

Psycho-Sufistic Approach in Islamic Counseling: Strengthening The Spiritual Well-Being Of *Santri*

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Abstract. Every *santri* (student in an Islamic boarding school) has the same rights in achieving education, attention, and affection. All *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) ideally encourage *santri* to develop spiritual well-being. However, not all *pesantren* provide psycho-Sufistic counseling. This descriptive qualitative study aims to describe the implementation of psycho-Sufistic Islamic counseling at *pesantren* Qudsiyah Kudus. The data analysis was carried out through data collection, data reduction and categorization, data display, and conclusion. This study found that implementing Islamic counseling with a psycho-Sufistic approach at *pesantren* Qudsiyah Kudus could strengthen four domains of spiritual well-being *santri*, namely personal, communal, environmental, and transcendental. In the personal domain, *santri* showed sensitivity to self-identity, self-awareness, happiness in life, inner peace mentally and spiritually, and making sense of life. While in the communal domain, *santri* developed in terms of loving someone, forgiving others, believing in others, respecting others, and doing good to others. In addition, from the environmental domain, *santri* transformed the characters of uniting with nature, be amazed by God's creatures, blend with the natural environment, feel a sense of wonder with the environment, and harmony with the environment. Lastly, from the transcendental domain, *santri* improved spirituality such as worship God, pray to God, have faith in God, always being grateful, and praying for God's pleasure.

Key words: psycho-Sufistic approach; Islamic counseling; spiritual well-being.

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INTRODUCTION

In this era, Sufism has a significant role in people's lives as a supplier of moral values, as well as a medium for Islamic education and as a means of physical and mental healing, so that Sufism becomes a significant contribution to human life (Biyanto, 2017; Gani, 2019). Reviewing from the source of thought and teachings, Sufism comes from the concept of *Ihsan* in Islam. *Ihsan* is a Muslim series of behaviors both in physical and mental actions. In addition, the practice of Sufism also applies to patterns of life accompanied by religious values because examples of living in simplicity embody the concept of *zuhud* and *qana'ah* (Ni'am, 2020). In contrast, modern Sufism emphasizes more on the humanistic, empirical, and functional understanding that can be applied in the behavior of human life (Nizami, 2017).

The main goal of Sufism is to draw closer to Allah by cleansing the heart and soul. Wasitaatmadja (2020) said the teachings contained in Sufism could be used as a medium to cleanse the soul from various forms of negative energy and emotions. Someone whose spirituality is disturbed will affect the psychological condition of the individual. The practice of Sufism teachings such as the concepts of *zuhud*,

repentance, surrender, patience, sincerity, and pleasure can affect individuals' mental condition or welfare.

Welfare is a continuum and multidimensional (Rizeq et al., 2021). Each dimension does not stand alone but is interconnected. When integrated in a balanced way will help individuals develop optimally. The spiritual dimension is the center of the balance of interactions between dimensions of well-being (Achenbaum, 2020; Crisp, 2019; Kirca, 2019).

Furthermore, Kosiewicz (2014) explained that those who studied Islam and life satisfaction with several respondents found that positive religiosity would improve individual spiritual well-being. Akturk (2020) states that the higher the level of religiosity because it has a close feeling, God willing, the individual spiritual well-being will also increase.

Based on the description above, the researcher wants to take a deeper look at the dynamics of the spiritual well-being of students. *Santri* are students who live in Islamic boarding schools to develop science, both religion and other sciences, which must be developed their spiritual welfare. The purpose of this study is to implement Islamic counseling with a psycho-Sufistic approach to improve the spiritual welfare of students. It has been explained that spiritual well-being is closely

related to psychological health in individuals. Therefore, the value of Sufism is expected to be used as a counseling medium with Sufism nuances.

METHODS

The researcher used a qualitative method (Gerring, 2017; Gill, 2020; Hamilton & Finley, 2019). Since the problems in this study are very holistic, complex, dynamic, and full of meaning, besides that the researcher intends to understand the social situation in-depth, find patterns or models, hypotheses, and theories related to Sufistic counseling at *Pesantren Qudsiyyah* (Qudsiyyah Islamic Boarding School) Kudus as the object of this research study. Qualitative methods are research procedures that produce descriptive data in written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. This method is directed at the individual background holistically. In addition, the qualitative method used by this researcher can be said to be a qualitative research format that is inquiry, so that researcher can make comparisons by combining several techniques with varied orientations. In this study, several methods are used, including ecological psychology, holistic ethnography, and cognitive anthropology, while the orientation used as a reference is ethnographic studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of Sufistic Approach Islamic Counseling in Islamic Boarding Schools

Implementing Islamic counseling with a psycho-Sufistic approach for students at *Pesantren Qudsiyyah* Kudus has stages that must be passed by someone undergoing therapy, namely *takhalli* (cleansing oneself from despicable traits), *tahalli* (filling oneself with commendable traits), and *tajalli* (the reality of God).

First is *takhalli* (emptying oneself of despicable qualities). It is an effort to empty oneself of the attitude of dependence on the pleasures of worldly life. This stage will be achieved by abstaining from disobedience in all forms and trying to subdue the urges of lust. According to the Sufis, disobedience is divided into two, namely outward immorality and inner immorality. Birth immorality refers to all despicable behavior carried out by birth members, such as hands, mouth, and eyes. Meanwhile, inner disobedience is all despicable behavior committed by the inner member, namely

the heart. The Qur'an has informed that a unique and effective method to overcome feelings of sin is through repentance. Repenting to Allah SWT will make sins forgiven and strengthen the hope of His pleasure in humans. This situation will lighten the intensity of anxiety. Furthermore, repentance will usually encourage humans to correct themselves so that they do not fall into mistakes and disobedience for the second time. It will also help to increase human self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-satisfaction.

Allah has explained the virtue of repentance in various verses, such as in Surah an-Nisa: 146, Hud: 90, an-Nasr: 3, and many more. The essence of these verses is that Allah is Merciful and Forgiving of human sins and mistakes. Then Allah SWT has explained that repentance is the path to victory, and it is not reserved for sinners only but is a right for believers who want success and victory in this world and the hereafter. As explained in the hadiths of Bukhari and Muslim, the Messenger of Allah asked for forgiveness and repented a lot. He is a *ma'shum* person. Allah has forgiven his past and future sins, but he repents to Allah 100 times a day, and this is not a limitation but shows how much he is in *istighfar* and repents.

Moreover, for a counselee or client in therapy, the therapist or counselor must provide guidance and direction to empty themselves of despicable traits by repenting. While repenting, the counselee/client is also encouraged to fill and adorn himself with commendable qualities (*tahalli*).

This process of guiding repentance must proceed on fundamental principles, and without them, repentance will not be achieved. There is some principles: (1) Intention. That is simply repentance, and faith is hoping for pleasure, love, and encounter with Him; (2) *I'tikad*. That is the existence of prejudice and reasonable belief in Allah that He will indeed accept the repentance of His servants; (3) Purpose and objectives. Repentance is done to escape from the interference of the devil, jinn, and devils and eliminate the dirt and najis inherent in the self, heart, mind, mind, senses, and body; (4) *Ber'azm*. That is to strengthen oneself with all one's strength and conviction, that one will never repeat any actions that can pollute one's soul and spirit; (5) *'Uzlah*. That means isolating oneself for a while from the crowds of people and the world so the conversion can be successful; (6) *Khalwat*. That is to isolate oneself in a place to present a sense of the presence of Allah in one's life, by

increasing *dhikr* and *istighfar*; (7) *Adab*. That is the attitude of courtesy before God is doing repentance. The process of repentance should be opened by praying two *rak'ahs*, four *rak'ahs*, or more and always maintaining self-purity from *hadas* or anything that can invalidate it while in a state of remembrance; (8) Be under the guidance and supervision of an expert. The process of repentance carried out by a person must be under the guidance and supervision of an expert because if it is not feared, it will endanger the repentance process because shaitan, jinn, devils, and humans with all three souls do not feel happy, and they can disrupt the process at any time. can even mislead him. (9). Evaluation. The duties and responsibilities of the therapist or counselor in developing spiritual well-being, in addition to guiding and directing the process of understanding and application of repentance, also conducts evaluations (Fairuz, 2020).

Second, *tahalli* (adorning oneself with commendable qualities) attempts to adorn oneself with good qualities and attitudes and actions. Strive for every movement of behavior to always run on the provisions of religion, both external obligations or outward obedience and inner or inner obedience. What is meant by outward or outward obedience is formal obligations, such as prayer, fasting, zakat, and hajj, while inner/inner obedience includes faith, sincerity, and solemnity.

At this stage of *tahalli*, the counselee or client is encouraged to fill continuously in obedience. Some of the therapies that can be done are as follows:

(a) Therapy With Prayer. Prayer is the second pillar of Islam and is the most crucial worship; it is obligatory. Many verses of the Al-Qur'an that explain the virtues of prayer, including; al-Ankabut: 45, al-Ma'arij: 19-24, al-A'la: 14-15, al-An'am: 162, and many more. Although prayer is the obligation of all believers, the Sufis mention three levels of prayer. First, the level of *ta'abbud*, namely the believers who place prayer as a mere sharia obligation, if it is carried out by fulfilling the conditions and pillars, the perpetrator is free from the threat of hell and will go to heaven. Second, the level of *taqarrub*, which views prayer as a way (*tariqah*) to get closer to Allah. At this level, the *mushalli* get the validity of the prayer and seek to achieve closeness to Allah by increasing spiritual values. Third, the level of *tahaquq*, which views prayer as a way to reach *maqam hudhur* (feeling the presence of God), *ghaybah* (loss of awareness of other than God),

wushlah (meeting with God), and *musyahadah* (witnessing God). Prayer is a means to ask Allah for help from various problems and difficulties in life that are difficult to deal with. Word of Allah SWT in Surah al-Baqarah: 45, "And seek help through patience and prayer; and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah]," and verse 153, "O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient." The two verses above clearly Allah SWT commands His believing servants to ask Allah through patience and prayer. The application here is not limited to the origin of a good application for the benefit of life, both for oneself or for one's family and others, especially when experiencing a disaster or serious life problems. The standing of man solemnly and humbly before Allah SWT when praying will give him spiritual strength that gives birth to a feeling of spiritual clarity, peace of heart, and peace of mind. When praying, humans turn their heads with all their organs and senses to Allah SWT. At the same time, humans let go of all the busyness and problems of the world and do not think about anything other than Allah SWT. Full release and all the problems and worries of life, not thinking about it when praying and standing before his Lord with totality of solemnity, will, in turn, give birth to a state of total relaxation. Prayer is one of the activities that has the most potential to benefit the world and the hereafter and rejects the harm in the hereafter. Prayer will prevent the perpetrator from sinning, bring medicine for the heart, avoid various physical ailments, illuminate the heart, purify the face, make the organs of the body become spirit, bring sustenance, keep away from wrongdoing, will encourage the perpetrator to help people who are persecuted, has the potential to reduce turmoil lust, maintain pleasure, avoid torment, bring mercy, and eliminate anxiety. From the description of the primacy of prayer, prayer can be used as therapy for counselees or clients who experience mental and psychiatric disorders. Prayer will have a positive effect if you have been able to appreciate the nature of prayer. To reach the highest level requires continuous *riyadhah*.

(b) Therapy with Al-Quran Recitations. Al-Quran is the book of Allah. It is God's strong rope and a wise reminder, and a straight path. He is who is not mixed with lust, is not difficult to pronounce verbally, does not make scholars feel full reading it, does not create many rejections, and his miracles never break. It is the book of Allah that does not make the jinn want to stop

hearing it until they say, "Indeed we have heard a wonderful Qur'an, which points to the truth. Reading or reciting the holy verses of the Al-Quran can be used as therapy. It functions as a healer (*syifa*) from various psychological and even physical ailments. Verses of the Qur'an that explain this include Surah al-Isra: 82 and Fushilat: 44. Based on the explanation of these verses, a therapist or counselor is very appropriate to offer his clients who are confused in dealing with various life problems, whatever the problem, especially if it is just mental anxiety, to read the Qur'an as solemnly as possible even just listening to people reading the Qur'an. In addition, the therapist or counselor should also first practice reading the Qur'an in their daily lives and pay close attention to what the benefits of the Qur'an as a healer can be felt so that they do not hesitate in suggesting to clients to read the Qur'an as a means of therapy (Hayat, 2016: 144).

(c) Therapy with Dhikr. Dhikr is a form of counseling approach applied in *Pesantren Qudsiyyah*; the meaning is that a believer feels the power and majesty of Allah. He is the One who is All-Powerful and All-Victorious. In His hands control all things. If He wants something, say be it, and it will be. A believer, when in his soul feels the state of superiority and subordination to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, then he will fear Allah, fear His punishment, and hope for His reward. He fears no one but Allah and hopes for nothing but Allah's pleasure and reward.

When a Muslim continues *zikrullah*, he will feel close to Allah SWT and feel in His protection and care. This thing will generate confidence, security, peace, and happiness. This is as stated in Al-Baqarah verse 152. Dhikr can restore a person's lost consciousness because the activity of remembrance encourages a person to remember and recall things hidden in his heart. Dhikr can also remind someone that only Allah SWT makes and heals so that remembrance can suggest healing. Remembrance has the same value as relaxation therapy, a form of therapy that emphasizes efforts to deliver the counselee or client how he should rest and relax by reducing psychological tension or pressure. Many of the Sufistic psychologists have extraordinary calm and peace of mind (ar-Ra'd: 28).

The primary key to the state of their soul is to do dhikr. Therapy with prayer has virtues and rewards like dhikr and other worship. In fact, the prayer formula can bring peace of mind, heal anxiety, anxiety, and restlessness because the

person who prays will hope that Allah will grant his request; he believes in the word of Allah SWT (in Surah al-Baqarah: 186). In this verse, Allah explains that if a servant asks Him, he is ordered to carry out all His commands and believe in Him. Indeed, have hope in the string of prayer and believe that Allah SWT will grant the prayer can relieve the anxiety and restlessness of a believer. Such confidence will help him to be patient and create a feeling of calm. The therapists or counselors must continuously provide direction, guidance, and counseling to counselees or clients who experience mental disorders with various therapeutic methods mentioned above. Guidance, therapy and counseling cannot be done only once or twice; there must be continuity so that the counselee or client can develop their spiritual well-being and find their identity. If the spiritual well-being of the santri improves, it is expected that they will have a quality personality.

The third is *tajalli* (the revelation of God). The term Sufism means that God's appearance is absolute in the form of a limited nature. The concept of *tajalli* starts from the view that Allah SWT in His solitude (before this world) wanted to see Himself outside Himself. Therefore, He made this world. So this nature is a mirror for Allah SWT. When He wants to see Himself, He looks at nature. Another version explains that God wants to be known, so He also appears in the form of *tajalli*. This is the final process in the Sufistic approach. It is hoped that the counselees have excellent spiritual well-being.

Spiritual Strengthening of Well-Being Santri

The impact of the implementation of Islamic counseling with a psycho-Sufistic approach on *santri* can strengthen spiritual well-being in four domains. First, the personal domain. *Santri* in *Pesantren* have sensitivity to self-identity/identity, self-awareness, joy in life, inner peace mentally and spiritually, and the meaning of life. Second, the communal domain. *Santri* can develop themselves through: loving someone, forgiving others, trust between individuals, respect for others, and kindness towards others. Third, the environmental domain. In this way, *santri* can relate to nature, marvel at amazing sights, blend with nature, be amazed by the environment, and be in harmony with the environment. Fourth, the transcendental domains. *Santri* will get closer through worshipping the creator, personal relationship with God, oneness God, peace with God, and prayer in life.

Empirically from the results of research that

has been carried out related to spiritual well-being, it shows a strong relationship between Islamic Counseling with a psycho-Sufistic approach and individual spiritual well-being. The state of spiritual well-being is directly related to the dimension of individual spirituality.

Fisher (2016) explains that children and adolescents with strong spirituality and religion can strengthen spiritual well-being and low antisocial behavior. Meanwhile, Sugawa-Gaskin (2018) explains that spiritual well-being with quality of life has a consistent correlation. Spiritual well-being contributes to the quality of life (Roychowdhury, 2019; Salman & Lee, 2019). Individual involvement in spiritual and religious practices has been proven in various studies to positively impact health and the treatment of physical and mental disorders. Thus the level of individual spiritual well-being impacts individual development and quality of life as an indicator of a prosperous individual. When properly utilized, the integration of spirituality in counseling services can be a practical approach to facilitate change, hope, and enlightenment within the counselee (Iani et al., 2020; Love et al., 2017).

CONCLUSION

God has made humans caliph on earth; of course, it is His will. He is given a big task and responsibility to manage everything, and therefore, he must be ready to live it wholeheartedly. Every human being born from his mother's womb will undoubtedly experience different problems in the future. One of the many therapies that can be given is Islamic counseling with a psycho-Sufistic approach. In this approach, several steps must be taken, namely: *takhalli* (purging oneself of despicable qualities), *tahalli* (filling oneself with commendable qualities), and *tajalli* (the reality of God). The counselee is invited and guided to clean and distance himself from bad traits on an ongoing basis. After that, it is directed to fill it with as many good deeds as possible, including prayer, recitation of the Qur'an, remembrance, prayer, etc. This practice can be a therapy for anyone who wants to develop the spiritual well-being of *santri*. If the counselee can calm mentally by doing the *riyadhah*, then the next step is to develop spiritual well-being, which consists of four personal, communal, environmental, and transcendental domains.

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