

Mental and emotional health education for addiction prevention: Islamic perspective

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Abstract

Background: Addiction is a word derived from a Latin “addictio” meaning ‘enslaved,’ that described the neurological model of chronic and relapsing brain-disease. Addiction affects at least 10% of any population addicted to drugs or alcohol.

Objectives: To identify the qualitative themes of Islamic spirituality of God-consciousness in Freud’s psychodynamics theory of mind, Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, Cognitive Triangle tools and Modal process of coping with stress.

Methods: The paper reviewed and explored literatures on the science and theology of addiction prevention from the frontiers of Islamic perspective. The Islamic models of spirituality blends several western psychological approaches. It also attempts to establish the processes of epigenesis and neuroplasticity programmed in Islamic model of spirituality, integrated education, cognitive learning, moral development and resilience in coping with stress, how it modulates the principles of God-consciousness in activating the Prefrontal Cortex (PFC), and in the emancipation of the ‘enslaved’ brain reward circuit from mental and ‘emotional hijack.’

Results: The review utilised the four default characteristics of human beings that motivates the addiction process to illustrate the background causal phenomenon. It bring forth the Islamic psychology approach and principles that integrates the psychodynamic theory, Kohlberg moral development theory, the cognitive triad approach to understanding the diseases’ of the mind and the modal emotion-regulation approaches to suggest several tools that will be helpful in addiction prevention interventions.

Conclusion: The paper identify both the theme of experimental and experiential data relating Islamic spirituality of God-consciousness in integrated education, educational psychology, educational moral development, psychotherapy of cognitive triangle, and stress coping strategies as significant models that will predict the prevention and intervention of addiction behavior.

Keywords: God-consciousness, Belief, Epigenesis, Neuroplasticity and Resilience.

Introduction

The word "addiction" from its Latin origin implies "enslaved by" or "bound to." This in

more ways fits the neurobiological model of

addiction, as a chronic, often relapsing brain disease, affecting about 10% of any

population addicted to drugs or alcohol. Since the turn of the 20th century, scientists have found that, half (50%) of a person's susceptibility to addiction can be linked to genetic factors and the other half (50%) as the result of poor coping skills. The genetic model of addiction posits inheritable predisposition to certain behaviours. However according to the moral model, a moral failure to do what is right causes addiction. The psychopathological model sees mental disorders as the cause of addiction and the spiritual model suggests a disconnection from God or a Higher Power as the cause of addiction.

In 2017 Feldman, a psychologist postulates that: "because of the difficulty in treatment of addiction problem there is little disagreement that the best hope for dealing with overall societal problem of Substance Abuse is to prevent people from becoming involve with drugs in the first place." In addition, based on the cognitive-behavioral

model, the most critical predictor of preventing addiction and relapse of treatment is the individual's ability to implement effective coping mechanisms to deal with stressful, tempting and/or dangerous situations.

To achieve effective ways of addiction prevention, this paper identify the qualitative themes of Islamic spirituality of God-consciousness in Freud's psychodynamics theory of mind, Kohlberg's theory of moral development, Cognitive Triangle model and Modal process of coping with stress, as essential tools.

Methodology

The paper reviewed and explored literatures on the science and theology of addiction prevention from the frontiers of Islamic perspective. The Islamic models of spirituality blends the theoretical framework of Freud's psychodynamic theory of mind, Kohlberg's theories of moral development,

psychiatric Cognitive-Triangle model and the Modal process of emotion regulation.

The review attempts to establish the impact of knowledge and belief on epigenesis and neuroplasticity of brain and heart, in programming the constructs of relative change and adaptation to moral principles against addictive thought, feelings and behaviours. Both scientific and religious models identify equal proportion of genetic control and environmental stress factors are attributed to enslavements of the self in addiction. The processes of epigenesis and neuroplasticity programmed in Islamic model of spirituality, integrated education, cognitive learning, moral development and resilience in coping with stress. How this modulates the principles of God-consciousness in activating the Prefrontal Cortex (PFC), and in the emancipation of the 'enslaved' brain reward circuit from mental and 'emotional hijack'.

Results/Discussion

Most religious systems have traditionally looked at addictive behaviours through a moral lens. While, the scientific understanding of addictive disease assigns very different role to individual's will in causing the disorder and in the recovery from it. In the therapeutic approaches, it is viewed as readiness for treatment or motivation for treatment. In the Islamic perspective, addiction is viewed in the integration of all these, as both religion and spirituality are not mutually exclusive i.e. you cannot have one without the other. Hence, the Islamic faith and spirituality provide Muslims with a code of behaviour, ethics, and social values, which helps them in tolerating and developing adaptive coping strategies to deal with stressful life events. Based on this later understanding, Islamic psychology defines man as having default characteristics which if not regulated can motivate toward the use of addictive substances and processes.

The four default characteristics of human

beings that motivates addiction:

1. Weakness: Motivates needs to take drugs in relieving pain and weakness...

*(man was created weak...
Qur'an. 4.28)*

2. Forgetfulness: Susceptible to forget the consequences of addiction...

*(We had already beforehand
taken the covenant of Adam
but he forgot... Qur'an
20.115).*

3. Impulsiveness: Inability to resist the loop of brain's reward cycle of cravings or addiction...

*(Man is a creature of haste...
Qur'an. 21.37)*

4. Ungratefulness: entices seeking of drugs to relief negative emotion of insatiability

*(Truly Man is to his Lord
ungrateful... Qur'an 100.6)*

Based on the above four characteristics of man, the Qur'an describes psychoactive substances as "intoxicants" the use of which is from succumbing to the "handiwork of Satan." According to this model, substance use will mean that the user's individuality or "self" has succumbed ("i.e. become enslaved") to his/her satanic impulses or desires (which in the Freudian psychoanalysis is termed id), and thus severing itself from the "spirit" (or psychodynamic superego). More entrenched than Freudian psychology is the recognition by Al Ghazali (1977), Jaafar (1996) and Jawzi (2000) that every human being has desires or passions which is expected to act according to conscience. And that it is the succumbing to the base desires lacking conscience which led the individual to meet the desires in a self-damaging way by demanding to fulfil current temptation in a hasty and despicable manner. The single use

or recurrent fulfilling of these desire with such self-damaging substances will have its toils on the human brain and body. Thus, the Islamic approach recognizes human characteristics of weakness, impulsiveness, forgetfulness and ungratefulness as primary issues in the start and sustenance of use of psychoactive substance. This Islamic model fits the triad of addiction phenomenon listed below.

The three phenomenon of addiction causation and maintenance

1. Addiction inhibits Pre-Frontal Cortex (PFC) functions and deficit of PFC functions reinforces addiction (corresponding to the forgetfulness and ungratefulness characteristics)
2. Mental illness triggers addiction and addiction reinforces mental illness (corresponding to the weakness, impulsiveness and forgetfulness characteristics)

3. Stress predisposes addiction and addiction reinforces stress (corresponding to the ungratefulness, weakness, forgetfulness characteristics)

Islamic approach to addiction prevention

Islam, being a complete way of life, forbids the use of intoxicants or substances that are harmful to health or affects faculty of reasoning. This is well enunciated in the following Qur'anic verse:

... and make not your own hands (money) contribute to your destruction (health and societal consequences)... Qur'an 2.195

The above succinctly captures the following points:

- Intoxicants is harmful to self and society and its harmfulness outweigh its benefit (Qur'an 2.219)
- Intoxicants affects judgments ie. alters mental functioning negatively (Qur'an 4.43)

- Intoxicants causes distraction from God-consciousness (Qur'an 5.91)
- Intoxicants are forbidden (Qur'an 5.90)

Further, for the above understanding to give contents to Islamic prevention approach to addiction, the proper understanding of risk factors is necessary.

Risks factors for addiction

1. Genetics (Nature)
2. Environment (Nurture)

Genetic risk factors for addiction

Genetics is the study of genes. *Genes* are functional units of DNA that make up the human genome. They provide the information that directs a body's basic cellular activities. The development into addiction may be influenced by inherited traits, which may delay or speed up the disease progression

- Genes account for approximately 50% of an individual's risk of becoming addicted

- The 46 chromosomes of genes approximately contributed the half of the known physical, psychological and spiritual characteristics of man

Environmental risk factors

Environmental risk factors of addiction are characteristics in a person's surroundings that increase their likelihood of becoming dependent on drugs and alcohol. A person may have many environments or influences, such as the community, school, family, and friends that may reinforce addiction behaviours.

Without changing the actual sequence of DNA, we have mechanisms in our body to control how and when cells express certain genes. These mechanisms are influenced by changes in our environment, and the process of influencing gene expression without altering the basic genetic code is called epigenetic. Hence, epigenetic regulation represents the nurture (environmental) part of "nature vs. nurture" phenomenon. In other

words, epigenetic changes can influence the growth of neurons in the developing brains as well as modify activity of the neurons in the adult brain

Nurture (epigenetic) inverse nature (gene) in addiction prevention

Involuntary living in default mode of gene control or analytical mind of world-consciousness, predicts the activation of id's (i.e. 'the beast in man') pleasure principles to irresponsible behaviour and inability to make informed decision and choice against addiction.

Many are the Jinns and men

We have made for Hell: They

have hearts wherewith they

understand not, eyes

wherewith they see not, and

ears wherewith they hear not.

They are like cattle nay more

misguided (like beast): for

they are heedless (immoral).

Qur'an 7.179

Voluntary living in focus mode of epigenetic control or creative mind of God-consciousness, predicts the activation of Superego's (i.e. the spiritual attributes in man) moral principles to responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decision and choice against addiction.

O you who believe! If you

fear Allah (acquire God-

consciousness) He will grant

you a criterion (i.e. activation

of Pre-Frontal Cortex to

judge between right and

wrong)... Qur'an 8.29

Islamic principles of educational models

of addiction prevention at spiritual level

Those truly fear Allah (God-

consciousness) among His

Servants who have

knowledge (are learned): for

Allah is Exalted in Might Oft-Forgiving. Qur'an 35.28.

Three dimension of human beings

1. The human body (id/physical/turab) operates at material dimension

(We created man from sounding clay from mud molded into shape (body);

Qur'an 15.26)

2. The human Soul (ego/self/nafs) operates at psychological dimension

(...Then the soul is breathed into his body.-Bukhari 4.430)

3. The human Spirit (superego/spirit/ruh) operates at spiritual dimension

(When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spiritfall you down in obeisance unto him 15.29).

Freud psychodynamic approach to addiction prevention in the Islamic model

"Mental training (neuroplasticity) has the power to change the physical structure of the brain" –

Alvaro Pascual-leone

Sigmund Freud (1923) theory of psychoanalysis of human mind postulated that the mind comprise of three parts: the id, ego and superego.

1. **Id (Nafsin bis-su'ii)** - *...The human soul is certainly prone to evil (submission to the will of the body [id] materialism) ... Qur'an 12.51 (greatest struggle against id)*

Characteristics of Nafsin bis-su'ii: vibrates at lower physical level

- Genetically natured and controlled by unconscious programming of pleasure principles

- Ignorant, uncivilized and enslaved (surrendered) to will of the body (materialism)
- Impulsive and compulsive enslavement (addiction) to foods, sex, drugs, social media
- Reactive to consequences of addiction

2. **Ego (Nafsil-lawwama)** - *And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit (submission to the will of the ego [self or nafs]). Qur'an 75.2*

Characteristics of Nafsil-lawwama: vibrates at moderated psychological level

- Epigenetically nurtured and controlled by conscious programming of realty principles
- Educated, arrogant and enslaved to the will of the self (secularism)
- Self-defensive in rationalizing the consequences for addiction
- Mediates the id's unrealistic goal of taking licit or illicit drugs

3. **Superego (Nafsim-mutma'inna):** - *To the righteous soul will be said: "O (thou) soul [superego] in rest and satisfaction (submission to the will of God in Islam)! Qur'an 89.27*

Characteristics of Nafsim-mutma'inna: vibrates at higher spiritual level

- Epigenetically learned and controlled by conscientious programming of moral principles
- Learned, civilized and enslaved (surrendered) to the will of God (God-consciousness)
- Self-expansive in internalizing the consequences against addiction
- Willpower to control id and persuade ego to moralistic goal of avoiding drugs or alcohol

Kohlberg moral development model of addiction prevention in the Islamic understanding

The unbelievers are protectors one of another:

unless ye do this (protect each other) there would be tumult and oppression on earth and great mischief.

Qur'an 8.73

Lawrence Kohlberg in 1976 theorizes the three stages of moral development of: pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional.

1. Pre-conventional role of parenting in addiction prevention

Reinforcements of reward (carrot) and punishment (stick) in inculcating societal values of morality, fulfilling child's right and providing social support, will prevent children early predisposition to addiction.

- ... *All of you (parents) are guardians and responsible for your wards (children's moral development)*

and the things under your care...

- *The Imam (spiritual leaders) is the guardian of his subjects and is responsible for them (their moral education) and a man is the guardian of his family and is responsible for them (their moral education)...*

- *A woman (wives) is the guardian of her husband's house and is responsible for it (securing moral environment). ...*

Bukhari 2.18

2. Conventional role of leaders in addiction prevention

Securing the mental and emotional health of adolescents by enacting laws and order against drugs, providing youth empowerment schemes, developing school activities and programs on addiction, and discouraging peer group influence and culture of addiction.

- *O! you that believe! betray not the trust of Allah and the apostle nor misappropriate (corrupt) knowingly things entrusted to you (for youth development). Qur'an 8.27*
- *Allah doth command you to render back your trusts (of securing the wealth, health and mind) to those (youth/adolescents) to whom they are due; and when you judge between man and man that you*

judge with justice:...

Qur'an 4.58

- *And those who respect (fulfil) their trusts (mandates of service to humanity) and covenants (promises of youth empowerment); Qur'an 70 32*

3. Post-conventional role of individuals in addiction prevention

Adult's level of moralization in spirituality, psychology and materiality internalizes the willpower of executive control over immediate gratification of the body and soul; to delay gratification of the spirit to achieve the state of spirituality, 'enlightenment' and self-actualization in avoiding addiction behaviors

- *"And He (God the first teacher) taught (nurtured) Adam the nature ('spirituality') of*

all things; then He placed them before the angels and said: "Tell Me the nature of these if you are right." Qur'an 2.31

- *By the Soul and the proportion and order (conscience) Given to it; And its enlightenment (psychology) as to its wrong and its right; Truly he succeeds that purifies it (from addiction); And he fails that corrupts it. Qur'an 91.7-1021*

- *It is He who hath made you (His) agents inheritors (participants) of the earth: He hath raised you in ranks ('self-actualization')*

some above others: that he may try you in the gifts (potentials) He hath given you: for thy Lord is quick in punishment: yet He is indeed Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful. Qur'an 6.165

Principles of cognitive triangle model of addiction prevention in Islamic perspective

The Cognitive Triangle is one of the most popular and effective strategies that Cognitive Behavioural Therapists (CBT) use when supporting clients in improving anxiety, depression, and other life-style stressors.

The Prophet, upon whom be peace, said, "Every action (behaviour) is based (i.e. predestined) upon intention (constructs of belief) ...Fiqh-us-Sunna 1.119



Cognition of Knowledge (experimental data)

+ Belief (experiential data) Worldview

(ideology) Purpose of life (dream)

Intention (goal) Theme of thought

(neurotransmitters) Emotional feeling

(brainwaves) Adaptive attitude

(neuroplasticity) Behavior disposition

(realization)

Functional brain imaging shows

choices are made (i.e. predestined)

before the subject is aware of it.

Thought

Mentally, ‘cognitive consistency’ in

Cognitive Intelligence (CQ) synchronizes

gamma brain’s waves to motivates the

thought, feeling and behaviour consistent in

response to God-consciousness or Spiritual Intelligence (SQ), against addiction.

Say: "Everyone acts (behave) according to his own disposition (knowledge + belief = thought): but your Lord knows best who it is that is best guided on the Way." Qur'an 17.84

The above can be summarized as:

Power of Mind (CQ) +Power of Heart (EQ) =Power of God-consciousness (SQ)

That is to say, the above shows the Islamic model of cognitive triad as more encompassing by illustrating the higher dimension of pursuit for human being i.e. SQ, as ways to continue to motivate the mind to aspire to grow more and not assuming that positive thoughts is everything.

Feelings

Emotionally, ‘God-consciousness’ in EQ vibrates heart’s coherent waves to activate

the willpower of executive functions in bypassing the limbic system's reward circuit for addiction

O you who believe! if you fear Allah (have God-consciousness) He will grant you a criterion (use PFC in judging between right and wrong)... Qur'an 8.29

Behavior

Spiritually, internalized operant and classical conditioning of knowledge and belief programmed the epigenesis and neuroplasticity of CQ + EQ = SQ (wisdom and compassion) to predict resilience for alternative healthy behaviours of coping with stress against addiction

...But if you persevere patiently (internalize knowledge and belief) and guard against evil then that will be a determining (predicting) factor in all

affairs (behaviours). Qur'an 3.106

Addiction prevention from environment stress factors: Islamic perspective

Converging lines of evidence indicate that stress increases risk of addictive (unrighteous) behaviours. Early life stress and child maltreatment, chronic cumulative adversity, major life trauma and negative emotionality and impulsivity/sensation seeking traits (behaviour) are each associated with increasing level of drug use and abuse.

Narrated Abdullah: ...Falsehood (cognitive dissonance) leads to Al-Fajur (unrighteousness), and Al-Fajur (unrighteousness) leads to the (Hell) Fire, and a man may keep on telling lies till he is (epigenetically) written before Allah, a

(behavioural) liar." Bukhari

8.116- Bukhari 8.116

Effects of stress hormones on cognitive functioning

- **Alter** parasympathetic mode of the nervous system to sympathetic mode for craving of drugs to relief stress and pain
- **Decrease** the memory function of the hippocampus in storing and retrieving of information for restraint against addiction behavior
- **Bypasses** the Pre Frontal Cortex (PFC) for attention, filtration of information, and decision-making (deliberation) against addiction behavior.

Narrated Sahl ibn Sa'd as-Sa'idi: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Deliberation (executive function of PFC) comes from Allah, but haste (impulsivity) from the devil (limbic system)," Tirmidhi 1309.

Process model of stress regulation in Islamic perspective

The process model of emotion regulation is based upon the modal model of emotion.

The modal model of emotion suggests that the emotion generation process occurs in a particular sequence over time. The process model posits five different families of emotion regulation that correspond to the regulation of a particular point in the emotion generation process. They occur in the following order:

1. Situation selection
2. Situation modification
3. Attentional deployment
4. Cognitive change
5. Response modulation

Situation Selection

Regularly and well performed prayers on time predicts selections of positive emotional situation

... for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds

*(addiction); and
remembrance of Allah is the
greatest without doubt. And
Allah knows the (deeds) that
you do. Qur'an 29.45*

Constant remembrance God dispels negative thoughts and situations inspired by Satan

*If anyone (choose to)
withdraws
(disengage)himself from
remembrance of (Allah) Most
Gracious We appoint
(engage)for him an evil one
(Satan)to be an intimate
companion to him. Qur'an
43.36*

Situation Modification

Changing our life condition by changing our core belief

*Verily never will Allah
change the condition
(situation) of a people until
they change it themselves*

*(with their own souls).
Qur'an 13.11*

Migrating from addictive, chaotic or immoral to non-addictive, peaceful or moral environment

*But Lut had faith in Him: he
said: "I will leave (migrate)
home (environment) for the
sake of my Lord: for He is
Exalted in Might and Wise.
Qur'an 29.26*

Attention deployment

Refocusing thought of frustration to appreciation and switch over emotion of sadness to happiness:

*And remember! your Lord
caused to be declared
(publicly): "If you are
(choose to be) grateful I will
add more (favours) unto you;
but if you (choose to) show
ingratitude (comparing
yourself with others) truly My*

punishment is terrible indeed." Qur'an 14.7

Restraining anger and forgiving relieves the heart from sadness to happiness

Those who spend (freely) whether in prosperity or in adversity; who restrain anger (aggression) and pardon (forgives) men; for Allah loves those who do good. Quran 3.134

Cognitive Change

Reappraising emotional relevant situation as a trial and opportunity for growth and development.

Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil) but give glad tidings (hope) to those who patiently persevere. Qur'an 2.155; "So, verily, with every

difficulty, there is relief:

Verily, with every difficulty there is relief." (Quran, 94: 5-6)

Projecting the benefit of doubt from paranoiac interpretations of thoughts, word or behavior

Those who listen to the Word (statements or behaviours) and follow the best (interpretation or meaning) in it: those are the ones whom Allah has guided and those are the ones endowed with understanding. Qur'an 39.19

Response Modulation

Therapy: pharmacological therapy and psychotherapeutic approach like CBT. Always remember that we treat God cures.

And when I am ill it is He Who cures me; Qur'an 26.80

Meditation: Counseling, Fasting and Spiritual healing (Ruqya)

O you who believe! give your responseto Allah and His apostle when He calls (counsels) you to that which will give you life (healing); and know that Allah cometh in (interface) between a man and his heart (thought) and that it is He to whom you shall (all) be gathered. Qur'an 8.24

O you who believe! fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that ye may (learn) self-restraint (God-consciousness against addiction). Qur'an 2.183

Conclusion

The paper identify both the theme of experimental-based and experiential-based data relating Islamic principles of God-

consciousness (wisdom), educational learning models (learned), educational moral development (moral conscience), psychodynamic tools of cognitive triangle (sanity), and stress coping strategies (righteousness) as significant models that will inform the prevention and intervention of addiction behavior.

Recommendations

1. Reintroducing the loss culture of discipline at community and schools level
2. Encouraging parental responsibility of moral development at home and community level
3. Legislating stiff laws and order against availability and used of drugs at political level
4. Integrating religious theories, principles and models in educational curriculum

5. Organizing regular symposium, workshops and lecture on addiction in schools and public
6. Creating awareness on addiction prevention in print and electronic media
7. Funding social support programs and scheme in alleviating poverty.

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