

The mental health benefit of religion and spirituality in people living with bipolar disorder in Malaysia.

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Introduction: The taxonomy of spirituality is fraught with complexities in relation to mental health studies due to contextual variables such as with and without religion. While positive mental health outcomes were reported by many studies in relation to spirituality, little is known from the context of bipolar disorder. This study aimed to provide a contextual understanding of spirituality from the religious worldview of people with bipolar disorder. **Materials and Method:** This is a qualitative study involving semi-structured and one-to-one indepth interview. A total of 25 participants diagnosed with bipolar disorder recruited from two psychiatric outpatient All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data and Bourdieu's concept of habitus is used to explore the findings in relation to participants' subjective account on their religious form of spirituality. **Results:** The theme 'Maintaining a positive sense of self' mainly consists of the religious element in the participants' everyday life: faith in God, religious practices and a sense of spiritual harmony (ie. peacefulness and connectedness). The role of religion and social agency were inclusive in promoting spirituality of the study sample. **Conclusion:** Through Bourdieu's lens of religious habitus, this study provides the understanding of religious-spirituality and a healthy mental state in such a way that it implies a relationship with God through religious beliefs and practices. This study invites other to pay attention on the dynamic role of religious agency and society in promoting religious faith and practices to the individuals diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

Keywords: Bipolar disorder, Bourdieu, Mental health, Religion, Spirituality