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Multicultural Counseling in Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

In this globalization and information era, the role of multicultural counseling is very urgent for the community. Given the cultural exchange between one country and another country is so massive. If a counselor only focuses on the client's person without regard to the cultural factors influence it, then the process of implementing counseling can cause bias and ineffective. In its historical development, the theory and practice of multicultural counseling is still dominated by multicultural counseling originating from the West. Meanwhile, Indonesia is a country where the majority of the population is Muslim and in terms of culture differs from rational, individualist, and materialist of Western cultures. Therefore, this paper describes multicultural counseling in an Islamic perspective as an alternative to the development of multicultural counseling in Indonesia. The different human concepts, cultures, and values developed by Islam form the basic foundation in the multicultural counseling process. From this basic difference, the author further explains the competence and practice of multicultural counseling in Islam, especially in Indonesia. In obtaining the comprehensive data, the authors conducted a qualitative study by taking data sources derived from the al-Qur'an, al-Hadith, and the results of the thinking of Muslim scientists related to multicultural counseling.

Key words: Counseling, Multiculturalism, Islam, and Culture

Introduction

At present, the presence of multicultural counseling in Indonesia is a necessity. At least, there are three main reasons why multicultural counseling is important. *First*, in this globalization era, there is no longer a distance between one country and another country or one culture with another culture so that exchange and mixing between cultures is inevitable. If multicultural counseling is not developed in this era, there will be problems in the process of implementing counseling due to the diversity of cultures both counselor and counselee. *Second*, the science of counseling is a science that was born from Western societies which incidentally is formed by their thoughts, values, and ideologies. Meanwhile, the science of counseling that developed in the world and Indonesia comes from Western counseling. If counseling is applied to Indonesian people who have the different culture from Western society, there will be obstacles if a counselor does not have competence in the field of multicultural counseling. *Third*, Indonesia is a country that has the high level of differences in ethnicity, tradition, language, religion, and culture. The diversities demand the need for multicultural counseling so the process of implementing counseling can run effectively and efficiently.

Starting from that interest, this paper seeks to provide a new think and understanding of multicultural counseling sourced from Islamic teachings. The author believes that Islam is a comprehensive religion, in which it does not only regulate theological issues but also regulates all aspects of life needed by humans, including in the development of counseling.

In Indonesia, the initial idea pioneered the birth of counseling based on Islam from a National seminar held by the Islamic University of Indonesia on May 15-16, 1985. The results of the seminar were formulated about Islamic guidance and counseling, an effort has been undertaken by competent individuals based on Islamic teachings, to help individuals who have problems to achieve the world and hereafter happiness (Sutoyo, 2014). Then, the several works which strengthened the science of counseling based on Islam appeared. Achmad Mubarok developed Islamic counseling based on his experience in handling client cases related to community mental health. According to him, "religion is an appropriate tool for psychological therapy because religion can sharpen the conscience, live feelings and remind the heart" (Mubarok, 2002). Hamdan Bakran Adz-Dzaky developed

Islamic counseling based on the Sufi approach which also relied on the experience of Sufi therapy that he did (Adz-Dzaky, 2002). Furthermore, Musfir bin Said Al-Zahrani (Az-Zahrani, 2005) and Anwar Sutoyo (Sutoyo, 2014) studied Islamic counseling from the viewpoint of the Qur'an, which is believed to be the main teaching source and a strong, correct reference to help humans throughout the ages.

Islamic counseling studies that focus on multicultural counseling are relatively rare. Ubaidillah Achmad's writing "Konseling Lintas Budaya Perspektif Abdurrahman Wahid" (Cross-Cultural Counseling Abdurrahman Wahid's Perspective) has not specifically examined multicultural counseling in Islam. He explained Gusdur's views and abilities in practicing cross-cultural counseling for clients, both Muslim and non-Muslim (Achmad, 2016). Likewise, the writings of Gabriele Marranci who studied Multiculturalism in Islam and the existence of Islam-phobia in Western society stated the emergence of Islam-phobia was not as a fight against Islam, but as a form of fear of Western society towards the growing massive multiculturalism resulting from globalization (Marranci, 2014). For this reason, this paper can be an alternative and filler for the lack of multicultural counseling studies sourced from religious teachings, especially Islam.

Method

This paper uses qualitative research methods. According to Sugiyono, the qualitative research method uses the post-positivism paradigm which is also called the interpretative and constructive paradigm which views social reality as something holistic, complex, dynamic, full of meaning, and the relationship of symptoms is interactive (Sugiyono, 2015). This means that the authors proceed and interpret library data sourced from the Qur'an and books or papers from experts in the field of Islamic Studies, counseling and psychology philosophically.

Then the data obtained from primary and secondary sources are sorted according to the main problem in this paper. Starting from the discussion about the basic foundation of multicultural counseling in Islam. Next, basic competencies in carrying out duties as a multicultural counselor and finally, the implementation of multicultural counseling in an Islamic perspective. Following the characteristics of qualitative research that is holistic and has interpretive nuances, this paper does not separate theory from findings in primary and secondary sources. All run simultaneously and interrelated between one data with

other data. The results of data processing are formulated in the conclusions and these are the findings or contributions of this paper.

Literature Review

The terms "culturally diverse" (Sue, D.W & Sue, 2008), "cross-cultural" (Barletta & Kobayashi, 2007), "intercultural" (Samovar, 1980), and "multiculturalism" are terms that are interrelated and sometimes difficult to use clearly distinguished. Therefore, the term multicultural in this paper is interpreted in line with the four terms. Initially the term multicultural was used to promote a new paradigm or new thinking in Psychology and Counseling to counteract the mainstream that has a mono-cultural understanding or Eurocentric knowledge (Pedersen, 2001). Then the term multicultural developed into a separate competence that must be possessed by a psychologist or counselor who wants to do the counseling process with counselees of different cultures (Hansen et al., 2000).

This development is experiencing rapid growth and can be used in several fields of expertise. Some applied multicultural expertise in the fields of psychotherapy (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017; Owen et al., 2011), educational institutions (Alenuma-Nimoh, 2016; Hilert & Tirado, 2018), social workers (Freund & Band-Winterstein, 2013), communication (Lieberman & Gamst, 2015; Mansour, 2016; Natalie Wu & Marek, 2018), and so on.

At least, there are three skills in multicultural counseling competence, namely *First*, the attitude of different cultures acceptance, *second*, having knowledge of different client cultures, *third*, having multicultural counseling expertise (Hansen et al., 2000; Kittler & Sucher, 2004). These three basic competencies in practice can be developed, as stated by Hansen that there are a minimum of 12 competencies that must be possessed by a counselor in conducting multicultural counseling, namely (1) awareness of what dimensions shape client cultural values; (2) Having knowledge of theory, methodology, and practice in the field of counseling/psychology; (3) Having knowledge of the history of counseling application; (4) Having knowledge about the influence of socio-political conditions in counseling practice; (5) Having knowledge on how to diagnose clients; (6) Having knowledge of issues related to cultural values used; (7) Having knowledge of procedures and tools for cultural measurement; (8)

Having knowledge about the family and groups of clients; (9) Having the ability to evaluate emir and ethical culture; (10) Having a multicultural competence in assessing someone accurately; (11) Having the ability to modify measuring devices; (12) Having the ability to design and treat clients effectively (Hansen et al., 2000).

Furthermore, multicultural studies also developed into a policy carried out by the government. Research conducted by Hajar Yazdiha on policy practices in multicultural application in four European countries (Britain, France, Germany, and Spain) towards Muslim populations shows Britain and France are more pluralist than German and Spanish (Yazdiha, 2013). Soo-Young Kwon's writings also researched on the practice of the South Korean government's policy towards immigrants in multicultural cultural settings (Kwon, 2010). Likewise, the study of multicultural policies in Indonesia was written by authors who focused the writing on typologies that is suitable for multicultural application in Indonesia (Ambarudin, 2016; Raihani, 2018; Wibowo & Wahono, 2017).

Different from previous studies, this paper examines multicultural counseling in the Islamic view. In this context, Islam is placed as a science and at the same time as a history of thought and civilization that colors the life of Muslims. Islam as a science can be studied through the main sources of Islamic teachings, namely the Qur'an and al-hadith, as developed by Kuntowijoyo in "*Islam Sebagai Ilmu*" (Kuntowijoyo, 2007). According to him, al-Qur'an can be used as a paradigm to develop knowledge in Islam. Placing the revelations as the sources of knowledge about the recognition of transcendental structures can be a reference for interpreting reality. Besides, the Qur'an must be understood as an autonomous and perfect system of ideas. To understand the transcendence of the Qur'an text, a methodology that is able to lift the Qur'an text (*nash*) is needed from its context. How to? Nothing else is "by transcending textual meaning from contextual interpretation and its historical biases". In this way, we can recapture "the meaning of the text - which is often a response to historical reality - to the universal message and its transcendental meaning", as well as "freeing up interpretations of it from certain ordinary biases due to the limitations of the historical situation".

The implication of the view of the existence of a transcendent structure is none other than the view that "the Qur'an provides a very large possibility to be

used as a way of thinking. This way of thinking is called the Qur'anic paradigm, the Islamic paradigm. The Transcendental Structure of the Qur'an is a normative and philosophical idea that can be formulated into a theoretical paradigm. He will provide a framework for the growth of empirical science and original rational science in the sense that it is in accordance with the pragmatic needs of the Islamic community, namely to actualize its mission to become a caliph on earth ".

Furthermore, Islam as a science can be studied in the real life of Muslims in practicing Islamic teachings. Therefore, the study of Islam as a science will intersect with the study of Islam historically. The history of Islam and Muslims is a "venture" that continues in the lives of Muslims. The history of Islam and Muslims sometimes increases and progresses, but it can also cause setbacks and destruction (Tamari, 2015). Clearly, through religious practices that exist in the history of Muslims, science in Islam is constantly experiencing growth and development.

In the context of pluralist or multicultural life, it has been going on for a long time in the life of Muslims. Multiculturalism is a sunnatullah that cannot be rejected by Muslims. However, in reality, sometimes the practice of multiculturalism has not run well. Conflicts between Muslims and between religions still continue this day, such as the Sunni-Shiite conflict in Sampang Madura (Hamdi, 2014), the persecution of Ahmadiyah groups by Islamic organizations in Cikeusik Pandeglang (Hakim, 2012), and the clashes between religious communities in several places in Indonesia.

In connection with the practice of multiculturalism, it is relevant to conduct an in-depth study of multicultural counseling that develops among Muslims, does it have a solid foundation of sources of Islamic teachings? What competencies must an Islamic multicultural counselor have? And how does the practice of multicultural counseling in Indonesia social life? These issues are interesting to be discussed further in this paper.

Discussion

Islam is taught by the Prophet Muhammad, it is the majority religion adopted by the people of Indonesia. At present, the number of Indonesian Muslims is 207 million out of the 267 million population of Indonesia. Of this number indicates that around 13% of 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide live in Indonesia. With this majority, the position and role of Islam is very important in

the life of the nation and state and the world arena. Islamic figures such as Soekarno, M. Hatta, Natsir, Syafrudin Prawiranegara, and others have a big part in the process of forming the State. Likewise, other Muslim figures who participated in the process of maintaining and filling development are Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurrahman Wachid, Johan Effendy, and so on (Van Bruinessen, 2012).

The presence of Muslim leaders in community life is inseparable from the problems faced by the community itself. In the context of contemporary life, there are many problems faced by Muslims, including problems of poverty, unemployment, differences in views or unity of the people, human rights violations, corruption, radicalism, terrorism, and so on. These problems were responded by Muslim leaders with brilliant ideas and religious organizations engaged in da'wa, education, and social society. Although various efforts have been made, the problems of the Muslim community to this day continue to occur and are increasingly complex. One of the interesting issue that need to be discussed is related to counseling between two or more people with different religions, cultures, and socio-political backgrounds or in the language commonly used in the term multicultural counseling.

Conceptually, multiculturalism is a concept adopted by Islamic teachings. In al-Qur'an, several verses are scattered that explain and acknowledge the concept of multiculturalism, including in Surah al-Hujurat verse 13, Allah states that "He made people tribal and have nationalities whose purpose is to get to know each other". Likewise in Surah al-Rum verse 22 which states that "Allah created the difference in language and color of human skin". The existence of these differences does not mean Islam starts from differences in the formation of society, as shared by the Communists who recognize the conflict of interests between workers or the Proletariat with employers or the bourgeoisie. The differences that exist in Islam are intended to provide convenience in work, get to know each other, and appreciate the potential possessed by each individual.

The practice of multiculturalism has been carried out by the Prophet as an example of the people in carrying out Islamic teachings. While in Medina, he was confronted with a variety of different tribes and beliefs. In Medina, there are the Aus, Khajraj, and others and there are Jewish, Christian and Bedouin beliefs. All these differences need to be responded to and responded to wisely. With the intelligence and abilities possessed by the Prophet Muhammad, finally the people of Medina can be united and managed properly through the Medina agreement

(Feener, 2004). This charter is believed to be a modern charter in the history of early Islam and is considered successful in uniting the people at that time. In the charter written an agreement on living in peace, mutual respect, and maintaining mutual unity among people (Shomad, 2013).

The practice of multiculturalism carried out by Rasulullah is not specifically related to counseling but within the framework of the formulation of building a civil society led by Rasulullah. Counseling as an applied science of psychology began to grow and develop in the West in the 19th century far from the era of the Prophet's life (Rao, n.d.). Even among Muslim scientists, counseling only grew and developed in the 20th century (Basit, 2017). Therefore, examining multicultural counseling in the era of the Prophet appeared to be less relevant both in terms of history and science. Nevertheless, efforts can be made by examining the values that originate from the teachings of al-Qur'an and al-Hadith which are the main guidelines left by the Prophet.

The Basis of Multicultural Counseling

Multicultural counseling is counseling that involves counselors and counsees (clients) who come from different cultural backgrounds. These cultural differences in the process can lead to cultural biases so that counseling runs less effectively (Adhiputra, 2013). The existing understanding clearly shows that in the process of implementing multicultural counseling involving two or more people who have different cultures. Culture is a tradition, habits, values, norms, language, beliefs and thoughts that have been patterned in a society that is passed on from one generation to the next (Adhiputra, 2013). The formation of culture can be sourced from religious teachings, community habits, systems and laws that apply in society and come from the information media.

Islam as a source of value can be used as a foundation in the formation of individual and community cultures. In this case, al-Qur'an and al-Hadith can be a foothold of Muslims in establishing culture. The process of cultural formation in the perspective of Islam is inseparable from the relationship between God, man, and the universe. The existence and role of God cannot be ignored in human life, including in multicultural counseling activities. God is transcendent and at the same time immanent as the main source of the values that exist in humans. The farther a man is from God, the less directive his attitude and behavior can even be

unkind. Conversely, people who are close to God are always introspective and tend to do a good attitude. God in the view of the Qur'an is a God who is always present in humans and has a significant role "... There is no secret conversation between three people, but He is the fourth. And there were not five people, but He was the sixth. And nothing is less than that or more, but He must be with them wherever they are ..." (Qur'an, 58: 7).

Furthermore, humans are words that are widely mentioned in the Qur'an with the terms *al-insan*, *al-nas*, *al-basyar*, and *Bani Adam*. Humans are perfect beings (Qur'an, 95: 4) and have a noble position (Qur'an, 17: 70). It is the human perfection and glory that needs attention in the multicultural counseling process. In everyday life, humans do not always do good and close to God. The existence of reason, five senses, freedom, and lust in human beings makes it possible for humans to make mistakes and deviate from God's teachings. Therefore, humans are not free from life problems that require help from others or counseling from a professional.

The human problems not only treated on physical and social aspects but also psychological and spiritual aspects. A counselor must be good at exploring the source of problems faced by clients, either through a client-based approach (person-centered) or a culture-based approach that influences the client (culture centered). Therefore, in the process of solving human problems, the involvement between guidance, counseling, and psychotherapy cannot be separated. Likewise, an approach which in use cannot be separated both person-centered with culture-centered. The integrative-holistic approach is one of its uniqueness in Islamic counseling.

Then the natural place where humans are involved is involved in the process of forming human culture. The barren nature and minimal resources requires its people to work harder, enable more creative and innovative human resources, and save on the use of natural resources. Unlike the case with people who are given fertile nature and abundant natural resources, of course, have an impact on human behavior.

With the ability of reason and nature that is certain, allow humans to process nature as well as possible. In the Islamic concept, nature is given to humans to be managed and bequeathed to those who are pious, so the nature is not destroyed only for the sake of human lust. Nature is given as a human

medium for worshipping God and at the same time as a medium for the welfare of human life.

Islamic Multicultural counselor competencies

As the author said above, that the multicultural counseling process works effectively when a counselor has a competence in the field of multicultural counseling. Sue mentioned the competency tripartite that are not separated in a multicultural counselor, namely knowledge, skills and awareness. These three competencies are basic competencies for a multicultural counselor and they can be further developed in practical activities in the field (Sue, D.W & Sue, 2008).

In the context of Islamic-based multicultural counseling, in addition to the three competencies as conveyed by Sue, the author adds two other competencies that must be possessed by Muslim counselors, namely monotheism and ethics. Tawhid becomes the core of all activities carried out by all Muslims. Even according to Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (al-Faruqi, 1986), Tawhid is the core of Islamic civilization, as stated in his book *“The Cultural Atlas of Islam”* as follows:

“Tawhid gives Islamic civilization its identity, which binds all its constituents together and thus, makes them an integral, organic body which we call civilization. In binding disparate elements together, the essence of civilization---in this case, tawhid --- impresses them with its own mold. It recasts them to harmonize with and mutually support other elements. Without necessarily changing their natures, the essence transforms the elements making up a civilization, giving them their new character as constitutive of that civilization. The range of transformation may vary from slight to radical, depending on how relevant the essence is to the different elements and their functions”.

A counselor who has a strong belief in God will be able to provide solutions to client problems, especially in helping to restore the spiritual values that exist in the client. It could be that social and psychological problems experienced by clients are closely related to spiritual issues. If a counselor does not have capacity in monotheism, then the resolution of human problems cannot be done holistically.

Furthermore, a Muslim counselor should have a qualified ethical capacity. Ethic is related to what is good and what is bad. If it is related to the competency

of a counselor, then ethic is related to the good and bad behavior and attitude of a counselor in dealing with clients. In the context of the Prophet Muhammad's hadith narrated by Imam Bukhari and Muslim that ethic is related to the concept of Ihsan, namely "you worship Allah as if you saw Allah, if you do not see Allah be sure that Allah will surely see you". By referring to the view of the hadith, a counselor in his behavior and attitude is always supervised by God, so he acts carefully or introspectively in conducting the counseling process.

In the Qur'an, the word *ihsan* has a root that is similar to the word *ahsan* which has the best meaning. There are three forms of *ahsan* in the Qur'an, namely *ahsan taqwim* (Qur'an, 95: 4), *ahsan qaulan* (Qur'an 41:33), and *Ahsan amalan* (QS. 67: 2). Of the three meanings, it means that a counselor should have an attractive appearance, the best word, and also the best behavior. These three elements are the ethics of an Islamic multicultural counselor.

The practice of Islamic multicultural counseling.

In Indonesian society, the counselor profession does not have a place compared to other professions such as Doctors, Teachers, and Psychologists. The factor could be due to the lack of public knowledge about counseling or the lack of professional counseling practices in the community. Although in the Republic of Indonesia's Minister of National Education Regulation No. 27/2008 Tentang Standar Kualifikasi Akademik dan Kompetensi Konselor (Academic Qualification Standards and Counselor Competence) has recognized the existence of a professional counselor who conducts counseling processes in educational institutions. However, the public knows him better as a teacher.

Actually, the community also has been going on counseling practices such as those conducted by volunteers or social workers who do mental rehabilitation as a result of natural disasters, wars, or conflicts between ethnic groups. Likewise, in correctional institutions, hospitals, Islamic boarding schools, *majelis ta'lim* (Islamic Studies place) or other institutions have held counseling practices. However, the practice of counseling is not widely understood by the community as a profession carried out by a professional counselor. However, the presence and role of counseling is needed by the community. Moreover, entering this era of disruption where many changes and unexpected leaps in work can cause many problems and mental illness suffered by the community.

The existence of Islamic multicultural counseling is basically similar to the practice of counseling in general and takes place in several institutions or people's lives. The fundamental difference lies in the source of values and competencies that must be possessed by an Islamic multicultural counselor so that overcoming human problems is carried out integrative-holistic.

The thing that needs to be the attention and awareness of an Islamic multicultural counselor is related to the existence of religion in a person. Religion as a person's ideology and beliefs is sometimes not easy to acknowledge the "truth" outside of its ideology and beliefs. As a result, it can cause obstacles in the process of implementing counseling of different religions or different understandings/schools. A person who understands Muhammadiyah is carried out by a counseling process by a counselor, who understands NU, can lead to bias if both do not understand each other and are aware of these differences. Likewise, a counselor who is non-Muslim does the counseling process by a Muslim counselor can run less effectively. For this reason, awareness and knowledge about counseling factors need to be understood by both parties so the counseling process can run effectively.

Conclusion

Islam is a religion that appreciates differences between individuals and even provides detailed guidelines in addressing religious and cultural differences. Therefore, even in the development of multicultural counseling, Islam provides a solid foundation. It is from the concept of the relationship between God, human, and nature that distinguishes Islamic multicultural counseling from Western multicultural counseling. As a consequence of the differences in these basic foundations, the competence of Islamic multicultural counselors also occurs. Besides having knowledge, skills, and awareness, an Islamic multicultural counselor must also have understanding and belief in monotheism as the core of all movements of life and human civilization and have ethics in appearance, speech, and deeds. In practicing Islamic multicultural counseling, a counselor needs to have a wise attitude and have high awareness in dealing with clients of different religions or religious understandings. Religion as an ideology sometimes acknowledges "truth claims" which are difficult to recognize that differences exist. For this reason, it is necessary to further study multicultural counseling practices

that have different religions and religious understandings, especially regards to the effectiveness of their implementation.

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