

Islamic Counseling Guidance Program Model: Integration of Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Al-Ghazali's Psycho-Spiritual Approach for Substance Addiction

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Abstract: Substance addiction is increasing in Malaysia, causing physiological, psychological, social, and spiritual crises, particularly among Muslim patients who require holistic treatment. This study develops an integrated Islamic counseling model by combining principles of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), such as cognitive restructuring and relapse prevention, with al-Ghazali's psycho-spiritual concepts, including tazkiyat al-nafs, muhasabah, mujahadah, and istiqamah. Through conceptual analysis and a comprehensive literature review, this study proposes a model comprising five intervention phases—holistic assessment, self-awareness development, soul purification, behavioral modification, and consolidation—implemented through twelve structured sessions. The model aims to enhance sustainable recovery, reduce relapse rates, and support overall psychological and spiritual well-being among individuals experiencing substance addiction.

Keywords: Islamic Counseling; Substance Addiction; Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT); al-Ghazali's Psycho-Spiritual Approach

Abstrak: Ketagihan substans semakin meningkat di Malaysia, menyebabkan krisis fisiologi, psikologi, sosial, dan spiritual, khususnya dalam kalangan pesakit Muslim yang memerlukan rawatan holistik. Kajian ini membangunkan satu model kaunseling Islam bersepadu dengan menggabungkan prinsip Terapi Tingkah Laku Kognitif (*Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*, CBT), seperti penstrukturan semula kognitif dan pencegahan relaps, dengan konsep psiko-spiritual al-Ghazali, termasuk tazkiyat al-nafs, muhasabah, mujahadah, dan istiqamah. Melalui analisis konseptual dan kajian literatur yang komprehensif, kajian ini mencadangkan satu model yang merangkumi lima fasa intervensi penilaian holistik, pembangunan kesedaran sendiri, penyucian jiwa, pengubahsuaian tingkah laku, dan pengukuhan yang dilaksanakan melalui dua belas sesi berstruktur. Model ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan pemulihan yang mampan, mengurangkan kadar relaps, serta menyokong kesejahteraan psikologi dan spiritual secara menyeluruh dalam kalangan individu yang mengalami ketagihan substans.

Kata Kunci: Kaunseling Islam; ketagihan substans; terapi tingkah laku kognitif (CBT); pendekatan psiko-spiritual al-Ghazali

INTRODUCTION

Substance addiction is a growing social and public health problem in Malaysia. Reports from the National Anti-Drug Agency (AADK) indicate that the number of new cases continues to increase each year, particularly those involving synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine and

heroin. Addiction not only disrupts physiological functioning but also affects psychological well-being, family relationships, economic stability, and broader social structures. In the context of Muslim patients, addiction is frequently associated with a spiritual crisis and a loss of direction in life.

Modern treatment approaches that rely solely on medication and psychotherapy are often insufficient to address the spiritual dimension of addiction. Nevertheless, psychological research has demonstrated the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) as an evidence-based intervention for treating addiction by modifying maladaptive thought patterns and high-risk behaviors. CBT also offers a clear therapeutic structure, systematic techniques, and empirically validated processes of cognitive and behavioral change. However, interventions that do not integrate spiritual dimensions—regardless of religious background—may fail to adequately support holistic recovery. For example, the Methadone Substitution Therapy Program implemented in Malaysia primarily functions as a harm-reduction strategy by reducing the risks associated with needle use and HIV transmission. Although this objective is achieved, many clients remain dependent on substitute substances, indicating that deeper psychological and spiritual issues remain unresolved. From the perspective of clients or counselees, such therapeutic approaches do not sufficiently address the inner dimensions of recovery, as aspects such as *tazkiyah*, *tawbah*, and the individual's relationship with Allah are often neglected.

In this regard, the psycho-spiritual framework of Imam al-Ghazali is highly relevant. Al-Ghazali emphasizes soul purification, *mujahadah* (self-struggle), *mahasabah* (self-reflection), and moral self-development as foundations for personal transformation and self-regulation. These concepts are conceptually compatible with the structured framework of CBT and can be effectively integrated. Therefore, there is a pressing need to develop an integrated Islamic counseling model that combines CBT with al-Ghazali's psycho-spiritual principles to support holistic recovery from substance addiction across biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions.

METODOLOGY

This study employs a conceptual analysis approach using secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and doctoral dissertations relevant to substance addiction, CBT, and Islamic psycho-spirituality. The analysis focuses on synthesizing CBT principles with the psycho-spiritual concepts articulated by al-Ghazali to develop an integrated and applicable Islamic counseling model (Saper, 2018). Data collected from empirical CBT studies help identify therapeutic techniques that have been proven effective in cognitive and behavioral modification. These techniques are subsequently aligned with al-Ghazali's psycho-spiritual

principles to ensure theoretical coherence and practical applicability (Idris, 2023). This integration seeks to harmonize the structured methodology of CBT with the rich spiritual dimensions of al-Ghazali's thought, thereby creating a holistic approach to addiction recovery. In addition, a review of international literature on substance addiction provides insights into best practices and recent innovations in global therapeutic interventions (Ariff, 2025).

Through an in-depth literature review, the conceptual framework of the proposed counseling model is developed based on the integration of cognitive-behavioral components and Islamic spiritual dimensions. This approach aims to construct a model that not only addresses the behavioral symptoms of addiction but also targets its underlying psychological and spiritual roots, in line with al-Ghazali's conceptualization of soul purification and the cultivation of inner well-being, as reflected in the Tazkiyah al-Nafs model (Cucchi, 2022). Additionally, this study examines the effectiveness of integrated Islamic therapeutic approaches in promoting psychological well-being through a review of recent empirical literature. A comprehensive narrative review was conducted across three main domains: (1) Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, (2) Islamic psychology as represented in peer-reviewed academic literature, and (3) faith-integrated therapeutic models relevant to Muslim populations. To ensure breadth and accessibility, literature searches were conducted using Google Scholar and PubMed, guided by keywords such as "CBT," "Islamic psychology," "Muslim mental health," and "faith-integrated therapy."

RESULT

Based on the developed conceptual framework, the proposed counseling model adopts a modular session structure that allows flexibility and individualization according to clients' needs. Each module is designed to progressively integrate CBT techniques with al-Ghazali's psycho-spiritual dimensions, ensuring a holistic approach to addiction recovery. Early sessions focus on the identification of negative automatic thoughts and core beliefs related to substance use, followed by the application of cognitive restructuring techniques integrated with practices of self-reflection and tazkiyat al-nafs.

Subsequent sessions emphasize the development of coping skills and relapse prevention strategies framed through Islamic values such as patience, trust in divine decree, and perseverance. Daily spiritual practices, including prayer and dhikr, are incorporated as self-regulation and resilience-building strategies to prevent relapse (Harianti et al., 2022). Individual counseling formats commonly used in CBT, typically involving four to seven sessions, are adapted to facilitate this process, with each session encompassing assessment, problem identification, therapeutic intervention, and independent practice tasks (Idris, 2023).

The findings indicate that the integration of CBT and al-Ghazali's psycho-spiritual approach is not merely parallel but mutually reinforcing. CBT provides a systematic, evidence-based therapeutic structure, while al-Ghazali's framework contributes profound spiritual and moral depth. This integration enables the development of a comprehensive therapeutic framework that addresses addictive behaviors while restoring the individual's spiritual and ethical dimensions (Abas & Sahad, 2021). CBT techniques can also be mapped onto Islamic concepts such as *tawakkul*, *shukr*, and *taqwa*, thereby enhancing therapeutic effectiveness through cultural and spiritual relevance (Ariff, 2025).

Furthermore, the emphasis on heart purification, self-awareness, and introspection in al-Ghazali's teachings aligns closely with CBT's objective of fostering cognitive and behavioral change. This integrated model demonstrates strong potential for application in rehabilitation settings in Malaysia, where Islamic psycho-spiritual approaches may enhance client acceptance, engagement, and treatment compliance (Abdullah et al., 2020). The model also supports the development of structured and meaningful daily activities, contributing to improved self-regulation and post-rehabilitation adjustment (Fitri & Widyastuti, 2021).

Overall, the integrated approach contributes to recovery outcomes by strengthening psychological resilience through the internalization of religious values, providing a robust moral and ethical framework, restoring psychological and spiritual balance, and offering renewed meaning and hope to Muslim clients (Farihah & Rachman, 2017; Cucchi, 2022; Othman et al., 2020).

DISCUSSION

Several key questions underlie the development of an integrated framework suitable for clinical practice in addiction recovery. These include how CBT techniques such as cognitive restructuring and skills training can be adapted to align with Islamic psycho-spiritual principles, and how effective such integration is in improving recovery outcomes and preventing relapse among Muslim patients. From a cognitive-behavioral psychology perspective, addiction is conceptualized as a learned behavioral pattern reinforced through cognitive distortions and environmental contingencies. CBT-based interventions are therefore effective in identifying and modifying maladaptive thoughts and behaviors that maintain substance use (Tajiri, 2019). However, further empirical research is required to evaluate the clinical efficacy of the proposed model through controlled intervention studies and objective outcome measurements. Assessing cultural adaptation and spiritual relevance is also essential to ensure acceptance and sustained engagement among Muslim clients.

The integration of Islamic psycho-spiritual concepts such as tawbah, tawakkul, and muhasabah provides a strong foundation for restoring psychological and spiritual well-being among individuals with addiction. Islamic psychotherapy, grounded in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, offers conceptual and therapeutic frameworks for addressing mental health challenges (Machsun, 2020). Incorporating additional concepts such as intention (niyyah) and fitrah may further enhance motivation and self-efficacy in Islamic counseling contexts (Che Wili & Othmanii, 2022).

Optimal intervention design requires the systematic integration of CBT techniques with al-Ghazali's psycho-spiritual practices to stabilize emotions, strengthen coping strategies, and build spiritual resilience (Ariff, 2025). Addressing addiction through a spiritual and religious framework has been shown to significantly support recovery processes (Shafie et al., 2019). By embedding daily religious practices such as prayer, dhikr, and communal worship into therapy, the integrated model fosters inner peace, social support, and a strong sense of purpose rooted in Islamic monotheism (Ahmad Sabki et al., 2018).

CANCLUSION

The proposed model emphasizes that substance addiction cannot be effectively treated through a one-dimensional approach. Instead, it requires the integration of modern psychological interventions with spiritual traditions, particularly Islamic psycho-spirituality, which offers rich moral guidance and frameworks for soul development. Islamic counselors must possess a sound understanding of both CBT and Islamic spiritual principles to deliver holistic and contextually relevant treatment for Muslim clients.

This integrated model enriches counseling practice by addressing psychological challenges while nurturing spiritual growth, thereby filling a significant gap in the literature on the integration of CBT and Islamic psycho-spiritual perspectives. The application of this model holds strong potential for developing effective and sustainable interventions for substance addiction among Muslim populations, particularly within post-rehabilitation and community-based settings. It is anticipated that, with further empirical validation, a comprehensive Islamic therapy model may stand on par with CBT in both empirical support and practical implementation.

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