

## Pornography Addiction Issue: A Counselor's Experience in Handling Interventions Using Islamic Cognitive Behavioural Theory (I-CBT)

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### Abstract

Pornography is an act that is not good and unacceptable because it is not only prohibited from an ethical and moral perspective but also in terms of religion. Pornography is also a form of sexual exploitation that is traded. The objective of this article is about counselors' experiences in handling interventions using Islamic Cognitive Behavior Therapy (i-CBT) with clients experiencing pornography addiction issues. The research methodology is qualitative, using a case study method. This article is presented in a narrative form. The respondent is someone addicted to pornography at a critical level and is still in the process of recovery. The counselor has used interventions using the i-CBT module to guide the client in recovering to be more rational with professional assistance. Based on this intervention experience, it is found that there are still effects of pornography addiction that disturb the respondent's thinking in daily life. This counselor's experience can help other counselors in designing effective Islamic counseling approaches to address these issues, whether at the protection, prevention, or recovery level. There are eight techniques in ICBT outlined in this article as a guide for counselors. Additionally, future researchers should focus more on seeking interventions related to desires (*nafs*).

**Keywords:** Addiction, Pornography, Counsellor Experience, Intervention, *i-CBT*.

## **Introduction**

Pornography is a depiction or narration of an act in a compelling way or any material intended to arouse sexual desire. Laili et al (2018) describes pornography as any form of act or action that contains sexual behavior or sexual exploitation that violates moral norms in society or the act of exposing the aurah excessively or excessively. Whereas, according to the Ministry of Health Malaysia the term "pornography" is *derived from* the word "porneia" which is a Greek word used to refer to prostitutes and this term carries the meaning of writing about prostitutes (MyHEALTH Official Portal of the Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2012). It can be understood that pornography is a bad and unacceptable act in everyday life as it is not only prohibited from the point of view of moral ethics but also prohibited from religion.

Thus, addiction refers to an individual who often sees pornographic pictures or watches pornographic videos as his daily need. Pornography addiction is something that is done in silence without the knowledge of others. Pornographic addiction can bring lust (raising arousal) to those who see it (Pier et al., 2018). Pornographic addiction is on the rise as cases of rape, murder and so on increase. This is very much related to this addiction. Critical level addiction can lead to bad things like rape and murder happening. The feeling of wanting to try of an individual when it is too addicted to pornography has been seen to invite problems and the victim is sought to satisfy the feeling of wanting to try it (Sarnon @ Kusenin et al., 2020).

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy can help the individual to deal with addiction problems by helping them form healthy thinking patterns related to their life situations. According to this approach, counsellors can identify clients' negative thoughts and help clients change their thinking such as automated thinking, conjectures and beliefs (Mey, 2009). This therapy focuses on thinking, and how it affects the client's feelings, and behavior (Joseph, 2009). When thoughts are corrected, clients will be able to change their feelings for calmer and accepting, as well as plan more effective actions.

In carrying out Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, the role of the counsellor plays an active role in solving the client's problems. The counsellor will focus on thoughts and feelings that cause problems for the client. Next, the counsellor will teach the client to identify the thinking patterns that need to be changed. In parallel with the pattern of thinking, the counsellor together with the client will plan the feelings and behaviors that are the goal of the client. In this approach, the counsellor will only focus on the present and the future without providing much space for the client to discuss the long history unless it comes to the action plan under discussion, the counsellor will review the events that occurred while helping the client explain the current problem.

Islamic Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (ICBT) is not a brand or model of new counselling or author's design. It is a group of types of counselling that uses the strategy of delivering the pattern of Islamic thought to the client through the counselling process. It is like other Cognitive Behavioral Therapy strategy groups because it uses strategies to change thinking patterns to change feelings and patterns of action. A distinctive feature of Islamic Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is that there is a general Islamic pattern of thought that can be applied to any problem, and clients and counsellors do not have to strive to form their own thought patterns, instead simply choosing from a menu of thought pattern that fit the problem. In

ICBT, counsellors and clients do not have to build their own words, but instead simply choose from the verses of the Quran and Hadith that are suitable for the situation.

### **Pornography Addiction from an Islamic View**

From the Islamic point of view, the legal status of the relevant behavior is as formulated from an article on the Federal Territory mufti site by Noor (2015) that any sexual activity outside the Shari'a is haram. Every Muslim is obligated to know the rulings in Islam which encompass five things, which are wajib, sunnah, haram, makruh and mubah so as not to fall into the valley of disobedience (Amir, 2004). The vices endanger mankind in this world and in the Hereafter. Vices hinder knowledge, for knowledge is the ray that Allah SWT places in the hearts of men while vices extinguish the rays. Vices also cause anxiety and loneliness in the heart. Anxiety and isolation are felt by humans who commit vices from a good class of people and do good things.

According to Wan Abdullah (2005), a person who performs an activity is not required to allocate other activities to avoid default. This is because when the individual is performing makruf, at the same time the individual is also leaving the default. Users who leave pornographic websites are leaving behind the default and at the same time doing the right thing and getting the reward in the sight of Allah SWT. From this perspective, it is not difficult to abandon the browsing of pornographic sites, simply not clicking on ads promoting it and not searching for the site is the first step in working on the makruf leaving the wrong and the initial step to obtain the reward of Allah SWT.

### **Methodologists**

The design of the study is qualitative and a form of case study where a respondent is interviewed because of the counselling session that was conducted before becoming a respondent of this study. The data and information needed to meet the objectives of the study are collected through the interview method. The interview questions are provided in general, that is, without giving guidance to the answer for example, "how you feel and how you feel when facing an addiction situation". It is to provide an opportunity for the respondents to explain and elaborate on their experiences and feelings (*narrative*). The interview was conducted to better understand the experience of the respondent. However, these questions are not too binding and need to be flexible based on the responses given by the respondents and their willingness to continue the conversation. This is because the first meeting is often more about the emotions of the respondents who will be expressed through an interview with the researcher.

Among the interview guides that the researchers have prepared prior to the interview with the respondents are:

1. What techniques do you use in treating clients involved with pornography?
2. What caused you the complexity during this intervention?
3. What are the implications to you after you finish helping the client?

However, this question guide is not too binding and needs to be flexible based on the responses given by the respondents and their willingness to continue the conversation (Ali et al., 2018). Freedom should be given to the respondent because during the interview period,

sometimes the respondent is unable to continue the conversation due to shame and fear when recounting the experience passed.

According to Lebar (2015) interviews are conducted in conducting a study not to answer the question of a study, test a hypothesis or make an assessment but to understand deeply the experience in life or an event that has been passed. Written consent from the respondent is required to record the interview. If the respondent does not allow the interview to be recorded or feels uncomfortable using the recorder, a note will be done during the interview session. In fact, the benefits of making a note compared to using a recorder, the researchers will focus more on what the respondents tell us than relying on the recorder alone. Apart from understanding through verbal communication, the respondent's feelings should also be understood through the non-verbal communication shown.

## **Analysis Findings**

### **Respondent's Background**

The respondent is a counsellor who has now served for 3 years in a private institution. The counsellor is an experienced person in handling addiction-related cases due to his experience as a retired lecturer before working in a private institution. He has a registered counsellor license and has almost 30 years of experience as a counsellor. The following are the techniques used by counsellors to help their clients as counselling interventions.

### **I-CBT Intervention**

#### **1. Removing the Mazmumah Properties and Incorporating Mahmudah Properties**

The counsellor will help the client to remove the bad thoughts that are in the individual. The mind is made up of mazmumah which are reprehensible traits that should not be present in a Muslim. These qualities need to be discarded to form a good heart. With a good heart then the client's behavior will be good. When the counsellor hears the client complaining about his life then the counsellor needs to stop the client's thoughts immediately and continue to remind the client of the purpose of life in the world. The purpose of life in the world is to worship God. Thus, good behavior will be able to be formed if the right thinking is formed.

Cognitive restructuring is important for the human being as it aims to shape thinking at once the best of behavior. To make good thoughts then it is necessary to apply the qualities of mahmudah first. Then it will be kind and will form a positive behavior. Cognitive restructuring begins with the process of cleansing oneself, namely through spiritual, heart, spirit and soul. When the self is clean, then it will be good for the whole body. But we can also repeat the process by instructing ourselves and eventually being able to complete the activity automatically without thinking consciously about the instructions. (Kamal Abd Manaf, 1996). For example, the world is a prison for believers. The client himself can realize when thoughts are being negative and immediately stop them. As "*STOP!*" What to do with this and immediately switch to zikr like "*LahauLawalaquwataillahbillah..*" or istigfar "*astagfirullah hal azim*".

#### **2. Removing Negative Shadows and Replacing Positive Shadows (Visualization)**

The Technique of Removing Negative Shadows and Replacing Positive Shadows (Visualization) is also a therapy to remove negative traits and replace them with positive traits. The visualization method is a method of imagining the emotions of good feelings that can enhance

good behavior. For example, every time a client is depressed due to a problem he or she is experiencing then the client can imagine a beautiful paradise and the heart will be happy. In heaven everything will look beautiful. Therefore, the client will try to be good to enter the paradise that Allah has set upon the believers who follow Allah's command and leave the prohibition of Allah. In fact, people can also be pleased and remember the promise of Allah to the servants of Allah who are affected by misfortune as in Surah Al Bayyinah which means "*Allah is pleased with them and they are happy*".

### **3. Systematic repetition method**

Such bilateral principles will be calm in a calm state which is related to Islam. Every problem has a solution and why it is happening (Kasmuri, 2012). There are various purposes of problems in human life such as Allah wants to raise his slave's maqam. Therefore, the client should be applied with the thought to be happy with every problem that occurs and do not be questioned why it happens because the question seems to damage our faith as a Muslim.

### **4. Qudwah Hasanah (Example Following)**

Qudwah Hasanah is a technique used to shape positive behavior. The model to follow is the way of life of the Messenger of Allah. The way of life of the Messenger of Allah is the best model that all human beings should follow because the personal qualities found in the Rasulullah are commendable morals. In fact, following the personal of the Rasulullah is also a sunnah and will earn a reward (Adnan, 2010). In this situation, the counsellor will ask the client to name anyone as good-minded friends or relatives and share what they are doing. So, can be followed by the example of the character of the prophet Muhammad as an example for husband and Siti Khadijah as an example for wife (Adnan, 2010).

### **5. Assignment**

Assignment is an activity that will be performed by the client outside the counselling session. Assignment is a form of practical training where the theory is studied in group counselling with counsellors. Among the forms of tasks performed by the client are performing prayers without leaving the obligatory especially, fasting Monday and Thursday, zikr and various activities that can sanctify and calm the client. Therefore, it can be said that the counsellor teaches his theory and the client practices it by doing exercises. The purpose of the assignment is also so that the client will be easier to learn and become a daily habit. Self-management is also very important where there needs to be discipline to manage oneself in life so that it is more systematic. The main discipline in human life is the prayer that every Muslim should perform. Allah SWT says in Surah Taha verse 14 which means "*Pray in remembrance of Me*".

### **6. Relaxation Exercises - Tranquility**

Relaxing techniques that calm the client's self are such as doing leisure activities, taking the right breath, and exercising. In addition, clients can also be encouraged to see the beautiful view of Allah's greatness to calm down the client such as seeing the beaches, waterfalls, mountains, islands, hills and so on.

### **7. Meditation**

The process of zikr therapy is another technique to calm the client's self. Allah said in surah Ar Rad verse 8 which means: "*Remember by remembrance of Allah's heart.*" *The use of zikr*

*asmaul husna especially can help women to fight in the face of stress.* Besides, there is a method to calm down internally and externally i.e. by reciting the Quran then the heart will be calm.

## **8. Mindfulness**

Consciousness is that everything that happens is derived from what individuals think. Clients who are Muslims will be in a state of consciousness when praying and praying. The individual will pray hoping to God wholeheartedly and be confident that God will grant the prayer. If this belief is done wholeheartedly, then the prayer will be answered by God. If individuals ask for good things, then good things will happen and if ask for bad things then something bad will happen. It can be concluded that what you think is what will happen.

## **Implications and Suggestions**

As a result of this study, researchers looked at I-CBT as an approach that can be used for follow-up studies in treating individuals involved with addiction. Among the things that can be done by the counsellor or preacher are:

1. Focus on recovery interventions.
2. Start with good relations and unconditional acceptance.
3. Generate trust and awareness of fear of the afterlife, and punishment of God.
4. Provide lifestyle alternatives that can be seen by those who are about to migrate.
5. Accept that migrating is staggered and time consuming.
6. Requires a special approach because individuals are entangled with addiction problems.
7. Get rid of negative thinking patterns and replace them with positive thinking patterns.
8. Removing negative shadows.
9. Relaxation and meditation.
10. Give them assignments.

## **Summary**

*"The internet is not the problem; the problem lies in the contagious diseases within society itself."* This is a quote from Dr. Mohamed Awang Lah when asked by Utusan Malaysia journalists about cybercrime in Malaysia. His words are synonymous with society's obsession with pornographic materials. The internet and all advanced communication devices are merely communication mediums. It is the users who determine their direction. Thus, users need to be educated to utilize technology in a way that is pleasing to Allah. This article has provided explanations of each counselor's experience in conducting interventions with respondents, as well as suggestions that counselors can make to help them return to a good life.

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