

ISLAMIC FAITH AS A SOURCE OF COPING WITH WORK STRESS

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Abstract

Many alternative strategies, mainly faith-based, have been used to cope with stress. The main purpose of this research is to understand the stress experienced by managers and the role of the Islamic faith in the process of coping. A qualitative phenomenological design was used, and 19 managers in the Düzce Organized Industrial Zone in Turkey were reached by snowball sampling method. Face-to-face and online interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview form. The data were subjected to content analysis and coded using a mixed method, resulting in 282 codes grouped into 30 categories and six themes (perception of stress, sources of stress, consequences of stress, coping, place of Islam in life, Islamic coping). The study shows that the participants perceive stress as a process that can spread to all areas of life. Meanwhile, religious belief influences how an individual perceives stress and its consequences. The perception of stress also determines what type of coping strategies will be preferred. The author further argues that Islamic teachings deal with coping with stress in a more holistic way, covering both psychological and physiological dimensions. In addition, time management discipline triggered by Islamic rituals, such as prayers and other forms of worship, has a positive stress-regulating effect.

[Sudah banyak strategi alternatif yang telah digunakan untuk mengatasi



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stres, terutama yang berbasis agama. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami stres yang dialami oleh para manajer perusahaan dan peran ajaran Islam dalam proses penanggulangan stres. Dengan desain fenomenologis kualitatif, penelitian ini melibatkan 19 manajer di Kawasan Industri Terorganisasi Duzce di Turki, melalui snowball sampling. Wawancara tatap muka dan daring dilakukan dengan menggunakan panduan wawancara semi-terstruktur. Data yang diperoleh kemudian dikaji dengan analisis isi dan mixed-method, yang menghasilkan 282 kode yang dikelompokkan ke dalam 30 kategori dan enam tema (persepsi stres, sumber stres, konsekuensi stres, penanggulangan, posisi ajaran Islam, penanggulangan Islami). Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa para peserta menganggap stres sebagai suatu proses yang dapat menyebar ke semua bidang kehidupan. Sementara itu, keyakinan agama memengaruhi cara seorang individu memandang stres dengan segala konsekuensinya. Persepsi terhadap stres juga menentukan jenis strategi penanggulangan yang akan dipilih. Penulis juga berpendapat bahwa ajaran Islam menangani stres dengan cara yang lebih holistik, yang mencakup dimensi psikologis dan fisiologis. Selain itu, disiplin manajemen waktu yang dipicu oleh ritual-ritual Islam, seperti salat dan bentuk-bentuk ibadah lainnya, memiliki efek positif dalam mengatur stres.]

Keywords: Islamic faith, work stress, coping, religious coping

A. Introduction

Stress is an integral part of everyday life as a concept that encompasses different moods. Man's effort to be sufficient and to keep up with the flow of time leads him to face and struggle with stress. If the stress experienced at work, where a significant part of life is spent, is not balanced, it can lead to a range of psychological and physiological problems. Excessive workload,¹ working conditions,² negative relationships with teammates or colleagues,³ and many similar situations can cause work stress. For managers, in addition to all these problems,

¹ Wendy MacDonald, "The Impact of Job Demands and Workload on Stress and Fatigue", *Australian Psychologist*, vol.38, no. 2 (2003), pp. 102-17.

² Bin Nordin Rusli, Bin Abdin Edimansyah, and Lin Naing, "Working Conditions, Self-perceived Stress, Anxiety, Depression and Quality of Life: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach", *BMC Public Health*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2008), pp. 1-12.

³ Anett Wolgast and Natalie Fischer, "You are not Alone: Colleague Support and Goal-oriented Cooperation as Resources to Reduce Teachers' Stress", *Social Psychology of Education*, vol. 20 (2017), pp. 97-114.

the decision-making process⁴ and efforts to adapt to an ever-changing competitive environment can be among the primary sources of stress.⁵

In this process, managers look for internal or environmental supports that will eliminate the stressor or reduce its impact to a manageable level while struggling with the psychological and physiological disorders caused by stress. Different coping strategies may be used, such as seeking social support, ignoring the stressor, or turning to religious belief. This study focuses on strategies developed by managers based on their beliefs in coping with work stress. Even though the business world evaluates facts and events from a pragmatic perspective, the impact of faith on regulating human life is remarkable. Evaluating a person and their outcomes by considering them solely as a mechanical entity will yield flawed results. Considering a person from a spiritual perspective will allow for a more holistic assessment. The holistic perspective of Islam will facilitate a better understanding of a person and facilitate stress management through its practices. Therefore, the attempt to address one of the fundamental issues of our time—work-related stress—through the holistic perspective of Islam makes this research unique. While religion can contribute to the process of coping with stress by shaping the character of life events, it can also be a coping product shaped by other elements of the process, such as birth, loneliness, and an increase in belief after emotional problems.⁶

In this study, the term “religion” was taken to mean “religion of Islam”. It was aimed to determine what kind of religious coping strategies managers developed against stress. In addition, the study sought to identify both cognitive and behavioural aspects of religious coping. Examining religious coping with work stress, especially among managers, and assessing the Islamic faith makes the study more original. This study deals with the following research questions: (1) How do managers define stress?; (2) What are the antecedents and consequences of stress?; (3) What are the main strategies used to cope with stress?; and (4) What is the role of the Islamic faith in stress management strategies?

⁴ Katrin Starcke and Matthias Brand, “Decision Making Under Stress: A Selective Review”, *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, vol. 36, no. 4 (2012), pp. 1228-48.

⁵ Senem Altan, “The Sources of Organizational-related Stress and Major Problems Caused by Organizational Stress”, *Stratejik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2018), pp. 137-58.

⁶ Kenneth I. Pargament et al., “God Help Me (II): The Relationship of Religious Orientations to Religious Coping with Negative Life Events”, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 31, no. 4 (1992), pp. 504-13.

A qualitative study was conducted using a phenomenological design to answer the above questions. The subject sample includes 19 top and middle-level managers from 9 companies among 60 enterprises in the Düzce Organized Industrial Zone, Turkey. The research used snowball sampling, and inclusions in the sample are stopped at a point where no new information comes from new sampling units, that is, at the saturation point.⁷ Prior to the interview, the participants were informed about the purpose and scope of the research. All of the interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' verbal consent. The data obtained through semi-structured interviews between 25 June 2020 and 26 November 2020 were subjected to content analysis and grouped under six main themes (perception of stress, sources of stress, consequences of stress, coping, place of Islam in life, and Islamic coping). The themes revealed that how religion is positioned in life is important in the process from perception to behaviour. In addition, the holistic perspective of Islam evaluates the coping process with both physiological and psychological elements. The findings provide valuable information for managers and manager candidates who put their faith in the basis of their lives in coping with work stress.

B. Work Stress and Religious Coping

1. *Stress and Work Stress*

Stress is an inevitable and natural situation that can be encountered in every moment of life, and people are exposed to stress through different events.⁸ Stress is the effort an individual exerts beyond his or her physical and psychological limits due to incompatible conditions arising from his or her physical or social environment.⁹ Physiological stress is the body's response to external factors or any internal change, threat or pressure.¹⁰ Any change in daily routine or physical or mental state may cause stress.¹¹ Stress-producing factors are generally treated under individual, organisational, and environmental. Even when people

⁷ Andrew K. Shenton, "Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects", *Education for Information*, vol. 22, no. 2 (2004), pp. 63-75.

⁸ Ayla Bayık et al., "The Situations of Meeting Stressor Life Events by Women", *Anadolu Hemşirelik ve Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2006), pp. 1-12.

⁹ Doğan Cüceloğlu, *İnsan ve Davranışı* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1996).

¹⁰ Hans Selye, *The Stress of Life* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956).

¹¹ Güçlü Nezahat, "Stress Management", *Gazi Üniversitesi Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 21, no.1 (2001), pp. 91-109.

are exposed to the same stressor, their reactions to stress may differ.¹² Therefore, it is difficult to determine what precisely the stressor is. A person can only achieve productive results when the stress levels are moderate¹³ because inefficiency occurs when the stress is too high or too low.

The negative consequences of stress can be assessed under three categories: physiological, psychological and behavioural. The multidimensional nature of stress and the possibility of confrontation, regardless of time and place, force individuals to seek solutions to cope with the inevitable consequences. Workload, organisational roles, and negative working conditions,¹⁴ time pressure, health and safety concerns¹⁵ can all lead to work stress. Work-related stress is a situation that arises as a result of work-related factors that distract employees from normal functioning and affect their psychological or physical behaviours.¹⁶ Work stress is known to lead to different outcomes, such as poor performance, lack of motivation,¹⁷ problems in relations with family,¹⁸ and excessive behaviour.¹⁹

Selye states that during the reaction phase, the human body prepares to defend itself against any danger. In the resistance phase, where the stressor continues, the body forces itself to return to its normal functioning. In the exhaustion phase, where the pressure continues,

¹² Hans Selye, "Stress and the General Adaptation Syndrome", *British Medical Journal*, vol. 17 (1950), pp. 1383-92.

¹³ Yücel Ertekin, *Stres ve Yönetim* (Ankara: Todaie, 1993).

¹⁴ Mustafa Okutan and Dilaver Tengilimoğlu, "İş Ortamında Stres ve Stresle Başa Çıkma Yöntemleri: bir Alan Uygulaması", *Gazi Üniversitesi İİBF Dergisi*, vol. 4, no.3 (2002), pp. 15-42.

¹⁵ Emel İftar, "The Relationship between Stress and Productivity", *Akademik Bakış Dergisi*, vol. 33 (2012), pp. 1-21.

¹⁶ Hasan Gül, "İş Stresi, Örgütsel Sağlık ve Performans Arasındaki İlişkiler: bir Alan Araştırması", *Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey Üniversitesi Sosyal Ve Ekonomik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, vol. 2 (2007), pp. 318-332.

¹⁷ Kamil Unur and Yeliz Pekerşen, "The Relationship between Job Stress and Toxic Behaviors: A Study on Chefs", *Seyahat ve Otel İşletmeciliği Dergisi*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2017), pp. 108-29.

¹⁸ Nihan Yavuz and Altan Doğan, "Testing the Effect of Job Stress on Work-Life Balance in the Context of Flexible Working", *İstanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. 18, no.35 (2019), pp. 41-62.

¹⁹ Jennifer K. Dimoff and E. Kevin Kelloway, "Signs of Struggle (SOS): The Development and Validation of a Behavioural Mental Health Checklist for the Workplace", *Work & Stress*, vol. 33, no.3 (2019), pp. 295-313.

diseases come with the loss of resistance.²⁰ Lazarus emphasises that stress arises when the individual perceives the situation as threatening and resorts to coping processes. Karasek, who looks at the issue from an organisational point of view, says that when there is little freedom to make business decisions in response to high business demands, workload increases and the increase in job demands and less freedom to make decisions than the demands increase tension in the individual.²¹ Another model suggests that when there is a lack of reciprocity between costs and benefits, i.e. when costs are high while benefits are low, individuals experience stress and emotional distress.²² Evaluating the subject in the context of religion, which is the theme of the study, will enrich our perspective.

Religion, albeit in any form, is a phenomenon associated with social or spiritual factors that exist in every society at a certain time and in a certain culture.²³ Religion guides people in all areas of life and helps them cope with significant problems such as death by giving hope and meaning to life.²⁴ Studies tend to focus on the stress-regulating effects of religion. Religious people have lower levels of depressive symptoms and a lower frequency of depression.²⁵ Religious values have an important place in people's understanding of life, as well as reducing stress, alleviating anxiety and protecting mental health.²⁶ In this context, how individuals place their religious beliefs in their lives also shapes how their beliefs will affect them.

2. *Coping and Religious Coping*

People need effective thinking skills to understand themselves and their environment and to improve their quality of life. When a stressor is experienced, individuals first evaluate the availability of appropriate

²⁰ Cüceloğlu, *İnsan ve Davranış*.

²¹ Robert A. Karasek Jr, "Job Demands, Job Decision Latitude, and Mental Strain: Implications for Job Redesign", *Administrative Science Quarterly* (1979), pp. 285-308.

²² Johannes Siegrist, "Adverse Health Effects of High-effort/Low-reward Conditions", *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1996), pp. 27-41.

²³ Nils G. Holm, "Din Psikolojisi ve Tarihçesi. Çev. Abdülkerim Bahadır", *Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 12, no. 12 (2001), pp. 71-78.

²⁴ Erkan Kavas, "The Relationship between Religious Attitude and Coping with Stress", *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. 37 (2013), pp. 143-68.

²⁵ Simon Dein, "Religion, Spirituality and Depression: Implications for Research and Treatment", *EKEV Akademi Dergisi*, vol. 18, no. 58 (2014), pp. 739-50.

²⁶ Abdurrahim Emhan and Celal Çayır, "Girişimcilerin Stres ile Başedebilmesinde Tinsel Değerlerin Etkisi", *Atatürk Üniversitesi İİB Dergisi*, vol. 24, no. 2 (2010), pp. 101-20.

resources to cope with the stressor and then exhibit some behaviours to reduce the damage perceived stress may cause. These behaviours are called the coping process.²⁷ The coping process includes not only avoiding or defending against stressors but also a wide variety of cognitive and behavioural strategies with problem-solving and emotion regulation functions.²⁸ The main factor of coping comes in the process of making sense of an event. In other words, a situation that one individual considers to be a stress factor may be rated differently by another. An event that does not seem threatening at first may become threatening if coping resources are insufficient to meet environmental demands or overcome personal constraints.²⁹ One of the cognitive and behavioural strategies developed by people who have to face stress is to seek refuge in religious belief.

Religious coping strategies consist of elements from both emotion-coping and problem-coping strategies.³⁰ Religious coping is the tendency of individuals to turn to their religious beliefs while coping with stressors. Religious coping deals with positive attitudes, including seeking spiritual support from the creator and/or fellow believers or religious help towards others.³¹ Religion draws a framework for individuals to understand and interpret the current situation in the face of painful experiences and stressful events.³² Individuals need to take shelter in a higher power to cope with stressful and challenging situations and seek to draw strength from the values they believe in through prayers and worship.³³

For Muslims, the Quran emphasises the importance of the mind in

²⁷ Richard S. Lazarus, *Psychological Stress and the Coping Process* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966).

²⁸ Susan Folkman and Richard S. Lazarus, "Coping as a Mediator of Emotion", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 54, no. 3 (1988), pp. 466-75.

²⁹ Susan Folkman and Richard S. Lazarus, "If it Changes it Must be a Process: Study of Emotion and Coping during Three Stages of a College Examination", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 48, no.1 (1985), pp. 150-70.

³⁰ Meguellati Achour et al., "An Islamic Perspective on Coping with Life Stressors", *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, vol. 11 (2016), pp. 663-85.

³¹ Kenneth I. Pargament et al., "Patterns of Positive and Negative Religious Coping with Major Life Stressors", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 37, no. 4 (1998), pp. 710-24.

³² Kenneth I. Pargament et al., "The Many Methods of Religious Coping: Development and Initial Validation of the RCOPE", *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, vol. 56, no.4 (2000), pp. 519-43.

³³ Ali Ayten et al., "The Relations of Religious Coping, Gratitude and Life Satisfaction: A Case Study on Patients, Patient Relatives and Hospital Staff", *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2012), pp. 45-79.

many ways since it helps people regulate their thoughts and behaviours. However, if this mind power, which affects human life, is to be used correctly, it must derive its principles from a divine source and take these principles as a guide in its actions.³⁴ Some Quranic verses read that Muslims will face some tests throughout their lives,³⁵ be rewarded for their patience in overcoming difficulties, and eventually find peace.³⁶ A pious Muslim is described as someone who spends in the way of Allah in abundance and distress, overcomes his/her anger, and forgives people.³⁷ The behaviours mentioned above are among the strategies used by modern psychology to cope with stress. Individuals' regulation of their behaviour in line with this belief is an example of the religious coping process.³⁸

Another factor that helps believers cope with their difficulties is the belief in destiny. According to such belief, every situation that happens to a person from birth to death is known by Allah and with His permission. People who rely on this belief (Ar: *tawakkul*) protect themselves psychologically from the devastating effects of the troubles they face. Worship is the practical application of the matters of faith explained in the theoretical parts of religion.³⁹ Worship positively affects people's mental and physical health when done correctly and regularly.⁴⁰ A belief in destiny that properly draws responsibilities and boundaries allows one to have a more effective religious coping strategy.⁴¹ Although individual results vary, prayer positively affects the coping process and helps people to be emotionally stronger. Prayer reduces the stress level and the risk of depression, provides calmness and tranquillity, and helps not to lose hope. Praying for others shows that those who use a positive

³⁴ Ahmet Hamdi Akseki, *Akal ve Din*, (1950).

³⁵ Al-Quran, 2: 155.

³⁶ Al-Quran, 23: 111.

³⁷ Al-Quran, 3: 134.

³⁸ Ayşe Murat and Muhammed Kızılgöçer, "Relationship of Religious Coping and Psychopathology", *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 6, no.11 (2017), pp. 111-51.

³⁹ Yusuf Çelik, "The Worship in the Holy Qur'an", *Atatürk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 41 (2014), pp. 203-21.

⁴⁰ Muammer Cengil, "The Protective Role of Religious Belief in Preventing Depression", *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2003), pp. 129-52.

⁴¹ Cüneyd Aydın, "Evaluation of the Faith of Destiny in Terms of the Defense Mechanism and the Religious Way of Coping", *Hitit Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 18, no. 35 (2019), pp. 101-22.

religious coping strategy may exhibit prosocial behaviours.⁴²

People's lack of values can lead them into situations of meaninglessness, existential depression, spiritual hunger, and aimlessness.⁴³ How people live through a healthy development process depends on how livable they accept their lives and what meaning they attach to it. A person who thinks his life is meaningless may see himself as worthless and isolated from life. Religious belief allows individuals to gain meaning in life and reduces the need to search for new meanings.⁴⁴ The duties and responsibilities that religion imposes on man contribute to realising the purpose of creation and leading a life in peace with his Creator, himself, and society. With this perspective, it empowers people to deal with problems such as meaninglessness, loneliness, alienation, depression, and anxiety.⁴⁵ In addition, religion enhances the individual's self-esteem by contributing to the process of self-knowledge and meaning.⁴⁶

Islam offers a surefire recipe for alleviating the stressful behaviour that plagues its people by referring to the provisions of Islamic teachings, namely through practices of strengthening faith, praying, *dhiker*, prayer, reading the Quran, and fasting.⁴⁷

C. Religiously Coping with Stress

Although it was desired to proceed within the framework of work stress, the participants involved in the study preferred to use the concept holistically. The transitive nature of stressors prevented the participants from thinking about the concept only in the work environment. For this reason, information about general stress, as well as work stress, is also included in the responses. The following passages show the obtained data

⁴² Nesibe Esen Ateş, "The Belief of Test and Coping in Terms of Attributing Meaning: The Case of Martyr Families, War Veterans, and War Veterans Families", *Trabzon İlahiyat Dergisi*, vol. 6, no.1 (2019), pp. 125-51.

⁴³ Süleyman Doğanay, *Religious Belief and Patience in Suffering of Life from Psychological Perspective: A Qualitative Study*, Phd Thesis (Çukurova Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Adana, 2019).

⁴⁴ İlhan Topuz, "The Meaning of Life and Religion: A Study on Youth", *İslam Medeniyeti Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. 1, no. 4 (2016), pp. 540-60.

⁴⁵ Habil Şentürk and Selahattin Yakut, "The Meaning of Life and Religion", *SDÜ İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 33 (2014), pp. 45-60.

⁴⁶ Ali Ayten, "Kendini Gerçekleştirme ve Dindarlık: Üniversite Öğrencileri Üzerine bir Araştırma", *Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 29, no. 2 (2005), pp. 185-204.

⁴⁷ Zaenal Abidin, "Ketika Stress Beraksi Islam Punya Solusi", *Komunika: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2009), pp. 148-66.

during the research. The discussion is based on six themes: perception of stress, sources of stress, consequences of stress, coping, Islamic coping, and place of Islam in life.

1. Perception of Stress

This theme consists of the emotions and thoughts that the word stress evokes in the participants. Participants perceived the stressors, emotional reactions, physical reflections, and consequences of stress with the word stress. This theme comprises positive, negative, emotional, and physical stress perception categories.

Theme	Categories	Codes
Perception of Stress	Positive	<i>tawakkul</i> , efficiency, time management, source of success, multidimensional thinking, continuity, discipline, source of motivation, perfectionism, target, effort, responsibility
	Negative	anxiety, complexity, problem, workload, boredom, inadequacy, pressure, inevitable, unexpected situation, hastiness, loss of control, disorder
	Emotional	pessimism, fear, excitement, anger, irritability, depression, restlessness
	Physical	headache, fatigue, biological need, insomnia, increased appetite

Figure 1: Findings on the “Perception of Stress” Theme

The word stress can be perceived positively by managers for its empowering and multidimensional thinking aspects or negatively for its complex structure entire of anxiety. The negative aspects of stress are felt more emotionally. Therefore, stress is a process that needs to be managed within both dimensions. However, physical stressors such as fatigue and insomnia caused by stress seem inevitable. The definition of stress by one of the participants is as follows:

A person’s stress reduces work efficiency and reflects on his family. It can damage his relationship with his family. It can strain relationships with friends. It can cause health-related problems. In other words, when we say stress, it is a factor that completely affects a person’s life.

2. Sources of Stress

The theme represents the elements that the managers stated as sources of stress. Some stressors are work-related (job, employee, manager), while others are personal (personality, health problems).

Theme	Categories	Codes
Sources of Stress	Work Related	time management, customer dissatisfaction, uncertainty, workload, production process, loss of control, insolvency, making mistakes, not getting support, commercial activities, need for quick decision-making
	Employee Related	sense of responsibility (hypengyophobia), inexperience, personnel management, uselessness, ignorance, status, rule violations, competition, inefficiency, lying
	Managers Related	planning errors, accountability to senior management, indiscipline, injustice, inequality
	Personality Characteristics	sensuality, perfectionism, dissatisfaction, tough temperament, impulsiveness, lack of self-confidence, fear, personality traits, disharmony, traditionalism
	Work-Family Balance	financial anxiety, communication problems within the family, work-family balance, high expectations, responsibilities related to children
	Health Problems	health problems, diseases with the uncertain process, biological/chemical factors, diseases related to old age, fatigue
	Social Relations & Communication	social relations, not being able to say no, offending the other side, not being able to express oneself, communication problems, making decisions without thinking, not keeping one's word, generation gap, differences of opinion
	Lack of Religious Rituals	restlessness, discomfort, disorder, sense of irresponsibility, feeling of lack, emotional wear, guilt, panic, bitterness, unhappiness, regret, embarrassment, uneasiness, disbelief, thanklessness, anxiety for the hereafter

Figure 2: Findings on the “Sources of Stress” Theme

Interactions between personal life and the social environment seem like other stressors (work-family balance, social relations) in managers’ work lives. Besides, the feeling of restlessness and irresponsibility resulting from incomplete worship also causes stress.

Four of the eight categories are directly related to work. In addition to personal situations, family and religion are also seen as stressors. Stress, shaped by how an individual evaluates the situation, affects human life differently. Disruption of religious rituals can also cause stress for the individual. One of the participants shared his thoughts:

When you say order, when you do all the things that should be, you already feel a spiritual peace. When you do what you shouldn't do, things automatically start to go a little wrong; you understand a little, so you start to say that I am making a mistake somewhere; such things happen to me.

3. *Consequences of Stress*

This theme includes the consequences of stress from the point of view of the managers who experienced it during or after the stress. As shown in Figure 3, stress leads to behavioural changes and psychological and physiological health problems in managers.

The consequences of stress may manifest as a reaction to oneself or others. The unique structure of each experience can lead to deriving positive or negative meanings from the stressful situation and developing behaviours accordingly. The participants emphasise that the experience gained during the stress and the meaning obtained after a certain period of time are different.

My tone of voice is changing completely. My psyche is changing at that moment. One becomes more irritable and more rebellious. You start to struggle not to offend the opposite, this time within yourself. There are

Theme	Categories	Codes
Consequences of Stress	Positive Behavior	tolerance, showing the way, praying more, self-criticism, empathy, being patient, seeing it as an experience, efficiency, staying away from smoking, making dhikr, discipline, motivation
	Negative Behavior	increased voice, increased tendency to smoke, hasty action, impulsive behaviour, negative behaviour, change in gestures and facial expressions, talking more, harsh manners, intolerance, making mistakes
	Physiological Health Problem	fatigue, headache, sleep problems, sweating, stomach diseases, blood pressure, weakness, diabetes, skin diseases, redness of the eyes, continuous drug use, goitre, increased appetite, hand tremors, heart diseases, hair whitening
	Psychological Health Problem	irritability, panic, introspection, need for solitude, unhappiness, regret, difficulty in expression, distraction, psychological diseases, excessive emotionality, tension, excitement, pessimism, depressed state, disharmony, loss of control, detailism, guilt, worry, sadness, fear

Figure 3: Findings on the “Consequences of Stress” Theme

times when you break down, but there are also times when we say work stress and go a long way.

Stress may cause physiological and psychological consequences that may affect health. Fatigue, insomnia, headache, and sweating are the most common physiological effects, while irritability, panic, unhappiness, and the need for loneliness are the most common psychological effects. A participant’s statement on this subject is as follows:

You feel tired. I told you, the taste is not salty. Such things are the main thing, so we return to the same point. You have no taste; you feel unhappy and aggressive.

4. Coping

The theme of coping includes the participants’ evaluations of which strategies they prefer to manage the process of experiencing stress and getting rid of it. Figure 4 presents the different coping strategies used by the participants.

Theme	Categories	Codes
Coping	Search for Solution	focusing on the solution, calming down, thinking, trying, knowing stress management, struggle, time management, admitting the mistake, making self-criticism, learning lessons
	Social Support	socialising, sharing the problem, exchanging ideas, spending time with loved ones, guiding, asking for help
	Personality Characteristics	empathy, not reflecting stress, honesty, self-knowledge, optimism, tolerance, sincerity, self-love, self-respect, forgiveness
	Smoking	cigarette consumption
	Avoiding Stressor	changing the focus, getting away from the stressful environment, giving yourself time, doing sports, walking, improving yourself, talking to yourself, reading a book
	Religious Orientation	praying, taking care, being patient, <i>tawakkul</i> , contemplation, inclination to worship, <i>dhikr</i> , being thankful

Figure 4: Findings on the “Coping” Theme

Because the stress was perceived as a response to a threat, participants developed general coping strategies rather than work-specific strategies. Participants can seek solutions directly and search for social

support from the external environment. Smoking and moving away from stressful places are also seen as solutions, in addition to a strong emphasis on personality. Turning to religious belief has also emerged as an essential factor in coping. One of the participants shared his coping strategies as follows:

What do we apply to? So I make time for myself. In that special time, sometimes you do sports, sometimes you sit with your friends and play a football match. Occasionally, you can sit down and have a drink with those who drink.

5. Place of Islam in Life

This theme includes findings on how participants position Islam in their lives. The participants evaluate their religious beliefs as a variable that affects their search for meaning, business life behaviours, and general moral behaviours.

Theme	Categories	Codes
Place of Islam in Life	Meaning	regulative, guiding, comforting, providing meaning and purpose, spiritual strength, the centre of life, trust in the Creator, peace, optimistic view, faith in Allah, praying, moderation, religious duties to be fulfilled, calming, protective, surrender
	Work Life	<i>tawakkul</i> , awareness of destiny, learning from mistakes, regret, belief in the hereafter, effort, expectation of getting a reward, regulating human-environment relationship, fards, giving hope, right of servant, contemplation, gratitude, patience
	Overall Impact	tolerance, human rights awareness, fairness, freedom of worship/belief, wording, equal treatment, trust, prosocial behaviour, honesty, effort, trustworthiness, adopting the job, humility

Figure 5: Findings on the “Place of Islam in Life” Theme

Religious faith gives meaning to life and provides spiritual peace and strength, helps to plan one’s life with tasks, and provides goals. By believing in Allah, the man accepts His greatness and power. A sense of surrender to the Creator is felt between fear and hope. The meaning-making process also shapes behaviour in both work and social life, especially from a moral perspective.

In my belief, there is fairness, you know. I want to adhere to a concept called the rightful share. I want to establish justice; I want to rule fairly.

When I approach unfairly, the person below me may not speak up, but I know that the value I believe in will give me something in return for the injustice I have done. It will reward or punish. Since I am aware of this, I try to approach my employees and subordinates in this way.

Theme	Categories	Codes
Islamic Coping	Consciousness of Destiny	gratitude, faith in destiny, awareness of testing, patience, ponderingly speaking
	Orientation to Allah	<i>tawakkul</i> , taking refuge in Allah, asking for help from Allah, surrender, contemplation, acting sincerely
	Orientation to Worship	praying, performing <i>ṣalāh</i> , reading the Quran, ablution, continuation of worship, giving alms, making <i>dhikr</i>
	Religious Socialisation	get support, stand by, participate in religious conversations, share the problem, spend time in the mosque, spend time with children
	Full and Timely Worship	happiness, peace, sense of responsibility, prosocial behaviour, change in physical and mental health, preventing anxiety

Figure 6: Findings on the “Islamic Coping” Theme

6. *Islamic coping*

Coping strategies are generally considered to fall into two categories: problem-focused and emotion-focused. Problem-focused coping is more active and involves rational responses focused on information and planned actions against sources of stress. Emotion-focused coping is passive and involves eliminating emotions in the face of stressors.⁴⁸ Islamic coping theme has a structure that includes both emotional and problem-focused strategies revealed by the participants. Strategies focus on religious awareness, worship, and seeking social support.

Belief in destiny is one of the conditions of faith for a Muslim.⁴⁹ A person who believes in destiny is aware that all the events he experiences occur within Allah’s knowledge. With this awareness, people see their experiences as a test and can face them with patience and calmness, leading them to speak thoughtfully and be more tolerant towards people who make mistakes. Besides, with the consciousness of destiny, people turn towards Allah and believe that Allah will give what is best for them

⁴⁸ Folkman and Lazarus, “Coping as a Mediator of Emotion”.

⁴⁹ Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, *Büyük İslam İlmihali* (İstanbul: Semerkand Yayıncılık, 2008).

and that there is wisdom in what He gives or not.

We pray and try to be calm according to our faith. We say that the best of everything is from Allah. According to Islam, the right thing to do is to work first and then do *tawakkul*. That is the necessity of the subject. I think it is wrong to say that I prayed, and the rest will come automatically.

The most mentioned worship in the coping process is prayer. Prayer can be defined as asking Allah for help by telling Him the current situation.⁵⁰ In addition, performing the prayers on time and entirely is also effective in coping. Especially in prayer, there is a sense of responsibility to Allah. The worshipper thinks that he continues his responsibility correctly. This thought triggers happiness and peace and reduces the individual's anxiety.

I read my Quran, I take my ablution, I go to my children, I pray for them, I do not know, I may sing a hymn at home, like that. . . . When I face stress, when I look at it from a religious point of view, I feel the need to pray. . . . Of course, when I fulfil one of these desired states and movements, prayers and rituals, of course, I am happy.

The stressed person feels the need to share his situation with someone, to socialise or to get away from the stressful environment. However, there are some differences in religious socialisation. In religious socialisation, it is desirable that the person to be shared is of the same belief. In addition, spending time with children, participating in religious conversations, and being together with people of the same religion are also seen as stress-reducing factors.

The bond I have with them, yes, it is comforting. Actually, there was that social approach that helped me get rid of stress. I already share this problem with the people I live with according to my faith. When I share it with other people, I can't explain my problem anyway. We can't catch the same frequency.

Well, now, for example, I get a lot of advice from my brother. That's one of the reasons I got to this stage. He gives me very good advice. I will listen to him. He explains some things in a way that can be understood well in the subjects I listen to, and I relax. Then I will come back to myself quicker, so it will be faster for me to get rid of stress.

⁵⁰ Osman Cilacı, "Dua", in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/dua>, accessed 14 Mar 2021.

D. Religious Sources for Coping with Work Stress

The level of stress experienced may vary according to the way one perceives the source of stress. Participants may perceive stress as a positive source of motivation that motivates them to work in a disciplined way and think multi-dimensionally, or they may perceive it negatively as an inevitable and unexpected problem. The important thing here is how we perceive the source of stress.

Some stressors are work-related (task, employee, manager), while others are based on personal situations (personality, health problems). Interactions between personal life and social environment seem like another stressor (work-family balance, social relations) in managers' work lives. Even if the focus is on work stress, managers consider stress as a process experienced in all areas of life. Besides, the shortcomings and disruptions in religious rituals are seen as a stressor, as worship is considered a factor that reduces stress.⁵¹ The perception of deficiencies in worship as stressors stems from the sense of responsibility that worship imposes on people.

Positive behaviours (being patient, self-criticism, and discipline) provide an opportunity to better understand the source of stress. Stress has a feature that renews and improves people.⁵² A person's energy, perception, and determination at the optimum stress level will also be high.⁵³ Negative behaviours (impulsive behaviour, intolerance, harsh manners) make difficult to cope with stress and lead the process into a dead end. Health problems in both psychological and physiological categories should be taken into account as they affect the general life of managers, their workplace productivity, and even their workability in the long run.

One of the strategies used in coping is to turn to religious belief and get support from it. Praying is the most commonly used strategy in this context. Behaviours such as *şalâh*, paying attention to worship, and being patient in the face of difficulties are actions used in coping. Dewe *et al.* emphasise a need for more adequate studies, particularly on

⁵¹ Gerard Rainville, "The Interrelation of Prayer and Worship Service Attendance in Moderating the Negative Impact of Life Event Stressors on Mental Well-being", *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 57, no. 6 (2018), pp. 2153-66.

⁵² Acar Baltaş and Zuhâl Baltaş, *Stres ve Stresle Başa Çıkma Yolları*, 36th edition (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2018).

⁵³ İştâr, "The Relationship between Stress and Productivity".

the classification and modelling of coping.⁵⁴ It can be stated that the coping methods identified in the research are similar to those found in previous studies.⁵⁵

It is necessary to figure out how Islam is positioned in life to understand religious coping better. In addition to being an important factor affecting both business and private life, Islam also has a unique meaning. In business, Islam encourages managers to be more tolerant and fair towards their employees and supports freedom of belief and worship. Islam also encourages embracing the work, seeing what is given as trust, benefiting people, and doing their best. Participants who internalise such Islamic teachings see them as a guide in all decisions and actions they will take in life. Such people have a higher level of consciousness of destiny, patience, and *tawakkul*, and they attach more importance to the issue of the rightful share. This centralisation is believed to affect personality traits and contributes to a person being honest, far from hypocrisy, measured, optimistic, tolerant, helpful, and conscientious. In addition, these people have found the meaning of life in Islam, which provides a purpose and motivation to people, and the influence of religion is seen in all areas of their lives.⁵⁶

Islamic coping as the most striking findings of the study is also discussed in 5 categories. These are compiled as consciousness of destiny, orientation to Allah, orientation to worship, religious socialisation, full and timely worship. Due to its importance, each category has been evaluated separately.

Destiny is described as “Allah’s knowing and determining all objects and events with His pre-eternal knowledge”.⁵⁷ One of the most basic tendencies of human beings is to try to give meaning to the events that they live and observe around them or to try to explain and understand the events by attributing some reasons to them.⁵⁸ Turning to Allah, who

⁵⁴ Philip Dewe et al., “Individual Strategies for Coping with Stress at Work: A Review”, *Work & Stress*, vol. 7, no.1 (1993), pp. 5-15.

⁵⁵ Ahmet Karakaş and Mustafa Koç, “The Relationship between Religious Coping and Coping with Stress Methods: An Analysis from Various of Variable”, *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2014), pp. 610-31.

⁵⁶ Gordon W. Allport and J. Michael Ross, “Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 5, no. 4 (1967), pp. 432-43.

⁵⁷ Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, “Kader”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/kader>, accessed 09 Feb 2023.

⁵⁸ Saffet Kartopu, “Relation Between Anxiety and the Perception of Predestination”, *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2013).

knows all life events with His infinite knowledge, and relying on his infinite power increases the determination to struggle in the coping process. As an Islamic term, *tawakkul* is defined as “a person’s surrendering himself to Allah, knowing Allah as a guarantor for his sustenance and affairs and trusting only Him”.⁵⁹ A strong belief and a solid understanding of faith and destiny play a very important role in eliminating the sense of helplessness that people feel about future uncertainties, which is one of the major causes of stress.⁶⁰

The idea that different kinds of worship and purification rituals reduce stress levels has been supported by much research.⁶¹ Similarly, religious practices play an important role in coping with work stress and regulating mental health.⁶² Worship includes certain attitudes and behaviours that people display to show respect, love, and obedience to Allah and to gain His pleasure. In this context, performing prayers fully and on time enables people to maintain their tight communication with Allah. Good communication with the Creator is good for an individual’s mental health, and trusting Allah also affects the process of coping with stress.⁶³ In coping with stress, devotions such as praying, performing *ṣalāh*, reading the Quran, giving alms, and performing *dhikr* strengthen the individual’s communication with Allah and put him in a stronger position against stressors. Participants stated they felt peaceful, happy, and

⁵⁹ Mustafa Çağrı, “Tevekkül”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/tevekkul>, accessed 10 Feb 2023.

⁶⁰ Mehmet Ali Çalgan, “Obtaining Peace in the Stress Age: Piety-Peace Relation in the Light of Hadith”, *İslami İlimler Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 9 (2020), pp. 54-78.

⁶¹ Jennifer N. Belding et al., “Social Buffering by God: Prayer and Measures of Stress”, *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 49 (2010), pp. 179-87; Robin LaBarbera and June Hetzel, “Christian Educators’ Use of Prayer to Cope with Stress”, *Journal of Religion and Health*, vol. 55 (2016), pp. 1433-48; Jane K. Ferguson et al., “Centering Prayer as a Healing Response to Everyday Stress: A Psychological and Spiritual Process”, *Pastoral Psychology*, vol. 59 (2010), pp. 305-29.

⁶² Meguellati Achour et al., “Job Stress and Nurses Well-being: Prayer and Age as Moderators”, *Community Mental Health Journal*, vol. 55 (2019), pp. 1226-35; Francesco Chirico et al., “Spirituality and Prayer on Teacher Stress and Burnout in an Italian Cohort: A Pilot, before-after Controlled Study”, *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 10, no. 2933 (2020), pp. 1-7.

⁶³ Joshua J. Knabb and Kenneth T. Wang, “The Communion with God Scale: Shifting from an Etic to Emic Perspective to Assess Fellowshiping with the Triune God”, *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2021), pp. 67-85; Vaibhava Upadhyay and Yogesh Parashar, “A Study of Parental Stressors, Financial Issues as Stress Factor, and the Coping Strategies in the PICU”, *Indian Journal of Pediatrics*, vol. 89, no. 6 (2022), pp. 563-9.

responsible if they performed these rituals entirely. The *ṣalāh*, which has a materially and spiritually relaxing feature, takes the believer away from the world's preoccupations, stress, and distress, providing inner peace.⁶⁴ The general results of the study are not only consistent with previous studies⁶⁵ but also have a unique quality in terms of drawing attention to different points.

E. Concluding Remarks

Based on the relationships between the themes, the place of religious belief in life affects the perception of stress, the consequences of stress, and methods of coping. In other words, the Islamic faith affects the perception of stress, indirectly affecting the perception of what can cause stress. However, once internalised, religious faith has an essential impact on the interpretation of the results of stress, and it reveals religious coping methods. There is a relationship between the perception of the stress outcome and the preferred coping method, which can also affect how the outcome is perceived.

Under the theme of Islamic coping, five sub-categories were obtained: three cognitive and two behavioural coping strategies. Cognitive strategies appear in the form of seeing their experiences as a test, feeling surrender and submission, and the awareness that negativity reminds us of Allah's Power and Grace. Meanwhile, behavioural strategies include praying regularly and spending time with people of the same faith. Considering the coping process in terms of independent physical or psychological elements is improper. With its holistic point of view, Islam revitalises people's world of thought and guides their behaviour. Therefore, being properly aware of Allah with His names and attributes will create employees and managers who exhibit fair behaviour. Regular and timely performance of Islamic rituals (worships such as *ṣalāh*, fasting, and prayer) leads to happiness and peace in participants who internalise their beliefs. On the contrary, shortcomings and delays in these rituals cause stress for managers because they feel they have disrupted their responsibilities.

However, the eight categories obtained for sources of stress can be

⁶⁴ Nurten Kimter, "An Examination on the Relationship between Prayer and Psychological Well-Being", *EKEV Akademi Dergisi*, vol. 68 (2016), pp. 299-332.

⁶⁵ Mustafa Koç, "Dinsel Pratiklerin Sıklık Düzeyleri ile Dini Başa Çıkma Arasındaki İlişki: Ergenler Üzerine Ampirik Bir Araştırma", *Bilimname*, vol. 16, no.1 (2009), pp. 140-82; Achour et al., "An Islamic Perspective on Coping".

evaluated as individual, work-based and social environment-based. People acquire a perspective of life in line with their orientations and preferences. This perspective is also affected by the interactions between business life and the social environment, which occupy a significant part of time. Many studies show these interactions result in sources of stress that are similarly addressed as individual, organisational and environmental factors. It is an important finding that the deficiencies and disruptions in religious rituals are seen as sources of stress.

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