
GRIEF REACTIONS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF PROPHET YA'QUB IN THE LIGHT OF THE NOBLE QURAN: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Grief is a commonly recognised emotion experienced by individuals and communities due to the Covid 19 pandemic. It is a great challenge to accept and adjust to the drastic changes following the loss of a loved one. Islam has provided practical solutions to this problem by presenting Prophet Ya'qub as an exemplary figure as he applied effective grief management strategies to deal with the loss of his son(s). The aim of this study is therefore to examine Prophet Ya'qub's grief reactions and coping strategies through his narratives with his sons. This study uses a qualitative approach with content analysis to analyse selected texts of Surah Yusuf and relevant commentaries; contemporary and Islamic works on grief were also evaluated. The key components of the transactional model of stress and coping were examined in relation to the coping resources and responses of the Prophet Ya'qub. As a result, this study identifies three grief responses: beautiful patience, crying and silent melancholy, and three coping styles: emotion-focused, spiritual-focused, and problem-focused, which Prophet Ya'qub employed. Finally, it discusses how his personality traits, high level of emotional intelligence and positive religious coping strategies led to resilience and post-traumatic spiritual growth. These grief coping

strategies of Prophet Ya'qub can be incorporated into Islamic grief counselling conducted for grieving Muslims to achieve psychological well-being.

Keywords: Prophet Ya'qub, Grief Coping Strategies, Positive Religious Coping, Posttraumatic Spiritual Growth.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the physical fragility and limited agency of human life. Covid-19 has resulted in 6.1 million deaths worldwide (WHO, March 27, 2022) and widespread financial and personal precarity. Waves of grief and loss ripple through families, communities, and nations around the world. After the loss of a loved one, people search for meaning in their lives and struggle to cope with the loss and adjust to the new world without their loved ones.

Most studies suggest that religious coping aids with adjustment to loss, as noted by Wortmann and Park (2008), while only a few studies showed negative or no effects (Tarakeshwar et al., 2005) or initial negative effects followed by positive effects (Pearce et al., 2002; Richards & Folkman, 1997). In addition, another study showed that religious people who use religious coping strategies to make meaning to the loss simultaneously grieve less (Lichtenthal et al., 2010).

Islam recognizes the emotion of grief as a natural reaction to the loss of a loved one and provides guidelines on how to express this pain and grief in a permissible manner in light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Allah, in His Infinite Mercy, has presented a noble & revered role model to emulate at the time of grief - Prophet Ya'qub - how he dealt with grief after the loss of his son(s). Although Prophet Ya'qub's grief responses and coping strategies are discussed in detail by many Islamic scholars from the perspective of the *Tafseer* but are not viewed through the lens of psychology.

Therefore, this study aims to analyse in-depth grief reactions and coping strategies of Prophet Ya'qub in the face of the loss of his beloved son(s) and how these coping strategies helped him to ameliorate the pain and distress. The study further discusses the role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in coping with grief and how practising these coping strategies can be effective in achieving good mental health and promote posttraumatic spiritual growth during the grieving period.

The conceptual framework underlying this study is the transactional model of stress and coping (TSC) developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). This study will examine the key components of the model in the context of the coping resources and responses of Prophet Ya'qub during his period of grieving and the short- and long-term outcomes of his grief coping strategies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

While there is a wide range of research on grief and bereavement, there is no relevant literature on issues of grief from the perspective of the Prophet Ya'qub. Therefore, a literature review of various studies related to grief and coping strategies from the perspective of contemporary and Islamic psychology is provided.

2.1 Grief and Coping in Context of Contemporary Psychology

Grief is a complex set of emotional, cognitive, and social difficulties that follow the death of a loved one. The nature of grief, its duration, intensity, and mode of expression vary from individual to individual (Christ et al., 2003). Nevertheless, there are universal components of grief that are common to all

bereaved individuals, regardless of religion or culture, and are a direct response to the psychological bonds of the individual (Parkes, 2000).

Reactions to grief are intended to help individuals accept and process loss relatively quickly to resume productive lives (Bonanno, 2009). Grief reactions are considered normal and appropriate when they occur in mild to moderate intensity over a short period. However, grief reactions are considered abnormal when they are intense and persistent and are accompanied by complications such as anxiety disorders, depression, health-damaging behaviours, and family, social, and occupational disturbances.

People going through the grieving process adapt to their loss, but the degree of adaptation and appropriate responses vary according to age, culture (Rosenblatt, 1997), religiosity, and resilience of the bereaved. The relationship with the deceased, the manner of death, the lifestyle appropriate to the death, the social system, and the personality of the bereaved also strongly influence the grief response (Worden, 2009).

Coping is considered the process by which an individual assesses the personal significance of a situation and considers options for responding to that situation (Stroebe et al., 2006). Personality variables is one of the factors that influence grief coping. Neuroticism predicted poor outcomes, while optimism (Boelen, 2015; Moskowitz, 2003), psychological flexibility (Bonanno & Burton, 2013), and mindfulness (Cacciatore & Flint, 2012) predicted greater resilience to loss.

A study by Yasien-Esmael et al. (2017) examined six personality traits with components of adjustment to loss. These 6 personality traits – the sense of coherence, well-being, self-differentiation, meaning in life, social support, and level of grief symptoms - are essential personal attributions for coping with grief.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is another factor that influences grief coping and plays a central role in understanding feelings and emotions that lead to action control (Cherniss, 2000; Jones and Hutchins, 2004). Ciarrochie et al., (2002) showed a relationship between EI and stress and mental health in the study and confirmed that high levels of EI acted as a protective factor against psychological stress and improved resilience and adjustment.

2.2 Grief and Coping in the Context of Islam

The trials in life take many forms and one of them is a loss of a loved one, as Allah clearly states, "And certainly We will test you with some fear, hunger, loss of wealth, life and fruits, but give glad tidings to the *As-Sabirin* (the patient). Those who, when afflicted by misfortune, say, "Verily, we belong to Allah, and verily, to Him we shall return"" (Quran 2:155-156). This is a response in the form of a statement to comfort oneself in the face of loss. The believer is certain that everything belongs to Allah, that He does what He wills with His servants, and that he will return to Him in the Hereafter. Such believers are rewarded with blessings, mercy, and guidance from their Lord (Qur'an 2:157).

In Islam, it is permissible to weep and express sorrow over the death of a loved one, as tears are expressions of a gentle and spiritually alert heart. Several Hadith report that the Prophet (ﷺ) wept on several occasions when one of his beloveds died. One such incident was the death of his son Ibrahim. The death caused grief to the Prophet (ﷺ), and he expressed his pain and sorrow by shedding tears and saying, "Verily, the eyes shed tears and the heart is grieved, but we will not say anything except what pleases our Lord. We are grieved at your departure, O Ibrahim." (Hadith: Al-Bukhari 1241). This Hadith confirms the inner sadness, the permissibility of crying to express sorrow, accepting the *Qadr* of Allah, and saying few words about the deceased.

Crying has a therapeutic effect and it causes stress reduction, mood elevation (Bylsma et al., 2008), relief, and is self-soothing (Simons et al., 2013). In addition, crying, the concept of *redha* (acceptance), and monologuing can help to cope with loss (Nazirah, 2012).

The bereaved are encouraged to remember and talk about their loved ones as well as remember the good deeds of their lives. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself never forgot his love for his beloved wife Khadijah, even years after her death (Maqsood, 2002).

Muslims are permitted to express feelings of grief and sorrow, as it can be harmful to suppress them (Maqsood, 2002), though extreme lamentation is discouraged (Khattab, 1998). The pre-Islamic practices of wailing, slapping cheeks, scratching faces, tearing clothes, and crying as in the Days of Ignorance are impermissible, as the Prophet (ﷺ) distanced himself from those who practised such acts (Hadith: Al-Bukhari 1294).

Religion can provide a cognitive framework that individuals use to cope with and manage stressful events, and it reduces stress by providing a sense of purpose and meaning (Hammad & Tribe, 2020a; Peres et al 2007). In addition, religion promotes resilience to stress and crises (Rettke et al., 2021).

However, it is important to distinguish between different types of Positive Religious Coping (PRC) and Negative Religious Coping (NRC). PRC is associated with positive psychological adaptations to stress, reducing levels of stress, anxiety, and depression and improving psychological well-being (Koenig et al., 2001; Pargament et al., 2001). In comparison, NRC, in which a person feels punished or abandoned by God or unsupported by the religious community, is associated with increased anxiety, depression, and psychological distress (Dew et al., 2008).

The study by Mohamed Hussin et al., (2018) explored the influence of religion on bereaved Malayan parents after the death of a child. In this qualitative study, 11 bereaved parents who lost their children were asked open-ended questions. The thematic analysis concluded that religion was a useful tool for parents to cope with the death of their child, and a resource that aided coping, meaning making and acceptance of loss.

Most coping strategies view the internalization of religion as a stress management strategy (Kelley, 2012). Internalization of religion is a symbol of attachment to a higher power. The stronger the person's attachment, the easier it is to find peace and move forward in life (Awang et al., 2020).

Several works of literature have identified growth outcomes from grief, such as spiritual and personal development with improved coping strategies (Schaefer & Moos, 2001). These developments lead to enhanced personal resources and relationships that result in changes in spiritual and religious beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes, resulting in psychospiritual transformation (Gamino et al., 2000; Balk, 1999).

The study on psychospiritual growth through loss and adverse life events (Raduan et al., 2019) reflected this concept. The study examined three cases related to grief and personal growth. For comparison, three stories from the Quran and Hadith about personal growth arising from difficulties were studied to reflect on three cases. The study concluded that Islamic spirituality facilitates and promotes personal growth in the face of any psychological and physical adversity.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method used was a qualitative method to collect relevant data related to the research topic. In this study, a thematic analysis with a deductive approach was used to review the resources that represented Islamic and psychological views. Moreover, this study was conducted using a content analysis of the Quranic verses in Surah Yusuf that referred to the phrase used by the sons of Prophet Ya'qub to address him - يَا أَبَانَا - which were analysed using relevant sciences to establish the whole concept of coping with grief from the perspective of Prophet Ya'qub. The research procedures involved:

- a. Identifying verses containing the word ' يَا أَبَانَا ' in Surah Yusuf.

b. Classifying verses based on chronological events in the story of Surah Yusuf in the form of a series of conversations between Prophet Ya'qub and his sons.

c. Presenting interpretations from *Tafsir al Tabrani* and *Tafsir ibn Kathir* about the events that took place in the verses that contained the word 'يَا أَبَانَا' and the relevant verses following it.

d. Understanding and analysing the interpretations from the views of contemporary and Islamic psychology theories of coping with grief.

e. Concluding the rest of the section and address issues related to the Prophet Ya'qub's grief reactions and coping strategies from Islamic and psychological perspectives.

4. RESULTS

The term "يَا أَبَانَا" (O Our Father) was used by the sons of Prophet Ya'qub to address him, and it is mentioned 6 times in Surah Yusuf (Quran 12:11, 17,63, 65, 81,98). Five events occur in the conversation between Prophet Ya'qub and his sons, which will be elaborated upon to study Prophet Ya'qub's emotional reactions and coping strategies.

Prophet Ya'qub had two wives; one was the mother of his two sons Yusuf and Binyamin, and the other was the mother of his other ten sons. They lived in a place called Canaan. Yusuf narrated a dream to his father, Prophet Ya'qub, and he advised him not to tell his dream to his brothers for fear that they would conspire against him out of jealousy. Prophet Ya'qub loved Yusuf more because of his noble character.

4.1 Conversation One: Yusuf's Brothers Persuade Their Father, Prophet Ya'qub to Take Yusuf to A Picnic (Quran 12: 8-15)

Jealousy clouded the brothers' perceptions, and they plotted to throw Yusuf into the well. They set the stage by reassuring their father, disarming his distrust, and presenting themselves to him as protectors of Yusuf. Then, through emotional manipulation, they convinced Prophet Ya'qub to send Yusuf with them for some enjoyment.

4.1.1 Anticipatory Grief

Prophet Ya'qub, seeing through the seditious machinations of the brothers, expressed his unwillingness to send Yusuf, saying,

قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنْ تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

"Indeed, it saddens me that you take him, and I fear that a wolf would eat him while you are of him unaware." (Quran 12:13)

The word لَيَحْزُنُنِي comes from ح ز ن, which lexically means sadden, grieve and mourn. Here, Prophet Ya'qub experiences anticipatory grief, that is, to grieve prior to the physical departure of a loved one. Anticipatory grievers who practice proactive coping in the face of loss show more growth than those who remain inactive (Rogalla, 2018), and this is what Prophet Ya'qub employed next.

4.1.2. Proactive Coping

Prophet Ya'qub employed proactive coping strategies because when he foresaw a potential stressor, namely the separation of Yusuf, he acted in advance to prevent it by warning his sons of the possibility of a wolf eating Yusuf while they were unaware

of it. This type of coping shows greater adjustment after the dissipation of the bereaved (Bonnano et al., 2011; Butcher et al., 2014).

4.2 Conversation Two: Yusuf's Brothers Deliver the Sad News to Prophet Ya'qub That Yusuf Has Been Eaten by A Wolf (Quran 12:16-18)

After throwing Yusuf into the well, they returned to their father in the night, crying falsely. They lied that the wolf had eaten him and presented his shirt - intact - with fake blood. Prophet Ya'qub saw through their plan that they were lying and deceiving as they presented the false evidence.

4.2.1 Cognitive Appraisal: Acceptance and Spiritual Meaning-making

Prophet Ya'qub's immediate reaction to this shocking news was his saying,

بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً...

"Rather, your souls have deceived you into something...", (Quran 12:18).

He then accepted this as a Divine Decree of Allah and began to construct a spiritual meaning around this incidence-considering as a trial from Allah and a means to increase ranks (Sabarhadi, 2016; Bahraen, 2015). In his emotional struggle, he analysed their lie and realised that Yusuf could not die because the dream had not yet been fulfilled.

4.2.2 Beautiful Patience

He continued by saying,

...فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ...

"...so, patience is most fitting... (Quran 12:18)."

The ellipsis indicates that Prophet Ya'qub submitted to the Divine Decree and said, "I will have a beautiful patience." Patience linguistically means "restraining" or "enduring" (Kidwell, 2009) and has a spectrum, the highest level of patience is "beautiful patience" practised by Prophet Yusuf. Beautiful patience means not complaining to Allah, no agitation (Mujahid), not seeking pity from others, being content with adversity and surrendering to the Will of Allah.

Practising patience as a coping strategy improves mental strength when facing adversity without complaining, which in turn promotes positive values that lead to perseverance. (Uyun & Rumiani, 2012; Ab Rahman et al., 2020).

4.2.3 Self-efficacy

Patience is the feeling of confidence that Allah will surely grant help when facing challenges while remaining calm (Ahmad Munawar et al., 2018), therefore Prophet Ya'qub further said,

... وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

"...And Allah is the one sought for help against that which you describe."(Quran 12:18)

Allah Almighty is الْمُسْتَعَانُ, means one whose help is asked for, so Prophet Ya'qub called on Allah for Divine help while continuing

his search for Yusuf, and this personality trait of Prophet Ya'qub is called self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is a belief in one's ability to gain control over life events to cope with personal and environmental demands (Benight & Bandura, 2004). Bereavement coping self-efficacy predicts higher psychological and spiritual well-being and better physical health with less emotional distress (Benight et al., 2001).

4.3 Conversation Three: Yusuf's Brothers Persuade Prophet Ya'qub to Send Their Brother Binyamin with Them to Egypt (Quran 12:63-67)

The brothers travelled to Egypt to buy grains when the famine reached Canaan. They met Prophet Yusuf, who had been appointed as a Minister of Finance, but they could not recognise him. Prophet Yusuf honoured them as royal guests and gave them grains according to the established rules. When they returned home from Egypt with food, they reported to their father what had happened and conveyed the condition of Minister of Finance, that in the future they would receive grains only if they brought Binyamin with them.

The brothers pleaded to Prophet Ya'qub to send Binyamin with them, repeating the same false promises they made for protecting Yusuf. Prophet Ya'qub, having faced a tragic situation with his son Yusuf, hesitated to entrust Binyamin to them. However, when the brothers found that their merchandise had been returned, they again beseeched their father to send Binyamin with them to Egypt, stressing that they would protect him.

4.3.1 Reliance on Allah as a Coping Strategy

After hearing the brothers' pleas, Prophet Ya'qub agreed to send Binyamin along, but on the condition that they promised him, in the name of Allah to bring him back. Next, Prophet Ya'qub entrusted the matter to Allah and gave his youngest son, Binyamin, into their care.

Prophet Ya'qub advised them to split up and enter from different gates, to protect them from undue suspicion, robbery, or evil eye. Thus, Prophet Ya'qub took all the permissible precautions and put his trust in Allah.

Empirical studies support the importance of trusting God as a coping strategy to reduce anxiety, and depression and restore hope (Bolhari et al., 2000; Ghobari et al., 2004). Reliance on God has four components: cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and relational. At the cognitive level, Prophet Ya'qub considered Allah as the first authority in all matters, and at the emotional level, he was readily inclined to put trust in Allah and considered Him as a Protector. On the behavioural level, he used the means such as the oath he took from his sons and advising them to pass through various gates, and on the relational level, he sought Allah's proximity and believed in His availability and support.

4.4 Conversation Four: Prophet Ya'qub Receives Grievous News; Binyamin Is Detained and the Eldest Son in Self-Exile in Egypt (Quran 12:81-87)

After Binyamin was arrested for theft and the eldest brother went into exile himself, the brothers returned home and told Prophet Ya'qub what had happened. Although they tried to

assure Prophet Ya'qub that they were telling the truth, he knew that they had lied, as they had done earlier in the case of Yusuf.

4.4.1 Optimism

Prophet Ya'qub's reaction to this sad news was with the same wording he said at the loss of Yusuf:

...بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً ۗ فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ ۗ

" Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting..." (Quran 12:83). Prophet Ya'qub still held on to his beautiful patience.

He went on to say,

...عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٨٣﴾

"... Perhaps Allah will bring them all together to me. Verily, it is He who is the Knower, the Wise." (Quran 12:83) The word عَسَى is *harfu tamanni*, which denotes optimism. After the disappearance of three children, Prophet Ya'qub remains optimistic, and this is a sign of faith.

The personality trait optimism, as had by the Prophet Ya'qub is an individual predisposition to expect favourable outcomes for future events (Carver et al., 2010). Optimistic bereaved tend to find meaning in loss (Davis et al., 1998), use effective coping strategies such as problem-focused and the expression of emotions, are flexible in their coping styles, adapt to the stress (Nes & Segerstrom, 2006) and experience less grief and distress (Riley et al., 2007), as with Prophet Ya'qub.

4.4.2 Crying and Silent Melancholy

Prophet Ya'qub turned away from his children, remembered his old grief over Yusuf in solitude, and said,

...يَا أَسْفَىٰ عَلَىٰ يُونُسَ...

"...Oh, my sorrow over Yusuf..." (Quran 12:84).

أَسْفَىٰ is used when a person has mixed emotions of anger and grief over a situation that he cannot control nor change. Prophet Ya'qub's grief was so intense that he invoked to the concept of grief as if 'grief' was before him.

The verse continues

...وَأَبْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ ...

"...and his eyes became white from grief..." (Quran 12:84).

Prophet Ya'qub's emotional reaction to the loss of Yusuf consisted of constant crying that lasted for years and affected his eyesight. It should be noted that expressing grief through crying is not against beautiful patience, for Prophet Ya'qub cried while he had beautiful patience. The death of a loved one is associated with deterioration of physical health (Prigerson et al., 2008; Stroebe et al., 2007), and in the case of Prophet Ya'qub, grief affected his eyesight.

In the last part of the verse

...فَهُوَ كَظِيمٍ ﴿٨٤﴾

"...for he was [of that] a suppressor," (Quran12:84).

The word كَظِيمٌ lexically means 'to be choked up or filled' and 'suppressing'. Although Prophet Ya'qub's heart was filled with grief, he suppressed it and did not express it verbally in front of others. Allah praises him for not showing his grief and controlling his emotions, as it is part of the perfection of faith in Allah that a person does not seek the pity of others.

4.4.3 Secure Attachment to Allah and Emotional Catharsis

When the sons saw their father's condition, they remarked, "By Allah, you will not cease to remember Yusuf until you are fatally ill or among those who perish" (Quran 12:85). Prophet Ya'qub replied,

﴿إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (٨٦)

"...I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you do not know." (Quran 12:86)

Lexically, إِنَّمَا means exclusiveness. Prophet Ya'qub complains exclusively to Allah about his grief and calls out for His sympathy. Positively complaining to Allah, having good supposition of Him and without questioning His wisdom, is not only permissible but a sign of faith. Prophet Ya'qub's emotional catharsis before Allah, in the form of talk therapy, is an important part of coping as it heals the emotional state (Kaminer, 2006).

This call of Prophet Ya'qub clearly shows the secure attachment he has with Allah. A secure attachment to God is directly related to lower depression and sadness (Kelley & Chan, 2012) and is also associated with improved optimism (Bradshaw & Kent, 2017).

The word *يَبِي* means "to dissipate and spread out," and this is the worst kind of grief, a prolonged one that strained the health of Prophet Ya'qub.

4.4.4 Emotion-focused Coping and Spiritual-focused Coping

Prophet Ya'qub uses adaptive emotion-focused coping strategies such as acceptance, positive reappraisal, self-control, religion, and spiritual beliefs to reduce his emotional reactions, which can lead to positive outcomes (Holmes et al., & Tanhan, 2020).

Moreover, he applies spiritually focused coping strategies, including collaborating with Allah by invoking Him (collaborative), believing that Allah will give him strength by having beautiful patience (self-directed) and depending completely on Allah to guide him to find his sons by trusting Him (Deferring), as postulated by Pargament (Ku, 2017).

4.4.5 Problem-focused Coping

Prophet Ya'qub instructed his sons by saying, " O my sons, go and find out about Yusuf and his brother and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people" (Quran 12:87). Although Prophet Ya'qub goes through an intense grieving process, he applies problem-focused coping by problem-solving and preparing a plan of action (Shin et al., 2014; Tanhan, 2019) to find his three lost sons by instructing his sons to search for their brothers.

4.4.6 Resilience and Sense of Coherence (SOC)

Prophet Ya'qub's statement testifies to his trait of resilience and his SOC. Prophet Ya'qub's resilience is his ability to rebound despite negative circumstances (Nadia et al., 2014) and SOC that he perceived the situation as comprehensible (trial from Allah), manageable (with beautiful patience) and meaningful (reward from Allah). These two characteristics facilitate personal adaptation and coping with loss (Wagnild, 2009b; Larsson & Kallenberg, 1999).

4.5 Conversation Five: Yusuf's Brothers Request Their Father Prophet Ya'qub to Ask Allah to Forgive Them (Quran 12: 88-98)

On the instruction of Prophet Ya'qub, the brothers travelled to Egypt for the third time and asked Prophet Yusuf for some grains as alms. When Prophet Yusuf saw their condition, he revealed his identity to them, and the brothers realised their mistake and asked Prophet Yusuf for forgiveness.

4.5.1 Forgiveness

When the brothers came home, they asked their father to forgive them and to ask Allah to forgive them. Prophet Ya'qub forgiving his sons led to his post-traumatic growth, as a study has shown a strong positive correlation between forgiveness and post-traumatic growth (Martinčková & Klatt, 2016).

5. DISCUSSION

The salutogenic results derived from this study arise from two grieving events of Prophet Ya'qub: the loss of Yusuf and the loss

of Yusuf, Binyamin, and the eldest brother, as shown in figure 1 and 2.

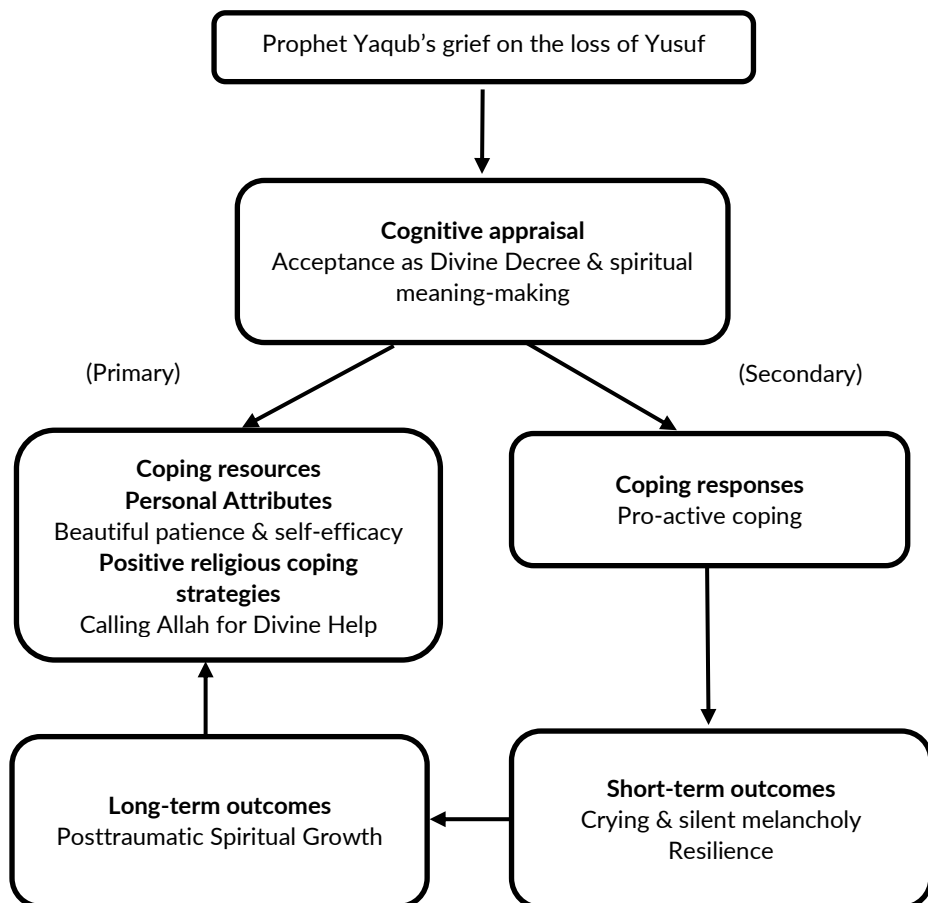


Figure 1. Prophet Ya'qub's grief coping strategies on the loss of Yusuf in the view of the TSC

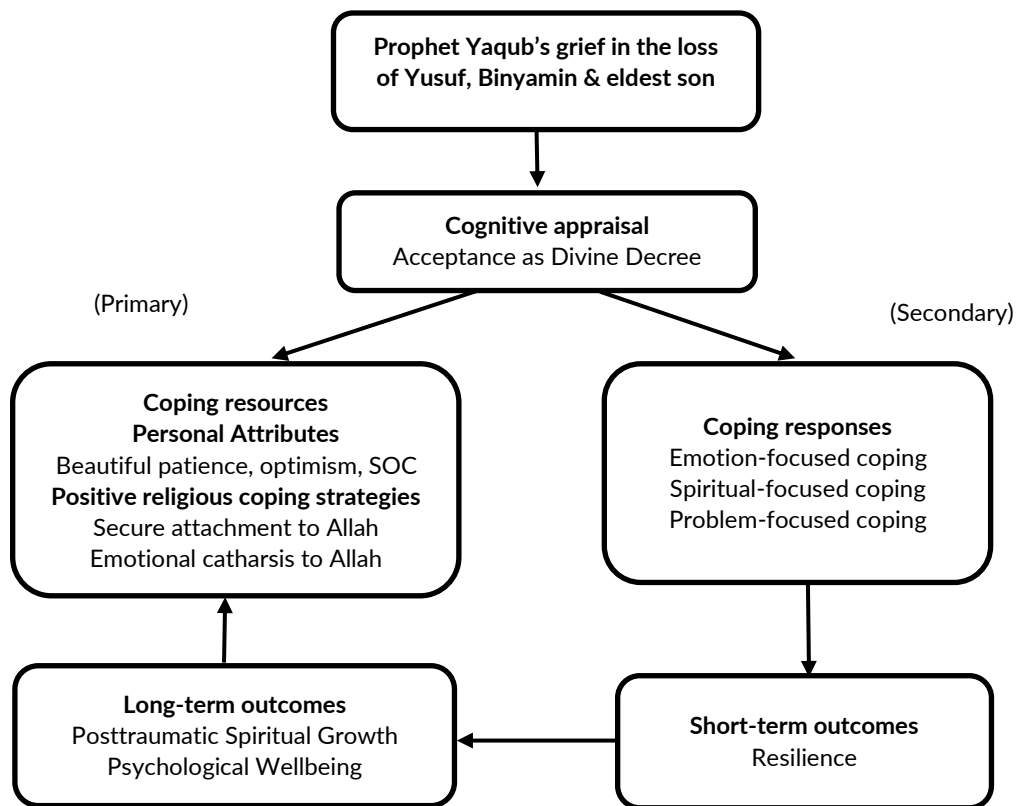


Figure 2. Prophet Ya'qub's grief coping strategies on the loss of Yusuf, Binyamin & eldest son in the view of TSC

The analysis of both figures revealed a new finding that Prophet Ya'qub showed resilience and spiritual growth during the two grief events, and the factors that contributed to this were his noble personality traits, PRC strategies, coping styles and high level of emotional intelligence (EI).

5.1 Emotional Intelligence of Prophet Ya'qub

The results show that Prophet Ya'qub had a high level of EI that helped him cope with the grieving process and can aid in post-traumatic growth. Prophet Ya'qub used his EI to understand his own emotions of pain and grief (self-awareness) and regulate them at a level of excellence through self-control (self-management), showing beautiful patience, silent melancholy, and a secure attachment to Allah. He showed emotional tendencies to achieve his goal of seeking his sons by being optimistic (self-motivation). He also understood the emotions of his sons, be it their jealousy or guilt, and remained an active father in their lives (empathy), showing excellent social and communication skills towards them (social skills), which were responsible for his grief.

5.2 Posttraumatic Spiritual Growth

The factors that were positively associated with the development of posttraumatic growth, as in the case of Prophet Ya'qub, were self-efficacy (Benight & Bandura, 2004), resilience (Bensimon, 2012), optimism (Agyei, 2018), Islamic spirituality (Raduan et al., 2018), emotional disclosure (Lepore et al., 2004), but before Allah, the use of problem- and emotion-focused coping (Linley & Joseph, 2004) and PRC (Gerber et al., 2011).

Most importantly, however, is the psycho-spiritual growth that Prophet Ya'qub experienced, which led to a stronger connection with the Creator by having good assumptions about the Creator (Lancaster & Palframan, 2009). Beautiful patience and belief in the one Allah with His corresponding attributes

(Qur'an 12:64 & 83) freed Prophet Ya'qub from his misery (Raduan et al., 2018).

5.3 Psychological Wellbeing

This study also explored the PRC strategies that Prophet Ya'qub practised, which can help alleviate pain, provide inner strength, comfort, give meaning (Ganzevoort & Falkenburg, 2012; Meert et al., 2005) and prove helpful in coping with grief (Lichtenhal et al., 2010). This is consistent with the study by Hawthorne et al. (2016) and Mohamed Hussin et al. (2018), who reported that the use of PRC strategies by bereaved parents was associated with lower grief symptoms, better psychological well-being, and greater personal growth.

6. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Religion had a great influence in all areas of Prophet Ya'qub's coping process, be it in his appraisal of the situation as a Divine Decree, in the spiritually oriented coping style he adopted, in his coping strategies of PRC and reliance on Allah, and his noble personality traits as beautiful patience and optimism. Overall, it can be concluded from the finding of this study that the role of IE is highly significant in grief coping. In addition, using a quantitative method to examine whether the Prophet Ya'qub's personality traits and PRC strategies predict post-traumatic growth in grieving adults would lead to a better understanding of this important concept.

Such positive outcomes are particularly relevant in the current Covid 19 pandemic; where loved ones are dying, grief counsellors can encourage the bereaved to adopt PRC

strategies as practised by Prophet Ya'qub, cultivate his personality traits, and develop a high level of EI to reduce the symptoms of grief and improve psychological well-being, leading to spiritual growth.

Although Prophet Ya'qub's strategies for coping with grief are largely consistent with contemporary grief psychology, contemporary theories are largely inadequate in terms of addressing the religious/spiritual aspect. Therefore, it is recommended to develop a new theoretical model for grief management from an Islamic perspective for a grieving Muslim. One of the personal characteristics of Prophet Ya'qub that was particularly highlighted was his beautiful patience in the face of loss; this characteristic needs to be further explored.

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