

Research Article:

Developing Crisis Intervention Model Within Sociocultural and Spiritual Landscapes: Implications for Islamic Education in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Crisis interventions assist psychologically distressed individuals to return to normal levels of functioning and to minimise the negative effects of psychological trauma. This study aims to develop an appropriate crisis intervention model that suits the sociocultural and spiritual context of Malaysian society, to test the validity and reliability of the crisis intervention model developed, and to integrate crisis intervention model developed in Islamic Education. A qualitative approach was used to collect data by semi structured interviews with a total of 24 respondents, consisting of counselling teachers and counsellors with over 10 years of experience in dealing with crisis cases. Seven counsellors and counselling officers are involved in testing the content validity and reliability of the model. To analyse, content analysis was used to develop main themes and sub-themes. Four stages of the crisis intervention model were developed. The model is named RPSD, which includes rapport (R), assessment (*penaksiran*) (P), support (S) and coping (*daya tindak*) (D). This crisis intervention model has high content validity (95%) and reliability is 0.77. The findings illustrate the relevance of the crisis intervention model developed in the sociocultural and spiritual context of Malaysian society. The RPSD crisis intervention model contributes comprehensive, concise yet easy and practical guidelines to help individuals with a crisis and suitable to integrate in Islamic Education. This integration acknowledges the importance of spirituality, especially in the coping stage during crises.

Keywords: Crisis intervention model, Islamic Education, sociocultural, spiritual, RPSD, Malaysia

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INTRODUCTION

A crisis can be considered normal in a person's lifespan, as nearly 90% of people experience a traumatic event or crisis at some point in their lives (Everly Jr et al., 2001). Crises can often cause trauma or tension, which could lead to imbalances, disruptions, and disorientation. These imbalances emerge when an individual can no longer manage or adapt to their situation. A person in crisis usually reacts in an irrational manner and avoids forming relationships in their social circle. They are more prone to engaging in high-risk behaviours like self-harming, suicide attempts, and substance abuse (Zin & Irwandi, 2022). Crisis situations also have implications for the religious faith of a person. Individuals going through a crisis may start to doubt God's power and love towards them, feel distant from God, and then start to have feelings of despair, hopelessness, guilt, and shame (Othman et al., 2020). Therefore, the crisis also needs to be addressed with an individual's understanding in Islamic Education such as in *usul al-Din*, the foundation of a Muslim's faith and practice. The incorporation of a crisis intervention model developed within the context of Malaysian culture and society into the Islamic Education in a school setting would significantly aid in addressing student challenges, adversities, and crises. Teachers, recognised as knowledgeable in Islamic Education, would benefit from this crisis intervention model in guiding them to effectively handle student crises, especially among Muslim students.

In crisis situations, it is important that effective intervention focuses on understanding and empathy, and not merely on the use of skills and techniques (James & Gililand, 2017). Interventions should not merely follow textbook guidelines but must be proportionate to the crisis's intensity and culturally appropriate for the individual (Sandoval et al., 2009). Islamic Education, which include disciplines such as Islamic theology (*usul al-Din*), Islamic law (*shariah*), ethics (*akhlak*), Islamic missionary work (*dakwah*), Islamic history and civilisation (*sirah*) and the Arabic language (Manuty, 2011), are seen as highly suitable for addressing crises in the context of the spiritual life of Malaysian society. Thus, crisis helpers do need specialised training to be able to help clients who have experienced a crisis or traumatic event (Everly et al., 2001). The combination of training and understanding in Islamic Education example in ethics (*akhlak*) of managing crisis can strengthen effective interventions among crisis helpers.

Crisis can be defined as an upset in a steady state, causing disruptions to a person's functioning which could lead to something good or bad (Parad & Parad, 2005). It could precipitate from events that are triggered internally from within oneself or externally through interpersonal interactions (Warrender et al., 2021). James and Gilliland (2017) state that a crisis happens when a disruption cannot be overcome through normal or previously known coping mechanisms because it is no longer useful or effective. A crisis can also be defined as a personal or situational challenge that holds individuals back from consciously managing their life. From the Islamic perspective, the Quran and Prophetic Hadiths define a crisis as an emergency situation that causes harm to society and could

potentially lead to its destruction (Al Eid & Arnout, 2020). In a crisis situation, a person is unable to manage their life and surroundings realistically. It was also mentioned that people of low spirituality are more prone in going through a crisis as they are unable to see the positivity in trials given by Allah SWT and would not be able to see the silver lining or lessons that could be learned from the crisis (Othman et al., 2020).

Crisis often brings about one of two things: an opportunity or a threat (James, 2008; Kanel, 2012). A crisis that is handled effectively can make way for other better opportunities to arise. In such situations, the individual would be in a stable state and be able to function normally. However, if the crisis is not managed well, this will pose a threat to the stability of the individual and their life. The ability of an individual to face a crisis effectively depends on their coping abilities and how rationally they can perceive the situation (Roberts & Yeager, 2009).

Effective intervention is a crucial factor in helping a person in crisis return to normal functioning. There are several crisis intervention models that exist, all of which are pioneered and tailored towards Western culture. These include Roberts' seven-stage crisis intervention model (Roberts & Yeager, 2009), Gilliland's six-step model (Gilliland, 1982), critical incidence stress debriefing (CISD) (Mitchell, 1974) and the ABC Model (Kanel, 2012). From a religious perspective, religious beliefs act as a protective role against negative effects following a crisis (Kannan et al., 2010). In the Islamic context, devoting a strong faith towards Allah SWT is believed to mitigate the negative effects of a crisis on a Muslim believer (Sipon et al., 2015). An Islamic approach towards crisis would be to define and identify the root of the crisis, assess the crisis, then find ways to cope and solve the crisis (Al Eid & Arnout, 2020). Another approach would be the Islamic cognitive restructuring technique with the use of four concepts derived from the Quran: 1) gratefulness, 2) acceptance, 3) with hardship comes ease, and 4) expiation of sins (Bahari & Muzafar, 2019). Besides that, other religious acts in Islamic teaching such as prayers (*solat*), remembrance of Allah (*zikir*), fasting, and reading the Quran help to overcome psychological distress (Risdayatie et al., 2024).

Each of the crisis intervention models has its own strengths and significance. The similarities of these models include elements such as assessment, building rapport, identifying issues, and finding solutions. In fact, as Muslims, the Quran has stated that it is imperative to approach crises with wisdom and positivity (Al Eid & Arnout, 2020). These elements in the crisis intervention model work to integrate the problem-solving process. Among the differences in these crisis intervention models are the arrangement of steps as well as the priorities. In short, crisis intervention models are designed to help individuals in crisis overcome their issues through effective coping methods. According to Sandoval et al. (2009), effective intervention has proven to reduce tension after trauma and can help promote a normal grieving and mourning process.

The application of crisis interventions within Islamic Education is relevant and should be proposed for the upcoming curriculum. Most Islamic Education graduates secure jobs in the education sector (Abdullah et al., 2019), working as teachers or lecturers. As educators, they frequently face various crises involving students or colleagues who perceive them as knowledgeable in Islamic matters and capable of resolving issues. Besides that, they hold the responsibility of educating students on how to deal with crises in their lives through Islamic values. For example, during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the education sector faced a crisis as schools and colleges had to adapt their teaching and learning methods. This caused stress and anxiety for both educators and students (Sarnoto et al., 2021). However, there is currently no literature mentioning the inclusion of crisis management or intervention studies in Islamic Education courses that could have prepared educators for such events. Even disaster helpers lack the psychospiritual competencies needed to assist disaster victims (Othman et al., 2020). This indicates a need to integrate crisis intervention training into Islamic Education, ensuring graduates possess the necessary skills and knowledge to handle crises effectively.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To develop a structural crisis intervention model that is socio-culturally and spiritually appropriate for the Malaysian population.
2. To test the validity and reliability of this newly developed crisis intervention model.
3. To integrate the crisis intervention model developed in Islamic Education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This article is written with the purpose of explaining the development of a sociocultural and spiritually based crisis intervention model appropriate for Malaysians and its implications for Islamic Education. Malaysia is well-known to be a multicultural country consisting of three major ethnicities (Malay, Chinese, Indians) while the remaining consist of aboriginals and other ethnicities. Subsequently, the major religious beliefs practiced in the country are Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. Hence, the intervention of crisis should also be dealt within the multi-sociocultural and spiritual context. Crisis helpers also need to have multi-faith knowledge so that they could overcome the challenge of multicultural differences and be able to help individuals of inter-faith in crisis. Based on the author's research and observations, there are no crisis intervention models that are created specifically for Malaysians and other Asian countries. Thus, there is a need to develop and introduce crisis intervention models that are socio-culturally and spiritually relevant to Malaysians and can be integrated into Islamic Education. Given the significant cultural differences between Malaysia and the West in understanding and managing crises, it is essential to develop a strategic intervention plan that is culturally appropriate for the local

context (Kiselica, 1998). A recent study by Othman et al. (2020) highlighted the necessity of equipping crisis helpers in Malaysia with an intervention model that integrates psycho-spiritual competencies. This is particularly relevant in Malaysian society, which places a strong emphasis on spirituality in daily life.

The Malaysian society differs in values in terms of respecting elders, family involvement, the concept of 'we' more than 'I', which focuses on belongingness over self (Jamal, 2006), harmonious relationships, maintaining one's dignity, and racial beliefs (Abdullah, 2001), as well as communication styles which have their own limitations especially in verbal expressions (Talib, 2010). Another significant aspect in Malaysian society is spirituality and religious beliefs that they possess. For believers of each religion, it is imperative to live their lives according to what was outlined in their respective scriptures. Besides, spirituality helps a person to cope in times of crisis (Othman et al., 2020). All these reasons highlight the need to have adaptations in crisis intervention models to make them suitable for Malaysians. The inability of the counsellor to understand sociocultural differences between clients can lead to mistakes in interpretation, judgement and conclusions which can leave a detrimental effect on clients (Sue, 1992).

The concept of developing a crisis intervention model fit for the sociocultural and spiritual needs of Malaysians is in line with what Halim (2000) states regarding the differences in Islamic spirituality and Western spirituality. In Islam, spirituality is integrated into the religion. Religion is at the highest point in the hierarchy and should be the individual's priority. Spirituality is known as *rohaniah* and involves the combination of one's heart, soul, mind, and spirit, which is important for physical, emotional and mental development. Spirituality provides a holistic approach and presents its adherents with an all-encompassing worldview (Van Niekerk, 2018). Thus, the spiritual concept in Islam Education gives focus to the development of a more holistic and comprehensive crisis intervention model appropriate for Malaysians. This is in line with the comprehensive nature of Islam, which also focuses on the aspect of spirituality to achieve general well-being. Saper and Sipon (2006) explain that spirituality is closely related to the aspects of religion, is influential, and is important in everyday life. Spirituality in Islam comprises the person's relationship with God and others, that involves belief, worship, and religious ethics. In Islam, spirituality is inherently linked to religion and is not separated as it is often explained in the West (Rothman, 2009). The phrase commonly used in the West is 'spiritual but not religious' (Attri, 2012). Mac Donald (2004) states that spirituality is a complex concept and has different elements. Furthermore, Zinnbauer et al. (1999) as well as Hill and Pargament (2008) agree that religion and spirituality are different and complex concepts to justify.

Western spiritual views do not represent the worldview of other religions or societies (Mustaffa et al., 2017). In fact, studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between spirituality and psychological well-being. Intervention programs for people going through crises that are infused with spiritual elements contribute to the positive psychological well-being of individuals (Bozek et al., 2020). This could be attributed to the fact that when

a person goes through a crisis, it triggers them to find new meanings in their life and thus use religion or spiritual elements as coping mechanisms. This is in line with Islamic theology as taught in Islamic Education. In crises, strong spiritual beliefs help individuals to endure traumatic experiences better and allow them to bounce back to normal functions. This is because they become more hopeful of the prayers that they offer and seek more spiritual guidance with hopes to cushion their feelings of despair or loss (Othman et al., 2020). To ensure prompt access to crucial psychological therapy and spiritual support for disaster victims or crisis clients, Malaysia should integrate comprehensive competencies for disaster workers or professional helpers. These competencies should encompass not only health and survivor training but also psycho-spiritual training within Islamic Education. Additionally, consideration should be given to incorporate Islamic perspectives on psycho-spiritual needs and competencies within this framework (Othman et al., 2020).

This statement provides solid justification for the development of a crisis intervention model based on the sociocultural and spiritual aspects in Malaysia. This evidence is further strengthened by the statement made by Hasan Langgulung (2001), which recommends that the spiritual dimension be placed accordingly alongside the physical and psychological dimensions because theories of personality that exist in the West lack the spiritual element. Langgulung (2001) also firmly states that Islamic society has made a mistake by blindly copying materials introduced by the West. Therefore, society needs a problem-solving plan that is Islamic based.

The spiritual point of view in Islam involves four elements of spirituality, which are *al-rub*, *al-qalb*, *al-aql*, and *al-nafs* which are aspects of *ma'nawi* stored in the human person (Al-Ghazali, 2000). This shows that Islam is a comprehensive religion as the word of God says, "today I have made you perfect for your religion, I have satisfied you with My blessings and I have chosen for you Islam as a way of life" (Al-Quran 5:3). This verse states that Islam is a comprehensive, complete, and perfect way to live life in this world and hereafter. Such argument gives the basis of the rationale for the development of a crisis intervention model while taking into consideration the Islamic spiritual aspects, which is the foundation of living for many Malaysians.

From the Islamic Education point of view, there are four types of crises based on what was mentioned in the Quran and al-Hadiths (Al Eid & Arnout, 2020):

1. Economic crises such as poverty, unemployment and loans recession.
2. Social crises such as divorce, domestic violence, infidelity and bad morality.
3. Health crises such as pandemic, plague and illness.
4. Political military crises such as war.

According to Alqahtani (2019), these crises could happen due to the disobedience to Allah SWT and when facing a crisis, Muslims have two approaches. The first approach is to view that the crises is a means to test a person's commitment to the Islamic values. The second approach views the crises as stemming from a weakening of one's faith or the commission of sins. One way to resolve a crisis is to repent for their disobedience towards Allah SWT and to please Allah SWT with acts of worship (Alqahtani, 2019).

Bahari and Muzafar (2019) used the Islamic cognitive restructuring, a technique that helps an individual to restructure their thoughts on an event or crisis. Individuals experiencing a crisis with dysfunctional thoughts were trained to be mindful of these thoughts and modify them until they could establish a more positive way of thinking. The restructuring technique uses values from the Quran, which are gratefulness, acceptance, ease alongside hardship, and expiation of sins. As a result, the patients were able to control their Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms, justifying the success of Islamic model of cognitive restructuring in helping people going through crises (Bahari & Muzafar, 2019). These findings show that crisis management and intervention should be taught as part of the Islamic Education syllabus as it integrates the teachings from the Quran and Hadiths.

Concurrent with the findings by Mohamad and Leong Abdullah (2020), spiritual well-being is closely related to the well-being of the spirit element in a person. Thus, the practice of religion in the spiritual element is proven to effectively help the individual in their physical, mental and internal health (Keonig, 2002). Noome et al. (2017) explain that there needs to be a spiritual mentor to help individuals and family members facing the end-of-life crisis. In addition to the spiritual aspect, individuals in crisis also need a safe and supportive environment, self-respect, and a sense of understanding (Washburn, 2003).

In the Malaysian education setting, Elias and Ghani (2014) implemented crisis intervention using Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) model on a group of primary school students who were involved in car accidents. They incorporated Islamic elements into the intervention by exploring the traumatic event through Islamic worldviews and teaching the students a set of *doa* (prayers) that could help strengthen their faith and resilience. On the other hand, Hasanuddin and Ahmad (2022) conducted a study regarding adolescent crisis among Malaysian high school students and counselling teachers. They found that students often sought spiritual solace as a coping mechanism. As for the teachers, they did not use any specific crisis interventions but instead approached the students using Carl Roger's Person-Centred theory. These studies solidify the importance of developing a crisis intervention model that incorporates spiritual elements tailored to the Malaysian context. Integrating such models into Islamic education would equip educators with the necessary skills to effectively manage crises.

In conclusion, combining spiritual elements with sociocultural values enables clients to receive holistic support, emphasising the need for prioritising these aspects in the development of crisis intervention models.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach to answer the two research objectives. The findings of this study are obtained through semi-structured interviews. Information was collected from school counsellors and counsellors in higher education settings, as well as counsellors from the public sector. All respondents have at least a bachelor's degree in counselling. In-depth exploration was utilised to obtain information regarding the process and strategies used by the respondents to handle crisis cases.

Purposive sampling was used to recruit respondents for this study, who are individuals with more than 10 years of experience in the counselling field. The first objective of the study is to develop a structural crisis counselling model. To achieve this objective, counsellors registered with the Board of Counsellors Malaysia who have handled crisis cases were recruited. A total of 12 counsellors (two female and two male counsellors representing schools, higher education centres, and the public sector) were chosen from each zone, namely the northern and central zones. Twelve counsellors were interviewed from each zone (12 counsellors \times 2 zones), bringing the total to 24 counsellors. The 24 counsellors selected in this study were suitable for the focus of the study, which is geared towards constructing a crisis intervention model. In addition to that, the sample selected also represents a wide range of experience and a variety of expertise relevant to the issues presently studied (Lebar, 2007).

To answer the second research objective, a total of seven experts in the counselling field were invited to be respondents. All seven of these experts have more than 10 years of experience in the counselling field, handling crisis cases. One of the experts, who is also an Emeritus Professor, was interviewed to provide his perspective on implementing sociocultural and spiritual aspects in the crisis intervention model developed. The selection of these experts was based on their expertise, experience, and credibility in crisis counselling. These experts were chosen to be interviewed to give them the opportunity to share and generate ideas, arguments, structure and other data relevant to the field being studied (Green & Thorogood, 2005).

These seven experts studied the model that was developed and answered a questionnaire to ensure validity and reliability were maintained. A total of 10 items on a 6-point Likert scale were administered to test the validity of the model. The validated crisis intervention model was then used as a guide to further strengthen counselling services, especially those involving crisis issues.

The results of the semi-structured interviews were analysed through content analysis. The information from the interviews was obtained through transcription and note-taking during the interviews. To ease the analysis process, the interviews can be converted to written text through transcribing data or through notetaking (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). According to Miles and Huberman (1984), analysing interviews involves three major phases: data

reduction, data display and verification. This process is utilised to identify themes and sub-themes. Detailed findings from the interviews are used to develop an efficient mechanism in the form of a structured crisis intervention model. The themes and sub-themes obtained are used as the foundation to develop the socio-culturally and spiritually appropriate crisis intervention model in Malaysia.

The 10-item questionnaire measured on a six-point Likert scale is used to analyse the validity of the model. The items on the Likert scale range from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items on the questionnaire include “this model is suitable for citizens of different cultures in Malaysia, steps in this model are clear, and steps in this model are easy to replicate”. The scores are calculated by getting the total score, making the lowest possible score 10 and highest possible score 60. In this study, the content validity (R) is calculated using the following formula:

$$R = (\text{expert score})/(\text{total score}) \times 100\%$$

On the other hand, the reliability of this crisis intervention model is determined using interrater reliability to assess the degree of agreement between two or more respondents. Interrater reliability only requires the instrument to be administered once by two or more respondents (Creswell, 2008).

This study is ethically approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), USM/JEPeM/17050263. Approval was also obtained from the Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To Build an Appropriate Crisis Intervention Model that is Socio-culturally and Spiritually Suitable for the Citizens of Malaysia

Four themes were obtained from the content analysis of the interviews. These four themes, which answers the first research question, refers to the four steps applied in handling crisis intervention cases. This model is named the RPSD crisis intervention model. RPSD is an acronym, in which R stands for rapport, P stands for *penaksiran* (assessment), S stands for *sokongan* (support) and D stands for *daya tindak* (coping). Figure 1 shows the diagram of the crisis intervention model developed. The diagram’s description outlines four types of crises: developmental crisis, situational crisis, ecosystemic crisis and existential crisis, which arise from interpersonal or intrapersonal human interactions. Developmental crisis happens when a person is in the developing stages and includes life stages such as career, starting a family and retirement. Situational crisis involves traumatic events such as divorce, sexual abuse, domestic violence and the death of a loved one in an accident. Ecosystemic

crisis includes natural disasters such as earthquakes, flash floods, tsunamis, and volcano eruptions. Existential crisis is an internal conflict involving religious issues such as sin and rewards. Based on the interviews, further details regarding the stages for the RPSD crisis intervention model is as follows:

Stage 1: Rapport

- a. Immediate involvement
- b. Basic counselling skills

Stage 2: Assessment

- a. Basic needs
- b. Emotional stability
- c. Safety

Stage 3: Support

- a. Conducive environment
- b. Psycho education

Stage 4: Coping

- a. Alternative
- b. Action plan
- c. Problem-solving
- d. Follow-up

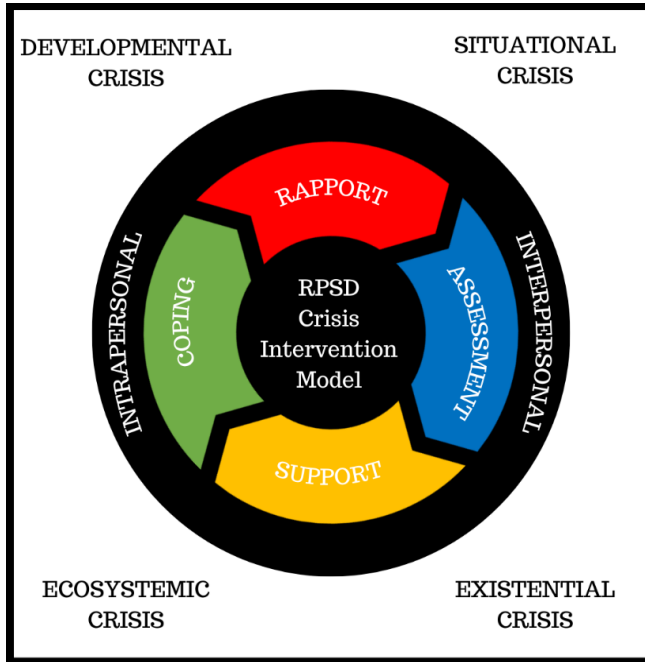


Figure 1. RPSD crisis intervention model

Determining the Validity and Reliability of the Newly Developed Crisis Intervention Model

The content validity of the RPSD model was obtained through the interview, which explains the steps of developing the RPSD model. The validity was reviewed by seven experts using a six-point Likert scale. The content validity (R) that was calculated using the formula is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Scoring proportion by experts

Expert	Position	Score	R (%)
1	KPM officer	57	95
2	KPM officer	60	100
3	KPM officer	60	100
4	Lecturer (public university)	60	100
5	JPA officer	55	91.67
6	NGO	58	96.67
7	Hospital counsellor	50	83.33
Total		400	95.23

Notes: KPM = Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (Malaysia Ministry of Education)

Based on the overall results, it shows that a high percentage (greater than 95%) is recorded with regards to content sufficiency of the model. This shows strong evidence that the crisis intervention model developed is valid and suitable to be used among Malaysians in the crisis intervention stage. The intervention used will be effective if it is tailored to meet the needs of the society, culture, values, education background and views of the client (James, 2008).

In this study, the estimated correlation value between classes with 95% confidence interval was calculated using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS 23) based on the average model (k = 5), absolute agreement, mixed effect. The correlation value between classes shows that the validity of the crisis intervention model, RPSD, is at .77, as shown in Table 2. According to Koo and Li (2016), this shows moderate reliability.

Table 2. Correlation value between classes

	Correlation between class	Confidence interval 95%		F-test with true value 0	
	Upper limit	Value	df1	df2	Sig.
Average measurement	0.77	1.231	9	54	0.296

To Integrate Crisis Intervention Model Developed in Islamic Education

The findings from interviews with respondents suggest that integrating sociocultural and spiritual elements into RPSD crisis interventions is most suitable at the coping stage. In this stage, individuals have already developed trust and confidence in the counsellor or helper. This also acknowledges the importance of spirituality and religiosity in the coping process during crises (Shaikh et al., 2017). However, Islamic Education elements such as Islamic theology (*usul al-din*), Islamic law (*shariah*), ethics (*akhlak*) and Islamic missionary work (*dakwah*), as stated by Manuty (2011) also can be applied in each level of RPSD according to the needs and readiness of individuals.

Stage 1: Rapport

At the initial contact in a crisis intervention, individuals often need a quick, swift yet brief involvement to ensure that the clients receiving help feel comfortable and stable, allowing for trust to be built between both parties. In the process of building rapport, counselling skills such as listening skills and eye contact are important. Counselling skills helps the counsellor in building an empathic relationship through the application of effective counselling skills, being comfortable with silence, using appropriate words and providing a comfortable environment to aid the healing process especially in a crisis situation (Silverman, 2016). Ethics (*akhlak*) as in Islamic Education in terms of confidentiality are also emphasised in this stage. For instance, the Islamic Education curriculum for Form Four includes a section on Islamic morals and ethics (*akhlak Islamiyah*), which covers the

unit on morals and ethics towards sick people (Yahya et al., 2020). This section emphasises the importance of these morals and ethics, aligning with stage one of the RPSD crisis intervention model. Islamic Education teachers can utilise the rapport stage of this model to encourage students to practice these morals and ethics towards sick individuals, thereby achieving the components of worship, emotion, and physical care.

a. Immediate involvement

Having a sense of urgency is important when handling crisis cases. Thus, crisis helpers should immediately introduce themselves and their roles to the clients so that the clients are not confused and burdened with the presence of a new person in the midst of the crisis. It is also important to ensure that a two-way communication is maintained throughout the process. Helpers should also receive clients as they are, regardless of the type of crisis they are facing. They should also refrain from giving advice. Instead, could show empathy and support which can help build trust and focus on the client instead of the issues they face. Generally, Malaysians are not comfortable if their private life and secrets are known to a third party. Thus, during this phase, it is crucial that crisis helpers practice and mention the areas of confidentiality, respect and clear boundaries with the clients. Helpers should also be knowledgeable about traditional practices in different religions to be able to provide services that matches the spiritual practices of the client. The spiritual element is considered the missing piece in the helping profession (Atarhim et al., 2019).

b. Basic counselling skills

In this stage, a comfortable therapeutic relationship should be built. This can help ensure that the relationship with the client is based on the foundations of trust and professionalism. Among the basic counselling skills that could be used in a crisis setting is listening skills, minimal encouragement, paraphrasing, reflection and summary. Non-verbal behaviour should also be observed by the crisis helpers to obtain better insights to the emotions and thought process of the client. Helpers should also non-verbally show that they are calm and capable enough to provide support for the client. The calmness portrayed by the helpers implies to the client that the issue faced by the client is under control and can be helped. This will indirectly help the client manage their fears, worries, panic and grief they are facing better. Crisis helpers should also avoid using skills such as confrontation in the early stages as it can be inappropriate and cause clients to drop out from receiving help. In the Malaysian context, it has been observed that once trust has been built, clients are often more ready to share emotions they experience. Thus, in this stage, it will be good to apply a non-directive listening approach (Sandoval et al., 2009).

Stage 2: Assessment

An assessment is done to identify symptoms that the client exhibits during the crisis. This assessment can be done as an interview and through observation. On the other hand, if

the client appears to be showing low crisis intensity, questionnaires can be administered if deemed fit by the helpers. Clients who are stable and responsive can be given the questionnaire, subject to the client's agreement. The main reason assessments are done is to determine how well the client is functioning, as this can help ensure that the client as well as people in their surroundings are safe.

Three sub-themes that were identified in the assessment phase are basic needs, emotional stability and safety, as elaborated as follows.

a. Basic needs

The helpers should ensure that the client is comfortable and has sufficient basic needs such as food, clothes, and shelter. Having these basic needs met is important as it allows the client to be comfortable and focused towards receiving help. In the Malaysian context, basic needs such as water are deemed to be very important, especially in prayer rituals and preparations. Atarhim et al. (2019) state that this is one way the client can be respected, in addition to maintaining confidentiality and incorporating their sociocultural beliefs in the session. Even from the Quranic perspective, these basic needs are fundamental human rights that should be provided to clients in order for them to feel secure (Migdad, 2020).

b. Emotional stability

The ability to respond well is often a sign of emotional stability. Helpers should be alert and sensitive to signs of trauma that clients may exhibit in a crisis. Emotional stability in Islamic Education involves understanding and applying Islamic perspectives on managing emotions, coping with stress and maintaining inner peace. Emotional stability is said to be achieved when the client can manage their emotions and not just release them in unhealthy ways, such as extended periods of sadness or guilt (Mohamad & Leong Abdullah, 2020). The ability to manage emotions well is closely related to the spiritual element in Islam, which believes that every event that happens is according to the will of God. Moreover, maintaining emotional stability is part of the responsibility of a Muslim from the Islamic law, *Maqasid Syariah*. It states that one should preserve the soul (*nafs*) – physically, emotionally and spiritually (Mustaffa et al., 2017). The effects of spirituality and health on mental health are likely bidirectional, and the manner in which religious beliefs are used to cope with distress may affect mental health outcomes (Lucchetti et al., 2021).

c. Safety

The safety aspect should be emphasised, especially in crisis cases involving security issues such as crime (violence, kidnapping and rape). Helpers should evaluate the possibility of physical, psychological and spiritual harm to the client. In such situations, quick thinking and prompt action such as making necessary referrals, need to be done. Safety considerations may involve training, professionals in crisis intervention techniques that are culturally

sensitive and respectful of Islamic principles and values. This ensures that interventions are conducted in a manner that promotes dignity, compassion, and respect for the rights and beliefs of individuals seeking support within the context of Islamic teachings.

Spiritual care occurs within interpersonal relationships and specific healthcare environments or systems when implementing them within spirituality (Vincensi, 2019). Individuals who are in dangerous or high-risk places need to be transferred to a safer location with access to basic needs such as food and shelter. Children need to be protected from strangers and shielded from being exposed to reports of the traumatic event on social media (Young et al., 1999). Additionally, engaging in spiritual practices has been shown to prevent self-harming behaviour among adolescents, highlighting an important aspect of client safety (Kamaludin & Ee, 2022). This is in line with what the Quran teaches, where the aspect of safety and protection from fear are emphasised, especially for weaker persons such as children and women (Migdad, 2020).

Stage 3: Support system

Clients in crisis often need temporary emotional and physical support. This support system can include their family members, friends, therapists, religious organisations, as well as other support groups (Schupp, 2007). Sharing their joys and sorrows with their support system in a positive manner can promote and intensify the healing rate. This is supported by Barenbaum et al. (2004), who found that individuals in crisis who had less social support were more likely to experience traumatic stress. This support system clients have is not limited to people they know but can also be any member of the community (Sandoval et al., 2009). *Talian Kasih*, a helpline which runs 24 hours a day, was introduced by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (<https://www.kpwkm.gov.my/kpwkm/index.php?r=portal/full&id=NGtVYXZIMjRqM3diWmV2K005Mm9Hdz09>) in Malaysia to provide counselling services to those who face issues such as abuse among many others. Nurses in hospitals can also provide social support for crisis victims by ensuring that they also receive spiritual support in efforts of holistically providing for their needs. It is believed that increasing spiritual support can help calm individuals in crisis (Atarhim et al., 2019). Having utmost faith and trust in God's plan gives people hope. Roberto et al. (2020) in their study on spirituality and resilience during COVID-19 found that individuals who had a strong faith in God were able to find hope, peace and comfort, as they were able to reframe their thinking and look for the positives.

Islamic psycho-spirituality is grounded in the belief that God and His creations serve as the primary sources of motivation for initiating appropriate behavioural and mental changes. These changes are designed to alleviate feelings of hopelessness, misery, loss, and uncertainty. Despite life's hardships, Islamic psycho-spirituality encourages individuals to work diligently and strive for success in both this world and the hereafter (Othman et al., 2020). The ultimate support system for the Muslim client is Allah SWT, who provides comprehensive guidance and support through faith. Islamic spirituality is characterised by

an individual's relationship with Allah, which influences their sense of self-worth, purpose in life, and connections to the environment and other people (Nasr, 1997). By incorporating Islamic teachings and practices into crisis interventions, it can provide holistic support to individuals facing crises (Karim & Chaudhry, 2012).

The two sub-themes of social support obtained through the interview are as follows:

a. Conducive environment

A conducive environment can help the client feel calm and not stressed. A conducive environment in this phase includes a good support system comprising of family members, employers and colleagues. A conducive environment can encourage positive growth. Resiliency factors such as psychological well-being, safe environment, stability, meaningful life, and social support can help the intervention (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2020).

b. Psychoeducation

Psychoeducation within Islamic Education offer guidance on how to address psychological challenges while drawing strength from faith and spirituality. By incorporating Islamic teachings into psychoeducational interventions, individuals can better navigate crises while maintaining their spiritual and emotional well-being. Helpers also often have to take the responsibility to convey information and educate the client in understanding the crisis experienced. Relaying information can help the client come to terms with the situation and work towards overcoming symptoms that affect their mental health. Helpers could also recommend referrals to other relevant resources, such as psychiatric or psychological units, to ensure clients receive adequate care. Psychoeducation is also important as it allows for accurate information to be conveyed to crisis victims. Receiving accurate and reliable information can also reduce the intensity of crisis experienced.

In the context of Islamic Education, educators equipped with crisis intervention skills could integrate them into teachings on Islamic ethics and manners (*akhlak* and *adab Islamiyah*). They can educate students on basic counselling skills such as the etiquette (*adab*) of asking questions, active listening, ethical considerations when attending to someone in crisis and developing empathy. Additionally, psychoeducation on crisis intervention within Islamic Education helps develop students' soft skills, such as verbal and non-verbal communication. Equipped with these skills, students can assist both themselves and their peers, which is beneficial for peer support groups in the Malaysian education system, known as *Pembimbing Rakan Sebaya* (PRS).

Stage 4: Coping

Coping is a strategy used by clients to handle the crisis, to function as best as possible, and return to life as they have known it. The coping method used needs to be manageable for the client. Previously known coping strategies are not wasted as these strategies, coupled with newly learned coping strategies, are crucial in forming alternative coping strategies (Kanel, 2012). From the interviews with the experts, it was agreed that it was appropriate to integrate sociocultural and spiritual values at this stage. In Islamic Education, psychoeducation or *dakwah* can be utilised to guide clients in overcoming their crisis situations, while also emphasising the importance of seeking solace through prayers to God. One of the ways to achieve inner peace and strength is through faith and religion (Othman et al., 2020). As crisis or traumatic events change a person's perspective of the world, having faith-based beliefs helps a person cope better by creating a new meaning system. Goodwin and Kraft (2022) mentioned that people who had been through crises cope by seeking spiritual support through activities such as prayers, religious group support, spiritual guidance, and other religious practices and rituals. This statement is supported in the extracts from the Quran: "Do not lose hope, nor be sad. You will surely be victorious if you are true believers" (Quran, Surah Al-Imran, 3:139).

Clients who maintain strong religious convictions may exhibit enhanced resilience in managing stressful circumstances and meeting their daily needs. Such individuals often draw upon their faith for solace, finding comfort in sacraments, prayers, and spiritual guidance (Saidon et al., 2020). Pargament (1997) underscored the role of religion in equipping individuals with coping mechanisms to navigate challenging situations. The frequency of religious attendance was associated with a 43% lower risk of developing mood disorders, as evidenced in a prospective study of a representative sample of South Africans (Tomita & Ramlall, 2018). These elements are important as it will encourage the client to continue living a healthy life while accepting what has happened as fate and to continue putting their trust in God, the Creator of the universe. In the coping stage, the sub-themes identified are as follows:

a. Alternative

Identifying alternatives involve identifying a mechanism and taking action by evaluating behaviour, thoughts, and changing it for the purpose of reframing the client's perception of the crisis. In this stage, the counsellor and client can list alternatives to overcome the issues. The selected alternatives can be from the existing coping skills or coping skills that have left a positive impression. The selected alternatives have to be realistic, achievable, and doable for the client. In the spiritual context, internal strength from spiritual elements can help the individual identify alternative coping strategies and help positively impact the rehabilitation of mental and emotional health (Mohamad & Leong Abdullah, 2020). Helpers must remain mindful and ensure that they do not become personally involved with the client (Kanel, 2012).

c. Action plan

This stage involves the counsellor encouraging the client to come up with a detailed plan to execute the alternative chosen. Helpers should empower clients so that they understand and feel that the action plan is their responsibility. The action plan should be something that can be carried out in the short term, thus it needs to be easily achieved. Helpers should also make the effort to affirm clients for positive aspects noticed. In executing a spiritually based action plan, the Islamic religion relates that faith in the Creator can strengthen the individual in times of hardships (Othman et al., 2020). This is because trusting in God can strengthen an individual's mind and be a source of comfort when facing various emotions including grief and sorrow. Indirectly, the action plan developed by the client can help them as their faith can strengthen them and encourage them to be patient with the test from God with courage and surrender (Said, 2010).

Within Islamic perspectives, individuals are perceived as rational beings, and Islam functions as a therapeutic framework, facilitating sufferers in exploring coping mechanisms. The cultivation of a religiously oriented mindset significantly contributes to the construction of one's worldview, thereby enhancing resilience in times of crisis (Othman et al., 2020). An action plan in crisis intervention could incorporate fostering religiously oriented coping strategies, aligning with Islamic principles, to bolster individuals' capacity to navigate and overcome adversities.

c. Problem-solving

Alternatives and action plans are used in the crisis solving process. In Islamic Education, problem-solving strategies may integrate patience, perseverance, and reliance on God alongside evidence-based techniques for addressing challenges. It emphasises the importance of seeking guidance from Islamic scholars, and spiritual practices to navigate difficulties effectively. However, if the alternative chosen is inappropriate, then the helpers and client are encouraged to work together once again to explore and develop new alternatives. Helpers should continually support the client in their effort to find new alternatives so that they do not give up in this problem-solving pursuit. In the problem-solving process, the spiritual practices can provide a sense of reassurance, surrender and strength in facing life's challenges, including crisis (Mohamad & Leong Abdullah, 2020).

d. Follow-up

This follow-up phase is a result of the interview with the experts, who agreed that a follow-up stage is necessary, especially for high-intensity clients who have experienced a traumatic event and are disturbed by it. This follow-up session is suggested to be done within four to eight weeks after the start of the crisis intervention, to see how the client is doing. This follow-up can be done individually or in a group manner to help them return to normal and function well. Schupp (2007) explains that follow-up sessions can be done a

few days later or in a week if needed to determine the state of the client. These follow-up sessions are done if needed and agreed upon by the client (Greenstone & Leviton, 2011). According to Luxton et al. (2013), the initial follow-up session should be conducted shortly after the intervention and then continued repeatedly until the client is more stable. Studies also found that repeated follow-up sessions with vulnerable clients help them function better in the long run (Luxton et al., 2013). Follow-up in Islamic Education may involve incorporating spiritual guidance, encouragement, and prayers to help individuals maintain resilience and faith during their recovery process. By implementing follow-up protocols within the context of Islamic teachings, support networks can effectively nurture individuals' spiritual and emotional healing after crises.

IMPLICATION FOR ISLAMIC EDUCATION

The RPSD crisis intervention model could be used to be integrated in Islamic Education to help equip educators with necessary skills and knowledge in the face of a crisis in their respective educational settings. This is because, other Islamic models had proven success in helping clients with their issues. For instance, the use of Islamic cognitive restructuring using four values from the Quran, which are gratefulness, such as being grateful of the other blessings Allah has bestowed on us, acceptance such as accepting that everything that happened is based on *qadarullah* (pre-determined by Allah SWT), believing that ease comes with hardship, and expiation of sins by Allah SWT for the suffering that we go through during crisis (Bahari & Muzafar, 2019). This technique was used on PTSD clients to help them restructure their thoughts to be more positive, and it has helped them to reduce their PTSD symptoms.

Osman et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review and found Islamic psychotherapy effective for helping Muslim clients dealing with anxiety, depression, and bereavement. Even Muslim helpers from Middle Eastern countries provide training on multicultural competence, affective empathy, self-efficacy and cognitive training for their students, ensuring they are equipped with counselling competencies and an Islamic worldview. Saidon et al. (2021) proposed a psycho-spiritual support model based on Islamic principles (*Maqasib Shariah*) for disaster victims, such as flood or earthquake victims. The model consists of three stages: pre-crisis, in-crisis, and post-crisis. The pre-crisis stage focuses on preventive measures and preparation by building resilience through education and guidance. During the in-crisis stage, victims are supported materially, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Emotional and spiritual support is provided through psycho-spiritual therapy, consisting of 10 modules derived from *tasawuf* principles. In the post-traumatic stage, victims may realise the extent of the damage and necessary assistance should be provided.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Al Eid and Arnout (2020) devised a crisis management strategy to aid Muslim leaders. Based on the theory, Muslims should uphold values such as patience, teamwork, immigration and transition, confrontation, anticipation of the

future, preventive action, advance planning and a positive outlook in life. In educational settings, Kadafi et al. (2021) discovered that applying an Islamic counselling approach to high school students in Indonesia significantly reduced their anxiety levels during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to those approached with conventional counselling methods. This highlights the necessity of incorporating crisis intervention into Islamic Education, enabling Muslims in Malaysia to address crises through an Islamic worldview.

To achieve this, it is recommended that Islamic Education develops and incorporates specific curriculum modules focusing on Islamic counselling techniques and crisis intervention. This initiative would better equip educators, particularly teachers, with the knowledge to identify and respond to students in crisis, providing them with immediate and effective intervention (Anderson et al., 2018). To do so, a teaching manual could be provided to teachers as a guideline on embedding basic counselling skills, promoting healthy coping mechanisms, building resilience and raising awareness of mental health within an Islamic perspective.

Research indicates that well-structured mental health programs led by trained teachers create a supportive learning environment in schools, potentially preventing serious mental health issues (Wasserman et al., 2012). In addition to teachers' roles in educating, identifying, and responding to students in crisis, peer support also plays a crucial role. A global systematic review by Dodd et al. (2022) on school-based peer education interventions found them effective in improving health outcomes among students, including mental health. In Malaysia, peer guiders or PRS, are school students led by the Guidance and Counselling Unit of each school. They act as facilitators and assistants to counselling teachers, influencing their peers towards healthy physical, spiritual and mental well-being (Aminin & Izwan, 2023). By integrating crisis intervention into Islamic Education, PRS teams and Guidance and Counselling Teachers would gain additional tools that are culturally and religiously appropriate, thereby enhancing their effectiveness in supporting students.

CONCLUSION

The development of the RPSD crisis intervention model in the sociocultural and spiritual contexts of Malaysian society represents a significant milestone in effectively addressing crisis situations within Malaysia's diverse cultural landscape. Tailored to resonate with the unique sociocultural and spiritual dynamics prevalent in Malaysian society, this crisis intervention model ensures that crisis interventions are not only relevant but also sensitive to the values and beliefs of the population. From an Islamic Education perspective, the integration of spiritual care in crisis intervention aligns with the holistic view of human well-being prevalent in Islamic teachings. Islam emphasises the inter-connectedness of spiritual, mental, and physical health, advocating for a balanced approach to healing and support. Islamic teachings on compassion, community support and reliance on God are

particularly relevant in crisis situations, providing a solid foundation for resilience and recovery.

The RPSD model is comprehensive, practical, flexible and specifically designed to cater to the needs of handling crisis issues for Malaysians. It can be utilised by counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and anyone else involved in managing crisis cases. Developed based on the sociocultural and spiritual values of Malaysians, this model emphasises the importance of values and manners between crisis helpers and clients during crisis intervention. It is essential that intervention practices include focusing on and conversing about God or the Creator and the relationship between people. It relates with Islamic Education disciplines in Islamic theology (*usul al-din*), Islamic law (*shariah*), ethics (*akhlak*) and Islamic missionary work (*dakwah*). By incorporating these elements, the RPSD model ensures that intervention practices are not only effective but also culturally and spiritually resonant.

In essence, the development of the RPSD crisis intervention model represents a concerted effort to bridge the gap between traditional crisis intervention practices and the sociocultural and spiritual realities of Malaysian society. By aligning interventions with local norms and values, the model aims to provide culturally competent and spiritually sensitive support to individuals navigating crises, ultimately promoting resilience, healing and well-being across diverse communities in Malaysia.

The development of a comprehensive crisis intervention model for psycho-spiritual support is deemed a paramount endeavour, especially considering the existing deficiencies in this domain, particularly when viewed through the lens of Islamic perspectives (Saidon et al., 2020). This is particularly significant in the Malaysian context, where the integration of Islamic principles can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of crisis interventions.

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