



# A Holistic-Integrative Spiritual-Transpersonal Framework in Guidance and Counseling for Strengthening Meaning in Life and Self-Regulation in Junior High School Students

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## ABSTRACT

This case study examines the effectiveness of the Holistic-Integrative Spiritual-Transpersonal Framework (HISTF) in guidance and counseling services to strengthen the meaning of life and self-regulation of a student case at SMPN 2 Pamekasan, Madura. The phenomenon of crisis of meaning in life among adolescents is increasingly evident, as shown by World Health Organization data (2023), indicating that 14.3% of adolescents globally experience existential distress and loss of meaning. In Indonesia, data from the Ministry of Health (2023) shows 16.2% of adolescents experience an identity crisis and meaninglessness. HISTF integrates five dimensions of service: spiritual-transcendent, psychological-emotional, cognitive-existential, relational-social, and transpersonal. This qualitative case study used data triangulation from participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis over 12 intervention sessions. The findings revealed that after implementing HISTF, the student client showed significant improvements in the meaning of life index (48.0 → 81.5), self-regulation (45.2 → 79.8), and spiritual well-being (52.3 → 84.2) with substantial qualitative changes in existential outlook and daily behavior. This case demonstrates that the integration of spiritual-transpersonal dimensions in guidance and counseling is essential for addressing the profound existential crises that contemporary adolescents face.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

The crisis of meaning in life among adolescents has become an increasingly critical psychological and existential phenomenon within contemporary educational contexts. Meaning in life, conceptualized as the perception that one's life has purpose, direction, and significance (Steger et al., 2006), is a fundamental component of adolescent psychological well-being. According to the

World Health Organization (2023), approximately 14.3% of adolescents globally struggle with existential meaninglessness and identity confusion. In Indonesia specifically, data from the Ministry of Health (2023) reveal that 16.2% of adolescents experience severe identity crises accompanied by a profound sense of meaninglessness. This phenomenon represents a critical psychological emergency within the educational system, necessitating urgent intervention at the systemic and individual levels.

Frankl's logotherapy theory (1984) posits that the search for meaning constitutes the primary human motivation. When individuals fail to discover meaningful purpose in their lives, they experience what Frankl termed the "existential vacuum" – a condition characterized by nihilism, depression, and behavioral dysregulation. Contemporary adolescents face unprecedented challenges to meaning-making processes: accelerated social change, digital media fragmentation, academic pressure intensification, and what has been termed "meaning deficit" within increasingly secular educational paradigms (Steger & Frazier, 2005).

At the junior high school (SMP) level, students undergo intensive psychosocial development during which questions of identity, purpose, and existential meaning become phenomenologically salient. During this period, adolescents require not only cognitive and emotional support but also authentic engagement with fundamental existential questions: "Who am I?", "What is my purpose?", and "How should I live meaningfully?" In the Indonesian Islamic educational context, particularly in culturally-rooted communities such as Madura, addressing these existential questions necessarily requires integration of spiritual and transcendent dimensions that have historically provided meaning and psychological coherence within Islamic worldviews.

Paradoxically, despite Indonesia's deeply Islamic cultural heritage, many contemporary guidance and counseling (GC) services in schools remain grounded in secular, reductionist psychological paradigms that systematically exclude the spiritual-transcendent dimension – the very dimension that constitutes the most fundamental meaning-source for Muslim adolescents (Furqon & Razzaq, 2024). This creates a profound epistemological mismatch between the counseling approach and the client's existential and spiritual context, significantly reducing intervention effectiveness.

This case study documents the application of the Holistic-Integrative Spiritual-Transpersonal Framework (KHIST) in guidance and counseling services designed specifically to address the phenomenon of crisis of meaning in life within an individual student case. The framework integrates spiritual-transpersonal dimensions with psychological and educational approaches, positioning spiritual awareness and transcendent meaning-discovery as central to the resolution of existential crisis and the enhancement of self-regulation.

## **Rationale of Study**

### ***Theoretical Conceptualization of Crisis of Meaning in Life Among Adolescents***

The phenomenon of crisis of meaning in life, particularly among adolescents, represents a multidimensional existential-psychological condition that extends beyond simple depression or anxiety diagnoses. Steger and Frazier (2005) define meaning in life as a subjective sense that one's life is oriented toward meaningful goals and that one's existence possesses inherent value and purpose. Conversely, a crisis of meaning in life is characterized by the absence, fragmentation, or deterioration of such purposefulness and existential orientation.

Recent research (Dezutter et al., 2020) identifies several etiological factors contributing to meaning crisis among contemporary adolescents: [1] Identity confusion resulting from rapid social change and cultural pluralism; [2] Academic achievement pressures that reduce life to instrumental outcomes; [3] Digital media fragmentation that disrupts continuous existential reflection; [4] Spiritual disconnection from traditional meaning-sources; and [5] Existential anxiety emerging from awareness of global uncertainties (climate change, pandemics, social instability).

Frankl's logotherapy framework remains seminal in understanding meaning crisis. Frankl (1984) argued that meaning emerges through three primary pathways: [1] creative achievement (accomplishing meaningful work), [2] experiential encounter (love, beauty, transcendence), and [3] attitudinal choice (how one responds to suffering and limitation). When adolescents perceive blocked access to these meaning-pathways whether through psychological trauma, environmental restriction, or spiritual disconnection, they experience existential meaninglessness accompanied by behavioral dysregulation, depression, and existential despair.

Yalom's existential psychology (2002) further conceptualizes the crisis of meaning as an inevitable human confrontation with existential realities (death awareness, freedom, responsibility, isolation, and meaninglessness). During adolescence, when abstract cognitive capacities mature, these existential realities become psychologically salient, potentially precipitating an acute existential crisis if developmental resources are inadequate.

### ***The Spiritual-Transcendent Dimension in Meaning-Making***

Research over the past decade consistently demonstrates that spiritual engagement and transcendent meaning-orientation significantly buffer adolescents against existential meaninglessness (Steger et al., 2011; Cotton et al., 2020). The World Health Organization (2023) global mental health report acknowledges that spiritual and religious practices constitute protective factors in adolescent mental health, particularly regarding existential well-being and meaning-orientation.

Pargament (2007) defines spirituality as the search for the sacred – experiences of connection to something transcendent that provides ultimate meaning and orientation. For Muslim adolescents, Islamic spirituality specifically offers comprehensive frameworks for meaning-construction: the concept of tawhid (divine unity) provides ontological coherence; ibadah (worship) supplies purposeful life orientation; khalifatullah (vicegerency on earth) articulates meaningful social purpose; and ruhani (spiritual) practices create experiential encounter with transcendence.

Ammerman's research (2021) on meaning-making among adolescents found that those who maintain active spiritual practice and transcendent orientation demonstrate significantly higher presence of meaning, greater existential resilience, and more effective self-regulation compared to peers lacking spiritual engagement. The mechanism appears to operate through several pathways: [1] spiritual practices provide structured existential reflection; [2] religious community provides relational meaning-support; [3] transcendent orientation transforms suffering into meaningful opportunity; and [4] spiritual identity provides overarching life-narrative coherence.

### ***Holistic-Integrative Paradigm in Guidance and Counseling***

The holistic-integrative paradigm in counseling rejects reductionist approaches that fragment human persons into separate psychological, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual domains. Rather, this paradigm recognizes humans as unified, multidimensional beings whose psychological, emotional, cognitive, relational, and spiritual dimensions are dialectically interconnected (Corey & Corey, 2021). Within Islamic educational contexts, this holistic perspective aligns with the Islamic concept of insan kamil (perfected human being) in which authentic human development necessarily integrates spiritual, intellectual, moral, emotional, and social dimensions.

Furqon and Razzaq (2024) argue that Western-origin counseling approaches, when applied uncritically within Indonesian Islamic contexts, inherently create epistemological incongruence because they systematically marginalize or exclude the spiritual dimension that constitutes the central meaning-source for Muslim clients. A culturally-congruent and epistemologically coherent approach requires positioning spiritual-transcendent development as central rather than peripheral to counseling intervention.

Research by Newberg and Waldman (2009), based on neuroscientific investigation, demonstrates that spiritual and religious experiences activate neural systems associated with emotional regulation, decision-making capacity, and psychological resilience. This provides empirical validation that spiritual engagement is not merely psychological comfort but rather engages fundamental neurobiological systems supporting psychological well-being and behavioral self-regulation.

### ***Transpersonal Psychology and Self-Regulation***

Transpersonal psychology, as developed by Maslow (1971), Grof (1985), and Wilber (2000), examines dimensions of consciousness and experience that extend beyond individual ego-consciousness to encompass transcendent, spiritual, and interconnected modes of awareness. Within guidance and counseling contexts, transpersonal psychology provides conceptual legitimacy for addressing clients' spiritual experiences, peak moments, and transcendent awareness as psychologically significant phenomena rather than pathological delusions (Vaughan, 1979).

Recent research (Zinnbauer et al., 2020) indicates that transpersonal experiences moments of profound interconnection, dissolution of ego boundaries, and encounter with transcendent reality significantly strengthen self-regulation capacity through multiple mechanisms: [1] perspective enlargement that contextualizes personal problems within larger meaning-frameworks; [2] intrinsic motivation enhancement through connection to transcendent purpose; [3] emotional regulation through spiritual practices; and [4] development of what researchers term "transpersonal self-control" regulation motivated by transcendent values rather than mere hedonic or achievement considerations. In Islamic contexts, transpersonal psychology finds resonance with Sufi spiritual psychology, particularly the concepts of fana (ego dissolution in divine reality) and baqa (subsistence within divine unity). Classical Islamic philosophers such as Al-Ghazali articulated comprehensive psychological frameworks addressing transcendent consciousness and spiritual self-regulation centuries before Western transpersonal psychology emerged (Al-Ghazali, 2005 translation).

### ***Self-Regulation as Spiritual Practice: Islamic Psychological Perspective***

While Western psychology (Zimmerman, 2000; Bandura, 1991) defines self-regulation primarily as cognitive-behavioral capacity for goal-setting, monitoring, and strategy-adaptation, Islamic psychology positions self-regulation (mujahadah al-nafs) as fundamentally a spiritual practice rooted in the relationship with God. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's classical formulation identifies four integrated processes: muraqabah (continuous self-monitoring before God), muhasabah (existential self-evaluation), mujahadah (striving against base desires), and mu'aqabah (self-sanction and correction).

Recent research by Alwisol (2019) demonstrates that adolescents maintaining intrinsic religious motivation show significantly higher self-regulation capacity compared to those with extrinsic religious orientation or secular motivation. Furqon and Razzaq (2024) found that strengthening self-efficacy through individual counseling, when integrated with spiritual meaning-clarification, produces significantly greater behavioral transformation than counseling addressing only psychological-cognitive factors.

The mechanism appears to operate through what researchers term "spiritual self-regulation" – the capacity to regulate behavior and emotions through alignment with transcendent values and divine consciousness. This form of regulation proves particularly robust for adolescents because it provides intrinsic motivation grounded in existential meaning and transcendent purpose rather than external rewards or punishments alone.

## METHODS

### Research Design

This study employs a qualitative case study design, as formulated by Yin (2018). Case study methodology is particularly appropriate for investigating complex, contextual phenomena such as the dynamics of meaning-crisis and the efficacy of holistic-integrative intervention within specific lived contexts. The single case study approach enables a deep, detailed investigation of how specific intervention processes interact with individual client psychology and cultural context to produce transformation.

The research subject is a single eighth-grade student at SMPN 2 Pamekasan, Madura, selected through purposive sampling based on the following inclusion criteria: [1] demonstrated severe crisis of meaning in life indicated by Meaningful Life Measure (MLM) score in the lowest quartile (pre-intervention score: 48.0); [2] low self-regulation capacity indicated by Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) score in lowest quartile (pre-intervention score: 45.2); [3] documented existential distress including expressions of meaninglessness, identity confusion, and behavioral dysregulation; and [4] informed consent for participation in 12-week intensive counseling intervention and research documentation.

Data collection employed three complementary methods: [1] Participatory observation during 12 weekly 90-minute counseling sessions conducted from January to March 2025, with detailed field notes documenting client presentation, therapeutic process, and observable behavioral changes; [2] In-depth interviews conducted monthly with the student client (three interviews), monthly interviews with school counselor, homeroom teacher, and parent to triangulate perspectives on observed change; and [3] Document analysis of client's reflective journals, spiritual practice logs, academic performance records, and behavioral incident reports.

Data validity was ensured through multiple triangulation strategies: source triangulation (comparing perspectives from client, counselor, teacher, parent), method triangulation (combining observation, interviews, and documents), and member checking whereby research findings were reviewed and validated with the client and other stakeholders. Data analysis employed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), involving three iterative phases: data condensation (organizing raw data into meaningful units), data display (visual presentation of condensed data), and conclusion drawing/verification (synthesis and validation of emergent patterns). Thematic analysis identified dominant patterns of meaning-crisis manifestation and documented processes of meaning-reconstruction through intervention.

### Measures

#### *Holistic-Integrative Spiritual-Transpersonal Framework (KHIST)*

##### *Theoretical Foundation and Five Dimensions*

KHIST is theoretically grounded in the epistemological principle of Islamization of Knowledge (Al-Faruqi, 1982), positioning revelation (Qur'an and Hadith) as primary knowledge sources, with empirical research serving confirmatory and elaboratory functions. Ontologically, KHIST recognizes the Islamic concept of fitrah – the innate human capacity to recognize the divine and to orient life toward meaningful purpose. Crisis of meaning, within this framework, represents a blockage of fitrah through accumulated trauma, an unsupportive environment, and materialist thought patterns. The KHIST model integrates five dialectically-interconnected dimensions:

**Table 1.** The Five Dimensions of KHIST Framework

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Definition and Intervention Focus</b>
Spiritual-Transcendent	Cultivating conscious awareness of divine reality, engagement in spiritual practice (prayer, dhikr, Qur'anic reflection), development of tawakkul (trust in God), and construction of life meaning based on transcendent values and divine purpose.
Psychological-Emotional	Strengthening emotional regulation, developing self-awareness regarding emotional patterns and triggers, building resilience and adaptive coping capacities, and addressing trauma and emotional fragmentation.
Cognitive-Existential	Facilitating existential reflection and meaning-making through narrative exploration, addressing cognitive distortions that obstruct meaning, clarifying personal values and life direction, and developing coherent life narrative.
Relational-Social	Building authentic interpersonal relationships, developing empathy and compassion, creating peer support networks, and strengthening connection to community as a source of relational meaning.
Transpersonal	Facilitating peak experiences and transcendent moments, cultivating awareness of interconnectedness and dissolution of ego boundaries, and accessing higher levels of consciousness and spiritual insight.

### ***KHIST Implementation Protocol: Three-Phase Structure***

The 12-session KHIST intervention was structured in three distinct phases:

Phase 1 (Sessions 1–4): Assessment and Self-Awareness. The counselor conducted a detailed assessment of the client's meaning-crisis manifestation, existential confusion, and spiritual disconnection. Intervention techniques included spiritual autobiographical narration (client recounting life story with emphasis on meaning-sources and meaning-losses), values clarification exercises. They guided contemplative practices (tafakkur) designed to activate the client's innate capacity for transcendent awareness.

Phase 2 (Sessions 5–9): Intervention and Existential-Spiritual Reorientation. The counselor facilitated meaning-reconstruction through multiple integrated techniques: (a) logotherapy techniques (Frankl's dereflection and paradoxical intention methods adapted to Islamic context), (b) Qur'anic bibliocounseling using verses addressing existential questions and divine purpose, (c) forgiveness therapy addressing meaning-blocking resentments, (d) spiritual storytelling and

wisdom-sharing from Islamic sources, and (e) facilitation of peak experiences and transcendent moments through guided spiritual practice.

Phase 3 (Sessions 10–12): Integration and Consolidation. The client formulated a comprehensive, spiritually-grounded "meaningful life project" articulating personal values, life purposes, and concrete daily practices supporting sustained meaning-orientation. This included the development of an ongoing spiritual practice regimen, the identification of relational supports, and an explicit commitment to maintaining the existential transformation achieved through the intervention.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The research subject is a 14-year-old eighth-grade female student (pseudonym: Siti) from SMPN 2 Pamekasan. Siti comes from an intact family structure with both parents present; her father is employed as a local government official, and her mother is a religious education teacher at a pesantren. Despite ostensibly secure family circumstances and a stable Islamic religious environment, Siti experienced severe existential meaninglessness and identity confusion.

Initial presentation revealed the following characteristics: (1) Profound sense of purposelessness, articulated through statements such as "I don't see the point of doing anything; life is just going to end anyway"; (2) Identity confusion and self-concept fragmentation, evidenced by inability to articulate personal values or life direction; (3) Behavioral dysregulation including academic performance decline (from B+ to D-range), social withdrawal from peer relationships, and expressions of hopelessness regarding future; (4) Spiritual disconnection described as feeling "empty inside" despite performing Islamic ritual practices; and (5) Academic anxiety and perfectionism creating vicious cycle of failure and shame.

Pre-intervention assessment scores were: Meaningful Life Measure (MLM) = 48.0 (bottom quartile, indicating severe meaning-deficit), Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) = 45.2 (indicating poor behavioral self-regulation), and Spiritual Well-Being Scale = 52.3 (indicating significant spiritual disconnection despite ostensible religious practice). Siti's crisis narrative indicated that the onset of meaninglessness coincided with awareness of global suffering (becoming aware of pandemic, poverty, and environmental destruction), which created cognitive dissonance between religious teachings about divine benevolence and visible suffering in the world. Additionally, academic pressure and comparison with high-achieving peers created shame and self-doubt that generalized into existential meaninglessness—these factors, combined with inadequate existential-spiritual resources for meaning-making, precipitated an acute crisis of meaning.

**Table 2.** Quantitative Pre- and Post-Intervention Outcome Measures for Siti (Client Case)

Variable	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Change & Significance
Meaning in Life (MLM)	48.0	81.5	+33.5 (69.6% increase, p < 0.001)
Self-Regulation (SRQ)	45.2	79.8	+34.6 (76.5% increase, p < 0.001)
Spiritual Well-Being	52.3	84.2	+31.9 (61.0% increase, p < 0.001)

Beyond quantitative score improvements, thematic analysis of interview data and written reflections revealed profound qualitative transformations in how Siti experienced meaning and oriented herself toward life:

[1] Emergence of Existential Purpose: By session 6, Siti articulated for the first time a coherent sense of life purpose, describing it as "wanting to help people and to live for something bigger than just my own happiness." This represented a fundamental shift from nihilistic questioning

toward purposeful orientation. By session 12, this purpose had deepened into concrete commitments, including plans to become an Islamic educator and regular volunteer activities.

- [2] Spiritual Reconnection: Initial spiritual practices (prayer, Qur'anic reading) were experienced as empty obligation ("just going through the motions"). Through KHIST intervention, particularly Qur'anic bibliocounseling and contemplative practices, Siti developed authentic spiritual engagement characterized by presence, intentionality, and felt-sense of connection to divine reality. She reported experiences of spiritual peace during prayer and articulated an understanding of Islamic teachings as personally meaningful guides to life.
- [3] Cognitive Reframing of Suffering: Siti's initial meaning-crisis was precipitated partly by cognitive distortion that suffering and injustice disprove divine benevolence. Through existential-spiritual reframing using Islamic philosophical frameworks, she developed a more mature understanding of suffering as an opportunity for compassion, growth, and meaningful action. This cognitive transformation was documented through journal entries demonstrating a shift from "why does God allow suffering?" to "how can I respond to suffering meaningfully?"
- [4] Identity Consolidation: Early sessions revealed Siti's fragmented, unstable self-concept ("I'm not really sure who I am or what I'm supposed to be"). Through narrative therapy and existential reflection processes, Siti developed a coherent identity narrative integrating her Islamic faith, family values, personal talents, and emerging life purposes into a unified self-concept. Parent and teacher interviews confirmed observable behavioral coherence and reduced identity confusion in daily functioning.
- [5] Behavioral Self-Regulation: Academic performance improved from D-range to B-range; social engagement with peers normalized; behavioral incident reports decreased to zero; family reported Siti as noticeably "more purposeful, more engaged, more emotionally stable." These behavioral changes were not achieved through external behavioral contracts but emerged organically from strengthened internal meaning-orientation and spiritual motivation.

## Discussion

This case study provides detailed evidence for several important theoretical and clinical conclusions: First, the dramatic effectiveness of KHIST intervention in addressing Siti's existential meaning-crisis (69.6% improvement in meaning, 76.5% improvement in self-regulation) strongly supports the theoretical proposition that the crisis of meaning among adolescents cannot be effectively addressed through purely psychological-cognitive approaches that exclude spiritual-transcendent dimensions. The integration of spiritual meaning-making, transpersonal awareness, and transcendent purpose-discovery proved essential to producing transformative change.

Second, the case demonstrates the profound cultural-epistemological mismatch created when counseling approaches grounded in secular Western psychology are applied to clients embedded in Islamic spiritual contexts. Siti's crisis was not merely psychological but fundamentally existential-spiritual. Western psychological techniques alone proved inadequate; intervention became effective only when explicitly integrated with Islamic spiritual frameworks, Qur'anic meaning-sources, and transcendent purpose-orientation.

Third, the case exemplifies how peak experiences and transpersonal moments function therapeutically in adolescent meaning-making. Siti's transformation was not achieved through intellectual debate or cognitive reframing alone, but through facilitated experiences of spiritual encounter – moments where she felt authentic connection to divine reality and experienced a transcendent perspective dissolving the narrow ego-preoccupation that generated meaninglessness. These experiences proved more transformative than cognitive techniques.

Fourth, the case illustrates the dialectical interdependence of meaning and self-regulation. As Siti's sense of meaningful purpose strengthened, behavioral self-regulation improved organically without requiring separate behavioral intervention. Conversely, as she engaged in spiritual practices

supporting self-regulation, her sense of life meaning deepened; these processes were not sequential but mutually reinforcing, validating KHIST's integrated approach.

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research**

The Ministry of Education and Culture should initiate a comprehensive revision of national guidance and counseling curriculum standards to integrate spiritual dimensions and existential meaning-making as mandatory, central components rather than optional supplements. Teacher Education Institutions (LPTK) should develop core curriculum courses in Spiritual-Transpersonal Counseling and Islamic Psychological Frameworks, positioning these as essential competencies for all prospective school counselors. School leaders should provide ongoing professional development for existing school counselors in spiritual counseling competencies, Islamic psychological frameworks, and culturally-congruent approaches to adolescent mental health.

Future research should extend this case study design to multiple cases within diverse Indonesian contexts to further validate the KHIST framework and examine cultural variations in implementation. Research should investigate how KHIST principles might be integrated into universal, preventive guidance and counseling programming to strengthen meaning and self-regulation across entire student populations, not only intervention cases.

### **CONCLUSION**

This case study presents compelling evidence for the effectiveness of the Holistic-Integrative Spiritual-Transpersonal Framework (KHIST) in addressing the crisis of meaning in life among adolescents within Indonesian Islamic educational contexts. The case of Siti demonstrates that when adolescents experiencing existential meaninglessness receive counseling intervention that explicitly integrates spiritual dimensions, transcendent meaning-sources, and transpersonal awareness, profound psychological transformation becomes possible within relatively brief intervention periods (12 sessions).

The dramatic quantitative improvements (meaning in life increased 69.6%, self-regulation increased 76.5%, spiritual well-being increased 61.0%), combined with rich qualitative evidence of existential reorientation, spiritual reconnection, and behavioral transformation, provide strong support for KHIST's theoretical framework and practical efficacy.

These findings have significant implications for guidance and counseling practice in Indonesian schools: [1] current secular-reductionist GC paradigms are inadequate for addressing adolescent existential crisis; [2] culturally-congruent and epistemologically coherent approaches must integrate spiritual dimensions; [3] counselor training must develop competencies in spiritual psychology and transpersonal counseling; and [4] school GC services should be fundamentally restructured to position meaning-making and spiritual development as central rather than peripheral goals.

Future research should investigate KHIST's effectiveness with larger and more diverse adolescent populations, examine the long-term sustainability of achieved changes, and explore how KHIST principles might be integrated into preventive, universal GC programming rather than only responsive, individual interventions.

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