identify anger and then express it positively. Therefore, it is essential to have anger management as an effort to manage and prevent unwanted negative behavior (Aslan, Gemlik, & Bektaş, 2016).

Anger management is defined as a specific strategy used by individuals to control emotional feelings, especially in expressions of anger, which are more acceptable and constructive (Schultz, 2007). Anger management is essential to transform the internal and spiritual maturity of each individual. If anger towards an external stimulus is manifested through "impulsive outbursts," the primary energy used for self-control and empowerment is lost. Instead, anger management will play into this diagramming, controlling, and restraining scheme to preserve the energy used for conscious control and transform power from the ultimate power to self-control and mental independence (Saraydarian, 2001).

Understanding and managing anger is not easy because it involves a complex interaction between thoughts, feelings, behavior, and physiology. Neuropsychologists make a more apparent distinction between emotions (which are states of the body) and feelings (states of mind). One way to control anger is to prevent feelings of anger by changing the way that triggers are interpreted. If the trigger is interpreted as an attack, anger will be triggered, whereas if it is seen as something that is only unprofitable and considers normal, angry outbursts can be prevented (Faupel, Herrick, & Sharp, 2011).

Anger management can be done through behavioral techniques and cognitive restructuring techniques. Behavioral techniques in the form of relaxation, self-statement to control anger, problem-solving skills, good communication, use of humor, and changing the environment. Cognitive restructuring techniques are efforts to increase understanding of the nature and components of the problem, identify and modify trigger events, change cognitive conclusions and dysfunctional schemes, fix dysfunctional schemes, increase physiological control, expand coping options in dealing with problems, prevent increased social behavior, and strengthen the commitment to change (Pashupati & Vidya, 2011). Simple steps that also have a significant impact include finding out the reasons for being angry, letting go of things that are out of control, expressing yourself, being careful, being assertive, not being aggressive in expressing yourself, and laughing (Hendricks, Bore, Aslinia, & Morris, 2013).

The uncontrolled form of angry reaction will hurt the individual and the environment around him. This is evidenced by research that states that a relatively unstable emotional state can be one of the triggers for aggressive behavior. Research shows that if individuals can manage their emotions, it can reduce the risk of maladaptive behavior, including aggressive behavior (Robertson, Daffern, & Bucks, 2012), (Elfina, Utami, & Latipun, 2018). To some extent, anger can be a killer in itself. Boerma's research states that a normal human heart beats 80 times per minute. When an individual is angry, his heart rate increases up to 180 times per minute and triggers blood pressure. Under normal conditions, an individual's blood pressure is 120/80

mmHg, whereas when angry, the pressure can increase to 220/130 mmHg or higher and can cause a heart attack or stroke. In a state of anger, the human body will release chemicals that can make blood clots, which later cause severe problems and cause death (Yadav, Yadav, & Sapkota, 2017).

3.2 Anger management from Islamic perspective

Anger management is considered not only important from a psychological perspective but also from an Islamic perspective. There are verses from the Al-Qur'an and hadith that specifically discuss the prohibition of anger and virtue of those who can withstand their anger. This shows that controlling anger is much more important than expressing anger negatively. A hadith describes the prohibition of anger explicitly and has been promised heaven by Allah for those who can contain their anger. Abu Daud narrated that those who can withstand anger, Allah will call upon him to choose the desired angle on the Day of Resurrection. Bukhari Muslim narrated that people who can withstand anger can be said to be healthy, not people who can defeat their enemies while wrestling (Wigati, 2013).

From Bakr bin Khalaf, the hadith of Abu Dawud narrates when you are angry when you stand up and immediately sit down; if your anger still does not subside, go to sleep or lie down. Another hadith from Ahmad bin Hambal, Rasulullah SAW, ordered ablution immediately when someone is angry. After being able to control anger, the next step is to forgive. Being generous or forgiving is an essential key to anger management. The next step is Ihsan's attitude towards people who have done wrong to repay evil with good. The hadith narrated by Bukhari from Abu Hurairah, Rasulullah SAW, explained that Allah created His creatures, Allah put His mercy ahead of His anger. This explains the teaching in humans to prioritize attitudes that show affection and not anger (Hasan, 2017).

Based on the teachings of the Qur'an and hadith, anger can also be controlled by several techniques. When someone is angry, he should sit down; if he is still angry, he can lie down. Next, be quiet and calm and try to leave the place for another place. Besides, ablution, prayer, prayer, and dhikr are also efforts to control anger and realize the harmful consequences of being angry and remembering the unique position promised for people who can control their anger. Finally, the importance of adequate rest because physically weak can trigger a person to become more irritable (Wigati, 2013).

Based on the description above, anger management from psychology and Islam views an appropriate strategy to respond to anger into something more positive and environmentally acceptable. However, in practice, the psychological perspective is more oriented towards controlling emotions through more general techniques such as behavior-changing techniques and cognitive restructuring. Techniques for changing behavior can be in the form of relaxation, problem-solving, good communication, use of humor, and changing the environment into ways that are considered capable of controlling and minimizing anger. From an Islamic perspective, its application tends to lead to emotional control through spiritual activity. Keeping yourself relaxed can be done by doing ablution, dhikr, praying, or reading the Al-Qur'an. Nayef & Wahab's research shows that reading Al-Qur'an can produce significant relaxation for a person. This is because the Qur'an has a specific ef-

fect on the human heart and causes several hormones and chemicals responsible for relaxation to work in it (Nayef, E. G., & Wahab, 2018). Besides, in the Al-Qur'an surah Ar-Ra'd: 28, it is mentioned, which means: know that only by remembering Allah can the heart be at ease (Wigati, 2013).

Islam also teaches anger control techniques by changing the environment, such as techniques in psychology. An angry person is encouraged to change his position. When you are standing, change your position to sitting; when you are sitting, and your anger has not stopped, change your position to lying down. This will take the focus away from anger. Likewise, when you are in a room, then moving to a room with different conditions will minimize the anger you experience. Efforts in problem-solving skills can also help individuals control anger. You have discussed in the hadith about steps that a person can take when angry, namely restraining anger and not doing something that will harm oneself—trying to repay others' evil with kindness and choosing silence as the safest attitude. Ahmad's hadith states that when someone is angry, he should be quiet (Wigati, 2013).

Cognitive restructuring techniques in anger management from a psychological perspective are concerned with individual efforts to increase understanding of the problem's components that trigger anger. Besides, efforts are also made to identify and modify triggering events so that the individual's perspective on something that causes anger will become more acceptable. In the Islamic view, trying to realize the harmful consequences of anger will make individuals make cognitive restructuring efforts so that angry will be more easily controlled. Besides, understanding Allah's unique position for individuals who can control anger is also a cognitive process to control anger.

4. CONCLUSION

Psychology and Islamic perspectives show a basis that is not much different in describing anger management. Both of these perspectives view anger management as a strategy used by individuals to control emotions so that they can become something more positive and environmentally acceptable. However, in practice, the psychological perspective is more oriented towards controlling emotions through more general techniques such as behavior-changing techniques and cognitive restructuring. From an Islamic perspective, its application tends to lead to emotional control through spiritual activities such as ablution, dhikr, prayer, and reading the Qur'an.

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