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The Rise of Pseudo-Experts in Islāmīc Psychology and Psychotherapy

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The rise of pseudo-experts in Islāmīc psychology and psychotherapy poses a serious challenge to the credibility and development of this important field. While the proliferation of online courses and platforms offering training in “Islāmīc” therapies has made these concepts more accessible, it has also opened the door to unqualified individuals misrepresenting themselves as authorities in Islāmīc psychology. This phenomenon has significant ethical and professional implications.

Key Ethical Concerns

1. Superficial Knowledge vs. True Expertise

- Many individuals present themselves as specialists in Islāmīc psychology after completing short online courses, sometimes lasting only a few days. Such training cannot substitute for the depth of understanding required to practice responsibly.
- True expertise in Islāmīc psychology requires rigorous academic study, a solid foundation in both psychology and Islāmīc studies, and extensive clinical experience.

2. Lack of Academic and Clinical Qualifications

- Some trainers lack formal academic qualifications in psychology, psychotherapy, or education.
- Clinical experience, a critical component of effective psychotherapy, is often missing. Without hands-on experience with clients, theoretical knowledge is insufficient to address complex psychological issues effectively.

3. Plagiarism and Intellectual Dishonesty

- There are instances where content is plagiarised from established scholars and practitioners, repackaged, and marketed as original.
- This undermines intellectual integrity and devalues authentic contributions to the field.

4. Self-Promotion and Professional Narcissism

- Some individuals dominate the discourse by using social media and self-owned platforms for publicity, creating echo chambers where dissenting voices or critiques are silenced.
- This monopolisation creates a misleading impression of authority and limits opportunities for genuine professionals to contribute.

5. Short-Term Profit vs. Long-Term Development

- The commercialisation of Islāmīc psychology as a branding tool detracts from its deeper purpose of integrating faith and healing for genuine mental health improvement.
- Organisations promoting short courses for financial gain often fail to prioritise rigorous education or ethical practice.

Advising Prospective Students Undertaking “Islamic Related” Courses

To address these concerns, it is essential for students seeking to pursue Islāmīc psychology and psychotherapy to carefully evaluate the credibility of trainers and programmes. The following questions are critical:

1. What are the qualifications of the trainer?

- Look for formal academic degrees in psychology, psychotherapy, counselling, and Islāmīc studies.
- A PhD, clinical certification, or other advanced qualifications indicate deeper expertise.

2. How were these qualifications obtained?

- Investigate the credibility and accreditation of awarding institutions.
- Be wary of self-styled certifications from unrecognised or dubious sources.

3. How many peer-reviewed publications exist?

- Peer-reviewed articles and books published by reputable journals or academic publishers are essential indicators of expertise.
- Avoid individuals whose claims are unsupported by substantive academic or clinical contributions.

4. What clinical experience do they have?

- Verify hands-on clinical experience, supervision, and casework.
- Theoretical knowledge alone is inadequate for addressing real-world mental health challenges.

5. Is the organisation credible?

- Look for:
 - Accreditation
 - Transparency in faculty qualifications
 - Student reviews or testimonials
 - Recognition by professional bodies in Islāmīc psychology or related fields

Moving Forward: Restoring Integrity to the Field

To preserve the authenticity and ethical foundations of Islāmīc psychology, practitioners, students, and institutions must commit to the following principles:

1. Promoting Rigorous Standards

- Establish and uphold minimum academic and clinical qualifications for trainers.
- Avoid endorsing or collaborating with unqualified individuals or organisations.

2. Advancing Research and Collaboration

- Encourage original research and critical scholarship.
- Foster collaboration among professionals with diverse academic, clinical, and cultural expertise.

3. Raising Awareness

- Educate students and practitioners about the risks of pseudoscience and unqualified trainers.
- Highlight the importance of choosing credible educational programmes.

4. Establishing Ethical Oversight

- Develop regulatory bodies to oversee education and practice in Islāmīc psychology.

- Create mechanisms for reporting and addressing unethical conduct or false claim
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Conclusion

Islāmīc psychology and psychotherapy are profound disciplines that bridge faith and mental health in meaningful ways. However, the emergence of unqualified individuals and organisations threatens the integrity of this field. By fostering rigorous academic standards, ethical practices, and a commitment to authentic learning, the discipline can continue to grow in ways that genuinely benefit individuals and communities worldwide.

Conseils aux étudiants souhaitant suivre des cours en lien avec l'« islamique »

Pour répondre à ces préoccupations, il est essentiel que les étudiants souhaitant se former en psychologie et psychothérapie islamiques évaluent attentivement la crédibilité des formateurs et des programmes. Voici les questions clés à poser :

1. Quelles sont les qualifications du formateur ?

- Recherchez des formateurs ayant des diplômes académiques formels en psychologie, psychothérapie ou counseling, ainsi qu'en études islamiques.
- Un doctorat (PhD), une certification clinique ou d'autres qualifications avancées indiquent une compréhension approfondie du domaine.

2. Comment ont-ils obtenu leurs qualifications ?

- Examinez la crédibilité des institutions qui ont délivré les qualifications.
- Méfiez-vous des certifications auto-proclamées provenant de sources non reconnues.

3. Combien d'articles ont-ils publiés ?

- Les publications évaluées par des pairs sont essentielles pour établir l'expertise.
- Vérifiez la publication d'articles ou d'ouvrages auprès d'éditeurs reconnus.

4. Quelle est leur expérience clinique ?

- Vérifiez l'expérience pratique en milieu thérapeutique.
- Les connaissances théoriques sans expérience clinique sont insuffisantes.

5. S'agit-il d'une organisation crédible ?

Vérifiez :

- Son accréditation ○ La transparence des qualifications ○ Les avis d'anciens étudiants

