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**RETHINKING THE HUMANISTIC PARADIGM IN COUNSELING THE ELDERLY:
INTEGRATION OF CBT, LOGOTHERAPY, AND SPIRITUALITY
IN THE AGE OF BANI**

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ABSTRACT

The elderly are a vulnerable group facing loneliness, loss of social roles, declining health, death anxiety, and a diminished sense of meaning in life. These challenges are increasingly complex in the era of BANI (*Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, and Incomprehensible*), which is fragile, worrying, nonlinear, and difficult to understand. The humanistic paradigm in counseling emphasizes the self, self-actualization, core conditions, and therapeutic relationships as the basis for respecting human dignity. However, this approach needs to be reexamined because it does not fully provide structured techniques, deep meaning orientation, and spiritual strengthening that are appropriate to the needs of modern older adults. This article aims to critically analyze the humanistic paradigm in counseling for the elderly and formulate opportunities for integration with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, logotherapy, and spirituality. The method used is a literature review of various relevant scientific sources from the last five to ten years. The results of the study indicate that the humanistic paradigm remains important as a foundation for empathy, unconditional acceptance, congruence, and therapeutic relationships. CBT integration strengthens the change of maladaptive thoughts, logotherapy helps older adults find meaning in life, while spirituality strengthens acceptance, hope, and psychological well-being. Thus, rethinking the humanistic paradigm produces a more comprehensive, contextual, applicable, and relevant framework for counseling for the elderly in the current BANI era. This study is expected to serve as a conceptual basis for developing humanistic, evidence-based, meaningful counseling services for the elderly that align with Indonesian cultural and religious values.

Keywords: *Elderly; Humanistic Paradigm; CBT; Logotherapy; Spirituality; BANI Era.*

INTRODUCTION

Population aging is becoming an increasingly important global issue in the development of health, social, and psychological services. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that by 2030, one in six people worldwide will be aged 60 years or older. The WHO emphasizes that the mental health of older adults is a serious concern, as approximately 14% of people aged 70 years and older live with mental disorders, particularly depression and anxiety. Furthermore, loneliness and social isolation, experienced by approximately one-quarter of older adults, are significant risk factors for mental health in later life (World Health Organization, 2025).

In Indonesia, the issue of the elderly is increasingly urgent. The 2024 Elderly Population Statistics publication presents macro data on the demographic, health, education, social, economic, protection, and empowerment conditions of the elderly based on the March 2024 Susenas and August 2024 Sakernas (Central Statistics Agency [BPS], 2024). The Ministry of Health explains that approximately 12% or 29 million Indonesians are elderly and the proportion is expected to continue to increase to approximately 20% by 2045 (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024). This phenomenon shows that aging is not only a demographic issue, but also a psychosocial issue that requires an adaptive, contextual, and meaningful counseling approach.

Elderly issues are not only related to physical illness, but also to the loss of a spouse, retirement, reduced social role, dependence on family, loneliness, anxiety about death, and a decreased sense of meaning in life. The WHO emphasizes that decreased intrinsic capacity, loss of function, grief experiences, decreased income, and a diminished sense of purpose after retirement

can cause psychological distress in older adults (WHO, 2025).

In the context of the BANI era, namely *Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, and Incomprehensible*, modern life is understood as a fragile, anxious, non-linear, and difficult to understand condition. A fragile, anxious, non-linear, and difficult to understand condition of the era, so that humans need to have strong adaptability, meaning of life, psychological resilience, and spirituality. Cascio introduced BANI as a framework for understanding contemporary reality that is increasingly chaotic, rapidly changing, and no longer adequately explained by linear thinking patterns (Cascio, 2020). For the elderly, this situation can amplify feelings of insecurity, anxiety, alienation, and confusion in adjusting to social, technological, family, and life value changes.

The humanistic paradigm has long been an important foundation in counseling because it views humans as individuals with dignity, potential, freedom of choice, and the ability to develop. The concepts of *self*, self-actualization, *core conditions*, and therapeutic relationships are the main foundations of the humanistic approach. In counseling the elderly, the principles of empathy, congruence, unconditional acceptance, and appreciation of subjective experiences are crucial for building a sense of security, esteem, and acceptance. This approach is relevant because the elderly often need space to be heard, understood, and acknowledged, rather than simply treated as individuals experiencing functional decline.

However, the humanistic paradigm also has limitations when used as a sole approach to addressing the complexity of elderly issues in the BANI era. The strong self-actualization orientation within the humanistic paradigm can be overly idealized if not adapted to the reality of older adults experiencing declining health, loss of roles, limited mobility, and social dependency.

Furthermore, *core conditions* and therapeutic relationships are important, but not always sufficient to help older adults change maladaptive thoughts such as "I'm useless," "I'm a burden," or "my life has no meaning anymore." Therefore, an approach that is not only humanistic but also structured, existential, and spiritual is needed.

Gap that emerged was the limited number of studies specifically critiquing the relevance of the humanistic paradigm in counseling the elderly by linking it to the characteristics of the BANI era. Research data showed that the study of psychological interventions for the elderly is still developing partially. Qiu et al. (2025) reported through a meta-analysis that internet-based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is effective in reducing depression and anxiety in the elderly, but this study focused more on cognitive changes and psychological symptoms. Ravari et al. (2021) found that cognitive therapy and group logotherapy both improved the general health of the elderly, while Humer et al. (2025) showed that logotherapy contributed more to strengthening the meaning of life and psychological well-being. Regarding spirituality, Coelho-Júnior et al. (2022) through a systematic review and meta-analysis found a significant relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and mental health in the elderly, while Mansouri et al. (2025) confirmed that spirituality plays a role in increasing life expectancy, self-acceptance, and quality of life in the elderly. However, the research results still place CBT, logotherapy, and spirituality as stand-alone approaches.

On the other hand, research on the BANI era in the field of counseling is still relatively limited and mostly discusses individual adaptation strategies to uncertainty, anxiety, and general social disruption. Hikmah (2025) suggests that a CBT approach can help build a peaceful

mindset in facing the characteristics of the BANI era, but this study has not specifically directed at counseling the elderly or criticized the humanistic paradigm. Thus, to date, there are not many studies that integrate the humanistic paradigm, CBT, logotherapy, and spirituality within a conceptual framework for counseling the elderly that is contextualized to the challenges of the BANI era. In fact, the complexity of elderly problems in this fragile, anxiety-filled, non-linear, and difficult-to-understand era requires an approach that not only focuses on therapeutic relationships but also encompasses cognitive restructuring, the search for meaning in life, and the strengthening of spirituality in an integrated manner.

Some studies have addressed older adults' psychological well-being, CBT, meaning in life, or spirituality separately. Research on CBT suggests that CBT-based interventions can help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in older adults, including through internet-based formats in long-term care (Kong et al., 2024).

A meta-analysis also showed that meaning in life has a moderate negative relationship with mental health problems in older adults, suggesting that the stronger the meaning in life, the lower the likelihood of mental health problems such as depression and anxiety (Nie et al., 2023). However, studies integrating humanistic critique with CBT, logotherapy, and spirituality within a single counseling framework for older adults are still underdeveloped.

The novelty of this article lies in its attempt *to rethink* the humanistic paradigm, not by rejecting it, but by updating it through the integration of approaches more suited to the needs of modern older adults. CBT is offered to strengthen the technical aspects through the identification and restructuring of maladaptive thoughts. Logotherapy is used to deepen the search for meaning in life,

acceptance of suffering, and strengthening life's purpose in old age. Spirituality is included as a source of values, hope, acceptance, and inner peace that are highly relevant in the context of religious Indonesian society (Perceka & Sutrisno, 2020). With this integration, counseling for the elderly is not only centered on the therapeutic relationship but also helps older adults organize their thoughts, find meaning, and strengthen their spirituality.

Based on this description, this article aims to critically analyze the humanistic paradigm in elderly counseling in the BANI era and formulate opportunities for integration with CBT, logotherapy, and spirituality. This article is expected to provide a conceptual contribution to the development of humanistic, evidence-based, meaningful, spiritual, and contextualized elderly counseling services tailored to the needs of older adults in Indonesia.

METHODS

This research employed a critical literature review with an integrative approach. This method was chosen because the article aims to critically analyze the humanistic paradigm in counseling for the elderly and formulate an integration with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), logotherapy, and spirituality.

The literature review approach allows researchers to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize scientific findings to build a new conceptual framework (Snyder, 2019). Literature sources were obtained from scientific databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, Science Direct, SpringerLink, Frontiers, and Taylor & Francis.

The keywords used include: *humanistic counseling*, *elderly counseling*, *older adults mental health*, *CBT for older adults*, *logotherapy elderly*, *spirituality older adults*, *meaning in life elderly*, and *BANI era*. The selected literature is limited

to scientific articles, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and conceptual articles published in the period 2019–2025, except for the classical humanistic theory used as a conceptual basis.

The inclusion criteria for this review were: articles discussing the elderly or mental health of the elderly; discussing the humanistic paradigm, CBT, logotherapy, spirituality, or the meaning of life; relevant to the context of counseling or psychological intervention; available in full text, DOI, official URL, or PDF format; and published in a reputable journal. Exclusion criteria included articles that were irrelevant to the elderly, lacked verifiable sources, were merely popular opinions, and lacked clear publication credentials.

The literature selection process was conducted through four stages, adhering to the PRISMA 2020 principles: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and determination of articles for analysis. PRISMA 2020 serves as a guideline for transparent review reporting, ensuring the search and selection process is traceable (Page et al., 2021). Furthermore, narrative quality and argumentative accuracy were assessed by observing the SANRA principles: clarity of purpose, comprehensiveness of the literature search, accuracy of citations, scientific reasoning, and relevance of the data used (Baethge et al., 2019).

Data analysis was conducted thematically and critically. The selected literature was grouped into five main themes: basic concepts of the humanistic paradigm, critiques of humanism in elderly counseling, contributions of CBT, contributions of logotherapy, and contributions of spirituality. The synthesis results were then used to formulate an integrative framework for elderly counseling in the BANI era. The validity of the study was maintained through the use of verifiable scientific sources,

publication year restrictions, and a match between empirical findings, theory, and relevance to the elderly context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

The results of this literature review yielded three main findings, namely: (1) a synthesis of the integration of the humanistic paradigm, CBT, logotherapy, and spirituality in counseling the elderly; (2) a critical analysis

of the humanistic paradigm in counseling the elderly; and (3) a framework for the humanistic-integrative model of counseling the elderly in the BANI era. These three findings indicate that counseling the elderly is not sufficient to rely solely on therapeutic relationships, but needs to be strengthened with cognitive strategies, the search for the meaning of life, and the strengthening of spirituality. The description of these results is presented in the following three tables.

Table 1. Synthesis of the Integration of Humanistic Paradigms, CBT, Logotherapy, and Spirituality in Counseling the Elderly

Component	Main Contributions	Implications in Counseling the Elderly
Humanistic	Empathy, unconditional acceptance, congruence, and therapeutic relationship valued	Helping seniors feel valued, accepted, safe, and
CBT	Maladaptive thought restructuring	Helps change negative thoughts such as “I am useless” or “I am a burden”
Logotherapy	Searching for the meaning of life	Helping older adults find purpose, meaning, and acceptance in their suffering
Spirituality	Hope, acceptance, religious values, and inner peace	Strengthening gratitude, patience, sincerity, prayer, and psychological well-being

Table 1 shows that each approach has complementary contributions. Humanistic therapy forms the basis of the therapeutic relationship through empathy, unconditional acceptance, congruence, and respect for the dignity of older adults. CBT strengthens cognitive aspects by helping older adults change negative thoughts such as "I'm useless" or "I'm a burden." Logotherapy deepens the

search for meaning in life, while spirituality strengthens hope, acceptance, inner peace, gratitude, patience, sincerity, and prayer. Thus, the integration of these four approaches creates a more comprehensive counseling framework because it addresses the emotional, cognitive, existential, and spiritual dimensions of older adults.

Table 2. Critical Analysis of the Humanistic Paradigm in Counseling the Elderly

Humanistic Concept	Relevance to the Elderly	Criticism/Limitations	Direction of Integrative Strengthening
Self	Helping seniors understand their identity after retirement, loss of a spouse, or changes in social roles.	The self-concept of older adults can be weakened by physical dependence, loneliness, and the stigma of old age.	Strengthened with CBT to build adaptive thoughts about oneself
Self-actualization	Encouraging seniors to continue to develop, be productive, and have a purpose in life	It would be too ideal if it did not take into account the health, economic and social limitations of the elderly.	Shifted to <i>meaningful aging</i> through logotherapy
Core conditions	Empathy, congruence, and unconditional acceptance create a sense of safety in counseling.	It is not enough to overcome negative thoughts, anxiety, mild depression, and crisis of meaning.	Equipped with CBT techniques and exploration of the meaning of life
Therapeutic relationship	Helping seniors feel valued, heard, and not ignored	Good relationships do not automatically result in cognitive and behavioral changes.	Combined with structured interventions and spirituality
Freedom of choice	Encourage the elderly to maintain autonomy in making life decisions	Not all elderly people have complete freedom because they depend on family, health, or the economy.	Strengthened by values-based counseling, family support, and spirituality

Table 2 shows that the humanistic paradigm remains relevant but has limitations when used as a sole approach. The concepts of *self*, self-actualization, *core conditions*, therapeutic relationships, and freedom of choice remain important for older adults. However, these concepts need to be adapted to the realities of older adults experiencing declining health, loss of a partner, retirement, loneliness, dependency, the stigma of old age, and socioeconomic limitations. Therefore, self-actualization is no longer simply understood as self-achievement, but needs to be directed towards *meaningful aging*, namely, an aging

process that remains meaningful despite individual limitations.

Table 3. Framework of the Humanistic-Integrative Elderly Counseling Model in the BANI Era

Counseling Stage	Main Focus	Approach Used	Intervention Examples
Building a therapeutic relationship	Create a sense of security, acceptance and appreciation	Humanistic	Empathy, unconditional acceptance, active listening
Exploration of elderly issues	Identifying loneliness, loss, anxiety, and crises of meaning	Humanistic and logotherapy	Exploration of life experiences, life values, and sources of meaning
Identify maladaptive thoughts	Discovering negative thoughts about yourself and old age	CBT	Identifying thoughts like “I am useless” or “I am a burden”
Cognitive restructuring	Changing negative thoughts to more realistic and adaptive ones	CBT	Replacing negative thoughts with healthier and more meaningful ones
Strengthening the meaning of life	Helping seniors find purpose and value in life	Logotherapy	Reflections on meaningful experiences, family contributions, and acceptance of suffering
Strengthening spirituality	Cultivating hope, acceptance, and inner peace	Spirituality	Reflection on gratitude, patience, sincerity, prayer, and religious values
Follow-up plan	Maintaining the continuity of psychological changes	Integrative	Meaningful activities, family support, social activities, and spiritual practices

Table 3 illustrates the framework of the humanistic-integrative counseling model for the elderly in the BANI era. This model begins with establishing a therapeutic relationship, exploring the elderly's problems, identifying maladaptive thoughts, cognitive restructuring, strengthening the meaning of life, strengthening spirituality, and developing a follow-up plan. This process demonstrates that counseling for the elderly needs to be carried out in stages: starting with a sense of security, continuing with understanding the problem, changing ways of thinking, strengthening meaning, strengthening spirituality, and sustaining the change through family support, meaningful activities, social activities, and spiritual practices.

2. Discussion

Based on the study results, the author analyzes that the humanistic paradigm remains an important foundation in counseling for the elderly because it provides a safe psychological space for the elderly to feel accepted, valued, and understood. In old age, the need to be heard and valued becomes crucial as many elderly experience role changes, loss of a partner, retirement, declining health, loneliness, and dependence on others. Empathy, unconditional acceptance, and therapeutic relationships are not only counseling techniques but also forms of recognition of the dignity of the elderly as human beings who remain valuable (Lungguh Perceka & Rusyani, 2025).

The author believes that the classical humanistic paradigm is not fully adequate to address the psychosocial

complexities of older adults in the BANI era. Elderly individuals require not only emotional acceptance but also assistance in organizing negative thoughts, managing anxiety, rediscovering the meaning of life, and strengthening spiritual resilience. The WHO (2025) emphasizes that older adults are at risk of depression, anxiety, loneliness, decreased mobility, chronic pain, and the need for long-term care; these conditions demonstrate that counseling for older adults needs to be multidimensional, not just relational.

The integration of CBT is important because many elderly problems are related to maladaptive thoughts, such as feeling useless, being a burden on the family, no longer having a future, or feeling that their lives have lost their value. According to the author's analysis, if counseling stops at empathy and acceptance, psychological change in the elderly can be limited (Perceka et al., 2021). CBT provides technical strength through the identification of negative thoughts, evaluation of irrational beliefs, and cognitive restructuring so that the elderly can develop more realistic and adaptive ways of thinking. Research by Kong et al. (2024) showed that *internet-based CBT* was effective for older adults with subclinical depressive symptoms in long-term care facilities, while Nordgren et al. (2024) also found that internet-based CBT tailored for older adults can be used in the treatment of depression.

In addition to cognitive aspects, the author analyzes that the fundamental problems of the elderly are often related to a crisis of meaning in life. The elderly may be able to accept physical changes, but they have a harder time accepting the loss of roles, reduced social influence, the loss of loved ones, and anxiety about death. Therefore, the concept of self-actualization in humanism needs to be reinterpreted into *meaningful aging* (Masyarakat et al., 2023). This means that the success of the

elderly is not only measured by productivity, but also by the ability to find meaning, purpose, acceptance, and contribution within limitations. A meta-analysis by Nie et al. (2023) showed that the meaning of life is negatively related to mental health problems in the elderly, so the stronger the meaning of life, the lower the tendency for psychological problems.

The author also believes that spirituality is an important dimension in counseling the elderly, particularly in the context of religious Indonesian society. Spirituality is not only interpreted as a formal religious practice, but also as a source of hope, acceptance, gratitude, patience, sincerity, prayer, and inner peace. In situations of chronic illness, loss, loneliness, and anxiety about death, spirituality can be a psychological resource that helps older adults cope and make sense of suffering. Coelho-Júnior et al. (2022) found, through a systematic review and meta-analysis, that religiosity/spirituality is significantly associated with mental health in older adults. McManus et al. (2024) also emphasized that spirituality and religiosity play a role in *successful aging* by supporting meaning, resilience, and well-being.

Thus, rethinking the humanistic paradigm in elderly counseling does not mean rejecting humanism, but rather expanding it to be more responsive to the needs of today's elderly. Humanism remains the ethical and relational foundation; CBT strengthens cognitive change; logotherapy helps older adults find meaning in life; and spirituality strengthens acceptance, hope, and inner peace. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of these four approaches into a more comprehensive, contextual, applicable, and humanistic-integrative elderly counseling model that is appropriate to the challenges of the BANI era.

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that the humanistic paradigm remains relevant as a basis for counseling older adults because it emphasizes empathy, unconditional acceptance, congruence, respect for human dignity, and therapeutic relationships. However, this paradigm needs to be reexamined as it does not fully address the psychosocial complexities of older adults in the BANI era, particularly those related to negative thoughts, anxiety, role loss, loneliness, and the crisis of meaning in life.

Integrating CBT, logotherapy, and spirituality creates a more comprehensive conceptual solution. CBT strengthens counseling through restructuring maladaptive thoughts, logotherapy helps older adults find meaning in life despite limitations, while spirituality fosters hope, acceptance, inner peace, and psychological well-being. Thus, *rethinking* the humanistic paradigm does not mean abandoning the humanistic approach, but rather expanding it to be more applicable, contextual, and suited to the needs of modern older adults.

This humanistic-integrative elderly counseling framework can be the basis for developing modules, counseling interventions, and further research to test its effectiveness in improving the meaning of life and psychological well-being of the elderly.

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