

# International Summit on Islamic Psychology 2024 in Indonesia: Review of Reports and the First Results

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**Abstract.** The article provides an overview of the speeches of the main speakers at the Islamic Psychology Summit-2024 (IPS-2024), held in October 2024 in Yogyakarta (Indonesia). The theme of the summit is: “The Transformative Power of Islamic Principles in Elevating Human Dignity”. The summit is organized by the International Association of Muslim Psychologists and the largest State University in Indonesia, University of Gadjah Mada. The summary of reports from speakers from different countries presented in the article allows us to see the main contexts in which Islamic Psychology and psychological counseling and therapy for Muslims are developing at the present time. It is shown that by using the methods and practices of Islamic Psychology, Muslims strive to resolve socio-psychological problems of an individual and of the society, and to develop science and educational programs and social support for Muslims around the world, and to contribute to the growth of spiritual and psychological well-being.

*Keywords:* International Association of Muslim Psychologists; Islamic psychology; psychological counseling for Muslims; cross-cultural psychology

## Introduction

Islamic psychology as a new promising field at the intersection of psychology and Islamic theology is rapidly developing all over the world. To consolidate this development, the International Association of Muslim Psychologists (IAMP) in collaboration with the University of Gadjah Mada (UGM) and sponsored by the International Institute of Islamic Thought, initiated the first International Summit on Islamic Psychology (Islamic Psychology Summit abbreviated as IPS-2024). This event has already become an important milestone in the development of Islamic psychology and psychological counseling for Muslims around the world.

The IPS 2024 was held on 26-27 October 2024 and was themed “Redefining Psychology: The Transformative Power of Islamic Principles in Elevating Human Dignity”. The Summit had four goals:

1. To establish a new stage in the development of Islamic psychology in the world;
2. To share the latest achievements in the research and practice of Islamic psychology;
3. To analyze the presented papers and publish the first edition of a handbook on Islamic psychology, which will include articles by eminent scholars of Islamic psychology from around the world;
4. To create opportunities for collaboration in organizing and implementing a psychology curriculum consistent with Islamic principles.

The Summit brought together academics, practitioners, research students and mental health professionals from around the world. It was preceded by a workshop on 24-25 October, featuring speakers from the International Association of Muslim Psychologists (IAMP) President Bagus Riyono,

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Professor Jasser Auda and Professor G. Hussein Rassool. The workshops were on Tazkia Therapy and Islamic Psychological Counselling. Another workshop delivered by Hannan Dover and Diana Setiyawati, was also conducted on Suicide Prevention, with reference to Muslims' contexts and belief.

Dr. Bagus Riyono presented his new book, "Tazkiya Therapy in Islāmic Psychotherapy" (Riyono, 2024). This book describes the author's concept of Tazkiya-therapy, which is a holistic psychological approach to understanding the human essence as a unity of the physical, psychological, social and spiritual faculties. The term "Tazkiya therapy" refers to the purification of the soul, self-development and improvement in accordance with the canons of Islam. Therefore, the author of the book shows that Tazkiya therapy is a dynamic and flexible approach that combines many structures and disciplines to develop the human soul, cognition, emotions and behavior. Although it is a multidimensional approach, the therapy process is stepwise, and the middle section of the book presents the key stages of the therapeutic protocol. Within these steps, the therapist is provided with seven different approaches that can be adapted to suit the client's needs, whether they need help with thought patterns, emotional disturbances, and behavioral problems. The book ends with a detailed description of the model, a series of case studies, an analysis of the prospects for teaching and application for the continued study and practice of tazkiya therapy. In the near future, the book is planned to be translated into Russian, which will contribute to the development of ideas about Islamic psychological counseling and therapy.

Professor Jasser Auda, the president of the Maqasid Institute Global and the author of well-known scientific books including the Maqasid Methodology, explained his views on the possibilities of using the methodology of Maqasid in psychology (Auda, 2018). The implementation of the methodology in psychology is also elucidated in the works of B. Riyono (Riyono, 2013).

Professor Hussein Rassool, the author of a number of scientific and practical publications on Islamic psychology and psychological counseling of Muslims (Rassool, 2022; Rassool et.al, 2023; Rassool & Keskin, 2023). Currently a professor of Islamic psychology at Charles Sturt University (Australia), discussed with the participants the use of some techniques for working with Muslim clients as part of a practical lesson:

- Storytelling from the Quran and Hadith;
- Metaphors;
- Visualization;
- Miracle question;
- Tafakkur (reflection);
- Behavior activation and dream analysis.

Also, during the Summit, H. Rassool presented the second edition of the book "Islamic Counseling Introduction to Theory and Practice" (Rassool, 2022). The first edition of which in Russian was published in 2022. The second edition has new parts, including a section on narrative practice in working with Muslim clients. During practical interaction on discussing client cases presented by the professor, participants from different countries became convinced that the use of all the proposed methods requires from the psychologist not only knowledge of religion, but also an understanding of the client's ethno-regional culture. For example, to come up with a metaphor, the psychologist must be in the same cultural space as the client.

The lectures and practical classes preceding the Summit helped the participants to get acquainted with useful theoretical and practical material. The experience of interaction during the workshop allowed the participants to get to know each other and get ready for work.

### ***Review of Presentations Made by the Participants of the Islamic Psychology Summit (IPS) 2024***

The first day of the conference started with a section called “Why Islamic Psychology?”. Renowned scholars from Indonesia, Malaysia and other countries delivered welcoming addresses to the participants. Afterwards, the speakers presented their arguments regarding the need to develop Islamic psychology in different countries of the world. Bagus Riyono emphasized that psychology today is a very important knowledge that helps to guide a person’s life. Psychology is knowledge about oneself with all the dynamics that can happen to us. Modern psychological science is dominated by the Western secular atheistic point of view. Muslims should study and develop psychology based on Islamic teachings, through the Quran and Hadith, guided by ideas about the basic nature of man, called fitrah. In order to develop psychology from an Islamic point of view, we need to redefine the purpose of psychology, the object and the methodology (Riyono, 2022; Riyono, 2023; Riyono & Hiram, 2012). The purpose of studying the discipline of "Psychology based on the Islamic worldview", according to the President of the International Association of Muslim Psychologists, is to preserve and develop the health of the human soul. Islamic teaching gives us knowledge that life in this world is a journey, at the end of which, that is, in the future life, we will return to Allah. Bagus Riyono in his report outlined the main directions of development of Islamic psychology and psychological counseling of Muslims.

Hanan Dover, clinical psychologist, vice-president of the International Association of Muslim Psychologists, lecturer (and founder) of the Graduate Certificate Program in Islamic Psychology at Charles Sturt University, Australia, addressed key issues in the ethics of psychological counselling for Muslims in her presentation (Dover et.al, 2007). She focused on how Muslim communities manage the dynamics of trust in mental health professionals who claim to provide ‘Islamic’ psychological support. The reliability of practitioners is becoming a central issue as Muslim communities often seek psychological help that is consistent with their spiritual and cultural values. As a long term practicing psychologist serving diverse communities around Sydney-Australia, Hanan Dover reviewed the consequences of unqualified psychological help, the problems of standardization, accreditation, informing and education of Muslim communities, as well as the implementation of training programs for specialists dealing with cultural specificities. According to Dover, there is a pressing need to adopt a code of ethics for Islamic psychologists.

Professor Hussein Rassool drew the attention of the participants of the Summit to the fact that Islamic psychology is a holistic approach to human psychology, taking into account its cultural specificity. Islamic psychology offers a comprehensive framework that integrates the spiritual, moral and mental aspects of human existence. Based on Islamic teachings, it addresses the whole person – mind, body and soul. The world is currently facing an unprecedented mental health crisis, and traditional psychological approaches often do not consider the spiritual aspect of well-being. Islamic psychology offers a solution by emphasizing the importance of spiritual balance, ethics and personal development through concepts such as nafs (self), qalb (heart) and ‘aql (intellect). Rassool noted that Islamic ethical

principles such as patience, gratitude and repentance are applicable to mental health issues across cultures. In addition, Islamic psychology provides practical therapeutic tools such as faith-based cognitive behavioral therapy and narrative therapy that can be applied in modern clinical settings. Islamic psychology bridges the gap between faith and science and offers an alternative model of healing that addresses both the spiritual and psychological aspects of human suffering. Its relevance in combating addiction, anxiety, and depression, and in promoting global mental well-being, demonstrates its potential to enrich both religious and secular understandings of psychology, offering hope for a more holistic approach to mental health and personal growth.

The second session, “Learning from The Past,” was devoted to discussing the historical legacy of Islamic psychology. Professor at Marmara University, and specialist in Sufi psychology Sulayman Derin drew the attention of attendees to the works of outstanding medieval Muslim scholars in psychology, such as Ibn Bajjah, al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd, and many others (Subandi et.al, 2024). Muslim scholars, including Sufis, developed Islamic psychology, which aimed to balance the dual nature of man. Based on the analysis of al-Ghazali’s book “Ihya’ ‘ulum ad-din”, which is a treasure trove of psychological ideas, as well as the works of Jalaluddin Rumi, S. Derin showed in his report the ideas of outstanding thinkers of the past that are in demand today in different countries of the world.

Professor Subandi from Universitas Gadjah Mada presented the coherences of Imam Al-Ghazali’s list of disease in the heart and mental problems from DSM-IV (Subandi et.al, 2024). Prof. Subandi especially focuses on the issues of anger which is quite important to be focused on when dealing with mental problems or disease in the heart.

Rania Awaad, a professor at Stanford University School of Medicine and an expert in Muslim mental health, reminded the Summit participants of the work of the eminent 9th-century Muslim scholar Abu Zayd al-Balkhi, whose work integrated Islamic beliefs with medicine (Awaad et.al, 2023). Focusing on “Sustenance for the Soul” (Al-Balkhi, 2019), Dr. Rania Awaad showed how al-Balkhi’s approach was ahead of its time in recognizing the complex relationship between mental and physical health, as well as in distinguishing obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and contributing to cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).

The third panel section, “Islamic Psychology in Different Cultures”, was devoted to examining the specifics of the development of the theory and practice of psychological counseling for Muslims in different cultural environments. In the report by Professor Olga Pavlova (Pavlova et.al, 2018; Pavlova, 2018), Head of the Department of Ethnopsychology and Psychological Problems of Multicultural Education at the Moscow State University of Psychology and Education, the main focus was on an integrated approach to psychological counseling for Muslims. A psychologist working with Muslim clients should know cross-cultural psychology, Islamic psychology, as well as multicultural technologies of psychological counseling, and have developed intercultural competence that will allow flexible use of various methodologies for psychological counseling for Muslims. The speaker shared the specifics of psychological counseling for Muslims in the post-Soviet countries and revealed the main socio-psychological characteristics of Muslims – representatives of different ethnic groups.

Professor Akbar Husain, from Aligarh Muslim University, a public university in Aligarh, India, reviewed the advances in Islamic psychology in India over the last three decades (Husain, 2006). Indian Muslim psychologists and Islamic scholars have played a key role in shaping the field by contributing to research publications, giving impressive presentations, and organizing seminars and conferences at

the national and international levels. Courses and seminars such as “Islamic Counselling” and “Personality Development” provide students with unique culturally relevant skills and can significantly improve the employability of Muslim psychologists in India. These courses, taught by psychology departments or in collaboration with other departments such as education, Islamic studies, social work and theology, will serve to bridge the gap between theory and practice by offering students intellectual depth and practical competencies. Husain emphasized that in a world where culturally based mental health services are increasingly in demand, the inclusion of Islamic psychology in academic curricula is not only an academic improvement but also an important step towards the development of specialists and it can overcome the gap between modern psychology and Islamic traditions and offer effective solutions for society.

Professor Abdur Rasjid Skinner, a clinical psychologist and lecturer at a number of renowned UK universities including the University of Leeds, the University of Sheffield and the Cambridge Muslim College, discussed how the conceptualization of Islamic psychology had spread to the UK (with the support of the late Professor Malik Badri) and analyzed the courses and clinical services that had emerged as a result, particularly in the areas of child and educational psychology (Skinner, 2010).

The fourth session of the Summit was devoted to the topic of “Happiness and Ethics” in the Muslim understanding. The speaker from the USA, Dr. Amber Haque, told the participants of the Summit that the pursuit of happiness is a universal human need, but the understanding of happiness varies for each individual as something personal (Haque et.al, 2016). He showed the differences between secular and Islamic views on happiness, and discussed the terminology related to happiness, which he found in the Quran and in the views of early Islamic scholars on this topic. The author touched upon the biopsychosocial factors that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of happiness, and shared the prospects and possibilities of studying happiness in Muslim countries.

The dean of the Faculty of Psychology at Muhammadiyah University (Surakarta, Indonesia) Professor Taufik Kasturi presented his vision of the problem of happiness and psychological well-being from the perspective of Islam and implementation in Muslim societies (Kasturi, 2021). He emphasized that well-being is related to all aspects of life: from physical and mental health to a good quality of life that allows a person to overcome various life problems and to survive. In the context of psychology, it is believed that a person has achieved a state of well-being when he or she feels happiness and satisfaction with life based on his or her values. Happiness and satisfaction are subjective, and everyone feels and understands them in their own way.

Meanwhile, as the speaker emphasized, the Quran teaches Muslims that well-being is based not only on subjective personal preferences, but also on how much a person's life is consistent with the rules established in the Quran and Sunnah. In other words, it is believed that a Muslim has achieved well-being if he bases his life on Islamic teachings, with the help of which he will find happiness and satisfaction in life. T. Kasturi's report was practice-oriented, included many interesting examples, in particular from the lives of Russian Muslims, to whom the speakers from Indonesia treat with great interest and respect. T. Kasturi has been establishing an Islamic school in central Java- Indonesia, using Islamic Psychology for its bases in Character education. Many Indonesian families have been showing great interest in sending their children to this school for their secondary education. The school's academic collaboration extends wide to Muslim colleagues from Islamic University of Russia.

The author of this article, Dr. Emi Zulaifah, the head of Islamic Psychology Center at the Universitas Islam Indonesia (Yogyakarta, Indonesia), in her speech focused on the question of whether adherence to ethical principles, particularly in work ethics, contributes to human happiness (Zulaifah, 2019). She stated that it would make more sense to understand the issue of ethics and happiness from the opposite state: That is the violation of ethics and its consequences. She traced some cases of work ethic violation i.e fraud, and showed how it impacted the fraudsters that range from anxiety and restlessness, to suicide. There was a connection, among fraudsters in different countries, to the reason why frauds were conducted. In Islamic Psychology it can be explained from the concept of the disease of the heart. The disease is in the form of the inability to control desires, and thus an individual will fall into indulgence of desires, and in this case it is the desire for material accumulation. She explored later on the principles called the Qur'anic Work Ethics. The author spoke about the structure of these principles, as well as some empirical studies conducted to determine their impact on employee performance.

The fifth session of the Summit focused on Islamic psychology in the context of addressing the psychological problems of Muslims. Dr. Diana Setiyawati, Faculty of Psychology, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, told the Summit participants about the interconnection between Islamic and secular understandings of human psychological health (Subandi et.al, 2024). The Quran as a guide for humans should serve as a fundamental source for integrating psychology with Islamic knowledge. In addition, the works of Muslim scholars based on the Quran and Sunnah should act as bridges to achieve this goal. A critical review of psychological problems outlined in the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) shows that many mental illnesses are associated with diseases of the spiritual heart (qalb). In addition, social problems such as human rights violations, sexual abuse, drug addiction, and others often arise for a similar reason. These problems arise because psychologists have either misunderstood or failed to properly interpret the Creator's guidance regarding human behavior.

Professor Muhammad Tahir Khalily from the International Islamic University Islamabad (Pakistan) drew the attention of the audience to the fact that the relationship between religion and spirituality has long been a subject of reflection and debate (Ijaz et.al, 2024; Khalily, 2012). Spirituality is often perceived as a deeply personal search for the divine, which can occur both within and outside of formal religious frameworks. Religion, in contrast, is understood as an organized system of beliefs and practices, often linked to institutional structures. According to the speaker, this dichotomy has led to a perceived separation in which spirituality is viewed as a personal experience of higher consciousness, sometimes independent of established religious doctrines. Such a divergence can lead people to unapproved spiritual journeys, potentially leading to the creation of personalized doctrines based on individual experience. On the other hand, those who strictly adhere to institutionalized religion without developing a personal, inner relationship with Allah may experience a sense of spiritual emptiness, reducing religious practices to mere routine rituals devoid of greater meaning and spiritual depth. In his talk, Khalily sought to bridge the gap between religion and spirituality, focusing on their intersection within Islamic psychology. The author shared the results of an empirical study, the first stage of which involved the development of a reliable assessment instrument called the Maladies of Nafs Scale (MNS) (Ijaz et.al, 2024). In his talk, the author presented the stages of development and reliability testing of this scale, as well as its possible use in research on Muslim (nafs-Psychological)

diseases. The empirical analysis revealed eleven different factors associated with nafs diseases, each of which demonstrates satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  ranges from 0.72 to 0.97). These factors included anger, arrogance, avarice, breaking ties, envy, lie, ostentation, slander, taunting, back-biting and materialism. Studies suggest that the MNS is emerging as a valuable tool for both research and intervention in Islamic psychology, as it provides a standardized method for examining the complex relationships between psychological well-being and the Islamic principles of Tazkiya (purification of the nafs).

In the second phase, the study moved to develop a psychosocial intervention to address the identified Nafs disorders. A committee comprising clinical and Islamic psychologists was established. They created a didactic treatment manual that integrated evidence-based psychosocial interventions with traditional Islamic treatments. This manual serves as a comprehensive guide to the treatment of specific disorders identified by the MNS. The intervention was then applied to a group of 30 Muslims aged 18–30 years using a single-group experimental design. The effectiveness of the intervention was assessed through changes in MNS scores, supplemented by a qualitative analysis of the participants' subjective experiences.

The study makes a significant contribution to the field of Islamic psychology by harmonizing spiritual wisdom with modern scientific approaches (Ijaz et.al, 2024). It also provides a model for integrating spirituality with traditional mental health practices, promoting a more holistic approach to psychological well-being in the context of Islamic psychology. It represents an attempt to rediscover and strengthen the connection between religion and spirituality within Islamic psychology. It indicates that spirituality, if firmly anchored in revealed religious practices and guidelines, can be effectively integrated with traditional Islamic teachings. The next presenter is Prof Dr. Dawood Abdulmalek Yahya Al-Hidabi, professor of education from IIUM presented toward developing an Islamic-based undergraduate psychology program.

The sixth panel session was devoted to examining various issues related to personality and organizational psychology. Professor Naved Iqbal of the State Islamic University Jamia Millia Islamia (New Delhi, India) discussed the problems Muslims face with Islamophobia, which can be seen all over the world (Iqbal & Skinner, 2021). Islamophobia, according to the speaker, although a modern term, is a long-standing phenomenon of prejudice and discrimination against Islam and Muslims. In his speech, he examined Islamophobia from a psychological perspective, with an emphasis on the role of the media in perpetuating negative stereotypes. In the media Islam is often confused with violence and terrorism, so that creates an environment of fear and mistrust. From a cognitive perspective, stereotypes and prejudices shape how audiences process information about Islam, reinforcing Islamophobic sentiments. The impact of Islamophobia on Muslim identity is profound, with many Muslims adopting strategies to hide or downplay their religious identity to avoid stigma. The socioeconomic consequences of Islamophobia include employment discrimination, limited access to resources, and increased social isolation, while its psychological effects contribute to anxiety, fear, and decreased well-being. By considering Islamophobia as both a form of religious prejudice and racial discrimination, the author called for a broader understanding of its global manifestations and the urgent need for systemic solutions to address its widespread impacts.

Professor Shukran Abdurrahman of the International Islamic University Malaysia presented to the Summit participants his vision that in the contemporary world psychology is a recognized discipline

that attracts the attention of students, scholars and practitioners (Rahman, 2020; Rahman, 2021). In studying this field, a number of important questions arise regarding its sources, nature, scope, ethics and practice. The answers to these questions are deeply rooted in the value foundations, belief systems, local traditions and historical contexts of those who study them. In this context, the author examines Islamic psychology with an emphasis on its epistemological, ontological, axiological and teleological foundations.

Professor Rahmatullah Khan, an expert in cross-cultural and Islamic psychology from the University of Selangor (Universiti Selangor) Malaysia, stressed that psychological well-being is critical to the health and functioning of communities and organizations (Khan, 2015). According to the speaker, Islamic psychology offers a unique perspective by integrating spiritual and ethical aspects into solving psychological problems. In his presentation, he outlined his views on how Islamic psychology comprehensively addresses mental health issues in communities and organizations.

During the Summit, its participants held an organizational meeting of the leadership of the International Association of Muslim Psychologists. The organization was founded in 1997 by the author of the modern concept of Islamic psychology, Prof. Malik Badri. At the organizational meeting, a new composition of the governing body of the Association, the Board of Trustees, was proposed and approved, which included: G. Hussein Rassool, Naved Iqbal, Amber Haque, Olga Pavlova, Taufik Kasturi, Rahmattullah Khan Abdul Wahab Khan, Prof. Muhammad Tahir Khalily, Shukran Abd. Rahman, Subandi, Emi Zulaifah, Hanan Dover, Diana Setiyawati and Bagus Riyono. The participants unanimously supported the current leader Bagus Riyono as the President of the Association, Hanan Dover will continue to serve as the Vice President, and Diana Setiyawati will continue to serve as the Secretary General. Those responsible for various areas of the association's development were elected, including, in particular, research and publication activities, development of clinical practice, development of an ethical code, as well as the implementation of educational programs on Islamic psychology and psychological counseling of Muslims in various universities around the world. The Board of Trustees of the International Association called for more active development of the publication activities of the main printed organ of the Association – the International Journal of Islamic Psychology. It was also proposed to open an international doctoral program in Islamic psychology and organize an international Center for Islamic Psychology. The Association should more actively develop cooperation with universities in various countries (including MSUPE, with which an agreement on cooperation for 10 years was concluded in 2019). In addition, it is necessary to create a special body within the Association that will be able to accredit specialists in the field of Islamic psychology and psychological counseling of Muslims.

## **Conclusion**

Herewith, a review of presentations made by the participants of the first international Islamic Psychology Summit, held in October 2024 at Gadjah Mada University (Yogyakarta, Indonesia), shows that there is a pressing need throughout the world to more intensively integrate psychological science and practice with ethno-religious and regional values and needs of Muslim clients. Developing intercultural competence of specialists, building psychological counseling for Muslims based on the development of Islamic psychology are tasks that should be solved by specialists from different countries, taking into account the socio-cultural context they live in. In this regard, the coordinating role



of the International Association of Muslim Psychologists is increasing, which should establish ethical requirements for the training and professional qualifications of Muslim psychologists, develop and implement educational programs, and disseminate the best professional experience of psychological counseling for Muslims. The publication of scientific articles and practical guides on counseling religious clients, accreditation and certification of specialists are the most important tasks of the association, which is called upon to establish high standards of quality of professional assistance in the field of psychological health of Muslims.

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