

Tasawwuf Approach among Prospective Islamic Counseling Practitioners

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ABSTRACT

Tasawwuf and spiritual approach is the main basis in the Islamic tradition to solve problems related to the purification of the soul, *mujahadah al-nafs and ilaj al-nafs towards* the problems of the soul through a special path. At the end of this, the tasawwuf knowledge approach has gained attention as the right Islamic knowledge in dealing with the problems of the soul in the discussion of Islamic counseling. Tasawwuf is also applied as an important method of Islamic counseling known as psycho-spiritual. This study aimed to examine the tasawwuf approach or spiritual approach among Muslim counseling practitioners in the state of Kedah during the counseling session. The method of study uses a quantitative method through the distribution of survey forms to 60 respondents in the vicinity of Kedah. The results showed that understanding the Tasawwuf Islam concept has a positive and significant relationship with Islamic psychotherapy with a signification value below 0.01. These findings prove that the counseling approach adopted by Muslim counselors in the state of Kedah is geared towards the tasawwuf approach through Islamic perspective counseling as opposed to *conventional* methods.

Keywords: tasawwuf approach, counseling practitioner, Islamic perspective counseling.

INTRODUCTION

Tasawwuf is a tradition of psychology according to Islam to deal with mental and spiritual problems according to the principles of tasawwuf knowledge highlighted by sufis. This knowledge is also basically the source of the revelation of the Quran, the morals of the Prophet PBUH, and the lives of the companions. Today's *tasawwuf* approach is an important module in handling problems related to the delirium of the soul and morality. The values of tasawwuf such as the concept of *tazkiyah al-Nafs, al-Maqamat wa al-Akhwat* and the method of moral purification were highlight by tasawwuf. In this era, tasawwuf applications have been widely used as a method in helping counseling practitioners to carry out a counseling process for Muslim clients and this effort is more accurate. Islamic counseling approach tries to help Muslim brothers using psychological principles based on Islamic sharia aimed at improving the quality of life of a person as a servant of Allah and the caliphate on earth (Ishammudin Ismail, 1996). Also Islamic counseling leads people towards the truth or *al-Haq* and eternal victory or *al-falah*, as well as avoiding the loss of the right, in life in this world and the hereafter (Adawiyah Ismail, 2007).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The practice of spirituality can build value in a Muslim in the search for Divine pleasure. Included in the

construction of the *ehsan* is the construction of moral values emphasized in Islam besides the emphasis of Faith and Shariah. The concept of sufficiency in Islam is born from the natural sources of Islam itself. There are many evidences of the Quran that call towards noble morals, as well as the morals and personalities of the Prophet s.a.w as well as the lives of his companions s.a.w (Norzira Salleh, 2017). The tasawuf debate often details discussions related to *ehsan*, manners and morals. Islam also encourages its ummah to prioritize morality in their daily lives. The Prophet s.a.w himself displayed a noble character to be a follower. Until the entire Islamic Shari'a is built based on Islamic morality through the Quran. The superiority of the true source of tasawuf and its legitimacy often draws opposition from Orientalists.

The development of tasawuf knowledge or soul problems, through the discussion of Ulama tasawwuf has discovered as well as highlighting the real treatment or *ilaj*. This has been proven in the Salasih study (2008) which states that *Tazkiyah al-Nafs* through the method of *mujahadah al-Nafs* can provide treatment to mental problems and is the best approach to self-identification and finding problems with the attributes and morals of *mazmumah*. This matter was discussed by al-Ghazali at length in his essay *Ihya Ulumuddin*. Touching on the nature of *nafs*, according to Sayyid Sabiq (1992) soul illness such as laziness, despair, tyranny, boasting, deceiving, aggravating people, and telling of one's goodness is a reprehensible trait that has to do with the whisper of the devil. Thus, Islam through the emphasis of *Maqasid Shariah* attaches importance to the element of intent to determine the direction of charity.

Matters related to counseling practices have been introduced by western scholars versus Islam. In the framework of guiding clients who are thirsty for motivation and advice, researchers see that counseling practitioners need to adopt a religious awareness approach. Elements of appreciation of faith such as understanding of faith in the decree, understanding of faith through the concept of testing and misfortune should be applied to a predigm shift. the soul who is ready to go through the counseling process should be ready to migrate the mind towards a new positive mindset. Counseling that uses psychosuffistics is more geared towards counselling that applies the value of tasawwuf and it is different from normal counseling (Muhammad Taufiq Firdaus, 2021). A soul burdened with confusion, diverse problems need to be guided towards spiritual guidance. Thus, the realization of spiritual appreciation will bring about a change of mind and action. The main and fundamental awareness is the awareness of tauhid. The concept of tasawwuf such as presenting gratitude and patience will produce a sense of satisfaction that will lead to faith in qadha and destiny (Nur zainatul Nadra Zainol, 2019)

According to the Andalusian Islamic scientist Ibn Bajjah in the study of Muhd Latiffi Mahadzir (2019) in explaining the concept of soul development, he emphasized the importance of the process of soul development, for the purpose of consolidating the relationship between slaves and the Creator. It is clear here that the Islamic method in the construction of the soul is capable of solving internal problems or in the method of inner practice. In the explanation of tasawuf, the discussion of inner practice is defined as a practice of the heart which includes faith. A heart or inner that is accustomed to bad attitudes and morals such as following passions requires the purification of the soul. The process of purification of the soul will not result, if the human soul does not bow and surrender to the Creator. The researchers are of the view that the noble efforts of counseling practitioners in building the Islamic counseling model and module are in line with the concept of dakwah and the call for advice, therefore every client's problem should be addressed by seeking the truth as well as correcting the mistakes by solving the problem to find the right and true solution. the model of zikr psychotherapy can be used to improve mental health Ikhsan, D., Fahmi, M., & Mafan, A. (2017).

In this regard, this study was highlighted as an effort to review the extent to which faith awareness and compassion approaches are used during counseling sessions. This study aims to examine the role and approach of tasawwuf in dealing with mental problems. In addition analyses the approach of tasawwuf application and the effective methods of Islamic counseling practices among Muslim counseling practitioners in the state of Kedah. The study also tried to find answers to questions such as, whether Muslim counselors prioritize Islamic or Western counseling approaches in conducting counseling sessions. As is known, the development of psychology is built based on non-Muslim flow or wisdom, researchers are encouraged to adjust the values related to the spiritual elements and tasawwuf introduced by most tasawwuf researchers such as, *al-Muhasibi*, *al-Taftazani*, *al-Qusyairi*, *Ibn Ataillah al-Sakandari*, *al-Ghazali* and others. Next, the readiness of a counselor's soul must meet the religious recommendations in terms of language and wisdom. The study uses a quantitative method in which the questionnaire will act as the main *instrument* for data acquisition work.

Mohd Nasir's study (2016) explained, the concept of mental health according to the Islamic perspective should be understood precisely because it is very important and this matter is not discussed in the field of psychology. Many people think that religion is a religion and it has nothing to do with psychology. The approach of isolating the concept of Islamic science and the sciences championed by the west was an early Western effort in developing the ideology of secularism. In the tradition of Islamic discipline, tasawwuf is seen as able to overcome modern psychology in dealing with mental problems (Amran Muhammad, 2018). Al-Mandily in his book concludes that the *method of tazkiyah al-Nafs one of methode* in control the human physical anatomy. The anatomy and physique of the human being can have a strong impact in determining the position of the commendable qualities in the tasawwuf construct. Human physical personnel are the first element that needs to be controlled and maintained. The seven most important bodies are the tongue, eyes, ears, stomach, vaginal and a pair of legs (Che Zarina and Nor Azlinah, 2016).

Besides, human self-development or *al-Tanmiyah* through commendable practices. According to al-Muhasibi in the study of Abu Dardaa Mohamad and Salasiah Hanin Hamjah (2017), the first thing to take care of in building the development of one's soul is the obligatory thing as it is a bridge between the slave and His god. *Al-Mahabbah* or love and *al-Khauf* sense that is fear of Allah is an important element that develops a human soul. (Human Capital Development according to Al-Ghazali encompasses three main processes which start from *tazkiyah al-nafs*, both *mujahadah al-nafs (takhhalli)* and later *al-nafs (Tahalli)* (Faizatul Najihah Mohd Azaman, Faudzi Naim Badaruddin, 2016) In highlighting the method of Islamic counseling, to recognize *self-righteousness* as the initiation towards the process of treating mental illness according to the discussion of tasawwuf scholars, a Muslim should be friends with a good, honest and good friend. His religion to reprimand and give good advice. In addition, a person who wants to change towards good needs to acquiesce with a lot of meditation and reasoning on every behavior done. (Al-Maqdisi Ibn Qudamah Ahmad^cAbd al-Rahman, 1999.)

Islamic counseling has been introduced by Muslim counseling practitioners who argue that the Muslim population needs a counseling approach that takes into account the outlook on life and Islamic values (Malik Badri, 1986). The views of values in the public mainstream with the Islamic current are found to be contradictory. In addition, there is also an element of strong Islamic motivation encouraging a Muslim who is not used in public current counseling (Nadiyah Elias, 2006). Therefore, there is an effort to incorporate elements and values of motivation in Islamic intervention (Md Noor Saper & Nadiyah Elias, 2009). This approach has been used in interventions against drugs, sexual addiction, and the internet (Nadiyah Elias, 2012). In conducting counseling sessions for the Muslim community, counseling based on Western theory was found to be less effective in dealing with the problems of Muslims (Yatimah Sarmani & Mohd Tajudin Minggal, 2008). Most of the problems stem from emotional aspects such as anger, hate, frustration and various problems related to the heart. This illustrates the need to apply spiritual elements in counseling to overcome the problem. Salasiah Hanin Hamjah (2008), Shahrizal Abdullah (2003) and Roslee Ahmad, Mohamed Sharif Mustaffa & Sulaiman Shakib Mohd Noor, (2008) were among the studies that used the Islamic approach in the treatment of the issues faced.

METHODOLOGY

The study sample consisted of a group of counselors who identified as Muslim and were based in the state of Kedah. The population sample selection employs a non-probability sampling method, namely the purposive sampling methodology, which involves the deliberate selection of individuals based on predetermined criteria.

This research employed a survey questionnaire as a tool to investigate the comprehension of the Islamic concept of tasawuf and its implementation during psychotherapy sessions. The survey form consists of three distinct sections, specifically Part A: Demographic Information, Part B: Independent Variables, and Part C: Dependent Variables. The administration of questionnaires to a sample size of 60 respondents is being facilitated through the use of the "Google Form" platform. The present study employed quantitative analysis, utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software for both descriptive statistical analysis and inference statistics.

The survey questions utilized in this study have been modified based on the findings of several previous studies (Al-Makki et al., 2019; Dynasty, 2013; Fahmy Zarkasyi, 2015; Fauzi Yusoh et al, 2018; Jaapar & Azahari, 2011; Mohamed, 2017; Mohd Nasir bin Masroom & Wan Ismail Wan Commerce, 2013; Niken Widiyawati, 2017; Nur Najihah & Syed Hadzrullathfi, 2017; Rahma et al., 2013; Rosyadi, 1993; Salasiah Hanin Hamjah, 2008; Shafie

& Othman, 2017; Sya'bani, 2015; Ubaedillah, 2015). Method 5 of the Likert Scale is employed to assess each question within sections B and C. Table 1 presents the recorded measures of the Likert scale employed in the study

Table 1 Likert Scale Measurement

Scale	Score
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Uncertain	3
Agree	4
Very Agree	5

FINDINGS

Frequency Analysis

According to the data presented in Table 2, the participants of the survey consisted of 60 individuals who were identified as counselors. Among these respondents, there were 29 men, which represented 48.3% of the total, and 31 females, representing 51.7% of the total. Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents' experience in the role of a Counsellor, derived from a sample size of 60 individuals. The findings indicated that 31 respondents (51.7%) possessed 1 – 2 years of professional experience, while 16 respondents (26.7%) reported having 3 – 4 years of experience. Additionally, 5 respondents (8.3%) indicated having 5 – 6 years of experience, 6 respondents (10%) reported 7 – 8 years of experience, and 2 respondents (3.3%) claimed to have 9 years of experience or more.

Table 2 Respondent Gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Male	29	48.3
Female	31	51.7
Total	60	100.0

Table 3 Experience in Counseling

<i>Year Experience</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - 2 years	31	51.7
3 - 4 years	16	26.7
5 – 6 years	5	8.3
7 – 8 years	6	10.0
9 years and older	2	3.3
Total	60	100.0

Reliability Analysis

Table 4 Results of Reliability Analysis

Variables	Alpha	No. of Items	No. of Item Deleted
Understanding of Tasawuf Concept	0.854	20	-
Islamic Psychotherapy	0.938	20	-

The findings of the reliability analysis indicate that all variables exhibit a satisfactory level of dependability, as evidenced by the alpha values exceeding the threshold of 0.70. The alpha score for Islamic Psychotherapy is 0.938, indicating a high level of reliability. In comparison, the understanding of the concept of tasawuf has an alpha value of 0.854. No items were excluded from the investigation due to the fact that all acquired alpha coefficients were deemed to be of high quality.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive data in Parts B and C of the survey questionnaire were analyzed to determine the mean or average of each item under investigation. Each segment consists of a total of 20 questions. Part B of the study aims to examine the level of comprehension among counsellors regarding the notion of Islamic tasawuf. Part C, on the other hand, focuses on investigating the practise of Islamic psychotherapy, specifically the implementation of tasawuf principles during psychotherapy sessions. According to the data shown in Table 5, it can be observed that the mean level of comprehension of the idea of Islamic tasawuf among the sample of 60 respondents is significantly higher, with an average score of 4.89. The descriptive results for section C indicate that the utilization of Islamic tasawuf in psychotherapy sessions was seen to be significantly high, with a mean value of 4.72.

Table 5 Results of Variable Descriptive Analysis

N		Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Understanding of Tasawuf Concept	60	4.10	5.00	4.8933	0.21794
Islamic Psychotherapy	60	3.80	5.00	4.7229	0.29322
Valid N (listwise)	60				

Correlation Analysis

Table 6 Results of Correlation Analysis

	Islamic Psycho-therapy	Understanding of Tasawuf Concept
Person Correlation	1	0.491**
Sig. (2 tailed)		0.000
Person Correlation	0.491**	1
Sig. (2 tailed)	0.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation analysis was conducted to identify the relationship between all the variables within the theoretical framework of the study. This analysis is also important to see aspects of multi-collinearity and the existence of

linear relationships between variables. The results indicated a positive but weak association between the two variables, as evidenced by a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.491$. The obtained p-value suggests a highly significant association between the understanding of Islamic Tasawuf and Islamic psychotherapy, with a significance level of $p < 0.01$. Pearson's correlation values were found below 0.80 which proves that there is no multi-collinearity problem in this study.

Regression Analysis

Table 7 Results of Regression Analysis

F	18.403
R ²	0.241
Adjusted R ²	0.228
Beta	0.491
Nilai t	4.290
Sig	0.000

The regression analysis yielded statistically significant findings, indicating that the study model was accepted ($P < 0.000$ and $F = 18.403$). The calculated R² value of 0.241 indicates that approximately 24.1% of the variation in the phenomenon under study can be accounted for by the factors considered. Conversely, the remaining 75.9% of the variation in Islamic Psychotherapy cannot be described only by the Tasawuf concept. The model exhibits a relatively modest yet highly significant level of strength.

CONCLUSION

The Islamic perspective counseling approach has become an important application practiced by counseling practitioners in the state of Kedah. This is a good development as a result of religious awareness among the community and counseling practitioners themselves. This shows the level of acceptance of Muslim counselors towards the appreciation of Islamic teachings. A good understanding of Islam as well as a structured Islamic approach produce the qualities of preachers who can guide the community towards spiritual stability and create a harmonious society.

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