

## The Pyscho-Spiritual Therapy On Mental Illness; An Islamic Approach

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### Abstract

*Islamic therapy has developed since ancient since the days of the Prophet Muhammad continued to be practiced until now even with the traditional equipments. The purpose of this study is to explore the extent of Islamic psycho-spiritual therapy for mental illness i.e. juvenile delinquency. This mental crisis generally found as a teenager problem who seeking self-identity in unfavourable environment. Typically teens often unable to manage emotions and thoughts so they mostly fell into a situation that is contrary with moral standard in the society. This paper uses qualitative method with case study to three teenage girls who undergo process of Islamic psycho-spiritual therapy. The findings shown that they get enlighten mind, self-awareness and reflections, and self-confidence and persistence domains after go through a period of recovery process. Some aspects of psycho-spiritual are also discussed in this study.*

### Abstrak

Terapi Islam telah berkembang sejak zaman Rasulullah SAW kemudian dipraktikkan sampai sekarang, bahkan dengan pendekatan yang tradisional. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi sejauh mana terapi psiko-spiritual Islami untuk penyakit jiwa yaitu kenakalan remaja. Krisis mental ini umumnya ditemukan pada masalah remaja yang mencari identitas diri di lingkungan yang kurang menguntungkan. Biasanya remaja seringkali tidak mampu mengelola emosi dan pikirannya sehingga kebanyakan terjerumus ke dalam situasi yang bertentangan dengan standar moral di masyarakat. Tulisan ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan studi kasus pada tiga remaja putri yang menjalani proses terapi psiko-spiritual Islami. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa mereka mendapatkan domain pencerahan pemikiran, kesadaran diri dan refleksi, serta kepercayaan diri dan domain ketekunan setelah melalui masa proses pemulihan. Beberapa aspek psiko-spiritual juga dibahas dalam penelitian ini.

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## **Introduction**

In the recent investigation on spirituality suggested that religious beliefs and behavior may play a role in promotion of positive adjustment in adolescents, especially through reductions in risk behavior (Marie Good, 2006). Religious adolescents are considered less likely to display delinquent behavior (Regnerus *et al.*, 2003), use drugs and alcohol (Nonnemaker *et al.*, 2003; Regnerus, 2003, Youniss,1997), and delay the onset of sexual activity (Holder *et al.*, 2000).

However, there are some problems when conducted study on spirituality and adolescent behavior, initially there is no exact variables within spirituality because it tends to be conceptualized and measured inconsistently across studies (Denelson, 1999). Some studies use of frequency of attendance at religious services, internal religious devotion spirituality (i.e., personal importance of one's religious beliefs, private Bible-reading, prayer, etc.), and the others conducted by using report of religious attendance alone to assess spirituality (Martin *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, the impact of spirituality toward adolescent behavior cannot exactly conceptualize in the whole manner of religion itself. Elkind (1999) found that spiritual involvement has different significance for adolescents from different racial backgrounds. Also, McKinney (2002) found that spirituality is an intensely private activity into which psychologists might be reluctant to intrude. These results provided example and evidence of the usefulness of spirituality as a means of investigating facets of adolescent identity and personality development.

Unfortunately, the role of spirituality toward adolescent well-being based on Islamic perspective not explore in literatures widely. The researcher found several study conducted in the Islamic spirituality toward mental health (i.e. Ghorbani, 2000), mental health and psychopathology (i.e. Khalek and Lester, 2007), well-being and depression (i.e. Khalek, 2009), delinquency (i.e. Sarajzadeh, 1998) and social problems (i.e. Ta'zim, 2002). This complementary study has scientific evidence to improve the roles of Islamic spirituality on mental health aspects.

Indeed, the purpose of this study is to explore the factor from Islamic spirituality that contributes toward conditions of delinquent behavior. This paper seeks to find evidence from case studies to know the psycho-spiritual condition of adolescents who undergoing the treatment in rehabilitation centre. Furthermore, this study wants to portray the Islamic spirituality with correlation to mental healing processes. This is an attempt to understand the issue of delinquent behaviour and treatment as an array and dynamic interaction between spiritual, psychological, and social approaches.

The spiritual approach might possibly to increase the intention factor for successful treatment. Therefore, the researchers hope that the findings of this study may help enlighten those committed to the work of alleviating the delinquent behaviour, and those who are involved in the work of building characters in the rehabilitation centre. According to Sussman and Ames (2001) more work is needed to understand what elements of treatment modalities that provides several approaches and techniques for risk behaviour rehabilitation. Therefore, this study may provide some understanding to the therapeutic community modality based on Islamic spirituality.

The social psychologists such Hall (1891), Starbuck (1899), and Leuba (1912) have generally recognized the distinctions between spiritual beliefs (cognition), spiritual feelings (affect), and spiritual works or practices (behaviour). The cognitive component is the belief or orthodoxy component, Glock (1962) called this dimension "ideology". The affective component is the feeling dimension and encompasses feelings toward religious beings,

objects, or institutions. And the behavioural component is “acted out”, such as ritual attendance, financial contributions, frequency of personal prayer and scripture study, and ethical behaviours are all included in the behavioural component of spirituality. According to Herbart Benson (1989) every aspect of spirituality has exercise to improve mood, thought and behaviour. Indeed, spirituality exercise improves the quality of life, induces greater sense of well-being and energy, reduces anxiety and depression, influences mood favourably and contributes to self-esteem and an aura of confidence; improves memory especially a "relaxation response". From Islamic perspective, spirituality has been informed clearly, the concept of spirituality could be realizing human nature at once and also show the quality of human life in society. The relationship between divinity and humanity is running in tandem and cannot be separated. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said which means, “*The best among you is who have the best characters*” (Hadits :riwayatTurmudzi) (Shamsuddin, 1992).

Indeed, the concepts of spirituality from Islamic contents beliefs, ritual and social activities, for example *tanbeed*, *aqidah*, *ibadah*, and *syariah*, and *mu'amalah*. These concepts are interrelated and reach the goal of the human life as *servant of God (Ibadullah)*.

In fact, the Islamic spirituality has great impact toward building characters, personality, and morality in the Muslim society (show in figure 1). This spirituality consists of beliefs and thoughts (*aqidah*), practices (*ibadah*), morality (*akhlak*). All categories of spirituality associated with characters building with eliminating bad habits behaviours, increasing self-confidence, and personal insight strength to change the life with a good spiritual practice in the community. That spiritual beliefs related with cognitive domain, spiritual practice related to affective domain, and morality spiritual associated with psychomotor domain

## Research Method

The study adopted a qualitative approach. The researcher uses the qualitative research for a number of reasons. Firstly, the research was concerned with understanding of meanings on spirituality and personality phenomenon. Secondly, the research pursued an exploration stated of objective which was not formulated at the start of the research process. Thirdly, flexibility to follow unexpected ideas during research and explore processes effectively and deeply meaning. Finally, ability to study symbolic dimensions and social meaning to develop empirically supported new ideas and theories.

The participants (interviewees) of the study were selected purposefully among students (patients) at the rehabilitation centre of Inabah Suryalaya Tasikmalaya Indonesia. A semi-structured interview schedule consisting of 9 (nine) open-ended questions was designed by the researchers in the light of a comprehensive literature review.

## Result and Discussion

The results of the study were discussed under three main concepts. The subsequent subtitles were constructed by considering research questions, the items in the interview schedule and the codes emerged from the interview transcripts. Based on analysis of studies, researcher conducted three themes, i.e. reflection domain (RD), expression domain (ED), and persistence domain (PD). Reflective domain explained the understanding, motivation, opinion, and concept of spirituality of participants. Based on study, RD in understanding of spirituality, the participants known spirituality as main part of their life. They also perceived the philosophical views and intentions to conceptualize the spirituality in a proper manner. This RD maintains their motivation and spiritual reaction toward challenge of their spirituality in the centre.

All of participants had explained the background of their spirituality, in term of family, schools, and formal education. In general, there are some ideas and paradigms about spirituality before they were grow up into adolescent stage. Some of the participants have a good understanding about spirituality since childhood and others were not really good in term of previous religious or spiritual education. This RD of participants portrayed the feeling dissatisfaction toward their religious or spiritual background.

Based on their background of religious education, the participants have different angle about understanding of spirituality in their life. P1 (participant 1) understood that spirituality is the compulsory part of human life and she beliefs that it should be practiced continuously in daily life. . For her, this RD teaches the relationship between human and God, she stated,

From what I understand about spirituality is a part, compulsory part of human life, especially Islam when teach all about practical within one life, with human relationship other human and also relation human and God (Discourse Unit 193)

Other participants (P2 and P3) understood their spirituality as the gradual process, God awareness and routine activities related with teaching of Islam.

P2 said,

I learn from essence of Islam from basic things such as reading Qur'an, perform prayers, and fasting... basically I have manage to be more pious and active in religious or spiritual activities, then...I have learn to differentiate between good and bad (Discourse Unit 176)

P3 said,

Since am here, for me spirituality is very important because it is actually has many activities related to God awareness, such as Dzikir, prayer, fasting, and others.....actually it will develop our self....(Discourse unit 183)

This study explored expressive domain (ED) of participants' spirituality in term of feeling, tension, willingness and reaction of spirituality in the centre. There were many problems faced in the centre such as lack of time for rest, a huge number of prayer and dzikir practices, and relationship between students (patients) and therapist. That situation faced by P1 she in the centre, she mentioned that,

...then we take some rest until 10.30 am, afet 11 am we must get up to taking bath and prepared our self to perform dhuhur prayer, then reciting dzikir for almost half an hour before we take our lunch...in the afternoon session, we have to perform prayer and reciting dzikir until before we sleep. But for me...the most dominant effected to me was dzikir and taking bath in early morning...(Discourse Unit 318-320)

Another case, P2 has tried to manage her self to be consistent of doing spirituality even though it was very difficult to her considering a huge number of dzikir and prayers in the centre, and in the same time, she also has to manage her study in the school. She said,

For me environment in the centre has influenced my self to improve my spirituality, but I think it very hard for this practice of spirituality....but I has a regret feeling to not going back with my past and I need to focus with my study....(Discourse unit 332-336)

In the case of P3 which has problem with the willingness of doing spirituality in the centre but actually she wants to improve herself to be more religious person both in the future. She mentioned that,

..the environment is good for me but still I need to adjust my spirituality since it was very difficult for me to follow all the ritual activities....i think it will become my habit in the future and really I feel more healthy....(Discourse Unit 321-326)

Persistence Domain contained the practice of spirituality and its impact toward others aspect in life. All participants have explained the impact of spirituality deeply base on their experiences, especially toward their behavior in life. They gave the example of PD with comparison between past and current situation of their situation in the centre. Basically, their morality and awareness improved after they understood and practiced the spirituality with strict control.

Regarding the practicing of spirituality in the centre, a situation of there was being the key factor since all participants have to 'enjoy' the situation even though it was very tight schedule. However, they agreed that the impact of those activities of spirituality were significant to make them realize on their weaknesses and errors in the past. In fact, they belief those activities become more important for their life.

The beliefs, feelings, and practices of spirituality are interrelated as therapy factor for their behavior in the past. They beliefs of reward from Allah made them easier to develop reflective domain (RD) of spirituality, they feelings that Allah will help them from any challenges in their expressive domain (ED), and the practices of *ibadah* shaped their behavior to make them more persistence in the life.

P1 said,

Actually, it is depending of the person, for me with zikr and prayers; I felt that spirituality can make me the better person... From my experience, the spiritual practices make me more religious and more motivated to my therapy process... I don't want to be like my previous condition, I want to make my parent proud to me, and I want to be a success in my life... (Discourse unit 330-336)

P2 said,

From spirituality I become motivated and it's not just my practice in Islam but also my behavior as well. I really do not want to repeat my mistakes for the second time...I want to continue my study to make my parent happy to me... (Discourse unit 332-338)

P3 said,

I think because I felt that by knowing the religion was very little...so I have to be able to practice and learn more seriously, because I think the spirituality can help me a lot to improve my life, in a way actually to get closer to Allah Ta'ala. I really want to make change in my life with continuing my practices in the spirituality such as dzikir and prayers.... (Discourse unit 136-139)

Base on the data analysis, table 1 concluded that impact of spirituality therapy toward adolescents who have delinquent behavior The first and second purpose of this study was to explore the participant's spirituality in the centre. There were some comments that contribute to this study; firstly, the spirituality is the compulsory part of human life which related with relationship between God and human. Secondly, spirituality is the basic of human life which related with intellectual, mental, and emotional. Thirdly, spirituality has gradual process of understanding. By understanding thenature of spirituality, the lives of adolescents is positively improving in term of psychological functioning, self-esteem, emotional, and morality in their environment.

The findings are in the line of the previous studies which mentioned about association between spirituality and adjustment in life of adolescent. The spirituality was greatly associated with higher self-esteem and better psychological functioning(e.g. Benson et al.,

1989; Ellison, 1993; Blaine & Crocker, 1995; Donahue & Benson, 1995; Evans et al., 1995; Gartner, 1996; King et al., 1997).

This finding also suggests that the understanding and the practicing spirituality can contribute to improve adolescent attitudes and performance in their life to overcome the risk behaviour, especially delinquent. Thus, the study had shown the consistent direction with earlier works.

## Conclusion

In summary, this study has explored the understanding and practicing of adolescents' spirituality in the rehabilitation centre as the main source of therapy. It was portrayed the direct impact of practicing spirituality toward behaviour changing in the life of adolescent who has a problem with mental illness. The spirituality has interrelated factors i.e. *aqidah* (beliefs), *ibadah* (practices of ritual), and *akhlak* (morality) which become key important factors of Islamic Psycho-therapy toward mental illness. The three dimension are explored in this study i.e. reflective domain (RD), expressive domain (ED), and persistence domain (PD) as the generate themes to explain the influence of Islamic psycho-therapy to recover adolescent delinquencies.

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