

The Urgency of Islamic Counselor Competence in Guiding The Millennial Generation

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Abstract: The millennial generation, the largest part of the population today, faces various challenges in their lives, both spiritually, psychologically, and socially. Islamic counsellors are important in guiding and helping the millennial generation overcome these problems. However, to provide effective counselling services, Islamic counsellors need to improve specific competencies to meet the millennial generation's needs. This study aims to identify and analyze the urgency of increasing the competence of Islamic counsellors in guiding the millennial generation and formulating strategies for developing these competencies. This research uses a qualitative approach with the literature study method. Data collection is carried out through the analysis of relevant documents. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The results showed that Islamic counsellors must possess the main competencies for guiding the millennial generation, namely theological, spiritual, psychological, ethical, and professional competencies, as well as community and social competencies. Increasing these competencies is very important to ensure Islamic counsellors can provide holistic, effective, and appropriate counselling services for the millennial generation's needs. Increasing the competence of Islamic counsellors is a must when facing challenges in guiding the millennial generation. Strategies that can be applied include the development of an Islamic counselling education curriculum, continuous training and supervision, and collaboration with various stakeholders

Keywords: Competence, Guidance, Islamic Counselor, Millennials

INTRODUCTION

Millennials, also known as generation Y (Scheling & Richter, 2021; Easton & Steyn, 2022), This generation is in the spotlight because it has unique characteristics and life challenges compared to previous generations.

One of the characteristics of the millennial generation is openness to digital technology and social media (Widyanti & Rajiani, 2021). Millennials grew up in the digital age, where the internet, smartphones, and social media have become an integral part of everyday life (Hardika et al., 2020). This significantly impacts the mindset, behaviour, and way millennials interact with the world (Eka & Pandin, 2021; Rizqillah et al., 2022).

On the one hand, high digital connectedness has provided many conveniences and opportunities for millennials. But on the other hand, this also brings its challenges, such as mental health problems, technology addiction, and difficulties in building more meaningful personal relationships (Calara, 2020; Lucero et al., 2021).

In addition, millennials are also known for other characteristics, such as high concern for social and environmental issues, the desire to achieve life balance, and greater demands on work and life. These things often clash with the realities of life at hand, triggering various psychological and spiritual challenges (Febriani & Ritonga, 2022; Erawati et al., 2023; Amaliya et al., 2022). The millennial generation grew up with digital technology and the internet. Millennials, who are very accustomed to using technology in everyday life, are becoming more open and tolerant of differences and tend to be more proactive in voicing social and political issues (McBeth, 2022; Missier, 2022).

Some of the main challenges millennials face are mental health issues, technology addiction, and difficulty building meaningful personal relationships (Moles et al., 2023). On the other hand, millennials also have a deep concern for social and environmental issues and greater demands on work and life. Understanding the characteristics of the millennial generation is important for various parties in responding to and adjusting to the dynamics of this generation (Marrero Galván et al., 2023; Alotaibi & Abbas, 2023).

In the context of Muslim societies, it is necessary to have an Islamic counsellor present to provide spiritual guidance on Islamic values. An Islamic counsellor can have competence and integrity and be an intermediary who helps individuals find balance, calmness, and closeness to Allah. In this context, the role of Islamic counsellors becomes very important in guiding and accompanying the millennial generation. Islamic counsellors are expected to understand the unique dynamics and needs of this generation, as well as provide counselling services that are holistic and based on Islamic values (Casmini, 2022).

In a modern era full of various life challenges and pressures, an Islamic counsellor's role is becoming increasingly important and needed. Islamic counsellors have a noble responsibility to help individuals find balance and tranquillity through spiritual guidance grounded in Islamic teachings (Rahman et al., 2023).

The role of Islamic counsellors is increasingly important in today's society, especially in guiding and accompanying the millennial generation. In facing the unique dynamics and needs of the millennial generation, Islamic counsellors are expected to have adequate competence. The competence of Islamic counsellors includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are in harmony with Islamic values. This is important so that Islamic counsellors can provide effective counselling services and contribute to the comprehensive development of the potential of the millennial generation (Sukman et al., 2023).

However, reality shows that there still needs to be a gap between the competence of Islamic counsellors and the millennial generation's needs. Several studies show that Islamic counsellors need to be more adequate in understanding contemporary psychological issues, integrating Islamic counselling approaches with modern approaches, and developing counselling skills that match the characteristics of the millennial generation (Gale et al., 2023) (Roziqi, 2024).

Islamic counsellors have an important role in the increasing number of Ummah's problems and challenges. The existence of a competent and honest Islamic counsellor can be an effective solution to providing spiritual guidance through Islamic values. Through the role of Islamic counsellors, it is hoped that Muslim individuals can find calmness, mental resilience, and closeness to Allah in living life (Willman et al., 2023) (Natsir et al., 2023).

Islamic counsellors also have a strategic role in helping individuals understand and live the teachings of Islam as a guide in their daily lives. Millennials can integrate the counselling approach with Islamic principles so that individuals can find a balance between physical, mental, and spiritual

aspects. In addition, Islamic counsellors can also help the millennial generation increase self-awareness, understand the purpose of life, and get closer to Allah SWT. Therefore, this study aims to examine the urgency of increasing the competence of Islamic counsellors, both in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, to provide more effective counselling services and contribute to the comprehensive development of the potential of the millennial generation.

METHOD

The research method used to examine the urgency of increasing Islamic counsellors for scientific journals uses a qualitative approach (Sardana et al., 2023; Fischer & Guzel, 2023; Khoa et al., 2023) with a literature study that focuses on an in-depth analysis of literature sources relevant to the research topic. Literature studies are used to understand phenomena in depth and comprehensively through critical analysis of literature sources, explore, develop, and deepen understanding of existing theories and identify gaps or new research opportunities based on findings from literature analysis (Furlong & Lester, 2023; Chigbu et al., 2023).

Data collection techniques use document analysis by analyzing documents, such as literature, reports, and policies to obtain relevant information (Popat & Tarrant, 2023; Serafini & Reid, 2023; Badr & Lasthuizen, 2023). Data analysis uses thematic analysis and content analysis by identifying, analyzing, and reporting on themes that emerge from the collected data and conducting content analysis of qualitative data through documents, to uncover hidden meanings, patterns, and themes (Squires, 2023; Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023). Through this qualitative approach to generate a deep understanding of the urgency of improving Islamic Counsellors, as well as finding strategies and recommendations that can contribute to the development of more effective Islamic Counselling practices.

RESULT

Competence of Islamic Counsellors

Islamic Counsellors have a great responsibility. Not only does it require knowledge and skills in the field of Counselling, an Islamic Counsellor must also have special competencies based on Islamic teachings. These competencies are important to ensure that the guidance and Counselling process provided is in accordance with Islamic values and principles.

1. Mastery of Islamic Science

An Islamic Counsellor must have a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, including the Quran, Hadith, jurisprudence, and various other branches of Islamic scholarship. Mastery of this religious knowledge will help Counsellors to provide advice and direction in accordance with the Islamic perspective (Rahman et al., 2023).

2. Ability to Guide Spiritually

In addition to understanding religious science, Islamic Counsellors must also have the ability to guide clients spiritually. This includes the ability to assist clients in drawing closer to Allah Almighty, building spiritual awareness, and developing emotional and spiritual intelligence (Keskinoglu & Ekşi, 2019; Hanin Hamjah & Mat Akhir, 2014).

3. Effective Communication Skills

Islamic Counsellors must have effective communication skills, both verbally and non-verbally. This ability will help Counsellors to convey advice and guidance in a way that is easy for clients to understand and accept (Haryati, 2018).

4. Understanding of Islamic Psychology

Islamic Counsellors need to understand psychological concepts that are in line with Islamic teachings, such as the concepts of fitrah, tawakkal, patience, and others. This understanding will help the Counsellor to identify and address the client's problems with an Islamic approach (El-Aswad, 2020).

5. Personal Exemplary

An Islamic Counsellor must have a personality and behavior that is in accordance with the teachings of Islam. The Counsellor should be a role model for the client in terms of morals, worship, and the application of Islamic values in daily life (Hanin Hamjah et al., 2020).

By having these competencies, an Islamic Counsellor is expected to provide effective guidance and Counselling, so as to help clients to achieve peace of mind, closeness to Allah SWT, and happiness in life in the world and hereafter.

Islamic Counsellors as a professional Counsellor must also have the ability to provide effective Counselling services, including:

1. Knowledge and Understanding

Counsellors have extensive knowledge of Counselling theories, human development, psychology, and social issues. Counsellors also understand the dynamics and process of Counselling, as well as effective intervention techniques.

2. Counselling Skills

Counsellors are able to establish a warm, empathetic, and non-judgmental Counselling relationship. Skilled in active listening, questioning, reflecting, and providing constructive feedback. The Counsellor is also able to develop a Counselling plan that suits the client's needs.

3. Assessment and Evaluation Capabilities

Counsellors are able to conduct comprehensive assessments to identify needs, problems, and potential clients. Counsellors are also skilled in selecting and using appropriate assessment tools. Counsellors are also able to evaluate the effectiveness of Counselling interventions and use the evaluation results for improvement.

4. Professional and Ethical Abilities

Counsellors also understand and adhere to the code of ethics of the Counselling profession, maintain professional boundaries and avoid conflicts of interest. Counsellors are also involved in professional development through training, supervision, and involvement in professional organizations.

5. Social and Cultural Care

Counsellors also understand the diversity of clients' social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Counsellors are also able to adapt and provide services that are sensitive to individual differences and have a commitment to promoting social justice and client well-being.

These skills are very important for Counsellors to be able to provide Counselling services that are professional, ethical, and oriented towards client welfare. The development of Counsellor competencies also continues to be carried out in line with the development of Counselling science and practice.

The Urgency of Islamic Counsellors

The existence of Islamic Counsellors has urgency including:

1. Spiritual Needs in Counselling

Human beings have not only physical and psychological dimensions, but also spiritual dimensions. Conventional Counselling often pays little attention to the spiritual aspect of the problem-solving process. This is where the role of the Islamic Counsellor becomes very important, namely to meet the spiritual needs of the client.

2. Guidance Based on Islamic Values

Islamic Counsellors can provide guidance and direction based on Islamic teachings, such as the Quran, Hadith, and other Islamic principles. This is especially important for clients who need a life guide that is in accordance with their religious beliefs and values.

3. Increase Spiritual Intelligence

One of the duties of an Islamic Counsellor is to help the client to improve his spiritual intelligence. This spiritual intelligence will help the client to understand the meaning of life, manage emotions, and develop awareness of God's presence in his life.

4. Overcoming Moral and Ethical Issues

Islamic Counsellors have a deep understanding of moral and ethical issues in an Islamic perspective. This allows millennials to assist clients in overcoming problems related to values, morals, and behaviors that are in accordance with Islamic teachings.

5. Provide Holistic Solutions

By blending physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects, Islamic Counsellors can provide more holistic solutions for clients. This holistic approach allows counsellors to touch all dimensions of a client's life, helping to achieve more well-being.

The presence of Islamic Counsellors is very important in providing guidance and Counselling in accordance with the needs of the Muslim community. With their competence, Islamic Counsellors can play a vital role in helping clients to achieve happiness and well-being based on Islamic values.

Competencies Used by Islamic Counsellors

Islamic Counsellors have special competencies that distinguish them from Counsellors in general. The following special competencies must be possessed by an Islamic Counsellor:

1. Theological Competence

Deep understanding of Islamic teachings, including aqidah, sharia, and morals.

Ability to integrate Islamic teachings into the Counselling process as well as Mastery of Islamic legal sources, such as the Quran and Hadith (Rothman & Coyle, 2020).

2. Spiritual Competence

Have spiritual maturity, characterized by piety, patience, and closeness to Allah SWT. Ability to guide clients in spiritual practices, such as prayer, dhikr, and prayer. An understanding of Islamic spiritual concepts, such as tawakkal, tazkiyatun nafs, and muraqabah (Asadzandi, 2020).

3. Psychological Competence

A deep understanding of psychological science, particularly with regard to human psychological development and dynamics. Ability to analyze client problems from a psychological and spiritual perspective. Skills in applying Counselling techniques that are appropriate to client needs (Vieten & Lukoff, 2022).

4. Ethical and Professional Competence

Deep understanding of the Islamic Counselling code of ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, objectivity, and integrity. The ability to be fair, empathetic, and appreciate each client's uniqueness. Commitment to develop professionalism and competence on an ongoing basis (Zakaria et al., 2022).

5. Community and Social Competencies

An understanding of the structure and dynamics of the Muslim community, as well as the ability to collaborate with relevant parties. Ability to identify and leverage existing resources within the community to assist clients. Sensitivity to social issues and ability to intervene appropriate to the client's cultural and social context (Rahman et al., 2023).

By having these competencies, Islamic Counsellors can provide comprehensive and effective Counselling services, so as to help clients, especially the millennial generation, in overcoming millennial generation's problems holistically, based on Islamic teachings.

The Approach Used by Islamic Counsellors Can Help Millennials

Islamic Counsellors can help millennials overcome millennial generation's problems through several approaches, including:

1. Holistic Approach

Islamic Counsellors view humans holistically, encompassing physical, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects. In helping the millennial generation, Islamic Counsellors not only focus on the problems faced, but also pay attention to balance and well-being in all aspects of millennial life.

2. Spiritual Guidance

Islamic Counsellors can help millennials to understand and live the teachings of Islam as a guide in overcoming problems. Through spiritual guidance, Counsellors can help millennials increase piety, build patience, and develop submission (tawakal) to Allah SWT. Spiritual practices such as prayer, dhikr, and recitation of the Quran can be used to relieve anxiety, provide calm, and increase closeness to God.

3. Counselling Based on Islamic Values

Islamic Counsellors use Islamic principles and values as a foundation in the Counselling process. Values such as honesty, trust, empathy, and justice are the foundation in building healthy and productive Counselling relationships.

Islamic Counsellors can help millennials to develop character and behavior that is in accordance with Islamic teachings.

4. Community-Based Interventions

Islamic Counsellors can work with the Muslim community to assist millennials in addressing millennial concerns. Through community activities, Counsellors can facilitate social support, mentoring, and spiritual coaching for millennials.

This approach can help millennials feel connected to the community and get the resources they need to address issues.

5. Collaboration with Other Experts

In certain cases, Islamic Counsellors may collaborate with other professionals, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, or social workers, to provide more comprehensive interventions.

This collaboration can help the millennial generation get assistance that suits the needs of the millennial generation, both in spiritual, psychological, and social aspects.

By integrating holistic approaches, spiritual guidance, Islamic values-based Counselling, community intervention, and collaboration with other experts, Islamic Counsellors can help millennials overcome various problems faced by millennials effectively and in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Spiritual Practices that can Help Millennials in Overcoming Problems

Islamic Counsellors can recommend several spiritual practices that can help millennials in overcoming millennial problems, including:

1. Salat

Salat is a very important form of worship in Islam and can provide peace for the perpetrator. Islamic Counsellors can teach millennials to understand the meaning and virtues of prayer, and familiarize millennials to perform it solemnly and consistently (Yusni et al., 2023).

2. Dhikr

The practice of dhikr, which is remembering and chanting the names of Allah and praises to Him, can help calm the heart and mind (Subandi et al., 2022). Islamic Counsellors can teach various forms of dhikr, such as prayer beads, tahmid, takbir, and istighfar, and guide the millennial generation to perform it regularly.

3. Reading the Quran

Reading, meditating, and practicing the teachings of the Quran can bring enlightenment and peace to the soul. Islamic Counsellors can encourage millennials to get used to reading the Quran, both individually and in groups, and help millennials understand its meaning and application in everyday life (Rothman & Coyle, 2018).

4. Prayer

Prayer is a very important means of communication in Islam, where a servant asks for help, protection, and guidance from Allah Almighty. Islamic Counsellors can teach the millennial generation to get used to praying, both daily prayers and prayers that are in accordance with the situation and problems faced (Yusni et al., 2023).

5. Muhasabah (Self-Introspection)

The practice of muhasabah, which is to reflect and evaluate themselves periodically, can help the millennial generation to recognize its shortcomings and advantages, and motivate the millennial generation to continue to grow and improve themselves. Islamic Counsellors can guide millennials in performing muhasabah, both individually and in groups, and help millennials find strategies to develop their potential (Ardimen et al., 2023).

By applying these spiritual practices consistently, it is hoped that the millennial generation can find calm, closeness to Allah SWT, and strength in facing various challenges and problems of life.

DISCUSSION

Entering the modern era, millennials are faced with various challenges and pressures of life that are increasingly complex. Starting from identity problems, anxiety about the future, materialistic lifestyle, to a crisis of meaning and spirituality. This condition raises an increasingly urgent need for millennials to get spiritual guidance and support in accordance with Islamic values (Febriani & Ritonga, 2022).

The millennial generation has different characteristics from previous generations. Millennials grew up in an environment filled with technological advancements, globalization, and cultural

shifts. This has an impact on the mindset, lifestyle, and perspective of the millennial generation on life. On the one hand, millennials have advantages in terms of creativity, adaptation, and openness to change. But on the other hand, millennials also face challenges related to self-identity, emotional stability, and the meaning of life. Many millennials feel they have lost their grip and calmness in living life (Parfanovych et al., 2022).

In the context of Muslim society, the presence of Islamic Counsellors is very important to help the millennial generation in dealing with these problems. Islamic Counsellors who understand the teachings of Islam comprehensively can bridge the gap between the demands of modernity and the spiritual needs of the millennial generation (Willman et al., 2023).

Through Islamic Counselling, Counsellors can help the millennial generation to understand and live the teachings of Islam as a guide in living life. The millennial generation can instill noble Islamic values, such as faith, patience, and tawakal, so that the millennial generation can find calmness, mental resilience, and closeness to Allah SWT (Haryati, 2018).

The presence of competent and integrity Islamic Counsellors is becoming increasingly important for Muslim millennials. With a holistic approach that integrates physical, mental, and spiritual aspects, Islamic Counsellors can provide guidance that suits the needs and challenges faced by millennials in living life in the modern era.

Islamic Counselling is very necessary to answer the spiritual needs of humans. Human beings need not only the fulfillment of physical and psychological needs, but also spiritual needs. Islamic Counsellors can help individuals to understand and live the teachings of Islam as a guide in living life. Through Islamic Counselling, individuals can find meaning, purpose, and peace in life (Keskinoglu & Ekşi, 2019).

The problems that individuals face often have a spiritual dimension that cannot be let go. Islamic Counsellors who understand the teachings of Islam comprehensively can help individuals see their problems from a broader perspective, covering physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects so that Islamic Counsellors can provide a holistic perspective in problem solving. This holistic approach can lead to more effective and lasting solutions (Rothman & Coyle, 2018).

In facing life's various challenges, individuals need strong mental and spiritual resilience. Islamic Counsellors can help individuals develop maturity of faith, patience, and laughter derived from Islamic teachings as well as to strengthen mental and spiritual resilience. This can be a solid foundation for individuals to face life's problems and pressures (El-Aswad, 2020).

Islamic Counselling does not only focus on problem solving, but also on efforts to increase an individual's self-awareness of the existence and greatness of Allah SWT. Through the Counselling process, individuals can get to know themselves, understand their purpose in life, and draw closer to God.

CONCLUSION

This research has identified and analyzed the urgency of increasing the competence of Islamic Counsellors in guiding the millennial generation. Research findings show that there are several main competencies that must be possessed by Islamic Counsellors, namely:

1. Theological Competence

Islamic Counsellors must have a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, so as to provide spiritual guidance in accordance with the principles of sharia.

2. Spiritual Competence

Islamic Counsellors need to have high spiritual intelligence in order to be role models and help the millennial generation in developing aspects of millennial spirituality.

3. Psychological Competence

Islamic Counsellors must understand the psychological dynamics of the millennial generation and have Counselling skills that are in accordance with the needs of the millennial generation.

4. Ethical and Professional Competence

Islamic Counsellors must uphold the code of professional ethics and demonstrate professionalism in providing Counselling services.

5. Community and Social Competencies

Islamic Counsellors need to have the ability to collaborate with various related parties and build a support network for millennials.

Increasing these competencies is very important to ensure Islamic Counsellors can provide holistic, effective, and appropriate Counselling services in accordance with the needs of the millennial generation. Some strategies that can be applied include the development of Islamic Counselling education curriculum, continuous training and supervision, and collaboration with various stakeholders. Thus, the urgency of increasing the competence of Islamic Counsellors is very important in an effort to guide and help the millennial generation face the challenges of millennial life comprehensively.

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