

A Phenomenology Study of *Dhikr* Spiritual Meditation Practice Among Recovering Drug Abusers

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ABSTRACT

Spirituality and religiosity-based interventions have emerged as powerful platforms within substance use recovery and research. In particular, the incorporation of meditation is becoming crucial. However, *dhikr*, as one of the pivotal meditation practices in Islam, has yet to be fully understood. The present article aimed to explore the experiences of *dhikr* meditation practice among recovering drug addicts. The study utilized a phenomenological qualitative study design with face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. A total of six participants, comprising recovering drug addicts who had been in the Islamic rehabilitation program that practiced *dhikr* spiritual meditation for at least two years, were interviewed in this study. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Then, the data were analyzed using thematic analysis for qualitative analysis. Four meanings emerged based on the participants' experience, namely "Redemption and Salvation," "Spiritual Journey," "Vow to God," and "Reliance and Togetherness." The findings revealed that the intertwined relationship between *dhikr* spiritual meditation and religiosity worldview has provided a powerful philosophy and cognitive framework that helps drug addicts' recovery and maintains abstinence. The study implies that the Islamic context in *dhikr* spiritual practice is fundamental in the recovery process. Further study on addiction treatment is suggested, with a focus on the *dhikr* meditation and spirituality module.

Keywords: Drug addiction, meditation, phenomenology, spirituality, substance abuse

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INTRODUCTION

Drug addiction is a growing global concern, with recent data indicating significant increases in substance use disorders worldwide. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2023 report, approximately 296 million people globally used drugs in 2021, marking a

23% increase over the previous decade. Commonly abused substances include cannabis, opioids, and stimulants such as cocaine and amphetamines. Alarming, opioid use alone was responsible for more than 70% of the drug-related health burden worldwide. Globally, the prevalence of drug use disorders, which includes addiction, has remained around 5.3% of the population as of 2024. These disorders contribute significantly to the global burden of disease, particularly due to the health and social consequences associated with addiction (Fox et al., 2013), which signals an urgent call for immediate attention and remedial action.

Spirituality and religiosity-based interventions have emerged as powerful platforms within substance use disorder recovery and research (Bonelli & Koenig, 2013; Kadri et al., 2017; Weber & Pargament, 2014). In particular, the incorporation of meditation is becoming crucial. Over the last two decades, there has been a greater focus placed on spiritual meditation within the drug addiction literature (Chitwood et al., 2008). Recently, a systematic review (Kadri, 2024b; Kadri et al., 2020) found that spiritual meditation has a positive impact on human well-being, quality of life, as well as substance use recovery. However, the research was won over by yogic meditation and mindfulness, along with a small amount of Islamic spiritual practice, particularly *dhikr*.

In a recent study, Saged et al. (2022) showed that an Islamic-based intervention, including recitation of the Quran and

remembrance of God, reduced the levels of anxiety and depression among Muslims in an experimental study. The intervention consisted of 30 one-hour sessions. In another study, Irawati et al. (2023) investigated the impact of religious practices, which are *solah* and *dhikr*, on schizophrenia patients. The findings showed that frequent practice of *solah* and *dhikr* improves patients' mental and physical well-being as well as their attentiveness and focus. On the other hand, *dhikr* therapy, which is performed once daily, at least for 10 minutes, either independently or guided by others, has been reported to reduce anxiety levels among cancer patients, as reported by Sulistyawati and Setiyarini (2019). On the other hand, a study by Kadri (2024a) shows that consistent and continuous *dhikr* practice may assist in spiritual changes, the shift of thought, and the emotional and behavioral transformation of drug abusers. These treatments demonstrate the growing interest in spiritual practices and their impact on people's mental and physical health.

Regardless of the growing studies on spiritual meditation practice, the exploration of Islamic spiritual meditation, particularly *dhikr*, on the recovery of Muslim drug addicts is relatively unknown. *Dhikr*, as one of the pivotal Islamic meditation practices, has yet to be understood. In order to respond to the need for empirical evidence on the spiritual meditation of *dhikr* on drug addiction, the present article aims to explore the experiences of *dhikr* meditation practice among recovering drug addicts and its implications on their well-being and lives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dhikr, or remembrance of God, the prolonged practice of uttering the name of God or its Attributes, is one of the most significant mental spiritual practices in Islam (Saniotis, 2018). This Islamic spiritual meditation can be performed either individually or collectively at any time without any posture restriction (Guemuesay, 2012). Ahmad Nabil et al. (2016) concluded that people are using Islamic spiritual meditation, such as *solah*, *dhikr* and prayer, to reduce their depression levels, which in turn can bring calmness to the practitioner. This finding is also consistent with the randomized control study conducted by Hosseini and colleagues (2016) that found Islamic supplication, *dhikr*, reduces nervousness and anxiety among patients undergoing coronary artery bypass surgery. Furthermore, one study that marked the spiritual meditation program in addiction treatment and rehabilitation centers proved a lower relapse rate among former drug addicts (Khalid, 2008). The first detailed study on *dhikr* spiritual meditation was undertaken by Sabri et al. (2018), who reported that *dhikr* practice enhances the recovery of former drug addicts by transforming the behavioral aspects.

As stated by faith (*Iman*) and action (*Amal*), the two elements of spiritual belief and practice are inseparable from the *dhikr* meditation. The deepest interpretation is that *dhikr* meditation is unmistakably focused on the presence of God. More precisely, according to the Islamic understanding of spirituality (Koenig & Al Shohaib, 2014), Allah, the presence of God, is the root of all

religious acts and practices, including the treatment of disease and its cure.

According to Cook's (2004) study on the relationship between addiction and spirituality, this cognitive framework offers valuable insight into how recovering patients view this worldly life (Zakaria & Akhir, 2017). This includes perspective on the afterlife, the meaning of life, self-reflection, and social interaction. The combination of these meanings strengthens the recovering drug addicts' cognitive spiritual beliefs. As a result, this phenomenon will strengthen spiritual motivation, spiritual awareness, and spiritual attentiveness. These elements are crucial in helping the patient's soul undergo a spiritual metamorphosis. Following that, this deep vision created a spiritual and cognitive map that affected their behavior, emotions, and thoughts while also arousing their spiritual awareness.

This connection might help to explain why the curriculum of an Islamic rehabilitation center places a strong emphasis on the Islamic conception of the soul and how drug addiction is seen from an Islamic theological viewpoint to awaken the soul throughout the healing process. The participants will receive guidance from the awakened soul to overcome their drug addiction and strengthen their hearts. Since happiness in this life, as well as the next is the ultimate objective, abstinence is not the primary goal. All of this is, in essence, a component of the Islamic psychological process of purifying one's own heart (Al-Ghazali, 1993). Furthermore, the Islamic psychology path leads Muslims closer to

their fitrah, which is good in nature, by going nearer to God and an Islamic lifestyle based on religious teachings, Quran and Sunnah (Arslan, 2014).

The literature also explores how Islamic spiritual practices like meditation integrate with modern psychological frameworks, focusing on their therapeutic effects in the treatment of mental health disorders. Islamic meditative practices are not only a means of spiritual growth but also serve as tools for emotional regulation and mindfulness (Isgandarova, 2019). In summary, spiritual meditation is a technique that draws its teachings and insights from Islamic scripture to explain the occurrence of sickness and to suggest solutions for individuals to overcome their obstacles.

METHODS

Design of Study

An exploratory, phenomenological qualitative approach was applied, utilizing semi-structured and face-to-face individual interviews. Phenomenology study is one of the most popular traditions among the qualitative methods (Creswell, 2013). This method is particularly useful in studying a certain research interest for a particular concept or phenomenon (Yin, 2014). This study was designed using phenomenology because it offers a method for examining the issue of drug abusers by delving into the participants' perceptions. Finding the significance of the participants' experiences, as well as seeing how they live, experience, and exhibit the *dhikr* practice, was also included.

Participant

The study was conducted over a 10-month period, from May 2018 to February 2019. Prior to the commencement of this study, ethical approval was duly obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), Malaysia. The study was conducted in full compliance with ethical standards, under protocol code UniSZA/UHREC/2018/42. The phenomenological interviews were conducted at different times for each participant. The participant was taken to the private Islamic rehabilitation center in Puncak Alam. Several recovering former residents and residents were selected to participate in the interview using purposive sampling. The management staff helped the researcher to find the eligible candidate based on the inclusion criteria were as follows:

1. Had attended for at least two years at the rehabilitation center programs. Two years was chosen because it can yield more dependable results. Long-term participants offer more consistent data on recovery trajectories, according to studies (Dennis et al., 2005).
2. The age range is 18 to 64 years.
3. Currently has been actively stopping taking substances and does not require detoxification.
4. Voluntary basis and the subjects willing to share their experiences and stories.
5. No previous and current neurological diseases or significant previous or current head injuries.

Sample Size

For qualitative studies, there are no specific calculations on the sample size (Golafshani, 2003). However, the data was considered robust after the information became saturated from the researcher's view. The data was considered saturated after the information was repeated; for instance, the participant said the same information for the same question during the interview. The average sample sizes for phenomenology studies are from three to fifteen people (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, six volunteers were interviewed.

Prior to the study, ethical approval was obtained from the university, and consent was obtained from the rehabilitation center. Demographic data of the participants were collected before the phenomenological interview process started. The semi-structured interview questionnaires were developed based on interviews with the leader of the rehabilitation center and relevant literature (Nasr, 2008; Schmitt & Pilcher, 2004) related to individuals who receive Islamic spiritual meditation. The questions highlighted the participants' personal experiences of drug addiction and how they coped and recovered.

Collection of Data

A phenomenological interview was implemented during the collection of the data (Hood & Williamson, 2008; Williamson & Hood, 2011). The main key point of this interview is to elicit detailed descriptions from the participants concerning the spiritual meditation, which is

dhikr, based on the participants' experience. It started with an open-ended question, and then the participants were asked in detail about their experience with *dhikr* practice and its effect on their life history with addiction recovery based on the developed semi-structured questionnaire. From that point, the interviewer avoids leading the questions and lets the participant recall the information as much as possible.

The qualified participants were contacted either via phone or in person at the rehabilitation center. Prior to the interview, an ethical consent form was provided after a comprehensive description of the study and confirmation that the participant agreed to participate. Due to their positive relationship with the rehabilitation center, all the patients consented to participate in the study. They each received a memento of gratitude. The interview was conducted based on the participants' choices. Before the interview began, the researcher asked the participants' permission to record the interview on a digital audio recorder. Then, face-to-face interviews were conducted at various times throughout the study duration. To make the participant feel as comfortable as possible, the researcher took the first step in this process by building rapport with the participant, focusing on their personal information and feelings. Later, the researcher explained the purpose of the interview to explore their experiences on how they cope with addiction-related issues by using the *dhikr* repetition spiritual practice. Prior to the interview, the participant has an opportunity to ask questions or to stop the interview at any time.

The researcher shifted the phenomenological approach to spiritual meditation of *dhikr* practice by asking the question, 'How do you describe the *dhikr* treatment since you have been at the rehabilitation center?' As the participant responded to this question, the question was followed by 'Can you recall back on the coping action in oneself after *dhikr* treatment as detail as you can remember? Then, other questions were asked smoothly during the interview. At this point, the researcher allowed the participants to elaborate on their experiences without interruption, except when the researcher requested a further explanation or detail about a specific event. Some experiences may bring emotional feelings when talking about the hardship of overcoming the drug issue. In addition, their experiences with God, such as Allah's Love for His Servant and the Forgiveness of God, also make them teary during the remembrance of their wrongdoer. The interview was concluded when both parties agreed that all the experiences had been conveyed as clearly as possible. The entire interview process typically lasted between one and two hours.

A face-to-face interview was conducted in the Malay language using a semi-structured questionnaire. The duration of each participant's interview ranged from 55 to 120 minutes. The researcher is a Muslim and experienced no challenge interviewing on the concept of Islamic principles and practices. Once the interview was finished, permission was requested to contact the participant again if needed to reconfirm any

related issues during data transcription and analysis. Following the agreement of the participant on this request, contact details were asked for at the end of the interview session. After completing the interview, the important details during the interview session were noted immediately while the information was still fresh and vivid in the researcher's memory. Moreover, nonverbal information, such as descriptions of body gestures and how they convey their stories, was also recorded in the field notes during the interview process.

Before proceeding to the second interview, the first verbatim of the first participant was transcribed to reduce the bias of the 'I' between the interviewer and the interviewee (Golafshani, 2003; Hamilton, 2020). This step is to be conducted to execute a more effective and robust interview for the next session. The verbatim result from the first interview served as a guide for the subsequent interview. Afterward, all the remaining interviews were also transcribed verbatim using Microsoft Office 2010. The audio of the recorded data was repeated a few times before being translated verbatim. Any unclear information about the interview was clarified for each participant prior to the data analysis.

Triangulation data was used during the data collection process. According to Bryman (2004), triangulation data needs to be conducted to increase the validity and reliability of the collected data. The semi-structured questionnaire, field notes, and the observation of nonverbal action play a key role during data collection.

Analysis of Data

A thematic analysis was employed to comprehend how the individuals' spiritual practice of *dhikr* provides significance to their lives and overall well-being. The data analysis process begins with data management and proceeds to the descriptions, classifications, interpretations, and representations of the data results (Creswell, 2013).

All the recorded interviews were saved on the computer for verbatim analysis. Once the transcribed verbatim was completed, it was necessary to extract the information in a coding format to identify all possible key issues or ideas. The coding was conducted manually by using Microsoft Office 2010 for each participant. Then, each code was carefully transferred into Microsoft Excel 2010 to form the themes and sub-themes. When transferring the coding, the researcher made an accurate judgment about the meaning and importance of the data, as well as the comparisons within and among the transcripts of each participant. Next, the quotes were rearranged from the generalization coding to produce an appropriate new theme after the judgment

process. Lastly, the findings were mapped and interpreted to achieve the objective of this interview by combining the perspectives of all participants. The global descriptions of the theme were discussed with the staff at the Islamic rehabilitation center and two other available participants for their feedback to validate the emergent theme and sub-theme.

RESULT

Participant Demographic Profile

The interviews were undertaken in the main office of the rehabilitation center, the participant's workplace, and the cafe. All the interviews were conducted in a private space. The duration of the interviews varied from 55 to 120 minutes. Table 1 displays the socio-demographic profile of the interviewed participant. What stands out in the table is the onset of addiction history at an early age, as early as 17 to 23 years old. In addition, all participants have occupations either in the private sector or are self-employed. Moreover, most participants have their families, and only two of them are still single.

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of the participants

Participant	Age of onset	Age (Years)	Abstinence (Years)	Occupation	Marital status
R1	20	48	>5 years	Non-government	Married
R2	18	48	>5 years	Manager	Married
R3	23	34	>5 years	Self-worker	Single
R4	21	37	>5 years	Self-worker	Married
R5	18	45	>5 years	Self-worker	Married
R6	17	47	>5 years	Security	Single

Meanings of *Dhikr* Practice

Four sub-themes were identified on the meanings of *dhikr* practice based on the participants' perspectives. The emerging sub-themes were as follows: (1) Redemption and salvation, (2) Spiritual journey, (3) Vow to God, (4) Reliance and togetherness. The primary theoretical framework guiding this manuscript is the theory of purifying one's heart (*tazkiyah al-nafs*) by Islamic scholar Al-Ghazali (1993), which utilizes spiritual-religious practices, specifically *dhikr*. Within this framework, the study focused on the spiritual changes that occur after practicing *dhikr* in their life and well-being. This process also aligned with the spiritual transformation theory (Paloutzian, 2005). This theory suggests that significant life changes, particularly in the context of addiction recovery, often occur through profound spiritual experiences that profoundly reshape an individual's worldview, sense of self, and life purpose.

Redemption and Salvation

The topic corresponds with the theory's notion that humans want to change their past mistakes and find significance via spiritual experiences. The participants' use of *dhikr* as a tool for purification and atonement is a direct reflection of their transforming experience, which reflects the first theme in this study. Redemption refers to a previous misconduct, especially drug consumption. A Muslim held the opinion that, from a religious standpoint, all alcohol usage, including drug addiction,

is forbidden (*haram*). The transgression act will result in a negative effect on the heart (*qalb*). The remedy for the sick *qalb* is *dhikr*. Thus, the participant practices the repetitive *dhikr* as one of the tools to redeem their previous misdeed and guilt, as well as accumulate good deeds. In addition, *dhikr* practice is also an act of asking forgiveness from Allah. One participant commented:

'This remembrance practice (*dhikr*) is like a soap to purify my heart, to cleanse the impurities. Addiction is a sin and makes my heart (*qalb*) dirty; I need to clean it. The heart is like this cup; if this cup is clean, [while lifting and demonstrating with a cup] we can drink the water. The heart is cleansed through *dhikr* practice' [R5]

Moreover, commenting on this issue, one of the participants said,

'*Dhikr* practice is our effort to revive hearts. Our hearts are black because of drugs, so the *dhikr* is like a tool to open up our hearts, even a small size like a needle hole. This tiny hole increased my awareness and consciousness; I want to repent and stop everything.' [R2]

Together, these perspectives provide important insights into one of the meanings of *dhikr*. From the perspective of participants, the repetitive *dhikr* practices act as a redemption and salvation process for their former sins. These means enabled them to resign themselves and accept reality as well as their sinful behavior.

Spiritual Journey

The second sub-theme that rose from the meaning of the *dhikr* theme is *dhikr* as a spiritual journey. Spiritual Transformation Theory emphasizes the idea of life as an evolving spiritual journey. The Muslims viewed health, illness, suffering and dying as a natural part of life. The absolute purpose of human life in this world is to have faith and worship Allah. Hence, human life is like a journey to find its definite purpose and meaning. Therefore, the participants' accounts of *dhikr* practice as a path towards personal growth and self-discovery act as a road in the spiritual journey. For example, one participant said,

'Ah, this practice is a personal journey. I want to increase the amount of *dhikr* frequently, get faster and faster during the program [while tapping on the table with his finger], but spiritually I'm not ready yet. The 'feel' of *dhikr* is different individually.' [R2]

Another commented,

'But when I do the *dhikr* consistently, over time, I understand the meanings, I'm changed, transformed the evil thought to think closer to God.' [R4]

Overall, these results indicate that *dhikr* practice means a spiritual journey to their opinions. This journey prevents them from tumbling once more into drug addiction.

Vow to God

The third sub-theme that appeared from this interview is the *dhikr* practice as a token of

promise and proof to Allah. It also highlights the role of spiritual commitments in sustaining transformation, as suggested by the Spiritual Transformation Theory. In the Islamic view, this world is just a stopover before moving to the everlasting world, which is the hereafter. Therefore, every volitional act, either good or bad, which can be in the form of a physical thought or spoken, is accounted for. A soul needs to be prepared before it comes back to Allah, which is death. Death is also a part of the journey to meet Allah. Hence, *dhikr* practice is like their vows to Allah to remain clean from drug addiction. This vow will be their proof to meet Allah in a proper way. It was suggested that,

'You know the difference between the living and the dead? The living person, his heart remembers God. Remember in here [show close to heart] I cannot say precisely, I have practiced it for years.' [R5]

Another participant echoed this view,

'No, I cannot take the drug again; consumption of the drug may break my vow with Allah. I keep this vow even when I am asleep.' [R6]

In summary, these results describe that repetition of *dhikr* practice was like a vow to Allah. This vow makes them realize and self-reflect (*muhasabah*) on their future action, including the consumption of drugs.

Togetherness and Reliance

The last sub-theme emanated is togetherness and reliance on God. The practice of *dhikr*

is not just a spiritual meditation or habit. This practice was connected tightly with the essence and feel of togetherness and reliance on God, which supports the theory of this study. Due to the essence, the participants feel a sense of belonging and transcendence. The comment below illustrates the current issue,

‘To understand easily, the role of remembrance in a simple way, God loves someone who remembers Him, right? For example, I always give you something you like, I am concerned about you, and I want you to be comfortable with me, don’t I? It is the same situation, we need to remember God, and so we can get God’s love. But remember, we need Him, but He does not need us.’ [R5]

Next, other participants said,

‘Why should *dhikr*? Why should it be remembered and practiced? Because the surroundings and circumstances of the inside and the outside of the rehabilitation center are different. When I go to the public, no one will stop me. Therefore, this practice makes me feel that Allah is always with me. Guided me. *Dhikr* is different from *solah* (prayer), I can remember Him anytime, anywhere, no specific time or movement.’ [R4]

Taken together, these results emphasize that there is a mighty relatedness between spiritual *dhikr* meditations and the sense of a Higher Power. All four sub-themes that emerged are correlated with God and the hereafter.

DISCUSSION

The research question sought to answer how participants make meaning of *dhikr* meditation practice experiences. Through the result of global description, it became apparent that participants made meanings of their experiences (Giorgi, 2009; Pollio et al., 1997); in this case, the *dhikr* meditation practice was described by the recovering drug addicts in a specific context. The experiences begin with their perception of the meanings of *dhikr* meditation practice in their journey of life as it occurs within the settings of an Islamic-oriented substance use recovery program. Then, it was followed by a significant self-change that came out after continuous *dhikr* meditation practice.

The context of the general experience description is not ample; it is handy to interpret the emerged themes (Merriam, 2009; Wassler & Kirillova, 2019) in the forms of the principles of the Islamic perspectives, culture, body, worldview and time, which all lay out a spirituality practical context for how addiction recovery is experienced by continuous practice of *dhikr* meditation. This interpretive structure is essential to flesh out a fuller meaning in the general description.

Meanings of *Dhikr* Practice

Generally, the entire set of meanings was closely related to each other under the spiritual connection with God as a focal point. As is known, the connectedness, transcendence and the feeling of a Higher Power and God are considered one of the fundamental meanings in the spiritual

dimension (Cook, 2004). More specifically, in the Islamic concept of spirituality (Koenig & Al Shohaib, 2014), the source of any religious act or practice, including illness and its remedy, is grounded in God's presence, which is Allah. As the selected rehabilitation center is an Islamic-based treatment, this may be one of the possible explanations for why their views are tightly connected with the presence and feeling of God.

Redemption and salvation can be defined as the guilt towards the wrongdoer because of drug addiction. Redemption is an individual atonement after having committed bad deeds towards others (Dowling & Scarlett, 2006), while salvation is an act to save and protect oneself from any type of evil (Borras et al., 2010; Mason et al., 2009). Both meanings revealed the profound intrinsic of the participant to seek forgiveness for their bad behavior. Therefore, the results of this theme indicate that former drug addicts try to be free from guilt and achieve calmness in their hearts by using *dhikr* spiritual meditation. It may be that these participants benefited from the continuous and prolonged practice of *dhikr* after a specific period. This finding is consistent with the study of Marlatt and Kristeller (1999), who found that religious, spiritual practice, such as meditation and prayer, helps them overcome addiction behavior problems and maintain abstinence.

The other perspective is the spiritual journey of life. Based on the Islamic cognitive framework, this world is like an examination place, and the ultimate resting place is the Hereafter (*Akhirah*) (Zakaria &

Akhir, 2017). Therefore, a Muslim believes that if they follow the teachings of God and the Prophet, they will receive a good life in the Hereafter in return (Vasegh et al., 2009). Most of the participants resolved to adopt this mindset during the *dhikr* meditation practice. Participants take this opportunity to get close to Allah with the guidance of the *Mursyid* (*spiritual leader*) and try to seek a nice place in *Dar al-Akhirah, the Hereafter*. This finding provides valuable insight into the meaning of this worldly life based on the Islamic perspective. Recognition of the profound meaning of this life brings up the resolution to continue this life properly without any regret. As drug addiction is one of the huge crises in their life, the *dhikr* meditation improves their understanding of the meaning of life as a journey toward the Hereafter that eventually enhances their resolution to maintain abstinence. In general, beliefs in the Hereafter philosophy assist people with drug addiction problems by motivating them to maintain abstinence and become better people.

The current studies found another interesting meaning of continuous spiritual meditation, *dhikr*, which indicates this practice is like a spiritual vow (*baiah*) towards Allah, which is consistent with the study by Sabri et al. (2018), on the recovery of former drug addicts by using the *dhikr* practice. Muslims believe that humans are one of God's creations. Therefore, all creations have the obligation to acknowledge and know their Creator (Dalhat, 2015). These cognitive beliefs were strongly engraved in their heart and minds before they started the

dhikr meditation with the help of *Mursyid*. The *Mursyid* indirectly strengthens their faith in Allah and provides social support to maintain the practice until the participants speak out their spiritual vow voluntarily. According to the study by Shamsalinia et al. (2014), religious teachings and a supportive religious environment within the family have a noticeable impact on the patient's spirituality from the beginning of their recovery process and throughout. Peer and family support, as well as the interchange of experiences during recovery, are significant factors in shaping participants' perspectives on spirituality and maintaining abstinence. Moreover, the religious teaching, especially repentance to God, that has been provided by the *Mursyid* in the Islamic rehabilitation center acts as a catalyst, which leads the drug addicts to be more optimistic and positive about their future lives. Consequently, their sense of togetherness and reliance on God for their future endeavors will enable them to sustain their abstinence.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study advances the theory of spiritual and religious coping by demonstrating how *dhikr* meditation enhances cognitive and perceptual abilities among recovering drug abusers, which had not been explored in prior research. Additionally, the study also emphasizes a phenomenological insight as a vital gap in the knowledge about the *dhikr* spiritual meditation in the field of drug addiction recovery, which revealed the meanings of *dhikr* spiritual meditation based on

the recovering drug abuser's perspective. The *dhikr* meditation is not only labeled as a religious act or worship practice, but it has a deeper meaning. It makes the practitioner accept their wrongdoing and realize the actual meaning and purpose of this life in this world. These worldviews assist them to become a new person and strengthen their motivation to keep on this track, which is abstinence. The journey started with the vow to Allah. Subsequently, after a prolonged mindset and action, they can feel the togetherness and reliance towards Allah in this world. Eventually, they will experience happiness in the world and the hereafter. All these meaning was carved deep down in the practitioners' hearts. The strong inwardness towards God's presence was achieved through consistent *dhikr* spiritual meditation until its effects were revealed outward. The study's findings might be helpful in the planning and preparation stages of addiction treatment, for instance, by giving policymakers input on rules pertaining to Islamic-based therapy in healthcare facilities. Therefore, as a recommendation, healthcare professionals and counselors should be concerned and support individuals' beliefs, values, culture and spiritual paradigm in order to develop a holistic drug addiction treatment strategy. Above all, religion and spiritual meditation cannot be separated in Malaysian Muslim culture. Therefore, the integration of spiritual meditation into the context of drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation is recommended.

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