



An Empirical Investigation of the Relationships among Spirituality, Well-Being, and Psychological Health.

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Abstract

In this paper researchers will examine the relationship between spirituality, well-being, and the psychological health. The design used for the study is survey research design to explore the uniqueness population of interest, and for the standardization of measurement. This study is a quantitative in nature, whereby researcher used Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) (Paloutzian and Ellison, 1982) to assess the spiritual well-being of the participants. On the other hand, psychological health was measured by three different set of questionnaires; General Self-Efficacy (GSES), Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Result in this study indicated that spiritual health is significantly associated with psychological health; self-efficacy, self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Keywords: Spiritual Health, Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem and Life Satisfaction.

Introduction

According to the Richins spiritual well-being (SWB) defined as a sense that linked to life, fostering wellbeing, relationship with higher power and others cited in Hammermeister, Flint, El-Alayli, Ridnour, & Peterson, 2005. While, Isaia, Parker & Murrow, (1999) defined spirituality as the core of one's life and moves, attaches, and all aspects of being transcends. This ideas similarly explained by Ellison and Smith (1991) when he mentions that spirituality is related to various aspect of human health. Moreover, The SWB was designed to measure two components: self-efficacy and life scheme (Bridges & Moore, 2002). Therefore, this current

research aimed to look at the relationship between the spiritual well-being with psychological health.

Lately, various studies found that spiritual well-being have positive correlations with human psychological well-being (Ivtzan, Chan, Hannah. Gardner & Prashar, 2011; Samman, 2007; Sehgal, and Tripathi, 2007). In others studies, in order to measure psychological wellbeing the positive and negative effects have been used. For example, researchers used stress, anxiety, depressions, self-esteem, happiness, distress and life satisfaction to measure psychological wellbeing (Murray-Swank, Lucksted, Medoff, Yang, Wohlheiter & Dixon, 2006). Nurizan,



Momtaz, Mumtazah, Norhasmah, and Farhan, (2012) discover a positive relationship between spiritual and psychological well-being. However, this current research focused not only youths but to all ages. Additionally, most recent study only used western samples. According to Moreira-Almeida, Neto and Koenig (2006), majority of studies that result higher levels of religious involvement were significantly linked with positive and negative psychological well-being indicators of such as happiness, life satisfaction, and less depression, suicidal thoughts and drug abuse. In overall, numbers of previous literature agree with the relationship between the spiritual health and psychological health.

In the United Kingdom, stress costs regular absence symptoms among the employer. This circumstances occur due to stress illness and high staff turnover. Hence, the employees challenged pressure for self-improvement. In the light of this, company or organisation should be aware of those mechanisms that help their workers to growth personally. One way of it was to design or revise employees' assistance programs and incorporated with spiritual and religious activity. Many employees were unable to discover their potentials. They ended up with lack of life satisfaction, giving up and withdrawn from the society and. Some working women tried to seek advice from others (social support) without awareness of the spiritual elements. Similarly, those who willing to help (especially the therapist and counsellor) neglecting the effects of spirituality. The benefit of discovering the link between spirituality and psychological health was to assist the employers and authority at the organisation to develop Islamic and religious situation of working to tap to employee's psychological problems.

Youth nowadays struggle to face the vice versa of traditional and modernity of life (Zubairi & Md. Sawari, 2014). In additions then, the clash of Islam and Christian also affect their life. Keeping this viewpoint in mind, it is therefore needed to explore the extent of and connections

between the spiritual and psychological health. Nevertheless, we can view nowadays most of the study are focus on Christian populations regard to the research on religiosity and spirituality (Calicchia & Graham, 2006), Hence it is less result discover the relationship between Muslim religiosity and spiritual Health. Like what has been mentions by Amer and Hood (2008), there is few studies found discover the spirituality and psychological health using Muslim society as the populations.

Event though, it is found that, religious psychology as the rich complex field of study, but primarily it largely being influenced by the Protestant Christian, and this concept mostly irrelevant to the Muslim society (Amer & Hood, 2007). The reliability and validity of the instrument measuring Islamic religiosity can be questioning (Amer & Hood, 2007). It can be one of the major weaknesses for the study related to Muslim society. Yet, plentiful of the research used specific religious groups on religiosity and spirituality until recently, in the literature it has been investigate that the relationship between spiritual and psychological health of employees is rare in the Malaysian context. Many researches on spirituality and psychological well-being were conducted in other countries, not much in Malaysia; an Islamic environment institution. Imam, Abdul Karim, Jusoh, and Mamad (2009) also have run study on spirituality and psychological health, however it focused on the regional differences in religiosity among Muslim youth in Malaysia, and found our urban-rural differences among the sample. Very rarely focused on workers in organization (Calicchia & Graham, 2006). Thus, this research also tried to fill the gap left by previous literatures.

Literature Review

Positive and Negatif Effect

Stress can be discover at various place in this word. Including the workplace setting. The



importance of identifying ways of handling stress for employees was obvious for the family, in general and specifically to the mother themselves. Stress is one of negative impacts towards psychological well-being. Thus, Maselko, Gilman, and Buka (2009) discover that there is positive correlations between spiritual health and psychological health. People with stress or low self-esteem could be 'cured' with spirituality.

Secondly, self-efficacy was found as the part of psychological health. Study have found that there is positive relationship between self-efficacy and spirituality. In addition, stress and self-efficacy, researchers also used anxiety, depressions, self-esteem, happiness, distress and life satisfaction to measure psychological wellbeing (Murray-Swank, Lucksted, Medoff, Yang, Wohlheiter & Dixon, 2006).

Psychological Dimension's

Self Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a combination of two words, self and efficacy. Historically, the word efficacy appeared in 1520 (Oxford English References Dictionary, 2003). It was derived from the Latin's word, "*efficācia*", which is equivalent to "*efficāc-*" that means the capacity for producing a desired effect (The Oxford Dictionary of American Usage and Style, 2000). However, the theory of self-efficacy was pioneered by one of the famous psychologists known as Albert Bandura. The self-efficacy term was firstly introduced by Bandura in 1977 through the article entitled *Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioural change* (Pajares, 1996). Bandura defines self-efficacy as people's belief about their capabilities to produce designated level of performance that exercise influences over events that affect their lives. Furthermore, the term can also be understood as confidence in one's capability for organising and implementing the cognitive, behavioural, and social skills, which are needed to achieve the goal. The major

concern of this theory is to determine confidence level, motivations, actions, and performance of human beings.

Generally, self-efficacy is the belief in one's competence to tackle novel tasks and to cope with adversity in a broad range of stressful or challenging encounters, as opposed to specific self-efficacy, which is constrained to a particular task at hand (Robins, Hendin & Trzesniewski, 2001). GSE is also defined as "one's belief in one's overall competence to effect requisite performances across a wide variety of achievement situations" (Chen, et al., 2001). Thus, GSE captures differences between individuals in their tendency to view themselves as capable of meeting task demands in a broad array of contexts. According to the founder of self-efficacy concept Bandura (1994), self-efficacy can be defined as the human's related to their capabilities in designing further levels of performance throughout their life.

In 2001, Grau, Salanova, and Peiro indicated that in general self-efficacy able to controls the stress-strain. In the sense that high self-efficacy level are connected to lower levels of occupational stress. The result were particularly important with chronically ill patient populations which often have to endure stressful psychological and social challenges, and, due to the harshness of their illness, often were worried with such fundamental philosophical concepts as their meaning and purpose in life (Koenig, 2004). Similarly, emotions and spiritual needs also interrelate on a clinical level: Spirituality has been shown to be associated with decreased anxiety and depression. Increased use of spiritual practices among persons with AIDS has been associated with a decrease in psychological distress and depression and an increase in emotional coping ability

Self Esteem

Self-esteem has been establish to perform significant roles in psychological function. Numerous studies shows that high self-esteem



can contributor to psychological health and well-being (DuBois & Flay, 2004). Moreover, Cheng and Furnham, (2004), mentions that, high level of self-esteem significantly associated with happiness. Not only that, it also related to the good psychological health (Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2004). Dein (2007) analysis literature from 1996 until 2006 on religion and depression discover that, 55% result reported high level of self-esteem affected from religiosity enrolment. This result similarly discover by Murray-Swank, Lucksted, Medoff, Yang, Wohlheiter, and Dixon (2006) when they found that positive self-esteem, less depression associated with stronger predictor of adjustment than religious service attendance.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is synonymous with happiness or subjective well-being, and is an evaluation by an individual that his or her life is positive (Yamawaki, Nelson & Omori). Diener, et al. (1985) defined life satisfaction as individual's assessment of the quality of their lives on the basic on their own unique set of criteria or standard.

Spirituality and Psychological Health

Maselko and associates (2009) (as cited in Ellison, (1983) stated that religious well-being subscale measures individual's relationship with God or a higher power whereas existential well-being subscale measures person's perceptions of meaning and purpose in life. In this study, the word "God" was replaced by "Allah". RWB also measures satisfaction with the relationship with God (Ramirez & Wooten, n.d.). Subscale scores are generated by summing scores of the 10 items on each subscale. The Existential Well-being subscale measures perceptions of life purpose and satisfaction. Each subscale has a scoring range of 6 to 24 with a higher score indicating higher religious and existential wellbeing.

In 1998, Koenig discover that, nearly 80% sample elaborate a statistically positive

association between greater religious participation and, happiness, higher morale and greater life satisfaction. Two years after that in 2000, Udermann found that that there is scientific evidence that individuals who frequently join and participated in spiritual worship and strongly feel the existence of higher power will experience strong, comfort, healthier and possess greater healing competences rather than people who do not participated in spiritual worship and strongly feel the existence of higher power will experience strong. Next, Kaldor, Hughes, Castle and Bellamy (2004) discover that people with secular viewpoints usually experience lower levels of well-being than persons with a higher spiritual orientation. Persons' with greater spirituality have associations with well-being. They are connected to a positive sense of purpose in life and tend to have a greater sense of purpose.

Islamic Sprituality

In Islam, there are two primary sources of knowledge, Quran and Hadith. Muslims will be in misguidance if they leave Quran and Hadith in their life. Quran and Hadith play a vital role in explaining human life concept. Quran is defined as revelations from Allah to Prophet Muhammad through Jibrail in Arabic transcript. Reading Quran is considered as worship. On the other hand, Hadith is defined as actions, sayings, and approval of actions of Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Both of these primary sources provide a complete guidance for all believers. There is no doubt in believing in both of these sources. Thus, in this part, the researcher chooses to highlight some verses of the Quran and Hadith that have relations to characteristics of self-efficacy.

Previous excerpt mentions the characteristics of people with self-efficacy as listed by numerous scholars, such as confident, highly motivated, consistent, serious, strive to succeed, work hard with trust, and avoid doubt. The Quran and Hadith also prescribe many characteristics of people with self-efficacy. Islam has presented the concept of self-efficacy as early



as 1400 years ago. For example, in surah al-Ra'd: verse 28, the translation says "now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts confident". Allah mentions the word "confidence" to all mankind. When they believe in the All Mighty, their level of confidence will increase. By remembering Allah, the hearts will feel calm and be confident. In another verse, Allah demands the Muslims to be confident in their prayers because each of the prayers will be answered by Him, as follows: "And your Lord hath said: Pray unto Me and I will hear your prayer" (al-Ghafir: 60).

As confidence is instilled in the hearts, any feeling of doubt should be avoided. This is because when someone has full trust and confidence, his heart will be saved from doubt. This notion is in accordance to the verse 113 of al-Maedah that says "This is the Book; in it is sure guidance, without doubts, to those who fear Allah". Allah mentions in this verse that those who believe in Him with full trust and confident will never have doubts with the holy book of Quran. In order to reach the high level of Iman in life, Muslims must have confidence in Islam and they must have not even single doubt.

This concept of confidence is also applicable to human daily actions. If they want to reach success or achieve something, they must work for it with confidence, leaving behind any feelings of doubt in themselves. This is because if they do not do so, they will easily fail in their task. The Quran has also revealed that man must have efficacies to achieve their goals. If they do not strive for it, Allah will never help them to reach the goals, as mentioned in surah al-Rad, verse 11, "Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls)". However, feeling of confidence and avoidance of doubt itself are not enough to make sure that mankind will reach high levels of self-efficacy. They must work hard and show how serious they are in their actions. With reference to the surah al-Hajj, verse 78, Allah has commanded human beings to work hard with trust, as follows:

"Strive hard in Allah's Cause as you ought to strive (with sincerity and with all your efforts that His Name should be superior). He has chosen you (to convey His Message of Islâmic Monotheism to mankind by inviting them to His religion, of Islam), and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship, it is the religion of your father Ibrahim (Abraham) (Islamic Monotheism). It is He (Allah) Who has named you Muslims both before and in this (the Quran), that the Messenger (Muhammad) may be a witness over you and you be witness over mankind! So perform As-Salat, give Zakât and hold fast to Allah [that is have confidence in Allâh, and depend upon Him in all your affairs] He is your Maula (Patron, Lord), what an Excellent Maula (Patron, Lord) and what an Excellent Helper!"

In the above verse, Allah asks human beings to strive hard and work with all their might in their *jihad* (efforts) in defending Islamic religion. Jihad is not meant for the purpose of war only but it covers all aspects of human life. All Muslims must do all of their works diligently and vigorously. When they do something, they must do it with full sincerity. This call was also emphasised by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the Hadith that says "Work in this world as if you are going to live forever; prepare for the next world as if you are going to die tomorrow" (al-Bukhari). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) urged Muslims to work hard and perform every work vigorously as if they are going to live forever in this world. In addition, they must also perform *ibadah* (religious duties) as though they will die soon.



The prophet asked his people to do all works seriously and conscientiously. Thus, perfunctory, unmotivated, complacent, and laziness are some of negative attitudes that are contrary to the call. In order to avoid these negative attitudes, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) called the Muslims as follows:

“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from disability, from laziness, from cowardice, from miserliness, decrepitude and from the punishment of the grave; O Allah, grant to my soul the sense of righteousness and purify it, for You are the best purifier thereof, You are the Protector and Guardian; O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the knowledge which does not benefit, from the heart that does not have fear of Allah, from the soul that does not feel content, and the supplication that is not answered.” (Muslim).

This Hadith shows that when someone becomes a Muslim, he or she must work vigorously and avoid laziness. Being a Muslim means he or she believes that Allah will count any deeds, good or bad, big or small. Allah The All Mighty mentions in surah Luqman, verse 16, as follows:

“Luqman went on saying to his son, “My dear son, in fact, if there is anything to measure a grain of rye, and it is (hidden) in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Surely, Allah is All-Fine, All-Aware.”

Muslims should always be consistent and patient to reach their goals. Even though there are uncountable obstacles, they will be able to handle the obstacles. This statement is supported by

Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) saying: “A strong believer is better and loves Allah more than a weak believer and they are both good, be eager to achieve all the benefits that you ask from Allah, help and support and do not give up”.

Besides that, in other Hadith narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also mentioned about the vagarious of Muslim, as follows:

“You are being commanded to stand up in the Night Prayer because We are going to send down on you a weighty word, to bear the burden of which you must develop necessary power in yourself, and you can develop this power only by abandoning your ease and comfort of the night and by standing up in the Prayer and passing half the night or there about in the worship of your Lord. “The Quran has been called a weighty Word also for the reason that acting on its commands, demonstrating its teaching practically, extending its invitation in the face of the whole world, and bringing about a revolution in the entire system of belief and thought, morals and manners, civilisation and social life, according to it, is indeed the weightiest task any human being ever has been charged with: It has been called a weighty Word also because bearing the burden of its revelation was a difficult and heavy duty.”

This Hadith is clearly states that good Muslims have desirable characteristic. They stand at night, pray, recite Quran, and worship the All Mighty. All these obligations should be performed sincerely and with determination. If they fail these obligations, their deeds will not be



accepted. This desirable characteristic proves that a good Muslim will always produce high quality of work. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH once said:

“Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by worshipping in the mornings, the nights.” (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the objective of the examine the relationship between spirituality, well-being, and the psychological health. In addition, the present research aimed to discover the effect of quality of spiritual health on psychological. Similarly, recognizing the how spiritual linked to psychological well-being of the employees would facilitate the authority to alter the current Islamic atmosphere or environment that suitable to encourage them to develop positive attitude. The authority could hold various spiritual activity as religious participated as support sources, coping, and resiliency (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001). Other than that, is to propose recommendations for the implementation plan of best psychological assistance to be adopted by the organization to help the employees achieve high self-esteem, self-efficacy and life satisfaction.

Methodology

This chapter discussed the respondents and the methodology to conduct the study in order to answer the research questions above. Since this study is aiming to examine the magnitude and relationship between spiritual and psychological health, it is noted that the suitable method of research is to conduct a survey research. The instrument, measurement and data analysis also will be highlighted later in this section.

Sample

The population of interest is current staffs (permanent or contract) covering various departments in one private college located at Klang Valley. In order to obtain the sample easily, convenience sampling procedure will be employed. Using sample taken from the population for this study is due to the cost of time, expenses and accessibility (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). In 240 staff, there are only five staffs who are non-Muslims, the rest (235 staffs) are Muslims. From 235 people, the researcher was only interested in achieving a sample size of 100 employees (permanent and contract) who would take part in our research. All 100 participants were recruited from various departments and positions. The 100 participants were Muslims while the number for each category of gender, age, educational background, and economic were not fixed. The purpose of this is due to small budget and limited time. As such, we would continue to invite staffs to take part in the research until our sample size was reached. However, the sample is unlikely to be representative of the population being studied.

Procedure

Researcher has managed to get the permission from the authority of interested college to spend a day in the college to collect as many questionnaire responses as possible. Since the aim of convenience sampling is easy access, researcher simply chooses to stand at one of the main entrances to campus at the college we were interested in, where it would be easy to invite as many Muslim staff that pass by to take part in the research. Then, brief explanation was given to them in terms of the purpose of the study, the anonymity and confidentiality and the outcome of answering and participating in this study. Administration of the set of questionnaires ranged from 10-20 minutes for each respondent. Staffs were given a pen for their participation in this research. The completed inventories did not



include the staffs name to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Finding

The purpose of the study was to identify the degree and association of spirituality well-being and psychological health among employees. Results were presented in there sections. First,

the analysis of the level of spiritual and psychological well-being of Muslim staffs, followed by association between spiritual and psychological health of Muslim staffs and the predictor role of spiritual of Muslim staffs towards their psychological health. In addition, basic demographic information of the respondents was collected.

The study explores the respondent’s background in terms of various characteristics. A total of 100 respondents participated in the study. From 100 Muslim staffs, there were 67 female and 33 male staffs. One-third of respondents were aged between 26-30 years old (34 staffs), followed by 31-35 years old and younger (32 staffs), and only two of them is 41 years old and above. Slightly more than half of the respondents are having income RM 2001 – RM 2500 (30 staffs), followed by RM1501-RM2000 (23 staffs). 16 people were included in RM1000-RM1500. More than half of staffs (56 people) are a Degree Holder, followed by Masters (22 staffs). Only two of them have PhD. The other information was presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Overall Demographic Background

Background	Staff	
	Frequency	Percentage
Sex:		
Male	33	33.0
Female	67	67.0
Total:	100	100
Age:		
20-25	18	18.0
26-30	34	34.0
31-35	32	32.0
36-40	14	14.0
41 above	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0
Income:		
below RM 1500	16	16.0
RM 1501 – RM 2000	23	23.0
RM 2001 – RM 2500	30	30.0
RM 2501 – RM 3000	19	19.0
Above RM3000	22	22.0
Total	100	100.0
Highest Educational Background:		
Diploma	12	12.0
Degree	56	56.0
Masters	22	22.0

PhD	3	3.0
Others	7	7.0
Total	100	100.0

The analysis of data using partial correlation between the measures of spiritual and psychological health was to examine the association between the two variables. Controlling for age, gender, income, and education level, it has been found that all the correlation coefficients were statistically significant, $r(98) = .24$ to $.71$, $p < .001$ (see Table 2). It shows that spiritual health is significantly associated with psychological health.

Table 2 Relationships between the Measures of Spiritual and Psychological Health Controlling for Age, Gender, Income and Education Level

Measures	RWB	GSE	SES	LS
RWB	1			
EWB	0.71*			
GSE	0.43*	1		
SES	0.24*	0.64*	1	
LS	0.35*	0.52*	0.37*	1

*RWB = Religious well-being, GSE = General Self-efficacy, SES = Self-esteem, LS = Life satisfaction

Another goal of this research was to investigate whether spiritual well-being is a predictor of psychological health. To evaluate the prediction of self-efficacy, self-esteem, and life satisfaction from religious well-being, bivariate linear regression was carried out (see Table 3). The primary predictor variable was the type of spiritual health (i.e., religious well-being and existential well-being). Criterion variables included outcome variables such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. Increased religious well-being has highest significant association to the increased of self-esteem ($r=42.09$, $p \leq .001$), followed by life satisfaction ($r=34.56$, $p \leq .001$) and self-efficacy ($r=21.38$, $p \leq .001$). Overall, measure of spiritual health also predicted multiple measure of psychological health.

Table 3 Bivariate Regression between Religious and Existential Well-being on Self-efficacy, Self-esteem, and Life Satisfaction

Predictor Variables	Outcome Variables	R	Beta	t	P
Religious Well-	Self-efficacy	21.38	.07	4.57	0.001



Being	Self-esteem	42.09	.29	6.90	0.0004
	Life satisfaction	34.56	.16	3.37	0.0000

Overall, staffs experience good spiritual and psychological state. The spiritual well-being has significant relationship and as a predictor of the psychological health. Increased in spirituality will increase self-esteem, self-efficacy and life satisfaction.

Discussion

Results showed that spiritual health is significantly associated with psychological health. It is supported by Maselko and colleagues (2009) study. They found that there is a relationship between spiritual and psychological health. It has been found there is a significant positive correlation between measures of spiritual well-being and psychological well-being among samples of adolescents (Mohan, Sehgal, & Tripathi, 2007). Study showed that man’s psychological health status is significantly influenced by both religious well being and existential well being (Nurizan, et. al., 2009). Measure of spiritual health predicted multiple measure of psychological health. For example, as spiritual well-being increased, psychological health increased. For the further research, it was recommended to conduct the study using random sampling to generalize and broaden the findings of the study. With that, the researcher could compare the differences of other variables in depth. It also suggested administering the survey on the larger sample size. The sample was very small therefore, did not represent the population of public college staff since it was non-probability sampling. We could not generalize the findings in other conditions. It was the time for additional inquiry related to spiritual-psychological issues since there was mix of findings from previous research. In order to validate the responses by the respondents, it would be better to incorporate interview session with the respondents to get further information. Finally, the researcher recommends that a qualitative method should be

used for in-depth investigation. For the further researcher’s interview regarding Malaysian experience of the spirituality and religion role on numerous aspects associated psychological health and preventive coping. Thus, permitting Malaysian voices to be spoken directly able to generate greater depth in understanding the professional issue.

Conclusion

The current study examine the relationship between spirituality, well-being, and the psychological health. The results Result in this study indicated that spiritual health is significantly associated with psychological health; self-efficacy, self-esteem and life satisfaction. Also, the findings attract the attention of other researcher the need to construct new instruments specific to Muslims within the Asian multicultural settings for a inclusive understanding of the spiritual health. The effective intervention in response to the spiritual and psychological needs of Malaysian people can be understood if future researcher able to realise this agenda.

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