

## The Effectiveness of Religious Module in Improving Psycho-Spiritual Health for Women Inmates in Prison

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**Abstract:** The implementation of religiosity and psycho-spiritual health through the module instrumentation is deemed significant to the inmates. Both entities are found to be effective in producing positive result. It is also believed to be able to train and treat patients' mental state and behavioral state, thus from recurring bad behaviors. Several methods have been applied including: Cross survey, interview and questionnaire survey, which involves 40 inmates in the prison for various delinquencies. This research is going to analyze the effectiveness of the psycho-spiritual module on the prison inmates before and after treatment. Due to the respondents' location, this research conducted at the Kajang Women prison in Malaysia. This article also evaluates the influence of religiousness inculcated in the treatment of inmates, which promotes changes in positive attitude, daily lifestyle, mental health and self-management. The result illustrates positive outcome from the implemented module before and after the psycho-spiritual treatment. As conclusion, the study findings give strong support for the effectiveness of religious approach in improving spiritual health for women inmates in prison. Thus, religious approach is recommended as an alternative to the current allopathic treatment method in dealing with the problem especially for women inmates in prison.

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### 1. Introduction

The implementation of religious elements proved to be effective to treat human inner wellness. The wellness itself encompasses three elements. First, the physical health, second the mental health and the spiritual health (World Health Organization, 2011) (Burke et.al, 2005). Most of studies in domain of health sciences encompass physical and mental aspects of human being. But there is still the dearth of research on spiritual health due to the difficulty of measurement. Scholars discovered religious and spiritual elements have surged through the medical field, being its capability to influence physical health (Ahmad Hisham et al., 2009) (Timothy, 2001). For instance, in America religion is perceived as an essential element among local communities. Researchers reported that 95 % of people believe in God, 80% among them state the significance of religion in their lives, 80% uses the power of prayer for the purpose of well-being, and more than 50% attended in monthly religious and divine congregation (Smith et al., 2002),

<http://www.youthandreligion.org/news/preliminary.html>, Accessed March 2, 2012).

By passing the time, it signifies that spiritual health is an important element in psycho-physical studies due to its ability to cure illness and produce positive results and its notable impacts on the physical health, besides various clinical treatments (Burke et al, 2005). This fact was supported by the result from a survey conducted by 'National Cancer Centre' in 2004 on 31000 respondents. It is found that more than 45% of the respondents have used prayer as a therapy for various reason, 43% has undergone the prayer therapy for recuperation from cancer, 25% request a third party to pray for the cure and 10% involved in the prayer congregation for health (Burke et al, 2005) (Barnes et al, 2004). (Jonas et al, 2003) has also discovered some patients diagnosed with serious illness wish to perform spiritual therapy through praying to God, in the hope of to lighten the burden whenever they face difficulties. Furthermore, it justified the ability of spiritual therapy for the prospective of the latest treatment medium for the patient and prison inmates.

## 2. Definition of spiritual health

There are numerous definitions for the concept of spiritual health. Batson et al. (1993) defines spiritual health as complex entities, an interchangeable phenomenon, and a narration of a person's life. The spirituality can be gained through a person's effort that combines the purity of heart through observation (National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), 2010). Other scholars support this by quoting that spiritual health is part of religion and the spiritual elements could be actualize through the religion (Medical dictionary, 2011) (Koeing, 2002). According to Olsen Steggink (1991), spiritual is not something that is outside ordinary life, but it is a life experience that is created by certain culture, place and time (Dunn et al, 2007). Sa'id Hawwa (2010) pointed out the spiritual elements relates to the reason and heart, that can be cured through the devotion towards god (Olsen Steggink, 1991). It can be concluded that there is connectivity between spiritual health and religious values although it could be influenced by societal belief and practical behaviors. Therefore, the spiritual elements that formed the basis of one's religion can be one of the influencing factors in due to its ability of creating belief and meaning in a person's life (Sa'id Hawwa, 2010) (Breitbart, 2002). Women progressively mature in building networks, exchanging ideas and generally learn from the experiences of others women (Megat Daud M.A.K et. al. (2013), more importantly those women-headed households, in the sense that women are expend their income mostly to support the family members Abdussalam O.I. et.al (2013). Hereby, this study is conducted to analyze the effectiveness of the implementation of religious values in psycho-spiritual based elements towards rehabilitant prison inmates in Kajang women prison, Malaysia.

## 3. Problem of study

This study aims to identify the relationship between the psycho-spiritual modules inspired by religiosity as the fundamental framework for rehabilitation in prison. The contribution of this study is seen in two folds of (a) to compare behavioral pattern, lifestyle and inmates' attitude during rehabilitation process, which inculcate religious elements in the program itself; (b) to evaluate the effectiveness of the religious and spiritual module towards mental health and positive behavioral changes.

## 4. Methodology and research instrument

This research methodology focused on library and field based researches (i.e. survey, observation, questionnaires and interview The survey method is

employed to observe and monitor few important subjects namely the effectiveness of module, the inmates' accommodation, the reaction towards module and the perception towards the module in the process of rehabilitation. In observation method, the session was conducted from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during five ordinary working days within a month. Such session was conducted to view the application process of the psycho-spiritual module. Questionnaires were also distributed among inmates. Some of the literate inmates completed questionnaires, and others were assisted by specific researchers. The questionnaires features Likert scale with five levels; being scale one represents extreme disagreement, and ends with scale five which represent extreme agreement. Last; semi-structured interview was conducted towards forty inmates and a few of prison officials. The data analysis was accomplished through the SPSS (version 20) software for the purpose of a thorough review.

## 5. Research Sampling

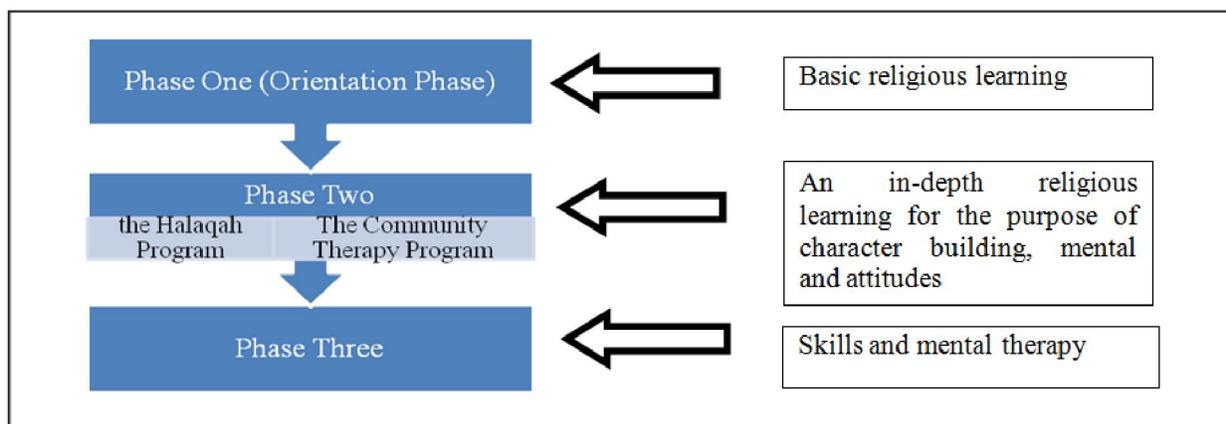
The aim behind the sampling process is to obtain the average information and perspectives towards the research (Patton, 1990). The research sampling was selected from women inmates who undergone the module on its second phase only. The reason for such selection is that the first phase of rehabilitation is the orientation period, which runs for six months. Consecutively, the inmates will enter the second phase, in which the period emphasizes on character building throughout six to seven months and will be evaluated before being allowed to undergo the third phase. During this phase, the inmates are more directed towards skill training and mental therapy, in preparation for the release. It should be noted that not all of the inmates are allowed to undergo the last phase, as the imprisonment period is subjected to the delinquencies. Therefore, the researchers are allowed to monitor only the second phase in due to the safety reason.

There are 40 inmates, who have been selected as respondents and involved in the second phase. The group is further divided; where only twenty three of them (56.5%) involved in the Community Therapy, which is designed for inmates with the drug delinquency and the remaining 17 (42.5%) involved in the *Halaqah* programme, which cater to delinquencies other than drugs. (*Halaqah* programme is designed specially for the Muslims who are not involved in any forms of drug cases. This programme is conducted for six months and its learning process is merely on religious/spiritual matters. This programme too, is aimed at producing residents who can embrace and implement the Islam as a way of

life). Most of the inmates in the second phase aged between twenty six to thirty years old (nine of them; (22.5%); twenty one to thirty five years old (seven of them; (17.5%), twenty one to twenty five years old (six of them; (15%), thirty six to forty years old (six of them ;( 15%), forty six to fifty nine years old (six of the; (15%), forty one to forty five years old; (10%), fifty one to fifty five years old (one of them; (2.5%) and sixty years and above (one of them; (2.5%).

In reference to the racial background, thirty of them are Malay (77.5%), four of them are India (10%), four of them are Chinese (10%) and the rest are from other races (2.5%). In addition, fourteen of them are married (35%), thirteen are divorced (32.5%), 11 unmarried (27.5%) and the remaining acquired other marital status (5%). In regard to the educational qualification, twenty eight of them

qualified up to secondary education (70%), six of them up to primary education (15%), two of them qualified as diploma holder (5%), one of them as a degree holder (2.5%) and three of them have never attended schools (7.5%). Majority of the inmates was imprisoned for the first time (twenty seven inmates, (67.5%), six of them was imprisoned between two to three times (15%), two of them between four to 6 times (5%) and the remaining five is more than ten times (12.5%). The types of delinquencies are recognized as drug Trafficking (nineteen inmates, (47.5%), breach of trust (five inmates, (12.5%), bribery (three inmates, (7.5%), more than one delinquency (three inmates, (7.5%)), conspiracy (2, (5%), impersonification dan threatening, extramarital pregnancy, killing attempt, abuse, kidnapping, robbery, owning robbed items and other delinquencies that is represented by one (2.5%).



**Figure 1:** Module instrumentation design for the prison inmates

Based on the above figure 1 flow chart, the prison's nurturing phase is segmented to three phase. In the first phase (the orientation phase), the inmates are thought on basic subjects such as belief towards God, the religious practices: obligation and prohibitions. They are also educated on basic religious law such as prayer, business transaction, matrimony, pilgrimage and so on.

In the following phase, the religious teachings is imparted further in depth. The difference between this phase and the former is that the teaching does not only remain in the theoretical aspect, but it is also transferred to the practical life in prison. In addition, the phase also emphasize on the character building, where attitude and discipline teaching is enforced in the aim of amending the previous bad lifestyle. Every past time is filled up with the Qur'anic recitation slot, supplications, and complimentary prayers and so forth.

The last phase is to uproot the learning during the previous phase, where inmates are directed towards building skills and entrepreneurship for the upcoming new life outside. Here, the religious teachings are being implemented but in various style such as Qur'anic recitation, sermon, lecture and so on. Usually, this phase are attended by inmates who are imprisoned for two years and above; it means all of them will not have the chance to undergo the period.

## 6. Finding

After the coding and consensus process, the inmates are segregated according to four main categories (i.e. based on the questionnaires): (1) Religious belief; (2) Positive Intentionality, (3) Positive self development (4) Agency. Each of these categories is discussed in verbatim which has been coded from the inmates' response.

Table 1. The category of questions on spiritual health and its influence on religious and societal belief

<p>Religious belief (Core belief)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The end result is solely for Allah S.W.T</li> <li>• The resolution to devote to Allah</li> <li>• Performing the five compulsory prayers</li> </ul> <p>Positive Intention Turnover</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making full use of opportunity towards the better</li> <li>• Fulfilling task without asking for any compliment</li> <li>• Doing the best in any work</li> <li>• Keen to learn and gain skill</li> <li>• Avoiding peer conflict</li> <li>• The resolution towards contributing to the society</li> <li>• The resolution to avoid betraying the family</li> <li>• The willingness to turnover for the sake of self and family</li> </ul> <p>Positive self changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More motivated after involvement in the program</li> <li>• Practice hygiene and cleanliness in lifestyle</li> <li>• Keen to offer the helping hand</li> <li>• No suicide attempt</li> <li>• No law obstruction</li> <li>• Not emotional during the decision making process</li> <li>• Does not procrastinate</li> <li>• Prompt in fulfilling promise</li> <li>• Not involved in confrontations</li> </ul> <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>Halaqah</i> program</li> <li>• The Community Therapy program</li> <li>• The prison nurturing method</li> <li>• The period of rehabilitation</li> <li>• The counseling for inmates</li> </ul>
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### **Religious Belief**

The strength of belief is the root of person strength. Belief is perceived to restrain a person from committing delinquencies that contradicts the religious commands. A firm assurance in God will enlighten the mission and vision of a person's life.

*"Before my imprisonment, I do not know how to perform my prayer and how to recite the Qur'an. I know that for the fact that I am a Muslim, but I do not execute it well. After undergoing the prison program, I feel more serene, and I did not miss prayer as well as digging more into the religious learning. (Respondent 1, the prison inmates", Religion Has Helped Me To Change A Lot. An interview on 14 January 2011)*

### **Positive output**

'Determination to be the best' is the goal of the inmates when they leave the prison in future. Therefore, the inmates did not waste the opportunity

to get fully recovered in the prison and transforming their bad attitudes into better ones.

*"After going out from the prison later, I want to search for a permissible (halal) job. I don't want to be involved with drugs anymore. I used to sell drugs to help my husband as he was not working and don't have enough money. I'm tired of getting imprisoned because of drugs; the sentence is six years long. I don't want my children to follow my footsteps. I will prove that I am going to be a good mother." (Respondent 2, inmate. Interview on 14 January 2011)*

This shows that the inmates were determined to perform their best throughout their presence even at Kajang prison. Besides, they are also motivated to change for the sake of family and aspired to be a productive Muslim who can contribute towards religion, country and nation. Skills obtained in the

prison will be utilized optimally to find compatible jobs with their status as the ex-inmates.

### **Positive Changes Post-Program**

The program held by the prison management brings about changing the inmates' attitude from negative to a more positive one. For instance, they are more motivated after joining the programs such as seminars, skill development workshops and others. Besides, they have also eliminate their unpleasant habits such as wasting time, unhygienic, attempts on committing suicide and violating the law. Through participating in the phase two for a period of six months, they have successfully educated the inmates to be more patient, hygienic and thinking more maturely before making decisions.

*"While at my house, I was not as clean as I've been in the prison. All house chores were done by my mother. If my mother sees me now, surely she won't*

*believe it."* (Respondent 3, inmates. Interview on 15 January 2011)

### **Agency**

Agency plays an important role in transforming attitudes of the inmates. Through exercises, methods, programs, modules, planning and social aids from peers and staffs will speed up the efforts of rejuvenating their morals and self-confidence. The *Halaqah* program, for example, use 100% religious elements to cure the inmates' morals. Their hearts are soften and revived with learning religion, the importance of religion in life, application of the religious obligations and the consequences of not practicing it. Quoted by the respondent:

*"I feel more calm and spend more time in performing the sunnah prayers and reciting the Qur'an"* (Respondent 4, inmates. Interview on 20 January 2011)

The process of statistic data codification can be referred to the table obtained below:

Table 2. Qualitative Report Result of the Competency Test on the Program Applied

	Mean (Before treatment)	Mean (After treatment)	Correlation(sig.)	Mean Differences (sig.)
E11 – Being Here is an <i>Amanah</i>	2.87	3.75	-0.069 (0.677)	0.949 (0)
E2a1 – Attempted Suicide	4.00	4.23	0.611 (0)	0.231 (0.13)
E2b1 – Attempted Escaping	4.23	4.20	0.475 (0.002)	-0.025 (0.85)
E2c1 – Pretend to be Sick	4.08	4.05	0.784 (0)	-0.025 (0.812)
E31 – Ultimate Goal is Allah	3.13	4.08	0.207 (0.201)	0.95 (0)
E41 – Reluctant to Perform Obligatory Prayers	3.53	3.78	0.549 (0)	0.25 (0.151)
E51 – Promise Not to Break Family's Trust	2.82	3.55	0.65 (0)	0.684 (0)
E61 – Enroll in the Center Voluntarily	2.69	3.73	0.445 (0.004)	1 (0)
E71 – Performing Tasks Without Hoping for Appraisals	3.77	3.85	0.708 (0)	0.051 (0.675)
E81 – Ready to Change Attitude for Oneself and Family	2.79	2.58	-0.102 (0.536)	-0.179 (0.514)
E91 – Have Violated the Laws Here	3.51	3.70	0.319 (0.048)	0.231 (0.193)
E101 – Give the Best in Each Task	3.72	4.05	0.491 (0.002)	0.308 (0.032)
E111 – Like to Seek Knowledge and Skills	3.51	4.10	0.483 (0.002)	0.564 (0.001)
E121 – Determine to Obey Allah	3.69	4.38	0.323 (0.045)	0.667 (0.001)
E131 – More Motivated After the Program	3.16	3.85	0.357 (0.028)	0.658 (0.002)
E141 – Practice Hygiene in Life	3.85	4.05	0.474 (0.002)	0.179 (0.228)
E151 – Emotional in Making Decisions	3.05	3.20	0.569 (0)	0.205 (0.16)
E16a1 – Like to Waste Time	3.68	3.98	0.483 (0.002)	0.3 (0.032)
E16b1 – Hard to Fulfill Promise	3.73	3.83	0.679 (0)	0.1 (0.352)
E171 – Rigid by the Design Timetable	3.51	3.43	0.583 (0)	-0.128 (0.442)
E181 – Like to Help Peers	3.92	4.05	0.894 (0)	0.103 (0.044)
E191 – Avoid Conflicts Between Peers	3.82	3.90	0.763 (0)	0.053 (0.571)
E201 – Do Not Mind to Partake in Fights	3.90	4.03	0.747 (0)	0.125 (0.303)
E211 – Selfish	4.13	4.13	0.695 (0)	0 (1)
E221 – Life in Prison is Suffering	2.50	2.83	0.628 (0)	0.325 (0.074)
E231 – To be a Contributive Individual	3.58	4.38	0.364 (0.021)	0.8 (0)

The tables above illustrate the output from the paired sample t-test. Test was conducted among the paired items (before and after) in E Section of the questionnaire form. The purpose of the questioned

item is to get the responds from respondents regarding certain items before and after the program participation. Items with negative statements are recoded to show the same direction with other

statements. Items involved are as such e2a, e2b, e2c, e4, e9, e15, e16a, e16b, e17, e20, e21 and e22.

As a background, there are two programs which have been implemented such as TC (Community Therapy) and *halaqah*. The table above shows the output of the overall samples (those who participated in both mentioned programs).

## 7. Discussion and conclusion

The objective of this research in to identify the health report of the inmates before and after undergoing the psycho-spiritual module at Kajang Women Prison found to have a positive results. Through this research, application of both instruments, spiritual and religious elements, manage to stimulate, harmonise and recover the health of the inmates. The result shows that there is an inter-relationship between the religion and spiritual influence towards the respondents' changes development through the obtained report.

There are four values which do not show any apparent changes to the inmates' attitudes comprising of selfishness, controlled by the design schedule held in the prison, have the inclination to escape from the prison in addition to have once cheated by pretending to be sick in order to skip programs held by the prison and lastly ability to change for the sake of oneself and the family. The inclination to escape is due to the tight learning schedule which emphasizes on imposing disciplinary. This is evident through the researcher's observation of the class which starts at 7 a.m. and ends at 6 p.m.. In second phase program, the inmates are really accentuated with the importance of time. They are strongly prohibited from small talks unless it involves matters regarding the ongoing programs. As the interview with a respondent follows"

*"...I'm fatigue and tired of the program's schedule. I don't have time for myself at all. I hope that I would be able to be out of this program as soon as possible"* (Respondent 5, inmate. Interview on 9 August 2011)

The stern and tight program application is never supported in Islam as mentioned in Qur'an 3: 159 connote the meaning:

*"So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad] you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you..."*

This proves that the program which was practiced with a stern and rigid cause the respondents to feel lazy, bored, unappealing and lost interest to continue. It indirectly entails a negative attitude and others such as pretending to be sick and inclination to escape from the institution as elaborated in Table 1 above.

As a background, there are two programs which have been implemented such as TC (Community Therapy) and *halaqah*. The table above shows the output of the overall samples (those who participated in both mentioned programs).

Generally, there is a significant connectivity between the preceding items and the succeeding items. The insignificant relation only was found at the item e1, e3 and e8. For all the mentioned items, there is a positive relation between 'before and after' joining the program. In other hand, if responds towards the preceding item is high, the responds towards the succeeding item is similarly high and otherwise.

Regarding the mean value showed by the preceding and succeeding items, it is found that there is an increase in the mean value for the total item (including the item transformation from negative to positive) except for item e2b, e2c, 2e and e17. Nevertheless, the negative differences for the four items are not significant. Besides, from all 26 items involved, only 11 items show the different significance between before and after (item e1, e3, e5, e6, e10, e11, e12, e13, e16a, e18 dan e23). It can be concluded that this program is efficient in certain aspects and otherwise in other aspects.

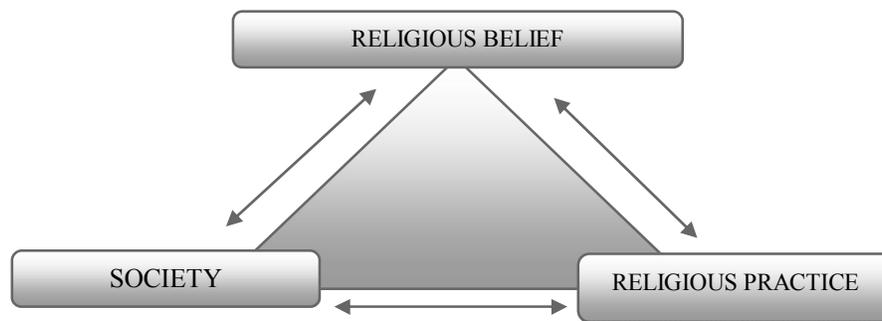
The efficiency of the spiritual development and health modules which instill religious values can be obtained from the table above which is strengthened by the previous researches. Among the scholars involved is Jones (2004), model which is proposed by him is built based on the effect of religion unto health. He found that there are several factors that bind the religious belief, practices of religion and health. Among them are:

i) The application and practices of religious activities promote to the responses of serenity from the health aspect. The activities are as such; performing prayers, reflections and meditations.

ii) Religion also entails to the declination of human involvement in the unhealthy activities for instance indulge in an unhealthy diet, adultery, smoking and others.

iii) A religious observant helps to increase the social support within the community and assist in producing positive physicals and good psychological health compared to those who do not practice religion.

Models which is established by Jones is further supported by the Koenig et. al (2001), religious model and bio-psychosocial health which is introduced by Koenig. It found that health sustains an extremely close relation with religion. Figure 2 as follows illustrates the model by Koenig;



## HEALTH

**Figure 2.** Source is a modification from the Religious Model and Bio-Psycho-Social Health by Koenig et al. (2001)

Based on the created model above, there is a close relation between the application of religious belief, execution of religious practices and its correlation with the society. This model further supports that the instillation of religious values and the internalisation which were incorporated within the psycho-spiritual model of the prison has promoted towards the betterment of the inmates. Moreover, by obeying and practicing religious values, it influences individuals' health, both physical and spiritual.

Rizzuto (2005) mentions, through exercising towards the religious obligations will eventually lead to serenity, happiness and will escalate the quality of life. On top of that, Furnham (1994) found that the element of spiritual belief which is embedded, manage to increase one's confidence to recover from the suffering of the illness. Therefore, the integration of religious spiritual elements into the modules used by the institution of prison was found to be successful in decreasing mental and emotional pressure of the inmates.

Evidently, this finding is added support by researches such as Ganzini et al (1998). He explains that high spiritual belief capable of promoting positive clinical influence towards patient's attitude and actions. Next, it will decrease the risk of getting ill (Donahue et al, 1995), (Lammer, et al, 2000), (Wallance and Foreman, 1998) and at the same time helping the individual to reduce emotional pressure and anxieties (Ahmad Hisham, 2009). The application of spiritual elements based on religion in the module was seen to be significant as it manage to change and assert individual's apprehension of his life (Jonas and Crawford, 2003) (Mary et al, 2008). This research is supported eminently with previous scholars' findings which proved that psycho-spiritual modules implemented in Kajang Women Prison was relevant to be practiced and need to be supervised and furbished from time to time. In summary, the

effective method of module application which is embodied with religious and spiritual elements found to have produced positive results and become the alternative to the current allopathic treatment method in dealing with the problem.

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