



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRITUALITY AND MULTICULTURAL  
COMPETENCY FACTORS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE COUNSELLING  
STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA***

**AMIRREZA AMOUHA**

**FPP 2013 13**



**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRITUALITY AND MULTICULTURAL  
COMPETENCY FACTORS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE COUNSELLING  
STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA**

**By**

**AMIRREZA AMOUHA**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

**July 2013**

## **COPYRIGHT**

All material contained within the thesis, including without limitation text, logos, icons, photographs and all other artwork, is copyright material of Universiti Putra Malaysia unless otherwise stated. Use may be made of any material contained within the thesis for non-commercial purposes from the copyright holder. Commercial use of material may only be made with the express, prior, written permission of Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Copyright © Universiti Putra Malaysia



Abstract of this thesis presented to the senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRITUALITY AND MULTICULTURAL  
COMPETENCY FACTORS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE COUNSELLING  
STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA**

By

**AMIRREZA AMOUHA**

**July 2013**

**Chairperson: Rusnani bt Abdul Kadir, PhD**

**Faculty: Educational Studies**

Working with religion and spirituality is often problematic in counselling practice due to counsellors' competency issues and their own cultural and spiritual history which do not make them expert in the field. Especially, there are not enough educational courses regarding preparing counselling students for applying spirituality in counselling practice. This study examines a relationship between spirituality factors (spiritual awareness, spiritual disappointment, spiritual narcissism, spiritual realistic acceptance, and spiritual instability) and multicultural counselling competency factors (multicultural counselling awareness, multicultural

counselling knowledge and multicultural counselling skills) among undergraduate counselling students in Malaysia. And as an empirical research this study randomly surveyed 119 final-year counselling students (27 males and 92 females) at three Malaysian universities (UM, UPM and USIM), to find their self-ratings on spirituality factors by Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) questionnaire with 48 items and multicultural competency factors by Multicultural Counselling Competencies (MCCs) questionnaire with 40 items. Eight significant low and moderate positive correlations were found, but four of them indicated medium and large effect size. The results imply the need of an academic training and a course to prepare competent counsellors in regard to the demanding role of spirituality in counselling practice within the diverse culture of Malaysia.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi sebahagian keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**HUBUNGAN ANTARA FAKTOR SPRITUALITI DAN FAKTOR  
KOMPETENSI PELBAGAI BUDAYA DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR  
PRA SISWAZAH KAUNSELING DI MALAYSIA**

Oleh

**AMIRREZA AMOUHA**

**July 2013**

**Penyelia: Rusnani bt Abdul Kadir, PhD**

**Fakulti: Pengajian Pendidikan**

Mengurus aspek spiritualiti dan keagamaan dalam amalan kaunseling selalunya sukar kerana isu kepakaran kaunselor dan sejarah budaya dan spiritual mereka, yang tidak membuatkan mereka menjadi pakar dalam bidang ini. Terutamanya tidak terdapat cukup kursus pengajian yang menyediakan pelajar kaunseling untuk mengaplikasi spiritualiti dalam amalan kaunseling. Kajian ini meneroka hubungan antara faktor spiritualiti (kesedaran spiritual, kekecewaan spiritual, narsisme spiritual, penerimaan realistik spiritual, dan ketidakstabilan spiritual) dan faktor kompetensi kaunseling pelbagai budaya (kesedaran kaunseling pelbagai budaya, pengetahuan kaunseling pelbagai budaya dan kemahiran kaunseling pelbagai

budaya) dalam kalangan pelajar pra siswazah kaunseling di Malaysia. Sebagai satu penyelidikan emperikal, kajian ini meninjau secara rawak seramai 119 pelajar kaunseling tahun akhir (27 lelaki dan 92 perempuan) di tiga buah universiti di Malaysia (UM, UPM dan USIM), untuk melihat skor spiritualiti mereka dengan menggunakan soal selidik Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) yang mengandungi 48 item, dan skor faktor kompetensi pelbagai budaya menggunakan soal selidik Multicultural Counselling Competencies (MCCs) yang mengandungi 40 item. Hasil menunjukkan terdapat lapan korelasi bersifat positif sederhana bersignifikan rendah, namun empat darinya menunjukkan saiz kesan yang sederhana dan besar. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan keperluan kepada latihan akademik dan kursus untuk menyediakan kaunselor yang kompeten dari segi peranan spiritualiti dalam praktis kaunseling dalam budaya yang berbagai di Malaysia.

## AKCNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I thank God for giving me strength and ability to complete this study.

I am sincerely grateful to Professor Dr. Rusnani bt Abdul Kadir, the Chairman of the supervisory committee, and Mr. Mohd Yusof, the member of supervisory committee, Faculty of Educational Studies, for their guidance, understanding and invaluable advice throughout the duration of this study and the preparation of this thesis.

I am greatly indebted and appreciate very much to my beloved, Mandana Daneshian Sani for her encouragement, support and sacrifices throughout the study. To my brother, Hamidreza Amouei and my sisters, Zhila and Shahla Amouei, for they have inspired me in their own ways to finish my thesis. To my dearest person in the world - my mother, a big thank you for her support and encouragement and for putting colours in my life, may God bless you all.

Last but not least, I wish to express my sincere thanks to all those who have one way or another helped me in making this study a success.



I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 24-7-2013 to conduct the final examination of Amirreza Amouha on his thesis entitled "Relationship Between Spirituality And Multicultural Competency Factors Among Undergraduate Counselling Students In Malaysia" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

Members of the Thesis Examination Committee were as follows:

**Azimi Bin Hj Hamzah, PhD**

Title: Professor

Name of Faculty: Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairman)

**Siti Aishah bte Hassan, PhD**

Title: Associate Professor

Name of Faculty: Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Internal Examiner)

**Maznah bte Baba, PhD**

Title: Lecturer

Name of Faculty: Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Internal Examiner)

**Name of External Examiner, PhD**

Title: Professor

Name of Organisation (University/Institute)  
United State of America  
(External Examiner)

---

**NORITAH OMAR, PhD**

Associate Professor and Deputy Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 19 September 2013

## DECLARATION

I hereby confirm that:

- this thesis is my original work;
- quotations, illustrations and citations have been duly referenced;
- this thesis has not been submitted previously or concurrently for any other degree at any other institutions;
- intellectual property from the thesis and copyright of thesis are fully-owned by Universiti Putra Malaysia, as according to the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Research) Rules 2012;
- written permission must be obtained from supervisor and the office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) before thesis is published (in the form of written, printed or in electronic form) including books, journals, modules, proceedings, popular writings, seminar papers, manuscripts, posters, reports, lecture notes, learning modules or any other materials as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Research) Rules 2012;
- there is no plagiarism or data falsification/fabrication in the thesis, and scholarly integrity is upheld as according to the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) and the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Research) Rules 2012. The thesis has undergone plagiarism detection software.

---

AMIRREZA AMOUHA (GS27738)

Date: 24 July 2013

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  | <b>Page</b> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>ABSTRACT</b>  | iii         |
| <b>ABSTRAK</b>   | v           |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>   | vii         |
| <b>APPROVAL</b>  | viii        |
| <b>DECLARATION</b>   | ix          |
| <b>LIST OF TABLES</b>  | xiv         |
| <b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>   | xv          |
| <b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>   | xvii        |
| <br>   |             |
| <b>CHAPTER</b>   |             |
| <b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>  | <b>1</b>    |
| 1.1 Background of the problem  | 1           |
| 1.1.1 Spiritual Competencies in counselling:                                       | 6           |
| 1.1.2 Advantages and disadvantages of integrating spirituality<br>into counselling | 9           |
| 1.1.3 Reflexivity  | 11          |
| 1.2 Problem statement  | 13          |
| 1.2.1 Current Problems in Malaysia   | 14          |
| 1.3 Purpose of the study   | 16          |
| 1.4 Hypotheses   | 20          |
| 1.5 Objectives   | 22          |
| 1.6 Significance of study  | 24          |
| 1.7 Limitations of the study   | 26          |
| 1.8 Definitions of terms   | 27          |
| 1.8.1 Spirituality   | 27          |
| 1.8.2 Multicultural competency   | 30          |
| 1.9 Summary  | 32          |

|         |  |    |
|---------|--|----|
| 2       | <b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>                                   | 34 |
| 2.1     | Introduction   | 34 |
| 2.2     | Concepts   | 35 |
| 2.2.1   | Self-Awareness   | 36 |
| 2.2.2   | Culture  | 38 |
| 2.3     | Theories and models  | 39 |
| 2.3.1   | Multicultural counselling competencies (MCCs)              | 39 |
| 2.3.1.1 | Counsellor awareness of own cultural values and biases     | 41 |
| 2.3.1.2 | Counsellor Awareness of Client's Worldview                 | 42 |
| 2.3.1.3 | Culturally Appropriate Intervention Strategies             | 44 |
| 2.3.2   | Spiritual development                                      | 45 |
| 2.4     | Conceptual framework                                       | 50 |
| 2.5     | Review of previous researches                              | 51 |
| 2.5.1   | Empirical research on spirituality in counselling          | 51 |
| 2.5.1.1 | Current status of spirituality in counsellor education     | 54 |
| 2.5.2   | Empirical research on multicultural counselling competency | 56 |
| 2.6     | Summary  | 61 |
| 3       | <b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>                                | 62 |
| 3.1     | Introduction   | 62 |
| 3.2     | Research design  | 64 |
| 3.3     | Scope of the study   | 65 |
| 3.4     | Population and Sampling Procedure                          | 67 |
| 3.5     | Description of the instrument                              | 71 |
| 3.6     | Translation of the Instrument                              | 75 |
| 3.7     | Pilot Study  | 76 |
| 3.8     | Validity of the instrument                                 | 78 |
| 3.9     | Reliability of the instrument                              | 79 |
| 3.10    | Procedure of the data collection                           | 81 |
| 3.11    | Procedure of the Data Analysis                             | 82 |

|        |  |     |
|--------|--|-----|
| 3.12   | Ethical considerations                                     | 83  |
| 4      | <b>RESULTS AND ANALYSIS</b>                                | 84  |
| 4.1    | Introduction   | 84  |
| 4.2    | Presentation of Data                                       | 85  |
| 4.2.1  | Demographic profiles                                       | 85  |
| 4.2.2  | Spirituality   | 86  |
| 4.2.3  | Cultural Competency  | 88  |
| 4.3    | Analysis of the Data                                       | 90  |
| 4.3.1  | Spiritual awareness and multicultural awareness            | 91  |
| 4.3.2  | Spiritual awareness and multicultural skills               | 92  |
| 4.3.3  | Spiritual awareness and multicultural knowledge            | 93  |
| 4.3.4  | Spiritual instability and multicultural awareness          | 94  |
| 4.3.5  | Spiritual instability and multicultural skills             | 95  |
| 4.3.6  | Spiritual instability and multicultural knowledge          | 96  |
| 4.3.7  | Spiritual narcissism and multicultural awareness           | 97  |
| 4.3.8  | Spiritual narcissism and multicultural skills              | 98  |
| 4.3.9  | Spiritual narcissism and multicultural knowledge           | 99  |
| 4.3.10 | Spiritual disappointment and multicultural awareness       | 100 |
| 4.3.11 | Spiritual disappointment and multicultural skills          | 101 |
| 4.3.12 | Spiritual disappointment and multicultural knowledge       | 102 |
| 4.3.13 | Spiritual realistic acceptance and multicultural awareness | 103 |
| 4.3.14 | Spiritual realistic acceptance and multicultural skills    | 104 |
| 4.3.15 | Spiritual realistic acceptance and multicultural knowledge | 105 |
| 4.4    | Interpretation of Data                                     | 106 |
| 4.4.1  | Hypothesis Testing   | 109 |
| 5      | <b>DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION</b>                           | 115 |
| 5.1    | Introduction   | 115 |
| 5.2    | Summary of Findings  | 116 |

|                   |   |     |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| 5.3               | Conclusion  | 117 |
| 5.4               | Limitations of the study                                    | 120 |
| 5.4.1             | Demographic Limitation                                      | 120 |
| 5.4.2             | Validity  | 121 |
| 5.4.3             | Measurement Limitation                                      | 122 |
| 5.4.4             | Skewing   | 123 |
| 5.4.5             | Contextualisation Problems                                  | 123 |
| 5.5               | Recommendations   | 124 |
| 5.5.1             | Cultural and Spiritual Competencies                         | 124 |
| 5.5.2             | Future Issues in Measuring and Teaching Cultural Competence | 128 |
| 5.5.3             | Implications of this study                                  | 132 |
| <b>REFERENCES</b> |   | 135 |
| <b>APPENDICES</b> |   | 153 |
| Appendix A:       | 153   |     |
| Appendix B:       | 163   |     |