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Research Article

Addressing Depression Through Faith: The Development and Theoretical Underpinnings of Religious Savior-Centered Psychotherapy (RSCP)

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Abstract

Religious Savior-Centered Psychotherapy (RSCP) is an innovative, faith-based therapeutic approach that integrates religious principles with evidence-based psychological frameworks, including Positive Psychology and Quality of Life Therapy (QOLT). Rooted in the Shi'ah Islamic tradition, RSCP emphasizes the transformative role of faith in a Savior while incorporating universal concepts of meaning, resilience, and well-being, making it adaptable to diverse religious and cultural contexts that share a belief in a Savior figure. RSCP draws heavily on the concept of "active anticipation" of the Imam Mahdi (PBUH), emphasizing purposeful action and hope for a just and utopian world. Within Shi'ah Islam, anticipation is not a passive state but a dynamic process of striving toward personal and societal transformation. Narrations extol the awaiting individual's status, portraying them as divine justice agents whose hope-filled and goal-oriented actions align with religious ideals of worship and well-being. This dynamic interplay between individual transformation and societal harmony makes RSCP a comprehensive model addressing both micro-level mental health needs and macro-level cultural aspirations. This therapeutic model builds on the parallels between Islamic teachings and positive psychology principles, such as hope, goal setting, and mental well-being. RSCP leverages the psychological benefits of utopian thinking, which fosters resilience, purpose, and social connection, aligning with Frankl's emphasis on meaning and Adler's focus on social connectedness. Additionally, RSCP integrates aspects of Quality of Life Therapy (QOLT) to operationalize the pursuit of a "Full Life," a concept echoed in positive psychology. By prioritizing individual circumstances and emphasizing meaning-centered actions, RSCP holistically addresses emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of well-being. RSCP is adaptable across different religious contexts. For example, in Christian traditions, it could center on the anticipation of the second coming of Christ (PBUH), while in other religious frameworks, similar Savior-centric beliefs could guide the therapeutic process. This approach not only aids in achieving personal fulfillment but also offers a framework for fostering broader societal harmony and justice. Moreover, RSCP has the potential to fulfill intrinsic human desires for perfection, security, justice, and unity. It should be noted that, due to the novelty of this treatment method and the need for further scientific research to provide readers with data on its validity, as well as to explore its qualitative and quantitative stages, this article focuses on its theoretical foundations. A more detailed description of its components, along with

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the qualitative and quantitative phases of its development, is provided in other extended articles.

1. Introduction

In recent years, positive psychology interventions have gained significant traction among psychologists [1-3], demonstrating promise in alleviating depression and promoting well-being. Positive psychology is increasingly used in therapies [4-6]. Notably, Iran has witnessed a growing adoption of these approaches [7-14].

One such promising approach is Quality of Life Therapy [15]. Researchers in Iran have explored ways to localize QOLT for Iranians [16, 17]. A key aspect of one of these localizations involves incorporating clients' positive, forward-looking religious beliefs that provide meaning to their lives [16]. This approach which has been named Religious Savior_Centered Psychotherapy (RSCP) specifically focuses on the Islamic concepts of "hope for the reappearance[1] of the savior" and "active struggle to realize his return."

It is now well known that the integration of religious and cultural concepts into therapy is beneficial, particularly for religious individuals [18-24]. Even Frisch emphasizes the importance of spirituality and belief in a meaningful life, often linked to a higher power [25]. So RSCP builds on these findings by exploring the development and potential effectiveness of a culturally sensitive intervention specifically designed for a religious population struggling with depression.

Other reliable sources support selecting such concepts to address. For example, today the growing body of research highlights the meaningful relationship between quality of life, depression reduction, and religious practices [26-34]. The World Health Organization Quality of Life Group even recommends the inclusion of spiritual assessments, religion, and personal beliefs particularly for individuals with poor health or nearing the end of life [35].

On the other hand, the emphasis on believing in the savior aligns particularly well with the basics of Shi'ism[2] [36], the dominant religious tradition in Iran[3] [37]. Shi'ism emphasizes the importance of faith in the reappearance of a savior and actively striving for a better future. This naturally connects with "finding meaning" in QOLT [15]. Other compelling evidence supporting the development of Religious Savior-Centered Psychotherapy (RSCP) is:

Firstly, the core tenets of Islam regarding the "Awaiting Individual"[4] [38-41] and the values of the School of Anticipation[5] (SOA) demonstrate a close conceptual alignment with the pillars and five CASIO[6] levels of Frisch's QOLT (2016) and Seligman's four levels of life [42, 43].

Secondly, SOA emphasizes future-oriented meaning in life, particularly during the end times [39-41], highlighting the consequences of neglecting such anticipation [38]. This is while extensive research supports the positive psychological benefits of looking forward to positive events, including improved cognitive function, better behavioral strategies, heightened motivation, and overall well-being [44-47]. Neuroscience studies corroborate these findings [45, 48, 49]. Conversely, other studies back up that the absence of such positive anticipation is linked to negative psychological well-being [47, 50-54].

Thirdly, research conducted in Iran demonstrates a significant positive correlation between Mahdism[7] and psychological well-being, mental health, happiness, hope, and quality of life [55-59]. The Iranian academic landscape emphasizes integrating Mahdism with psychology, specifically positive psychology [60, 61].

Continuing from the points raised this paper focuses on the theoretical foundation of RSCP. To provide a more nuanced understanding, later sections will engage in a deeper examination of selected themes introduced here.

1.1. Anticipation of Imam Mahdi's [PBUH] Reappearance in Islam

Within Shi'ah Islam, the concept of Mahdism occupies a central and dynamic space. The Mahdi, awaited by the faithful, is a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] through his daughter Fatima [PBUH] [38]. Shi'ah belief holds that the Mahdi will emerge in the future to establish justice [62] and righteousness [63] upon the Earth [64]. This belief is also shared

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1. Zohur
2. Shi'ism, literally meaning "follower," refers to a branch of Islam that believes the rightful successors to Prophet Muhammad (may Almighty God's peace and benediction be upon him and his descendants) are the Imams.
3. In Iran, over 80% of the population adheres to Twelver Shi'ism, a branch that emphasizes the belief in twelve Imams. The twelfth Imam, according to this belief, is currently alive but in hiding, awaiting a divine sign to reappear and usher in a just and peaceful era.

4. Refers to someone who believes in the Twelfth Imam and his imminent reappearance, and actively engages in prayer and effort for his emergence of the occultation.
5. A Doctrine that teaches a person how to become an Awaiting Individual for real.
6. Circumstances - Attitude - Standards of fulfillment- Importance- Overall satisfaction
7. A form of Messianism within Twelver Shi'ism.

by a group of Sunni Muslims [65, 66]. Mahdi is not merely a future hope; he is considered the twelfth and last Imam, a divinely guided leader who will reappear after a period of occultation and will lead the Ummah (Muslim community) in an era of suffering from oppression and injustice [38]. The concept of the Imams themselves is crucial in Shi'ah theology. According to Al-Majlisy, the author of Behar Al-Anwar, a prominent Shi'ah hadith[8] compilation, the Holy Qur'an possesses outward and inward dimensions. All knowledge is believed to be contained within the Holy Qur'an, and only the Imams have the rightful authority to interpret its meanings. They are seen as divinely appointed figures who carry the true understanding of the Quran, the "Natiq" (speaking) Quran, as opposed to the physical, written "Samit" (silent) Quran after Prophet Mohammad's [PBUH] passing [67]. This lineage of Imams, entrusted with the interpretation of the Quran's deeper meanings, guides humanity [68]. The twelfth Imam, though currently hidden, is believed to be alive [69]. So, the anticipation of the Mahdi's return is more than a mere hope; it is a driving force in Shi'ah life. This expectation fosters a sense of responsibility to prepare for a just world [70]. Shi'ah belief emphasizes active participation in readying oneself and society for the Imam's arrival and the establishment of a righteous government [41]. The preparation involves specific duties and supplications seen as having a profound impact on individuals. It is important to note that interpretations of the Mahdi may vary within Shi'ah Islam [66]. However, the core belief in his eventual return and the emphasis on active preparation remains central to Shi'ah faith and identity for many believers. This hope distinguishes Shi'ah Islam from other traditions and infuses it with dynamism and vitality.

1.2. Islamic Verses and Narrations Around the Necessity of Anticipation

Within Shi'ah Islam, anticipating the Imam Mahdi's [PBUH] return occupies a central and dynamic space. This anticipation transcends a mere wish; it is transformed into a powerful force shaping the lives of believers. Here, anticipation for the Mahdi, the twelfth Imam, is not synonymous with idleness. It's an active state, characterized by purposeful striving [40, 71]. Mere waiting without effort is seen as incomplete [39, 41].

In narrations about waiting, instead of using the word "Afzal al-halat,"[9] the word "Afzal al-Awmal"[10] is used [38]. In a hadith, the holy prophet Muhammad [PBUH] called anticipation for reappearance, the Ummah's best and most valuable act [38]. In another context, anticipation for the reappearance of Imam Mahdi [PBUH] is an action that is Allah's (Glory is to him) most beloved form of worship [72]. It encourages believers to actively work towards creating the conditions for

the Mahdi's return, a world reformer who will establish justice [38]. This active involvement is seen as a way to preserve human integrity.

The Awaiting Individual embodies this active anticipation. They are not just faithful believers in Almighty God, resurrection, and justice, they are also firm adherents to the concept of prophethood and Imamate[11]. They fervently await the Mahdi's return and dedicate themselves to acts that may hasten his arrival [57]. Shi'ah Imams hold these individuals in the highest esteem [38, 73].

Ultimately, the Shi'ah belief emphasizes that a person's value is measured by the quality of his aspirations[12]. The Awaiting Individual's fervent hope for a just and righteous world reflects the noblest of ideals. Their ultimate desire aligns with the divine promise[13] – the establishment of Almighty God's rule and global justice – a dream shared by prophets throughout history [41]. However, as emphasized earlier, this anticipation finds true meaning only when accompanied by purposeful action.

Overall, anticipation in Islam encompasses all the fundamental principles of the religion. An Awaiting Individual is essentially a believer in God, resurrection, and God's justice. Central to this concept is adherence to both prophethood and Imamate. To summarize the Awaiting Individual eagerly awaits the Mahdi's reappearance, fervently praying for his return [57]. So active hope is recognized by Shi'ah Imams as a mark of exceptional piety.

Imam Sadiq[14] [PBUH] refers to such individuals as "God's Saints," highlighting their blessed state [73]. Similarly, Imam Sajjad[15] [PBUH] elevates their status, proclaiming them superior to people of any other era due to their unwavering faith and anticipation [38]. However, as emphasized throughout this discussion, the value of such anticipation is contingent upon action. The Awaiting Individuals must strive to translate their hopes into reality [41].

1.3. Expecting a Savior Is Different from Believing in a Savior

At the end of this section, it is crucial to distinguish between actively waiting for the appearance and believing in it. In addition to Shi'ah, the followers of other divine religions[16]

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believe in the appearance of a universal reformer at the end of time [74].

For instance, many faiths, including some branches of Christianity, anticipate the return of a savior (e.g., Christ's second coming) [74]. But not all of them are waiting for its realization. Therefore, the functions mentioned for the Awaiting Individual, do not necessarily happen in a person who believes in the savior. All those advantages mentioned for the Awaiting Individual in the hadiths and verses indicate an expectation accompanied by actions, not just believing in the reappearance.

This distinction is evident in Iran, where the majority holds the core Shi'ah belief in the Mahdi's return, yet not all Iranians actively anticipate it. Therefore, a core objective of the RSCP is to reignite this active hope within their clients. The RSCP emphasizes the potential psychological benefits associated with such a fervent faith, where prioritizing the role of an Awaiting Individual becomes central to one's life.

1.4. Active Anticipation of the Imam Mahdi [PBUH]: Hope, Action, and Mental Well-being

Shi'ah beliefs about the return of the Imam Mahdi emphasize "active anticipation" as a catalyst for positive life changes. Passages like a narration from Imam Mahdi [PBUH] highlight the transformative power of actively supplicating for his return, framing it as a solution to various problems [38]. Analysis of such narrations suggests this supplication, and the anticipation it fosters, can positively impact an individual's mentality [61, 71].

Crucially, this anticipation is not a passive escapism. Such behaviors are ineffective coping strategies and related to poorer mental health outcomes [75-77]. Islamic perspectives emphasize an active and dynamic approach to supplication, similar to prayer [78]. Imam Mahdi [PBUH], likely emphasizes both the active behavioral aspects of supplication and its spoken form [79]. This suggests that diligent anticipation, or actively preparing for the future, is an important part of supplication focusing on the Mahdi's return, the hope for a just reign, and taking proactive steps fosters a brighter future vision. This empowers individuals to set meaningful goals and work towards them [61].

Positive anticipation motivates individuals, leading to goal setting, planning, and actions that enhance happiness and well-being [45, 49]. Anticipation nourishes hope and purpose, promoting well-being and a dynamic future-oriented outlook [49].

Conversely, the lack of positive anticipation is linked to depression, anxiety, and poor stress coping [47, 53]. This aligns with a narration attributed to Imam Hasan Askari[17] [PBUH] that suggests everyone experiences distress during the

occultation [62], except those who actively pray for the Mahdi's return [73].

Also, the core principle of "active anticipation" in Islam resonates with the goal theory of well-being [80, 81]. This theory suggests that setting and pursuing goals positively affects well-being [80, 81]. Benefits arise not only from achievement but also from the strong positive anticipation experienced while striving towards the goal [46]. Goal pursuit and positive anticipation contribute to well-being.

Furthermore, the promised benefits of "anticipating the savior" in Islam [41] find support in neuroscience. Studies have identified brain regions involved in anticipation, such as the amygdala and medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC) [48, 82, 83]. Research using fMRI[18] scans have shown increased bilateral MPFC activity during anticipation of positive events compared to neutral ones. These MPFC activity levels also positively correlated with well-being [49]. Other studies suggest anticipation of future events may be a form of emotional regulation, allowing for the allocation of resources and planning of coping strategies [44, 45].

Ultimately, anticipating positive events can elicit positive emotions, acting as a coping mechanism for social stress [47]. So, Shi'ah Islamic perspectives on actively anticipating the Mahdi's return offer a unique framework for understanding the link between hope, action, and mental well-being.

1.5. Utopian Thinking: A Psychological Catalyst for Social Change and Personal Growth

Utopian visions, far from simply flights of fancy, are a pervasive feature of contemporary life. They permeate our artistic and literary landscapes [84-87], serving as expressions of our deepest yearnings for a more perfect world [88, 89]. However, the significance of utopian thinking extends beyond artistic expression. Historical evidence demonstrates utopian visions have dramatically inspired social change movements [88, 90]. Understanding the psychological impact of utopian thinking is crucial, as it can motivate individuals to actively engage in transforming their realities.

The power of utopia lies in its ability to spark a yearning for change. Envisioning ideal societies can ignite a desire to bridge the gap between the present and the ideal [91]. Some utopian theorists emphasized, that utopian thinking is a paradigm in which ordinary people frequently engage [89, 92]. These imagined ideal worlds serve as a powerful motivator for individuals to actively participate in shaping their societies [91]. They can also play a significant role in individual life [93, 94].

Utopian thinking offers a multifaceted toolkit for psychological well-being. It stimulates hope and belief in the possibility of overcoming limitations and harbors creative solutions to address human needs [95]. It carves out spaces where innovative thinking can flourish [96].

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idea remains the same. All believe that a savior will liberate the world from oppressors and create a peaceful and just society. Hindus await Vishnu, Buddhists the fifth Buddha, Jews the Messiah, Christians Jesus, and Muslims Imam Mahdi [PBUH].

17. Eleventh Shi'ah Imam

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18. Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging

Furthermore, utopias can serve as a motivational compass, guiding individuals toward their ideal realities [91]. They function as aspirational goals that drive self-regulatory behaviors [97-101]. Ultimately, they offer potential solutions to the fundamental human challenge of reconciling desires with limited resources [102].

There's a remarkable convergence between utopian thinking and SOA, both addressing four fundamental human desires: perfectionism, security, justice, and unity. Despite the prevalence of utopian themes in cultures, it seems their potential contribution to positive psychology has been largely overlooked. Utopian thinking does not necessarily advocate for radical revolution [103]; even incremental changes based on utopian thinking can be quite beneficial for therapeutic goals. Given its potential to encourage critical thinking, debate, and experimentation [91], it deserves greater consideration within positive psychology just as RSCP does.

1.6. Other Parallels Between the School of Anticipation and Psychology

The School of Anticipation (SOA) in Shi'ah Islam shares surprising common ground with various schools of thought within psychology. Here's a breakdown of some key areas of convergence:

Motivation and Tension Management: Regarding the escalation or alleviation of tension, SOA's point of view aligns closely with the perspectives of eminent theorists such as Allport, Rogers, Maslow, and Frankel [70, 104-108]. The SOA's emphasis on anticipation serves a similar function, providing a focus for action and nurturing a sense of purpose.

Human Potential and Goal Setting: The SOA highlights the importance of actively pursuing goals and cultivating a sense of responsibility towards others [16, 57, 70]. This resonates with the ideas of Allport, Maslow, and Frankl who emphasize the importance of utilizing human potential and striving for self-actualization [104-106]. Goal setting is a key component in the SOA and these psychological frameworks.

Unity and Social Connection: The concept of "wholeness" in Gestalt therapy [109] aligns with the emphasis on unity in the Quran[19] (3:103). Similarly, the SOA's focus on hope, love, purpose, and duty [16, 57, 70] finds parallels in the theories of Alfred Adler [110]. Adler's concept of striving "to become complete and not just be"[111] and social connection aligns with the characteristics of the Awaiting Individual in Shi'ah Islam [41].

These shared principles create a compelling rationale for integrating the tenets of Mahdism with positive psychology. Religious Savior-Centered Psychotherapy (RSCP) emerged from this recognition, aiming to utilize positive psychology

frameworks to enhance the well-being of those who actively anticipate the Mahdi's return [113]. Following the in-depth exploration of RSCP's theoretical foundations, the subsequent section will delve deeper into the specific integration of Mahdism with Quality of Life Therapy (QOLT).

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Integrating Saviorism with Quality of Life Therapy

This section explores the potential integration of "Saviorism," a specific religious belief system centered on the awaited reappearance of Imam Mahdī [PBUH], into Quality of Life Therapy (QOLT).

2.2. Quality of Life Therapy

Quality of Life Therapy (QOLT), developed by Frisch [25], is a well-established therapeutic approach that emphasizes goal setting, self-worth, and a holistic perspective on well-being. It is rooted in the principle that mentally healthy individuals possess a sense of purpose and strive not only to achieve their aspirations but also to assist others in reaching their full potential [25].

QOLT integrates cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques to help clients identify meaningful life goals, build essential skills, and reshape beliefs that may hinder well-being. Widely used in both clinical and non-clinical settings, it is particularly beneficial for individuals experiencing depression, as it addresses life dissatisfaction and promotes greater life satisfaction. This therapy is recognized for its effectiveness in fostering resilience and improving mental health [15].

This approach is founded on three primary pillars: finding meaning, quality of time, and inner abundance [15]. These pillars encourage clients to discover a sense of purpose within each life domain, promoting more fulfilling goal-setting and engagement, while also emphasizing a balanced and mindful allocation of time across various areas to optimize life satisfaction.

Inner abundance, the third pillar, fosters a mindset of gratitude and appreciation for available resources and positive aspects of life. To achieve targeted improvements, QOLT utilizes the CASIO Model—a structured framework that addresses satisfaction through five dimensions: Circumstances, Attitude, Standards, Importance, and Overall satisfaction [15]. This model helps clients by adjusting external conditions, such as health, finances, or environment, to support well-being, and by encouraging positive cognitive appraisals of life circumstances. Additionally, it involves revising personal standards where dissatisfaction exists, reassessing the significance of life domains to align with overall happiness, and strengthening satisfaction across diverse areas for a bal-

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19.	"And hold fast to the Bond of Allah, together, and do not scatter. Remember the Favor of Allah bestowed upon you when you were enemies, and how He united your hearts so that by His Favor you became brothers. And how He saved you from the Pit of Fire when you were on the brink of it. And so, Allah makes plain to you His verses, so that you will be guided".

anced sense of fulfillment.

The therapy's focus is further extended to 16 essential life areas[20], including health, self-esteem, relationships, work, play, learning, spirituality, and community [15]. Notably, while Frisch acknowledges the role of spirituality, he emphasizes a non-religious perspective within his "goals and values" component [112].

As a whole, by addressing and enhancing satisfaction within these domains, QOLT fosters a comprehensive, balanced life and resilience, integrating cognitive-behavioral techniques, the CASIO model, and its core pillars to help clients build a high quality of life.

2.3. Religious Savior-Centered Psychotherapy (RSCP): A Complementary Intervention

Religious Savior-Centered Psychotherapy (RSCP) is a related intervention derived from the same core principles and structure as QOLT. It explores similar areas as QOLT but with a specific religious interpretation, drawing upon the tenets of the "School of Anticipation" (SOA) within Islamic thought. The key distinction in RSCP lies in its use of the client's inherent belief in the reappearance of Imam Mahdi [PBUH] as the primary foundation for identifying and modifying unhelpful and detrimental thoughts and behaviors.

This approach aims to reduce factors that contribute to depressive symptoms and increase life satisfaction through QOLT's principles which are reconstructed based on religion and culture [113]. Given this, it is important to distinguish between spirituality-based interventions, which may or may not include religious elements, and religious psychotherapy, which, like RSCP, distinctly emphasizes the inclusion and utilization of patients' religious beliefs [114].

2.4. Potential Synergies Between Saviorism and QOLT

Saviorism, particularly the belief in the coming of Imam Mahdi [PBUH], offers a unique framework that can potentially resonate with certain client populations. Here's how it might align with the three pillars of QOLT and its five CASIO levels:

Finding Meaning: In Islam, the highest capacity of man, which pleases Almighty God[21], is to achieve the goal of man's creation[22] [115] and the highest level of worship is trying to

be a true anticipant[23]. The anticipation of Imam Mahdi's arrival and the establishment of a just world can provide a powerful sense of purpose and direction, aligning with QOLT's emphasis on finding meaning in life [15]. This pillar emphasizes the importance of having goals and aspirations that extend beyond oneself.

Inner Abundance: Active engagement in practices believed to hasten the reappearance of the savior can foster a sense of inner richness and connection to a greater good, mirroring QOLT's concept of inner abundance. The second pillar of QOLT, "inner abundance," focuses on cultivating a sense of fulfillment and enrichment in life [15]. This can be achieved through various means, religious practices, and spiritual connections which are included in SOA. For individuals who subscribe to Saviorism, actively participating in rituals and behaviors believed to contribute to the reappearance of the Imam, can create a sense of inner wealth and purpose.

Quality of Time: The belief system offers a multitude of daily practices believed to hasten the reappearance of the savior, potentially improving time management and engagement in QOLT's concept of Quality of Time. The third pillar of QOLT, "Quality of Time," emphasizes the importance of using time effectively and finding meaning in daily activities [15]. SOA offers a structured framework for daily activities, as religious sources identify up to 80 ways individuals can contribute to the reappearance of the Imam, through daily actions [41]. Engaging in these practices can provide fruitful Circumstances (C) of purpose and structure to daily life in the near future[24], aligning with QOLT's focus on Quality of Time.

2.5. Aligning with QOLT's Focus on Self-Esteem

Furthermore, active engagement in the SOA fosters a sense of self-worth that aligns with Frisch's emphasis on self-esteem as a core aspect of QOLT [15]. By actively preparing for the reappearance of the savior and contributing to a positive global outcome, Awaiting Individuals see themselves as valuable contributors to a grander cause.

This perception fosters a sense of self-worth and purpose that transcends individual concerns. During therapy sessions, clients have the opportunity to recall the basic definitions of Islam regarding satisfaction[25] and learn how to benefit psychologically from their religion's positive and dynamic attitude in their daily lives.

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20. 1- Health and physical health 2- Self-esteem 3- Value and value of money 4- material things 5- Work 6- Fun and recreation 7- Learning 8- Creativity 9- Helping others 10- Love 11- Friends 12 - Children 13- Relatives 14- Home and neighbors 15- Society 16- Spouse.

21. According to Imam Sadiq [PBUH], believers are closest to Almighty God and most pleasing to Him when they do not have access to the proof of Almighty God and it remains hidden from their sight. Despite not having access to the evidence, they should still anticipate the reappearance of Almighty God every morning and evening, while acknowledging that the proofs and visions of Almighty God have not been invalidated. This is the time when Almighty God is most pleased with them [41].

22. "I did not create the jinn and the humans except that they may worship Me"

23. It has been said beforehand that the best of the things to do in Islam and the highest level of worshiping God is to attain the status of true anticipant [71].

24. Indeed they see it to be far off, and We see it to be near [116].

25. Islamic teachings suggest that satisfaction arises from recognizing a significant amount of goodness within something. Religious Savior-Centered Psychotherapy (RSCP) offers access to the ultimate form of this goodness. The Quran itself reinforces this concept by highlighting the blessed arrival of Imam Mahdi [PBUH] as the greatest good [117]. "Baqiyatullah," which translates to "what remains of Allah's provision," is one of the titles ascribed to Imam Mahdi [PBUH] in Islamic hadiths. These hadiths prophesy that he will identify himself by this name upon his reappearance. The term signifies Almighty God's reserve, referring to the Twelfth Imam, whom Allah has preserved to appear at a designated time when humanity is prepared to accept his righteous leadership and the salvation it brings.

2.6. Expanding the Definition of Prayer

There is a crucial distinction between self-centeredness and a broader concern for the well-being of all. Saviorism, as embodied in RSCP, encourages individuals to transcend a purely self-interested perspective. Clients are encouraged to consider the needs of others, including all people and even creatures, fostering a more expansive sense of purpose and responsibility. While the concept of inner abundance in QOLT emphasizes prayer and communication with a higher power, RSCP offers a broader perspective.

Prayer in RSCP goes beyond a solely individual act of devotion. It encompasses actively engaging in practices believed to contribute to the reappearance of the savior, such as helping others, strengthening family bonds, and contributing positively to society. These acts of service and social responsibility are all core areas of focus within QOLT [15]. Therefore, RSCP expands the definition of prayer to include not only individual devotion but also service to others and contributions to a better world. This broader perspective on prayer can potentially enrich the concept of inner abundance within QOLT.

3. Results

In response to the need for culturally and religiously aligned mental health interventions, Religious Savior-Centered Psychotherapy (RSCP) was developed as an adaptation of Quality of Life Therapy (QOLT), integrating religious principles to enhance its relevance for clients rooted in Islamic beliefs. RSCP uniquely incorporates the framework of "Saviorism"—centered on the anticipated reappearance of Imam Mahdī [PBUH]—within the therapeutic process. This approach retains the core structure of QOLT while adapting it to emphasize religious values and culturally resonant goals, which can be especially beneficial for those experiencing depression or life dissatisfaction. The qualitative phase of the research, informed by grounded theory methodology, and its effectiveness in addressing specific religious and psychological needs has been evaluated and discussed in other articles [113].

4. Discussion

Considering all that has been discussed, it appears that Seligman, as the pioneer of positive psychology, has, in a way, taken into account the establishment of life in a utopian context through his concept of the Full Life.

On the other hand, Frisch, within the framework of Quality of Life Therapy (QOLT), strives for the realization of a Full Life by prioritizing "Circumstances" within the CASIO model. At first glance, this replacement might seem ordinary or unimportant, but a deeper dive into the principles of positive psychology highlights the significance of this matter.

Seligman and Frisch have not directly addressed saviorism and the struggle for life in a utopia, which could be crucial avenues for achieving a Full Life. Addressing these concepts is essential due to the significant cultural and religious backgrounds in various nations, especially in religious societies. Therefore, positive therapies that adopt a savior-centered approach may not only help individuals achieve a Full Life, as Seligman suggests but also affect tangible changes at the Circumstances level of Frisch's theory.

Furthermore, even if an individual does not encounter the arrival of a savior or the chance to live in a perfect world, incorporating these ideas into positive therapies can still provide significant benefits for the Awaiting Individual.

This can be explained by goal theory, which indicates that the mere act of having and progressing towards goals confers genuine benefits to well-being. Supporting this, an Islamic hadith states: "If someone achieves the level of true anticipation during occultation and before the arrival of the savior, there is no distinction between those having witnessed the reappearance and those who have not, even if they pass away before the event. They have achieved the intended purpose as if the emergence has already happened to them" [38].

It is worth emphasizing that Frisch acknowledges the importance of nurturing the soul and highlights this through practices such as praying, which he considers a means to this goal [25]. However, he does not precisely discuss the way to transcend human suffering, making the achievement of this goal in QOLT somewhat vague.

Therefore, it is suggested that the quality and effectiveness of QOLT, particularly within religious communities, can be enhanced by providing platforms aligned with human nature and culture and offering clear instructions. This may involve considering the School of Anticipation which could complement a comprehensive approach like QOLT.

The importance of this issue becomes even more apparent when considering that the concept of saviorism and the hope for a global peacemaker are common among both monotheistic and non-monotheistic religions [74]. As a result, there is potential for further exploration and adaptation based on the foundations and manuscripts of other religions, especially Sunni Muslims, as there are groups within this community who strongly believe in Imam Mahdi [PBUH].

Therefore, this form of treatment is designated as Religious Savior-Centered Psychotherapy (RSCP) rather than being exclusively labeled as Islamic or specifically attributed to Shi'ah Islam. This broader classification allows for the potential adaptation and application of RSCP principles in the context of other religious traditions, facilitating its integration into diverse cultural and spiritual frameworks. So, the initial version has been developed and validated as the Islamic variant of RSCP and this edition can be adapted and presented according to the sacred manuscripts of other religions.

Moreover, considering studies that highlight the benefits of focusing on positive future events, it is evident that the concept of saviorism transcends religious boundaries. Sav-

iorism, at its core, nourishes and addresses the four intrinsic desires of mankind—perfectionism, security, justice, and unity—which are critical to humans as social creatures. Thus, a spiritual perspective can reveal the potential for savior-centered approaches that are not necessarily religious.

Finally, history has shown that humanity has made significant efforts to meet its innate needs by striving for utopia. The diverse nature of utopian existence, whether as a mental construct or objective settlement, substantiates this fact. However, the psychological effects of saviorism and utopian belief have been less applied in psychology. Future studies in this area could elucidate the psychological benefits of these approaches and demonstrate that strengthening these beliefs internally in individuals may be more fruitful than external development efforts.

5. Conclusions

This work highlights the potential synergy between positive psychotherapy and the concept of saviorism within religious contexts, particularly in Iranian society. Positive psychotherapy's optimistic outlook aligns well with the hope for a future savior prevalent in many religions. Integrating saviorism, which parallels Seligman's positive psychology and represents an event that could occur soon, may benefit religious clients who believe in the reappearance of a savior.

The hope of living in a utopia, which requires human effort to achieve, is as dynamic as many current psychotherapeutic concepts and has a unique advantage. Unlike other positive intervention models, which at their best help clients achieve the three levels of Seligman's life, religious meanings can guide clients towards achieving even the fourth level. Based on many religions' scriptures, the Full Life might someday be realized through the reappearance of a Savior.

Therefore, Religious Savior-Centered Psychotherapy (RSCP) presents a promising avenue for enhancing the quality of life and decreasing depression through a religious perspective in Iranian society.

Abbreviations

QOLT	Quality of Life Therapy
RSCP	Religious Savior-Centered Psychotherapy
SOA	School of Anticipation
CASIO	Circumstances - Attitude - Standards of Fulfillment- Importance- Overall Satisfaction
MPFC	Medial Prefrontal Cortex
fMRI	Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging

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Author Contributions

Negin Khayat Hesari: Conceptualization, Data curation, Methodology, Investigation, Validation, Project administration, Writing – original draft

Mahnaz Aliakbari Dehkordi: Conceptualization, Data curation, Methodology, Formal Analysis

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Data Availability Statement

The data is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Appendix

The data related to RSCP's efficacy on depression can be accessed at: https://doi.org/10.1080/19349637.2024.2418122

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Biography

Negin Khayat Hesari is a clinical psychologist and researcher dedicated to advancing Religious Savior-Centered Psychotherapy (RSCP), a culturally adapted, faith-based intervention in positive psychology. With a Doctorate in Pharmacy from Azad University of Pharmaceutical Sciences, she later pursued a Master's in Clinical Psychology at Payame Noor University, developing an Islamic educational-therapeutic package to improve life quality and decrease depression. Currently a Ph.D. student in Psychology at Islamic Azad University, she works extensively on RSCP, focusing on its practical applications and potential to enhance Muslim clients' life satisfaction.

Mahnaz Aliakbari Dehkordi is a distinguished psychologist specializing in developmental and health psychology. She holds a Ph.D. in Psychology from the Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, where her research focused on gender roles, mental health, marital satisfaction, and emotional intelligence among working women and their spouses. She earned her M.A. in General Psychology from Tarbiat Modares University, with a thesis on stressors affecting digestive disorders, and her B.A. in Clinical Psychology from Alzahra University. Currently, Dr. Ali Akbari Dehkordi is a lecturer at Payame Noor University, where she teaches a range of psychology courses from undergraduate to doctoral levels.

Abbas Pasandideh is an assistant professor and esteemed faculty member at the University of Quran and Hadith, specializing in Quranic studies and Islamic traditions. He holds a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies, with a focus on the Quran and Texts, from the Faculty of Hadith Sciences, where he researched the foundations of happiness in Islam through a positive psychology lens. Dr. Pasandideh's scholarly pursuits emphasize Islamic psychology, ethics, and spiritual well-being. He teaches courses on Quranic psychology, hadith comprehension, ethical principles, and the lives of Islamic leaders at the University of Quran and Hadith and other esteemed educational institutions.

Mir Farrokh Fattahzadeh holds a Ph.D. in Quran and Hadith from the Osool al-Deen College in Tehran, Iran. His academic expertise centers on the interpretation and contextual understanding of Islamic scriptures, focusing on the principles of Quranic exegesis and the transmission and analysis of Hadith. Dr. Fattahzadeh is committed to advancing scholarship within Islamic theology and scriptural studies, often integrating classical interpretations with contemporary applications. Through his work, he seeks to enhance the accessibility and relevance of Islamic teachings, contributing to a deeper and more informed engagement with religious texts.

Forough Asghari Nami is a master's student specializing in Family Counseling at Khatam University in Tehran, Iran. Her studies focus on supporting family dynamics, enhancing communication skills, and developing strategies for conflict resolution. With a commitment to promoting mental well-being within family units, Forough is gaining expertise in evidence-based counseling techniques and cultural sensitivity. Her academic journey reflects a dedication to understanding and addressing the complexities of family relationships, preparing her for a career aimed at fostering healthier and more resilient families.

Atena Mohammadzadeh is a master's student in Psychology at Payame Noor University in Tehran, Iran. Her academic focus is on understanding human behavior, mental health, and psychological well-being. Atena is passionate about exploring psychological theories and their practical applications, aiming to contribute to the development of effective therapeutic techniques. Through her studies, she seeks to deepen her knowledge in various areas of psychology, including cognitive, emotional, and social processes, with a particular interest in mental health interventions and support systems.

Research Fields

Negin Khayat Hesari: Religious Savior-Centered Psychotherapy, Mental Health, Depression Treatment, Quality of Life, Psychological Interventions, Faith-Based Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

Mahnaz Ali Akbari Dehkordi: Educational Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Family Therapy, Child Development, Psychological Counseling, Mental Health, Psychoeducation, Behavioral Interventions, Social Psychology, Cognitive Development

Abbas Pasandideh: Islamic Psychology, Positive Psychology, Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Islamic Teachings, Religious Studies, Mental Health, Quranic Studies, Family Well-being, Ethics.

Mir Farrokh Fattahzadeh: Quranic Studies, Hadith Studies, Islamic Theology, Religious Studies, Islamic Psychology, Islamic Counseling, Faith-Based Therapy, Mental Health, Islamic Philosophy, Quranic Interpretation.

Forough Asghari Nami: Family Counseling, Mental Health, Psychological Counseling, Relationship Therapy, Family Therapy, Marriage Counseling, Psychological Interventions, Psychological Support.

Atena Mohammadzadeh: Psychology, Mental Health, Psychological Well-being, Cognitive Processes, Emotional Regulation, Social Psychology, Therapeutic Techniques, Mental Health Interventions, Psychological Support Systems.