

## The Counselors' Spiritual Well Being

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### Abstract

This study is to identify the spiritual well-being of organizational counselor in Ministry of Education Malaysia. The subjects consisted of 203 counselors who are serving in organization counselors who serve in the State Education Department, District Education Office, Matriculation College, Institute of Teacher Education and also Psychology and Counseling Division, Ministry of Education. This study also is to understand the level of spiritual well being of the organizational counselor in Ministry of Education Malaysia. Likert Scale survey that consist of an instrument Spiritual Well being Scale that was developed by Paloutzian and Ellison (1982) was used in this study. Data gathered and analyzed using SPSS application. Instrument used showed high reliability. Descriptive analysis used to measure mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage. The study showed that the level of spiritual well being of organizational counselor in Ministry of Education Malaysia is moderate with mean score 95.59 and standard deviation 10.45. This study about the spiritual well being of the organizational counselor in Ministry of Education Malaysia will gives high impact in strengthening the level of professionalism for the counselor throughout the country. A few implication and suggestions also were suggested.

**Keywords:** Well-being, Spiritual Well-being, Organizational Counselor

### Introduction

Spiritual is a combination of values, trust, mission, awareness, subjectivity, experience, direction and effort towards something more broad and meaningful than yourself (Melati et.al, 2014). According to Al-Ghazali, there are four non-negligible spiritual elements namely al-nafs, al-qalb, al-ruh and al-'aql. These elements are also known as *ruhaniah* which

involves the combination of the four elements (Salasiah Hanin, 2016, Nurul Ain, 2006). Yatimah and Mohd Tajudin (2011) summarize through the *Ihya'* that external attributes are influenced by the inner aspect of humanity, spirit, heart and mind. So it turns out that spiritual aspect is something that is sacred in one's soul. The fact is there is an overlap between religion and spiritual. Melati et.al, (2014) summarizes in religion there is a spiritual element but in the spiritual sometimes there is no religious elements.

Discussing on spiritual well-being, according to Ellison (1983), spiritual well being is a spiritual life that is connected with God, ourself, the community as well as the environment that is the core of the perfection of one's life. He also noted that the concept of spiritual well-being can be translated into many dimensions. It represents trust and values in one's self. Arnold et al (2010) also emphasizes that spiritual well-being is a satisfaction of religious well-being that reflects its relationship with the Almighty, the well-being of its existence and the meaning and purpose of this life.

For the purpose of this study, the spiritual well-being will assess the relationship of organization counselors with God and measure the meaning of their existence and religion on this earth. The Spiritual Well being Scale (Paloutzian and Ellison, 1982) will be used to identify the two dimensions of spiritual well-being of the organization's counselor that are the well being of the existence and well-being of the religion.

### **Research Objectives**

This study was conducted to

- a. identify the level of spiritual well-being of counselors serve in the Ministry of Education
- b. investigate the level of two dimensions of spiritual well being of counselors serve in the Ministry of Education.

### **Research Methodology**

This study uses a quantitative approach that uses survey methodology. According to Fraenkel & Wallen (2001), there are three main features of the survey: first, the information obtained is from a group of people representing a particular population to see some aspects or features such as opinions, attitudes, beliefs or knowledge. Secondly, the method of collecting information is through questions where the answer to the questions asked is the data for the study. Next, is the information collected from a particular sample and not from each member within the population.

### **Research Sample**

The sample of this study was 203 counselors serving under the Ministry of Education. There were a total of 117 males (57.2%) and 86 females (42.8%) involved in this research. While 110 respondents (54.3%) worked in the District Education Office, 18 respondents (8.6%) in the State Education Department, 40 respondents (19.7%) at the Institute of Teacher Education and the Matriculation College and Ministry of Education, 24 respondents (12.0 %) and 11 respondents (5.3%) respectively.

### **Research Instrument**

The research instrument used in this study is a questionnaire. A set of questionnaire comprising two parts, Part A and Part B. Part A consists of respondents' demographics, Part B consists of the Spiritual Well being Scale developed by Paloutzian and Ellison (1982).

### ***Part A: Demographics***

Demographic data is the first data to be answered by the respondent. It contains 14 demographic items. The items include gender, race, religion, age, status, service status, place of work, workplace location, academic qualification in the field of counseling, experience as counselor, counselor's practice certificate and counselor's membership number.

### ***Part B: Spiritual Well being***

The Spiritual Well being Scale was developed by Paloutzian and Ellison (1982). This scale has 20 items that contain two sub-constructs. It consists of 20 items in which the respondent should choose based on six Likert constructs starting from Very agree (1) to Very Disagree (6). This scale aims to measure the spiritual well-being experienced when one involves himself with something meaningful in his life (Ellison, 1983). Religious Well being defined as well-being in relation to God (Ellison, 1983) and Existential Well being defined as a sense of life-purpose and satisfaction, with no reference to anything specifically religious.

Sub-scale of Religious Well being is items that measure the relationship between respondents with their God while the sub-scale of Existential Well being is an item that measures the relationship of respondents to their environment. These two sub-constructs are summed up to produce overall spiritual well-being.

A high score points out that the individual is not a lonely individual, has high social skills, has a high self esteem and has a high religious commitment. Hence the higher the score obtained by a respondent then the stronger his spiritual well-being. The low score is 20 to 40, the score 41 to 99 is moderate and the high score is 100 to 120 (Boivin et al., 1999). In addition, there are some items that are stated in the negative form and should be reversed with the code. The items are 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 12, 13, 16, and 18. All of these items should be re-encoded before the total process is implemented to get the right calculation.

### **Data Analysis**

The data from the scale along with demographic data will be analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19. The first and second objectives of this study that is to identify the levels of spiritual well being and its dimensions of counselors serve in the Ministry of Education will be achieve using descriptive statistics. Conclusions regarding the level of spiritual well being based on the characteristics of the samples will be available at the end of the study.

### **Findings**

Data for this study were collected through a questionnaire distributed to respondents of the study. After the review process, data removal and outliers then the final data involved for the analysis process is 203 cases. The number of respondents according to the states are Johor, there were 18 respondents (8.8%). Meanwhile, the Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory was 13 respondents (6.4%), Kedah (8.8%), Kelantan with 14 respondents (6.8%) and the Federal Territory of Labuan with 3 respondents (1.4%). Next, the state of Melaka, there were 7 respondents (3.4%), Negeri Sembilan were 10 (4.9%), Pulau Pinang with 11 respondents (5.4%), Pahang with 13 respondents (6.4%), Perak with 13 respondents (6.4% , Perlis is 4 (1.9%) and Sabah is 16 (7.8%). For the state of Selangor, there are 12 (5.9%) in Sarawak, 30 in Sarawak (14.7%), 10 in Terengganu (4.9%) and 11 in the Federal Territory of Putrajaya (5.4%).

From 203 respondents, majority were Malays (n = 166, 81.7%), followed by 16% (7.8%) of Chinese, Indian (n = 4, 1.9%), Bumiputra Sabah with 6 (2.9% ) and Sarawak

Bumiputra of 8 (3.9%). In terms of age, 50 (24.1%) respondents were in the age of 25 to 35 years old. While 79 (38.9%) respondents consisted of age group 36 to 45 years old. Next, respondents aged 46 to 55 are 68 (33.4%). Furthermore, respondents aged 56 years and above only have a total of 8 people and represent 6% of the total respondents. For the status of marriage, there were 24 (11.8%) respondents still single and unmarried. While 177 (87.1%) respondents were married and 1 (0.5%) responded to the divorced and died spouse.

In terms of the highest academic qualification in the field of counseling, there were 3 (1.4%) respondents who had a Diploma in the field of counseling. A total of 145 (71.4%) respondents had a Bachelor's degree in counseling and 55 (27.0%) had a Masters degree in counseling as the highest academic qualification.

The descriptive analysis also shows that there are 54 (26.6%) respondents having experience as counselors for 1 to 5 years. Meanwhile, 80 (39.4%) respondents had experience as counselors for 6 to 10 years. Furthermore, 49 (24.1%) respondents have experience as counselors for 11 to 15 years. A total of 19 (9.3%) respondents have also been experienced as counselors for 16 to 20 years and 1 (0.5%) of them have experienced as a counselor for 21 to 25 years. This analysis also shows that 110 (54.1%) respondents are registered counselors and 93 (45.8%) respondents are still not registered with the Malaysian Counselor Board.

### ***Spiritual Well Being Level***

A higher score shows the higher the level of spiritual well-being of an organization counselor. The overall organizational counselor's spiritual well-being level at the Ministry of Education is moderate with a mean score of 95.59 and a standard deviation of 10.45. There are two sub constructs in the spiritual well-being that are existence and religion. Between these two sub constructs the religious sub scale recorded the highest mean value of 50.69 with the standard deviation of 6.36. Subsequently followed by sub scale of existence which recorded mean score 50.15 with standard deviation 5.76.

Table 1.1 :

Means and Standard Deviations Of Sub Constructs In Spiritual Well Being

	<b>Sub Constructs</b>	<b>Mean (n=203)</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Level</b>
1	Religious Well being	50.69	6.36	Moderate
2	Existence Well being	50.15	5.76	Moderate

Table 1.1 above shows that both the spiritual well-being sub constructs, religious well-being and existence well-being are at a moderate level with the mean score of religious well-being is higher than the mean score of the existence well-being.

### **Discussion**

Overall, the level of spiritual well-being of the organization's counselors at the Ministry of Education Malaysia is at a modest level. Research respondents consisting of those who are currently serving as an organization counselor in the Ministry of Education, either in the District Education Office, State Education Department, Matriculation College, Teacher Education Institute and Psychology and Counseling Division, at the Ministry of Education.

The modest level of spiritual well-being provides an indicator that the respondents in this study have been able to realize the sub constructs elements in spiritual well-being that are religion and existence. The feeling of socializing and attending is in a counselor because

the sub scale of existence is referred to as a horizontal dimension which is more likely to see the social psychological aspects of being able to communicate with fellow human beings. And this can be done by an organization counselor. He also sees how great an individual can adapt to his client and his surroundings. This sub scale also involves the purpose of the existence of the person, the satisfaction of his life, the positive and negative working experience (Ellison and Smith, 1991, Trott, 1996). Respondents of this study, majority had married at the age of 25 to 55 years and had more than five years of working experience as a counselor and also had experienced various working experiences in their life. Adaptation in the family and community environment will help in establishing the well-being of their existence.

While sub constructs of religion are also found to be moderate. Boivin et al (1999) also states that vertical dimensions are religious well-being. This is because in this sub construct he focuses on one's spiritual well-being in relation to his God. The religious element in the respondents studied shows that all of them have a religious stand that can make them a place of hope, asking for help and a place to complain of their destiny to their respective gods. Religious holdings that exist in a person will enable them to remain in a state of affairs and always be able to discipline themselves in this life. This is because religion has a set of rules that must be followed by its adherents. If they violate the rules set out then the result will return to themselves. Anyone who does good will be rewarded with good, while those who do evil will be rewarded with their torture and reprisal.

### **Conclusions and Suggestions**

Researchers would like to suggest that future researchers conduct a qualitative research study specifically to understand the well being factor found in the counselor. This is because qualitative studies are a more specific form of study for specific aspects using specific observation and interview processes. The observation process on the aspect of well being can be more interesting as it is analyzed based on continuous and systematic observations. However, the researcher should also be careful and observe also the elements or other issues that may arise during the study. Wellness in many respects is one element that must exist in a counselor. The overall study has been able to achieve the objectives set to see the spiritual well-being of the organization's counselor serving the Ministry of Education

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