



## **Syncretic Cognitive Behavioral Counseling: Developing Students' Meaning of Life through the Blended Values of Islamic and Osing Culture**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The *Osing* culture embodies syncretic values that influence individuals respond to life's challenges and shape their values and belief as part of their meaning of life (*MoL*). This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of integrating *Osing* cultural syncretism into Cognitive Behavioral Counseling (*CBC*) to support students in developing *MoL* based on creative, experiential, and attitudinal dimensions. A quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design was used, involving 30 students from the *Osing* ethnic group by purposive sampling. Data were collected using the Meaning of Life Questionnaire (*MLQ*), adapted to reflect *Osing* cultural constructs, supported with alpha reliability at .769. The results were analyzed using a paired-sample t-test. Findings revealed a significant positive difference in students' *MoL* scores after the intervention, supporting the effectiveness of the syncretic *CBC* model as the significant value below .001. The blended *Osing* cultural and *Islamic* values had become syncretism practices in the community spiritual dimension. This contributes in counseling for students' cognitive reframing and value-based decision-making. Syncretism serves as a foundation for belief systems and automatic thought patterns. This study suggests culturally grounded counseling to enhance psychological outcomes based on exploration of *Osing* spiritual-cultural practices, like *Barong Ider Bumi*, *Tumpeng Sewu*, and other local wisdoms.

**Keywords:** Cognitive Behavior Counseling; Cultural-Counseling; Meaning of Life; *Osing* Culture; Syncretism

### **ABSTRAK**

Budaya *Osing* memiliki nilai *sinkretisme* yang memengaruhi individu dalam merespon tantangan kehidupan dan membentuk nilai dan keyakinan sebagai bagian dari *Meaning*

of Life (MoL) pada dirinya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji keefektifan dari integrasi budaya *sinkretisme Osing* ke dalam *Cognitive Behavior Counseling (CBC)* guna membantu pengembangan *MoL* siswa berdasarkan nilai kreatif, eksperiensial, dan atitudinal. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain quasi-experimental pretest-posttest, melibatkan 30 siswa beretnis *Osing* melalui purposive sampling. Pengumpulan data menggunakan *Meaning of Life Questionnaire (MLQ)*, yang diadaptasi dengan merefleksikan konstruk budaya *Osing*, didukung reliabilitas alpha .769. Hasil penelitian dianalisis menggunakan paired-sample t-test. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan adanya perbedaan positif signifikan atas skor *MLQ* siswa setelah intervensi dengan nilai signifikansi di bawah .001. Hal ini mendukung bukti keefektifan Model *Syncretic CBC*. Budaya *Osing* dan nilai *Islam* yang telah terintegrasi dan saling bercampur dalam praktik *sinkretisme* dalam dimensi spiritual masyarakat. Praktik ini berkontribusi dalam proses *reframing* kognitif dan pengambilan keputusan berbasis nilai. *Sinkretisme* menjadi landasan terbentuknya *belief system* dan pola pikiran otomatis siswa *Osing*. Penelitian ini menekankan potensi konseling berlandaskan budaya untuk meningkatkan kondisi *psychological outcome* berdasarkan eksplorasi lebih lanjut terhadap praktik spiritual dalam budaya *Osing*, seperti *Barong Ider Bumi*, *Tumpeng Sewu*, dan kearifan lokal lainnya.

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**Kata kunci:** *Cognitive Behavior Counseling*; Konseling Budaya; *Meaning of Life*; Budaya *Osing*; *Sinkretisme*

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## INTRODUCTION

The *Osing* culture represents a syncretic value system that profoundly shapes the community's attitudes and responses toward diverse life domains (Iswanto et al., 2023). Recognized as one of Indonesia's culturally protected ethnic groups, the *Osing* people have attained formal acknowledgment, particularly through the establishment of *Desa Wisata Adat Osing* in Kemiren Village, Banyuwangi, Indonesia (Ardiansyah et al., 2024). During the 1990s, public discourse often attributed mystical abilities to the *Osing* community as a perception lacking scientific validation yet persisting in societal perspectives (Putro & Setiawati, 2022). Such narratives transcend mere folklore, reflecting the community's profound spiritual engagement with both natural and metaphysical realms.

This syncretism stems from a historical evolution of belief systems, transitioning from animism and dynamism to Hindu-Buddhism, and subsequently to Islam (Hanafi et al.,

2018). Rather than supplanting one another, these belief systems intertwined over generations, creating a spiritual-cultural framework wherein Islam as religion and *Adat* as customary wisdom exert equal influence. This distinctive integration cultivates a cognitive and emotional worldview shaped by both Islamic doctrine and ancestral traditions (Gavrilova et al., 2018). In *Osing* society, these dual systems establish a shared intersubjective meaning structure that functions as a moral compass grounded theologically and culturally.

Such syncretic orientation manifests in various traditional ceremonies and religious-cultural expressions including *lontar yusuf*, *rapalan*, *tumpeng sewu*, *kebo-keboan*, *sawitan*, and *barong ider bumi* (Hanafi et al., 2018; Kurniasari et al., 2019). Each ritual serves as a living testament to how gratitude, supplication, and spiritual awareness are embedded within religious rites and cultural performances (Fajaryanto & Subiyanto, 2020; Paramita et al., 2018). Beyond heritage preservation, these practices operate as communal mechanisms transmitting values, norms, and identity across generations. Consequently, the syncretism inherent in *Osing* culture influences their individuals, especially students, in interpreting experiences, making life decisions, and constructing their sense of meaning and purpose.

Within this cultural milieu, syncretism shapes what psychologists term the “human view” as a cognitive lens through which individuals perceive themselves, others, and the environment (Aldwin et al., 2014; Solleveld, 2025). The *Osing* worldview, deeply integrating faith and tradition, diverges from the individualistic or secular perspectives typically assumed in mainstream psychological frameworks. This worldview informs how individuals construct meaning, interpret suffering, and define purposeful existence as core dimensions of life’s meaning (Lokhov et al., 2018; Routledge & FioRito, 2021).

Recent research underscores the search for meaning in life as a vital developmental task, especially during adolescence, a phase marked by identity confusion, existential uncertainty, and value disorientation (Lokhov et al., 2018; Martela & Steger, 2016). Adolescents from culturally embedded communities such as the *Osing* are not exempt from these challenges. Although their environment offers abundant spiritual and moral resources, these are not always effectively activated or contextualized to support youth facing contemporary psychosocial pressures. Thus, meaning of life transcends philosophical discourse to become a psychological necessity linked with resilience, well-being, and

decision-making (Hidayah, Hanafi, et al., 2020). Previous studies have examined adolescent vulnerability in meaning of life relative to low resilience (Hidayah, Hanafi, et al., 2020), self-acceptance (Zuanny & Subandi, 2015), post-traumatic growth (Hanafi et al., 2025), motivation (Yu et al., 2022) and other psychological aspects.

Furthermore, deficiency in life meaning among adolescents correlates with adverse outcomes such as academic disengagement (Hidayah et al., 2022; Muniroh et al., 2016), emotional distress (Gunawan & Oriza, 2022), behavioral issues (Darimis et al., 2022), and heightened risks of depression and anxiety (Alfadla et al., 2020; Hidayah et al., 2025). In Indonesia's, the adolescents had the environment context that characterized by academic pressures, socioeconomic inequalities, and evolving cultural influences. This context make the adolescents frequently struggle to anchor their experiences within coherent value frameworks (Afdal et al., 2023; Habsy et al., 2019; Saputra et al., 2023). While *Osing* culture offers a reservoir of spiritual and moral wisdom, students often find it challenging to translate these into practical internalized frameworks.

These observations emphasize the urgent developmental and psychological imperative to assist adolescents in constructing culturally grounded meaning systems. Interventions such as counseling and psychotherapy, if implemented without cultural adaptation, risk ineffectiveness for clients whose cognitive and emotional schemas are shaped by distinct belief systems and practices (Cantrill, 2024; Fitriyah et al., 2022; Mappiare-AT et al., 2019). Hence, the internalized values of the *Osing* necessitate counseling approaches that honor and integrate their unique cultural-religious identities.

At its foundation, *Cognitive Behavioral Counseling* (CBC) aims to restructure maladaptive thought patterns to positively affect emotions and behaviors (Beck, 2021; Beck & Fleming, 2021). However, CBC's original design emerged from a Western secular paradigm prioritizing individual rationality over collective, spiritual, or culturally embedded values. For communities like the *Osing*, whose worldview merges religious devotion and traditional customs, cognitive interventions neglecting these cultural dimensions risk misalignment with clients' lived realities (Harahap et al., 2019; Hidayah et al., 2018b). Therefore, integrating syncretic spiritual values of Islam and *Osing* traditions into CBC may enhance its cultural relevance and therapeutic efficacy, particularly in addressing existential constructs such as meaning of life. Spiritual practices like *rapalan* (islamic chants), *lontar*

*yusuf* (religious storytelling), *sawitan* (cultural habit), and symbolic rituals such as *kebo-keboan* provide cultural anchors conducive to cognitive reframing rooted in familiar values and collective belief systems (Hanafi et al., 2018; Indarti & Wangi, 2015; Nurhayati et al., 2025).

Embedding *Osing* values within CBC's change mechanisms fosters stronger cultural congruence. A culturally grounded CBC model is likely to increase acceptance and internalization of counseling outcomes, especially among children and adolescents in value formation stages (Darimis et al., 2022; Mony et al., 2022). Prior research in China (Ng & Wong, 2018), Pakistan (Hosseini Rafsanjani et al., 2017), Lebanon (Husain & Hodge, 2016), and Latin America (Guzmán-Pimentel & Rojas-Solís, 2022) has demonstrated CBC's adaptability when localized cultural and spiritual values are incorporated effectively. Thus, the *Osing* context presents a promising avenue for culturally responsive counseling research, where meaning-making integrates cognitive, behavioral, spiritual, and communal dimensions.

This study aims to evaluate the efficacy of a culturally integrated CBC model incorporating *Osing* community's syncretic values in enhancing students' meaning of life. CBC has shown effectiveness in improving life meaning across various contexts (Dewitte & Dezutter, 2021; Hidayah et al., 2018a; Hidayah, Hanafi, et al., 2020; Yuen & Datu, 2021). Accordingly, CBC may function not only as a reactive or curative approach but also as a developmental intervention.

The hypothesis posits a significant positive effect of syncretic CBC on attitudinal values and meaning of life among *Osing* students. This research is expected to broaden both theoretical and practical perspectives on CBC by presenting a culturally embedded model that supports "culturally accepted" and "culturally reinforced" psychological outcomes, particularly within ethnic groups like the *Osing* whose values and worldview diverge from mainstream therapeutic norms.

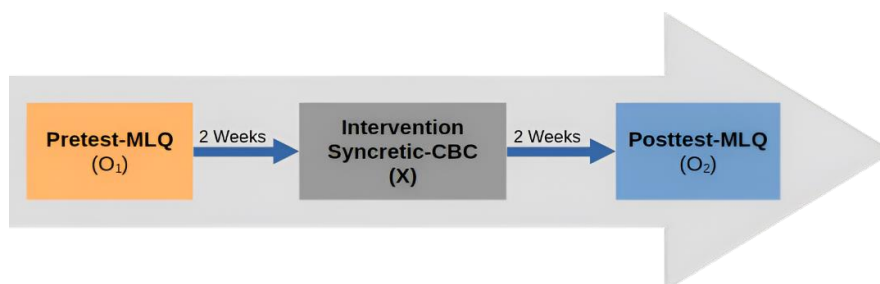
## METHODS

This study utilized a quasi-experimental design employing a pretest-posttest framework without a control group (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The objective was to assess the efficacy of *Syncretic Cognitive Behavioral Counseling* (CBC), a model

integrating Islamic-*Osing* cultural values, in enhancing students' sense of meaning in life. This design facilitated an applied intervention within a naturalistic environment while allowing for statistical evaluation of changes between pre-intervention (pretest) and post-intervention (posttest) measurements (Miller et al., 2020). The research design is depicted in Figure 1.

The research population comprised 96 *Osing* adolescents culturally affiliated with the *Osing* ethnic group and adhering to its syncretic traditions of Islam and indigenous heritage. The sample included 30 *Osing* students from Banyuwangi, East Java, Indonesia, selected via convenience sampling. These participants represented the sole accessible ninth-grade *Osing* students from one school, as the alternative school had only 2 to 10 ninth-grade *Osing* students, potentially introducing bias due to differing school environments. Subjects were high school students aged 15 to 17 years, corresponding to early to mid-adolescence as this range was a critical developmental stage for identity exploration and existential orientation.

To operationalize the primary construct, the *Meaning of Life Questionnaire* (MLQ) (Hanafi et al., 2018; Jovanović et al., 2024; Martela & Steger, 2016) was administered during both pretest and posttest phases. The MLQ encompasses two subscales: Presence of Meaning (e.g., “I understand my life’s meaning”) and Search for Meaning (e.g., “I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful”). Each subscale measures three dimensions of meaning of life values that are creative, attitudinal, and experiential. This instrument has been adapted to the *Osing* framework by Hanafi (Hanafi et al., 2018) comprising 19 items. It underwent linguistic adaptation and cultural validation specific to the *Osing*-Islamic context (Hanafi et al., 2018). Preliminary testing among *Osing* adolescents demonstrated adequate reliability with a Cronbach’s alpha of .769, and item validity coefficients ranged from .327 to .658 based on bivariate analysis.



**Figure 1.** Research Design

**Table 1.**

Meaning of Life Score Categorization

Score Interval	Percentage Interval (%)	Category
64.61 - 76.00	85.01% - 100.00%	Very High
53.21 - 64.60	70.01% - 85.00%	High
41.81 - 53.20	55.01% - 70.00%	Moderate
30.41 - 41.80	40.01% - 55.00%	Low
0 - 30.40	0% - 40%	Very Low

The intervention commenced with group formation and norming sessions aimed at fostering conformity and trust. Participants were randomly assigned into five groups of six members each. Following group cohesion, the main intervention progressed through three stages: (1) Session 1 focused on cognitive diagnostics assessing participants' Meaning of Life status and internalization of *Osing* cultural values; (2) Session 2 engaged participants in cognitive restructuring by employing traditional narratives and proverbs to reinterpret personal challenges and goals through a meaningful lens; (3) Session 3 emphasized value-driven action, encouraging reflection on life purpose, moral priorities, and culturally religious practices as guiding frameworks for decision-making.

Upon completion of the intervention, participants undertook the posttest using the same MLQ instrument. Data were analyzed descriptively to examine differences in mean scores and variability, including classification of MLQ scores per Table 1 guidelines. Additionally, N-gain analysis quantified the average change in scores. Subsequently, paired-sample *t*-tests were conducted to evaluate the statistical significance of improvements in students' Meaning of Life scores.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive statistics indicate that the mean pretest score was 77.10 (SD = 8.75), increasing to a mean posttest score of 79.71 (SD = 9.60). This reflects an average gain of +2.60 points following the three-session intervention, suggesting a positive trajectory in the enhancement of participants' meaning of life. Detailed data are presented in Table 2.



**Table 2.**  
Descriptive Results

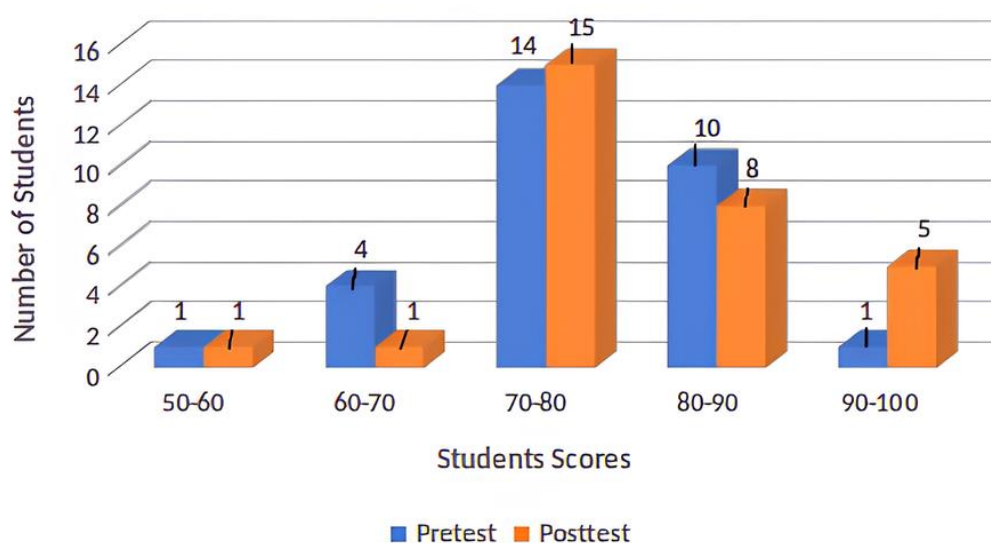
No	Pretest (%)	Posttest (%)	Gain	Gain (%)	Gain Category	Posttest Category
1	53.26	50.00	-3.26	-6.1%	Negative	Low
2	60.14	64.71	+4.56	+7.6%	Positive	Moderate
3	69.20	77.21	+8.00	+11.6%	Positive	High
4	69.57	77.21	+7.64	+11.0%	Positive	High
5	69.93	70.59	+0.66	+0.9%	Neutral	High
6	70.65	71.32	+0.67	+0.9%	Neutral	High
7	70.65	74.26	+3.61	+5.1%	Positive	High
8	71.01	71.32	+0.31	+0.4%	Neutral	High
9	71.01	75.74	+4.72	+6.6%	Positive	High
10	72.10	77.94	+5.84	+8.1%	Positive	High
11	73.19	75.74	+2.55	+3.5%	Positive	High
12	73.91	75.00	+1.09	+1.5%	Positive	High
13	75.00	78.68	+3.68	+4.9%	Positive	High
14	76.81	79.41	+2.60	+3.4%	Positive	High
15	77.54	72.06	-5.48	-7.1%	Negative	High
16	77.54	80.88	+3.35	+4.3%	Positive	High
17	78.26	80.88	+2.62	+3.3%	Positive	High
18	78.99	78.68	-0.31	-0.4%	Neutral	High
19	79.35	76.47	-2.88	-3.6%	Negative	High
20	80.07	86.76	+6.69	+8.4%	Positive	Very High
21	81.52	85.29	+3.77	+4.6%	Positive	Very High
22	82.61	83.09	+0.48	+0.6%	Neutral	High
23	84.78	87.50	+2.72	+3.2%	Positive	Very High
24	85.14	86.76	+1.62	+1.9%	Positive	Very High
25	86.59	91.91	+5.32	+6.1%	Positive	Very High
26	87.32	88.97	+1.65	+1.9%	Positive	Very High
27	87.68	93.38	+5.70	+6.5%	Positive	Very High
28	88.04	94.12	+6.07	+6.9%	Positive	Very High
29	89.86	91.91	+2.06	+2.3%	Positive	Very High
30	91.30	93.38	+2.08	+2.3%	Positive	Very High

The frequency distribution of student scores depicted in Figure 2 further illustrates this improvement. At pretest, the majority of students (14 out of 30) scored within the 70–



80 range. Post-intervention, this range remained predominant (15 students); however, there was a discernible shift toward higher score brackets. Notably, the number of students scoring between 90 and 100 rose from one at pretest to five at posttest, while those in the 60–70 range declined from four to one. These shifts signify a general upward movement in score distribution.

A paired-sample *t*-test was employed to assess the statistical significance of the observed score increase. Results, detailed in Table 3, revealed a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores:  $t(29) = -4.563$ ,  $p < .001$ , with a mean difference of -2.604 and a 95% confidence interval of [-3.772, -1.437]. This confirms that the improvement in students' meaning of life scores post-intervention was unlikely due to chance. Furthermore, a strong positive correlation between pretest and posttest scores was observed ( $r = .946$ ,  $p < .001$ ), reinforcing the reliability of these findings.



**Figure 2.** The Frequency Distribution of Student Scores

**Table 3.**

Effect of Syncretic Cognitive Behavioral Counseling

Measure	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>t</i>	df	D	CI	
						Lower	Upper
Pretest- Posttest	.000	.946	-4.563	29	2.604	-3.772	-1.437

**Note.** The data were tested using *paired samples t-test*. CI= Confidence Interval

While individual gain scores varied, with some students exhibiting minor decreases attributable to natural variability, the overall trend supports the effectiveness of the culturally tailored CBC intervention. The increase in mean scores and the statistically significant pre-post differences demonstrate that integrating culturally and religiously meaningful content within cognitive-behavioral strategies can effectively enhance students' life purpose and existential clarity.

Initially, some students employed *rapalan* primarily in life-threatening contexts, such as encountering snakes or navigating darkness at night. Throughout the intervention, participants gained confidence by utilizing *rapalan* as a coping mechanism in daily activities, including academic and career-related goals. Their *rapalan* practice functioned to regulate negative self-talk and maladaptive perspectives, including intrusive visual imagery, that impeded performance and self-confidence.

These results support the hypothesis that a syncretic CBC approach, grounded in the lived religious and cultural traditions of the *Osing* community, offers a meaningful counseling framework. This outcome aligns with extant literature on culturally adapted counseling models and underscores the importance of incorporating indigenous wisdom into psychological interventions.

The findings of this study underscore the efficacy of integrating syncretic cultural values derived from the *Osing* community's traditions into *Cognitive Behavioral Counseling* (CBC) to enhance students' sense of meaning in life. The incorporation of cultural and religious practices are most notably the utilization of *rapalan* as a spiritual expression. This incorporation proved both feasible and psychologically impactful. This research substantiates that culturally embedded interventions can foster attitudinal development and personal growth when aligned with the lived experiences and belief systems of the target population.

At the core of this intervention lies the transformation of *rapalan*, a traditional *Osing* ritual historically associated with magical spells for protection and guidance (Hanafi et al., 2018). Over time, with the ascendancy of Islam within the *Osing* community, these magical components were gradually supplanted by *do'a*, Islamic supplications (Putro & Setiawati, 2022). This evolution exemplifies natural syncretism (Gavrilova et al., 2018), wherein indigenous customs and Islamic teachings coexist and mutually enrich. Crucially, this

adaptation preserved the spiritual potency of *rapalan*, reframing it to align with Islamic values while maintaining its role in everyday life.

Within Islamic tradition, *do'a* holds a pivotal role as both a religious act and a habitual coping strategy (Fitriyah et al., 2021). It functions as a medium for individuals to express hopes, fears, and gratitude to God, thereby facilitating emotional regulation, patience, and spiritual resilience (Alfadla et al., 2020; Mulya et al., 2022). Among *Osing* youth, *do'a* has been internalized beyond ritual compliance to serve as a personalized cognitive tool for interpreting challenges and decision-making, paralleling the objectives of cognitive restructuring in CBC (Hinton & Patel, 2017). This convergence of cultural practice and counseling technique fosters participant engagement by rendering the therapeutic process both familiar and meaningful (Habsy & Wahyuni, 2019; Kiyimba & Anderson, 2022; Naeem et al., 2019).

The intervention effectively demonstrated that *do'a*, as embedded within *osing rapalan*, can be repurposed as a culturally congruent coping mechanism. From a cognitive-behavioral perspective, this practice facilitates the identification, challenge, and reframing of irrational cognitions, while providing emotional catharsis and spiritual affirmation (Ciccarelli et al., 2021; Crumb & Haskins, 2017; Darimis et al., 2022; Hidayah, Yuliana, et al., 2020). Consequently, the culturally informed CBC model equipped students with psychological tools alongside moral and existential anchors drawn from their own cultural identity.

This cultural-psychological synthesis was particularly effective in reinforcing the attitudinal dimension of meaning of life, one of the three values articulated by Viktor Frankl and further developed in meaning-centered approaches (Hidayah, Hanafi, et al., 2020; Lokhov et al., 2018). Attitudinal values pertain to an individual's capacity to derive meaning through their stance toward inevitable suffering, uncertainty, or adversity (Bartrés-Faz et al., 2018; Hidayah & Ramli, 2017). Within the *Osing* syncretic framework, these attitudes are informed by spiritual reflection (*mawas diri*), collective responsibility, and value-driven living elements reinforced through narrative reflection and *do'a*-based activities during sessions. Such processes assisted students in translating cultural values into behavioral choices and psychological insights (Dewitte & Dezutter, 2021; Ginting et al., 2019).

In addition to attitudinal development, the intervention engaged the experiential and creative dimensions of meaning. The experiential dimension involves openness to meaning derived from experiences, emotions, and relationships (Głaz, 2019; Su et al., 2014). Through storytelling, students reconnected with their cultural heritage and shared familial experiences, gaining emotional validation and renewed appreciation of their social context (Hidayah et al., 2024; Rofiqoh et al., 2021). The creative dimension is relating to the capacity for meaningful action and value generation. It was addressed via value-based behavioral planning (Hanafi et al., 2020; Yuen & Datu, 2021), encouraging students to align decisions with personal aspirations and collective cultural norms.

Importantly, these findings resonate with extant research emphasizing culturally adapted psychological interventions. Studies indicate that CBC tailored to reflect specific cultural and religious values enhances participant engagement and therapeutic outcomes. This process aligns therapeutic intervention with the community's belief system, facilitating meaning-making that is culturally accepted and reinforced (Hanafi et al., 2020; Price & Johnson, 2024; Beck, 2021; Fitriyah et al., 2022).

Meaning development, indoctrination, and growth in this study emanated from reflection grounded in *Osing* values, involving values consideration and perspective-taking integral to decision-making (Permatasari et al., 2024; Price & Johnson, 2024; Samadifard & Narimani, 2017). Alignment with the belief system supports individuals' assumptions, perceptions, norms, and coping strategies for dysfunctional cognition (Hanafi et al., 2022; Krafft et al., 2019). The group setting further bolstered perspective-taking based on *Osing* syncretic traditions, providing a supportive environment that reduced resistance to internalizing values (Darimis et al., 2022; Erby, 2019; Farhoudi et al., 2023). Moreover, successful practice of *rapalan* facilitated cognitive coping, enabling adjustment of maladaptive cognitive distortions.

Beyond practical efficacy, this study contributes to the discourse on indigenized psychological intervention, especially the paradigm shifting and movement aiming to decentralize Western and recognize the psychological sophistication embedded in local traditions (Habsy & Wahyuni, 2019; Crumb & Haskins, 2017; Roziqi et al., 2022). The *Osing*, with their history of religious and cultural negotiation, exemplify how indigenous practices can evolve while retaining psychological relevance (Putro & Setiawati, 2022;

Shofwan et al., 2022). By integrating *Osing* traditions into structured counseling, this research validates local wisdom as a credible therapeutic resource.

Despite these promising outcomes, the intervention utilized only a limited scope of the *Osing* cultural-spiritual repertoire. The emphasis on *rapalan* and *do'a* represents one facet of *osing* syncretism. Other syncretic practices such as *tumpeng sewu*, *barong ider bumi*, and *kebo-keboan* (ardiansyah et al., 2024; Indarti & Hasibin, 2018, 2019; Kurniasari et al., 2019; Septohadi et al., 2024) potentially offer additional layers of meaning related to ritual embodiment and communal identity. These rituals hold promise as therapeutic tools to further enhance meaning of life and other psychological outcomes. Future research should explore these elements and assess their applicability in group-based or expressive counseling modalities, including art or narrative therapy.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest promising directions for school counseling, especially in culturally pluralistic settings like Indonesia. Counselors working with ethnic minority students may adapt culturally salient symbols, narratives, and spiritual practices within intervention strategies. Such integration enhances receptivity and fosters cultural pride and intergenerational continuity, both linked to psychological resilience. Additionally, group-based culturally grounded interventions may provide supportive systems facilitating belief transformation and more effective value adaptation.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effectiveness of *Syncretic Cognitive Behavioral Counseling* (CBC), which integrates Islamic and *Osing* cultural values, in enhancing the meaning of life among students of *Osing* descent. Employing a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design, the intervention successfully incorporated traditional spiritual practices. It most notably the syncretic *rapalan*, integrating Islamic *do'a* as culturally responsive components within CBC techniques such as cognitive restructuring and coping skills development. The findings demonstrated a statistically significant positive improvement in students' meaning of life scores, particularly within the attitudinal dimension that captures how individuals leverage personal values to confront challenges and make purposeful decisions. These results underscore the potential of culturally embedded counseling models to enhance therapeutic efficacy by drawing on indigenous wisdom and culturally

internalized belief systems. This study contributes to the expanding discourse on culturally adapted counseling practices and affirms the importance of integrating spiritual-cultural identity into psychological interventions. Nonetheless, given the intervention's focus on a limited aspect of *Osing* culture, future research is recommended to examine a wider spectrum of cultural rituals, including *Tumpeng Sewu* and *Barong Ider Bumi*, as well as to extend the intervention duration and include more diverse student populations. Subsequent studies might also explore the applicability of these cultural elements within group-based or expressive counseling modalities, such as art therapy or narrative counseling.

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