

SPIRITUAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH OF INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC COLLEGE STAFFS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explored level of spiritual and psychological well-being of Muslim staffs at International Islamic College. Dein (2007) defined religion as collections of beliefs, practices, and institutions related to spiritual matters and spirituality as experiences and beliefs about higher meaning, intelligence, and purpose to existence and life. Both are fundamentally related to the discipline of psychology, and our psychological conceptions and comprehension of spirituality and religion influence our physical, emotional, mental, and social health and evolution. Clearly, one can be spiritual without being part of an organized religion. Spirituality is about enjoying the benefits of a connectedness with one's innermost self, as well as seeking one's place and purpose within the broader universe. Thus spirituality is a mighty, cohesive force within the individual, and within our humankind. This study involved 100 respondents from various departments in International Islamic College. The collected data were coded using the Master Code prepared by the researcher. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) WIN 16.0. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the study. Descriptive statistics used include frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and correlation while inferential statistics used was t-test, and regression. One sample t-tests was used to examine the magnitude of spiritual and psychological health of the respondents. The results provided some support for the belief that the Muslim staffs of the International Islamic College enjoy adequate spiritual and psychological health and there is significant association between their spiritual health and psychological health's.

Keywords: Spiritual, Psychological Health

INTRODUCTION

The struggle for Malaysian youth, then, is as much between Islam and the West as between tradition and modernity. Keeping this perspective in mind, it is therefore essential to investigate the extent of and relations among measures of spiritual and psychological health among Malaysian youth. However, research on religiosity and spirituality almost exclusively focuses on Christian population (Calicchia & Graham, 2006). Although psychology of religion is a rich and complex field of inquiry, it has largely been influenced by Christian perspectives (primarily Protestant), and many of the concepts and measurement tools may be less relevant for Muslim populations (Amer & Hood, 2007). As such, one of the major impediments in conducting research related to Muslims continues to be the glaring absence of reliable, valid, and culturally sensitive instruments for measuring Islamic religiosity and other Islamic religious constructs (Amer & Hood, 2007). In addition, only a small number of research studies have been conducted in Muslim countries or with Muslim participants (Amer & Hood, 2008).

The current model of human health consists of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions (Udermann, 2000). Most of the previous studies in this area involved physical,

psychological, and social aspects of health. In recent years, however, there has been an explosion of research in the area of spirituality and psychological well-being. The flow of interest in these topics reflects the importance of spirituality for individual's physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Although research results indicate that spirituality is an essential component of an individual's life, little attention has been given to the spiritual and psychological health of Muslims (Bridges & Moore, 2002). Taking into account the evidence supporting the association between spiritual well-being and many aspects of health, it is surprising that inadequate attention has been given to the examination of spiritual and psychological health in Muslim countries.

SPIRITUALITY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN MUSLIMS CONTEXT

Islam is Malaysia's official religion. Tiliouine, Cummins & Davern (2009) found a positive relationship between Islamic religiosity and well being in sample of approximately 2900 people from Algeria. Salem (2006) noted that coping strategies for Muslims when dealing with serious health problems included faith in God, prayer, scripture reading, or attending a mosque. Tocco (2009) noted that the popular hadith, "For every disease, Allah has given a cure" is being utilized in Northern Nigeria to assist HIV infected persons to enrol in HIV clinics and improve the quality and length of their lives. One hundred and eighty three Indonesian Muslim adolescents, French, Eisenberg, Vaughan, found a positive relationship existed between their involvement with Islam and peer group status, academic achievement, emotional regulation, pro-social behaviour, antisocial/problem behaviour, internalizing behaviour, and self-esteem (Purwowq & Suryanti, 2008).

Using a sample of 400 patients at a teaching hospital in Karachi, Qidwai, Tabassum, Hanif, Khan (2009) examined the relationship between practice and belief in offering prayers and its impact on healing. It was found that prayers for healing were practiced by 96.5% of the participants and 95.8% believed that praying caused healing.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Specifically, the objective of the study was to explore the predictive quality of spiritual health on psychological health. Thus, the main concerned of this study is to address the following research questions:

1. Do IIC staffs possess adequate level of spiritual?
2. Do IIC staffs possess adequate level of psychological health?

RESEARCH DESIGN

The design used for the study is survey research design to tap on the uniqueness of gathering primary data for unbiased representation of the population of interest, and for the standardization of measurement. Survey also helps to gather large scale of data that helps to generalize the findings to the context (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, p. 174). The study employs questionnaire as the instrument for data collection.

Instrument

There were two variables to be gauged which spiritual well-being and psychological health. Researchers used Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) 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).

SWBS was developed by Paloutzian and Ellison (1982) contained 20-item scale. Each respondent given themselves a rating for each question based on six-point Likert-scale administered to the Muslim staffs in IIC. RES is the most widely used measure of global self-esteem (Robins, Hendin, & Trzesniewski, 2001).

FINDINGS

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 in IIC, 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

<i>Background</i>	<i>IIC</i>		
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	
<i>Sex</i>	Male	33	33.0
	Female	67	67.0
	Total	100	100
<i>Age</i>	20-25 years old	18	18.0
	26-30 years old	34	34.0
	31-35 years old	32	32.0
	36-40 years old	14	14.0
	41 years old and above	2	2.0
	Total	100	100.0
<i>Income</i>	RM 1000 – 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
<i>Highest Educational Background</i>	Diploma	12	12.0
	Degree	56	56.0
	Masters	22	22.0
	PhD	3	3.0
	Others	7	7.0
	Total	100	100.0

One sample *t*-test was conducted to examine the magnitude of spiritual and psychological health of the respondents. For all variables of spiritual and psychological health, the obtained mean scores of the respondents were well above the theoretical average of the scales, $t(98) = 12.55$ to 37.68 , $p < .05$ (see Table 2). The result suggested that there were significant differences across groups, however, no group scored below the standard. This indicated that the staffs of IIC enjoy very good spiritual and psychological health.

Table 2. Mean Scores on Measures of Spiritual Well-being and Psychological Well-being

<i>Variables</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
RWB	35	45.61	4.99	98	37.68	0.043
EWB	35	42.30	5.16	98	16.47	0.035
GSE	24	27.56	6.44	98	12.55	0.032
SES	25	28.41	5.07	98	29.33	0.048
LS	20	24.50	3.33	98	13.92	0.021

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

DISCUSSION

The result showed that staffs of IIC enjoy very good spiritual and psychological health. The high mean spirituality scores are in line with the religious backgrounds of the staffs. The overall Islamic atmosphere of this college might also have contributed to the high spirituality of the staffs. Being in International Islamic College may give a sense of importance to most staffs. It is very likely that the participants' association with International Islamic College as owned by IIUM, which is a highly reputed institution in the Muslim world, might have contributed to their feeling of being efficacious and worthwhile. The two terms "Islamic" and "International" might be a source of inculcating feelings of high self-efficacy and self-esteem.

CONCLUSION

The current study examined the degree and association between spiritual health and psychological health and sought to examine the predictive nature of spiritual health on psychological health. The results provided some support for the belief that the Muslim staffs of the International Islamic College enjoy adequate spiritual and psychological health and there is significant association between their spiritual health and psychological health.

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