



A PARADIGM ON INDIGENOUS COUNSELING OF SPIRITUALITY IN PESANTREN EDUCATION CULTURE

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Abstract

The paradigm shift from colonialism to postcolonialism has a remarkable contribution on the construction of indigenous counseling foundations that presented an epistemology derived from local wisdom. Indigenous counseling recognizes universal standards of truth depend on cultural and subcultural values and knowledge, which do not have to be subject to the recognition and validation of Western rationalities. Indigenous counseling builds knowledge of the interconnection and interdependence dimensions, the relationship between humans transcends the physical world. Indigenous Counseling of Spirituality in Pesantren education culture is a paradigm that proposes views on human nature, theoretical foundations, and how counseling is aligned with the world view of the pesantren community spirituality. The philosophy of postcolonialism is functioned as the cornerstone of indigenous counseling in general, while Sunni philosophy is a paradigm of thinking to construct indigenous counseling of spirituality in pesantren education culture.

Keywords: *Counseling paradigm, cultural values, indigenous counseling, pesantren education, spiritual counseling.*

Abstrak

Pergeseran paradigma dari kolonialisme ke pascakolonialisme memberikan kontribusi luar biasa terhadap konstruksi fondasi konseling *indigenous* yang menghadirkan epistemologi dari kearifan lokal. Konseling *indigenous* mengakui standar kebenaran universal yang bergantung pada nilai-nilai dan pengetahuan budaya dan subkultural, yang tidak harus tunduk pada pengakuan dan validasi rasionalitas Barat. Konseling *indigenous* membangun pengetahuan pada dimensi interkoneksi dan interdependensi, hubungan antar manusia melampaui dunia fisik. Konseling *Indigenous* Spiritual dalam budaya pendidikan pesantren merupakan paradigma yang mengemukakan pandangan tentang hakikat manusia, landasan teori, dan keselarasan konseling dengan pandangan dunia spiritual masyarakat pesantren. Filsafat postkolonialisme difungsikan sebagai landasan konseling pribumi secara umum, sedangkan filsafat Sunni merupakan paradigma



berpikir untuk mengkonstruksi konseling *indigenous* dalam budaya pendidikan pesantren.

Kata Kunci: Konseling *indigenous*, konseling spiritual, nilai budaya, paradigma konseling, pendidikan pesantren,

Introduction

Counseling services in Asian countries are increasingly recognized and relevant to their typical needs (Leung & Chen, 2009), especially after the emergence of indigenous counseling. The previous approach, multicultural counseling (Lee et al., 2007; Pedersen et al., 2002; Sue & Sue, 2008) although globally it can address issues of racial and ethnic inequality in counseling theory and praxis in regard of recognition on cultural diversity of individuals (U. Kim et al., 2000), however, the issue of the importation of knowledge from West to East has always raised the same question including in multicultural counseling literature that represents only minority groups in the U.S. and is only relevant for socio-political conditions in the U.S. (Ho, 1998; B. S. K. Kim et al., 2001; U. Kim et al., 2006).

There is a particular awareness has emerged in Asia, that the theory of universal multicultural counseling in the West is not universal (U. Kim, 2000). Then multiculturalism alone is not enough, but it also *needs* to be indigenous and need for indigenization (Ho, 1998; U. Kim et al., 2000; U. Kim & Berry, 1993). Indigenous *philosophy* (le Grange & Mika, 2018) is a collective view of the entire indigenous peoples of the world – people who have and are constantly experiencing attachment to the places they inhabit throughout the lifespan. The strong relationship with the local environment demonstrates the distinctive philosophies of each different indigenous community. The physical and non-physical dimensions are understood to be interrelated and localized, relying on the peculiarities of the history and landscape of society itself.

Indigenous *information* is a source of knowledge (Enriquez, 1993). Indigenous *approach* advocated by Kim and colleagues (U. Kim, 2000; U. Kim et al., 2000; U. Kim & Berry, 1993) is an example that uses a *bottom-up* approach. In a

cultural context, the human being interacts with his natural environment so that the culture provides a framework for understanding what is meaningful, relevant and unique (Kim, 2000).

Counseling as a helping relationship must be placed within a cultural framework and must be adapted to ethnic values and ways of life (Brammer, 1988). The helping relationship between counselee and counselor is essentially embedded in cultural norms (Flückiger et al., 2018a), counseling must be integrated with local cultures and traditions to enable counselors interacting and connecting with individuals with ethnic backgrounds (Cochran & Cochran, 2015).

The position of the help relationship, the role of helper/ counselor, and the life values of helpee/ counselee is highly possible to have diverse concepts and interpreted differently in a cultural context (Brammer, 1988). For example, in the culture of ethnic communities, individuals often ask for help from authority figures based on expectations and structures in that culture that the personages have special skills or knowledge which provide guidance regarding the interests of daily life. (Kitano & Matsushima, 2002).

As happened in Indonesia, widespread acceptance of Islamic education has colored various aspects of life so that the life values of the *santri* (students of Islamic boarding school) were heavily influenced Islamic teachings in *Pondok Pesantren* (Islamic boarding school). This explains why the respect for *Kiai* as a religious teacher is very high and learns from *Kiai* as a commendable person, who masters religious science, and has a noble character is the main choice for religious Indonesian people (Hefni, 2019; Pribadi, 2013; Sukanto, 1999; van Bruinessen, 2012).

Maintaining *silaturahmi* (affection-based relationship) and asking religious leaders for guidance is part of the tradition practiced by *santri*. In the landscape of the *santri* society, the role of the *Kiai* has a great influence in the development of self-development, way of thinking, spiritual life, and community behavior (Dhofier, 2011; Pribadi, 2013). *Santri* generally establishes a balance of life between physical

and psychic by studying and reciting to *Kiai*, visiting *Kiai* to ask for *dua* (prayer), good deeds, and *baraka* (blessing). Even the *santri* ask *Kiai's* guidance on various things in their life ranging from learning success, work problems, hoping for advice and wisdom, consulting about marriage, and spiritual needs (Dhofier, 2011).

The helping relationship beyond the explanation of established Western theories are considered as *unstructured relationships* (Brammer, 1988). Hence, the relationship between *Kiai* and *santri* on the one hand is the relationship between teachers and students, and on the other hand is the relationship between *helper* and *helpee*. The emerging models of helping relationships are vary according to the cultural context provides a framework for understanding what is meaningful, relevant, and distinctive (U. Kim, 2000) thereby it can answer the needs of the local community in accordance with the distinctive philosophy of the local community (Mika & Stewart, 2018).

Developing the concept of counseling based on the local wisdom value is also relevant to the changing 21st century counseling trends that have moved definitively from the diagnostic microscope of the previous era and towards contextual strategies that are only possible to realize by utilizing the cultural lens of the community (Lewis et al., 2011). This movement reflects a major change in the attitudes and perspectives of typical counselors and in the counseling profession as a whole. Counseling theory that emphasizes the relationship between humans and the environment as a whole has become the main principle of 21st century counseling because environmental factors are very strong to improve or limit human development (Grayshield et al., 2020).

Counselors cannot understand individuals without seeing them in the context of their families, and cannot understand individuals and families without placing them in their cultural context (Bridges et al., 2019; Laszloffy & Davis, 2019). The cultural value of counseling should be the main concern of the counselor aimed at not hindering the formation of trust in the counseling relationship (Zayts-Spence et al., 2021). Accordingly, counseling with a specific ethnic group requires a

foundation of knowledge of individuals in the ethnic group (Bogue, 2011; Wark et al., 2019). By involving *indigenous* cultural values in counseling relationships, counseling services are increasingly recognized and relevant to the unique needs of ethnic communities (Leung & Chen, 2009).

Methods

This study is designed as a conceptual-philosophical inquiry rather than an empirical investigation, utilizing a traditional literature review method to synthesize a framework for indigenous spiritual counseling within the *pesantren* educational context. The literature selection process was guided by specific keywords, including "counseling paradigm," "cultural values," "indigenous counseling," "pesantren education," and "spiritual counseling." To ensure both theoretical depth and contemporary relevance, the selection criteria integrated classical Islamic texts and modern academic literature. Classical works, particularly from the Sunni tradition, were prioritized to establish the ontological foundations of human nature, while contemporary scholarship—ranging from seminal postcolonial theories in the 1990s to recent developments in indigenous psychology up to 2021—was analyzed to provide a modern theoretical lens for the paradigm shift toward localized counseling practices.

Within this framework, books and articles on postcolonial philosophy, Sunni philosophy, and indigenous counseling serve as the primary analytical references. Postcolonial philosophy is employed to examine the spirit of counter-colonialism as the foundational philosophy underlying the emergence of indigenous counseling. Simultaneously, Sunni philosophy functions as a tool for analyzing human nature, human needs, and the ultimate purpose of life within a spiritual context. These perspectives are synthesized through indigenous counseling theory to analyze humans as cultural beings whose viewpoints and life goals are rooted in specific cultural values. This approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of how individuals develop across emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and spiritual dimensions, grounded in the

concepts of interconnection and interdependence that characterize the *pesantren* community.

Results and Discussion

A. Postcolonialism as a Cornerstone

The endeavor to examine a meaningful knowledge, values, beliefs and world view for local communities from the viewpoint of local peoples themselves is rooted from a study of decolonization or philosophy of Postcolonialism. Postcolonialism is a philosophy that challenges Western hegemony including claims of universal truth over the products of science, challenges the claim that true and logical science is the one that originated from the West, and opposes the dominant paradigm of eurocentrism dates back to colonization. Postcolonialism is considered relevant to indigenous studies because its study area includes: (1) Awareness of being colonized, (2) Ethnic, culture, political autonomy, dan (3) Growing awareness of local knowledge (Mika & Stewart, 2018; Said, 2003).

First, there is a consciousness to resist colonial authority and domination in various aspects of life. Second, postcolonialism is dedicated to terminate inequality and injustice, along with the recognition of the principles of cultural, social and ecological diversity. The recognition of cultural diversity is a momentum for freedom and autonomy based on the culture in which the self is formed and experiences meaning. Third, postcolonialism supports subaltern cultures and knowledge that historically considered as trivial value; in fact, has developed as rich cultural and counter-knowledge resources. Postcolonialism takes seriously local knowledge that has been rejected as primitive and unrealistic 'scientific' knowledge status (Carey & Festa, 2009; McLeod, 2007; Mika & Stewart, 2018; Said, 2003; Young, 2003).

Following the spirit of postcolonialism, Indigenous Psychology is present as a scientific study of the native human behavior or mind, which is not transported from other regions, and which is designed for its society. Indigenous psychology

tests the knowledge, skills, and beliefs that people have about themselves and studies these aspects in their natural context. Indigenous psychology is an approach in which the content (i.e., meaning, values, and beliefs), and context (i.e., family, social, cultural, and ecological) is explicitly incorporated into the research design (U. Kim et al., 2006; U. Kim & Berry, 1993; Ward, 2007).

In a practical-ideological setting, indigenous counseling is developed by referring to what is local, native, or original of a geographic area. Indigenous philosophy is a collective view of all the indigenous peoples of the world – people who own and are constantly attached to the places they inhabit in the long run. The forceful relationship with the local environment demonstrates the distinctive philosophies of different indigenous communities. Based on the philosophy of postcolonialism, indigenous counseling views that the Western paradigm has explanatory limitations in the knowledge and behavior context of ethnic societies that are interconnected with each other. The basic theory constructs are interconnection and interdependence – a univocality, cultural propriety, and cultural integrity (Calderon, 2008; Grayshield et al., 2020; Jacob et al., 2015; le Grange & Mika, 2018; Mahmoudi et al., 2012; Mika & Stewart, 2018).

The postcolonialism philosophy is used as a foundation of scientific thinking to explore affection-based relationship between *santri* and *Kiai* (student and teacher) as a cultural entity in the context of *Pondok Pesantren* which in practice have a knowledge base sourced from the *Kitab Kuning* (Muslim philosophy ancient book), traditional Islamic traditions, and academic traditions of *pesantren*. Indigenous psychology is used to examine the knowledge, skills, and beliefs that people have about themselves and how they function in their family, social, cultural, and ecological contexts. It emphasizes obtaining a descriptive understanding of human functioning in a cultural context. And indigenous counseling is used as a context and reference for forms of guidance and helping relationships that are distinctive and relevant to *pesantren* communities. Indigenous counseling tries to understand how individuals live interacting each other beyond what can be

understood by the thinking of Western counseling. Counseling practice involves four interconnected, complementary, and inseparable elements including mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual elements.

B. Sunni Philosophy Overview on Indigenous Counseling of Spirituality in *Pesantren*

1. The Human Nature

The Sunni Philosophy with one of its prominent figure Imam al-Ghazâlî (1058-1111 AD) views human as essentially having an inherent tendency to achieve a goal which they believed morally good (Al-Ghazâlî, n.d.). Humans are made up of two substances, the body that is material and the soul that is immaterial (*al-nafs*). The essence of human is *al-nafs* which distinguish them from all existing creatures. There are three levels of *Al-nafs*: *al-nafs al-nabatiyat* (vegetative soul), *al-nafs al-hayawaniyat* (sensitive soul) and *al-nafs al-insâniyat/ al-nafs al-nathiqat* (rational soul). The highest is *al-nafs al-nathiqat* distinguishing human from everything that exists. *Al-nafs* consists of intellectual functions (*nathiqah*) and intuitive functions (*al-dzauq*) (Al-Ghazâlî, n.d.). With those two potentials, the main criterion of a perfect human being is intellectual maturity and intuition. Self-maturity, thus, is characterized by an increase of intellectual and intuitive functions according to their respective roles.

Those function of ideal human leads to earnest intentions in seeking and pursuing knowledge as well as blessing of knowledge from Allah Swt. Sheikh Az-Zarnuji argues that the essence of human is their ability to obtain knowledge and with science knowledge human can fulfill his obligations as a creature of Allah (az-Zarnuji, 1948). Being pious people are more important than people who worship without knowledge. A man who seeks knowledge is facilitated his way to heaven. The noble human is the one who puts his/her knowledge into practice (Zainuddin, 1970).

In sum, human nature in the view of Sunni philosophy is *al-nafs*, which is interpreted as a soul that has a tendency to achieve what is good and human fullness is a condition when human beings have the maturity of intellectual and intuitive functions. Likewise, human has potential to acquire meritorious science, not merely for current life, but also the future and hereafter life. Individuals who continue to learn and deepen their knowledge have the virtues of both the world and the hereafter, and an excellent human is one who contributes his/ her knowledge as evidence of his/ her responsibility as a creature of Allah Swt.

The Sunni clerics believes that the nature of human is a very fundamental problem and has a connection with the purpose of human life. *Al-nafs* who consistently do commendable deeds with divinity orientations, at a certain level, can achieve *al-nafs al-muthmainnah* (al-Ghazâlî, n.d.). However, the Sunni scholars also agreed that to achieve glory and authenticity, many individuals have obstacles and inadequacies; consequently, they need guidance from Allah through the Apostles and the Quran, but if their intellectual and soul functions are not capable to directly understand the Quran and get the light of knowledge, then they must seek knowledge and guidance from the scholars or pious teachers/ *Kiai*.

Learn to and guided by *Kiai* in the santri life is realized through two methods, first, learn as a student in *Pondok Pesantren* during a certain period of time, and second, continuesly maintain good relations with *Kiai* even after graduated from *Pondok Pesantren* by visiting *Kiai*. The last tradition is called as *silaturrahmi* (affection-based relationship). For *santri*, *silaturrahmi* is an attempt to maintain inner bond with *Kiai* as their teacher at once the pious figure. *Silaturrahmi* is considered as a crucial factor to receive *wasilah* (spiritual intermediary) through the depth of religious science and spiritual power of pious figures (van Bruinessen, 2012). Learning as well as *silaturrahmi* is substantially interpreted as scientific and spiritual chains connected to

Cleric, until Apostle, and therefore to Allah Swt. This belief is known as intellectual genealogy which connects to *Kiai* and then the teacher of the *Kiai*, the earlier Clerics from whom the knowledge was learned who are interconnected to the Messenger of Allah; therefore, the knowledge mastered by *Kiai* subsequently taught to his *santris* has a source of scientific chain that is recognized as legitimate, decent, meritorious and has spiritual strength (Dhofier, 2011).

Silaturrahmi to *Kiai* is believed to be a way of obtaining *baraka*. The *Kiai's* personal morals and level of religious knowledge are believed to be factors that can bring blessings to *santris* who study from him (az-Zarnuji, 1948). *Baraka* comes from Allah Swt., but Sunni scholars opine that *baraka* can be obtained through the intermediary of pious teachers, who are consistent in their worship as a sign of always remembering Allah Swt., their deep understanding of the religious sciences underlies his words and behavior, and his godliness guides him away from mundane interests (Asy'ari, 2016; Zainuddin, 1970).

Wasilah and *baraka* are two main reasons for *santris* in maintaining *silaturrahmi* in the long-term with pious teachers in *Pesantren*. After graduated from *pesantren*, *silaturrahmi* is undertaken at a certain time, it is strived for a lifetime by *santri*. *Wasilah* and *baraka* represent something that is hoped, is also a life purpose, which directs the *santri's* behavior towards longlife positive self-development, and encourage *santri* to think and behave as humans who have faith and science.

2. Substantive Purpose of Indigenous Counseling of Spirituality in Pesantren

Retaining *silaturrahmi* in *santri's* everyday life aims for their various needs, each *santri* who visited *Kiai* has different personal purpose based on their wants and needs. Basically, those purposes cannot be separated from the nature of *silaturrahmi*, hoping for *baraka*, asking for *dua*, conducting *deliberation*, to get advice and wisdom, and to replenish spiritual needs. There

are three classifications of *silaturrahmi* orientations: affectual needs, spiritual needs, and practical needs. Affectual needs are related to inner happiness and satisfaction, spiritual needs represent an inner relationship with the Kiai who mediates blessings and *wasilah*, and practical needs are advice, suggestions, or opinions that need to be practiced in everyday life.

Frequently, *silaturrahmi* is undertaken merely to fulfill the longing of *santri* to their teachers. The fulfillment of this kind of affective need is merely to affirm the spiritual-inner bond between the *santri* and the *Kiai*. In addition to teacher, *santri* regard *Kiai* as parents who have such significant roles in *santri*'s life as educator and guidance figure who teach knowledge and wisdom as life provision. These values are taught and lived through learning a *kitab kuning* entitled *Ta'limul Muata'allim*, that the person who teaches science is parents in religion (Az-Zarnuji, 1984). Inner satisfaction when meeting a pious teacher fosters feelings of happiness and peace in *santri*'s soul. Through *silaturrahmi*, *santri* get insight and wisdom, positive energy, and are motivated to do good and beneficial things, practice knowledge better, and to improve the quality of deed and worship to Allah SWT.

The pursuit of *baraka* and *wasilah* is a spiritual orientation. *Baraka* derived from Arabic words which means goodness, virtue, prosperity, and happiness; and increase of good deeds (*ziyadatul khoir*) (Munawwir, 1984). *Baraka* is all good things in life can be obtained through intermediary pious teachers. Firstly, it comes as meritorious knowledge, afterwards it is contributed to the society then it develops as gratitude and satisfaction with career, family life, and all aspects of life. Meanwhile, the *wasilah* is related to the importance of spiritual connectedness to the Messenger of Allah and therefore to Allah Swt through *Kiai* as the center of religious knowledge who has closeness to Allah Swt., is believed can deliver *wasilah* because their ability as transcendent spiritual teacher.

Practical needs are concerned the personal problems of *santri*. In this case, students expect advice directly, *Kiai*'s advice is then used as a guide to find solutions to overcome *santri*'s life problems. Even though *dua* and *dzikr* has spiritual dimensions; it however is frequently used for practical purpose, it has therapeutical effects on psychological issues and is believed can ease of sustenance and facilitate business, and for a variety of other daily life solutions.

3. The Meaning of Preserving Student-Teacher Relationship

Pesantren culture places high respect on *Kiai* as a religious leader and studying from *Kiai* as a commendable person, who masters religious science, and has a noble character is the main choice of religious communities in Indonesia (Hefni, 2019; Pribadi, 2013; Sukamto, 1999; van Bruinessen, 2012). In the Sunni scientific tradition, learning from clerics and pious teachers needs to be pursued throughout life regardless of age and status. Students will not gain knowledge and its benefits, except by glorifying knowledge, along with the teacher (who teaches it), and honor the teacher. Knowledge that is perfect in goodness is knowledge obtained from the words of scholars because scholars memorize things by choosing the good ones, which they have heard. As well as saying something better, already memorized (Az-Zarnuji, 1984).

The pesantren tradition also develops a system of relationships that last a lifetime between *Kiai* and *santri*/teacher and students, so forgetting the relationship with the teacher is a negative thing and can eliminate the *baraka*. (Dhofier, 2011). The legacy of maintaining good relations between *Kiai* as teachers and students as students is taught in various *Pesantren* through various forms of interaction between the two. In the Sunni scientific tradition implemented in *Pesantren*, the values of the *baraka* of knowledge and the *baraka* of teachers are taught through the *Kitab Kuning*, including: *Ta'limul Muta'allim* (Az-Zarnuji, 1948), *Adabul 'Alim wal Muta'allim* (Asy'ari, 2016), *Hidayatul Adzkiya'* karya Syekh (Zainuddin, 1970) and *Ihya' Ulumuddin* (Al-Ghazâlî, n.d.).

Silaturrahmi is an attempt to maintain that long lasting affection-based relationship. Although it represents the pattern and dynamics of the relationship between *Kiai* and santri, it is also closely related to the effort of seeking knowledge throughout life and the importance of knowledge-based actions so that the terms teacher's blessing and knowledge blessing are very popular and interpreted as very fundamental things among santri. In this case, Az-Zarnuji (1984) described that knowledge is a gift from God specifically given to the human race. Science becomes noble because it is a means to get *taqwa* to Allah Swt. Science becomes an advantage and symbol for every commendable thing.

One of the requirements for obtaining knowledge, according to Imam Syafi'i in *Ta'limul Muta'allim*, is to maintain good relations and pay attention to the teacher's instructions. A person who seeks knowledge only for the purpose of the hereafter, then he will obtain happiness, grace and direction from Allah. With such intentions, humans can go to the truth and obtain virtue. While the damage is great for someone who does something without the basis of religious rules and the damage is even greater if there are people who perform worship without knowledge.

Thereby, *silaturrahmi* to pious teachers by the santri community is considered a special moment and interpreted in a sacred way because the *Kiai* visited is a charismatic pious teacher, heir to the Prophets and Apostles, and an opener to the light of knowledge, knowledge from them is a blessing for life (Asy'ari, 2016; az-Zarnuji, 1948). *Kiai-santri* relationship pattern (as an inseparable educational, psychological and spiritual relationship), although with different motivations, is the most *indigenous* educational culture (Madjid, 1997; van Bruinessen, 2012) and has cultivated in the traditions of the people of the Nusantara (Irawan M.N., 2018).

C. Indigenous Counseling of Spirituality and The Universality of Helping Relationship

Broad acceptance of Islamic teachings affects aspects of Indonesian people's lives, including the establishment of many *Pesantren* as an education system that is prioritized by religious communities in Indonesia (Dhofier, 2011; Irawan M.N., 2018; Rifai, 2007). With the magnitude of the *pesantren* influence, the ethics and traditions of pesantren continue to be carried out by the *santri* community as a guide to live a good and useful life.

The history of Islam is not a single history, the influence of religious beliefs and traditions of pre-Islamic times in the Nusantara has a lot of influence on Islamic traditions. In historical review (Irawan M.N., 2018), the practice of *silaturrahmi to pious teachers* – For example, the Javanese call it *sowan* and Madurese people call it *nyabis*– has been practiced by the people of the Nusantara since pre-Islamic times, that the practice of *sowan* in Chinese news from the 7th century is found in the Tuk Mas inscription and the Sojomerto inscription in Central Java. Both inscriptions show the influence of India. At that time *sowan* was done by visiting someone who mastered science to learn, asking for advice, opinions, views, or all things related to science. This practice was carried out centuries ago since the days of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms.

The tradition of pesantren is inherited and maintained from time to time (Azra, 1999). First, *nyabis* as a pesantren tradition, although historically and anthropologically influenced by various traditions from other cultures such as Hindu-Buddhist (Dhofier, 2011; Irawan M.N., 2018), has been adapted to Islamic values. Second, *pesantren* culture in Indonesia which is historically and intellectually influenced by various sources such as Islam Haramain (Mecca-Medina) (Abdullah, 1987; Dhofier, 2011; Lombard, 2006), Egypt (van Bruinessen, 2012), and India (Steenbrink, 1986), by the Ulama have been reinterpreted and adapted to the local wisdom of the Nusantara, so that *nyabis*

as a pesantren tradition has evolved cultural inculturation and becomes a sustainable tradition.

The *nyabis* tradition remains to be practiced because on the one hand there are individuals who need guidance and assistance and on the other hand there are individuals who have the capacity to provide guidance and assistance. So *nyabis* has relevance to the universality of helping because in the history of human life, helping is a function of all interested humans and is not limited to certain professions. (Brammer, 1988). Helping others is essentially a process that allows individuals to grow in their chosen direction, solve problems, and deal with crises. Helping facilitates awareness of those alternatives and assesses readiness for action. Helping is first and foremost about people seeking help (Egan, 1994). Assistance, however, must be determined primarily by the helpees, who choose their own growth goals, and who also determine whether they want help. To avoid feeling dependent (*feeling patronized*), helpees define the desired help in their own terms and to meet their own needs. The important point is the voluntary quality of the helping process.

Finally, helping lasts throughout the life span. Each developmental period, and the transitions between developmental phases. Helping can make a difference in all human encounters (Carkhuff, 2008). Professional counselors typically view helping as time-limited and problem-focused, whereas informal helpers (for example pious teachers, called *Kiai* or *Ulama*) tend to view their help as ongoing, broad-based support that is concentrated on the person's changing needs. In the context of wider societal life, individuals need different forms of assistance at different periods of their lives.

D. Constructive Definition of Counseling Relationship

Considering the nature of the relationship between *santri* and *Kiai*, thus, the helping relationship in indigenous counseling of spirituality should be based on *silaturrahmi* values. Counseling relationships are not merely formal transactional relationships, but rather holistic collaborative (Rogers, 1957;

Zetzel, 2003) which can strengthen the kinship and affection. This kind of relation is a fundamental aspect in the counseling relationship as the concept of therapeutic alliance which emphasizes the importance of the counselors to build personal attachment (Horvath, 2001). This concept accentuates the conscious aspect of the relationship (as opposed to the subconscious process) and the holistic achievement of the collaborative "working together" aspect of the relationship.

Counseling relationship should be indigenous-professional relationship between helper dan helpee, between counselor dan counselee so that the relationship is established on the basis of affection where the counselor accepts the counselee as a relative. According to (Cochran & Cochran, 2015) in their book *The Heart of Counseling: Counseling Skills Through Therapeutic Relationships*, counselors must have compassion because wholeheartedly service lead to effective counseling process and result. Counselors develop deep concern and make healing connections. Such relationships are challenging and very strong in personal development as counselors.

Silaturrahmi is the foundation that can reinforce and maintain the relationship between counselor and counselee. A strong foundation must be built, considering that the counseling relationship is the core element that distinguishes counseling from other professions (Tyler, 1953). It should be developed by counselors throughout their careers as a counselor and all that they do as a counselor (Cochran & Cochran, 2015).

Researchers are increasingly focusing on helper-helpee relationships in general and alliances in particular (Flückiger et al., 2018b; Horvath, 2018; Norcross, 2010). Counseling relationship is a therapeutic condition that is created to develop a relationship between the counselor and the counselee that originates from feelings, perceptions, attitudes, and mutual actions between the two (Gelso & Carter, 1985). Typically, this view represents a facilitative condition in counseling that shows authenticity/congruence, unconditional

positive regard, and empathy. (Rogers, 1957). A more adequate concept of a counseling relationship involves natural interaction in the interpersonal relationship between counselor and counselee based on authenticity, conformity, and undistorted interaction (Sexton & Whiston, 1994). This proves that the affectionate aspect is not trivial in establishing and developing a helping relationship to achieve counseling efficacy.

1. Human Needs for Guidance

Counselors, in helping relationships, have the view that humans consist of material and immaterial aspects termed as *al-nafs* (Al-Ghazâlî, n.d.). The term *nafs* (self and soul) used to show individual personality and human nature. *Nafs* covers a wide range of topics including *qalb* (psyche), *ruh* (spirit), *aql* (intellectuality) dan *irada* (will) (Haque, 2004). Spirit is a substance that moves and animates the physical and mental aspects of humans. Intellect is an intellectual function and human thought, *aql* and *irada* is a special quality in humans that enables them to attain spiritual peak. The mind is the fundamental rational faculty, which enables humans to generalize and form concepts and gain knowledge. While *qalb* is a balance between *aql* and *irada*.

As a creature of Allah Swt., who have choices, humans can develop themselves on the basis of freedom of mind and will based on faith and piety, in a life order that is aimed at achieving a life that is in harmony with their nature. (Kartadinata, 2011). Humans with physical and psychological aspects, with innate potential that can be developed optimally are actually progressing towards ideal humans (*insan kamil*) in various aspects of life and this process occurs throughout the life span.

Humans need help because not every individual has the same capacity to develop their potential in understanding science and developing good morals. There are also some individuals who experience obstacles in fulfilling their obligations as servants of Allah Swt., in the process towards intellectual maturity, how to acquire and understand knowledge that is beneficial to

themselves and others, and how to behave based on knowledge during the span of life.

Humans with good nature, can also experience unwanted developments and imbalances between physical and spiritual aspects, between lust and conscience, and between spiritual and mundane orientations because humans also have two positive and negative sides as Al-Ghazali divides the *nafs* into three categories based on the Qur'an: *Nafs Am-marah* (12:53) – which invites people to be tempted to follow their carnality and incite evil deeds; *Nafs Lawammah* (75:2) – conscience that directs people to the right or wrong, and *Nafs Muthmainnah* (89:27) – the self/soul who attains the highest peace.

2. Learning and Human Optimal Development Through Indigenous Counseling of Spirituality

The educational culture of pesantren positions *Kiai* as a central figure and role model in studying science and a figure who has the ability to provide guidance for the development of positive behavior. This is relevant to pedagogical efforts in guidance to facilitate optimal individual development and the achievement of independence, and counseling as a process of helping to facilitate individuals to overcome problems and make decisions constructively (Kartadinata, 2011).

Humans naturally have a desire to know and learn various things related to their environment (az-Zarnuji, 1948), That's why education must give every human being the opportunity to follow the natural path of learning as much as possible. The counselees, through *nyabis*, seeks knowledge and understanding about himself, about knowledge that is advantageous for their life, knowledge to improve self-quality, knowledge that is beneficial to his environment, explores knowledge that has not been understood or mastered by asking more experts. If one of the goals of counseling is to help individuals

develop long-term positive behaviors, (Kartadinata, 2011), then this can be achieved through *nyabis* which illustrates the strong desire of the counselee to learn for life. And the counselor's willingness to facilitate the counselee to set goals, analyze, explore behaviors and attitudes that affect his ability to perform successfully in the learning community, family, work, and decision making (Stone & Dahir, 2016).

The purpose of *nyabis* to obtain blessings can be interpreted that in essence the counselee always wants himself to develop in an optimal direction related to various aspects of his life, which are related to improving the quality of worship to Allah SWT, having applicable knowledge and skills from a meaningful educational process, social adaptation and contribution, and career success that impact on the advancement of humanity.

The purpose of *nyabis* as maintaining good relations with the teacher as a spiritual intermediary or *wasilah* can be interpreted as an individual effort to achieve spiritual peace in order to maintain physical and spiritual health. The optimal aspect is not solely physical growth and function, but also the psychological aspect quality which the scientific chain connected to the *Rasulullah* saw., thus, the intention to seek knowledge for Allah Swt., and increase faith in Allah Swt. *Nyabis* is a supportive relationship that promotes optimum development because it facilitates the individuals to experience continuous and progressive change (Chaplin, 2002) towards a more perfect (Monks et al., 2019) according to the unique potential of each individual and the value system adopted (Kartadinata, 2011).

The development of a functional and well-integrated personality with various aspects that make up human nature is an achievement not a gift (Dewey dalam (Riley & Welchman, 2003). *Nyabis* as a model of wisdom in counseling relationships generally stems from cultural-historical wisdom with three assumptions about the nature of wisdom, namely being integrative and holistic, referring to the application of deep values, and guiding individual

behavior in a way that, at the same time, optimizes individual and human potential (Kunzmann & Baltes, 2005).

3. Spiritual Core Values in Pesantren Facilitates the Counseling Relationship

Silaturahmi. Counseling relationships are developed based on a sense of humanity that focuses on relationships between humans, good intentions to help humans, and on the basis of affection between humans. In the structure of collective culture, the role and influence of the family is very important, communal culture forms a system that various things must be in harmony with the principles of living together, and various important decisions and orientations of community life are always carried out with the principle of kinship. (U. Kim et al., 2006).

Kinship value is a positive feature of the adaptive culture of ethnic communities that is used to create different relational dynamics between cultures (Palmer & Yuen, 2020; Scott & Deutsch, 2021). Empirical findings on how family values are seen as wisdom in Eastern culture are very helpful in the development of counseling relationships. This contribution is particularly relevant in the sociocultural setting of ethnic communities characterized by interdependence (Wilson Fadji & Khumalo, 2021).

Baraka. Baraka is a goodness that is blessed by Allah (divine gift), which is beneficial not only for oneself but also for whatever is done and that is around the individual (Denffer, 1976). Muslims believe in *baraka* as healing; to improve good behavior towards Allah and fellow human beings, and also to maintain psychological and physical health (Abu-Raiya, 2012).

Belief in *baraka* encourages individuals to increase the positive aspects and happiness in their lives throughout the lifespan (Djakfar & Permatasari, 2020). Baraka is an important aspect that promotes well-being (Denffer, 1976). Through the counseling relationship, the counselor

encourages/motivates the counselee to increase benevolence in spiritual aspects, education, family, career, and social life.

Taat. Obedience (*taat*) is the counselees' commitment to be involved in the counseling process and to develop in a positive direction. While the counselor is also committed to guiding and encouraging the counselees to be faithful to their commitment, giving reinforcement to the positive changes. The value of obedience in a counseling relationship is the counselees' willingness to listen to positive opinions and input from the counselor, the willingness to regulate emotions and open mindset for better opportunities that counselees can do to achieve their life goals. Counselees and counselors are obedient not to do deficiency things that hinder the counseling relationship.

In the living system of Asian society, the value of obedience is a positive feature of righteousness (truth/virtuous thing) that indicates harmony, mutual need, and mutual reminder of goodness. (U. Kim et al., 2006). The adherence level to cultural values and rules are associated with higher life satisfaction. Ethnic factors are significantly associated with reciprocity, adherence and life satisfaction (Mccubbin et al., 2013; Soon Aun et al., 2019).

Akhlak. A counselor must be a good role model, especially maintaining good morals. In a counseling relationship, the counselor should be skillful at encouraging the counselee to develop a good mental condition (*al-nafs al-muthmainnah*) that bring out commendable behavior (*akhlaq mahmudah*) (Hanin Hamjah & Mat Akhir, 2014) such as the practice of virtue, morality, and well-mannered (Rassool, 2016). Morals are not only adaptive behavior in an individuals' home environment, but the individuals' ability to adapt wherever and the skills to adapt according to environmental conditions. The counseling relationship must be a means for the counselee to balance between inner qualities and positive human behavior (Izfanna & Hisyam,

2012) as a creature that must kneel to Allah SWT., at the same time being able to do good deeds to other Allah's creation.

Musyawah. The counseling relationship also facilitates deliberation (*musyawarah*) between the counselor and the counselee, both discussing and advising each other/providing advice. Discussing a plan and goals is an effort to obtain the best opinion and alternative (Shihab, 2002). *Musyawah* in the counseling relationship aims to support the counselee to communicate thoughts and feelings, discuss important things, find the best solution or opinion, and commit to realizing actions to achieve goals.

Effective solutions can only come through honest discussion of about strengths, barriers, and each one's contributions (Brammer, 1988). Counselors and counsees are involved in mutually understanding, giving and strengthening relationships. The counsees have the opportunity to discuss the meaning from their personal life experiences, problems, and the goals that the counsees want to achieve (Carkhuff, 2008). It is noteworthy in the discussion, the counselee is given the confidence to set goals independently and experience self-determined growth.

Conclusion

Indigenous counseling of spirituality in pesantren education culture adopts the value of *silaturahmi* and refer to relationship patterns that prioritize kinship and love, the helping relationship is developed not only oriented to current life goals and relationships between individuals, not limited to the dimensions of world life, it goes beyond living here and now. The life of santri is spiritually oriented with the view that humans are equipped with the potential to develop themselves in a good direction, the human ability to learn science, and the ability to develop knowledge-based behavior. Humans seeking knowledge are considered as worship that connects them to the Messenger of Allah and Allah SWT.

Local wisdom in the context of the ethnic communities' life is fundamental as a custodian of harmonious relations between fellow humans, humans with the Creator,

and humans with their environment. Theories and practices of counseling with Western philosophical, theoretical, and cultural bases have contradictory potentials because their views of life and cultural values are far different from the deeply rooted cultural system and cultural values that are the life goals of ethnic communities which holistically involve material and immaterial aspects, physical and psychic, the orientation of life in the world to reach the afterlife, and the visible and the transcendent.

To provide guidance and counseling services to santri as students and as human beings, it is absolutely necessary to understand the values and orientation of life developed through the pesantren education system and culture. Behavior must be based on knowledge, blessed and meritorious knowledge is obtained through a process of interdependence from pious teachers, knowledge and good deeds have the interconnection dimension with scholars, the Prophet until Allah Swt. Santri behavior should be in accordance with the socio-cultural environment because it will benefit other humans and the universe. Behavior is worth worship because the goals to be achieved are wasilah and baraka.

A study and future research on wisdom values in indigenous counseling of spirituality is in basic need. First, because culturally (and its interrelation with religion) the santri community has the concept of well-being, values, views, and life goals that are very tied to the local culture (indigenous culture), especially the pesantren culture. There are viscous cultural processes and contextual conditions between Kiai and santri that cannot be explained by mainstream Western counseling theories. Second, silaturahmi as a tradition and spiritual purpose has long been practiced and rooted in the pesantren culture, this gives an understanding that there are values as key factors of helping relationships in pesantren. Contextualization of the silaturahmi values in pesantren as a basis for the counseling relationship has the potential to develop culturally adaptive guidance among the santri community. Third, the spiritual aspect in pesantren education culture has a harmonious unification (a univocacy) between education, psychology, culture, and religion to facilitate the achievement of santri optimal development. The study of spirituality values in pesantren education culture

has relevance to the basis of indigenous counseling of spirituality that benefit for facilitating harmony between individuals, their cultural environment, and transcendence aspects.

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