

**THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN SELF-CARE EXPERIENCE
AMONG CRISIS COUNSELORS**

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UNIVERSITI SAINS ISLAM MALAYSIA

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AMONG CRISIS COUNSELORS**

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AUTHOR DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my own except for quotes and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRAK

Kaunselor di pelbagai persekitaran kerja krisis sering menyaksikan penderitaan orang lain ketika mengendalikan kes krisis. Ini menjadikan mereka berpotensi untuk terdedah kepada kesan psikologi. Walaupun pengkajian di barat telah meneroka kesan-kesan ini secara terperinci, pengkajian berkaitan kesejahteraan psikologi dalam kalangan kaunselor yang terlibat dengan penugasan krisis di Malaysia masih rendah. Kesannya, perbincangan berkaitan amalan penjagaan sendiri dalam kalangan kaunselor krisis masih terbatas. Kajian-kajian terdahulu di Malaysia mendapati amalan penjagaan sendiri dalam kalangan kaunselor sering berkisar kepada aktiviti keagamaan dan spiritual yang menekankan peranan berpengaruh agama dalam membimbing amalan ini. Walau bagaimanapun, pemahaman yang mendalam berkaitan saling peranan antara agama dan penjagaan sendiri masih belum diteroka. Justeru itu, kajian kualitatif ini telah dilaksanakan bagi meneroka pengalaman amalan penjagaan sendiri dalam kalangan kaunselor di Malaysia yang terlibat dengan penugasan krisis secara harian dengan memberi perhatian kepada peranan agama dan bagaimana saling peranan antara amalan penjagaan sendiri dan agama menyumbang kepada kefungsian menyeluruh kaunselor krisis. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah fenomenologi deskriptif untuk meneroka intipati pengalaman tersebut. Tiga belas kaunselor di Malaysia yang berpengalaman dalam penugasan krisis telah menyertai kajian ini. Hasil kajian mendedahkan beberapa fasa yang berbeza dalam pengalaman amalan penjagaan sendiri kaunselor sepanjang perkembangan profesional mereka dalam persekitaran penugasan krisis. Fasa-fasa ini termasuk pendedahan kepada kes-kes traumatik, pengharungan cabaran berkaitan, pengukuhan semula sendiri dan pelajaran yang dipelajari. Setiap fasa melibatkan proses kognitif yang kritikal dan kompleks serta memberi impak mendalam ke atas sistem kepercayaan, keadaan psikologi dan kefungsian menyeluruh kaunselor. Selain itu, turut didapati agama menjadi satu faktor penting dalam membimbing pengalaman penjagaan sendiri pada setiap fasa. Agama memainkan peranan yang utama dalam pembentukan makna selepas pendedahan kepada kes-kes trauma, beradaptasi dan bertahan mengharungi cabaran di samping mengekalkan kesejahteraan sendiri dan refleksi moral untuk menentukan pemikiran dan pelakuan yang bersesuaian dengan pelajaran yang dipelajari daripada pengalaman-pengalaman mereka. Hasil kajian memberi implikasi praktikal yang ketara ke arah pembangunan reka bentuk latihan penjagaan sendiri yang bersasar dalam kurikulum pendidikan kaunselor semasa dan program latihan lanjutan. Inisiatif seperti ini dapat menyediakan kaunselor pelatih dan kaunselor yang baru dalam penugasan krisis dengan pengetahuan, kemahiran, sikap, keupayaan dalaman dan kualiti peribadi yang sesuai untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan psikologi mereka dan menyediakan sokongan yang berkesan kepada klien yang menerima perkhidmatan mereka. Kajian ini juga menyumbang kepada kajian sedia ada dalam memberi pencerahan berkaitan gambaran interaksi antara penjagaan sendiri, agama dan kefungsian menyeluruh kaunselor Malaysia dalam persekitaran krisis.

ABSTRACT

Counselors in various crisis work settings regularly witness the suffering of others in crisis cases, exposing them to potential psychological impacts. While Western scholars extensively explore these effects, little research addresses the psychological well-being of counselors in crisis settings within the Malaysian context. Consequently, the discussion of self-care practices in crisis work remains scarce. Prior studies in Malaysia indicate that self-care practices among counselors often revolve around religious and spiritual activities, underscoring the influential role of religion in guiding these practices. However, a deeper understanding of the interplay between religion and self-care remains unexplored. Therefore, this qualitative study was conducted to explore the experiences of self-care practices among Malaysian counselors engaged in crisis work daily, with a particular focus on the role of religion and how the interplay between self-care practices and religion contributes to crisis counselors' overall functioning. The study employed a descriptive phenomenological approach to capture the essence of these experiences. Thirteen experienced Malaysian counselors working in crisis settings participated in the study. The findings reveal several distinct phases in the counselors' self-care practice experiences throughout their professional development in crisis work settings. These phases include exposure to traumatic cases, navigating the associated challenges, self-revitalization, and lessons learned. Each phase involves critical and complex cognitive processes that profoundly impact counselors' belief systems, psychological states, and overall functioning. Additionally, religion emerges as a pivotal factor guiding each phase of the self-care experience. Religion plays a significant role in meaning-making after exposure to traumatic cases, in adapting and coping with challenges while maintaining personal well-being, and in moral reflection to determine appropriate thoughts and actions based on lessons learned from their experiences. The study's findings have significant practical implications, calling for the design of targeted self-care training within current counselor education curricula and advanced training programs. Such initiatives would better equip intern and novice counselors in crisis work settings with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, inner capacities, and personal qualities necessary to promote their psychological well-being and effectively support their clients. This study contributes to the existing literature by shedding light on the nuanced interaction between self-care practices, religion, and the overall functioning of Malaysian counselors in crisis settings.

الملخص

يشهد المستشارون بشكل منتظم في مختلف بيئات العمل معاناة الآخرين في قضايا الأزمات، مما يعرضهم لتأثيرات نفسية محتملة. وفي حين تستكشف الدراسات الغربية هذه التأثيرات بشكل واسع، فإن القليل من الأبحاث تتناول الرفاه النفسي للمستشارين عند بيئات الأزمات داخل الأجواء الماليزية. وبالتالي، فإن مناقشة عن ممارسات الرعاية الذاتية في بيئات الأزمات بين المستشارين لا تزال نادرة. تشير الدراسات السابقة في ماليزيا إلى أن ممارسات الرعاية الذاتية بين المستشارين غالبًا تدور حول الأنشطة الدينية والروحية، مما يؤكد الدور المؤثر للدين في توجيه هذه الممارسات. ومع ذلك، فإن الدراسة العميقة للتفاعل بين الدين والرعاية الذاتية تبقى غير مستكشفة. لذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة النوعية إلى استكشاف تجارب ممارسات الرعاية الذاتية بين المستشارين الماليزيين الذين قد تعاملوا في بيئات الأزمات بشكل يومي، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على دور الدين وكيف يساهم التفاعل بين ممارسات الرعاية الذاتية والدين في المستشارين في أدائهم العامة. واستخدمت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي الظاهري لرصد جوهر هذه التجارب. فقد شارك فيها ثلاثة عشر مستشارًا ماليزيًا من ذوي الخبرة العاملين عند بيئات الأزمات. تكشف النتائج عن عدة مراحل متميزة في تجارب ممارسة الرعاية الذاتية للمستشارين طوال تطوراتهم المهنية في إعدادات العمل عند بيئات الأزمات. وتشمل هذه المراحل التعرض للحالات الصادمة، والتغلب على التحديات المرتبطة بها، والتنشيط الذاتي، والدروس المستفادة. تتضمن كل هذه المراحل عمليات معرفية حاسمة ومعقدة تؤثر بشكل عميق على أنظمة معتقدات المستشارين، وحالاتهم النفسية، وأدائهم العامة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يظهر الدين كعامل محوري يوجه كل مرحلة من تجارب الرعاية الذاتية. يلعب الدين دورًا مهمًا في الصنع المعنوي بعد التعرض للحالات المؤلمة في التكيف والتعامل بالتحديات مع الحفاظ على الرفاه الشخصي، وفي التأمل الأخلاقي لتحديد الأفكار والإجراءات المناسبة بناءً على الدروس المستفادة من تجاربهم. فإن نتائج الدراسة لها آثار عملية كبيرة، وتدعو إلى تصميم التدريب المستهدف على الرعاية الذاتية ضمن المناهج الحالية وبرامج التدريب المتقدمة. ومن شأن هذه المبادرات أن تزود المستشارين المبتدئين والجدد في أعمالهم عند بيئات الأزمات بشكل أفضل بالمعرفة والمهارات والمواقف والقدرات الداخلية والصفات الشخصية اللازمة لتعزيز رفاهيتهم النفسية وتقديم الدعم الفعال للعملاء الذين يستخدمون خدماتهم. تساهم هذه الدراسة في الأدبيات الموجودة من خلال تسليط الضوء على التفاعل الدقيق بين ممارسات الرعاية الذاتية، والدين، والأداء العام للمستشارين الماليزيين في بيئات الأزمات.

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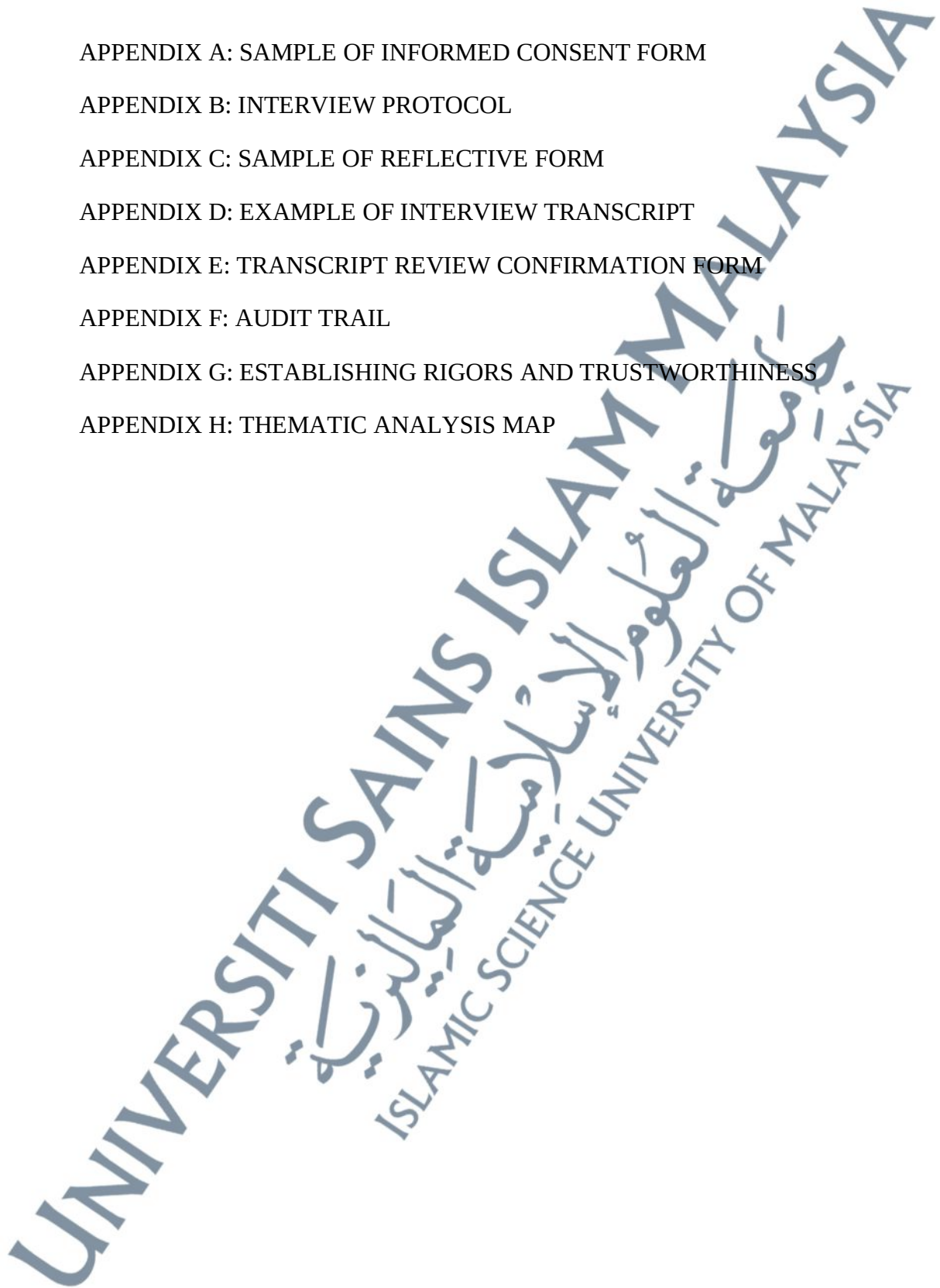
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APPENDIX H: THEMATIC ANALYSIS MAP



GLOSSARY

Bhagavad Gita	<i>It means 'The Song of the Lord.' As spoken by Krishna, this scripture holds great significance for many Hindus.</i>
Bible	<i>It is the Christian scriptures that comprise the Old and New Testaments.</i>
Insya Allah	<i>It is an Arabic language expression meaning "if God wills" or "God willing".</i>
Karma	<i>It literally means action. Technically it refers to the law of cause and effect.</i>
Mahabharata	<i>It is a literary masterpiece originating from ancient India that narrates the saga of two distinct family lineages, namely, the Pandavas and Kauravas. The storyline is interwoven with philosophical deliberations and anecdotes concerning the living and the deceased.</i>
Mantra	<i>It refers to a short sacred text or prayer, often recited repetitiously.</i>
Musibah	<i>It is an Arabic word that refers to unpleasant conditions caused by events that bring harm or loss to humans.</i>
Qur'an	<i>It means "is read" or "is recite". The Divine Book that was revealed to The Prophet Muhammad, is considered the final revelation from Allah to humankind.</i>
Rosary	<i>It is also called prayer beads, (from Latin rosarium, "rose garden"), a religious exercise in which a series of prayers are recited and counted on a string of beads or a knotted cord.</i>
Thirukkural	<i>It is a collection of 1330 Tamil couplets organized into 133 chapters, also known as kural. The verses of the Thirukkural emphasize the importance of simplicity and truth.</i>

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CSDT	Constructivist Self-Development Theory
MoH	Ministry of Health
SWD	Social Welfare Department
RMP	Royal Malaysia Police
MPD	Malaysian Prison Department
IO	Investigation officer

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