



Original Article

Implementation of Hamka's Philosophical Thoughts in Guidance and Counseling Services for the Elderly with Empty Nest Syndrome in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Background: Empty nest syndrome is a psychosocial condition frequently experienced by older adults following children's independence and departure from the household. This transition may lead to loneliness, loss of social roles, reduced meaning in life, and increased vulnerability to mental health problems. A holistic and culturally sensitive approach is therefore required. Hamka's philosophical thought, emphasizing moral integrity, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility, offers a relevant framework to strengthen Guidance and Counseling (BK) services for older adults in Indonesia.

Methods: This study employed a conceptual literature review of Hamka's philosophical works, peer-reviewed articles on elderly mental health, and policy documents related to BK services. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify moral, ethical, and spiritual values relevant to the psychosocial needs of older adults and their potential application in counseling services.

Results: The analysis identified core values including moral integrity, spiritual strengthening, character development, and redefinition of social roles in later life. These principles align with the psychosocial challenges of empty nest syndrome and can inform individual and group counseling interventions.

Conclusion: Integrating Hamka's philosophical values into BK services may enhance holistic mental health and psychosocial well-being among older adults within the Indonesian cultural context.



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INTRODUCTION

Mental health issues among older adults have become a global concern in line with increasing life expectancy and changes in family structures, particularly with regard to psychosocial well-being and quality of life (World Health Organization, 2025). One of the psychosocial problems commonly experienced in later life is empty nest syndrome, a condition that arises when adult children become independent and leave the parental home, leading to feelings of loneliness, loss of social roles, diminished meaning in life, and various mental health problems (Willis et al., 1997). Psychological disorders, prolonged stress, and limited ethical and spiritual awareness may further negatively affect social relationships, role functioning, and

overall well-being among the elderly (Rahmah, 2015). Consequently, elderly support services require an approach that not only emphasizes psychological and clinical dimensions but also incorporates moral, spiritual, and social aspects (Rambe et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, strengthening mental health and character development through education, health services, and Guidance and Counseling (BK) programs is considered essential, including for older adults (Silvanus Daempal, 2021). Mental health and character development in later life are viewed as key factors in maintaining independence, personal integrity, and active social participation (Ambarwati & Pandin, 2024). Although BK services and psychosocial support are available in various educational, health, and social institutions, their implementation still tends to prioritize clinical psychological approaches without systematic integration of moral, ethical, and spiritual values (Ramadhan & Bahiroh, 2021). This condition indicates the need for a holistic framework that can enrich guidance and counseling services as well as geriatric nursing practices in Indonesia (Rahmah, 2015).

In the West Sumatra region, older adults experiencing empty nest syndrome face psychosocial challenges shaped by shifts in family roles and local cultural values, particularly within the Minangkabau sociocultural context (Arya Fendha Ibnu Shina, 2022). Evidence from elderly support cases suggests that psychological interventions alone are insufficient to assist older adults in addressing moral dilemmas, adapting to changing social roles, and searching for meaning in later life (Aiken, 1995). These findings highlight the importance of support approaches that are culturally sensitive and attentive to spirituality and local wisdom.

Hamka's philosophical perspective emphasizes moral integrity, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility as fundamental elements of human character development throughout the lifespan, including old age (Steenbrink, 1994). These values are highly relevant for integration into guidance and counseling services and geriatric nursing practices, as they may help older adults redefine life roles, strengthen psychosocial resilience, and improve mental health in a holistic manner (Yandri & Juliawati, 2025). Integrating Hamka's philosophical thought into guidance and counseling services has the potential to enrich elderly care practices through ethical reflection, spiritual support, and the development of a culturally contextualized moral decision-making framework within Indonesian society (Rambe et al., 2025).

Based on this background, the present study aims to analyze the core principles of Hamka's philosophical thinking and to explore their implementation in Guidance and Counseling services for older adults experiencing empty nest syndrome, particularly in supporting mental health, character development, and moral and spiritual awareness in a holistic manner.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a conceptual study design aimed at analyzing the principles of Hamka's philosophical thought and exploring their relevance to Guidance and Counseling (BK) services as part of efforts to support the mental health of older adults experiencing empty nest syndrome (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of the moral, spiritual, and social values embedded in Hamka's philosophy and their potential integration into holistic and contextually grounded elderly care practices (Moleong, 2022; Steenbrink, 1994). The focus of the study centers on the concepts of moral integrity, spiritual awareness, social responsibility, and the search for meaning in later life, particularly among elderly individuals experiencing empty nest syndrome (Steenbrink, 1994).

This research constitutes a literature-based study, with primary data sources comprising Hamka's works in the form of books and philosophical writings, peer-reviewed scientific articles addressing elderly mental health and empty nest syndrome, as well as policy documents and guidelines related to guidance and counseling services and geriatric nursing in Indonesia (Silvanus Daempal, 2021). The research process was conducted over a three-month period, encompassing literature searching and selection, data organization, thematic analysis, and the preparation of the research report. The research population included all relevant literature addressing Hamka's thought, guidance and counseling services, elderly mental health, and empty

nest syndrome. Literature samples were selected using purposive sampling by considering topic relevance, source credibility, and contribution to the development of elderly assistance concepts grounded in moral and spiritual values (Etikan, 2016).

Data collection was carried out through a systematic literature review process involving the identification, documentation, and critical examination of literature related to moral, ethical, and spiritual values, as well as strategies for elderly assistance within guidance and counseling services (Bowen, 2009). Additional data were obtained from health and nursing journals that discuss psychosocial well-being in older adults and non-pharmacological interventions aimed at improving mental health among elderly individuals with empty nest syndrome. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis by organizing data into key themes, interpreting the meaning of each theme, and synthesizing findings to formulate strategies for integrating Hamka's philosophical values into guidance and counseling services and geriatric nursing practices (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Data trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation and peer review involving experts in guidance and counseling and geriatric nursing to maintain interpretive consistency and analytical rigor (Shenton, 2004).

The research findings are presented in a descriptive narrative form emphasizing the integration of Hamka's values into BK practices for elderly individuals experiencing empty nest syndrome, both through individual and group counseling interventions. This conceptual framework is expected to serve as a foundational reference for geriatric nurses and counselors in developing elderly support services that are humanistic, holistic, and aligned with the cultural values of Indonesian society (Rahmah, 2015).

RESULTS

Literature analysis indicates that older adults experiencing empty nest syndrome undergo significant psychosocial changes that directly affect their mental health and overall quality of life. These changes include persistent feelings of loneliness, loss of social and familial roles, diminished meaning in life, and an increased risk of mild to moderate anxiety and depressive symptoms (Aiken, 1995). Such conditions are closely associated with reduced interaction with adult children and shifts in the roles and functions of older adults within family and community systems (Arya Fendha Ibnu Shina, 2022). These findings reinforce the understanding that empty nest syndrome constitutes a multidimensional phenomenon that extends beyond psychological distress to encompass moral, spiritual, and social dimensions of elderly well-being.

Characteristics of Research Data Sources

The results of data source identification show that this research is supported by balanced conceptual and applied literature, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Research Data Sources

Data Source Types	n	%
Hamka's book	6	30.0
Scientific journal articles	10	50.0
BK policy document	4	20.0
Total	20	100

Table 1 shows that most of the data sources come from scientific journal articles and Hamka's works, which strengthen the conceptual analysis and the relevance of implementing moral and spiritual values in guidance and counseling services for the elderly.

Psychosocial Themes of Elderly with Empty Nest Syndrome

Literature analysis identified the main themes of psychosocial problems experienced by elderly people with empty nest syndrome, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Psychosocial Themes of Elderly with Empty Nest Syndrome

Psychosocial Themes	Major Impact on the Elderly
Lonely	Social withdrawal, negative emotions
Loss of role	Decreased self-esteem and meaning of life
Decreased meaning of life	Existential emptiness
Vulnerability to mental disorders	Mild-moderate anxiety and depression

These findings indicate that the elderly need assistance that is not only psychological-clinical in nature, but also touches on the dimensions of the meaning of life and spiritual values.

Relevant Themes of Hamka's Philosophical Thought

The results of the thematic analysis of Hamka's philosophical thinking identified four main themes that are relevant to guidance and counseling services for the elderly with empty nest syndrome (Table 3).

Table 3. Main Themes of Hamka's Philosophical Thought

Main Theme	Frequency of Appearance	Percentage (%)
Moral integrity	18	90.0
Spiritual awareness	17	85.0
Character development	16	80.0
Social responsibility	15	75.0

These themes show that Hamka's thinking provides a strong foundation of values to help the elderly accept changing roles, strengthen psychosocial resilience, and rediscover the meaning of life in the elderly phase.

The Relationship between Hamka's Theme and the Form of Guidance and Counseling Services

The analysis also illustrates the relationship between Hamka's thought themes and the form of BK services, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The Relationship between Hamka's Thought Themes and the Form of Guidance and Counseling Services

Theme	Individual Counseling	Group Counseling
Moral integrity	Tall	Currently
Spiritual awareness	Tall	Currently
Character development	Currently	Tall
Social responsibility	Currently	Tall

Table 4 shows that individual counseling is effective for self-reflection and meaning of life in the elderly, while group counseling is more suitable for strengthening the social roles and social interactions of the elderly after empty nest syndrome.

Integrative Synthesis and Relevance of Gerontological Nursing

The results of the multivariate analysis indicate that the integrated application of moral integrity and spiritual awareness values plays a significant role in strengthening ethical decision-making, self-awareness, and social responsibility among older adults. This integration can be operationalized through ethical reflection on life experiences, spiritual guidance, and character-building processes within Guidance and Counseling (BK) services (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Rahmah, 2015). These findings suggest that value-based interventions provide a structured framework for supporting older adults in making meaning of their life trajectories and maintaining moral coherence in later life.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that Hamka's values-based approach is highly relevant to geriatric nursing practice, particularly in the domains of therapeutic communication

and psychosocial support. The integration of moral and spiritual values enables nurses and counselors to establish empathetic and trust-based relationships, recognize and respect older adults' lived experiences, and promote their active social and spiritual participation within family and community contexts. Such an approach aligns with holistic models of elderly care that emphasize not only psychological well-being but also ethical reflection, spiritual meaning, and social connectedness as essential components of mental health in old age.

Based on the research results, it is confirmed that Hamka's philosophical thinking provides a systematic, humanistic, and contextual framework of Indonesian cultural values to enrich Guidance and Counseling services and geriatric nursing in improving the mental health and psychosocial well-being of the elderly with empty nest syndrome.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that Hamka's philosophical thinking has strong relevance for integration into Guidance and Counseling (BK) services for older adults experiencing empty nest syndrome, particularly in strengthening moral, spiritual, and social dimensions. These findings confirm that psychosocial problems among older adults in the empty nest phase cannot be adequately addressed through purely clinical or psychological approaches alone; rather, they require a holistic framework that positions meaning in life, values, and socio-cultural context as integral components of elderly mental health (Papalia & Martorell, 2021). This perspective aligns with public health and lifespan development approaches, which emphasize that psychosocial well-being in later life is shaped by the continuous interaction of psychological, spiritual, and social factors (Santrock, 2019).

Moral integrity, as emphasized in Hamka's philosophical thought, can be understood as an ethical foundation that enables older adults to adapt to changes in social roles and functions following the departure of their children from the household. Among older adults experiencing empty nest syndrome, the loss of the primary caregiving role often triggers feelings of worthlessness and diminished self-esteem. Moral integrity contributes to maintaining a stable sense of self-worth, fostering mature acceptance of life transitions, and perceiving old age as a meaningful phase within the broader life journey (Pinquart & Sörensen, 2003). These findings are consistent with existential and humanistic counseling perspectives, which emphasize personal responsibility, freedom of choice, and meaning-making as core mechanisms of psychological adaptation in later life (Hurlock, 2019). Previous studies have also demonstrated that values- and ethics-based counseling interventions enhance moral maturity and adaptive decision-making capacities among adults and older populations (Stuart, 2021).

Spiritual awareness, as articulated in Hamka's thinking, plays a significant role in strengthening the mental health of older adults experiencing empty nest syndrome. In this context, spirituality extends beyond formal religious practices to encompass an awareness of life's meaning, acceptance of personal destiny, and transcendental connectedness that fosters inner peace. Integrating spiritual dimensions into guidance and counseling services enables older adults to reinterpret experiences of loneliness and role loss as existential processes that contribute to wisdom and personal growth (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). This finding is consistent with evidence indicating that spiritually oriented interventions enhance psychological resilience, coping capacity, and protection against stress and depressive symptoms in older adults (World Health Organization, 2025). Within Indonesia's religious and communal sociocultural context, such an approach is particularly relevant and culturally congruent for elderly mental health services (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020).

Furthermore, the emphasis on character development and social responsibility in Hamka's philosophy has important implications for both guidance and counseling services and geriatric nursing practice. Older adults experiencing empty nest syndrome often face reduced social participation, which may lead to prolonged isolation and loneliness. Strengthening values of social responsibility encourages older adults to remain actively engaged in extended family roles, community activities, and social interactions in accordance with their physical and psychosocial capacities. This perspective aligns with the healthy aging paradigm, which identifies

social engagement as a key determinant of mental health and quality of life in later adulthood (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). Previous research has shown that counseling and mentoring interventions grounded in social and cultural values can enhance empathy, social awareness, and the quality of interpersonal relationships among older adults (Corey, 2017).

Overall, this study makes a conceptual contribution by positioning Hamka's philosophical thinking as a systematic and applicable source of local wisdom for addressing the psychosocial challenges of older adults experiencing empty nest syndrome. Hamka's thought offers not only moral and spiritual values but also a coherent framework for meaning-making that is particularly relevant to the later stages of life (Potter et al., 2020). These findings enrich the development of Guidance and Counseling scholarship, especially in designing promotive and preventive services rooted in national cultural values and local wisdom. Based on the present analysis, the integration of Hamka's philosophical thinking into counseling services for older adults with empty nest syndrome is supported by both theoretical and empirical foundations. This approach has the potential to expand the role of counseling and geriatric nursing beyond curative interventions toward promotive and preventive efforts that enhance mental health, psychosocial well-being, and quality of life in a holistic and sustainable manner.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Hamka's philosophical thoughts are highly relevant to be integrated into Guidance and Counseling services for the elderly with empty-nest syndrome, particularly in supporting mental health and psychosocial well-being holistically by strengthening moral integrity, spiritual awareness, character development, and social responsibility. Research findings show that elderly people with empty nest syndrome not only experience emotional and psychological problems, but also face a decline in the meaning of life and social roles, thus requiring a support approach that goes beyond the psychological aspect. The integration of Hamka's values into counseling services has been conceptually shown to help seniors reinterpret changing life roles, strengthen psychosocial resilience, and achieve balance among the moral, spiritual, and social dimensions.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that Guidance and Counseling practitioners develop value-based and locally rooted elderly support services through ethical reflection, spiritual support, and the strengthening of meaning in life. Educational institutions and policymakers are expected to support the development of a humanistic, culturally contextualized elderly health care curriculum and programs. Further research is recommended to empirically test the effectiveness of the Hamka-based BK service model in improving mental health and quality of life for elderly with empty nest syndrome.

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