

How to Cite:

Ali-Asghar, S.-R., & Masoumeh, O. (2022). The relevance between faith to God and health dimensions in the Holy Quran: A content analysis. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S6), 5342–5351. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS6.11723>

The relevance between faith to God and health dimensions in the Holy Quran: A content analysis

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Abstract--Introduction: Islam has the largest number of followers in the world after Christianity. Islamic religions and sects differ in their beliefs, ceremonies, rites, and leaders, but all have in common the faith to God and the Quran. God places great emphasis on the health of his servants in the holy Quran. This study aimed to analysis the relevance between faith to God and the dimensions of health in the holy Quran. Methods: This qualitative study was conducted by using content analysis of the original text of the holy Quran in eight steps. Meanings of the verses of the holy Quran were used in five Persian and five English translations. Content analysis were done through conceptual coding, categorization of the codes, and achievement of the main themes. Results: 800 verses of the holy Quran showed appurtenances of the faith including faith to God, God's verses, God's Books, God's angels, the unseen word, and the Last day are related to five dimensions of the heath including physical, mental, social, spiritual, and moral. Conclusion: This study offers new messages about the infinite meanings and concepts of the holy Quran verses by a new outlook at the relevance between faith to God and health.

Keyword--God, health, Holy Quran

Introduction

In the crisis age of thought retardation in the Muslim societies, it is possible to reconstruct the epistemic elements of Islamic civilization by referring again to the

Quran and the consensus wisdom of the Muslims (1). One of the most important and basic Islamic concepts is the faith to God. Faith in the holy Quran is not just an epistemological concept that only requires acknowledgment of a religious theorem, such as a monotheistic one, but also a practical link to religious belief as well as the manifestation of that belief in our actions and behaviors (2). Islam (23%) has the largest number of followers in the world after Christianity (32%). Islamic religions and sects differ in their beliefs, ceremonies, rites, and leaders, but all have in common the faith to God and the Holy Book of Quran (3).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health means complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not just the absence of illness or disability (4). About 25 years ago WHO debated whether the spiritual dimension should be incorporated into the definition of health. It was then confirmed that the spiritual dimension is also involved in human development (5,6). According to Islamic epistemology, spirituality is the base of the body and soul health (7). The philosophy of Islamic laws and commands is the material and spiritual development of Islamic society. According to Islam, the greatest blessing of God to man is the health of the body and greater than it is the health of the soul and the most dangerous disaster is the disease of the body, and more dangerous of it is the disease of the soul (3). In fact, the health is a holistic concept that encompasses several dimensions (6). Individually, there is also the ethical dimension of health. Mohammad Zakaria Razi, an Iranian scientist, presented a health-based moral system. He believed that health is a person's natural state of man and the illness of the soul can be affected by temptation. Health and disease are the results of the constant challenge between wisdom (practical) and temptation (8).

The effect of faith on the motivational dimension of virtues, as well as its effect on the cognitive dimension, is realized from two angles of faith and heart submission (9). According to Imam Khomeini view, man is perfectionist; Hence, even if he grasps the whole being world but he can't reach to the ultimate perfection and he can't disappear his anxiety, insecurity, insecurity and loneliness. If man has a proper understanding of his relationship with God, his ultimate worth and absolute perfection will be God. If one does not correctly recognize this relationship and refrain from divine mention, he will be subject to psychological and social pressures (10). The holy Quran has referred the health and treatment as "healing" on several occasions. Faith and healing work together. Because there is a close connection between the soul and the human body from a religious point of view. In new medical sciences, having a belief in recovery and healing by the physician is one of the basic principles of treatment. As Hippocrates says that the physicians need to inform patients of their own inner power to relieve pain. This inner power is nothing else belief and faith (11). Many articles on faith to God and aspects of health have been written by several documentary ways, studying or exploring the holy Quran, other Islamic sources, and some psychology books (6,9,11-22). But so far, no research has been conducted on relationship between faith to God and health dimensions based on the content analysis of the verses of the Holy Quran. This study specifically analyzes the relationship between faith to God and the physical, mental, social, spiritual and moral dimensions of health.

Methods

The research process began after the approval of the proposal, obtaining a code of ethics and a license from the Vice Chancellor for Research, Qom University of Medical Sciences. In this qualitative study, content analysis was used by conceptual coding, code classification, and key themes. The executive steps of content analysis included eight key steps (23):

- Prepare the data
- Define the unit of analysis
- Develop Categories and A Coding Scheme
- Test Your Coding Scheme on A Sample of Text
- Code All the Text
- Assess Your Coding Consistency
- Draw Conclusions from The Coded Data
- Report Your Methods and Findings

Prepare the data

The entire Arabic text of the Holy Quran at the Pars-Quran website was considered as the data source (24). Meanings of the verses of the holy Quran were used in five Persian translations from Ansarian, Khoramshahi, Foladvand, Ghomsheye, and Makarem-Shirazi and five English translations from Qarib, Sarwar, Shakir, Pickthall, and Yusufali.

Define the unit of analysis

The units of content analysis of the Holy Quran verses were selected based on the aim of the research to analyze the relationship between appurtenances of the faith including faith to God, God's verses, God's Books, God's angels, the unseen word, and the Last day as well as five dimensions of the heath including physical, mental, social, spiritual, and moral.

Develop Categories and A Coding Scheme

Coding was based on the five hypotheses of this study regarding the relationship between appurtenances of the faith and the five dimensions of health. Each of the health dimensions was considered as a category and conceptual codes were assigned to the relevant category.

Test Your Coding Scheme on A Sample of Text

At this step, the codes for the verses of the holy Quran and categorizing the codes based on five dimensions of the health were assessed. As the coding and categorizing scheme were appropriate, content analysis continued with the summary approach.

Code All the Text

The text of all selected verses of the Holy Quran was coded.

Assess Your Coding Consistency

Credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability were verified according to the Lincoln & Guba criteria (1989) to confirm the rigor of the study (25,26). Credibility of data was assessed by controlling the derived concepts with the research team members and assuring them of prolonged engagement of the researchers with the research, and allocating sufficient time to analysis. Data confirmability was confirmed by constant data recording and receiving help from external professors (as supervisors) to endorse derived results. Transferability was conducted by achieving similarities due to the semantic differences and finding meanings that are more universal. To reach dependability, it was used the same verses of the holy Quran as an evidence, all of the steps of the research process were recorded and data audibility was made possible by external supervisors.

Draw Conclusions from The Coded Data

Content analysis with summary approach was used. Where the interpretation was needed to explain the concept, professors of Quran science and books of Quran interpretation were assisted.

Report Your Methods and Findings

A summary of the research findings is compiled in this research paper. The content analysis report is also detailed in the thesis.

Ethical considerations

This study was conducted after registering the Code of Ethics (IR.MUQ.REC.1398.005) in the National Ethics Committee system in Iran and obtaining permission from Research Deputy of the Faculty of Health and Religion in Qom University of Medical Sciences. Each step of the content analysis was done after the scientific and ethical confirmation of the results of the previous step by the members of the research team and the reviewers.

Results

Of the eight hundred verses of the holy Quran, the appurtenances of the faith (faith to God in all of 800 verses, the unseen word in 12 verses, the angels Of God in 19 verses, the divine prophets in 196 verses, the Book of God in 124 verses, the signs of God in 125 verses, and the Last Day in 170 verses) were related to five dimensions of health (physical with 23 codes, mental with 460 codes, social with 272 codes, spiritual with 707 codes, and moral health with 320 codes) were related. The following are some samples of this relevance:

Physical Health

- **Being a good food lawful (faith to Allah)**
Believers, eat of the good with which We have provided you and give thanks to Allah, if you really worship Him (sura 2, verse 172).
- **The harmfulness of wine (faith to Allah, faith to Last Day)**

Believers, wine and gambling, idols and divining arrows are abominations from the work of Satan. Avoid them, in order that you prosper (sura 5, verse 90).

- **Security after sleep (faith to Allah, faith to signs of the Lord)**

When you were overcome by sleep, as security from Him, He sent down water from the sky to cleanse you and to purify you of Satan's filth, to strengthen your hearts and to steady your footsteps (sura 8, verse 11).

Mental Health

- **Tranquility into the hearts (faith to Allah, faith to signs of the Lord, faith to Unseen world)**

It was He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers so that they might add belief upon belief. To Allah belong the armies of the heavens and the earth. Allah is the Knower, the Wise (sura 48, verse 4).

- **Neither fear, nor grief (faith to Allah, faith to Last Day)**

The believers, Jews, Sabaeans, and the Christians who believe in God and the Day of Judgment and who do what is right will have nothing to fear nor will they be grieved (sura 5, verse 69).

- **Security (faith to Allah)**

Those who believe and have not confounded their belief with harm security belongs to them; and they are guided (sura 6, verse 82).

Social Health

- **Social rituals in meetings (faith to Allah, faith to Unseen world)**

Believers, when you are told to make room in a meeting for others, do so. God will then make room for you. When you are told to disperse, do so. God will raise the position of the believers and of those who have received knowledge. God is Well-Aware of what you do (sura 58, verse 11).

- **Social rituals in entering for a meal (faith to Allah, faith to the prophets)**

Believers, do not enter the houses of the Prophet for a meal without waiting for the proper time, unless you are given permission. But if you are invited, enter, and when you have eaten, disperse, not desiring conversation, for that is hurtful to the Prophet and he would be shy before you; but of the truth Allah is not shy. And when you ask his wives for anything, speak to them from behind a curtain, that is cleaner for your hearts and theirs. You must not hurt the Messenger of Allah, nor shall you ever wed his wives after him, surely, this would be a monstrous thing with Allah do (sura 33, verse 53).

- **Social rituals in entering other's houses (faith to Allah)**

Believers, do not enter houses other than your houses until you first ask permission and greet with peace the people thereof; that is better for you in order that you remember (sura 24, verse 27).

Spiritual Health

- **Effects of the remembrance of Allah (faith to Allah)**
those who believe, and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Is it not with the remembrance of Allah that hearts are satisfied (sura 13, verse 28).
- **Gardens of Bliss for the believers (faith to Allah)**
But for those who believe and do good works are Gardens of Bliss (sura 31, verse 8).
- **The greatest winning (faith to Allah, faith to Last Day)**
Allah has promised the believing men and women gardens underneath which rivers flow, in which they shall live forever. Goodly mansions in the Gardens of Eden, and the pleasure from Allah which is greater. That is the greatest winning (sura 9, verse 72).

Ethical Health

- **Avoid hurting the believers (faith to Allah)**
Those who hurt believing men and believing women undeservedly, shall bear the guilt of slander and a major sin (sura 33, verse 58).
- **Optimism (faith to Allah)**
Had you heard it, and the believing men and women, thought good thoughts about one another said: 'This is a clear falsehood (sura 24, verse 12).
- **True righteousness (faith to Allah, faith to the Last Day, faith to the angels, faith to the Book of God, faith to the prophets)**
Righteousness is not whether you face towards the east or the west. But righteousness is to believe in Allah and the Last Day, in the angels and the Book, and the Prophets, and to give wealth however cherished, to kinsmen, to the orphans, to the needy, to the destitute traveler, and to the beggars, and to ransom the slave; who establish their prayers and pay the obligatory charity; who are true to their promise when they have promised. Who are patient in misfortune and hardship and during the time of courage, Such are the truthful; such are the cautious (sura 2, verse 177).

Discussion

According to the results, faith to God is related to the five dimensions of health in the verses of the holy Quran. There are different views on the relationship between faith to God and health. In both ends of a spectrum, the effects of religion on health are viewed positive or negative. Chatters reviewed articles focused on religious and health. He argues that spirituality is distinct from religion, but the convergence of religion and spirituality is happened for beliefs and experiences that specifically place God as their reference point. Many transcendental and supernatural experiences (such as feelings of closeness to God, peace and holiness) reported by respondents emphasize a relationship with something (as God) greater than themselves and with a personal meaning that may be have important consequences for one's health and well-being through behaviors, attitudes, and emotional states (27).

The present study showed the relationship between faith to God and the physical dimension of health. Chatters points to evidence from epidemiological and clinical studies and medical research that support the effect of religious on physical health indicators. These include studies of cancer, hypertension, stroke, cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal diseases, general or specific cause mortality, indicators of physical disability, self-report health status, and semiology reports (27). Aboul-Enein explored verses related to health in the holy Quran and identified verses related to health promotion and behavior. He identified 28 verses on diet and nutrition, personal health, alcohol abstinence and the importance of a healthy lifestyle (28).

The present study showed the relationship between faith to God and the psychological dimension of health. Epidemiological studies have shown that religious factors have beneficial effects on a variety of behavioral patterns, including depression, drug and alcohol abuse, criminal behaviors, suicide, mental disorder, and some functional psychiatric diagnoses (27). Bradshaw & Kent showed that the relationship between prayer and psychological health is moderated by attachment to God. Those who pray and are securely attached to God have greater mental health than those who pray and are insecure (29). In a qualitative study with grounded theory approach, the relationship with God was studied in old age. Respondents (18 elderly in the ages of 60 to 81 years) pointed to the importance of relating with God and having the sense of tranquility. They believed that when they relate to God, they would have a sense of support. Achieving supremacy, excellence, empathy, seeing God beside him were other issues raised by these elders (14).

The present study showed the relationship between faith to God and the social dimension of health. Some studies cite negative religious outcomes about health: Religious beliefs and commitments can lead to negative lifestyle changes and behavior patterns that are detrimental to health. Religious teachings may prohibit medical treatment and specific medical practices, and may in some cases promote and reinforce social aberrations and erratic behaviors that may impair one's health and well-being (27). The Aboul-Enein study showed that the holy Quran can be used as an effective medium for public health professionals in different communities, especially Muslims, to improve and maintain healthy behaviors. He concludes that paying attention to the verses can have a significant impact on improving and promoting a healthy lifestyle and preventing chronic diseases. The reflection of these verses can be used as a health promotion guide for qualified health educators and public health professionals in different communities (28).

The present study showed the relationship between faith to God and the spiritual dimension of health. A narrative review of the subjects of religion, spirituality, spiritual health, religious beliefs, and the impact of spiritual health on physical and mental health showed that spiritual health was related to physical, mental, social, and human health dimensions. Spiritual health is the root of all aspects of human existence. Until this basic dimension is not formed relatively, one cannot balance between other dimensions of his being. Spiritual health can be overt or covert, an ability or a capability that is an essential part of any person's existence (6). The study of "Spiritual Factors on Human life span in the Quran" was conducted by library analyzing of Islamic and religious sciences books, existing

interpretations, as well as articles on psychology related to spiritual health and life. The results show that according to the holy Quran, five main factors extend human life: faith, forgiveness, monotheism in worship of the Almighty, obedience to God, and piety. The most important spiritual factor is "the firm faith to infinite power" (13).

The present study showed the relationship between faith to God and the moral dimension of health. The study of "Spiritual categories of health in Islamic theology" showed that spirituality in Islamic theology is the essential essence of religion and is not merely about adherence to religious laws or ethical practices. Spirituality in Islamic theology is knowledge and faith to unseen and monotheistic explanation of the system of existence and acting on this basis. This spirituality is the foundation of worship and morality. According to Islamic epistemology, spirituality is the basic of the body and soul health (7). Cognition due to faith in God showed the believer the worth of virtues and motivates him to beautify by them. But heart submission is the most influential. That is the essence of faith. By surrendering the heart to a God who is fully ethical in relation to his servants, human desires will also be ethical. On the other hand, with fulfillment of heart submission, moral virtues become holiness. This leads to inform a strong desire to virtue in the believer. By increasing faith degree, the virtues gain more depth and richness (9).

Conclusion

Eight hundred verses of the holy Quran showed appurtenances of the faith including faith to God, God's verses, God's Books, God's angels, the unseen world, and the Last day are related to five dimensions of the health including physical, mental, social, spiritual, and moral. This study offers new messages about the infinite meanings and concepts of the holy Quran verses by a new outlook at the relevance between faith to God and the dimensions of health.

Acknowledgement

Special thanks to the professors, managers and experts of the faculty of Health and Religion and Research Deputy of Qom University of Medical Sciences for providing virtual educational and research facilities and financial support for this research project.

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