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## **Professionalism of Islamic Spiritual Counsellors to Achieve The Quality of Health Services for Patients in Hospitals**

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### **Abstract**

Spiritual counsellors in hospitals have not fully reached the professional stage, it is considered that there are still many problems to achieve the ideal stage according to the patients' needs. The problems of Islamic spiritual counselling for patients in hospitals lie in: First, there is no standard of performance that is mutually agreed upon professionally. Second, there is no standard for preparing counsellors who are recognised both academically and professionally by the hospital, so that the ability of the counsellors is only seen and assessed based on common sense only without looking at academic capacity and competence, or ability. Third, as a consequence of the two problems mentioned above, the aspects of license and accreditation certainly cannot be done by each hospital, including the development of professional organisations. Therefore, the development solutions that have to be carried out include the development of the standardisation of the professional counsellor performance, namely the formulation of the professional spiritual counsellor standard performance in hospitals. The effort to pioneer the realisation of the formulation of the performance needs to be initiated by academics majoring BPI / BKI in Faculty of Da'wah and Communication with spiritual counselling practitioners in the hospital and standardisation of counsellor preparation. It aimsto prepare the (prospective) counsellorswith

knowledge, mastery, and ability to carry out the materials and skills contained in the points of the formulation of performance.

Keywords: Professionalism, Islamic Spiritual Counselling, the Quality of Health Services

## **Introduction**

Along with the increasing public attention to health, the higher the public demand for the quality of health services provided by the hospital, especially in terms of nursing care. Taylor states that the goal of the treatment at the hospital is not only to recover the patients' physical health, but also to keep the patients' emotional and physical condition comfortable. However, the rapid progress in medical and electro medical technology has not been accompanied by similar advancement in the human aspects of patient care (Taylor, 2018, p. 313). In other words, there is a neglect of the psychological aspects in the patient nursing care process in the hospital, so it often causes various psychological problems in patients such as feelings of anxiety, frustration, and attitude of rejection towards the disease they suffer.

Therefore, the treatment of the patients needs to be developed with an integrated service pattern or can be referred to as "Holistic Service Pattern". This service is carried out by a team consisting of various professions including doctors, nurses, and spiritual experts who all have vital contributions in the process of treatment and services in terms of bio-medical, psychological, and spiritual. The framework of each profession is intended to be able to reach out and help overcome health problems in patients from all dimensions of humanity, both physically and mentally (Fanani, 2012, p. 3).

As the role of doctor and medical nurse, spiritual nurse or "Islamic clergy" also has an equally important role in the patients' psycho-spiritual-mental healing process. It relates to the results of medical research which suggest that the major factors that cause someone to get sick are unhealthy mentality or psychiatric conditions. The results of other research show that there are proven psychosomatic problems that are often found in patients and their families whose faith level is minimal or significantly low. Islamic spiritual counselling to patients can foster patience, sincerity, optimism, the growing sense of being calm, and loss of anxiety. There is a process of increasing suggestion for the patients who receive the spiritual services (Machasin, 2012, p.13-14).

The process of Islamic spiritual counselling is highly needed by the patients in the process of healing. The perceived impacts are, for example, spiritual service in the form of spiritual counselling will cause the patients' psychology to be calm if they are guided, motivated, and recited with prayers. It seems that it has not been fully realised by several hospitals. Therefore, the condition of health services in hospitals in general is still monolithic which only emphasises the process of bio-medical healing and still does not pay much attention to psychological and spiritual factors. In fact, it is theoretically stated that the factors which affect someone's physical condition are not only from their physical aspects, but also psychological and spiritual factors. Likewise, most hospitals that carry out Islamic spiritual counselling also do not fully see it as a part of the professional expertise. Islamic spiritual counselling is still seen as complementary, even though epistemologically it already has a firm domain, namely the social-spiritual domain, just as the medical world has a bio-social domain.

It is highly possible that there are problems (something wrong) in the implementation of Islamic spiritual counselling to the patients at the hospital. The problems can lie in the competence of Islamic spiritual counselling, namely in terms of counselling materials, ineffective counselling methods, and counselling management that is not accommodated in the hospital policy.

This article aims to answer how the career development of Islamic spiritual counsellor should be, in the effort to achieve professionalism in patient health services at hospitals. The focus of this study is elaborated in four sub-theories and the discussion of basic concepts of Islamic spiritual counselling, profession and professionalism of spiritual counsellors, and Islamic spiritual counsellors towards professionalism: problems and solutions, competence of Islamic spiritual counsellors in their efforts to achieve professionalism in patient health services.

## **Discussion**

### *Basic Concepts of Islamic Spiritual Counselling*

Islamic spiritual counselling is a service that offers spiritual assistance for the patients and their families by providing motivation to be tough and patient in facing the trials, guidance to pray, guidance to purify and salaah, and guidance to

perform virtuous deeds in the state of illness (Bukhori, 2005, p.19). According to Salim (2005, p. 1), Islamic spiritual counselling is an activity in which there is a process of spiritual guidance and coaching to the patients in the hospital, as an effort to perfect the medical endeavours with spiritual endeavours with the aim of providing calmness and coolness of heart with encouragement and motivation to remain patient, keep their trust, and always carry out their obligations as servants of Allah. According to Hidayanti (2015, p.24), Islamic spiritual counselling is the process of providing assistance for the patients and their families who experience faith or spiritual weakness because they are faced with life trials in the form of illness and various problems that accompany them, so that they can undergo the test in accordance with the guidance of Islamic teachings. From this definition, it can be concluded that Islamic spiritual counselling is the process of providing spiritual assistance for the patients and their families which is carried out by an Islamic clergy in the form of providing motivation, so that the patients remain patient, steadfast, keep their trust in facing the trials, and continue to carry out their obligations as servants of God.

In accordance with the definition of Islamic spiritual counselling above, the function and purpose of Islamic spiritual counselling are also in line with the function of counselling. According to Mustamar (1996, p.4), counselling has several functions: 1) Preventive function, which is preventing the emergence of a person's problems; 2) Curative or corrective function, helping individuals to solve or overcome their problems; and 3) Preservative and developmental function, maintaining the bad conditions to be good again, and developing the already-good conditions to be the better ones.

Meanwhile, according to Machasin (2012, p.13), Islamic spiritual counselling has the following functions: 1) Emotional Support, giving attention and care to the patients; 2) Appraisal Support, providing assistance to develop the patients' awareness; 3) Information Support, giving advice in dealing with the disease suffered by the patients; 4) Personality Traits, strengthening hardiness or resilience and perseverance in dealing with the disease and optimism, or fostering strong hopes for the recovery of the disease they suffer.

Meanwhile, the objectives of Islamic spiritual counselling according to Mashudi in Hidayanti (2015, p.25) are as follows: 1) Convincing the patients to be optimistic about healing their diseases; 2) Convincing the patients to follow the treatment process well until recovery; 3) Making the patients aware of various

concepts of being healthy and sick according to Islamic teachings; 4) Making the patients understand that their mental condition is very influential for their physical health; 5) Inviting the patients to be calm and patient as a form of therapy to accelerate the healing process; 6) Helping individuals to adjust to the health problems throughout their life cycle; 7) Providing assistance to the patients who experience anxiety in dealing with the disease; 8) Providing counselling on the meaning of pain from the view of religion; 9) Providing assistance for the patients who undergo the agony of death and accompanying them to die in *khusnulkhathimah*; 10) Helping the family to accept the patients' condition or death; 11) Helping the patients to solve all problems that can hinder their recovery; 12) Teaching the patients to endeavour in facing their diseases, by seeing the professionals; 13) Reminding the patients to keep performing worship according to their abilities; 14) Ensuring that the patients pay attention to various things that support the healing process, such as the cleanliness of clothing and bedding; 15) Giving moral strength to the patients who will undergo surgery or are in pain; 16) Assisting the patients and families in overcoming psychological, social, and religious problems in order to accelerate the patients' recovery; 17) Providing assistance or advocacy for the patients and their families who suffer from trauma or crisis; 18) Providing assistance for the patients who experience the agony of death and accompanying them to die in *khusnulkhathimah*.

In line with the above elaboration, according to Komarudin, et.al. (2010, p.228), the purposes of Islamic spiritual counselling are as follows: 1) Convincing the patients to be optimistic about the healing process of their illness; 2) Convincing the patients to follow the treatment process well until recovery; 3) Making the patients aware of various concepts of being healthy and sick according to Islamic teachings; 4) Making the patients understand that their mental condition is very influential on their physical health; 5) Inviting the patients to be calm and patient as a form of therapy to accelerate the healing process; 6) Helping individuals to adjust to the health problems throughout their life cycles; 7) Giving assistance for the patients who experience anxiety in dealing with their illness; 8) Providing guidance on the meaning of pain according to the view of religion; 9) Teaching the patients to endeavour in facing the disease, by seeking treatment from the experts (endeavour in the right way); 10) Reminding the patients to keep practicing worship according to their abilities; 11) Making sure that the patients pay attention to various things that support the healing process, such as the

cleanliness of clothing and bedding, 12) Giving moral strength to the patients who will undergo surgery or are in pain.

From the previously mentioned various objectives, it can be concluded that the purpose of Islamic spiritual counselling is to provide moral and spiritual support for the patients and their families in order to have an adaptive spiritual response, as well as to develop the right attitude and behaviour when dealing with diseases according to religious guidance, so that the healing process can be accelerated.

In addition to having functions and purposes, the existence of Islamic spiritual counselling for the patients in the hospital of course has several methods to be used. Method is a path that must be conducted to achieve a goal (Arifin, 1995, p.43). The methods of Islamic spiritual counselling for the patients in the hospital, according to Faqih (2000, p.53), are grouped into two, namely the direct communication method (direct method) and indirect communication method (indirect method).

### *Direct Method*

Direct method is a method that is conducted in which the clergy or spiritual counsellors communicate directly or face to face with the patients (Hidayanti, 2014, p.230). This method includes:

1. Individual Method. Individual method is carried out by implementing the following techniques:
  - a. Personal conversation, i.e. the counsellor engages in a direct or face-to-face dialogue with the patient.
  - b. Home visit, i.e. the counsellor engages in a dialogue with the patient, but it is done at the patient's home as a post-hospital care.
  - c. Work visit and observation, in which the counsellor conducts individual conversation while observing the patient's activities in their working environment (Faqih, 2000, p.54).
2. Group Method. Counselling as a group is a service provided for more than one client, including small, large, or very large groups (Winkels, 1991, p.122). The counsellor communicates directly with the patients in small groups, for

example in wards or inpatient rooms for those consisting of three to eight people. This method can be conducted with the following techniques:

- a. Group discussion, i.e. the counsellor carries out discussions with groups of patients who have similar problems.
- b. Psychodrama, which is counselling that is carried out by playing roles to solve or prevent psychological problems.
- c. Group teaching, which is conducted by providing counselling with certain materials to the group that has been prepared (Faqih, 2000, p.55).

### *Indirect Method*

Indirect method is a counselling method that is carried out through mass communication media. This can be conducted individually or in a group (Faqih, 2000, p.55). The individual method is carried out through correspondence and telephone, while the group method can be carried out through counselling boards, newspapers or magazines, brochures, audio media, television, and so forth.

### *Profession and Professionalism of Islamic Spiritual Counsellors*

The “profession” term always relates to a job, but not all jobs can be called as professions. Profession is usually interpreted as a position or occupation that demands expertise from its employees. That means, a job that is called as a profession cannot be done by people who are not trained and not specifically prepared in advance to do the work.

Profession is a job that is carried out as the major activity to produce a living by relying on certainability. Meanwhile, professionals are people who have a profession or full-time job and live from that job by relying on a high level of expertise. In other words, a professional is someone who lives by practicing a particular skill or by engaging in a certain activity according to their expertise, while others do the same thing as just a hobby, for fun, or to fill in their spare time.

Profession, according to De George, is a job which is carried out as the main activity to produce a living by relying on certain expertise. In *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI, 2005, p.453) or Indonesian Dictionary, profession is defined as a field of work that is based on certain education, expertise (skills,

vocational, etc.). Meanwhile, professional: 1) is associated with certain professions, 2) requires special skills to carry it out, 3) requires payment to do it (the opponent of amateur) (The Ministry of National Education, 2005, p.897).

In line with the above definition, according to Prayitno (1999, p.338-339), a profession is a position or occupation that demands expertise from its employees, meaning that a job called as a profession cannot be carried out by people who are not trained and are not specifically prepared in advance to do the job. Meanwhile, professional refers to two things: first, people who carry a profession, for example he is a professional; second, the appearance of a person in doing certain work in accordance with their profession. In this second sense, the professional term is often contradicted with the non-professional term or amateur.

Based on some definitions above, it can be concluded that professional is a field of work to produce a living that requires training, mastery, and education of certain expertise or skills, and the job has commitments or promises that must be fulfilled.

Related to profession and professional, there are several terms that should not be confused, namely profession, professional, professionalism, professionalism, and professionalisation. Professionalism refers to the commitment of members of a profession to improve their professional abilities and continuously develop strategies that are used in doing the work in accordance with their profession.

Professionalism refers to the attitude of members of a profession towards their profession and the degree of knowledge and expertise they have in carrying out their work, and professionalisation refers to the process of escalating the qualifications and abilities of the members of a profession in achieving standard criteria in their appearance as members of a profession. Professionalisation is basically a series of professional development processes, both carried out through pre-service training and in-service training. Therefore, professionalisation is a process that lasts a lifetime and non-stop (Anti, 1999, p.338-339).

Spiritual counsellor is said to be a professional job because it has special characteristics as professional features. The professional characteristics as stated by Dunlop and McCully cited in Nugent (1981) include the members and professional groups: 1) can clearly define their roles; 2) offer unique services; 3) have special knowledge and skills; 4) have a clear code of ethics; 5) have the right



to offer services to the public in accordance with the description of their profession; 6) have the ability to monitor the practice of their profession (Latipun, 2008, p.339-340).

Professionals, especially those who carry out the task of providing assistance (helping relationship) such as counsellors, psychologists, and social workers really need basic knowledge related to their duties. The basic knowledge is both in the form of the basic of expertise and that related to the mastery of skills (Latipun, 2008, p.339-340).

Counsellors in Islamic guidance and counselling must be those who have competence in that field. In this case, expertise in the field of Islamic guidance and counselling is an absolute requirement. More clearly, the qualifications needed by Islamic advisers and counsellors include several aspects, namely:

1. Professional ability (expertise ability). For this reason, in detail, the professional capabilities that an Islamic adviser or counsellor needs to have include:
  - a. Mastering the problem areas that are faced, for example; the area of marriage and family, education, social, and so on.
  - b. Mastering methods and techniques of guidance and counselling.
  - c. Mastering Islamic law in accordance with the area of Islamic guidance and counselling that is being faced.
  - d. Understanding the philosophical foundation of Islamic guidance and counselling.
  - e. Understanding the scientific foundation of relevant Islamic counselling guidance.
  - f. Being able to organise and administer Islamic counselling and guidance services.
  - g. Being able to collect and utilise research data related to Islamic guidance and counselling.
2. Having good personality traits (*ahlakulkarimah*)

The good personality traits (noble character) of Islamic advisers and counsellors will support their success in conducting guidance and counselling. These characteristics include;

- a. *Siddiq* (love and justify the truth)
- b. *Amanah* (trustworthy)
- c. *Tabligh* (willing to convey what is worth saying)
- d. *Fatonah* (intelligent, smart, knowledgeable) including innovative, creative, responsive, quick decision making, and so on.
- e. *Mukhlis* (sincere in carrying out the task).
- f. Patient.
- g. *Tawadlu* (humble)
- h. *Saleh* (love, do, foster, and support kindness).
- i. Fair (being able to deal with the problem and the client in accordance with the situation and condition proportionally).
- j. Being able to control themselves, maintain self-respect and client' honour.
- k. Social skills (social relations, *ukhuwah Islamiyah*)
- l. Devotion to Allah (Musnamar, 1992: 42-48).

In addition to the qualities as mentioned above, Islamic advisers or counsellors must also have good physical things and so on, and have a good mental state.

### *Islamic Spiritual Counselling Towards Professionalism: Problems and Solutions*

Islamic spiritual counselling services, just as guidance and counselling, are believed to be a profession that can fulfil the characteristics and requirements to be called as a profession. However, due to its relatively new development, especially in Indonesia, currently the Islamic spiritual counselling services have not yet fully achieved the expected requirements. As a profession that requires special expertise, Islamic spiritual counselling for the patients still needs to be developed, even fought for, especially when looking at the reality of the implementation of Islamic spiritual counselling to the patients in the hospitals in Semarang from the perspective of legitimate professional standard. Theoretically, certain expertise can be called as a profession if it meets several

standards, namely (a) standard for professional work, (b) standard for preparing counsellors, (c) accreditation, (d) stratification and license, and (e) development of professional organisations.

In this context, the development of the Islamic spiritual counselling profession must be carried out through the processes of: (a) standardisation of the professional work of Islamic spiritual counsellors, (b) standardisation of the preparation of Islamic spiritual counsellors, (c) accreditation, (d) certification and license, and (e) development of professional organisation. The development of these five standards is important because the implementation of Islamic spiritual counselling for the patients in several hospitals in Semarang, especially those that become the object of the research involving Sultan Agung Hospital, Roemani Muhammadiyah Hospital, and Tugurejo Hospital, still does not have a basic standard that is agreed and recognised academically and socially from 1) its work standard, 2) standard for the preparation of the workers in terms of knowledge and skill, and 3) accreditation and license, to the development of professional organisation.

There are several problems of Islamic spiritual counselling for the patients in the hospitals. First, there is no basic standard of working guidelines that is mutually agreed professionally. Each makes its own rules and service standards without any proven effectiveness socially and scientifically. Second, there is no standard for preparing the counsellors who are recognised both academically and professionally in those three hospitals, so that the expertise of the counsellors is only seen and assessed based on common sense alone without looking at their academic capacity and competence, and expertise. Third, as a consequence of the two problems mentioned above, the aspects of license and accreditation, of course, cannot be done by each hospital, including the development of professional organisation. The Islamic spiritual counsellor organisation for the patients has actually been initiated at the end of 2011, but its development cannot be seen until now since it is relatively new.

### *Standardisation of Counsellor Professional Work*

There are still many people who opine that the work of Islamic spiritual counsellor can be done by anyone, as long as they are able to communicate and interview. Another assumption says that the counselling service of Islamic

spiritual counsellors is solely directed to provide assistance with regard to problem-solving efforts in the narrow sense. This is clearly a false assumption. Guidance and counselling services are not solely directed to solve problems, but include various types of services and activities that refer to the realisation of broad functions. Various types of assistance and activities demand certain professional performance. Hence, it can be understood the importance of the formulation of the standard professional performance of spiritual counsellors in a hospital. The effort to pioneer the realisation of the formulation of the performance needs to be done by academics majoring BPI or BKI in the Faculty of *Da'wah* and Communication with the practitioners of spiritual counselling at hospitals in Semarang.

### *Standardisation of Guide/Counsellor Preparation*

The purpose of preparing the counsellors is to make the (prospective) counsellors have insight and mastery, and can carry out the best materials and skills contained in the points of the performance formula. The preparation of the counsellors is conducted through academic programs of BPI Department and or education and training, equalisation programs, or education in positions (such as upgrading). Specifically, for preparing the counsellors through educational programs in positions, the time is quite long, starting from the selection and acceptance of the prospective students who will participate in the program until they graduate. The counsellor academic education program is a tertiary level of education.

Selection of prospective students is the initial stage in the process of counsellor preparation. This activity plays a very essential and decisive role in the effort to obtain the expected prospective counsellors. The United States counsellors' duty, standard, and qualification commission (In Mortensen &Schmuller, 1976), states that the personal conditions that must be owned by the prospective counsellors are knowledge, skills, and attitude. The knowledge, skills and attitude are obtained through special education. For professional services of Islamic spiritual counselling that are based on certain levels and types of education, the knowledge, attitude and skills of the counsellors who will be assigned to certain schools need to be adjusted to various demands and conditions of service targets, including age, education level, and stage of patient development.

*Competence of Islamic Spiritual Counsellors to Achieve Professionalism in Patient Health Services*

Competencies that have to be mastered by an Islamic spiritual counsellor include the following aspects:

1. Mastering the theoretical foundation of Islamic guidance and counselling; which includes the knowledge of Islamic spiritual counselling and its foundation of knowledge, implementing the principles of counselling and the process of counselling itself, mastering the cultural foundation in the praxis of guidance, mastering the essence of Islamic spiritual counselling services, mastering the essence of patient guidance and counselling, and mastering the essence of Islamic spiritual counselling as a profession.
2. Mastering the theoretical and practical framework of guidance and counselling which includes applying the essence of Islamic spiritual counselling services, applying the direction of the Islamic spiritual counsellor profession, applying the basics of Islamic spiritual counselling services, applying Islamic spiritual counselling services in accordance with the conditions and demands of the work area, applying an approach of service type and activities to support Islamic spiritual counselling, and applying them in the practice of Islamic spiritual counselling service format.
3. Carrying out independent Islamic spiritual counselling which includes designing Islamic spiritual counselling programs, analysing the needs of Islamic spiritual counselling, arranging a sustainable Islamic spiritual counselling program based on the patients' needs comprehensively with a developmental approach, arranging plans for implementing Islamic spiritual counselling programs, and planning facilities and costs for implementing Islamic spiritual counselling programs.
4. Implementing comprehensive Islamic spiritual counselling programs that includes implementing Islamic spiritual counselling programs, implementing a collaborative approach in Islamic spiritual counselling services, facilitating the development, academic, career, personal, and social of the Islamic spiritual counselling, and managing the facilities and costs of the programs.

5. Assessing the process and results of Islamic spiritual counselling activities which includes evaluating the results, processes and programs of Islamic spiritual counselling, making adjustments to the process of Islamic spiritual counselling services, informing the implementation results of the Islamic spiritual counselling service evaluation to related parties, using the results of the evaluation to revise and develop the Islamic spiritual counselling program.
6. Implementing internal collaboration in the workplace which includes understanding the basics, goals, organisation and roles of other parties, communicating the basics, goals, and activities of Islamic spiritual counselling services to other parties at workplace, and working with the related parties at the workplace.
7. Participating in the Islamic spiritual counselling professional organisations and activities which includes understanding the basics, objectives, and *Anggaran Dasar/Anggaran Rumah Tangga* (AD/ART) or Budgetary Allocation of Islamic spiritual counselling professional organisation for personal and professional development, obeying the code of ethics of Islamic spiritual counselling profession, and being active in Islamic spiritual counselling professional organisation for self and profession development.
8. Implementing a collaboration between professions which includes communicating several professional aspects of Islamic spiritual counselling to other professional organisations; understanding the roles of other professional organisations and using them for the success of Islamic spiritual counselling services; working in teams with other professionals and professionals of other professions; and conducting referrals to other professional experts as needed.

## Conclusions

After reviewing the research data, several conclusions are identified: 1) The problems of Islamic spiritual counselling for the patients in Tugurejo Regional General Hospital, Sultan Agung Islamic Hospital, and Roemani Muhammadiyah Hospital include: First, there is no standard of performance that is mutually agreed upon professionally. Each makes its own rules and service standards without any proven social or scientific effectiveness. Second, there is no standard for preparing counsellors who are recognised both academically and professionally in those three hospitals, so that the ability of the counsellors is only

seen and assessed based on common sense only without looking at academic capacity and competence, or ability. Third, as a consequence of the two problems mentioned above, the aspects of license and accreditation certainly cannot be done by each hospital, including the development of professional organisations. Several solutions for Professionalism Development of Islamic Spiritual Services in these three hospitals in Semarang, among others, are through [1] the improvement of Standardisation of Professional Work of Guide/Counsellor as the standard professional performance of spiritual counsellors in hospitals. The efforts to pioneer the realisation of the performance formulation need to be done by academics majoring BPI in Faculty of *Da'wah* and Communication with practitioners of spiritual counselling at hospitals in Semarang; and [2] standardisation of Counsellor Preparation. The purpose of preparing the counsellors is to make the (prospective) counsellors have insight and mastery, and able to carry out the best materials and skills contained in the points of the performance formula. The preparation of the counsellors is conducted through academic programs of BPI Department and or education and training, equalisation programs, or education in positions (such as upgrading). Specifically, for preparing the counsellors through educational programs in positions, the time is quite long, starting from the selection and acceptance of prospective students who will participate in the program until they graduate. The counsellor academic education program is a tertiary level of education.

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