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Tawakkul in the Qur'an as Coping Mechanism for IIUM Student Mastery in Coping with the Covid-19 Challenges

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Abstract: It is a known fact that Covid-19 has affected all academic activities including at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). There were many implications on students' academic affairs, mental health, finance, etc. In such a situation, tawakkul as a coping mechanism plays a significant part, as it can define one's capability in coping with the challenges due to Covid-19 and some tests from All◉h. This study analysed the perception of Hamka on Qur'◉nic verses related to tawakkul. It also looked at how IIUM students dealt with challenges brought on by Covid-19. This study employed a qualitative research method in collecting and analyzing data through semi-structured interviews. The findings showed that tawakkul as a coping mechanism according to Hamka refers to having strong im◉n to overcome painful or difficult emotions. When tawakkul is considered as a coping mechanism, it appeared that it has a very considerable overlap and can be applied for the purpose of assisting one to live a better life. This is due to the fact that practicing tawakkul as coping mechanisms will assist one in overcoming painful or difficult emotions. The findings also revealed that all of the respondents believed that tawakkul was immensely helpful in coping with the challenges they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Keywords: Tawakkul; Tafsīr al-Azhar; Hamka; Covid-19; Coping Mechanism.

Abstrak: *Diketahui bahwa Covid-19 telah mempengaruhi semua kegiatan akademik termasuk di International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Ada banyak implikasi pada kehidupan mahasiswa dalam hal akademik, kesehatan mental, keuangan, dan lain-lain. Dalam situasi seperti itu, tawakkul sebagai* coping mechanism *memainkan peran penting, karena dapat menentukan kemampuan seseorang dalam mengatasi tidak hanya tantangan karena untuk Covid-19, tetapi juga dengan beberapa tes dari Allah. Kajian ini menganalisis persepsi Hamka terhadap ayat-ayat Alquran yang berkaitan dengan tawakkal. Selain itu, untuk melihat bagaimana mahasiswa IIUM menghadapi tantangan yang dibawa oleh Covid-19. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dalam mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara semi terstruktur dan menganalisisnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tawakkul sebagai mekanisme koping menurut Hamka adalah memiliki iman yang kuat agar mampu mengatasi emosi yang menyakitkan atau sulit. Ketika tawakkal dianggap sebagai mekanisme koping, ternyata memiliki tumpang tindih yang sangat besar dan dapat diterapkan untuk tujuan membantu seseorang menjalani kehidupan yang lebih baik. Hal ini dikarenakan dengan mengamalkan tawakkal sebagai mekanisme koping akan membantu seseorang dalam mengatasi emosi yang menyakitkan atau sulit. Temuan juga mengungkapkan bahwa semua responden percaya bahwa tawakkul sangat membantu dalam menghadapi tantangan yang mereka hadapi selama pandemi Covid-19.*
Kata Kunci: *tawakkal; tafsir al-azhar; Hamka; Covid-19; mekanisme mengatasi.*

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 outbreak which has led to the Movement Control Order (MCO) and Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) from 18th March 2020 has affected all academic activities at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) at that time. According to a survey conducted by IIUM Student Union on Students' Views Facing the Extension of the CMCO, the CMCO apparently has many implications on students' lives who stayed in *mahallah*/hostel in terms of their academic affairs, mental health, finance, etc.[1] On this basis, the circumstances that IIUM students have experienced as a result of Covid-19 appear to have a strong connection to the meaning of *tawakkul* in the Qur´ān, particularly in relation to Hamka's interpretation of some verses on *tawakkul* that discuss about how it should be properly practised. Thus, *tawakkul* is therefore absolutely important within that situation, especially when it serves as a coping mechanism.

In the Qur´ān, there are many verses on *tawakkul*. The term *tawakkul* itself that means relying on Allāh is mentioned in its various forms 38 times in the Qur´ān.[2]The necessity of having *tawakkul* is shown by Allāh Who says in the Qur´ān that the believers should put their trust on Him: "*True believers are those whose hearts tremble with awe when God is mentioned, whose faith increases when His revelations are recited to them, who put their trust in their Lord, who keep up the prayer and give to others out of what We provide for them. Those are the ones who truly believe. They have high standing with their Lord, forgiveness, and generous provision*"[3].

As Muslims, we should place our trust in none other than Allāh, direct our devotions only to Him, seek refuge with Him, invoke Him for our various needs, and supplicate to Him alone. We must also understand and accept that whatever He desires will come to pass, and whatever He does not desire will not come to pass. *Tawakkul*, as such, is a measure of one's faith. A high level of trust in Allāh indicates a strong faith, and vice versa. For this reason, a true believer should completely rely on Him, as He is the Only One who will assist us in all of our endeavours.[4] In brief, Allāh will provide the necessities of his servants as long as they have *tawakkul* in Him. To put it another way, people who have *tawakkul* in this context signify that they have *taqwā*, and *taqwā* is only acceptable when accompanied by trust in Allāh.[5]

When it comes to coping mechanism, it is a method that people adopt to cope with unpleasant or difficult emotions when they are worried or traumatised. Coping mechanism is believed to assist people cope with difficult conditions while still maintain their mental health. Coping mechanism, in more detail, can be used to relieve stress or to cope with frustration, isolation, anxiety, or despair.[6] Coping, as defined by psychologists, refers to the ways people use to adjust when faced with hardship. Psychologists also examine the way individuals deal with adversity using their faith. The majority of coping research is observational in nature, with computations and correlational methodologies employed. It demonstrates how religion may provide a meaningful system of beliefs that can be used to present even tragic events in a good light. The presence of God in one's life is essential for finding purpose and comfort during difficult times.[7] As a result, it is possible to conclude that one's faith has a close connection with one's coping mechanism.

Tawakkul has been thoroughly discussed in numerous studies. The majority of studies have examined the understanding, perception, and concept of *tawakkul*, which form the basis of this study.

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[1] IIUM STUDENT UNION, "AIIMSU CMCO Extension Report 2020".

[2] Muḥāmmad Fu'ād ʿAbd al-Baqī, *Al-Dalīl Al-Mufahras Li Al-Alfāẓ Al-Qur´ān Al-Karīm*, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981). 762.

[3] M.A.S Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'ān / A New Translation by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem* (United States: Oxford University Press, 2004). 144.

[4] Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr Al-Qurṭubī, Translated by Aisha Bewley* (British: Diwan Press Ltd, 2021).

[5] Sahl ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Tustarī, *Tafsir Al-Tustarī, Translated by Annabel Keeler and Ali Keeler* (Amman: Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2011).

[6] GoodTheraphy, "Coping Mechanisms," 2018, https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/coping-mechanisms.

[7] Sharon Johnson, *Therapist's Guide to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Intervention*, 1st Editio (United States: Academic Press, 2009).

One of them is a research conducted by Miswar in his article "Konsep Tawakkal Dalam Al-Qur'ān"[8], discovered that the term *tawakkul* in the Qur'ān is linked with five values. First, *tawakkul* in Allāh after making an important decision; second, *tawakkul* in battling enemies; third, *tawakkul* leads to peace; fourth, *tawakkul* can strengthen one's heart; and fifth, Allāh promises goodness to those who place their trust in him. Furthermore, he argued that the true meaning of *tawakkul* according to the Qur´ān is to surrender to Allāh after first striving hard and working to the best of one's ability. Similarly, in the article "Tawakkal Dalam Perspektif Islam,[9]" Achmad highlighted that *tawakkul* is ultimate belief in Allāh, since a Muslim believes that only Allāh created everything in the universe. This is the conviction that drives humans to hand over control of all affairs to Allāh. Besides, there are four concepts to grasp when it comes to *tawakkul*: the definition of *tawakkul*, the degree of *tawakkul*, the benefits of *tawakkul*, and the features of *tawakkul*. A person's trust in Allāh can be strengthened by appreciating these four points of *tawakkul*.

Nur Hadi Ihsan in his article "Hamka's Doctrine of *Tawakkul* (Trust in God)"[10]. He discovered Hamka's perspectives on tawakkul. According to Hamka, *tawakkul* is a natural result of true faith (tawḥīd). Hamka argued that *tawakkul* is entrusting the outcome of all matters and endeavours to Allah, as well as surrendering oneself to Him. *Tawakkul* entails patience in the face of hardship and challenges. This is not to say that practising *tawakkul* requires doing nothing, abandoning required deeds, or quitting to labour; it must be done with effort. The doctrine of *tawakkul* is then connected to the doctrines of *ṣabr* (patience) and *shukr* by Hamka (gratitude). It is also noted that patience should be maintained if the outcome of an action does not yet reach expectations, and if the desired outcome is achieved, appreciation should be expressed as well as self-surrender to God should be genuine. From this article, it is clearly seen that the writer has discovered a general conception of *tawakkul* from among others Hamka's *tafsīr*, which highlighted that *tawakkul* must be coupled with effort, and it is, therefore, a mistake to hold that *tawakkul* means abandonment of all actions. Similarly, in an article written by Roni[11], he concluded that according to Hamka, the concept of *tawakkul* is that it must be based on faith and in accordance with the Qur'an and the *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad. To be explicit, in Hamka's opinion, *tawakkul* is the final verdict of all one's efforts. Thus, there is a gap in current research to examine Hamka's understanding of *tawakkul* in sufficient detail to understand how *tawakkul* may be applied as a coping mechanism in the face of adversity.

The study of defense mechanism responses to Covid-19 by Altwaijr et al[12], revealed some of the psychological defence mechanisms people adopt to deal with the psychological suffering caused by severe life situations like the Covid-19 pandemic. They discovered that people's responses to stressful situations may fall into one of four types of defense mechanisms: a) pathologic defense, which based on an obvious break with objective reality, b) immature defense, which refers to reducing feelings of anxiety and distress that might be manifested by outbursts of behaviour or emotions that are socially inappropriate, c) neurotic defense, which refers to keeping all potentially threatening feelings, memories, ideas, wishes, or fears outside an individual's awareness, and d) mature defense, which refers to conscious processes that increase emotions of control while aslo augmenting positive emotions. However, it does not explain scientifically how defense mechanism could be practised through spiritual perspective like *tawakkul*.

Given the fact that the Covid-19 has had a significant impact on people all throughout the world, it is crutial to learn more about how the works of Islamic scholars can educate people to act properly, particularly in times of pandemic. The study conducted by Saifuddin et al[13] showed the need of

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[8] Miswar, "Konsep Tawakkal Dalam Al-Qur'an," *Ihya Al-Arabiyah* 4 (2018).

[9] Achmad, "Tawakkal Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Syaikhuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pranata Islam* 10 (2019).

[10] Nur Hadi Ihsan, "Hamka's Doctrine of Tawakkul (Trust in God)," *Kalimah* 2 (2003).

[11] Agus Heryanto, "Konsep Tawakkal Perspektif Hamka Telaah Semantik Ayat Tawakkal Dalam Tafsir Al-Azhar Surah Ali 'Imran Ayat 159," *El-Furqania* 8 (2021).

[12] Nouf Altwaijiri et al., "Defense Mechanism Responses to Covid-19," *PeerJ*, (2022), https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.12811.

[13] Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy et al., "Covid-19 Pandemic in Indonesia: Some Reflections from Bażl Al-Māʿūn by Ibn Ḥajr Al-ʿAsqalānī," *Journal of Aqidah and Islamic Thought*, no. Afkar special issue on Covid-19 (2022): 61–98.

applying historical literature as a source of information on dealing with the Covid-19 challenges through Bażl al-Māʿūn of Ibn Ḥajr al-ʿAsqalānī, a classic book that contains pandemic studies based on hadith and the history of the early Muslim society. Bażl al-Māʿūn apparently presents several terms and concepts related to the techniques in handling the plague employed in the fifteenth century, such as the attitude towards Ṭāʿūn (it is a type of disease that affects a vast number of people), which correspond to the current strategies for combating the ubiquitous Covid-19. They arrived to the conclusion that classical religious literature, as historical knowledge might provide contextual solutions for society. It is emphasised that people now should look to the past to develop proper solutions for dealing with the pandemic.

Another study revealed spiritual or religious coping strategies as a key element that can influence individual and group behaviour. There are two aspects of Islāmic coping strategies strategies that have been developed: (a) the internal (acquiring knowledge, spiritual-based experience, and faith) and (b) the external coping (social and professional supports). The Internal coping strategies are based on the foundation of strong faith in Allāh, strong personalities, and robust spirituality, and they are built on deep faith in Allāh, strong personalities, and spiritual resilience. Knowing Allāh, grasping the meaning of existence, and comprehending one's position as an *ummah* are all part of the idea of knowledge and the teaching principles of Islām. In order to obtain "*taqwā*", man must understand the essence of "*tawhīd*" in hopes of gaining wisdom from Allāh. Religion can help people cope with adversity by offering coping mechanism as well as a source of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Everyone needs love and protection, but God's love is the ultimate love that can offer strength.[14] This illustrates that in order to deal with any difficulties, one must first have *tawakkul* that can only be obtained from a Muslim who has strong faith in Allāh.

In light of the above, the researcher realised how crucial it is for all Muslims to have strong imān since it enables them to rely on Allāh in every difficult scenario they face. Thus, the author chose Hamka to interpret some Qurʹānic verses on *tawakkul* for this study, because the author was motivated by his experience and mentality as he overcame numerous challenges with fortitude and reliance (*tawakkul*) on Allāh. This was evident in 1964, when Hamka was arrested by "Orde Lama" regime which was presided over by President Soekarno on several counts. He was imprisoned for two years and four months. During his captivity, however, Hamka was able to complete the writing of tafsīr al-Azhar.[15]Hence, this research intends to identify the meaning of *tawakkul* as a coping mechanism in Hamka's perspective, to understand how *tawakkul* functions as a coping mechanism, and this study will also explore IIUM students' perception on tawakkul as a coping mechanism.

METHOD

This research was qualitative in nature. This study used content analysis as a research method. Firstly, the researcher collected some Qurʹānic verses related to *tawakkul*, and analysed their meaning as coping mechanisms according to Hamka's interpretation in his *tafsīr* al-Azhar. Following that, the author also analysed how *tawakkul* can function as coping mechanism from some of references. Furthermore, the researcher has chosen field research, in order to find out IIUM students' perception on the application of *tawakkul* as coping mechanisms during the Covid-19 pandemic challenges through conducting in-depth interviews.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tawakkul as Coping Mechanism in Hamka's Perspective

To discuss how Hamka interprets the verses about *tawakkul*, the author chose some verses which address the issue of *tawakkul* as coping mechanism, and the following are verses on *tawakkul* from

[14] Z. Abiddin et al., "Spiritual Coping Strategies from the Islāmic Worldview," in *International Conference on Empowering Islamic Civilization in the 21th Century*, 2015.

[15] Hamdi Putra Ahmad, "Construction of Indonesian Cultural Thoughts in Tafsir Al-Azhar as Hamka's Teaching Practice; Text Analysis Using George Herbert Mead Communication Theory," *Journal of Islāmic Culture and Education* 2 (2017).

Tafsīr al-Azhar that the auhtor believes explain more about *tawakkul* than any other sūrats. The sūrats that will be discussed are as follows; a). Sūrat Āli ʿImrān (3) verse (159), b). Sūrat Al-Māʾidah (5) verse (11), c). Sūrat Al-Anfāl (8) verse (49), and d). Sūrat Az-Zumar (39) verse (38).

***Sūrat Āli ʿImrān* (3) verse (159)**

"*By an act of mercy from God, you [Prophet] were gentle in your dealings with them – had you been harsh, or hard-hearted, they would have dispersed and left you – so pardon them and ask forgive- ness for them. Consult with them about matters, then, when you have decided on a course of action, put your trust in God: God loves those who put their trust in Him*".[16]

According to Hamka, Allāh commands The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ to first convene a discussion with his companions. As a leader, he listens to concerns and exchanges ideas about a particular circumstance. Following the discussion, he makes a decision since it is his role as a leader. For this reason, as leaders, we must have a strong determination in our hearts, then make a decision and place our trust in Allāh. Furthermore, a leader must be decisive and willing to take all risks in order to strengthen the heart that has opted to place its trust in Allāh.[17]In this regard, it denotes that the human perspective is inadequate, and that Allāh has greater superior and absolute control over human intelligence and strength. After all, He is the only one with the power to make a decision.

The most important thing after making a decision is to put our trust in Allāh. To put it another way, when we take a step forward, our hearts must be filled with strong determinations, and we must then surrender to Allāh. Those who maintain their faith will always be favoured by Allāh; if something does not impress us, we will not be upset, and we will never boast about what Allāh has provided for us, according to His *tawfīq*. And, with tawakkul, our hearts will always be receptive to filling gaps and correcting weak points for the future. We can see from this interpretation how Hamka indicated that this verse highlights the need of having a firm determination when making any decision in one's life. It is because in this world, one is responsible for all of one's decisions. To elaborate, one must always retain and even strengthen one's *imān* under all circumstances. As a result, this becomes an indication of someone who has a strong faith in Allāh. Most significantly, with a strong determination and faith on Allāh, one will be able to cope with anything. This is how *tawakkul* works as a coping mechanism from one who has a strong determination.

***Sūrat* Al-Māʾidah (5) verse (11)**

"*You who believe, remember God's blessing on you when a certain people were about to raise their hands against you and He restrained them. Be mindful of God: let the believers put their trust in Him*".[18]

Hamka has explained that Allāh warns those who believe in Him that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ has been saved from all threats because he remains attached to two conditions of struggle, the first of which is *taqwā*, and the second of which is *tawakkul*, where these two important parts cannot be separated. To put it another way, *taqwā* will always preserve our relationship with Allāh, and Allāh will always be on our hearts. Hence, we must obey and carry out all of His commandments while avoiding all of His prohibitions, and we must always have trust in Him, surrendering everything to Him and believing that what He has determined must occur. As a result of this, the prophet ﷺ was shielded from harm.[19]

As a result, Allāh discloses at the end of this verse that *tawakkul* is not only Prophet Muhammad ﷺ's clothing, but also a guide for everyone who believes in Allāh. It implies that we must exert effort in order to entirely surrender ourselves to Allāh. In brief, only Allāh knows what is best for His servants and He wills what is best (for His believing servants) and allows His will to triumph in His eternal purpose.[20]

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[16] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'ān / A New Translation by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem*.
[17] Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, *Tafsīr Al-Azhar* (Jakarta: Pustaka Pinjamas, 1987). Vol. 4, 971.
[18] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'ān / A New Translation by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem*.
[19] Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, *Tafsīr Al-Azhar*. Vol. 4, 1646.
[20] Ibid, 1647.

According to Hamka, *tawakkul* does not indicate passively waiting for fate by not putting forth any effort. *Tawakkul*, on the other hand, must be accompanied by effort. When one surrenders to Allāh, one will gain power in one's soul and one's mind is opened to facet and conquer any hurdles, whereas worry will prevent one from resolving a problem.[21]*Tawakkul* will appear to have grown on its own, in accordance with our effort, specifically everything that must be prepared by using all of our potential and abilities, and then it must be pursued. None of it is simple, however we must always be ready to face any challenges that may emerge. Thus, let Allāh decide the final result, and a believer is one who always trusts in Allāh. By doing so, *tawakkul* will serve as coping mechanism. That is because if one has already given one's best effort, one will be able to overcome any difficulties as a result of one's reliance in Allāh.

***Sūrat* Al-Anfāl (8) verse (49)**

"*The hypocrites and those who have sickness in their hearts said, 'These people [the believers] must be deluded by their religion,' but if anyone puts his trust in God, God is mighty and wise*".[22]

After studying the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ's history and *sirah*, notably during the Battle of Badr, Hamka remarked that certain Quraysh tribe members intended to fight the Prophet ﷺ, but their hearts were not firm. There were also those among them who had sick hearts and held grudges. They are from these two groups, and after seeing the few Muslims, approximately 300 persons, they have misjudged the Muslims arrogantly by saying: "They have betrayed their religion". The reality is, as Allāh reveals at the end of the verse, this is due to the strength of one's faith: "Whoever places his reliance in Allāh, know that Allāh is Mighty, Most Wise". This is not a case of religious deception. In any case, it is a gathering of persons who have completely surrendered to Allāh.[23]Considering *tawakkul* is the peak of one's religion, if one's faith is strong enough, *tawakkul* will grow on its own. If one has not reached the pinnacle of *tawakkul*, it is not enough to say one has faith. As a result, Muslims who put their trust in Allāh and surrender to Him will be strong and passionate in all that they do. They are no longer fearful of death since Allāh's wisdom is sufficient for them, and they, too, receive encouragement from Allāh to achieve victory.

Thus, at the Battle of Badr during the Prophet ﷺ's time, both the Quraysh and the disbelievers claimed that the Muslims had been misled by their religion. In truth, this is not an example of religion manipulating people; rather, it is an example of a person's faith reaching its pinnacle, namely *tawakkul*. To put it another way, once people achieve the peak of *tawakkul*, those who trust in Allāh will no longer be terrified of the dangers that await them, no matter how formidable the adversary may be. As a consequence, those who have placed their faith in Allāh should thank Him if they are still alive, and if they die, they will be considered a martyr. As a result, if we are already in this position, we will become bold in it since we have been sprinkled with the nature of "*ʿAzīz* and *Ḥakīm*", which are founded on Allāh's names in *Asmā' al-Ḥusnā*.[24] This interpretation emphasises the importance of having a strong belief in Allāh since only faith enables one to have *tawakkul* and use it as a coping mechanism in difficult circumstances.

Sūrat Az-Zumar (39) verse (38)

"*If you [Prophet] ask them, 'Who created the heavens and earth?' they are sure to answer, 'God,' so say, 'Consider those you invoke beside Him: if God wished to harm me, could they undo that harm? If God wished to show me mercy, could they withhold that mercy?' Say, 'God is enough for me: all those who trust should put their trust in Him*".[25]

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[21] Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah. Vol. 11, 298.
[22] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'ān / A New Translation by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem*.
[23] Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, *Tafsīr Al-Azhar*. Vol. 10, 2780.
[24] Ibid, 2781.
[25] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'ān / A New Translation by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem*.

At the start of this verse, Hamka asserts that the human heart holds the belief that Allāh is the universe's supreme ruler and that there is no other else except Him. Even if the Arabs first asked who created the heavens and the earth, Hamka explained, they would not respond with idols. They will almost certainly respond that Allāh created the heavens and the earth.[26] The ingrained monotheism inside the human heart will result in a strong belief in Allāh. In his opinion, Hamka is attempting to express that people's belief in the concept of divinity can easily lead them to the pinnacle of religion, namely trust in God.

In elaborating on the significance of this verse, Hamka referred the story of a time when he passed through a village where many of the citizens were throwing up. The village shaman had asked the locals to surround the village with leaves, specifically *jiluang* leaves or *pandan* weasel leaves, as an antidote to prevent infection. In addition, Hamka frequently saw a pregnant young woman standing on the steps leading into the house while wearing a horseshoe that had been made into an amulet. All of these beliefs actually date back to the *Jāhiliyyah*-era and would not have existed if a person's heart had been brimming with faith, *tawḥīd*, and *tawakkul*. In order to prevent the disease from spreading to their houses, they will therefore make a conscious effort to maintain a clean house in accordance with health recommendations.[27]

Tawakkul, which is Hamka's interpretation of this verse, naturally implies that there will be no any fear or anxiety in the hearts of people who place their faith in Allāh, as they believe that He is the one who bestows kindness and as a result nothing can harm or obstruct them. Furthermore, if we truly believe in Allāh's might, then only His power would be able to put an end to sorrow and show mercy to His followers. The believers who fear only Allāh and regard Him as the ultimate sustainer, without whose order nothing and no one can hurt them, has nothing to fear in this worldly world. People with weak or no faith, on the other hand, will be terrified of a variety of entities, will be distracted by fear of the future, and will be anxious about a variety of minor and large things over which they have no control.

By understanding the essence of *tawakkul* as coping mechanism, a person who places complete faith and trust in Allāh, one's heart will be free of fear. Moreover, it also indicates that every misfortune or affliction that occurs can be accepted as a test from Allāh to be endured with patience and fortitude. As Allāh has promised in the Qur'ān, those who believe in Allah and the Day of Judgment, then do good deeds, and remain firm in their belief that Allāh is the ultimate sustainer, will be rewarded to enter paradise:

> "*For those who say, 'Our lord is God,' and then follow the straight path there is no fear, nor shall they grieve: they are the people of Paradise, there to remain as a reward for what they were doing*".[28]

In response to Hamka's interpretation on the meaning of *tawakkul* as coping mechanism, Hamka appears to emphasise through his understanding that, *tawakkul* is the strongest support for one's soul. It can be seen from *taqwā* (piousness) that it can provide peace to one's heart, as it enables us to have patience in the face of hardship and gratitude in the face of pleasures. In this regard, true believers must genuinely feel that they have full support from Allāh. Furthermore, rather than being a sign of weakness, *tawakkul* is a sign of firmness and power for one's soul. In other words, Hamka believes that when confronted with a particular situation, *tawakkul* will remove uncertainties and instil boldness in a person. To recapitulate, if we follow Allāh's instructions and avoid all of the prohibitions, we will believe that none of Allāh's commands can cause terrible things to happen to us. Another important thing to understand is that, when we surrender to Allāh, we must also accept that whatever He has planned for us will not be averted. For this reason, *tawakkul* must serve as a guidance for all believers.

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[26] Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, *Tafsīr Al-Azhar*. Vol. 24, 51.

[27] Ibid, 53.

[28] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'ān / A New Translation by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem*. *Sūrat* Al-Aḥqāf (46) verse (13-14).

As a result, Hamka's understanding of *tawakkul* as a coping mechanism indicates that in order for a Muslim to be effectively able in overcoming unpleasant or challenging emotions, particularly in the face of difficulties like the Covid-19 pandemic, then it must be started by a Muslim who always has great desire in increasing his *imān*, and is also capable of maintaining it.

Understanding How *Tawakkul* Functions as a Coping Mechanism

When considering at *tawakkul* as a coping mechanism, one should realise that practising *tawakkul* entails more than simply surrendering oneself over to Allāh. To emphasise, part of having the *tawakkul* on Allāh is striving and working with the mind-set that He will take care of one's affairs and help one through one's hardships. That is why, one must request everything and direct all of one's expectations toward Allāh, in order to receive assistance from Him. In this regard, one can obtain it by performing various forms of worship to Allāh. As a result, it is necessary to recognise a few elements that, when implemented, will result in a *tawakkul* attitude as a coping mechanism:

Prayer Performance

The first step to practise *tawakkul* as a coping mechanism is to get closer to Allāh. Thus, it will start with one's prayer performance, since it is widely known as the most practical religious approach for dealing with stress in Muslim lives. To elaborate, performing prayer will heighten awareness of the divine power as well as intense reflection on the masterful grand design of creation and the universe, and providing a relaxing sense of scale in relation to reality. For this reason, one of the most fundamental obligations in Muslim religious life is to performing prayer, since it brings about human balance. Most importantly, it can reduce work-related stress by making it possible the body to rest physically, emotionally and mentally.[29]

A brief review of each of the five prayers indicates that by performing them, one will constantly surrender oneself to Allah,[30] the first prayer of the day is performed before sunrise and consists of two *rak'a* (a unit of Muslim prayer). One can begin one's day with remembrance of Allah and seeking His protection from everything that is undesirable for the day, as well as praying for His compassion. Then, the four *rak'a* noon prayer happens when an individual is in the midst of his regular duties. The pleasant respite from materialistic aspects of life allows him to reconnect to God and seek guidance for a good life and prosperity. In addition to being an excellent form of exercise, the physical action helps one break up the monotony of chores one is involved. The third prayer for four *rak'a* for the believer is in the afternoon or at the halfway point between noon and sunset, when worldly involvements are at their peak. The believer is once again rewarded with spiritual and physical advantages of prayer, providing an opportunity to continue reenergised, just when the mind and body are strained by the pressures of everyday involvements. When the day has successfully folded just after sunset, the fourth prayer is performed in three *rak'a*. It is indeed time to thank Allāh for a successful day and ask Him to pardon all of one's transgressions. The four *rak'a* of the night prayer is then offered approximately an hour and a half after sunset, before going to bed. It is interesting to note that a glance at how these prayers are performed reveals how effectively remembering of Allāh is intertwined with man's daily activities without needing to stop one for the other. A few minutes of pause from the material world to return at regular intervals in submission to Allāh and to thank Him for all His blessings not only connects the believer with God, but also better qualifies one to proceed with his worldly activities. Therefore, one that can perform the formal prayer seriously, will get spiritual enlightenment and a sense of calm and tranquillity in removing stress, anxiety, and negativity in the worshipper.[31]

In this regard, regular prayer acts as a constant psychological and emotional catalyst, enabling Muslims to successfully protect themselves from environmental changes and develop their decision-

[29] Meguellati Achour, Benaouda Bensaid, and Mohd Roslan Bin Mohd Nor, "An Islamic Perspective on Coping with Life Stressors," *The International Society for Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS)*, 2015.

[30] Shabbir Ahmed Sayeed and Anand Prakash, "The Islamic Prayer (Salah/Namaaz) and Yoga Togetherness in Mental Health," *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 2015.

[31] Ibid.

making in line with the fundamental purpose of performing prayer and their intrinsically evolving relationship with Allāh. Additionally, Islām exhorts Muslims to perform the supererogatory prayer to asking Allāh for guidance in all of their decisions (istikhara), as doing so will increase one's confidence and remove uncertainty and reluctance. In order to establish long-term spiritual and emotional power, performing prayer aims to free Muslims from uncertainty and the hazy and frequently confused effects of self-commitment to life goals. Besides, it also aims to revive Muslims' minds through immersion in Allāh's remembrance.[32]

Meditation

The second important aspect of practising *tawakkul* as a coping mechanism is through meditation. Meditation is a method of spiritual transcendence used to get closer to the Creator, it serves to free one's mind from superstitions, doubts, and sinful thoughts by replacing them with certainty, love, compassion, and purity. Remarkably, it is frequently used as a powerful tool in stress management, self-improvement, and healing programs, where it helps people gain control over their feelings, thoughts, and behaviours. For this reason, meditation undoubtedly brings happiness, psychological peace, mental clarity, and intimacy into the practitioner's heart. As a result, it is a therapeutic activity that can assist in the relief of physical and psychological disorder-related pain. Moreover, a Muslim is doing so because one realises that every atom in this universe glorifies and praises Allāh.[33]

There are different kinds of meditation in Islām: contemplation and invocation. Meditation in the form of contemplation is a significance method for drawing one's focus to Allāh since it is a great way to achieve spiritual enlightenment and a constant source of peace, gratitude, and appreciation for Allāh's blessings. Furthermore, contemplating on Allāh's creations can bring about a state of peace and harmony, which also makes one feel relieved and obedient to the Creator. It also gives one a feeling of defense, warmth, and safety.[34]

The meditation in the form of contemplation is generally performed by reciting the Qur´ān, understanding it, appreciating its meanings, and acting on it.[35]It is also worth noting that a contemplative Muslim can achieve a high level of meditation with relatively little effort and time. For instance, by listening to the verses of the Qur'ān's chanted by a nice voice can elicit all of the fine meditative reactions in a matter of minutes.[36]This was demonstrated by Ahmed Elkadi's experiment which concluded that when one listens to the recitation of Qur´ānic verses, whether one is Arabic speakers or not, one experiences all the physiological changes indicative of the release from stress and anxiety, as well as warm feelings of tranquillity and an increase of immunity towards disease. In this study, He used the most advanced digital tools to measure blood pressure, heartbeat, muscle tension and skin resistance to electric current, and discovered that the recitation of the Qur´ān obviously had a calming effect in 97 per cent of cases. The subjects naturally sensed an increased spiritual response, which he was unable to measure because there is no 'spiritometer' for measuring this sacred dimension. Therefore, the foundation of meditation in the form of contemplation is the idea that one should proceed from thinking about the creation to its Creator, who is Allāh.[37]

There is no wonder that contemplation can only come from a heart that believes in Allāh and a mind that submits to Him and His sublime attributes. More specifically, this is the unshakable belief in oneness (*tawhid*) which bears witness to the fact that Allāh is the One and Only God who created,

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[32] Achour, Bensaid, and Mohd Nor, "An Islamic Perspective on Coping with Life Stressors."

[33] Muhammad Al-Mahdi Jenkins and Abdul Aziz Bin Azimullah, *Positive Islāmic Psychology* (Selangor: Excellent Ummah Development Association, 2016). 408.

[34] Ibid, 409.

[35] Muhammad Bazmul, "Contemplation of the Qur'an and Its Effect Regarding Purification of the Soul," *Authentic Statements Publishing*, 2017, 27.

[36] Malik Badri, *Contemplation: An Islamic Psychospiritual Study* (Washington: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2018). 47.

[37] Elkadi Ahmed, "Quranic Concepts for Eliminating Negative Emotions: Another Aspect of the Healing Effects of the Qur'an," *Traditional Health System and Public Policy*, 1994, 150.

rules and sustains the universe. Any other method of contemplating the splendour and majesty of heaven and earth would be considered atheism or polytheism (shirk), as it would not acknowledge the Creator, much less give Him thanks and praises.[38]

Another meditation in Islam, as the second style of meditation through the invocation can be called as *dhikr* (remembrance of Allāh). To elaborate, *dhikr* entails recollection, mindfulness, and repetition of the name through invocation. It can be practised orally or verbally in a low tone, or as a heart meditation, namely the meditation from one's inner words.[39]For this reason, the Qurʹān says to put one's reliance in Allāh alone, to Him one should invoke, and that He is the only One worthy of praise.

In light of the fact that *tawakkul* may be used as coping mechanisms for life's challenges when practised, the author can therefore infer the conclusion that they have a significant correlation to be applied for the same purpose of assisting one to live a better life. That is because practising *tawakkul* as a coping mechanism will aid in the management of painful or difficult emotions. It is worth noting that *tawakkul* as a coping mechanism can help one adjusts to difficult experiences while maintaining one's emotional well-being if one could practise all of the elements described above.

IIUM Students' Perception on Tawakkul as a Coping Mechanism

One of the highlights in this study is to acknowledge how IIUM students perceive *tawakkul* as a coping mechanism and practise it. Thus, fifteen students were selected for this study, specifically chosen from those who have stayed in *mahallah*/hostel during a situation of Movement Control Order (MCO) and Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO). According to the results of in-depth interviews, there were fifteen students, consisting of two local students and thirteen international students. These students were made up of two undergraduates and thirteen postgraduates' students.

With regard to the IIUM students toward their perception on *tawakkul* as coping mechanism, apparently, they had a good understanding and were successfully in practising it. When practising *tawakkul* as coping mechanism, one should not only make an effort to achieve one's life goals, but one must also have complete trust that Allāh will always be there to assist one in any circumstances by increasing one's *imān*. For this reason, there are a few ways for all of the respondents of practising *tawakkul* as coping mechanism while dealing with their challenges, such as through performing prayer and making *duʿā*. For example, almost all of the students stated that practising *tawakkul* through performing prayer and making *duʿā* is one of the best ways to make them calmer and stronger in facing their difficult times such as, adapting to online learning, studying in *mahallah*/hostel for a long time, worrying about their studies, financial issues, and missing their family. This was very much in line with what Hamka mentioned before, that those who maintain their faith will always be favoured by Allāh; if something fails to impress us, we will not be disappointed, and we will never boast about what Allāh has prepared for us, according to His *tawfiq*.[40]For this reason, *tawakkul* as coping mechanism is really necessary to be practised in our lives, since it will help us in dealing with unpleasant circumstances.

Another perception of IIUM students on *tawakkul* as coping mechanism was proven that the first thing they did to face their challenges during pandemic time was to pray to Allāh as much as they can. For instance, some students stated that they continued to perform *sunnah* prayer and *ṣalāṫ tahajud*, as frequently as possible, and they simply left everything to Him by making *du'ā*, after they had done their best on their studies, such as trying to accept all of the academic life changes brought by the Covid-19 pandemic, staying in touch with their lectures and classmates through social media, and attempting to gain much knowledge from some based education seminars based on their field of study. Thus, they really put high expectation only to Allāh in order for those difficult times to pass through praying to Him. Furthermore, another students also experienced that when they faced difficult situations at that time, they would usually make *duʿā* and invoke Allāh by His names. These

[38] Badri, *Contemplation: An Islamic Psychospiritual Study*. 23.
[39] Muhammad Al-Mahdi Jenkins and Abdul Aziz Bin Azimullah, *Positive Islāmic Psychology*. 411.
[40] Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, *Tafsīr Al-Azhar*. Vol. 4, 971

statement is stressed out by another students who believed that *tawakkul* as coping mechanism through making *duʿā* can make them feel close to Allāh. However, some of them were experiencing mental health issues as a result of being separated from their families and unable to see them for a long period of time. Fortunately, they still have *imān*, which means that they still believed that Allāh will always protect them as well as their family who lived far away from their mahallah/hostel. It is evidence now that, once individuals reach the pinnacle of *tawakkul*, those who trust in Allāh will no longer be afraid about the dangers that may befall them, no matter how challenging the situation may be. For this reason, one will become bold in facing the difficult situation because one has been sprinkled with the nature of *ʿ'Azīz* and *Ḥakīm*, which are based on Allāh's names in *Asmā' al-Ḥusnā*.[41] It is important to highlight that the practise of *tawakkul* as coping mechanism through performing prayer and making *du'ā* appears to have a substantial impact on one's mental health when dealing with difficult emotions.

When all the respondents were successful in practising *tawakkul* as coping mechanism, it became apparent that every one of them could sense good effects from practising *tawakkul* as coping mechanism, so that they able to think positively at that time. As a result, the author found that *tawakkul* was very important for all the respondents, as they have assisted all of the students to cope with the challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In this regard, it can be demonstrated by some students who stated that *tawakkul* assisted them in dealing with the challenges of the pandemic and that they can eventually finish their studies. Regardless of the fact that some of them once had negative thoughts about the pandemic, which has had many impacts in their lives, particularly in their study lives, they were very grateful that they could still put their trust in Allāh by strengthening their faith in Him. Another students also mentioned that when they put their trust in Allāh over their problems, they did not feel anxious; rather, they believed that everything will be alright because they had done what they could and left the rest to Allāh. That is how they were able to overcome painful or difficult emotions throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

In this regard, *tawakkul* as coping mechanism based on Hamka's interpretation, can naturally be inferred that there will be no dread or anxiety in the hearts of those who place their faith in Allāh. For this reason, if we believe in Allāh's power, then nothing other than Allāh's might alone will be able to end suffering and offer mercy to His servants. It is now evidence that people with weak or no faith, on the other hand, will be terrified of a variety of entities, will be distracted by fear of the future, and will be anxious about a variety of minor and large things over which they have no control.

As a result, when one strengthens one's *imān* and puts one's trust in Allāh, one naturally is able to deal with difficulties in one's life. This is how *tawakkul* as coping mechanism works in dealing with challenges situation. In short, all of respondents seemed to agree that practising *tawakkul* as coping mechanism has assisted them deal with the challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic in a good way.

It is fascinating to know that IIUM students can really practise the *tawakkul* as coping mechanism in overcoming the painful or difficult emotions they experienced. It is also worth noting that all of respondents practised *tawakkul* as coping mechanism by making efforts, performing prayer and making *du'a*, as this is how they dealt with the difficulties they experienced, after they had done everything they could to cope with their affairs. Furthermore, the students also stated that *tawakkul* could undoubtedly make them think optimistically, because when they placed their trust in Allāh, they naturally felt that they would have no worries about anything that might happen in the future. Last but not least, all of them considered that *tawakkul* as coping mechanism tremendously aided them cope with the challenges they encountered during the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

CONCLUSION

Tawakkul emphasies that Allāh has total and absolute power over human strength and comprehension. After all, He is the only one with the authority to determine everything. In this

[41] Ibid, Vol. 10, 2781.

study, *tawakkul* as coping mechanism according to Hamka's interpretations in his *tafsīr* al-Azhar, based on some verses in the Qurʹān, signifies that one must have strong *imān* in order to be able to overcome painful or difficult emotions. It is worth noting that whatever that is happening, the most important thing to do is to continue to put one's faith and reliance in Allāh. As a result, with *tawakkul* as coping mechanism, one's heart will always be open to improving what is lacking and correcting what is not yet ideal yet for the future. By doing so, one will be able in coping any kind of circumstances. Understanding *tawakkul* as a coping mechanism entails more than simply surrendering oneself over to Allāh. To emphasise, part of having the *tawakkul* on Allāh is striving and working with the mind-set that He will take care of one's affairs and help one through one's hardships. That is why, in order to obtain assistance from Allāh, one must request everything and aim all of one's expectations toward Him, such as through conducting prayer performance and making du'ā. In this regard, it it can be obtained by practising another forms of worship to Allāh.

The fact that IIUM students generally comprehended the true essence of *tawakkul* as coping mechanism and were successful in overcoming challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic seems to be absolutely fascinating. Most significantly, they can really practise the *tawakkul* as coping mechanism to get through painful and challenging feelings they experienced. Ultimately, *tawakkul* is an essential element of our faith, and by correctly understanding and practising it is what assists us in being able to get through life. Thus, *tawakkul* should be practised for all Muslims, not only students. Accordingly, one should start by drawing closer to Allāh in order to fully comprehend the true meaning of *tawakkul* as a coping mechanism before putting it into practise in one's daily life.

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