

Selected Publications of the Association for Psychology and Psychotherapy Research



Purpose and Overview of the Booklet

This booklet presents a selection of academic works conducted under the Association for Psychology and Psychotherapy Research, aiming to provide an overview of current models of psychotherapy that are structured with religious and cultural sensitivity.

The content includes theoretical frameworks, systematic reviews, case studies, and intervention-based studies—offering unique insights for both practitioners and researchers in the field.

This collection features concise summaries of studies integrating religious values into psychotherapy, highlighting the scientific validity, practical applications, and conceptual foundations of religious-sensitive approaches to mental health care.





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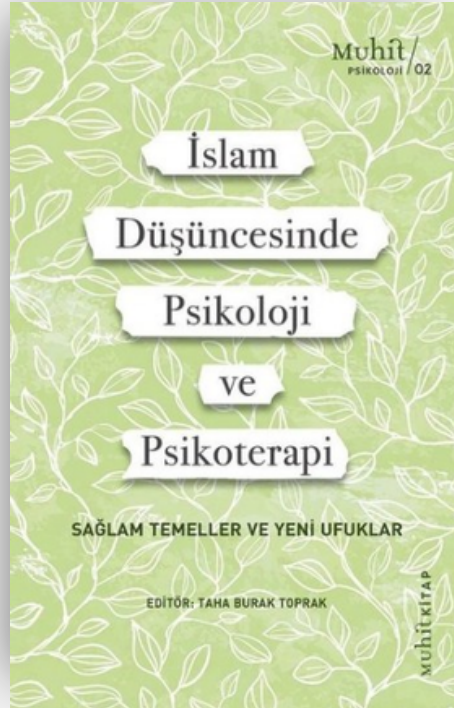
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Books

Psychology and Psychotherapy in Islamic Thought – Solid Foundations, New Horizons



Editor: Dr. Taha Burak Toprak

Contributors: Prof. Dr. Malik Badri, Prof. Dr. Ömer Türker, Prof. Dr. Ekrem Demirli, Prof. Dr. Fatih Yavuz, Prof. Dr. Medaim Yanık, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zuhul Ağılkaya Şahin, Dr. Mustafa Merter, Dr. Taha Burak Toprak, Dr. Hooman Keshavarzi, 2021, Muhit Kitap, İstanbul.

Publication Type and Field: Book, Psychology.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

The book *Psychology and Psychotherapy in Islamic Thought* seeks to address the theoretical, methodological, and practical gaps that arise in Western-originated psychology and psychotherapy approaches to understanding the human being. The work aims to contribute to the development of new conceptual and practical approaches that can evaluate the multi-layered relationship between modern psychology, psychotherapy and Islamic thought within an integrated

perspective. It aims to inspire readers to rethink, ask more insightful questions, and foster hope and curiosity.

Social and Professional Contributions

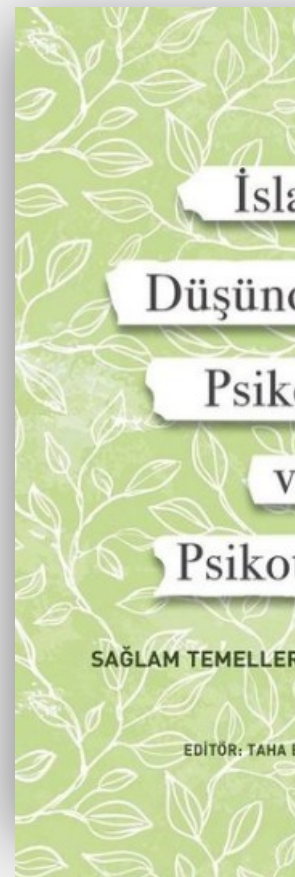
Social Contribution

Mental health problems have become an area of concern that negatively affects society—not only by impairing individual functioning but also by disrupting family structures and weakening social relationships (WHO, 2023). In this context, it is evident that mental health interventions contribute not only to individual well-being but also to social cohesion. Furthermore, therapists' rigid adherence to psychotherapy approaches that are disconnected from cultural contexts can be alienating and may hinder the development of a therapeutic alliance for many individuals (Miller & Hedges, 2008; Fernando, 2010). For individuals with strong religious affiliations, psychological interventions that align with their belief systems tend to be more effective and widely accepted (Bentley et al., 2021; Toprak et al., 2025). Research indicates that religiously sensitive psychotherapy models have a significant impact on mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Hook et al., 2010).

In this context, the book *Psychology and Psychotherapy in Islamic Thought* shows that it is possible to develop a religiously sensitive approach to therapy by using the knowledge traditions of Islamic thought. The theoretical ideas and practical models in the book help build mental health services that are more sensitive to religious values, especially in Muslim communities, leading to more inclusive and effective support at the social level (Toprak, 2021).

Professional Contribution

The book emphasizes the importance of working with different



knowledge traditions for psychology and psychotherapy professionals and questions the ontological foundations underlying the methods used in modern psychotherapy. The authors discuss ways to develop alternative evaluation tools and intervention based on Islamic knowledge traditions, offering therapists new horizons. Especially, examples and treatment models inspired by classical sources provide concrete contributions aimed at enhancing therapists' intercultural competencies.

Extended Summary

Psychology and Psychotherapy in Islamic Thought is a comprehensive and pioneering study examining the multi-layered relationship between Islamic thought and the fields of modern psychology and psychotherapy. Edited by Taha Burak Toprak, the volume is shaped by contributions from academics across various disciplines and offers rich discussions at both theoretical and practical levels.

The book emphasizes that Islam, as a religion, answers fundamental existential questions such as "Who are we?", "Why are we here?", and "Where are we going?", while psychology addresses "How are we?" and psychotherapy pursues answers to "How do we get to where we want to be?" Each of these three fields approaches the human being from a different perspective, and they cannot be considered independently. The book argues for a balanced and meaningful dialogue among these areas and aims to create a platform for such discussion.

The book is divided into two main parts: Islam and Psychology, and Islam and Psychotherapy. The first part addresses theoretical foundations, while the second focuses on practical models and clinical applications built upon those foundations.

In the first section, the book explores how human beings are defined in Islamic thought through components like nafs (self),

qalb (heart), ruh (spirit), and aql (intellect), and how these definitions relate to psychological processes.

Dr. Taha Burak Toprak classifies the Ilmü'n-nefs tradition in Islam into four categories: medical, philosophical, Sufi, and scholarly (alim) traditions. It is emphasized that these traditions seek to understand humans through various lenses—body, mind, and spirit—and provide diverse epistemological resources related to psychology. Toprak also critiques modern psychology's roots in Western philosophy and its scientific approach that tends to exclude spiritual realities.

Prof. Dr. Ömer Türker elaborates on psychological understanding within Islamic medicine and philosophy traditions, revealing views on the structure and functioning of the human psyche. The distinctions and potential bridges between Islamic thought and modern psychology are also discussed.

Prof. Dr. Ekrem Demirli focuses on how human psychology is addressed in Sufi tradition, offering in-depth interpretations of concepts such as qalb, ruh, aql, and nafs. The spiritual journey and purification processes of the human being are central themes.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zuhul Ağilkaya Şahin discusses the role of religion in psychology and psychotherapy, advocating for the necessity of religiously sensitive psychotherapy. She emphasizes that therapists should possess religious and spiritual competencies. The protective and healing effects of religious beliefs on individual mental health are elaborated.

Prof. Dr. Malik Badri critiques the Western-centered psychology paradigm and explores the potential contributions of the Islamic traditions to this field. He questions the ideological and cultural origins of psychology in the West and highlights the importance of constructing an Islamic psychology.

The second part of the book presents psychotherapy models inspired by Islamic thought and practical examples.

Dr. Taha Burak Toprak develops a psychotherapy model inspired by the Ilmü'n-nefs tradition applicable to modern psychotherapy. Using Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur as a foundation, he illustrates how cognitive restructuring techniques can be applied to treat religious obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), particularly focusing on the concept of waswasa (whispering doubts).

Prof. Dr. Medaim Yanık discusses the possibilities and challenges of creating a psychotherapy model based on Islamic medical and philosophical traditions. According to the author, reviving the Ilmü'n-nefs tradition requires strategic planning, schools of thought, functional research, institutional structures, and strong publications. When these five elements work together, a broad and high-quality production process can begin in the field.

Dr. Mustafa Merter analyzes the differences between the concept of psyche in the West and nafs in Islam. He critiques the historical development of psychology in the context of Enlightenment and secularization, defending the holistic human understanding of Islamic thought. Merter contends that conventional psychotherapies aim only at restoring functionality, while genuine inner peace can only be achieved through spiritual growth, moral refinement, and a meaningful relationship with Allah.

Prof. Dr. Fatih Yavuz discusses the fundamental deficiencies in how science and psychology are engaged within the Islamic world and examines how these deficiencies might be addressed. He offers proposals on how theoretical differences around psyche and nafs can reflect on modern psychotherapy.

Dr. Hooman Keshavarzi evaluates Muslim populations approaches to psychotherapy based on research findings. He proposes a psychotherapy model grounded in Islamic ontological concepts and explains its clinical advantages and limitations.

Throughout the book, numerous commonalities and differences between Islamic thought, psychology, and psychotherapy are highlighted. Rather than offering a single absolute model, the goal is to encourage readers to rethink and formulate deeper questions. The book demonstrates how different knowledge traditions can harmoniously operate and what epistemological and methodological contributions they can provide in the process.

The aim of the book is to contribute to the development of original, religiously sensitive, and effective psychological models that evaluate the rich sources of Islamic thought tradition in dialogue with modern psychology and psychotherapy. In this regard, the work serves as a valuable reference for both academics and clinical practitioners.

Keywords

Ilm al-Nafs (Islamic science of the soul), Islamic thought, Spirituality and mental health, Religion-sensitive psychotherapy models, Critique of modern psychology.

Highlights

- The book addresses the differences and intersections between psychology, psychotherapy, and Islamic thought within a framework that enables understanding the human being as a holistic entity.
- With interdisciplinary contributions, it aims to produce knowledge applicable at both academic and clinical levels, bridging theory and practice.

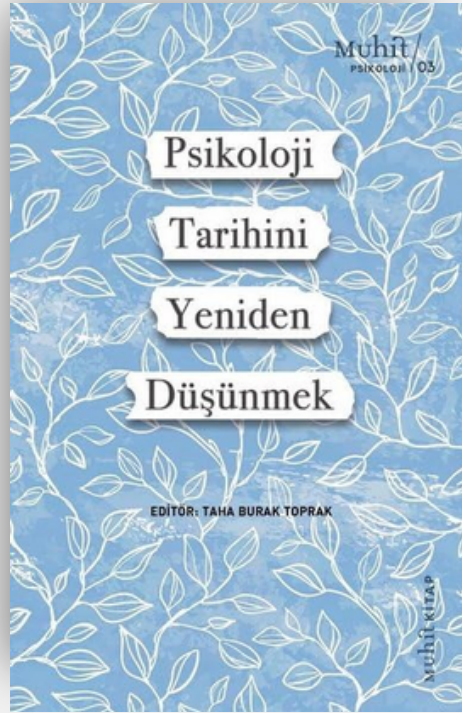
Psychotherapy models developed based on the Ilmü'n-nefs tradition open new horizons for mental health

practices at individual and societal levels.

- The Western-centered ontological and epistemological foundations of modern psychology are critiqued, and a psychology grounded in the sources of Islamic civilization is proposed instead.
- Therapeutic approaches sensitive to religious values are emphasized as more effective and acceptable, especially for Muslim clients.

Books

Rethinking the History of Psychology



Editor: Dr. Taha Burak Toprak

Contributors: Prof. Dr. Eşref Altaş, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Zahit Tiryaki, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Dinç, Dr. Hacı Bayram Başer, Dr. Tuba Erkoç Baydar, M. Halit Çelikyön, Muhammet Uysal, 2023, Muhit Kitap, İstanbul.

Publication Type and Field: Book, Psychology.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This book critically examines the Western-centric narrative of the origins of modern psychology and aims to reassess the history of psychology within the framework of Islamic thought. It argues that the methods used in the fields of psychology and psychotherapy, based on a unidimensional (Western) worldview, fall short in fully understanding human nature. In this context, the book aims to recover and present psychological insights and practices rooted in Islamic

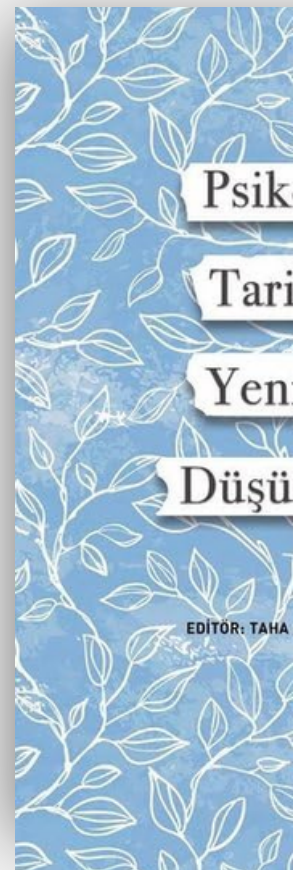
intellectual tradition including medicine, philosophy, kalām (theology), and Sufism. It endeavors to describe the perspectives of key figures in Islamic intellectual history on human psychological structure, functioning, “dysfunction,” and “healing” in ways that may offer valuable insights for contemporary psychological and psychotherapeutic discussions.

Social and Professional Contribution

Social Contribution

Psychological disorders can significantly reduce individuals’ quality of life and their ability to function within society (WHO, 2023). Addressing these issues effectively is essential for both individual well-being and social welfare (APA, 2020). Research shows that when treatments are sensitive to religious, cultural, and personal values, they tend to increase both client engagement and therapeutic effectiveness (Sue et al., 2009; Zoellner et al., 2018). For this reason, it is crucial to design psychological interventions that are compatible with religious sensitivities (Toprak et al., 2025). Beyond clinical practice, the development of theoretical models that reflect cultural and religious awareness also contributes to making mental health services more inclusive and effective at the societal level. However, since most modern psychotherapy approaches were developed within Western cultural contexts, they may not be equally effective across different cultures. As highlighted in *Rethinking the History of Psychology* (Toprak, 2023), the reductionist structure of modern psychology weakens the theoretical basis for psychological support in the Islamic world and leads to cultural mismatches in practice.

Within this framework, the book explores the relationship between psychology and Islamic thought on both theoretical



and practical levels. In doing so, it seeks to offer an approach that responds to the needs of society while also contributing a distinct and meaningful perspective to the field of mental health.

Professional Contribution

The book encourages clinical psychologists to adopt a critical perspective on Western-centric approaches, offering opportunities to develop treatment models based on ontological and epistemological foundations in Islamic thought. In particular, the concept of “multi-dimensional reality” enables therapists to more comprehensively and holistically evaluate clients’ religious and cultural worlds. In this regard, the book is a rich resource for professionals in psychology and psychotherapy, both in terms of theoretical insights and practical applications.

Summary

Rethinking the History of Psychology is a multifaceted work that questions the Western-centric approach to the history of modern psychology and offers a distinct perspective rooted in the Islamic thought tradition. The book argues that psychological and psychotherapeutic studies have historically been framed within a narrow paradigm shaped by figures such as Aristotle, Descartes, and Freud, overlooking the rich body of knowledge developed in the Islamic world concerning the human soul, mental processes, emotions, and behavior. Accordingly, the book aims to provide an alternative historical reading of psychology, both theoretically and practically. It particularly highlights how Western paradigms tend to approach the human being in biological or behavioral terms, whereas Islamic thought offers a more comprehensive image of the human through concepts such as soul (rūḥ), heart (qalb), conscience, self (nafs), and intellect (aql).

The first chapter introduces **Dr. Taha Burak Toprak**’s concept of “multi-dimensional reality” as a central methodological

proposal. This concept asserts that various disciplines within the Islamic thought tradition—such as Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), theology (kalām), Sufism, and philosophy—approach reality from different layers. Therefore, a science focused on human beings, like psychology, must draw from all these layers. Toprak exemplifies this multi-dimensional understanding through the “Risale on Waswasa” (Vesvese Risalesi), showing how the concepts in the text intertwine fiqh, sufi, and scientific meanings. He warns that interpreting such layered texts through a unidimensional lens may lead to misreadings, which can affect therapeutic practice as well. Misidentifying the level of reality to which a concept belongs can lead to methodological ambiguities and incomplete approaches in practice.

Also in the first chapter, with the contribution of **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Dinç**, the colonial structures of thought and language in modern psychology are critically addressed. Dinç challenges the uncritical use and universalization of many psychological theories developed in the West within Muslim societies. He argues that this has led to a deep intellectual colonization in psychological thought. He particularly stresses the need to reassess how language shapes thought. Since psychology is not only an academic discipline but also a way of defining, understanding, and intervening in human behavior, these definitions must be grounded in a framework that draws from one’s own civilizational heritage.

The second chapter focuses on prominent thinkers in Islamic intellectual history who have made significant direct or indirect contributions to psychology. Each contributor analyzes the views of a thinker within their tradition. **Muhammet Uysal** examines al-Balkhī’s work within the framework of the medical tradition, highlighting how his reflections on emotional regulation, the etiology of psychological disorders, and therapeutic practices anticipated key developments in modern psychology. **Dr. Tuba Erkoç Baydar** examines how

Debūsī, within the fiqh tradition, approaches moral responsibility, will, and behavior. **Prof. Dr. Eşref Altaş** assesses Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's theological perspective on mental processes through his theory of action. **Dr. Hacı Bayram Başer** presents Ibn 'Arabī's Sufi interpretations of the inner world of the human being using concepts such as heart, soul, inspiration, and self. **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Zahit Tiryaki** explains Ibn Sīnā's theory of the soul and his classification of faculties such as perception, memory, and imagination. **M. Halit Çelikyön** discusses Imam Ghazālī's integrative approach that synthesizes various traditions, demonstrating how it provides a strong theoretical and practical foundation for psychology, especially through the concept of tajdīd (renewal).

The third chapter offers a roadmap for future research in this area. Toprak, emphasizes the importance of understanding one's own metaphysical foundations and grasping responses to essential questions about existence, knowledge, and morality in Islamic thought. He proposes re-thinking both the challenges faced by humanity and psychotherapy from the perspective of Islamic thought and building a systematic, consistent, and holistic relationship with modern science. This approach seeks to develop a psychology that is both theoretically sound(sahih) and practically relevant by distinguishing between constant (immutable) principles and variable (contextual) knowledge.

In conclusion, *Rethinking the History of Psychology* is both a call for critical reflection and a constructive endeavor. It aims to move psychology beyond its Western paradigms and reframe it within the rich intellectual heritage of Islamic civilization. For students, researchers, and practitioners of psychology, this book offers not only an alternative history of psychology but also demonstrates that a deeper, multi-layered, and more meaningful understanding of the human being is possible. In this respect, it serves as a valuable guide

for those who are willing to ask new and courageous questions at both intellectual and professional levels.

Keywords

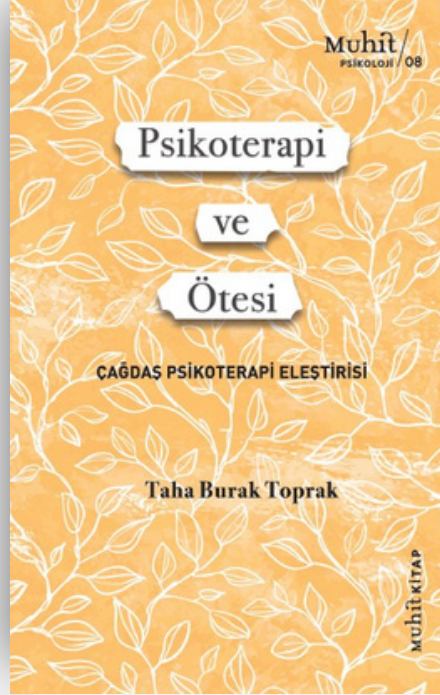
Islamic thought, Psychotherapy, Multi-dimensional reality, History of psychology.

Highlights

- The book critiques the Western-centric narrative of modern psychology and aims to integrate the rich spiritual and intellectual heritage of the Islamic world into psychology.
- The “multi-dimensional reality” approach argues that psychology must draw upon various epistemological layers, such as Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), theology (kalam), Sufism, and philosophy.
- It challenges the universalization of Western psychological theories and their uncritical application in Muslim societies.
- In-depth analyses of Islamic thinkers (al-Balkhī, Debūsī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Arabī, Ibn Sīnā, Imam Ghazālī) reveal rich insights into the human mind and soul.
- The book underscores the need to develop a consistent and holistic psychology grounded in Islamic thought by distinguishing between constant principles and contextual knowledge.

Books

Psychotherapy and Beyond



Dr. Taha Burak Toprak, 2024, Muhit Kitap, Association for Psychology and Psychotherapy Research, Istanbul.

Publication Type and Field: Book, Psychology.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This book critically engages with the theoretical foundations of clinical psychology and psychotherapy, examining the concepts and interventions used in psychotherapeutic practice through the lens of religious and cultural values. It emphasizes the importance of methodological reflection and discusses both the challenges and potential of integrating the rich intellectual resources of Islamic thought with modern psychotherapeutic practice.

Social and Professional Contributions

This book aims to offer a more inclusive and sensitive mental health service by integrating cultural and religious sensitivities into psychotherapy, allowing individuals to experience a therapeutic process that aligns with their beliefs. It also provides a framework for therapists to incorporate their own value systems into their professional practice by addressing the spiritual dimension of mental health alongside the bio-psycho-social model.

Social Contribution

This book advocates a more inclusive and sensitive mental health service model by drawing attention to the importance of cultural-religious sensitivities in psychotherapy practice. In this way, individuals' distrust of psychotherapy is overcome and they are enabled to experience a psychotherapy process that does not conflict with their own beliefs and values. In addition, by stating that mental health includes a spiritual dimension in addition to bio-psycho-social dimensions, it helps both to increase awareness on this point and to produce more holistic solutions to psychological problems. In this way, it is aimed to increase the capacity to provide faith-compatible and scientifically based solutions to the rapidly increasing mental health problems in society.

Professional Contribution

The book discusses ways for individuals with religious sensitivities who receive psychotherapy services, as well as clinical psychologists, psychiatrists and therapists with this sensitivity, to experience a psychotherapy process that does not conflict with their own beliefs and values. It also provides a framework in which they can integrate the opportunities offered by their own value systems into their professional practice. At this point, by stating that mental health includes



a spiritual dimension in addition to bio-psycho-social dimensions, the door is opened to the development of more comprehensive and highly effective interventions in the field.

Summary

Psychotherapy and Beyond may be best described as a 'critique of modern psychotherapy', as it opens up the theoretical and practical issues of psychology, and specifically clinical psychology and psychotherapy, for discussion. A broad questioning of practical issues and then the method is made in psychotherapy. The book frequently draws attention to the fact that the theories and concepts used in psychotherapy carry much more philosophical/ideological load than it seems. It is mentioned that one should be aware of the fact that the principles on which the theories are based and the concepts they use are based on a metaphysical view, even if they are ignored. It is stated that each theory has its own view of the universe, nature, human, life, the meaning and purpose of life, and the basic concepts and principles that express this view. It is pointed out that a theory carries a human understanding, worldview and value system in addition to a set of technical methods and includes certain assumptions in this direction. At this point, questioning the theories and concepts to be used in the context of the worldview they are based on is considered a responsibility. Therefore, by pointing out the dangers that may be involved in a therapist's adoption of these theories as "neutral", therapists are invited to develop a conscious epistemological stance.

The book underscores the importance of methodological accountability and the need to ground therapeutic practice in both empirical evidence and solid references. It argues that models like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), due to their empirical foundations and minimal metaphysical assumptions, may be applied in ways that do not inherently conflict with religious belief. However, such application should be undertaken consciously. It is indicated that the balance to

be established between empirical and metaphysical knowledge will enable the psychotherapist to develop a solid stance that is both scientific and based on faith. The importance of developing a consciousness that can distinguish the instrumental and philosophical aspects of a theory is emphasized in order not to make mistakes such as ignoring the concepts and achievements of psychotherapy theories or closing common communication channels. It is encouraged to learn and apply scientific, observable, measurable and useful knowledge that has been passed through a metaphysical filter instrumentally. However, the main task is; it is emphasized that the aim is to know and understand well the Islamic beliefs and values that are based on issues such as humanity, the universe and the meaning of life.

On the practical side, the book addresses a number of dilemmas, such as whether and how religious topics should be addressed in therapy. It examines questions like: "Can or should we talk about God, atheism, or faith crises in therapy? If so, how?" It also draws attention to the fact that talking while ignoring something is itself an intervention. In addition to these, the possibilities of studying crises of faith as a relationship; just as we talk about a relationship that ends in daily life with its reasons and consequences, we also discuss the possibilities of talking about the relationship between God and human in a similar way.

A central goal of the book is to assist Muslim psychotherapists in constructing a professional identity that is congruent with both their scientific and spiritual values. In this context, the psychotherapeutic process is re-evaluated by focusing on the metaphysical dimensions offered by Islamic thought about human beings. It proposes a comprehensive roadmap for navigating theoretical and clinical challenges, and it presents a faith-informed therapeutic model grounded in Islamic metaphysics—one that upholds belief in God, the afterlife, and

life as a test. By doing so, it contributes methodologically and conceptually to the integration of Islamic thought into psychotherapy. In addition to integration, a universal model is also pointed out as a result of considering that the proposed improvement proposal should be an opportunity offered to everyone, while not ignoring the spiritual dimension. In this context, *Psychotherapy and Beyond* stands out as a unique and valuable resource for both academic and clinical practice.

Ultimately, *Psychotherapy and Beyond* offers a distinctive academic and clinical contribution, enabling Muslim psychotherapists to maintain professional rigor while remaining faithful to their religious identity. It argues that the reference sources that people use to understand, know and change themselves, which is one of the fundamental issues of psychotherapy, cannot be fully evaluated without considering the spiritual dimensions of human existence. For the therapist, having an informed and comprehensive understanding of all dimensions of the human experience is not optional but a professional obligation. Ignoring any factor that impacts the psyche constitutes a failure in therapeutic responsibility. It is emphasized that all of these should be done on an empirical basis, far from the philosophical and ontological explanations. In this way, it is aimed to increase the capacity to provide faith-compatible and scientifically based solutions to the rapidly increasing mental health problems in society.

Keywords

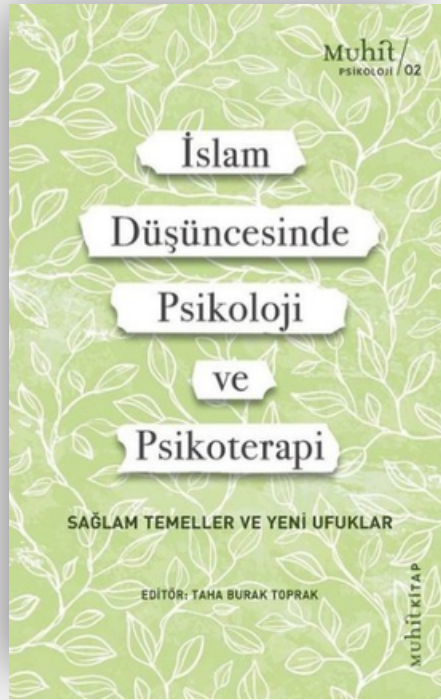
Faith and psychotherapy, Muslim therapist identity, Ethical responsibility in psychotherapy, Critique of contemporary psychotherapy.

Highlights

- Psychotherapeutic theories, even when they appear neutral, are grounded in specific metaphysical worldviews.
- In addition to a set of technical methods, each theory has its own view on the universe, nature, human being, life, the meaning and purpose of life, and basic concepts and principles that express this view.
- The development of a universal model must be based on empirical reasoning and supported by solid references. In this context empirical approaches like CBT are often preferred due to their limited metaphysical commitments but still require epistemological awareness.
- The balance that will be established between empirical and metaphysical knowledge will enable the psychotherapist to develop a solid stance that is both scientific and faith-based.
- The reference sources that people use to understand, know and change themselves, which is one of the fundamental issues of psychotherapy, cannot be fully evaluated without considering the spiritual dimensions of human existence.
- Therapists are responsible for understanding the full spectrum of human experience and cannot afford to overlook any dimension that affects the psyche.

Book Chapters

Islam and Psychology: Core Concepts, Central Questions, and Foundational Debates



Taha Burak Toprak, 2021, Muhit Kitap, Association for Psychology and Psychotherapy Research, Istanbul.

Publication Type and Field: Book Chapter, Psychology.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This chapter addresses critical questions surrounding the conceptualization of psychology within Islamic intellectual traditions. It explores whether psychology ('Ilm al-Nafs) exists within these traditions, how different epistemological frameworks and knowledge systems have understood the self (nafs), and whether a uniquely Islamic psychology is conceptually and methodologically possible. It also examines how these traditions might inform or challenge modern psychology and how Muslim mental health professionals might engage with them in their practice.

Social and Professional Contribution

Social Contribution

The chapter emphasizes the importance of culturally and religiously sensitive therapeutic approaches, arguing that these can enhance treatment adherence. It provides a conceptual framework for understanding the intersections between Islamic traditions of knowledge and contemporary psychological science, making it a valuable resource for those interested in integrating these domains.

Professional Contribution

By presenting a systematic model of Islamic traditions related to the self and knowledge, the chapter enables mental health professionals to critically evaluate their clinical practices from an Islamic perspective. It suggests that engaging with the Islamic intellectual heritage can inspire alternative models of mental health care and contribute meaningfully to theoretical and practical innovation in the field.

Summary

This work analyzes the relationship between Islam and psychology through fundamental concepts, questions, and debates. Drawing on al-Ghazālī's typology of epistemological pathways within Islamic scholarship, the author introduces a fourfold classification of nafs traditions: Medical, Philosophical, Sufi, and Scholarly. These are positioned within a broader inquiry into how human nature and psychological inquiry have been shaped across Islamic intellectual history.

The study engages classical texts (e.g., al-Ghazālī, Avicenna) alongside modern scientific definitions, using conceptual analysis and historical comparison. A core contribution is the introduction of a typology of 'Ilm al-Nafs traditions:



Table 1. *Ilm al-Nafs Traditions*

Medicine	Philosophy	Sufi	Revivalist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperament • Physiology • Ethics • al-Balkhī (850–934) • “<i>Maṣāliḥ al-Abdān wa’l-Anfūs</i>” Proposed diagnostic criteria and treatment suggestions for OCD. • BODY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Sciences • Metaphysics • Ethics • Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) (980–1037) • “<i>Kitāb al-Nafs</i>” Described the structure and function of the self in a rational-analytical framework. • MIND 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion • Spirituality • Psychotherapy • Ibn ‘Arabī (1165–1240) • “<i>al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya</i>” Described the structure and function of the self based on spiritual, intuitive, experiential, and mystical knowledge. • HEART–SPIRIT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion • Cognitive Sciences • Ethics • Psychotherapy • al-Ghazālī (1058–1111) • “<i>‘Ilm al-Dīn</i>” Defined the structure and function of the self by synthesizing medical, philosophical, and Sufi traditions. • BODY–MIND–HEART–SPIRIT

The chapter examines how Islamic understandings of knowledge (*‘ilm*) differ across disciplines—e.g., jurisprudence, theology, mysticism, and philosophy—and how these differ fundamentally from modern scientific paradigms based on empiricism and positivism. Whereas classical Islamic science aimed at truth and spiritual enlightenment, modern psychology is portrayed as focused on prediction, control, and pragmatism.

It argues that attempts to frame Islamic intellectual traditions within the modern scientific paradigm can result in methodological distortions. A shift from truth-seeking to control-oriented inquiry is identified as a core epistemic

transformation in the transition from classical to modern science.

Original Contribution

The chapter offers a conceptual bridge between Islamic traditions and modern psychology, outlining the epistemological and ontological tensions between them. It provides a typology of nafs traditions that can guide future interdisciplinary research. Its key originality lies in reinterpreting Islamic categories not as obsolete remnants of the past but as conceptual resources for rethinking psychology.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the author revisits the main typologies (e.g., truth-seeking pathways, 'ilm al-Nafs traditions, modern scientific paradigms) and highlights the challenges of interpreting Islamic traditions through modern empirical frameworks. The recommendations stress the importance of a robust Islamic worldview grounded in sound theological principles. For those seeking to contribute to psychology from within the Islamic tradition, the author advises methodologically sound engagement with both Islamic and scientific sources. Inspired by al-Ghazālī's epistemic humility and methodological discipline, the chapter calls for continued learning and rigorous reflection by Muslim scholars and practitioners.

Keywords

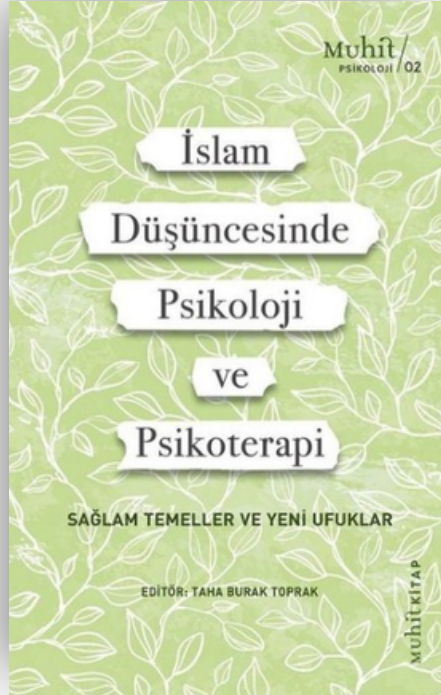
Islam, Psychology, 'ilm al-Nafs, Islamic Thought, Epistemology, Modern Science.

Highlights

- The Islamic intellectual tradition offers four major paths to truth: Kalām (theology), Philosophy, Sufism, and Bāṭinī (esotericism).
- The concept of ‘ilm al-Nafs in Islamic thought is not equivalent to modern psychology but represents a distinct form of knowledge embedded within ethical and theological goals.
- Modern psychology’s focus on empiricism and laboratory-based methods diverges sharply from the spiritually grounded frameworks of classical Islamic science.
- The author introduces three possible stances for Muslim psychologists toward modern science: (1) science is universal, (2) science is culturally specific, or (3) science includes both universal and culturally specific elements.

Book Chapters

Islam and Psychotherapy: Integrating Islamic Tradition into Psychotherapy: A Conceptual Model and Clinical Application



Taha Burak Toprak, 2021, Association for Psychology and Psychotherapy Research, Muhit Kitap, Istanbul.

Publication Type and Field: Book Chapter, Clinical Psychology.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This chapter aims to explore both the possibilities and the challenges of developing clinically applicable models grounded in the rich theoretical heritage of the Islamic tradition.

Social and Professional Contribution

Social Contribution

The psychological burden of mental disorders significantly affects both individual and societal well-being. It is argued that culturally and individually tailored interventions enhance treatment efficacy, and that religious values are critical in influencing client engagement. Thus, the integration of religious sensitivity in therapy—both theoretically and practically—is presented as a meaningful contribution to public mental health.

Professional Contribution

The model introduced in this chapter has received positive feedback, particularly from clinicians working with religious obsessions (scrupulosity). The work highlights the practical relevance of a "living" tradition, demonstrating how Islamic resources can inform and enrich contemporary psychotherapeutic practices.

Summary

This chapter, titled "Psychotherapy in the Islamic Tradition," investigates how the theoretical richness of Islamic intellectual heritage can be integrated into contemporary clinical psychotherapy. It introduces the 4T Model, which is based on the discipline of 'Ilm al-Nafs and classical sources such as Said Nursî's Treatise on Obsessions (Vesvese Risalesi). The model seeks to support cognitive restructuring in treating religious forms of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD).

The academic development of the model began in 2016 and was refined through conference presentations, published articles, and workshops. The model emerged from the observation that contemporary cognitive therapy lacks a hierarchical structure for cognitive processes. In response, the



4T Model—comprising Tahayyul (Imagination), Tasavvur (Conceptualization), Taakkul (Reasoning), and Tasdik (Affirmation)—offers a hierarchical framework compatible with both classical sources and modern psychotherapy techniques.

The model is implemented through integration into standard Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). The intervention process includes normalization of obsessive thoughts, introduction of the general model, individualization, and cognitive restructuring. Both qualitative (client feedback) and quantitative (Y-BOCS, Beck Depression and Anxiety Inventories, Padua Inventory) data collection methods were employed, along with post-treatment follow-up interviews.

Quantitative findings indicated general symptomatic improvement. In qualitative feedback, clients emphasized the therapeutic value of distinguishing between thoughts, mental images, and beliefs. Many participants reported relief in realizing that intrusive thoughts were not directly linked to their faith, reducing thought-action fusion. Follow-up sessions confirmed the maintenance of therapeutic gains.

The original contribution of this study lies in presenting a new psychoeducational and therapeutic model that integrates metaphysical and psycho-ontological concepts from the Islamic tradition into modern cognitive therapy. The model provides a theologically coherent and nuanced explanation for thought-action fusion, a central cognitive distortion in OCD. It also allows clients to address existential concerns—such as the source of thoughts—that are often overlooked in standard treatments.

However, a major limitation is the lack of randomized controlled trials (RCTs). Future studies should test the model in larger samples and engage scholars from both theology and psychology to assess its conceptual robustness.

Keywords

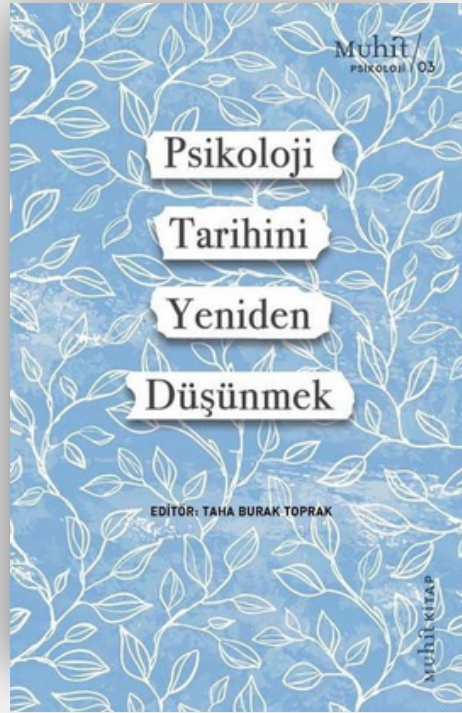
Islam, Psychotherapy, 'Ilm al-Nafs, 4T Model, OCD.

Highlights

- The 4T Model is a psychoeducational framework grounded in the Islamic discipline of 'Ilm al-Nafs and Said Nursî's Treatise on Obsessions. It categorizes cognitive processes hierarchically as Tahayyul (Imagination), Tasavvur (Conceptualization), Taakkul (Reasoning), and Tasdik (Affirmation).
- The model distinguishes between levels of cognitive responsibility: Tahayyul and Tasavvur are involuntary processes, whereas Tasdik represents a volitional act of moral judgment. Accordingly, only Tasdik is considered ethically accountable.
- In OCD, where thought-action fusion is a key issue, this hierarchical model provides clients with a clearer understanding of cognitive processes, reducing guilt and distress.
- The model was integrated into a standard CBT framework. Both qualitative and quantitative findings suggest that it supports symptom reduction and conceptual clarity, particularly for clients with religiously themed obsessions.
- This study offers a conceptual and practical example of how new-generation psychotherapy models rooted in Islamic thought can respond to culturally and religiously sensitive clinical needs.

Book Chapters

An Attempt at a Conceptual Roadmap



Taha Burak Toprak, June 2023, Muhit Kitap; Association for Psychology and Psychotherapy Research, Istanbul.

Publication Type and Field: Book Chapter, Psychology.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This chapter is based on the premise that any understanding of psychology that neglects fundamental metaphysical questions fails to offer a coherent view of the human being. It calls for a critical examination of the human conceptualizations underlying various psychological models—particularly the role of the psyche within those frameworks—as well as how psychological well-being and pathology are defined. The neglect of this inquiry, the author argues, results in both theoretical inconsistencies and practical limitations. Recognizing the multidimensional nature of reality leads inevitably to new questions about practical applications, sources of knowledge, and methodological choices.

Social and Professional Contribution

Social Contribution

The chapter offers therapeutic techniques that can support clients who seek value-based, theologically informed forms of psychological well-being rooted in the Islamic conception of servanthood (‘ubūdiyyah).

Professional Contribution

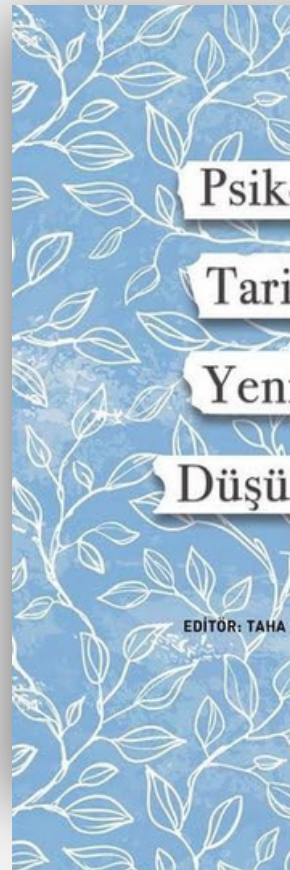
It aims to illuminate the relationship between the epistemological and methodological foundations of various psychological approaches and their practical clinical manifestations. By highlighting these differences, it seeks to stimulate new theoretical and methodological developments within the discipline.

Summary

The discipline of psychology cannot be separated from assumptions about the metaphysical nature of the human being. Different intellectual traditions—such as kalām, fiqh, and taṣawwuf within Islamic thought—each offer distinct conceptions of the human self and its psychological dynamics. These differences naturally yield diverse understandings of mental health and pathology and imply alternative paths to healing. When these distinctions are ignored, significant theoretical tensions arise—such as when mystical transformation processes are reduced to body-centered explanations rooted in modern psychology.

This text seeks to make visible how knowledge, methodology, and therapeutic practice are constructed differently across various intellectual traditions. The analysis is framed through three levels of inquiry:

1. **Theoretical Level:** Philosophical and metaphysical questions (e.g., “What is the human being?”, “What is the



psyche?”, “What is healing?”).

2. **Research Level:** Empirically driven knowledge production.

3. **Therapeutic Level:** The meaning and use of clinical methods and interventions.

The multidimensional approach advocated here rejects the reduction of truth to a single layer of reality. Instead, it emphasizes that material, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions must be integrated and understood as complementary. While every domain of knowledge approaches truth through its own methods, ultimate truth is viewed as being accessible only through divine revelation.

Within this conceptual framework, the development of a psychologically grounded therapeutic model is said to rest on three fundamental responsibilities:

1. Learning one’s own metaphysical foundations
2. Confronting the contemporary challenges of humanity
3. Acquiring methodological and procedural competence

The text stresses the importance of distinguishing between fixed principles (timeless and absolute truths) and context-dependent variables (situational practices). It advocates for engaging traditional Islamic disciplines—such as *fiqh*, *kalām*, and *taṣawwuf*—in order to develop ethically and culturally coherent models of care.

Keywords

Fiqh, Kalām, Taṣawwuf, Truth, Metaphysics, Ontology, Epistemology.

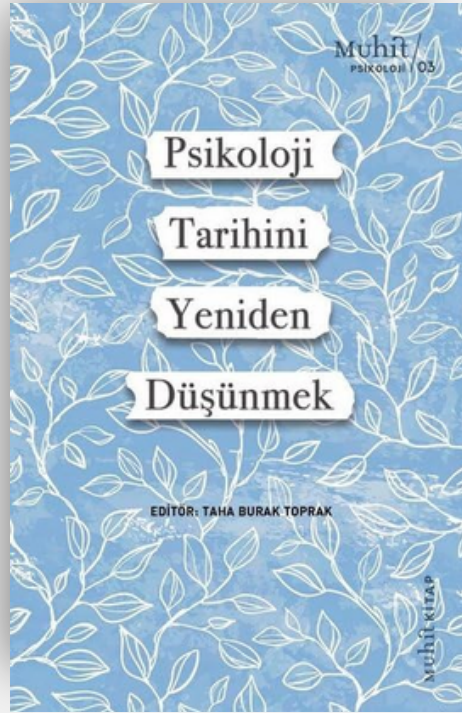
Highlights

- Psychological theory is inseparable from metaphysical assumptions. Islamic traditions—especially *fiqh*, *kalām*, and *taṣawwuf*—offer divergent conceptualizations of human existence and the psyche.

- The absence of well-grounded answers to fundamental metaphysical and ontological questions may lead scholars to unconsciously adopt dominant paradigms, distancing themselves from their own epistemological and ethical frameworks.
- Core psychological concepts such as relationship, empathy, and well-being must be examined not only through legalistic (*fiqhi*) lenses but also within the spiritual context of *taṣawwuf*, to construct multilayered meanings.
- Every researcher should identify the philosophical paradigm of science they adhere to and articulate the epistemological and methodological boundaries of that paradigm with clarity and self-awareness.

Book Chapters

A Multidimensional Model of Reality



Taha Burak Toprak, June 2023, Muhit Kitap, Association for Psychology and Psychotherapy Research, Istanbul.

Publication Type and Field: Book Chapter, Psychology.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This chapter addresses the conceptual and methodological problems that arise when diverse ontological foundations are forced into a single, homogeneous epistemological framework. It argues that each ontological perspective necessitates its own distinct epistemology, thereby requiring a search for new, multidimensional methodologies. In this context, the chapter offers original theoretical proposals.

Social and Professional Contribution

Professional Contribution

This work reminds scholars that every epistemological system is constructed upon particular ontological assumptions. Especially in fields like psychology that center on human nature, the theoretical and methodological assumptions underlying clinical practice must be critically examined. The text contributes to professional awareness by offering a conceptual lens for theoretical coherence and cultural sensitivity.

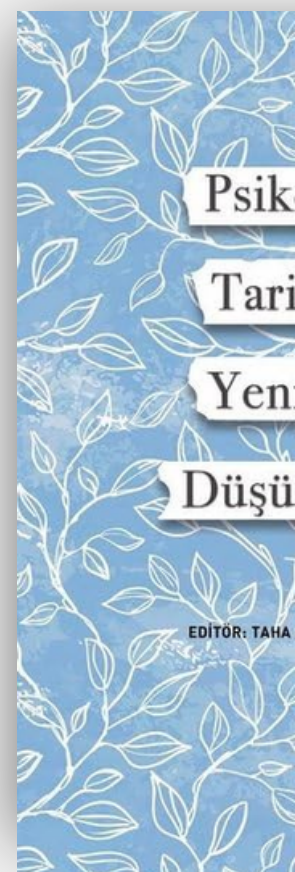
Social Contribution

In clinical settings, individuals with strong religious commitments may encounter therapeutic interventions that conflict with their belief systems, resulting in inner tension. This chapter promotes a holistic framework that addresses both psychological needs and the moral-spiritual worldview of the individual. It supports clients in pursuing truth and healing within their own cultural-religious contexts, thereby reducing potential value conflicts in the therapeutic process.

Summary

This chapter draws attention to the multilayered ontological and epistemological richness within Islamic intellectual traditions and proposes a multidimensional model of reality as a methodological response. The core thesis is that each ontological worldview demands its own epistemological engagement, and attempts to explain multiple ontologies through a single knowledge paradigm are both insufficient and potentially misleading.

The Multidimensional Reality Model identifies Islamic disciplines such as fiqh, kalām, taṣawwuf, and philosophy/science as distinct domains with their own



understandings of being and knowledge. These are seen as reflecting different aspects of truth. The chapter warns that without methodological clarity, interdisciplinary transitions between these layers risk becoming superficial or demagogic. For example, interpreting a fiqh-related issue through a tasawwuf-based lens can lead to conceptual displacements.

Treatise of Scrupulosity (Risalah Waswasah), is presented as a functional example of multidimensional integration, demonstrating how fiqh, kalām, and taṣawwuf can be harmonized without collapsing one into the other. The chapter stresses the need for interpretive sensitivity when analyzing religious texts psychologically, especially when navigating between different layers of meaning.

The multidimensional reality perspective is proposed as a kind of “epistemology of experience,” wherein each level of human experience must be approached through its own method of knowing. This approach respects the integrity of different domains while aiming for holistic understanding. The text highlights classical scholars such as al-Ghazālī, Junayd al-Baghdādī, Imām Rabbānī, and Bediüzzaman Said Nursî as exemplars of this integrated method of knowledge production.

Keywords

Multidimensional Reality, Cultural and religious sensitivity, Risalah Waswasah.

Highlights

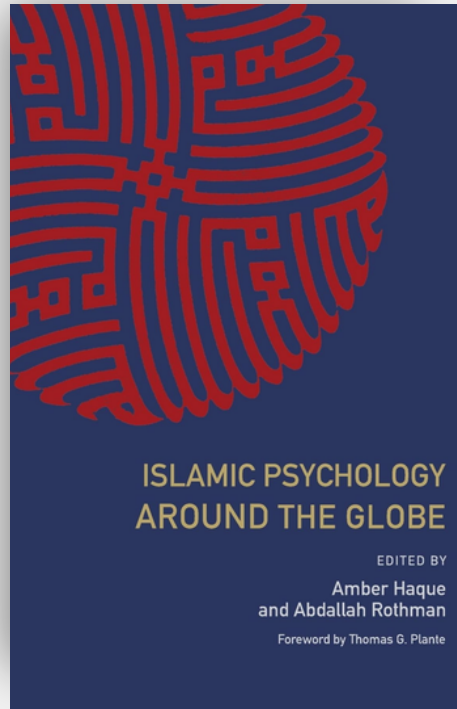
- **Each discipline produces distinct knowledge:** Islamic sciences like *fiqh*, *kalām*, and *taṣawwuf* are built on distinct ontological and epistemological grounds; they should be engaged collectively, without conflation.
- **Single-perspective interpretations are misleading:** Attempting to explain diverse ontological standpoints through a singular epistemological lens can lead to semantic distortions and interpretive errors.



- **Recognizing epistemological layers is critical:** The interpretive value of religious texts depends on an awareness of the epistemological layer (e.g., jurisprudential vs. mystical) from which the knowledge is derived.
- **Treatise of Scrupulosity (Risalah Waswasah) as a model:** This treatise serves as a concrete example of how different Islamic sciences can be integrated—distinct yet harmonious—in addressing psychological issues.
- **A new method is proposed:** The chapter offers an original methodology that aligns with the layered structure of Islamic thought, grounded in authentic religious sources and capable of interpreting psychological challenges within that framework.

Book Chapters

Islamic Psychology Around the Globe: 'Studies on Islamic Psychology in Türkiye: Present Situation, Possibilities and Challenges'



Süleyman Derin, Taha Burak Toprak, 2021, International Association of Islamic Psychology Publishing; Seattle, Washington, USA.

Publication Type and Field: Book chapter, Psychology.

What Problem Does the Text Address?

The text systematically presents the historical background, current state, pioneers, academic and clinical activities, as well as the opportunities and challenges faced by the field of Islamic psychology in Türkiye, offering explanations about what is necessary for the development and institutionalization of this field.

Social and Professional Contribution

Social Contribution

This study provides significant contributions both socially and professionally by addressing the developments in Islamic psychology within the Turkish context in a historical continuity. On a societal level, the development of psychological approaches that are compatible with individuals' religious, cultural, and value systems increases accessibility and acceptability of mental health services, thereby contributing to the construction of a culturally sensitive and inclusive psychosocial support system. Holistically addressing the spiritual dimension of the human being alongside psychological functioning not only strengthens individuals' active participation in therapeutic processes but also lays the groundwork for transforming prejudices against psychotherapy. This facilitates wider sections of society benefiting from mental health services and helps individuals cope more meaningfully with psychological difficulties, thereby supporting psychological resilience and overall well-being at both individual and societal levels.

Professional Contribution

From a professional perspective, the text serves as a resource indicating new areas of practice for mental health professionals. It offers a literature overview regarding the possibilities Islamic thought provides for the field and the studies conducted in this regard. By articulating models produced within the Turkish context, it contributes to enhancing the competencies of those interested in the field. Highlighting current developments, it paves a new horizon and provides guidance towards Islamic psychology becoming a more institutionalized, scientific, and sustainable discipline.



ISLAMIC
AROUND



Summary

Authored by Süleyman Derin and Taha Burak Toprak, this text examines the rapidly growing Islamic psychology (IP) studies in Türkiye from disciplinary, historical, and institutional perspectives; it analyzes developmental trends, opportunities, and fundamental challenges in the field. The authors argue that IP is not only a theoretical interest but also emerges as an alternative paradigm that can guide psychotherapeutic practices. Within this framework, they emphasize the need to establish a critical and constructive relationship between Islamic thought and modern psychology, while drawing attention to the unique developmental dynamics of this field within the Turkish context.

The main premise of the text is grounded in the recent cultural and epistemological critiques toward the universality claims of psychology, underscoring that Western-centered psychological theories are not independent of cultural contexts. Accordingly, there has been a noticeable increase in interest among mental health professionals, researchers, and students in Turkey towards building a psychology that is compatible with Islamic values, indigenous, and culturally meaningful. Derin and Toprak categorize this interest through three main dynamics: clinical orientation, academic production, and institutionalization efforts.

Firstly, clinical interest is especially evident within the search for spirituality-based therapy. Psychologists, counselors, and psychiatrists feel the need to develop a more holistic approach that considers clients' religious and spiritual values. This situation shows that IP is not only an academic pursuit but also a professional necessity. However, the main concern raised is that concepts and narratives are sometimes directly transferred into psychotherapeutic contexts without methodological consideration.

Secondly, from the academic production perspective, there is

a significant increase in postgraduate theses, journal articles, and national and international symposiums. Notably, conceptual analyses of classical Islamic thought terms such as nafs (self), qalb (heart), ruh (spirit), and aql (intellect), and studies linking these concepts to modern psychology, stand out. These efforts form a theoretical basis for constructing an Islamic psychology epistemology. Nevertheless, the lack of methodological depth hinders the systematic organization of these concepts.

Thirdly, on the institutionalization front, research centers within universities, associations, publication series, and online educational platforms reflect institutional interest in the field. The primary goal of these structures is to support knowledge production on Islamic psychology institutionally and provide content that can be integrated into professional training processes. While these initiatives are progressing toward establishing a solid foundation, they are still in the developmental phase regarding sustainability and academic recognition.

The text emphasizes that for IP studies to progress more systematically, conceptual clarity, methodological rigor, interdisciplinary collaboration, and institutional support are necessary. Moreover, it is stated that a holistic approach integrating Islamic thought with modern psychology could play a strategic role by deepening scientific understanding and increasing public trust in mental health services.

In conclusion, this text evaluates the current status of Islamic psychology studies in Türkiye as both an accumulation of knowledge and a turning point. It asserts that the field's potential must be developed with disciplinary responsibility, indigenous epistemology, and academic rigor. This endeavor will enrich the content of professional training and bridge the gap between cultural belonging and scientific knowledge, thereby paving the way for more effective and comprehensive mental health services.

Keywords

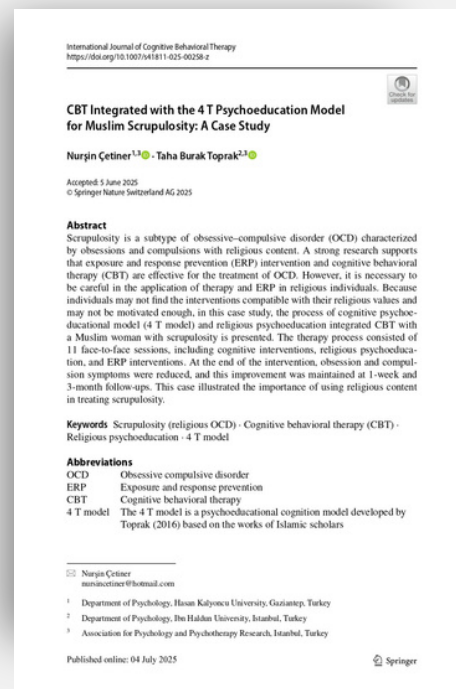
Islamic psychology, Ilm an-Nafs, Psycho-ontology, Empirical studies.

Highlights

- Fundamental concepts from classical Islamic thought such as 'nafs' (self), 'ruh' (spirit), 'qalb' (heart), and 'aql' (intellect) are revisited comparatively with modern psychology, playing a central role in forming the theoretical framework of Islamic psychology.
- Academic and clinical interest in Islamic psychology has significantly increased in recent years. However, theoretical coherence, conceptual clarity, and methodological depth in the field remain underdeveloped, pointing to the need for interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Growing awareness that clients' religious and spiritual values should not be overlooked in therapy encourages mental health professionals to engage with Islamic psychology. This orientation contributes to the development of a value-based and culturally sensitive psychotherapeutic approach.
- Efforts to holistically integrate Islamic thought with modern psychology at ontological, epistemological, and ethical levels offer not only theoretical renewal but also cultural adaptation that enhances public trust and participation in mental health services.

Peer-Reviewed International Publications

CBT Integrated with the 4T Psychoeducation Model for Muslim Scrupulosity: A Case Study



Nurşin Çetiner, Taha Burak Toprak, 2025, International Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (In press), Hasan Kalyoncu University, Ibn Haldun University, Association for Psychology and Psychotherapy Research.

Publication Type and Field: Case study, Clinical Psychology.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This study examines the effectiveness of therapeutic approaches sensitive to religious values in Muslim individuals experiencing scrupulosity—obsessions and compulsions with religious content—by evaluating the integration of the 4T Model into traditional CBT, through a single case application. It

also addresses the limitations of conventional CBT in religious contexts.

Societal and Professional Contribution

Social Contribution

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) not only reduces individuals' functioning and quality of life, but also negatively impacts social harmony, productivity, and interpersonal relationships (APA, 2013). In devout individuals with religious OCD, therapeutic approaches that disregard cultural and religious values may reduce treatment adherence and lead to resistance (Siev & Huppert, 2017). Therefore, therapeutic models that are sensitive to religious values should be developed at both theoretical and applied levels (Garcia, 2008). This study offers insight into how such sensitivity can be implemented both conceptually and clinically, thereby contributing to the field and to society.

Professional Contribution

Professionally, this case study provides therapists with a concrete roadmap for identifying, formulating, and intervening in religious obsessions. It also offers practical guidance on how to integrate religious references into cognitive restructuring.

Summary

Introduction

This study presents the therapeutic process of a Muslim woman diagnosed with scrupulosity—a subtype of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) characterized by religious obsessions and compulsions such as fear of sin, doubts about faith, and excessive repentance rituals. ERP (Exposure and Response Prevention) is widely recognized as the gold-standard intervention, and CBT is the most effective treatment for OCD (American Psychological Association, 2021). However,

International Journal of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
https://doi.org/10.1007/s41811-025-00258-z

CBT Integrated with the 4 T Model for Muslim Scrupulosity: A Case Study

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Abstract

Scrupulosity is a subtype of obsessive-compulsive disorder characterized by obsessions and compulsions with a religious theme. Exposure and response prevention (ERP) and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) are effective for the treatment of OCD. However, individuals may not find the intervention helpful if they are not motivated enough, in the absence of a supportive educational model (4 T model) and if the intervention is not tailored to a Muslim woman with scrupulosity. This study involved 11 face-to-face sessions, including psychoeducation, CBT, and ERP interventions. At the 3-month follow-ups, the religious scrupulosity symptoms were reduced, and the intervention was effective in treating scrupulosity.

Keywords Scrupulosity (religious OCD) · Religious psychoeducation · 4 T model

Abbreviations

OCD	Obsessive compulsive disorder
ERP	Exposure and response prevention
CBT	Cognitive behavioral therapy
4 T model	The 4 T model is a psychoeducational model based on Toprak (2016)

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for individuals with strong religious sensitivities, standard CBT techniques may lead to motivational deficits or treatment resistance. The literature includes several culturally and religiously adapted interventions (e.g., Aouchehian et al., 2017; Arip et al., 2018; Bonchek & Greenberg, 2009; Almasi et al., 2013), among which the 4T Model, developed by Toprak (2016), stands out as a novel framework (Toprak & Emül, 2016; Toprak, 2022). Accordingly, this study evaluates the effects of a CBT intervention integrated with the 4T Model—based on Islamic theological and psychological thought.

Methods

This is a qualitative case study. The participant was a 24-year-old devout Muslim woman who self-referred for treatment. She was not on medication and was not receiving any other therapy at the time. The intervention consisted of 11 face-to-face sessions, including one initial assessment. In addition to standard CBT, the intervention incorporated religious psychoeducation and the 4T Model, along with ERP techniques. The Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale (Y-BOCS) was used for assessment throughout the process. Verbal and written feedback were also collected after the sessions.

Results

At the beginning of the intervention, the client's OCD severity was in the "severe" range (Y-BOCS: 26); by the end, it had decreased to a "subclinical" level (Y-BOCS: 4). The most significant reduction occurred following the religious psychoeducation sessions (Sessions 6 and 7). The client reported realizing that her religious doubts remained in the mental domain and had not reached the level of "confirmation" (tasdiq), which she did not approve of in her heart. This awareness, supported by the 4T psychoeducational model, increased her participation in ERP tasks. Both written and verbal feedback from the client indicated that the therapy—and particularly the integrated 4T intervention—was effective.

Discussion

This case study suggests that a religiously sensitive therapeutic model can be effective in the treatment of scrupulosity. By introducing a cognitive hierarchy and distinguishing between voluntary and involuntary thought processes, the 4T Model helped reduce thought-action fusion and provided the client with theological clarity. This study contributes to the literature by extending traditional CBT to incorporate culturally and religiously responsive approaches.

Conclusion and Implications

This short-term intervention integrating the 4T Model significantly reduced symptoms of religious OCD. Although based on a single case, the results highlight the potential benefits of incorporating religious sensitivity into therapy for improving treatment outcomes.

Keywords

Scrupulosity (Religious OCD), 4T Model, Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), Religious psychoeducation.

Highlights

- This case study demonstrates the effectiveness of a CBT protocol integrated with religious content in the treatment of scrupulosity (religious OCD) in a devout Muslim client.
- Within a short-term, 11-session therapy program, the client's symptoms decreased from the "severe" to the "subclinical" level.
- A marked reduction in OCD symptoms was observed particularly after the sessions involving religious psychoeducation.
- The 4T Psychoeducation Model, rooted in Islamic thought, provided a structured cognitive hierarchy that helped reduce thought-action fusion and decreased resistance to ERP by aligning with the client's religious values.

- This study offers a culturally sensitive clinical framework for therapeutic interventions with clients who experience religious OCD, and contributes to CBT literature by integrating faith-based epistemologies into classical cognitive models.

Peer-Reviewed International Publications

Rethinking Psycho-Ontology in the Context of Ilm an-Nafs (the Study of Self by Muslim Scholars) and Clinical Applications



Taha Burak Toprak, 2025, *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, Ibn Haldun University, Department of Psychology, Association for Psychology and Psychotherapy Research. <https://doi.org/10.1037/scp0000390>

Publication Type and Field: Theoretical review article, Clinical Psychology.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This article argues that mainstream psychotherapy approaches often fall short in understanding psychological distress in highly religious individuals- particularly in cases of scrupulosity. To address this gap, the author draws upon the

Islamic tradition of 'Ilm al-Nafs to propose a renewed understanding of human nature and mental health. The goal is to offer a religiously sensitive therapeutic framework.

Social and Professional Contribution

Social Contribution

Psychological suffering impacts not only individuals but also their families, social environments, and communities. Therefore, effective psychological support must consider clients' faith and cultural values. Research suggests that religiously congruent therapeutic approaches enhance treatment engagement and recovery. The models introduced in this article aim to offer culturally and religiously meaningful care for individuals from devout backgrounds.

Professional Contribution

The article provides therapists with four structured, theoretically grounded models—3K, 4T, 3N, and the Nafs Model—designed to assist with psychological disorders presenting with religious symptoms, especially scrupulosity. These models serve as therapeutic roadmaps that help clinicians work more effectively with religious clients.

Summary

Introduction

While dominant schools of psychotherapy—such as psychoanalysis and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)—have significantly contributed to understanding psychological distress, they often overlook deeper dimensions of the self, such as the heart, soul, and moral faculties. This article introduces models inspired by the Islamic science of 'Ilm al-Nafs, offering integrative approaches to therapy grounded in Islamic scholarship.



Rethinking Psycho-Ontology
(the Study of Self by Muslim)

Taha
Department of Psychology
Association for Psychology and

While modern psychotherapies are especially in addressing the more profound a discipline rooted in the Islamic intellectual that offer a multidimensional perspective theological insights. This article focuses which we have developed the 3K model (model), the 4T model (cognitive model), cognitive behavioral therapy. The more explanatory and holistic than models helped them distinguish between a sense of security by integrating religious models offer a richer psycho-ontological the values and beliefs of Muslim patients expand the definition of the human being avenues for religiously sensitive therapeutic directions for integrating Ilm an-Nafs to further explore this integration, potentially serve diverse populations.

Keywords: study of Nafs (self); Islamic models (4T, 3K, 3N, and Nafs (self))

Since the dawn of modern science, pioneering psychotherapeutic methods such as psychoanalysis and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) have emerged and been widely adopted to assist patients in coping with psychosocial challenges. While these methods have significantly advanced

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Taha Bank Teprek <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-74181418>

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The article first reviews the key traditions of 'Ilm al-Nafs (medical, philosophical, Sufi, and revivalist) and then outlines four models developed by the author:

Models Introduced

- **3K Model:** Based on classical Islamic psychology, this model conceptualizes the human psyche through three core faculties—quwwah shahwiyyah, which drives bodily desires and can manifest as chaste love and mercy; quwwah ghadabiyyah, which protects through anger and fuels altruistic courage; and quwwah 'aqliyyah, the rational faculty that discerns right from wrong and should guide the other two for a balanced, virtuous life.
- **4T Model:** A cognitive psychoeducational model developed from Said Nursi's writings. It categorizes thought processes hierarchically into Tahayyul (imagination), Tasavvur (conceptualization), Ta'aqqul (reasoning), and Tasdiq (confirmation). The model is particularly useful for clients with religious OCD in helping them distinguish between levels of thought and volition.
- **3N Model:** Inspired by Islamic conceptualizations of the soul, this model outlines spiritual development in three stages—Nafs al-Ammārah (instinctual-self), Nafs al-Lawwāmah (self-reproaching self), and Nafs al-Muṭma'innah (congruent-self)—offering a moral and spiritual map for personal growth.
- **Nafs Model:** A holistic framework integrating bodily, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of the self. It synthesizes elements from the 3K, 4T, and 3N models and helps structure interventions aligned with clients' metaphysical and religious beliefs.

Discussion

The article critically assesses the limitations of psychoanalysis and CBT in addressing the religious and ontological dimensions of clients' concerns. While psychoanalysis may pathologize religious beliefs, and CBT may overly reduce

mental suffering to cognitive distortions, the 'Ilm al-Nafs approach offers a richer, layered, and ethically attuned understanding of the self. In cases of scrupulosity, the models help address thought-action fusion and morality-action fusion, enabling more coherent therapeutic outcomes aligned with clients' values.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The models derived from 'Ilm al-Nafs present a rich, multidimensional framework for understanding the human self. These models have the potential to expand the scope of contemporary psychotherapy by offering culturally and spiritually responsive interventions. They contribute to the development of more holistic, integrated understandings of mental health grounded in Islamic thought.

Keywords

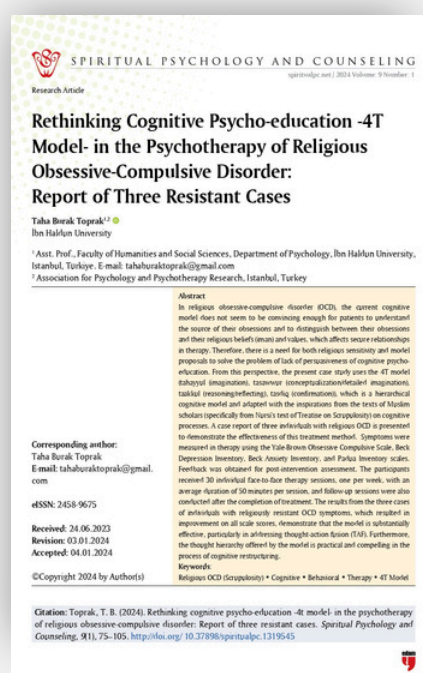
'Ilm al-Nafs, religious OCD (scrupulosity), religiously integrated CBT, psycho-ontology, cultural sensitivity.

Highlights

- This article introduces therapeutic models inspired by 'Ilm al-Nafs to address the limitations of contemporary psychotherapy in understanding religiously sensitive clients.
- The 3K, 4T, 3N, and Nafs models consider not only cognitive structures but also moral, spiritual, and emotional dimensions of the self.
- These models offer both symptom-level interventions and value-based therapeutic guidance for scrupulosity and other belief-related challenges.
- By balancing reason, heart, and soul, these models integrate faith into the therapeutic process, providing culturally grounded psychological care.
- The article proposes a new psycho-ontological framework for clinical practice that resonates with the needs of culturally and religiously sensitive clients.

Peer-Reviewed International Publications

Rethinking Cognitive Psycho-education -4T Model- in the Psychotherapy of Religious Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: Report of Three Resistant Cases



Taha Burak Toprak, 2024, Spiritual Psychology and Counseling, Ibn Haldun University, Department of Psychology; Association for Psychotherapy and Psychology Research. <http://doi.org/10.37898/spiritualpc.1319545>

Publication Type and Field: Case Series, Clinical Psychology.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This article addresses the inadequacy of conventional cognitive models in treating individuals with religious obsessive-compulsive disorder (scrupulosity). It focuses on the need for a psychoeducational model that is both cognitively persuasive and religiously sensitive—especially

concerning thought-action fusion (TAF) and perceived violations of faith. The 4T model (Tahayyul – Imagination, Tasavvur – Conceptualization, Ta'aqqul – Reasoning, Taşdıq – Confirmation) is introduced to help clients distinguish between obsessive thoughts and faith-related beliefs.

Social and Professional Contribution

Social Contribution

Psychological disorders contribute to loss of productivity, deterioration in social functioning, and diminished quality of life (WHO, 2001; Sadock et al., 2021). Addressing these challenges with culturally sensitive interventions improves clinical outcomes (Clark, 1999). Neglecting cultural and religious sensitivities can decrease treatment adherence (Huppert & Siev, 2010). Religious values influence individuals' willingness to engage in therapy (Siev et al., 2017), making belief-sensitive approaches such as the 4T model crucial for therapeutic engagement among religious clients.

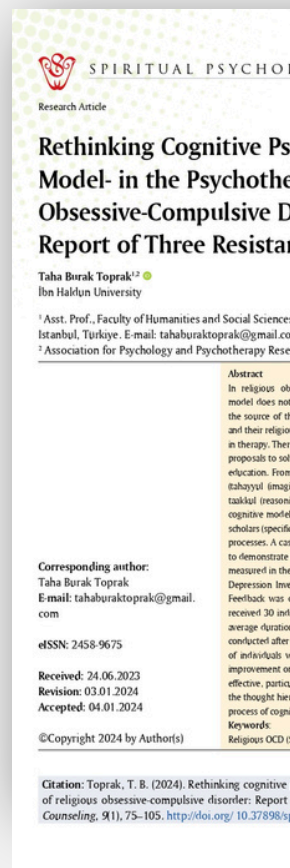
Professional Contribution

This study offers an applied example of religiously sensitive psychotherapy by integrating the 4T model into the treatment of religious OCD. It addresses the limitations of standard CBT in such cases and offers clinicians an alternative that enhances cognitive restructuring, reduces treatment resistance, and respects clients' religious frameworks.

Summary

Background

While Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and mindfulness-based approaches are commonly used for OCD, they often fall short in cases of



religious OCD (scrupulosity). Standard cognitive models may fail to convincingly differentiate obsessive thoughts from faith and moral values, leaving clients conflicted. Thus, faith-integrated psychoeducational models are needed.

The **4T Model**—inspired by Said Nursî’s *Treatise on Obsessive Thoughts* (*Vesvese Risalesi*)—provides a structured cognitive framework addressing this gap. It distinguishes four stages in mental processing:

- **Tahayyul** (Imagination)
- **Tasavvur** (Conceptualization)
- **Ta‘aqqul** (Reasoning)
- **Taşdīq** (Confirmation)

Responsibility is proposed to begin only at the *Taşdīq* stage, making the model suitable for clients who conflate intrusive thoughts with sinful intent. The model has also been expanded (e.g., with the notion of *Tawahhum*—suspicion/baseless assumption) for use in trauma-related conditions.

Case Study Overview

The study presents a case series of three clients aged 35–38 with religious OCD, referred to the Psychiatry Outpatient Clinic of Cerrahpaşa Medical Faculty. Each client completed 30 sessions of individual therapy. Psychometric tools administered at baseline and every 10 sessions included: Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale (Y-BOCS), Padua Inventory (PI), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI).

A 3-year follow-up was conducted, and qualitative feedback was obtained through open-ended interviews.

The intervention was structured based on Clark’s five-stage CBT model. Psychoeducation about thought-emotion-behavior relationships and the nature of obsessions was provided in early sessions. Clients reported difficulty differentiating between normal and intrusive thoughts and

stated that conventional CBT failed to explain the origin of involuntary religious obsessions.

The 4T model was then introduced, and clients were asked to re-evaluate their obsessions according to the four cognitive levels. Said Nursi's explanations on *waswasa* were shared, emphasizing that involuntary thoughts are not sinful unless consciously affirmed. His model of three psychological faculties—desire, anger, and intellect—was also used to help contextualize the process of obsession formation.

Using examples and targeted psychoeducation, cognitive restructuring was deepened. Clients reported reduced guilt and fear, leading to decreased resistance to ERP and increased openness to exposure exercises. The therapy concluded with behavioral experiments, neutralization tasks, and ERP strategies.

Findings

Quantitative data showed significant reductions in OCD, anxiety, and depression symptoms by session 30. These improvements were largely sustained at follow-up, despite some fluctuations.

Qualitative feedback revealed that clients had internalized the core message of the 4T model. They gained awareness of the difference between involuntary thoughts and intentional beliefs, reducing over-responsibility and excessive thought control.

The study emphasizes that, while promising, the findings are limited to a case series and do not generalize like those from randomized controlled trials (RCTs). However, this work represents an important step toward establishing the 4T model as an evidence-based, belief-sensitive intervention.

Keywords

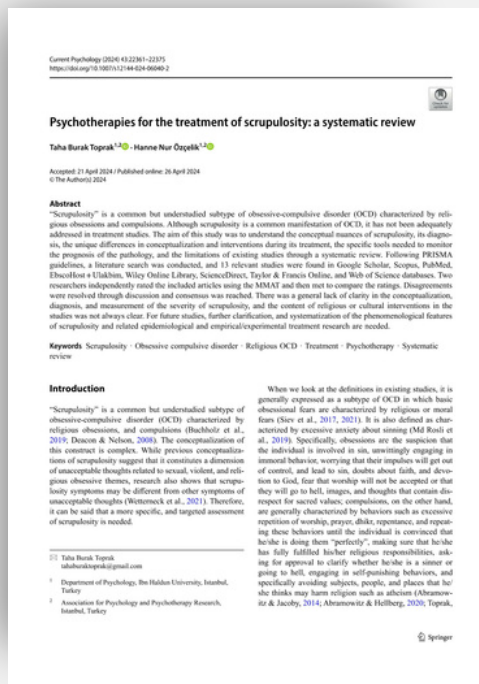
Religious OCD, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), 4T Model.

Highlights

- This study presents the 4T cognitive model (Tahayyul, Tasavvur, Ta'aqul, Taṣdīq) as a religiously sensitive psychoeducational intervention for religious OCD.
- Unlike conventional CBT, the 4T model enables layered interpretation of intrusive thoughts and redefines cognitive responsibility in accordance with Islamic epistemology.
- All three clients exhibited clinically significant improvements in OCD, anxiety, and depression symptoms following the intervention.
- The model helps restructure the perception of thought-action fusion (TAF) by distinguishing involuntary mental events from volitional belief endorsement.
- Follow-up data indicate sustained therapeutic effects and deep internalization of the model's conceptual framework, supporting long-term cognitive restructuring.

Peer-Reviewed International Publications

Psychotherapies for the Treatment of Scrupulosity: A Systematic Review



Taha Burak Toprak & Hanne Nur Özçelik, 2024, Current Psychology, Ibn Haldun University, Department of Psychology; Association for Psychology and Psychotherapy Research. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-06040-2>

Publication Type and Field: Systematic Review Article, Clinical Psychology.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This systematic review investigates psychotherapeutic interventions for scrupulosity, a subtype of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) characterized by excessive moral and religious concerns. The study aims to identify diagnostic,

sconceptual, and clinical limitations in the literature and address the need for belief-sensitive and culturally informed therapeutic approaches. The authors emphasize the necessity of conceptual clarity regarding scrupulosity and advocate for interventions that respect the religious and cultural frameworks of individuals.

Social and Professional Contribution

Social Contribution

Scrupulosity is a complex subtype of OCD shaped by religious and cultural contexts (Md Rosli et al., 2018). Its treatment requires individualized approaches sensitive to clients' belief systems (Buchholz et al., 2019; Rosa-Alcázar & Iniesta-Sepúlveda, 2018; Toprak, 2018, 2024). The review highlights the ethical and practical challenges arising from clinicians' lack of religious literacy and the insufficient psychological training of religious leaders (Miller & Hedges, 2008). This work contributes to public understanding of the distinction between pathological obsessions and normative religious practices.

Professional Contribution

The review identifies a gap in structured and effective therapeutic models for scrupulosity. Findings suggest that integrating religious content into CBT can improve clinical outcomes (Akuchekian et al., 2011; Almasi et al., 2013). The review also highlights the lack of standardized diagnostic tools for scrupulosity and the need for interdisciplinary collaboration between mental health professionals and religious authorities. It calls for the development of culturally competent therapeutic frameworks.

Current Psychology (2024) 43:22361–22375
https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-06040-2

Psychotherapies for the treatment of scrupulosity

Taha Burak Toprak^{1,2} · Hanne Nur Özçelik^{1,2}

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Abstract

"Scrupulosity" is a common but understudied religious obsessions and compulsions. Although scrupulosity is addressed in treatment studies, the aim of this review is to address the unique differences in conceptualization of the prognosis of the pathology, and the limitations of the current guidelines, a literature search was conducted, and the results were synthesized. The search was conducted in EbscoHost + Ulakbim, Wiley Online Library, Scopus, and PsycInfo. Researchers independently rated the included articles. The results were resolved through discussion and consensus. The aim of this review is to address the unique differences in conceptualization of the prognosis of the pathology, and the limitations of the current guidelines, a literature search was conducted, and the results were synthesized. The search was conducted in EbscoHost + Ulakbim, Wiley Online Library, Scopus, and PsycInfo. Researchers independently rated the included articles. The results were resolved through discussion and consensus.

Keywords Scrupulosity · Obsessive compulsive disorder · Religious scrupulosity · Review

Introduction

"Scrupulosity" is a common but understudied religious obsessions and compulsions (OCD) characterized by excessive religious beliefs and practices (Bach et al., 2019; Deacon & Nelson, 2008). The concept of scrupulosity is complex. While previous conceptualizations of scrupulosity suggest that it constitutes a form of unacceptable thoughts related to sexual, violent, or blasphemous themes, research also shows that scrupulosity symptoms may be different from other types of unacceptable thoughts (Wetterneck et al., 2021). It can be said that a more specific, and targeted of scrupulosity is needed.

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Summary

Introduction

Scrupulosity is defined as a subtype of OCD involving intrusive religious or moral thoughts and compulsions related to performing religious rituals “perfectly.” While religious OCD is known to be common, the lack of focused psychotherapeutic literature represents a significant gap. This review examines how psychotherapy has addressed scrupulosity and outlines key conceptual and clinical challenges in its treatment.

Objectives

The study aims to (1) assess which psychotherapy methods have been applied to scrupulosity, (2) evaluate their religious and cultural sensitivity, and (3) identify which assessment tools have been used to measure effectiveness.

Method

This systematic review was conducted according to PRISMA guidelines. Studies published between 2001 and 2024 were included through a comprehensive search across databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, PubMed, and Web of Science. Inclusion criteria:

- Interventions targeting scrupulosity using psychotherapy,
- Participants aged 18+,
- Studies measuring change in religious OCD symptoms,
- Presence of a control group (if applicable),
- Reports on effect size when available.

Thirteen studies were included:

- 6 case reports,
- 2 case series,
- 3 experimental studies,
- 2 randomized controlled trials (RCTs).

All studies were evaluated by two reviewers using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT, 2018). No study was excluded due to methodological quality.

Findings

Psychotherapeutic interventions included CBT, ERP, ACT, Religiously Integrated CBT (RCBT), and the 4T Cognitive Psychoeducational Model. The most common outcome measures were Y-BOCS, PIOS, and BDI.

- CBT and ERP protocols were effective in reducing symptoms.
- RCBT demonstrated increased treatment engagement and symptom improvement due to its religious congruence.
- ACT interventions with religious adaptations improved psychological flexibility and reduced avoidance.
- Only one study applied the 4T model, a religiously sensitive, cognitive framework inspired by Said Nursî.
- In seven other studies, although participants had religious OCD symptoms, the interventions were not tailored to their belief systems.

However, a major limitation across studies was the lack of consistency in diagnostic and assessment tools, making it difficult to compare outcomes and generalize findings.

Discussion

Scrupulosity remains an under-defined and theoretically contested subtype of OCD. Religious obsessions are closely tied to personal belief systems, necessitating belief-sensitive models of care. This review shows that religiosity significantly shapes client experiences and therapy outcomes, and that interventions ignoring this dimension risk clinical inefficacy.

The review's original contribution lies in systematically comparing diverse therapeutic approaches and clarifying the therapeutic value of religiously integrated models. While the inclusion of both case-based and experimental data is a strength, variability in methodologies and tools limits cross-study comparability.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Religiously adapted psychotherapies show promise in treating scrupulosity. Clinicians should enhance their cultural competence and ability to work with religious references. Future research should:

- Use larger, randomized samples,
- Improve standardization in measurement tools,
- Clarify diagnostic criteria,
- Investigate the clinical utility of models like **RCBT** and **4T**.

Collaboration between clinicians and religious scholars is essential to address spiritual-ethical dilemmas in therapy.

Keywords

Scrupulosity, Religious OCD, Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), Systematic review, Treatment, Psychotherapy.

Highlights

- Scrupulosity remains conceptually and diagnostically ambiguous and is often misclassified within standard OCD frameworks.
- Psychotherapies sensitive to religious beliefs are effective but lack procedural standardization.
- The distinction between religious and secular scrupulosity is often overlooked in the literature.
- The 4T and RCBT models exemplify belief-sensitive interventions worthy of further study.
- The question of when and how to involve religious authorities in treatment remains a pressing practical and ethical issue.

Peer-Reviewed International Publications

Recovery from Sexual Assault: A Religion-Adapted Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for a Woman Sexual Assault Survivor



Hatice Rumeysa Işık & Taha Burak Toprak, 2024, European Journal of Trauma & Dissociation, Association for Psychology and Psychotherapy Research; Ibn Haldun University. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejtd.2024.100441>

Publication Type and Field: Case Study, Clinical Psychology.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This case study examines the therapeutic outcomes of a religion-adapted cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for a Muslim female survivor of sexual assault. The therapy process is structured around the client's religious and ethical values,

focusing on key themes such as guilt, justice, and meaning-making. It explores the integration of Islamic spiritual resources with conventional CBT and ACT techniques, assessing their contribution to trauma recovery.

Social and Professional Contribution

Social Contribution

Sexual assault is a deeply traumatic experience that can impair psychological well-being and social functioning. This study emphasizes how religious beliefs can shape survivors' meaning-making processes and supports the development of culturally responsive therapy models that enhance mental health at a community level.

Professional Contribution

The case provides a practical example for therapists working with religious clients. Applying the 4T cognitive model and Islamic metaphors offers a framework for addressing challenging emotions like guilt and anger within a culturally and religiously congruent context.

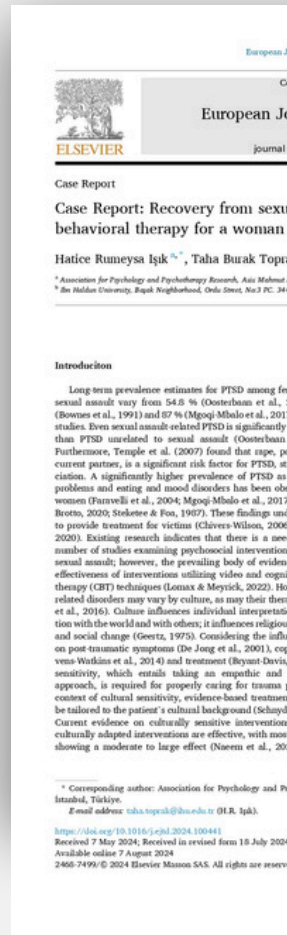
Summary

Introduction

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a common consequence of sexual assault, frequently accompanied by intense guilt, shame, anger, and emotional numbness. While CBT is an empirically supported treatment, it may fall short if religious and cultural values are not incorporated. This study investigates how faith-based adaptations to therapy can facilitate psychological well-being.

Method

The client was a 29-year-old married Muslim woman who experienced a sexual assault in 2016. She received 18 sessions



of integrated therapy involving standard CBT and ACT interventions, the 4T psychoeducational model, and Islamic concepts such as repentance (tawba), hereafter view and the court metaphor. Symptom severity was measured using the PCL-5 and self-report forms at baseline, throughout treatment, and at an 11-month follow-up.

Findings

The client's PTSD symptoms decreased significantly, with PCL-5 scores dropping from 62 (baseline) to 41 (session 15) and 10 (11-month follow-up), indicating clinical recovery. Guilt and anger diminished, while hope, trust, and value-based living increased. The client reported enhanced satisfaction in her marital and social life and greater alignment with her spiritual values.

Discussion

Religion-adapted interventions were found to be instrumental in processing guilt and rebuilding trust. Repentance fostered self-forgiveness, and the afterlife metaphor restructured her sense of justice. The 4T model helped her gain cognitive distance from intrusive thoughts and reduce experiential avoidance. The therapeutic alliance was strengthened by the integration of religious content, which enhanced emotional safety and client engagement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Culturally and religiously adapted therapeutic frameworks not only reduce trauma symptoms but also support the restoration of meaning and value-congruent living. This case underscores the importance of spiritually integrated psychotherapy for Muslim clients. Future research should expand upon this model using larger, controlled samples to assess efficacy across populations.

Keywords

Sexual trauma, Religion-adapted CBT, Guilt, 4T Model, Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Highlights

- This case study examines the use of religion-adapted CBT in treating PTSD symptoms in a Muslim woman following sexual assault.
- The intervention integrated CBT, ACT, and Islamic spiritual practices such as repentance, 4T cognitive model, and the use of religious metaphors (hereafter and divine court).
- Significant reduction in PTSD symptoms was observed, sustained through an 11-month follow-up.
- Religious content enhanced therapeutic alliance, facilitated emotional healing, and promoted a return to value-congruent living.
- Findings support the feasibility and clinical relevance of culturally competent, religiously/ spiritually integrated approaches to trauma therapy.

Peer-Reviewed International Publications

Effectiveness of Religiously Adapted Brief Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy in Reducing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms After an Earthquake: A Quasi-Experimental Study



Taha Burak Toprak, Hanne Nur Özçelik, Hatice Rumeysa Işık (2025), International Journal of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Ibn Haldun University; Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University; Association for Psychology and Psychotherapy Research. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41811-025-00232-9>

Publication Type and Field: Quasi-experimental intervention study; Clinical Psychology, Trauma Psychotherapy.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This study evaluates the effectiveness of A Brief Intervention of Religious-Adapted Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in reducing

symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among Muslim individuals affected by the 2023 earthquakes in Türkiye. It also explores the applicability of a religiously and culturally sensitive early intervention model in post-disaster mental health care.

Social and Professional Contribution

Social Contribution

Frequent earthquakes in Türkiye cause widespread psychological distress. This study demonstrates that culturally congruent and religiously meaningful interventions can play a pivotal role in promoting psychological recovery among religious populations. A Brief Religious Integrated CBT enhances accessibility and acceptability of trauma treatment for devout individuals.

Professional Contribution

The integration of Islamic references into trauma-focused CBT enhanced cognitive restructuring and therapeutic alliance. The findings emphasise the necessity for mental health professionals to develop cultural competence and adapt therapeutic models to clients' religious frameworks.

Summary

Introduction

The earthquakes on February 6, 2023, caused extensive trauma and psychological harm in Türkiye. PTSD symptoms are common in such contexts, yet conventional interventions often lack cultural-religious sensitivity. This study investigates the efficacy of A Brief Religious Integrated CBT protocol in addressing these needs for Muslim earthquake survivors.

Method

A quasi-experimental design was employed with 14

International Journal of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s41811-025-00232-9>

Effectiveness of Religiously Adapted Brief Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms Among Muslim Earthquake Survivors: A Quasi-Experimental Study

Taha Burak Toprak^{1,3} · Hanne Nu

Accepted: 13 January 2025 / Published online: 6
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Abstract

Earthquakes are considered one of the most devastating natural disasters that can lead to a wide range of psychological and physical consequences. Thus, individuals exposed to such disasters often experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health issues. This study examined the positive contributions of a religiously adapted brief cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) intervention to the recovery process. Based on this premise, the study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Religiously Adapted Brief Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (RABCBT) in reducing post-traumatic stress symptoms among Muslim earthquake survivors. In this quasi-experimental study, 24 individuals affected by the 2023 earthquakes were divided into two non-randomized groups: a control group and an intervention group. A 2.5-week marathon intervention was administered to the participants, which included CBT techniques and Islamic references, and was facilitated by a therapist and two trauma specialists. The results showed that the intervention group had significantly lower PTSD levels in the experimental group compared to the control group. These findings provided evidence that the RABCBT intervention significantly alters PTSD symptoms. The results further suggested that developing culturally and religiously sensitive interventions may be a worthwhile endeavor for mental health professionals to serve as an alternative early intervention for PTSD symptoms.

Keywords Post-traumatic stress disorder · Cognitive behavioral therapy · Brief CBT

This article is a revised and expanded version of the article "Effectiveness of Religiously Adapted Brief Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms Among Muslim Earthquake Survivors: A Quasi-Experimental Study" published in the International Journal of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in 2023.

Extended author information available on the

participants (7 in intervention group, 7 in control group). The intervention group received five online sessions of A Brief Religious Integrated CBT, incorporating both core CBT components and Islamic teachings. Outcomes were assessed using the PCL-5 for PTSD symptoms, PTCI for dysfunctional cognitions, PTGI for posttraumatic growth, and MRC for religious coping.

Findings

A substantial reduction in symptoms of PTSD and dysfunctional beliefs was observed in the intervention group at the post-treatment stage and at the one-year follow-up ($\eta^2 = 1.00$). While both groups demonstrated enhancements in religious coping and posttraumatic growth, intergroup disparities in these domains were not statistically significant. Participant feedback indicated that religious integration enhanced emotional relief and trust in the therapeutic process.

Discussion

The findings indicate that religion-adapted brief CBT is efficacious in the reduction of PTSD symptoms. The incorporation of Qur'anic verses and prophetic narratives has been demonstrated to facilitate cognitive reframing and meaning-making. The model enhanced therapeutic engagement by aligning with the clients' belief systems. However, limitations such as small sample size and non-randomized group allocation restrict the generalizability of the findings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A Brief Religious Integrated CBT offers a feasible and effective model for addressing trauma in religiously observant populations following natural disasters. It is recommended that future studies encompass larger samples, utilise randomised controlled designs, and employ long-term assessments to validate the efficacy of the intervention across

diverse populations.

Keywords

Post-traumatic stress symptoms, Earthquake, Religious-adapted cognitive behavioral therapy, Brief intervention.

Highlights

- The study evaluated the effectiveness of a religiously-sensitive brief cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) intervention for PTSD symptoms in Muslim earthquake survivors.
- Conducted with 14 participants, the study employed a quasi-experimental design and five online sessions.
- In the intervention group, PTSD symptoms and dysfunctional thoughts decreased significantly.
- Religious adaptation enhanced therapeutic alliance and acceptability.
- The findings support religion-sensitive brief interventions for post-traumatic treatment and future research.

Works In Press

“Worship Is Not Merely About Form”: Religiously Integrated Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in a Case of Scrupulosity

Yakup Işık, Taha Burak Toprak, 2025, International Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (In press). Hasan Kalyoncu University, Gaziantep. Ibn Haldun University, Association for Psychology and Psychotherapy Research, İstanbul.

Publication Type and Field: Case Report, Clinical Psychology.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This case study examines the psychotherapeutic process of a Muslim client suffering from scrupulosity—a subtype of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) involving religious obsessions and compulsions. The intervention employed an adapted CBT protocol enriched with Islamic theological references. The study aims to demonstrate how religiously integrated CBT can enhance therapeutic alliance, cognitive restructuring, and symptom reduction in clients with strong religious sensitivities. It also seeks to contribute to the conceptual and clinical understanding of religious OCD.

Societal and Professional Contribution

Social Contribution

Religious OCD often creates significant distress in devout individuals and may be exacerbated by therapeutic models that disregard clients' faith commitments. This study shows that integrating religious references into CBT can improve trust, engagement, and symptom relief. It offers a culturally

attuned model that can increase accessibility and adherence to mental health services among religious communities, particularly those in Muslim-majority societies.

Professional Contribution

The study provides clinicians with a comprehensive model for conceptualizing and treating religious obsessions. It introduces three religiously grounded interventions—(1) the Sustainable Righteous Deeds Program, (2) the Religious Uncertainty Management Plan, and (3) the Reconstruction of the Image of God. These interventions support ERP implementation and help address cognitive distortions while respecting theological nuance, offering therapists practical tools for religiously integrated care.

Summary

Introduction

Scrupulosity is a religious manifestation of OCD marked by intrusive doubts about sin, faith, and worship. Standard CBT and ERP are effective for OCD, yet may fall short when clients fear religious misinterpretation or sinfulness in the therapeutic process. This case presents a culturally sensitive CBT intervention adapted for a devout Muslim client, integrating Qur'anic verses, prophetic narratives, and classical Islamic concepts.

Methods

The client was a 24-year-old Muslim male diagnosed with OCD and Avoidant Personality Disorder, not on medication during the therapy. The treatment consisted of 26 sessions, including assessment, cognitive restructuring, religious integration, and ERP. Measures included Y-BOCS, BDI, BAI, and a qualitative therapy evaluation form. The therapy integrated standard CBT with religiously adapted interventions across three phases: cognitive formulation, religious intervention, and behavioral exposure.

Results

The client's OCD symptoms decreased from "severe" (Y-BOCS = 31) to "mild" levels (Y-BOCS = 13) at the 9-month follow-up. The most substantial improvements occurred during the religious cognitive restructuring phase. Religious interventions helped reduce perfectionism, intolerance of uncertainty, and thought-action fusion. The client reported improved spiritual peace, increased self-compassion, and better functioning in daily life. While anxiety increased at follow-up due to life stressors, OCD symptoms remained stable.

Discussion

The integration of religious content into therapy enhanced therapeutic outcomes by aligning interventions with the client's belief system. Conceptual shifts—such as reinterpreting God's mercy, managing religious uncertainty, and recognizing the difference between voluntary sin and intrusive thought—played a key role in symptom reduction. The findings support the viability of religiously integrated CBT models in treating scrupulosity and underscore the need for therapist competence in religious domains.

Conclusion and Implications

This case study demonstrates that religiously sensitive CBT appears promising for treating scrupulosity in devout clients. Therapists equipped with cultural and theological literacy can better address the unique challenges posed by religious OCD. The study recommends further research with larger samples and comparative designs.

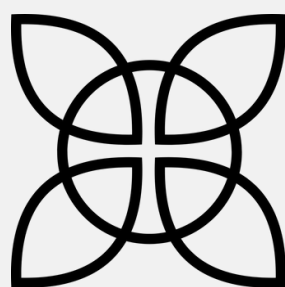
Keywords

Scrupulosity, Obsessive-compulsive disorder, Religious OCD, Treatment, Religiously integrated CBT, Case study.

Highlights

- This study presents a 26-session CBT intervention for scrupulosity in a devout Muslim client.

- Religious content—Qur'anic verses, prophetic traditions, and theological concepts—was systematically integrated into therapy.
- Three structured religious interventions enhanced the impact of cognitive and behavioral techniques.
- Significant OCD symptom reduction was sustained through 9-month follow-up.
- The study contributes to the development of culturally competent CBT models for clients with strong religious values.



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