



## **Emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being: Impact on society**

Nurshahira Ibrahim<sup>1</sup>, Norhapizah Mohd Burhan<sup>1</sup>, Asjad Mohamed<sup>1</sup>, Maziah Mahmud<sup>1</sup>,  
Sakinatul Raadiyah Abdullah<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Pahang, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Kedah, Malaysia

Correspondence: Nurshahira Ibrahim (email: [shahiraibrahim@uitm.edu.my](mailto:shahiraibrahim@uitm.edu.my))

Received: 13 July 2021; Accepted: 19 July 2022; Published: 31 August 2022

### **Abstract**

Mental health issues are frequently ignored and overlooked by society because they cannot be physically expressed. Furthermore, this perception has long been entrenched in the Malaysian society as the stigma against individuals who suffer from this problem remains at the same level even though awareness about mental health issues has spread significantly. Therefore, this study was conducted to evaluate the relationship between emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being among counseling clients in one of the government agencies in Pahang, Malaysia, during the Covid-19 pandemic. A total of 157 counseling clients answered the questionnaire. SmartPLS was used to evaluate the data content of the questionnaire and test the research hypotheses. The results of the analysis yielded several significant findings. First, there was a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence (i.e., self-awareness, social awareness and emotional receptivity) and spiritual intelligence. Second, there is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. Third, there is a positive and significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being. Fourth, there is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being. The findings of this study confirmed the important role of spiritual intelligence as a mediating variable in the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. Furthermore, the findings of this study can be used as essential recommendations to help practitioners understand the diversity of perspectives on the construct of emotional intelligence and develop a spiritual intelligence management plan in counseling sessions to help those with mental issues achieve and maintain their emotional well-being in daily life.

**Keywords:** Counseling, Covid-19, emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, SmartPLS, spiritual intelligence

## Introduction

Malaysia's achievements in terms of the economy, science, technology, politics and education are at a very commendable level, and they are expected to continue to grow in line with current world developments. However, Malaysia has been hit by the Covid-19 epidemic, which had also jeopardized many countries worldwide. The extensive spread of the epidemic has a major impact on various segments of society, affecting education, loss of income and employment, limiting social and community activities, cutting off basic food needs for poor families, rural people and those in the interior and increasing workload faced by front-line officers.

This condition, to some extent, disrupted the mental and emotional well-being of some, which caused these individuals to experience stress, depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia (Eikhwan & Mahirah, 2020). In general, psychological well-being is the happiness of an individual, either internally or externally, and its assessment varies according to knowledge, skills and behavior. Ryff (1989) presented psychological well-being serves as a measure of an individual's psychological well-being against existing strengths and weaknesses. These measurements are the basis for constructing the needs of the Psychological Well-Being Index among the people and civil servants in Malaysia. Although the basis of this formation is measured, on the whole, the sensitivity in the psychological well-being of an individual depends on how wisely they handle themselves.

Based on data from Talian Kasih Report published by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (KPWKM), which documented a record increase in the number of people seeking counseling services. There was an increase to 47.3 percent in the number of those seeking counseling during the first phase of the Movement Control Order (MCO) was enforced. The service recorded 336 complaints of physical, mental, emotional and sexual abuse as well as exploitation and neglect of children, domestic violence, people with disabilities (OKU) and the elderly. This suggests that the issue of people's psychological well-being has a significant impact on their emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence. Peter Salovey & John Mayer (1990) explained that if people can monitor their emotions and others and can differentiate those emotions, they can guide their thoughts and actions to be more rational and reasonable. The wisdom to manage emotions will help them train themselves to manage their emotions, be able to give feedback well and cooperate with others. This is because emotional intelligence is the ability to identify and track the feelings of others and take them as one's own experience, have empathy, have self-motivation in dealing with conflicts and adversities, and interact effectively (Goleman, 1995).

Nevertheless, emotional intelligence alone is not enough to succeed in life. Spiritual intelligence must coexist with emotional intelligence as it is needed to achieve happiness and meaning in life (Siti Zunariah, 2013). The term spiritual intelligence refers to an individual's personal interpretation of his ability to cleanse the soul from negative influences (Rohana et al., 2021), his understanding of the value, meaning and purpose of life (Fisher, 2010) and harmonious relationship with his creator, i.e., God, other human beings and environment (Vaughan, 2002). In simple words, spiritual intelligence results from the manifestation of deep faith as well as belief in the oneness of Allah (s.a.w), which gives birth to positive emotions, thoughts and actions (Suriani & Rosni, 2015). According to Al-Ghazali (1058-1111M) in the book *Ihya' Ulumiddin*, as a whole, the internal aspects of man consist of *an-nafs* (soul), *al-qalb* (heart) and *al-aql* (mind) which will affect the external attributes or human behavior (Suriani & Rosni, 2015). He added that the heart (*al-qalb*) is a major spiritual component needed in order to be the leader of life, either toward

aspects that are good or bad (Suriani & Rosni, 2015). When a person's heart (*al-qalb*) is damaged, then he is more inclined towards evil, and his soul is restless. Next, positive stimuli will lead to positive behaviors, while negative stimuli will lead to negative behaviors. Spiritual intelligence becomes a guide to man to find the truth of his humanity to attain success in finding the purpose of his life. This shows that emotional and spiritual balance is essential to propel a person towards a more positive, happy, productive and prosperous life. If society or the government fails to manage the state of this issue, it will weaken the immune system and disrupt the ability of the individual body to cope with infections and diseases thus inviting psychological problems. Therefore, efforts to curb this psychological disorder at the micro-level must be implemented immediately and effectively.

## Literature review

### *The relationship of emotional intelligence with spiritual intelligence*

The role of emotional intelligence in changing human behavior is in line with the theory proposed by Daniel Goleman in his book entitled 'Emotional Intelligence', which uses the model of Salovey and Major to examine how emotional intelligence relates to lifestyle. Thus, emotional intelligence can be defined as a person's ability to control the feelings and emotions of oneself and others as well as being able to lead all their actions and thoughts rationally (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Recent studies have found that emotional intelligence is developed using two main aspects and focused on six main elements (Sandhya & Namrata, 2013). The two main aspects are personal and social competence, and the six elements of personal and social skills include self-awareness, self-motivation, emotional regulation, social awareness, social skills and emotional receptivity. This study focuses on three elements. First, self-awareness which refers to the ability to see oneself in objective terms. Second, social awareness refers to the ability to see, understand and respond to the emotions of others and feel socially comfortable. Third, emotional acceptance refers to accepting and encouraging the point of view of others by being open to their emotions. In general, EQ is a person's ability to manage and control his or her feelings and those of others while providing positive impetus toward establishing human relationships that can lead to achieving a goal (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; McGarvey, 1997).

Recommendations have been put forward by the theory and are supported by empirical studies. The studies included Joanna Samul (2020), that studied 190 students of the University of Technology in Poland; Ardiana et al. (2019), that studied 217 cadets at Surabaya Polytechnic; Md. Aftab, AAhad & Muhammad Sabbir (2018) studied 250 students from various universities in Malaysia and Maryam & Hossein (2015) and studied 354 students in the 2014-2015 academic session at Zabol University. The findings showed that emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence are interrelated and reinforce each other because these two elements can affect the efficiency of managing and controlling emotions. Spiritual intelligence can develop intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies closely related to good attitudes such as humility, forgiveness, and gratitude. In addition, if a person's spiritual intelligence is strong, it can increase the individual's ability to produce positive emotions, courage him/her to face stress and challenges (Rohana, 2021) and help in his/her social interaction with others (Jung, 2014). The findings of these studies have led to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Self-awareness has a positive and significant relationship with spiritual intelligence.  
Hypothesis 2: Social awareness has a positive and significant relationship with spiritual intelligence.

Hypothesis 3: Emotional receptivity has a positive and significant relationship with spiritual intelligence.

#### *The relationship of spiritual intelligence with psychological well-being*

Furthermore, it is found that spiritual intelligence is able to improve psychological well-being, which uses a set of abilities and competencies in solving problems of daily life. This is in line with the theory of Spiritual Intelligence introduced by Emmons (1999). This theory reveals that spiritual intelligence is a framework for identifying the skills and abilities needed for adaptive spiritual use. Emmons (2000) proposed five components of spiritual intelligence. First is the ability to use spiritual resources to solve problems. Second is the ability to enter situations, causing awareness to increase. The third component is the ability to carry out daily social activities with a sense of holiness. The fourth is the ability to transcend physical and material, and the fifth is the ability to be virtuous.

Several studies have recognized that spiritual intelligence is a significant antecedent of psychological well-being. For example, a study by Melley, Getrude & Stephencie (2019) reviewed 255 members of the Christian Emmanuel Fellowship; Fereshteh et al. (2019) studied 220 Mazandaran University students; Faramarzi & Hassanzadeh (2017) studied 90 women i.e., breast cancer patients who received treatment and attended hospital counseling sessions; Koradžija et al., (2016) studied 112 employees of metal manufacturing companies in Slovenia; and Bigdeloo & Bozorgi (2016) studied 253 secondary school teachers in Mahshahr city. These studies showed that people with high emotional intelligence are more likely to have better mental abilities in understanding situations and responding to the tensions and pressures of the internal and external environment. At the same time, they are able to manage feelings and emotions when faced with problems and immediately take steps to cope with stress in daily life. Thus, high emotional intelligence can improve a person's quality of life and personal and social success and is an important factor in determining life success and psychological well-being. Therefore, this leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Spiritual intelligence has a positive and significant relationship with psychological well-being.

#### *The relationship between emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being*

Although the relationship of the direct effect model has been extensively studied, based on the limitations of previous studies, there have been only two studies with respect to the indirect effect involving spiritual intelligence as a mediating variable. For example, a study conducted by Abdalla & Ahmed (2018) showed that spiritual intelligence is a mediating variable that explains the relationship between stress coping strategies and well-being. In comparison, a study by Said et al. (2020) found that the mediating role of spiritual intelligence in the relationship between perfection and life expectancy among administrators of Azad Islam University, Mazandaran, Iran, had an indirect effect on life expectancy. Furthermore, about 56% of the variance of spiritual intelligence

and 25% of the variance of life expectancy were explained by perfectionism and about 88% of the variance of life expectancy is justified by spiritual intelligence. This percentage indicates the importance of spiritual intelligence as a mediating variable to see the influence on other variables. Therefore, this leads to the following hypothesis:

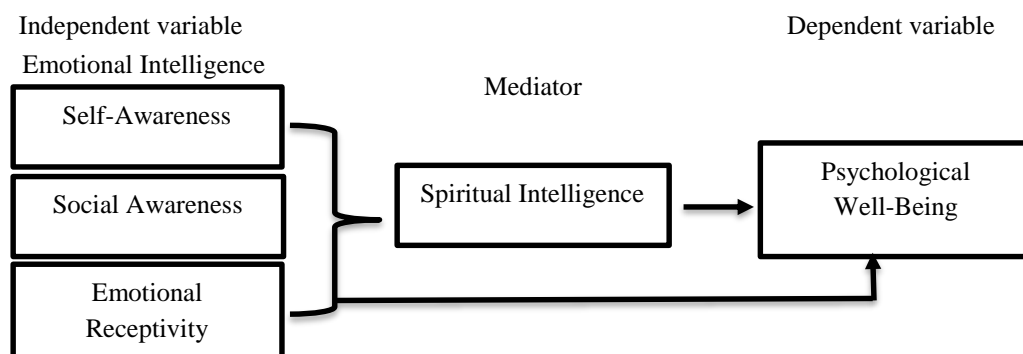
Hypothesis 5: Spiritual intelligence as a mediating variable has a positive and significant relationship with self-awareness and psychological well-being.

Hypothesis 6: Spiritual intelligence as a mediating variable has a positive and significant relationship with social-awareness and psychological well-being.

Hypothesis 7: Spiritual intelligence as a mediating variable has a positive and significant relationship with emotional receptivity and psychological well-being.

Although many previous studies had examined the influence of emotional intelligence in improving psychological well-being, most of these studies had focused on emphasizing the characteristics of emotional intelligence and the direct effects between variables. In conclusion, since previous studies had limitations in the aspect of studying spiritual intelligence as a mediating variable, previous studies that used simple correlations to measure the strength of the relationship between dependent and independent variables, previous studies used simple interview methods in explaining different respondents' perceptions of intelligence, emotional, spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being. In addition, previous studies also adopted a considerable number of general variables only in exploring the relationship without taking into account the dimensions found in those variables. So it is clear that the lack of past studies indicates a significant weakness of evidence of a relationship between emotional intelligence, and spiritual intelligence versus psychological well-being. This prompted researchers to fill in the gaps and simultaneously prove that this relationship is very important and should be given due attention in society. Let alone it can be used to identify the effectiveness of counseling sessions conducted during the Covid-19 outbreak. Thus, this study was conducted to provide guidance to counselors, educators and organizational leaders about the importance of their roles in improving psychological well-being.

The research literature has guided the researchers to formulate a conceptual framework for this research, as illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework

## **Method and study area**

### *Research design*

This study was conducted in one of the government agencies that offered counseling services in the State of Pahang, Malaysia. The name of this institution is not displayed on the basis of confidentiality. In the context of this study, all the agencies are given autonomy to plan and administer the distribution of questionnaires. The distribution of these questionnaires were made through various forms and differentiated according to time period, function and source. For example, a counselor will distribute this questionnaire to clients who have completed a group counseling session and are involved in a counseling program.

This study used survey methods (as research strategies) and a cross-sectional research design to help researchers collect accurate data, reduce bias, and improve the quality of collected data, as suggested by Sekaran & Bougie (2016). In the early stages of data collection, questionnaires were compiled based on the literature on emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being. Next, back-to-back translation techniques were used to translate the questionnaires into English and Malay to improve the quality of the study results (Lomand, 2016).

### *Research sample*

This study used purposive sampling method to distribute 200 questionnaires to counseling clients in one of the government agencies that offered counseling services in Pahang, Malaysia. This sampling technique was chosen for this study because the agency management did not provide detailed information about the clients due to confidentiality factors. This limitation did not allow the researchers to use random sampling techniques in selecting participants for this study. In the study, the help of a counselor is needed to help the researcher obtain data accurately and promptly because only the counselor knows the condition and development of the respondents. Generally, clients answered the questionnaire voluntarily and based on their consent. Of these, 157 (78.5%) usable questionnaires were returned to the researchers.

### *Research instruments and procedures*

The questionnaire of this study included four main sections: First, emotional intelligence used 14 items adapted from the study of Sandhya & Namrata (2013). These constructs were assessed using three elements: self-awareness, social awareness and emotional acceptance. Second, spiritual intelligence used 10 items adapted from the study of Abdollahzadeh et al. (2009). Third, psychological well-being used 4 items adapted from Ryff's (1989) study. A 5 -point Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree" was used to rate the items. Demographic variables such as gender, age, place of residence, religion, citizenship, higher education, occupation, marital status, and a monthly income as this study assessed the emotions of counseling clients.

### Data analysis

Survey questionnaire data were analyzed using SmartPLS to provide latent variable scores, address small sample sizes, abnormal data, and evaluate complex research frameworks (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016; Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009). This analysis procedure will reflectively and structurally analyze the model to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement scale, test the direct and indirect effect model and test the model suitability criteria (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016).

### Results and discussion

According to Hair et al. (2017), survey questionnaire data must be filtered first before being used to analyze measurement models and structural equation models. Based on this recommendation, the questionnaires with no missing value were used. Furthermore, items with suspicious answers, Skewness and Kurtosis values greater than +/- 2.0 were removed from this questionnaire. Only questionnaires that met the validity and reliability analysis criteria were used in this study.

#### Characteristics of respondents

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents are female (66.2%), aged between 25 to 40 years (45.9%), living in the city (57.3%), the majority are Muslim (94.3%), Malay (95.5%), education level degree (45.9%), working in the government sector (43.3%), married (52.2%) and earning in the range below RM1999 (49.7%).

**Table 1.** Demographics.

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	53	33.8
	Female	104	66.2
Age	Below 25	65	41.4
	25- 40	72	45.9
	41- 56	20	12.7
Residence	Town	90	57.3
	Rural	67	42.6
Religion	Muslim	148	94.3
	Non-Muslim	9	5.7
Nation	Malay	150	95.5
	Chinese	1	0.6
	India	1	0.6
	Others	5	3.2
Education	LCE/SRP/PMR	2	1.3
	MCE/SPM/SPMV	22	14.0
	HSC/STPM/STAM	2	1.3
	Sijil/Diploma	48	30.6
	Ijazah	72	45.9
Employment	Others	11	7.0
	Government	68	43.3
	Private	22	14.0
	Self-employed	67	42.7

Marital status	Married	82	52.2
	Single	69	43.9
	Others	6	3.8
Income	< RM1999	78	49.7
	RM2000 – RM2999	30	19.1
	RM3000 – RM3999	13	8.3
	RM4000 - RM4999	14	8.9
	RM5000 - RM5999	10	6.4
	>RM6000	12	7.6

Note: SPM/MCE (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia/Malaysia Certificate of Education)  
 STPM/HSC (Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia/Higher School Certificate)PMR/SRP/  
 LCE (Penilaian Menengah Rendah/Sijil Rendah Pelajaran/Lower School Certificate)

### *Reflective measurement model*

Based on Table 2, all the outer loading recorded values are as recommended by Hair et al. (2017) which is above the value of 0.708. Convergent validity is seen in the value recorded by AVE which must reach at least 0.5. For internal consistency reliability, the defective CR value is  $> 0.708$ .

**Table 2.** The value of the reflective measurement model.

Indicator	Convergent validity		Internal consistency reliability	
	Outer loadings	AVE (>0.50)	Indicator reliability (>0.50)	Composite reliability
B01	0.833	0.640	0.577	0.899
B04	0.815		0.554	
B06	0.800		0.547	
B09	0.801		0.568	
B11	0.748		0.588	
B36	0.755	0.720	0.555	0.911
B39	0.853		0.542	
B40	0.901		0.520	
B41	0.879		0.518	
B58	0.772		0.559	
B61	0.784	0.587	0.596	0.850
B62	0.793		0.542	
B67	0.713		0.595	
C03	0.707		0.525	
C04	0.870		0.506	
C05	0.862	0.708	0.559	0.960
C08	0.824		0.550	
C09	0.852		0.522	
C11	0.887		0.592	
C15	0.863		0.533	
C16	0.899	0.762	0.576	0.928
C27	0.910		0.508	
C28	0.715		0.580	
E30	0.815		0.617	



E33	0.895	0.552
E36	0.862	0.509
E37	0.917	0.643

Source: Questionnaire

Table 3 shows the results of construct validity and reliability. The value of the Heterotrait-monotrait correlation ratio (HTMT) for each construct is less than 0.90 (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2009), indicating that the construct has met the discrimination validity criteria (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2017; ., 2009). In addition, the secret interval value for each construct shows that in the parentheses falls below 1 (Hair et al., 2017), indicating that the construct has met the standards of discriminatory analysis.

**Table 3.** Discriminatory analysis results.

Construct	Self awareness	Social awareness	Emotional receptivity	Spiritual intelligence
Social awareness	0.642			
Emotional receptivity	0.505	0.714		
Spiritual intelligence	0.572 (0.157, 0.439)	0.581 (0.103, 0.430)	0.503 (0.040, 0.324)	
Psychoogical well-being	0.753	0.636	0.575	0.620 (0.487, 0.683)

Note. The values in the parenthesis are the values of confidential intervals at 5% and 95%.

### Construct analysis

Table 4 shows the analysis of the variance inflation factor and descriptive statistics. The mean values for all the constructs are in the range of 4.25 to 6.50, indicating that some respondents see the level of self-awareness, social awareness, emotional receptivity, spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being between (4) to (7). In contrast, the value of the variance inflation factor for the relationship between the independent variable (i.e., self-awareness, social awareness and emotional receptivity) and the mediating variable (i.e., spiritual intelligence), and the dependent variable (i.e., psychological well-being) is lower than 5.0, indicating that the data do not have serious collinearity problems (Hair et al., 2017).

**Table 4.** Analysis of variance inflation factor and descriptive statistics.

Construct	Mean	Standard deviation	Variance inflation factor	
			Spiritual intelligence	Psychoogical well-being
Self awareness	5.60	2.56	1.513	
Social awareness	6.50	2.18	1.894	
Emotional receptivity	5.25	2.05	1.592	
Spiritual intelligence	6.20	2.54		1.000
Psychoogical well-being	4.25	2.35		

*Structural model measurement*

Table 5 shows that Self\_A, Social\_A, and ER explain 38.7 percent of the changes in SI for the direct effect model. It is noted that 61.3 percent of the SI variance is explained by other factors that are not the focus of this study. The R2 value is greater than 0.33, which indicates that this model has a large effect. For the indirect effect model, 34.1 percent of the PWB variance is explained by SI, Self\_A, Social\_A, and ER. About 65.9 percent of the PWB variance are explained by other factors that are not the focus of this study. A value of R2 greater than 0.33 indicates that this model has a large effect. In turn, the study hypothesis test findings show seven important findings. First, Self\_A correlates significantly with SI (B = 0.295; t = 3.989), therefore, supporting H1. Second, Social\_A correlates with JSI (B = 0.277; t = 3.298), thus, supporting H2. Third, ER significantly correlates with SI (B = 0.172; t = 2.367), thus, supporting H3. Fourth, SI significantly correlates with PWB (B = 0.584; t = 11,611), thus, supporting H4. Fifth, Self\_A and SI correlate significantly with PWB (B = 0.172; t = 3.2580), thus, supporting H5. Sixth, Social\_A and Si correlate significantly with PWB (B = 0.161; t = 3.069), thus, supporting H6. Seventh, ER and SI correlate significantly with PWB (B = 0.100; t = 32.230), thus, supporting H7.

Next, the effect size (f2), model fit (SRMR value), and forecast relevance (Q2) were tested. The f2 value for the relationship between Self\_A and SI (0.094) is lower than 0.15 (Hair et al., 2017), indicating a moderate effect. The value of f2 for the relationship between Social\_A and SI (0.066) is lower than 0.15, indicating a moderate effect. The value of f2 for the relationship between ER and SI (0.030) is lower than 0.15, indicating a moderate effect. The value of f2 for the relationship between Self-A, Social\_A, ER, SI, and PWB (0.516) is higher than 0.35, indicating a large effect. The standard root means that the residual value (SRMR) is 0.075, lower than 0.1, indicating that this model is appropriate. The Q2 value for SI is 0.260, and PWB is 0.249, which is higher than zero, indicating that the model has a relevant forecast.

**Table 5.** Results of structural model measurement analysis.

Hypothesis	Relationship	B	P	t	Result	R <sup>2</sup>	F <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup>	SRMR
H1	Self_A → SI	0.295	0.000	3.989	Accepted	0.387	0.094	0.260	0.075
H2	Social_A → SI	0.277	0.001	3.198	Accepted		0.066		
H3	ER → SI	0.172	0.018	2.367	Accepted		0.030		
H4	SI → PWB	0.584	0.000	11.611	Accepted	0.341	0.516	0.249	
H5	Self_A → SI → PWB	0.172	0.000	3.580	Accepted				
H6	Social_A → SI → PWB	0.161	0.002	3.069	Accepted				
H7	ER → SI → PWB	0.100	0.026	2.230	Accepted				

Note. Significant at \* t > 1.96 (two tail testing); Self\_A: Self-Awareness; Social\_A: Social Awareness; ER: Emotional Receptivity; SI: Spiritual Intelligence; PWB: Psychological well-being

**Discussion**

Many past studies had extensively used direct impact models to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence (self-awareness, social awareness and emotional receptivity) and spiritual intelligence (Joanna Samul, 2020; Ardhiana et al., 2019; Md. Aftab, AAhad and Muhammad Sabbir, 2018; Maryam & Hossein, 2015). The test results of such a model only determine the strength of the correlation between the variables. However, most researchers were unable to measure the impact of spiritual intelligence as a significant mediating variable between

emotional intelligence (self-awareness, social awareness and emotional receptivity) and psychological well-being. This situation inspires the researchers to expand the literature by evaluating the intermediate effects of spiritual intelligence in the relationship between emotional intelligence (self-awareness, social awareness and emotional receptivity) and psychological well-being. This study formed a conceptual framework based on emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being literature. These findings indicated the counsellors' ability to emphasize the importance of spiritual intelligence in the activities of the counseling sessions. Hence, formal and/or informal guidance can drive the effectiveness of the client's emotional intelligence. As a result, this condition can enhance the development of their psychological well-being in going about their daily lives.

In the context of this study, the role of counselors has been broadly defined by the Board of Counselors based on global challenges. This is in order to address various human challenges in various situations (family, work, education, rehabilitation, community). Subsequently, the Ministry has given autonomy to agencies (schools, institutions, public sector, private sector, community, industry and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)) that offer counseling services to enhance the personal development and well-being of all individuals and communities. In community counseling agencies, the responsible agencies, particularly the Social Welfare Department and Lembaga Penduduk dan Pembangunan Keluarga Negara, have been empowered to provide comprehensive assistance services involving intervention strategies and services to improve the well-being of individuals, families and communities. The interaction between the counselor and the client is very important because they are able to determine the achievement of the coaching objectives in the community. The majority of participants indicated that the levels of emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being were low. This finding explains that the ability of the counselor to implement comfortable communication and provide adequate support in the counseling session will increase the spiritual intelligence of the client. As a result, emotional intelligence and psychological well-being can be improved for each client.

This study provides two important impacts: theoretical contributions and practical contributions. Regarding the theoretical contribution, the results of this study confirm that spiritual intelligence has influenced the emotional intelligence and psychological well-being of counseling clients. These results are consistent with Bar-On's Intelligence Emotional model that emotional intelligence involves interrelated relationships of emotional and social competence (Bar-On, 2006; Emmons, 2000). These theories are thought to determine how we understand and express ourselves, how we understand others, how we relate to the people around us, and how we cope with daily emotional challenges. In contrast, Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences finds that spiritual intelligence meets the criteria for an independent intelligence modality. This view is supported by Emmons (2000) who stated that the adaptive use of spiritual information can facilitate the solution of everyday problems and allow one to achieve certain goals in life. As a result, emotional intelligence and psychological well-being can be enhanced through the role of the client's spiritual intelligence. The theories are supported by the study of Joanna Samul (2020), Ardhiana et al., (2019), Getrude & Stephencie (2019), Md. Aftab, AAhad & Muhammad Sabbir (2018), Najib et al., (2017) and Faramarzi & Hassanzadeh (2017) who revealed that the ability of counselors to practice emotional intelligence is based on the diverse personalities, needs, and expectations of clients in formal and informal counseling activities. As a result, their spiritual intelligence have been improved. Therefore, this effectiveness can improve clients' psychological well-being in each counseling service agency.

Further, in terms of practical contribution, the results of this study can be used by practitioners to improve the effectiveness of guidance and counseling management in counseling services agencies during the Covid-19 pandemic. To achieve this goal, the management should pay attention to the following aspects: First, creative training programs should be precisely designed to help clients use standard content and methods to apply the practices in everyday life, bearing in mind their different needs and expectations. This practice can make it easier for counselors to measure their clients' abilities in achieving guidance and counseling goals. Second, the responsible agencies in schools, universities, the public sector, the private sector, communities and NGOs need to plan formal assembly sessions at least three times a year. This session is important to guide the client so that he can use his intellectuality to distinguish between right and wrong, think about the existence of nature and the power of God as well as the balance between evil lust with good lust. For example, the pandemic situation has left the client in an abnormal life as many things have been destroyed and lost, but this counseling session, to some extent, can help the client get out of the shackles of the problems faced by changing thoughts, emotions and strengthening themselves spiritually. This practice can increase the client's personality, morale, and confidence to continue living normally. Third, peer mentoring programs should begin by highlighting high-performing clients to be group leaders. They are able to directly share success stories, and motivate and guide group members to support the emotional, spiritual and psychological well-being of other clients. Fourth, special counseling programs for low-motivating clients should be arranged to reinforce cognitive behaviors (e.g., fostering clients' positive beliefs and expectations in realizing their life goals, creating stronger relationships between counselors and clients, and increasing client motivation. This socio-motivational aspect can improve client adjustment, increase success, and maintain higher psychological well-being. Finally, guidance and counseling programs should diversify their focus beyond aspects of life such as soft skills, ethics, thinking skills, career, and personality development. These aspects help prepare clients improve their psychological well-being. These suggestions are important to motivate and help clients adapt to the various challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **Conclusion**

This study is expected to provide useful input to practitioners in particular in order to increase understanding of how the effects of spiritual intelligence as a mediator can influence counseling sessions. Thus, future studies can test the relationship between the specific dimensions of the mediating and dependent variables while it can be done in larger as well as complex agencies.

## **Acknowledgement**

We would like to thank the GERAN LESTARI SDG2.0 (Project Code: 600-RMC/LESTARI SDG-T 5/3 (016/2021)) for supporting this research.

## References

- Abdalla, S. G., & Ahmed, M. Z. (2018). The mediation of spiritual intelligence and forgiveness in relationship between stress coping strategies and well-being in a structural model. *Journal of Educational & Psychological Sciences*, 19(1), 225-270.
- Abdollahzadeh, H., Baqherpour, M., Bozhmehrani, S., & Lotfi, M. (2009). *Spiritual intelligence: concepts, measurements and its applications*. Tehran: Ravansanji Publications.
- Al-Ghazali Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad. (1994). *Majmu'ah Rasa'ilal-Imam al-Ghazali*. Lubnan: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiah.
- Ardhiana, P., Warsono., Yoyok, S., Erny, R., & Heru, S. (2020). The effects of intelligence, emotional, rohani and adversity quotient on the graduates quality in Surabaya shipping polytechnic. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 9(3), 1075- 1087.
- Bar-On, R. (2006). The bar-on model of emotional-social intelligence (ESI). *Psicothema*, 18, 13-25.
- Cooper, R. K., & Sawaf, A. (1997). *Executive eq: emotional intelligence in leadership and organizations*. New York: Grosseflutnam.
- Eikhwan Ali, & Mahirah, A. R. (2020). *Pandemik Covid-19: Mendepani impak psikososial*. Perspektif, 11/2020.
- Emmons, A. R. (2000). Spirituality and intelligence: problems and prospects. *The international journal for the psychology of religion*, 10(1), 57– 64.
- Emmons, R. (1999). *The psychology of ultimate concerns: motivation and rohaniity in personality*. New York: Gilford Press.
- Fereshteh, B., Mashad, M., & Tahereh, G. B. (2019). Predicting students' subjective well-being and its subscales based on spiritual intelligence. *International Journal of Psychology*, 13(2), 89-108.
- Fisher, J. (2010). Development and application of a spiritual well-being questionnaire called SHALOM. *Religions*, 1(1), 105-121.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter Than IQ*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)*. Second Edition. Los Angeles. Sage.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sinkovics, R. R. (2009). The use of the partial least squares path modeling in international marketing. *New Challenges to International Marketing Advances in International Marketing*, 20, 277-319.
- Ivtzan, I., Chan C. P., Gardner, H. E., & Prashar, K. (2013). Linking religion and spirituality with psychological well-being: Examining self-actualization, meaning in life, and personal growth initiative. *J Relig Health*, 52(3), 915-929. doi:10.1007/s10943-011-9540-2.
- Joonna Samul (2020). Emotional and rohani intelligence of future leaders: Challenges for education. *Educ. Sci.*, 10 (178), 1-10.
- Jung, J. H. (2014). Religious attendance, stress, and happiness in South Korea: Do gender and religious affiliation matter? *Social Indicators Research*, 118(3), 1125–1145.
- Lomand, T. C. (2016). *Social science research: a cross section of journal articles for discussion & evaluation*. Routledge.
- McGarvey, R. (1997). Final score: Get more from employees by upping your EQ. *Entrepreneur*, 25(7), 78-81.

- Md. Aftab, A., Aahad, M. O. G., & Muhammad Sabbir, R. (2018). Effects of rohani intelligence from islamic perspective on emotional intelligence. *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, 11(1), 216-232.
- Melley, M. M., Getrude, C., & Stephencie, S. (2019). The effects of spiritual intelligence on academic achievement and psychological well-being of youths in Kanibungan Village, Pitas. *Southeast Asia Psychology Journal*, 9, 1-14.
- Najib, A. M., Azlizamani, Z., & Umami Habibah, A. R. (2018). *Emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among hearing-impaired: Does it relates?* MATEC Web of Conferences (2018).
- Noradilah Md Nordin & Mansor Abu Talib. (2009). Kesunyian dan kesejahteraan psikologi di kalangan pelajar universiti di Malaysia. *Jurnal Psikologi Malaysia*, 23, 27-37.
- Norhayati, Y. (2018). *Kajian terhadap faktor kemurungan*. Open University Malaysia: Batu Pahat, Johor.
- Nurul Sofiah, A. A. M., Noraini, A. R., & Mohd Sufien, H. (2020). Peranan kesihatan mental sebagai moderator terhadap kecenderungan bunuh diri. *Malaysian Journal of Social Science*, 5(1), 87-99.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioural research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879-903.
- Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? explorations on the meaning of psychological well being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), 1069-1081.
- Said, A. K., Babak, H., Ali, A. S., & Jamal, S. (2020). Mediating role of spiritual intelligence in the relationship between perfectionism and life expectancy among administrators of Azad University in Mazandaran Province. *Religion and Health, Spring & Summer*, 8(1), 49-56.
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, cognition, and personality*, 9, 185-211.
- Sandhya, M., & Namrata, S. (2013). Development of the emotional intelligence scale. *International Journal of Management & Information Technology*, 8(1), 1252-1264.
- Sayeeda, S., & Hameeda, S. (2016). Emotional intelligence in relation to psychological well-being among students. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 3(4), 206-213.
- Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2016). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Seyed Ali, M. K., Naeimeh, N., Zahra, A., & Elahe, D. (2014). Spiritual intelligence and life satisfaction among married and unmarried females. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 2, 172-177.
- Siti Zunariah, M. S. (2013). *Model struktur pengaruh kecerdasan emosi dan kecerdasan spiritual terhadap kepimpinan transformasi ketua jabatan akademik*. Desertasi Doktor Falsafah, Fakulti Pendidikan, UiTM. Malaysia. Ogos 2013.
- Suriani, S., & Rosni, W. (2015). *Kecerdasan spiritual: kupasan menurut perspektif hadis*. International Conference on Aqidah, Dakwah And Syariah 2015 (IRSYAD2015), Kuala Lumpur, 12th-13th October 2015.
- Vaughan, F. (2002). What is spiritual intelligence? *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 42(2), 16-33.
- Zohar, D., & Marshall, I. (2000). *SQ: Connecting with our spiritual intelligence*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.