

IDENTITY, PURPOSE, AND MENTAL HEALTH: TAWHEED VS SECULAR HUMANISTIC COUNSELLING

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Abstract

The growing prevalence of mental health challenges, particularly those related to identity, purpose, and existential anxiety, has highlighted limitations in dominant counselling paradigms. Secular humanistic counselling emphasizes self-actualization, autonomy, and subjective meaning-making. While these approaches offer valuable therapeutic tools, they often lack a stable and transcendent framework for identity and purpose. This paper examines Tawheed, the Islamic concept of the Oneness of Allah, as a comprehensive model for psychological wellbeing. Using a comparative analytical approach, the study contrasts Tawheed-based counselling with secular humanistic approaches in terms of identity formation, purpose, emotional regulation, and coping mechanisms. Drawing upon Qur'anic verses, authentic hadith, and contemporary psychological literature, the paper argues that Tawheed provides a stable, objective, and spiritually grounded framework that addresses both psychological and existential dimensions of mental health. Practical implications for integrating Tawheed principles into counselling practice are also discussed.

Keywords: Tawheed Islamic psychology; mental health; identity purpose; counselling humanistic; psychology wellbeing

1. Introduction

Mental health problems have become one of the major global challenges in modern society. According to the World Health Organization, cases of anxiety, depression, stress, loneliness, and emotional burnout continue to increase worldwide, especially among adolescents and university students. Modern psychological studies suggest that mental health issues are not only related to biological or clinical factors, but are also strongly connected to crises of identity, meaning, and spirituality (WHO, 2022; APA, 2023). Many individuals experience confusion about purpose, self-worth, and direction in life despite living in an era of technological advancement and material progress.

The rapid growth of technology and social media has contributed significantly to this condition. While digital platforms provide communication and convenience, they also increase social comparison, emotional dissatisfaction, and identity instability. People are constantly exposed to changing standards of success, appearance, and lifestyle, leading many to feel insecure and emotionally exhausted. Modern culture often encourages individuals to define truth, identity, and happiness based on personal desire and social trends. Although this is commonly viewed as freedom and empowerment, it may also create confusion, anxiety, and emotional instability (Baumeister, 1991). Contemporary psychology has increasingly recognized the importance of meaning and purpose in mental wellbeing. Viktor Frankl explained that many psychological problems arise from what he described as the "existential vacuum," a condition of emptiness caused by the absence of meaning and purpose in life (Frankl, 2006). Likewise, Johann Hari argued that anxiety and depression are often linked to disconnection from meaningful relationships, values, and purpose (Hari, 2018).



These perspectives indicate that emotional wellbeing cannot be separated from deeper existential and spiritual dimensions.

In counselling practice, secular humanistic approaches such as Abraham Maslow's Humanistic Psychology and Irvin D. Yalom's Existential Therapy emphasize self-development, autonomy, and personal meaning-making (Maslow, 1968; Yalom, 1980). These approaches have contributed positively by emphasizing self-awareness and emotional understanding. However, they generally place human reasoning and subjective experience at the center of defining truth, identity, and morality. As a result, meaning and identity may become unstable because they depend largely on personal feelings and changing social values.

Recent discussions in mental health research have also highlighted the growing impact of spiritual emptiness, loneliness, and lack of existential clarity on psychological distress (Koenig, 2012; Maté, 2022). Although many psychological interventions help reduce symptoms, deeper spiritual and existential needs may remain unresolved. This has encouraged increasing interest in integrating spirituality into counselling and psychotherapy.

From an Islamic perspective, human beings are viewed as holistic creations consisting of body, mind, heart, and soul. The foundation of this worldview is Tawheed, the belief in the absolute Oneness of Allah. Tawheed provides a clear understanding of identity, purpose, morality, and human existence. The Qur'an clearly states:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

"I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (Qur'an, 51:56)

This verse establishes that human life has a clear and divinely guided purpose. In Islam, identity is not shaped by changing social trends or personal desires, but by servitude and submission to Allah. Such a framework offers stability, clarity, and direction in life.

The Qur'an also connects spiritual connection with emotional peace:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

"Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Qur'an, 13:28)

This highlights an important distinction between Tawheed-based understanding and secular counselling frameworks. While many modern approaches focus mainly on emotional regulation and cognitive restructuring, Islam emphasizes that true tranquility comes from closeness to Allah. Classical scholars such as Ibn al-Qayyim explained that the heart cannot achieve complete peace without knowing and worshipping Allah.

In recent years, scholars of Islamic psychology have increasingly emphasized the importance of integrating Islamic spiritual concepts into counselling practice. Abdallah Rothman and Coyle (2018) argued that Islamic psychology should include concepts such as qalb (heart), ruh (soul), and fitrah (natural disposition), which are often neglected in secular psychology. Similarly, Malik Badri (2018) criticized the secularization of psychology and argued that the exclusion of revelation and spirituality limits the ability of modern counselling to fully address human wellbeing.

Therefore, this paper examines the role of Tawheed in shaping identity, purpose, and mental health, and compares it with secular humanistic counselling approaches. The paper argues that Tawheed offers a more comprehensive and stable framework for psychological wellbeing by

addressing both spiritual and existential dimensions of human life. In addition, the study discusses the practical application of Tawheed-based principles in counselling and their potential contribution to contemporary mental health discourse.

1.1 Literature review

1.1.1 Secular Humanistic Counselling

Secular humanistic counselling developed as a response to earlier psychological approaches such as psychoanalysis and behaviorism, which were considered too deterministic and focused mainly on human behavior rather than personal experience. Humanistic Psychology emphasizes personal growth, self-awareness, freedom, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1968). Similarly, Existential Therapy focuses on human struggles related to meaning, freedom, responsibility, loneliness, and death (Yalom, 1980). These approaches encourage individuals to understand themselves and create meaning through personal choices and experiences.

One important contribution of humanistic counselling is the development of person-centered therapy by Carl Rogers, which introduced empathy, unconditional positive regard, and active listening as essential counselling techniques (Rogers, 1961). Such approaches have helped many individuals improve emotional expression, self-confidence, and self-awareness. Humanistic and existential therapies also recognize the importance of human emotions and lived experiences in the healing process.

However, secular humanistic counselling is largely based on a human-centered worldview in which individuals define their own meaning, identity, and morality. As identity is shaped mainly by personal feelings, experiences, and social influences, it may become unstable and constantly changing. Modern society, especially through social media and popular culture, often encourages people to continuously redefine themselves according to trends and personal desires, which may lead to confusion, emotional insecurity, and anxiety (Baumeister, 1991).

In addition, existential freedom may also create psychological pressure. Irvin D. Yalom (1980) explained that individuals may feel anxious when they are fully responsible for creating meaning without any fixed guidance or absolute truth. Recent studies also show that many people in modern societies experience loneliness, emotional emptiness, and identity instability despite material progress and technological development (Maté, 2022).

Furthermore, secular counselling approaches often focus mainly on emotional and psychological dimensions while giving limited attention to spirituality and divine guidance. Although some modern counselling models acknowledge spirituality, mainstream secular psychology generally separates mental health from religion and revelation (Koenig, 2012). As a result, counselling may help reduce emotional symptoms while deeper spiritual and existential concerns remain unresolved.

1.1.2 Meaning and psychological Wellbeing

The relationship between meaning and psychological wellbeing has become an important topic in modern psychology. Researchers increasingly agree that human beings need more than material success or temporary happiness to achieve lasting wellbeing. People also need meaning, purpose, and direction in life. Viktor Frankl argued that the search for meaning is one of the main motivations of human existence (Frankl, 2006). He introduced the concept of the “existential vacuum,” which describes feelings of emptiness, hopelessness, and purposelessness experienced by many individuals in modern society.

Contemporary studies continue to support the connection between meaning and mental health. Individuals with a clear sense of purpose generally show better emotional wellbeing, stronger resilience, and higher life satisfaction. In contrast, people who experience meaninglessness are more likely to suffer from anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and suicidal thoughts (Steger, 2012). Likewise, Johann Hari (2018) emphasized that depression and anxiety are often linked to disconnection from meaningful relationships, values, work, and community.

Despite recognizing the importance of meaning, secular psychological approaches usually leave the definition of meaning to personal interpretation. Meaning often depends on individual desires, social expectations, or temporary experiences. Although this flexibility may seem empowering, it can also create instability and emotional dissatisfaction. Many individuals continue pursuing achievement, pleasure, or social approval without finding true fulfillment, resulting in stress and emotional exhaustion (Baumeister, 1991).

Research also shows that spirituality plays an important role in mental health. Harold G. Koenig (2012) found that spirituality and religious involvement are associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicide, while also improving coping skills and emotional resilience. However, modern secular psychology has historically paid limited attention to spirituality because of its materialistic and empirical orientation. This separation may reduce the ability of counselling models to address deeper questions related to purpose, morality, suffering, and human existence.

Recent scholars further argue that the modern mental health crisis is not only psychological but also spiritual and existential. Gabor Maté (2022) explained that modern societies normalize stress, emotional disconnection, and unhealthy lifestyles, contributing to widespread psychological suffering. Therefore, many scholars now emphasize the need for holistic approaches that integrate emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions.

1.1.3 Tawheed and Islamic Psychology

Islamic psychology offers a different understanding of human nature and wellbeing compared to secular counselling approaches. Islam views human beings as holistic creations consisting of body, mind, heart (qalb), and soul (ruh). The foundation of this worldview is Tawheed, the belief in the absolute Oneness of Allah. Tawheed shapes the understanding of identity, purpose, morality, emotional wellbeing, and the relationship between humans and their Creator.

Contemporary scholars of Islamic psychology argue that modern counselling often neglects the spiritual dimension of human beings. Abdallah Rothman and Coyle (2018) emphasized that Islamic psychology should include concepts such as qalb (heart), ruh (soul), fitrah (natural disposition), and nafs (self), because these concepts are central to understanding human behavior and mental health. According to this perspective, psychological wellbeing cannot be separated from spiritual wellbeing.

Similarly, Malik Badri (2018) criticized the secularization of psychology and argued that excluding divine revelation limits the understanding of human nature. He explained that many modern psychological theories focus heavily on material and emotional aspects while neglecting the spiritual reality of human beings. From the Islamic perspective, true wellbeing is achieved through a strong relationship with Allah based on worship, remembrance, sincerity, and submission. Islam provides a clear and stable purpose for human existence. The Qur'an states:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (Qur’an, 51:56)

This verse shows that human life has a divinely guided purpose. In Islam, identity is not based on changing social expectations or personal desires, but on servitude to Allah. Such a framework provides stability, direction, and emotional clarity.

The Qur’an also explains the connection between spirituality and emotional peace:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” (Qur’an, 13:28)

This verse highlights an important difference between Tawheed-based psychology and secular counselling models. While many modern therapies focus mainly on emotional management and cognitive restructuring, Islamic teachings emphasize that true tranquility comes from closeness to Allah. Classical scholars such as Ibn al-Qayyim explained that the human heart naturally seeks connection with its Creator and cannot attain complete peace without Him.

Recent developments in Islamic psychology increasingly support integrative counselling approaches that combine professional therapeutic methods with Islamic spiritual principles (Rothman, 2021). These approaches recognize that counselling for Muslims should address not only emotional and cognitive issues but also spiritual and existential needs. Therefore, Tawheed is not merely a theological concept but also a comprehensive framework for identity, resilience, and psychological wellbeing.

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative conceptual and comparative approach to examine the role of Tawheed in identity, purpose, and mental health, and to compare it with secular humanistic counselling frameworks. A qualitative design was considered appropriate because the study focused on analyzing philosophical foundations, psychological concepts, and spiritual dimensions related to human wellbeing rather than measuring numerical variables.

The study utilized an interdisciplinary literature review by integrating perspectives from Islamic studies, psychology, counselling, and mental health research. Primary Islamic sources included the Qur’an, authentic hadith, and classical Islamic scholarship related to identity, purpose, emotional wellbeing, patience, Tawakkul, and remembrance of Allah. Secondary sources consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and recent publications on humanistic counselling, existential psychology, Islamic psychology, spirituality, resilience, and mental wellbeing.

Relevant literature was collected through academic databases and scholarly sources such as Google Scholar, Scopus-indexed journals, ResearchGate, and published books. Keywords used in the search process included “Tawheed and mental health,” “Islamic psychology,” “humanistic counselling,” “spirituality and wellbeing,” “identity crisis,” “meaning and mental health,” and “Tawakkul and resilience.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic and comparative analysis. Major themes identified included identity formation, meaning and purpose, emotional stability, spirituality, resilience, and coping with hardship. These themes were then comparatively analyzed between

Tawheed-based understanding and secular humanistic counselling approaches to identify conceptual differences, strengths, and practical implications for counselling and mental wellbeing.

This study also developed a conceptual framework proposing that Tawheed strengthens identity, purpose, and spiritual connection, which subsequently contribute to emotional stability, resilience, and psychological wellbeing

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Tawheed as a Framework for Identity and Purpose

Tawheed, the belief in the absolute Oneness of Allah, is the foundation of the Islamic worldview and provides a clear framework for identity, purpose, morality, and wellbeing. Unlike secular approaches that often define meaning and identity based on personal feelings or social influences, Tawheed offers a stable and divinely guided understanding of human existence. In Islam, human beings are created by Allah with a clear purpose and responsibility.

The Qur'an states:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (Qur'an, 51:56)

This verse explains that the purpose of life is worship and submission to Allah. Therefore, identity in Islam is not based on wealth, status, appearance, or social approval, but on servitude to the Creator. Such a framework provides clarity, direction, and emotional stability.

In contrast, many secular perspectives encourage individuals to create their own meaning and identity according to personal preferences and changing social trends. Although this may appear liberating, it can also lead to confusion, insecurity, and existential anxiety. Roy Baumeister (1991) explained that modern individuals often struggle with unstable identity due to the absence of fixed meaning systems. Similarly, Irvin D. Yalom (1980) argued that excessive freedom in defining meaning may create psychological pressure and uncertainty. Tawheed addresses this issue by providing clear guidance regarding who human beings are, why they were created, and what defines success in life.

Tawheed also connects spirituality with emotional wellbeing. The Qur'an states:

أَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُ اللَّهُ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” (Qur'an, 13:28)

This verse highlights that true peace comes from closeness to Allah. While many modern counselling approaches focus mainly on emotional regulation and cognitive techniques, Islamic teachings emphasize that the human heart naturally seeks connection with its Creator. Therefore, emotional distress may also be linked to spiritual disconnection.

Classical scholars such as Ibn al-Qayyim explained that the heart cannot achieve complete peace except through knowing, worshipping, and remembering Allah (Ibn al-Qayyim, 2003). In Islamic psychology, the qalb (heart) is considered the center of emotional, spiritual, and moral wellbeing. A spiritually healthy heart promotes emotional balance, resilience, and inner peace.

Recent studies in Islamic psychology also support integrating spirituality into mental health frameworks. Abdallah Rothman and Coyle (2018) emphasized the importance of Islamic concepts

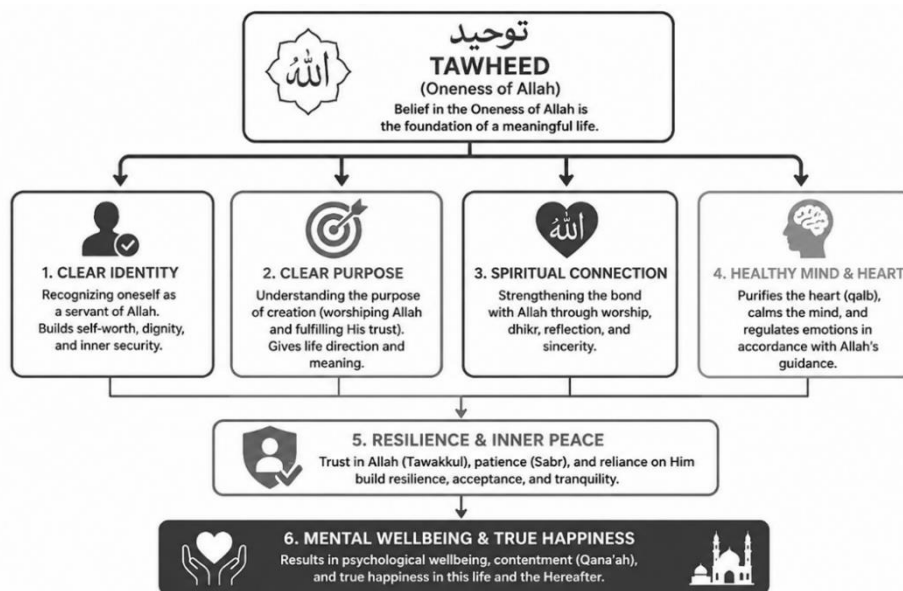
such as qalb (heart), ruh (soul), fitrah (natural disposition), and nafs (self) in understanding mental wellbeing. According to this perspective, psychological and spiritual wellbeing cannot be separated.

In addition, Tawheed provides a strong framework for coping with difficulties and hardship. The Qur'an states:

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٦﴾

“Indeed, with hardship comes ease. Indeed, with hardship comes ease.” (Qur’an, 94:5–6)

This teaching helps Muslims view hardship as meaningful and connected to patience, spiritual growth, and reliance upon Allah. As a result, Tawheed strengthens resilience and reduces feelings of hopelessness.



Source: Developed by Author, 2026.

Figure 1. Tawheed Framework for Identity and Mental Wellbeing

Tawheed also shapes self-worth and moral stability. In modern society, self-worth is often measured by achievement, appearance, wealth, or popularity, which may create stress and insecurity. Islam, however, teaches that true honor is based on righteousness and closeness to Allah. The Qur'an states:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

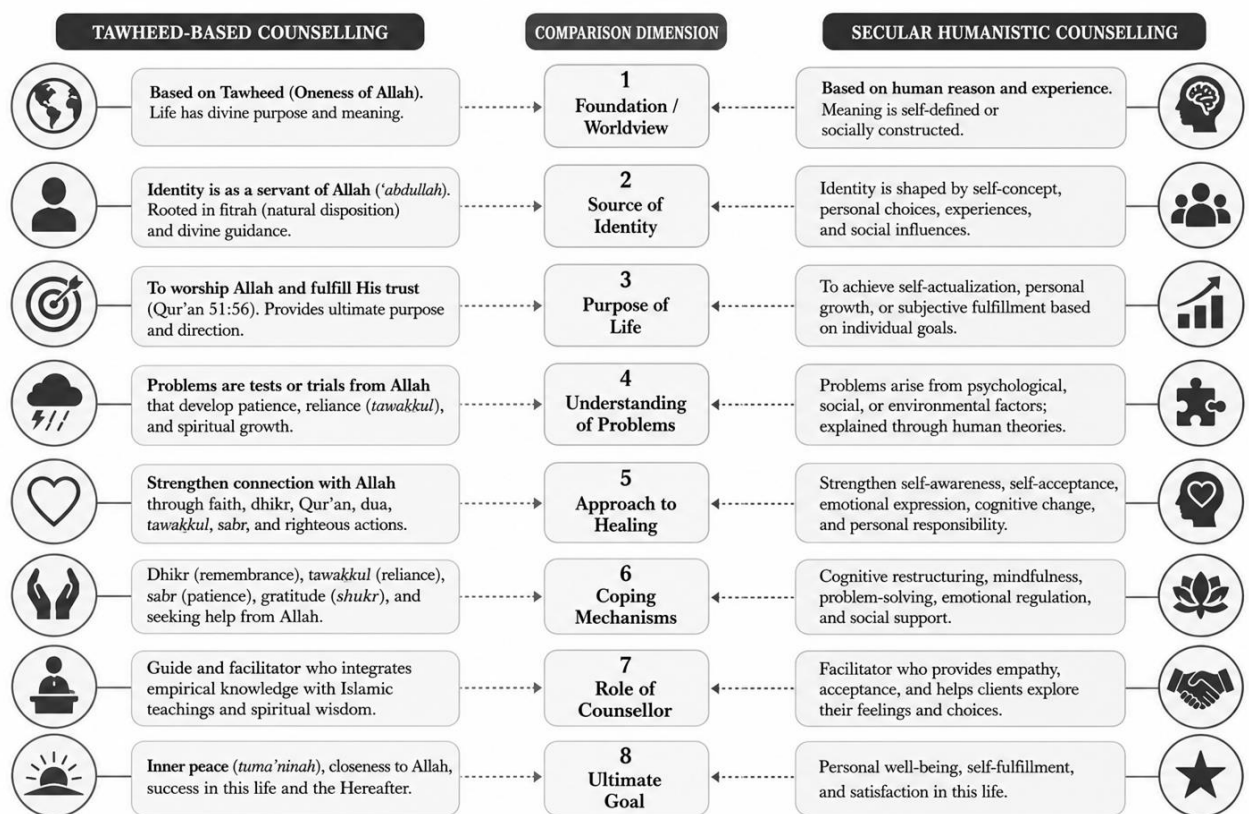
“Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you.” (Qur’an, 49:13)

This perspective reduces dependence on external validation and promotes inner stability and dignity.

Recent mental health discussions increasingly recognize that psychological wellbeing requires meaning, spirituality, and authentic identity rather than only symptom management (Maté, 2022). Tawheed addresses these needs by reconnecting individuals with their Creator, purpose, and spiritual nature. Therefore, Tawheed functions not only as a theological belief but also as a holistic framework for identity, resilience, and psychological wellbeing.

3.1.2 Comparative Analysis

The comparison between Tawheed-based understanding and secular humanistic counselling reveals significant differences in worldview, epistemology, identity construction, emotional wellbeing, and coping mechanisms. Although both approaches aim to improve human wellbeing and reduce psychological distress, they originate from fundamentally different foundations. Tawheed is rooted in divine revelation and absolute guidance from Allah, whereas secular humanistic counselling is primarily grounded in human reasoning, subjective experience, and evolving psychological theories. Consequently, the two frameworks differ substantially in how they define the human being, the purpose of life, emotional fulfillment, and responses to hardship.



Source: Developed by Author, 2026.

Figure 2. Comparative Framework of Tawheed-Based and Secular Humanistic Counselling

Identity Formation

One of the most fundamental differences between Tawheed-based understanding and secular humanistic counselling concerns the formation of identity. In Islam, identity is grounded in servitude to Allah and rooted in divine revelation. Human beings are not left to independently define themselves according to social expectations, personal desires, or changing cultural trends. Instead, identity is anchored in the recognition that humans are servants (*ibad*) of Allah with a divinely ordained purpose and moral framework.

The Qur'an states:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (Qur'an, 51:56)

This framework provides individuals with a stable and objective understanding of who they are and why they exist. Identity is therefore not dependent upon external validation, material achievement, appearance, or social popularity. Rather, self-worth is connected to one's relationship with Allah and adherence to divine guidance. Such a framework contributes to psychological stability because identity remains constant despite changing social circumstances.

In contrast, secular humanistic counselling generally promotes self-defined identity and personal autonomy. Humanistic psychology encourages individuals to explore and construct their own identity based upon personal experiences, feelings, desires, and self-perceptions (Maslow, 1968). Existential approaches similarly emphasize individual freedom and responsibility in creating meaning and defining the self (Yalom, 1980). While these approaches may empower personal expression, they also risk producing identity instability because identity becomes fluid and continuously reconstructed.

Modern social conditions further intensify this instability. Social media culture, consumerism, and changing societal norms often pressure individuals to constantly redefine themselves according to external trends and expectations. Baumeister (1991) argued that modern societies increasingly experience identity fragmentation because individuals lack stable meaning systems and enduring moral frameworks. Consequently, many individuals experience insecurity, confusion, and emotional distress when their self-worth becomes dependent upon temporary achievements or social acceptance.

Recent psychological discussions also highlight the growing prevalence of identity-related anxiety among young adults. Twenge (2020) noted that modern generations face increasing psychological pressure associated with self-image, social comparison, and uncertainty regarding identity and life direction. From an Islamic perspective, Tawheed addresses this issue by grounding identity in a permanent relationship with Allah rather than unstable external standards.

Purpose and Meaning

Another major distinction between Tawheed-based understanding and secular humanistic counselling concerns the source and nature of meaning and purpose in life. Within the Islamic worldview, purpose is objective, fixed, and divinely revealed. Human beings are not required to independently create meaning because Allah has already defined the purpose of existence through revelation. This objective framework provides clarity, consistency, and existential certainty.

The Qur'an explicitly defines the purpose of human life:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (Qur'an, 51:56)

As a result, purpose in Islam extends beyond temporary worldly achievement and is connected to worship, righteousness, and preparation for the Hereafter. Daily activities such as work, education, family responsibilities, and social interaction become meaningful when aligned with

obedience to Allah. This framework allows individuals to maintain existential direction even during hardship, failure, or loss.

In contrast, secular humanistic counselling generally treats meaning as subjective and individually constructed. Frankl (2006) emphasized the importance of meaning for psychological survival and argued that lack of meaning contributes to existential emptiness. However, although Frankl recognized the necessity of meaning, secular frameworks typically do not provide an objective source for defining it. Individuals are therefore expected to create personal meaning through career, relationships, achievement, or personal values.

While this flexibility may appear liberating, it may also create confusion and instability. Meaning constructed solely through personal preference may continuously change according to emotional states, societal expectations, or life experiences. Consequently, individuals may experience chronic dissatisfaction or existential anxiety when personal goals fail to provide lasting fulfillment. Hari (2018) argued that modern depression is often linked to disconnection from meaningful values, relationships, and authentic purpose.

Moreover, secular definitions of success are often heavily associated with material achievement, productivity, fame, or self-fulfillment. Such standards may increase pressure, burnout, and emotional exhaustion. In contrast, Tawheed redirects purpose toward spiritual success and divine pleasure, reducing excessive attachment to worldly standards and external validation. This contributes to greater psychological balance and long-term emotional stability.

Emotional Stability

The comparison between Tawheed and secular humanistic counselling also reveals important differences regarding emotional stability and inner peace. Within Islamic teachings, emotional wellbeing is directly connected to spiritual wellbeing and remembrance of Allah. The Qur'an states:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” (Qur'an, 13:28)

This verse establishes that true tranquility originates from spiritual connection with Allah rather than solely from external circumstances or emotional self-management. Islamic psychology views the human heart (qalb) as the center of emotional and spiritual functioning. Consequently, emotional instability may result not only from psychological stressors but also from spiritual emptiness and disconnection from the Creator.

Classical Islamic scholars extensively emphasized this relationship. Ibn al-Qayyim explained that the heart naturally seeks closeness to Allah and cannot attain complete peace without worship, remembrance, and reliance upon Him (Ibn al-Qayyim, 2003). Similarly, Al-Ghazali argued that spiritual purification and connection with Allah are essential for inner peace and psychological wellbeing.

In contrast, secular humanistic counselling generally approaches emotional stability through self-awareness, emotional acceptance, self-expression, and cognitive regulation. Therapeutic approaches such as mindfulness, self-compassion, and emotional processing have demonstrated positive effects in reducing stress and anxiety (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). However, these approaches often focus primarily on managing emotional symptoms rather than addressing deeper spiritual needs.

Furthermore, emotional wellbeing within secular frameworks may remain heavily dependent upon external conditions such as achievement, relationships, financial security, or self-esteem. When these factors are disrupted, emotional stability may weaken significantly. In contrast, Tawheed provides a stable internal anchor because emotional security is rooted in trust in Allah rather than unstable worldly conditions.

Recent research increasingly recognizes the importance of spirituality for mental health. Koenig (2012) found that spiritual and religious involvement is associated with lower rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide while improving resilience and coping abilities. Similarly, Maté (2022) argued that modern emotional suffering is often connected to disconnection from authentic human needs, spirituality, and meaningful relationships. Therefore, Tawheed offers a holistic framework in which emotional stability emerges from spiritual certainty, divine remembrance, and reliance upon Allah.

Coping with Challenges

The Tawheed-based framework and secular humanistic counselling also differ significantly in their approaches toward suffering, hardship, and adversity. Secular counselling generally conceptualizes hardship as a psychological challenge requiring emotional adaptation, stress management, and coping strategies. While such approaches provide valuable therapeutic tools, they may not always provide deeper existential meaning for suffering.

In contrast, Islam reframes hardship as meaningful, purposeful, and spiritually beneficial. The Qur'an states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

“O you who believe, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.” (Qur'an, 2:153)

Similarly, Allah states:

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

“Indeed, with hardship comes ease. Indeed, with hardship comes ease.” (Qur'an, 94:5–6)

These verses provide a fundamentally different perspective on adversity. Hardship is not viewed as meaningless suffering but as part of divine wisdom, spiritual purification, and personal growth. This framework promotes resilience, hope, patience (sabr), and trust in Allah (tawakkul).

The Prophet ﷺ also taught believers to maintain reliance upon Allah during uncertainty and hardship:

“If you ask, ask Allah; and if you seek help, seek help from Allah...”

(Sunan al-Tirmidhi 2516)

This belief system reduces excessive anxiety about outcomes because individuals understand that events occur according to divine decree and wisdom. Consequently, Tawheed-based coping mechanisms integrate both practical effort and spiritual reliance.

In contrast, secular coping models often emphasize self-reliance, emotional regulation, and cognitive adaptation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Although these methods can improve coping skills, they may not fully address existential questions such as “Why am I suffering?” or “What ultimate purpose does this hardship serve?” Without a transcendent framework, suffering may appear random and psychologically overwhelming.

Recent psychological discussions increasingly acknowledge that resilience is strengthened when individuals possess meaning, spirituality, and hope during adversity (Southwick & Charney, 2018). Tawheed offers all three dimensions simultaneously by connecting hardship to divine wisdom, spiritual growth, and trust in Allah.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis Between Tawheed-Based and Secular Humanistic Counselling

Aspect	Tawheed-Based Framework	Secular Humanistic Framework
<i>Identity</i>	Servitude to Allah	Self-defined identity
<i>Purpose</i>	Divinely revealed and constant	Personally constructed and variable
<i>Emotional Stability</i>	Rooted in remembrance of Allah	Rooted in self-awareness and emotional regulation
<i>Source of Peace</i>	Spiritual connection with Allah	Psychological coping mechanisms
<i>Coping with Hardship</i>	Patience, tawakkul, spiritual meaning	Adaptation and stress management
<i>Moral Framework</i>	Absolute and revelation-based	Relative and socially influenced
<i>Source of Self-Worth</i>	Taqwa and relationship with Allah	Achievement and self-perception

Source: Developed by Author, 2026

3.1.3 Limitations of Secular Humanistic Counselling

Although secular humanistic counselling has contributed significantly to the development of modern psychotherapy by emphasizing empathy, autonomy, emotional awareness, and personal growth, several conceptual limitations remain evident, particularly when addressing deeper existential and spiritual dimensions of human wellbeing. These limitations become increasingly significant in contemporary societies experiencing rising levels of identity confusion, emotional instability, loneliness, and meaninglessness. From the perspective of Tawheed-based understanding, secular humanistic counselling often provides valuable psychological techniques but lacks a comprehensive and transcendent framework capable of fully addressing the spiritual nature of human beings (Table 2).

Table 2. Key Limitations of Secular Humanistic Counselling

Limitation	Explanation	Potential Psychological Impact
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<i>Subjectivity of Meaning</i>	Meaning is individually constructed and variable	Existential confusion and instability
<i>Identity Instability</i>	Identity shaped by social trends and self-perception	Anxiety, insecurity, emotional fragility
<i>Lack of Spiritual Dimension</i>	Spiritual needs insufficiently addressed	Emotional emptiness and existential dissatisfaction
<i>Dependence on External Validation</i>	Self-worth linked to achievement or approval	Fear of failure and chronic stress
<i>Absence of Absolute Guidance</i>	Morality and purpose become relative	Internal conflict and uncertainty

Source: Developed by Author, 2026

Subjectivity of Meaning

One major limitation of secular humanistic counselling concerns the subjectivity of meaning. Humanistic and existential approaches generally encourage individuals to independently construct purpose and meaning according to personal preferences, experiences, desires, and values. Meaning therefore becomes relative, flexible, and dependent upon individual interpretation rather than grounded in an objective and stable source.

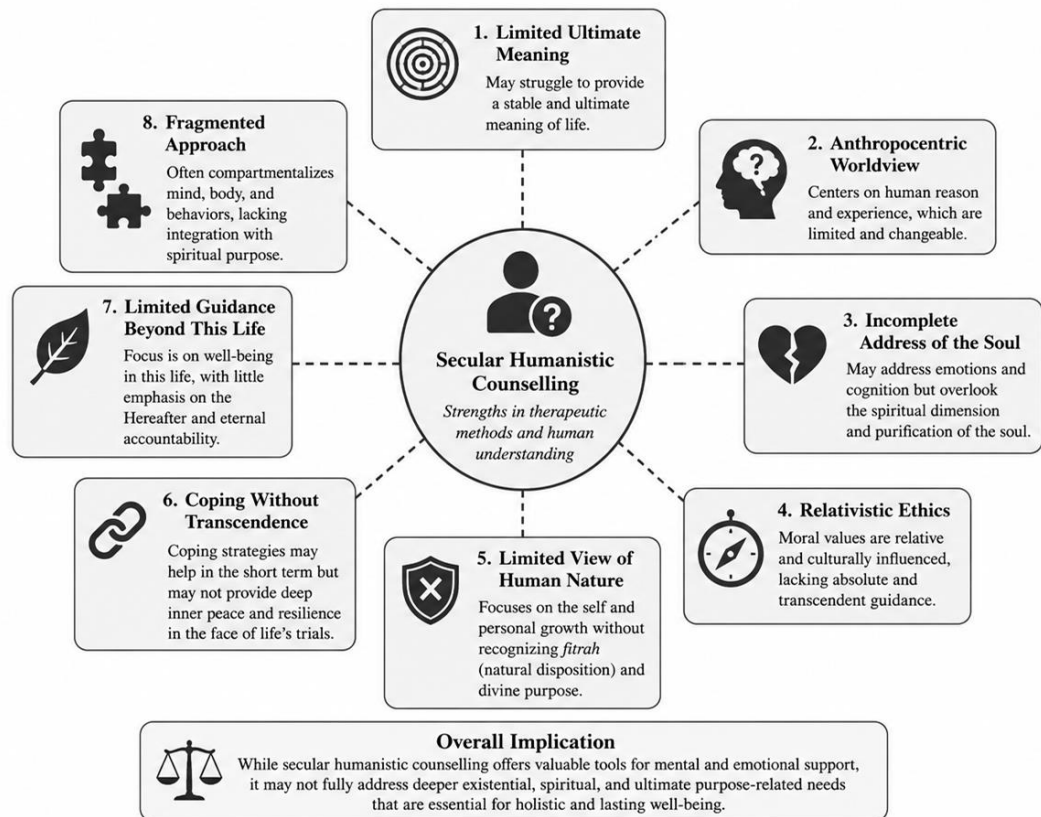
Man’s Search for Meaning emphasized that meaning is essential for psychological survival and resilience (Frankl, 2006). Frankl argued that individuals who fail to discover meaning may experience what he termed the “existential vacuum,” characterized by emptiness, hopelessness, and psychological distress. However, while Frankl recognized the necessity of meaning, secular existential frameworks generally leave the source and definition of meaning to the individual. Consequently, individuals may continuously search for purpose without achieving lasting existential certainty.

This subjectivity may create confusion and instability, especially within rapidly changing modern societies. Meaning that is constructed primarily through career success, social approval, wealth, pleasure, or personal achievement may collapse when these external conditions change. For example, individuals whose sense of purpose depends heavily upon professional success may experience severe emotional distress during failure, unemployment, or retirement. Similarly, individuals who define meaning through relationships or social recognition may experience identity crises when facing rejection, loneliness, or changing social expectations.

Recent discussions within psychology increasingly acknowledge the limitations of purely subjective meaning systems. The Myth of Normal argued that modern societies frequently normalize emotional disconnection, overachievement, and chronic stress while failing to address deeper existential and spiritual needs (Maté, 2022). Likewise, recent research highlights growing concerns regarding purposelessness and emotional emptiness among younger generations despite material advancement and technological development (APA, 2023).

Moreover, individualized meaning systems may become fragmented and unstable without broader spiritual or moral foundations. Recent discussions on spirituality in secular societies indicate that highly individualized forms of spirituality may risk fragmentation and lack of coherence when disconnected from stable transcendent frameworks. Consequently, individuals may continuously pursue temporary fulfillment without attaining enduring existential peace.

In contrast, Tawheed provides an objective and divinely revealed purpose rooted in worship and servitude to Allah. Meaning is therefore not dependent upon changing emotional states, societal trends, or worldly achievement. This objective framework contributes to existential clarity, consistency, and psychological stability.



Source: Developed by Author, 2026

Figure 3. Conceptual Limitations of Secular Humanistic Counselling

Identity Instability

Another important limitation of secular humanistic counselling relates to identity instability. Humanistic psychology strongly emphasizes self-definition, self-expression, autonomy, and personal authenticity. Individuals are encouraged to continuously explore and redefine themselves according to their desires, emotions, and experiences (Maslow, 1968). While such flexibility may appear liberating, it may also produce uncertainty, instability, and psychological vulnerability.

Baumeister (1991) argued that modern societies increasingly experience identity fragmentation because traditional sources of meaning and stable moral frameworks have weakened. As a result, many individuals are left to construct their identities independently within environments characterized by constant social change and competing value systems. Identity becomes fluid rather than stable, often influenced by social media, peer pressure, cultural trends, and external validation.

The rise of digital culture and social media has intensified this issue considerably. Modern individuals, particularly adolescents and young adults, are constantly exposed to unrealistic standards

concerning appearance, success, lifestyle, and self-worth. Twenge (2020) noted that highly connected digital generations frequently experience increased anxiety, loneliness, insecurity, and emotional instability associated with social comparison and pressure to maintain idealized identities.

Furthermore, when identity is grounded primarily in external achievements or subjective feelings, emotional wellbeing becomes vulnerable to changing circumstances. Failure, criticism, rejection, or social exclusion may significantly damage self-worth because identity lacks a stable foundation. Existential theorists themselves acknowledge that excessive freedom and responsibility for self-definition may produce existential anxiety and uncertainty (Yalom, 1980).

Recent psychological discussions increasingly recognize the importance of stable identity frameworks for emotional wellbeing. Studies on spirituality and mental health indicate that stronger spiritual identity and transcendent connection are associated with greater resilience, emotional balance, and psychological wellbeing.

From the Islamic perspective, Tawheed addresses identity instability by grounding identity in servitude to Allah rather than fluctuating social standards. Human worth is not dependent upon wealth, appearance, fame, productivity, or external validation, but upon one's relationship with Allah and moral character. This stable identity framework provides psychological consistency and reduces existential confusion.

Lack of Spiritual Dimension

Perhaps the most significant limitation of secular humanistic counselling is the insufficient integration of spirituality and divine guidance within its understanding of human wellbeing. Modern secular psychology historically developed within frameworks emphasizing empiricism, materialism, and human-centered reasoning. Consequently, spirituality has often been marginalized or treated as secondary rather than essential to psychological health.

Koenig (2012) highlighted that spirituality and religious involvement are strongly associated with lower rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicide while also enhancing resilience, hope, and coping abilities. More recent literature continues to support the positive relationship between spirituality and mental wellbeing. Recent studies indicate that spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, and religious engagement contribute positively to emotional balance, resilience, stress management, and sense of purpose, particularly among university students and young adults.

Despite these findings, secular counselling approaches often focus primarily on cognition, emotion, behavior, and social functioning while neglecting deeper spiritual realities such as the soul, worship, divine connection, and existential purpose. Consequently, therapeutic interventions may effectively reduce symptoms while leaving individuals spiritually empty and existentially dissatisfied.

Moreover, spirituality within secular contexts is frequently individualized and detached from divine revelation. While spirituality itself may provide certain psychological benefits, recent studies suggest that spirituality disconnected from stable transcendent frameworks may sometimes become fragmented or inconsistent. This highlights the importance of distinguishing between general spirituality and spiritually grounded frameworks rooted in revelation and objective guidance.

From the perspective of Islamic psychology, this limitation is particularly significant because Islam views the human being as a holistic entity consisting of body, mind, heart (qalb), and soul (ruh). Consequently, psychological wellbeing cannot be fully separated from spiritual wellbeing. Rothman and Coyle (2018) argued that Islamic psychology must integrate spiritual concepts such as fitrah

(natural disposition), qalb (heart), ruh (soul), and connection with Allah because these elements are central to understanding human functioning.

Similarly, Malik Badri (2018) criticized the secularization of psychology and argued that modern psychological theories often neglect the spiritual dimension of human beings. According to Islamic understanding, true peace and emotional tranquility originate from spiritual connection with Allah rather than solely from cognitive or emotional self-management. The Qur’an states:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” (Qur’an, 13:28)

This verse establishes a fundamental distinction between Tawheed-based understanding and secular counselling models. Emotional wellbeing is not viewed merely as symptom reduction or emotional comfort but as the result of spiritual harmony, remembrance of Allah, and alignment with divine guidance

3.1.4 Advantages of Tawheed-Based Approach

The Tawheed-based approach offers a comprehensive and holistic framework for understanding human identity, purpose, emotional wellbeing, and resilience. Unlike secular humanistic counselling, which primarily relies on human reasoning and subjective interpretation, Tawheed is grounded in divine revelation and provides a stable and transcendent foundation for psychological wellbeing.

From the Islamic perspective, the human being is not merely a psychological or social entity but a creation of Allah possessing spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and physical dimensions. Consequently, true wellbeing can only be achieved when these dimensions are harmonized through connection with Allah and adherence to divine guidance.

Recent developments in psychology and mental health increasingly acknowledge the importance of spirituality, meaning, resilience, and existential certainty in promoting psychological wellbeing. However, Tawheed differs fundamentally from generalized spirituality because it provides not only spiritual practices but also an objective worldview, clear moral guidance, and a stable framework for identity and purpose. As a result, Tawheed-based understanding contributes to deeper emotional stability, existential clarity, resilience, and long-term psychological wellbeing.\

Table 3. Advantages of Tawheed-Based Approach for Mental Wellbeing

<i>Aspect</i>	Tawheed-Based Contribution	Psychological Impact
<i>Identity and Purpose</i>	Clear divine purpose and stable identity	Reduces existential confusion
<i>Spiritual Connection</i>	Dhikr, salah, tawakkul, worship	Emotional calmness and inner peace

Self-Worth	Rooted in taqwa and relationship with Allah	Reduces dependency on external validation
Resilience	Patience, tawakkul, belief in divine wisdom	Enhances coping and emotional endurance
Meaning of Hardship	Hardship understood as meaningful test	Promotes hope and acceptance
Emotional Regulation	Spiritual moderation and remembrance of Allah	Reduces anxiety and emotional instability

Source: Developed by Author, 2026

Clarity of Identity and Purpose

One of the greatest strengths of the Tawheed-based approach is its ability to provide individuals with a clear, stable, and objective understanding of identity and purpose. In Islam, human beings are not left to independently define who they are or why they exist. Rather, Allah has already clarified the purpose of human existence through revelation:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (Qur’an, 51:56)

This verse establishes that human identity is fundamentally rooted in servitude to Allah. Consequently, identity is not dependent upon unstable worldly standards such as wealth, social approval, appearance, career success, or personal achievement. Instead, identity is anchored in a stable relationship with the Creator, providing existential certainty and psychological consistency.

In contrast, contemporary societies frequently encourage individuals to continuously construct and reconstruct identity according to personal desires and changing social expectations. Such fluidity may contribute to confusion, insecurity, and identity instability, especially among youth and young adults exposed to social media pressure and rapid cultural changes (Twenge, 2020). Psychological literature increasingly recognizes that lack of clear identity and purpose contributes significantly to anxiety, emotional instability, and existential distress (APA, 2023). Tawheed addresses this issue by providing a fixed framework for meaning and direction. Every aspect of life, including education, work, family responsibilities, and social interaction, becomes meaningful when connected to worship and obedience to Allah. This objective understanding of purpose reduces existential confusion and promotes psychological coherence.

Recent studies also demonstrate that spirituality and meaning are strongly associated with improved mental wellbeing and life satisfaction. A recent study on spirituality and mental wellbeing among university students found that spiritual engagement significantly contributes to emotional balance, resilience, stress management, and sense of purpose in life. These findings support the Islamic understanding that spiritual orientation and clear existential purpose are essential for long-term psychological wellbeing.

Moreover, Tawheed protects individuals from excessive dependence on worldly validation. In many modern societies, self-worth is heavily tied to achievement, popularity, productivity, or

physical appearance. Such standards may create chronic pressure and emotional exhaustion. Islam, however, redirects self-worth toward taqwa (God-consciousness) and righteousness:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْفَأكُمْ

“Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you.” (Qur’an, 49:13)

This framework strengthens intrinsic self-worth and reduces emotional vulnerability caused by external comparison and social pressure.

Emotional Stability

Another significant advantage of the Tawheed-based approach is its emphasis on spiritual practices that promote emotional calmness, inner peace, and psychological balance. Islam directly connects emotional wellbeing with remembrance of Allah and spiritual connection with the Creator. The Qur’an states:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” (Qur’an, 13:28)

This verse establishes that true tranquility originates from spiritual connection rather than solely from external circumstances or emotional self-management. Islamic teachings view the heart (qalb) as the center of emotional and spiritual functioning. Consequently, spiritual neglect may contribute to anxiety, emptiness, and emotional instability.

Practices such as dhikr (remembrance of Allah), salah (prayer), Qur’an recitation, du‘a (supplication), and tawakkul (trust in Allah) function as continuous sources of emotional regulation and psychological grounding. Unlike temporary coping strategies dependent upon external conditions, these spiritual practices provide stable inner support rooted in divine connection.

Recent mental health research increasingly supports the positive relationship between spirituality and emotional wellbeing. Studies indicate that spiritual practices contribute to stress reduction, resilience, emotional balance, and lower levels of anxiety and depression among university students and adults. Furthermore, recent findings suggest that spiritual coping mechanisms significantly reduce stress, anxiety, and emotional distress while improving psychological resilience.

Classical Islamic scholars also extensively discussed the relationship between spiritual connection and emotional wellbeing. Ibn al-Qayyim explained that the human heart naturally seeks closeness to Allah and cannot attain complete peace without worship and remembrance of Him (Ibn al-Qayyim, 2003). Similarly, Al-Ghazali argued that spiritual purification and sincerity are essential for emotional balance and inner tranquility.

Another important dimension of Tawheed-based emotional stability is emotional moderation. Islam encourages believers to maintain balance during both ease and hardship. Emotional reactions are regulated through remembrance of Allah, patience (sabr), gratitude (shukr), and reliance upon divine wisdom. This framework protects individuals from excessive despair, hopelessness, arrogance, or emotional impulsivity.

Additionally, Tawheed provides emotional security by reducing fear of uncertainty and excessive attachment to worldly outcomes. Since believers trust that events occur according to Allah’s wisdom and decree, they are less overwhelmed by anxiety concerning future uncertainties and uncontrollable circumstances

Resilience and Acceptance

The Tawheed-based approach also offers a powerful framework for resilience, acceptance, and coping with adversity. Unlike secular coping models that often emphasize psychological adaptation and self-reliance alone, Islam combines practical effort with spiritual trust in Allah (tawakkul), patience (sabr), and belief in divine wisdom (qadr).

The Prophet ﷺ said:

“If you ask, ask Allah; and if you seek help, seek help from Allah... Know that what has passed you by was not meant to befall you, and what has befallen you was not going to miss you.”
(Sunan al-Tirmidhi 2516)

This hadith establishes one of the most powerful psychological principles within Islam: emotional security through certainty in Allah’s decree. Believers are encouraged to exert effort while understanding that ultimate outcomes are controlled by Allah. Such belief reduces excessive worry, fear of failure, overthinking, and chronic anxiety regarding uncertain outcomes.

The Qur’an similarly reframes hardship as meaningful and spiritually beneficial:

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

“Indeed, with hardship comes ease. Indeed, with hardship comes ease.” (Qur’an, 94:5–6)

This perspective transforms adversity from meaningless suffering into an opportunity for spiritual growth, purification, and reliance upon Allah. Consequently, Tawheed promotes psychological resilience by helping individuals interpret hardship within a larger divine framework rather than perceiving it as random or purposeless.

Recent studies increasingly recognize spirituality as a major contributor to resilience and coping during adversity. Research demonstrates that spiritual coping enhances resilience, reduces stress, anxiety, depression, and improves emotional recovery after trauma and crisis situations. Furthermore, resilience research highlights that meaning, hope, spirituality, and social support significantly strengthen psychological adaptation during difficult circumstances (Southwick & Charney, 2018).

Tawheed-based resilience also differs from secular resilience models because it combines hope with acceptance. While believers strive to improve their circumstances, they simultaneously accept Allah’s wisdom and decree with patience and trust. This balance protects individuals from excessive despair, hopelessness, and emotional collapse when facing failure or uncertainty.

Moreover, Tawheed cultivates long-term resilience by connecting temporary worldly hardships with eternal spiritual rewards. This Hereafter-oriented perspective provides enduring hope even during severe adversity. As a result, Tawheed-based resilience is not merely emotional endurance but a spiritually grounded form of perseverance rooted in certainty, hope, and trust in Allah.

3.1.5 Practical Applications in Counselling

The practical integration of Tawheed within counselling provides a holistic framework that addresses cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and spiritual dimensions of human wellbeing (Table 3). Unlike purely secular counselling models that often focus primarily on symptom management and emotional regulation, Tawheed-based counselling aims to reconnect individuals with Allah, strengthen spiritual certainty, and restore balance between the heart, mind, and soul. Contemporary developments in Islamic psychology increasingly emphasize that counselling for Muslim individuals should not separate psychological wellbeing from spiritual wellbeing because both dimensions are deeply interconnected (Rothman & Coyle, 2018).

The practical application of Tawheed in counselling does not necessarily reject evidence-based therapeutic methods. Rather, it reorients counselling interventions within an Islamic worldview grounded in revelation, spirituality, and divine purpose. Consequently, counselling becomes not only a process of emotional healing but also a means of strengthening faith, resilience, and spiritual growth. The following applications demonstrate how Tawheed-based principles may be integrated within counselling contexts to enhance mental wellbeing and psychological resilience.

Aqidah-Based Cognitive Reframing

One of the most important practical applications of Tawheed in counselling is *aqidah*-based cognitive reframing. Cognitive reframing refers to the process of changing the way individuals interpret thoughts, situations, and life events. In conventional cognitive therapy, negative thought patterns are challenged and replaced with healthier interpretations (Beck, 2011). Tawheed-based counselling similarly utilizes cognitive reframing but grounds the reinterpretation process within Islamic beliefs concerning Allah, divine wisdom, destiny (*qadr*), and the purpose of trials.

Within the Islamic worldview, difficulties and hardships are not viewed as meaningless suffering or random misfortune. Rather, life challenges are understood as tests containing wisdom, spiritual purification, and opportunities for growth. The Qur'an states:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِيرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

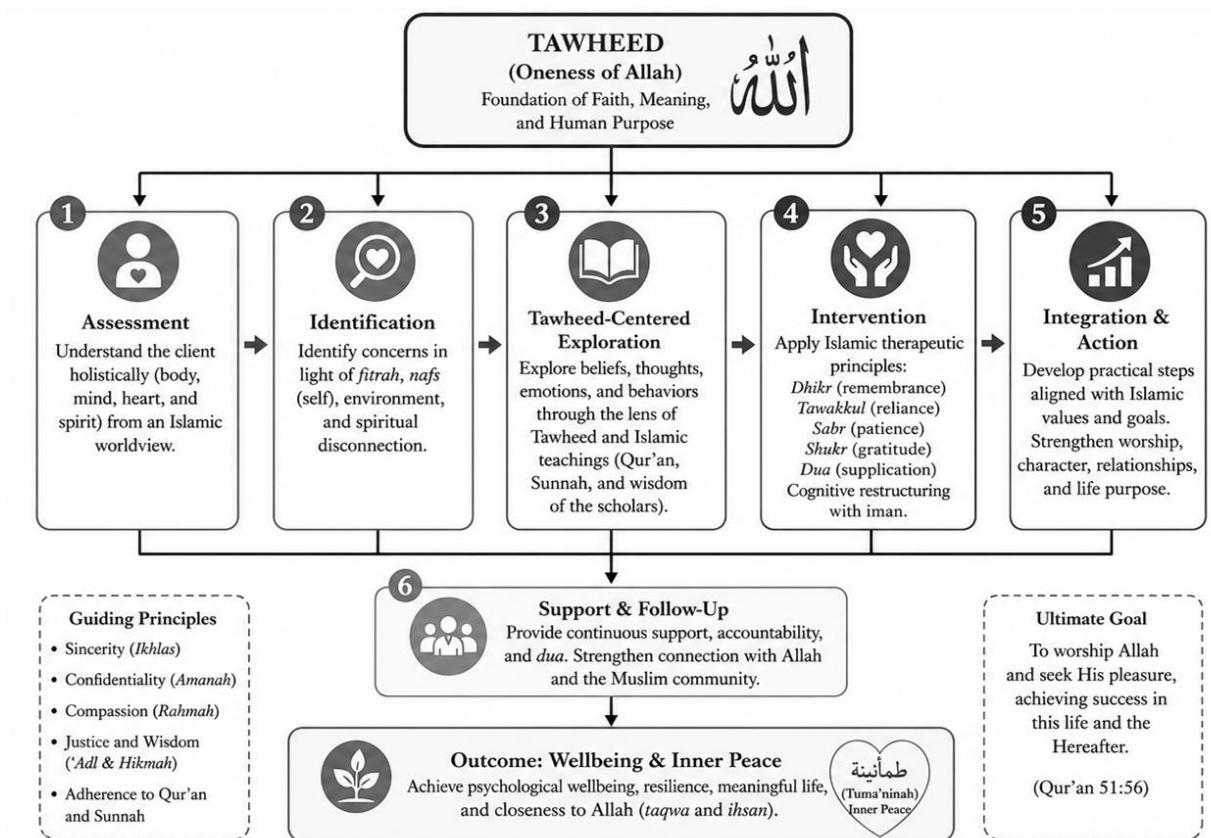
“And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and loss of wealth, lives, and fruits, but give glad tidings to the patient.” (Qur'an, 2:155)

This framework allows clients to reinterpret painful experiences through the lens of divine wisdom rather than viewing them solely as evidence of personal failure, injustice, or hopelessness. Such reframing may reduce catastrophic thinking, hopelessness, resentment, and excessive anxiety.

For example, clients experiencing academic failure, financial difficulties, illness, or emotional loss may be guided to understand that hardship does not necessarily indicate worthlessness or abandonment, but may instead represent a test from Allah designed to strengthen patience, humility, dependence upon Him, and spiritual growth. This perspective creates existential meaning and psychological resilience during adversity.

Recent developments in Islamic psychotherapy support the integration of Islamic beliefs within cognitive interventions. Hamdan (2008) argued that cognitive restructuring can be effectively integrated with Islamic concepts such as *tawakkul* (trust in Allah), *sabr* (patience), gratitude, and belief in *qadr* (divine decree). Similarly, Islamic psychology frameworks emphasize that healthy cognition should align with correct *aqidah* and spiritual certainty (Rothman, 2021).

Furthermore, aqidah-based reframing strengthens emotional acceptance by helping clients distinguish between what is within human control and what belongs to Allah’s decree. This reduces excessive self-blame, overthinking, and chronic fear concerning uncertain outcomes.



Source: Developed by Author, 2026

Figure 3. Tawheed-Based Counselling Framework

Dhikr-Based Emotional Regulation

Another important practical application of Tawheed-based counselling is dhikr-based emotional regulation. Emotional regulation refers to the ability to manage emotional reactions, stress, fear, sadness, and anxiety effectively. While secular counselling approaches often utilize mindfulness, relaxation techniques, breathing exercises, and emotional awareness practices, Islamic counselling incorporates dhikr (remembrance of Allah) as a central mechanism for emotional calmness and spiritual grounding.

The Qur’an directly links remembrance of Allah with emotional tranquility:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” (Qur’an, 13:28)

This verse establishes that true tranquility originates from spiritual connection with Allah rather than merely external emotional management. Dhikr functions as a continuous source of

emotional grounding by redirecting attention away from fear, excessive worry, and worldly attachment toward remembrance of Allah and trust in His wisdom.

Practically, counsellors may encourage clients to establish regular spiritual routines involving morning and evening adhkar, Qur'an recitation, supplication (du'a), reflection upon Allah's names and attributes, and mindful performance of salah (prayer). Such practices may significantly reduce stress, emotional impulsivity, and anxiety while strengthening spiritual certainty and emotional resilience.

Recent research increasingly supports the relationship between spiritual practices and emotional wellbeing. Studies indicate that religious and spiritual engagement contribute positively to stress reduction, emotional balance, and resilience among university students and adults. Recent findings also suggest that spiritual coping practices significantly improve psychological wellbeing and emotional regulation during adversity and uncertainty.

Unlike secular mindfulness approaches that often emphasize present-moment awareness detached from transcendence, dhikr-based regulation connects emotional calmness directly with remembrance of Allah and awareness of divine presence. Consequently, emotional stability becomes spiritually rooted rather than dependent solely upon psychological techniques. Classical Islamic scholars also emphasized the emotional and spiritual effects of dhikr. Ibn al-Qayyim explained that remembrance of Allah strengthens the heart, removes anxiety, and brings tranquility and spiritual strength (Ibn al-Qayyim, 2003). Therefore, dhikr-based emotional regulation represents not only a coping mechanism but also a spiritually transformative process that strengthens the relationship between the servant and Allah.

Table 4. Practical Applications of Tawheed in Counselling

Application	Main Focus	Psychological Benefits
<i>Aqidah-Based Cognitive Reframing</i>	Reinterpreting hardships through divine wisdom	Reduces hopelessness and catastrophic thinking
<i>Dhikr-Based Emotional Regulation</i>	Spiritual remembrance and worship	Emotional calmness and stress reduction
<i>Purpose-Oriented Counselling</i>	Aligning life goals with worship and akhirah	Existential clarity and life satisfaction
<i>Tawakkul Training</i>	Balancing effort with trust in Allah	Reduces overthinking and anxiety

Source: Developed by Author, 2026

Purpose-Oriented Counselling

Purpose-oriented counselling represents another significant practical application of Tawheed within therapeutic settings. Contemporary mental health literature increasingly recognizes that lack of purpose contributes significantly to emotional distress, depression, hopelessness, and existential anxiety (Frankl, 2006). However, secular counselling frameworks often encourage individuals to independently construct personal meaning according to subjective desires and experiences. While

such flexibility may appear empowering, it may also produce instability and confusion when purpose becomes dependent upon changing emotions or external achievements.

In contrast, Tawheed-based counselling provides clients with a stable and objective framework for meaning rooted in worship and servitude to Allah. The Qur'an clearly defines human purpose:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (Qur'an, 51:56)

Within this framework, counselling helps clients reconnect their daily activities and life goals with spiritual purpose and divine guidance. Education, career, family responsibilities, social service, and personal development become acts of worship when aligned with sincerity and obedience to Allah. This transforms ordinary life activities into spiritually meaningful experiences.

Purpose-oriented counselling may be particularly beneficial for individuals experiencing identity confusion, hopelessness, emotional emptiness, or existential crises. Clients may be guided to evaluate their goals according to both worldly benefit and spiritual significance. Such counselling also helps individuals distinguish between temporary worldly success and ultimate success in the Hereafter.

Recent psychological literature increasingly supports the importance of meaning and purpose for resilience and mental wellbeing. Frankl (2006) emphasized that individuals who possess meaning demonstrate greater resilience during suffering and hardship. Similarly, recent studies indicate that strong spiritual purpose contributes positively to life satisfaction, emotional wellbeing, and psychological resilience among young adults and university students.

Moreover, purpose-oriented counselling reduces excessive dependence upon external validation. In modern societies, individuals frequently associate self-worth with productivity, popularity, wealth, or social recognition. Such standards often create chronic pressure, insecurity, and emotional exhaustion. Tawheed-based purpose redirects attention toward divine pleasure and eternal success, thereby reducing emotional dependence upon unstable worldly standards.

Tawakkul Training

Tawakkul training represents another essential practical application of Tawheed within counselling. Tawakkul refers to placing trust and reliance upon Allah while simultaneously exerting appropriate effort. In Islamic understanding, tawakkul does not mean passivity or abandoning action; rather, it combines practical effort with spiritual trust in Allah's wisdom and decree.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

“If you ask, ask Allah; and if you seek help, seek help from Allah... Know that what has passed you by was not meant to befall you, and what has befallen you was not going to miss you.”

(Sunan al-Tirmidhi 2516)

This hadith establishes a profound psychological framework for managing uncertainty, anxiety, fear of outcomes, and overthinking. Clients are encouraged to exert effort responsibly while

understanding that ultimate results remain under Allah's control. Such belief significantly reduces excessive worry concerning future uncertainties and uncontrollable circumstances.

In counselling practice, tawakkul training may involve helping clients to differentiate between controllable and uncontrollable matters, focus on effort rather than obsessive attachment to outcomes, develop acceptance of divine decree (qadr), strengthen trust in Allah during uncertainty and hardship. This framework is particularly beneficial for individuals experiencing generalized anxiety, perfectionism, fear of failure, chronic stress, and excessive overthinking.

Recent resilience research highlights that acceptance, hope, spirituality, and meaning significantly strengthen psychological adaptation during adversity (Southwick & Charney, 2018). Similarly, recent studies indicate that spiritual trust and surrender positively contribute to emotional wellbeing and resilience during crisis situations.

Tawakkul training also protects individuals from emotional exhaustion caused by excessive attachment to worldly outcomes. Modern societies frequently promote hyper-control, perfectionism, and constant performance pressure, which contribute significantly to anxiety and burnout. Tawakkul restores psychological balance by teaching that while human beings are responsible for effort, ultimate control belongs to Allah.

Moreover, tawakkul strengthens emotional acceptance without encouraging helplessness. Clients continue striving toward goals while simultaneously maintaining inner peace and trust in Allah's wisdom. This combination of action and spiritual surrender creates a balanced psychological state characterized by hope, resilience, emotional calmness, and reduced anxiety

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this paper demonstrate that Tawheed provides a comprehensive and holistic framework for mental wellbeing by integrating psychological, emotional, spiritual, and existential dimensions of human life. While secular humanistic counselling has contributed valuable therapeutic methods such as empathy, self-awareness, emotional expression, and cognitive reflection, its human-centered epistemological foundation may limit its ability to fully address deeper existential and spiritual concerns. In contrast, Tawheed offers a stable and divinely grounded worldview that provides clarity of identity, objective meaning, emotional stability, and resilience through connection with Allah.

One of the major themes emerging from this discussion is that contemporary mental health challenges are increasingly connected to crises of identity, meaning, and spiritual disconnection rather than merely psychological dysfunction alone. Modern societies have achieved significant scientific and technological advancement, yet rates of anxiety, depression, loneliness, burnout, and existential distress continue to rise, particularly among younger generations. Recent literature increasingly recognizes that mental wellbeing cannot be separated from meaning, spirituality, and transcendent purpose (Maté, 2022; APA, 2023). Consequently, counselling frameworks that address only emotional symptoms without engaging existential and spiritual dimensions may remain incomplete.

Secular humanistic counselling approaches emphasize autonomy, self-construction, and subjective meaning-making. Although these approaches may empower individuals to explore personal experiences and emotions, they may also contribute to identity instability and existential uncertainty when meaning becomes entirely dependent upon individual interpretation and changing social influences. Baumeister (1991) argued that modern societies increasingly experience identity

fragmentation because stable sources of meaning and moral guidance have weakened. Similarly, Yalom (1980) acknowledged that existential freedom may produce anxiety because individuals are burdened with the responsibility of defining meaning independently.

From the perspective of Tawheed, the human being is not left to independently determine ultimate truth, purpose, and identity. Rather, divine revelation provides a clear framework explaining who humans are, why they were created, and how they should live. Consequently, Tawheed reduces existential confusion by grounding identity and purpose within a stable relationship with Allah. This framework provides psychological consistency because identity is no longer dependent upon unstable external validation, material success, or social acceptance.

An important implication of this discussion is that Tawheed does not merely function as a theological doctrine but also as a psychologically protective framework. The Qur'an repeatedly connects spiritual connection with emotional wellbeing, patience, hope, and inner tranquility. The verse:

أَلَا يَذْكُرُ اللَّهُ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” (Qur'an, 13:28)

illustrates that emotional calmness in Islam is fundamentally connected to remembrance of Allah and spiritual certainty. This differs significantly from secular counselling approaches that often focus primarily on emotional regulation and symptom management without addressing spiritual disconnection.

Recent developments in Islamic psychology strongly support this integrative understanding. Rothman and Coyle (2018) argued that Islamic psychology should incorporate core Islamic concepts such as the qalb (heart), ruh (soul), fitrah (natural disposition), and nafs (self), which are frequently neglected within secular psychological paradigms. Likewise, contemporary discussions in Islamic psychotherapy increasingly emphasize the necessity of integrating spirituality and revelation within therapeutic practice. Recent publications on Islamically integrated psychotherapy and spiritual interventions argue that counselling approaches rooted in Qur'anic and Prophetic guidance provide more holistic healing by addressing psychological, spiritual, and existential dimensions simultaneously.

Furthermore, current discussions within global mental health services indicate increasing demand for culturally and spiritually responsive counselling frameworks, particularly within Muslim communities. Recent symposiums and research initiatives in the Middle East emphasize that Islamically integrated mental health approaches are becoming increasingly relevant due to limitations observed in purely secular therapeutic models. This trend suggests growing recognition that culturally and spiritually grounded interventions may improve therapeutic engagement, emotional connection, and counselling effectiveness among Muslim populations.

Another important implication emerging from this paper is that Tawheed-based counselling should not necessarily be understood as rejecting all Western psychological approaches. Rather, Tawheed may serve as a foundational worldview that ethically and spiritually guides therapeutic interventions. Certain evidence-based techniques such as cognitive restructuring, emotional awareness, behavioral interventions, and stress management may remain beneficial when integrated within an Islamic epistemological framework. In this sense, Tawheed does not merely replace

therapeutic methods but reorients them toward divine guidance, spiritual wellbeing, and ultimate purpose.

This integrative perspective aligns with recent developments in Islamically integrated psychotherapy. Recent literature highlights the importance of combining evidence-based psychological interventions with Qur'anic spirituality, dhikr, supplication, tawakkul, and Prophetic guidance in order to create more comprehensive counselling models. Such integration may enhance counselling outcomes for Muslim clients by ensuring that therapeutic interventions remain spiritually meaningful and culturally relevant.

Additionally, this discussion highlights the importance of decolonizing psychological knowledge and recognizing alternative epistemological frameworks beyond purely secular paradigms. Contemporary scholars in Islamic psychology increasingly argue that modern psychology has historically developed within Western secular contexts that may not fully reflect the spiritual and cultural realities of Muslim societies. Recent literature therefore emphasizes the need for Islamically grounded counselling frameworks capable of integrating revelation, spirituality, and psychological science in a balanced manner.

Nevertheless, it is also important to approach the integration of Tawheed within counselling with academic rigor, ethical sensitivity, and professional competence. Not all mental health conditions can be addressed solely through spiritual interventions, and serious psychiatric disorders may still require medical and clinical treatment. Therefore, Tawheed-based counselling should complement appropriate psychological and psychiatric care rather than promote simplistic or reductionist approaches. Effective Islamically integrated counselling requires properly trained practitioners capable of combining authentic Islamic knowledge with professional counselling competencies.

Moreover, future research is needed to further examine the effectiveness of Tawheed-based counselling interventions empirically. Although existing literature increasingly supports the relationship between spirituality and mental wellbeing, additional qualitative and quantitative studies are necessary to evaluate the long-term impact of Islamic spiritual interventions on anxiety, depression, resilience, emotional regulation, and identity formation. Comparative studies between secular and Islamically integrated counselling approaches may also contribute significantly to the development of culturally responsive mental health services for Muslim populations.

Ultimately, this paper argues that Tawheed provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding human wellbeing because it addresses dimensions frequently underrepresented within secular counselling paradigms, particularly spirituality, divine purpose, and existential certainty. Human theories attempt to understand the human being through observation, experience, and evolving conceptual models. Tawheed, however, originates from divine revelation revealed by the Creator of the human being Himself. As Allah states:

أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

“Does He who created not know, while He is the One who knows every detail, the All-Aware?”
(Qur'an, 67:14)

Therefore, the Tawheed-based framework offers not only psychological techniques but also a complete worldview capable of guiding identity, purpose, emotional wellbeing, resilience, and spiritual fulfillment in a deeply interconnected manner

4. Conclusions

This paper demonstrates that Tawheed provides a comprehensive framework for identity, purpose, emotional wellbeing, and mental health. While secular humanistic counselling offers valuable therapeutic tools such as empathy, emotional awareness, and cognitive reflection, it may not fully address deeper existential and spiritual dimensions of human life. In contrast, Tawheed offers a stable and divinely guided foundation that helps individuals understand who they are, why they exist, and how to achieve true wellbeing.

The study highlighted that many contemporary mental health challenges are closely connected to identity confusion, emotional emptiness, lack of meaning, and spiritual disconnection. Tawheed addresses these issues by grounding identity and purpose in worship and connection with Allah. Practices such as dhikr, tawakkul, sabr, and reliance upon divine wisdom contribute significantly to emotional stability, resilience, and psychological peace. As Allah states:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” (Qur’an, 13:28)

The paper also emphasized that integrating Tawheed into counselling does not require rejecting beneficial psychological methods. Rather, Tawheed may serve as a foundational worldview that strengthens counselling approaches by integrating spiritual, psychological, and existential dimensions.

Future research should further examine the effectiveness of Tawheed-based counselling models in different cultural and clinical contexts through empirical studies and practical counselling applications. Overall, this paper argues that Tawheed offers a more holistic and stable framework for mental wellbeing because it originates from divine guidance revealed by the Creator of the human being Himself.

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Author Contribution Statement

HS conceptualized and designed the study, conducted the literature review, analyzed the comparative frameworks between Tawheed-based understanding and secular humanistic counselling, and developed the theoretical and practical discussions presented in the paper. HS also interpreted the Islamic and psychological sources, prepared the conceptual framework and comparative analysis,

and wrote, reviewed, and finalized the manuscript for publication. All parts of the study, including data interpretation, integration of references, academic revisions, and overall manuscript preparation, were completed by HS.

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