

Islamic music listening, spiritual well-being and burnout of employees in Islamic university

[Mendengar musik Islam, kesejahteraan rohani dan kelelahan dalam kalangan pekerja di universiti Islam]

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ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, working in university with Islamic vibes that boost the spiritual well-being and less burnout need to be supported with empirical evidence. The aim of the study is to examine the relationship between listening to Islamic music, the spiritual well-being, and burnout of employees in public university. A cross-sectional study using online survey was conducted among 140 employees in a public university during the Covid-19 movement control order in Malaysia (April to May 2021). The set of questionnaires include socio-demographic data, the types and frequency of music listened by the employees, Modified Maslach Inventory Burnout (MBI), the Duke University Religion Index (DUREL) and spiritual well-being (SWB). The data was analysed using SPSS version 26.0, and hypotheses were tested using Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal Wallis and Spearman correlation. Majority of employees listened to music every day and 51.4% of study participants listened to Islamic music or audio. The study participants have high level of religiosity (DUREL Mean = 24.02, SD=±2.352), high spiritual well-being (SWB) (Mean= 109.84, SD=±9.014). For the burnout category, there was low level of depersonalization (Mean= 8.54, SD=±5.728), moderate emotional exhaustion (Mean=20.51, SD=±9.866), and high personal accomplishment (Mean=31.87, SD=±7.956) among employees. SWB correlates positively with personal accomplishment and negatively with emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (p<.05). The present study highlights that listening to Islamic type of music that potential support the mental well-being and productivity of employees.

Kata Kunci:

Musik Islam, Kelelahan, Keagamaan, Kesejahteraan Rohani

ABSTRAK

Di Malaysia, suasana bekerja di universiti Islam mungkin mendorong kepada kesejahteraan rohani dan kurang melelahkan yang mana ianya perlu disokong dengan bukti empirikal. Matlamat

kajian adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan antara mendengar muzik Islam, kesejahteraan rohani, dan kelesuan pekerja di universiti awam. Metodologi: Kajian rentas menggunakan tinjauan dalam talian telah dijalankan dalam kalangan 140 pekerja di universiti awam semasa perintah kawalan pergerakan Covid-19 di Malaysia (April hingga Mei 2021). Set soal selidik termasuk data sosio-demografi, jenis dan kekerapan muzik yang didengari oleh pekerja, Modified Maslach Inventory Burnout (MBI), The Duke University Religion Index (DUREL) dan kesejahteraan rohani (SWB). Data dianalisis menggunakan SPSS versi 26.0, dan hipotesis diuji menggunakan ujian Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal Wallis dan korelasi Spearman. Keputusan: Majoriti pekerja mendengar muzik setiap hari dan 51.4% peserta kajian mendengar muzik Islam. Peserta kajian mempunyai tahap keagamaan yang tinggi (Min DUREL = 24.02, SD=±2.352), kesejahteraan rohani (SWB) yang tinggi (Min= 109.84, SD=±9.014). Bagi kategori keletihan (burnout), terdapat tahap penyahperibadian yang rendah (Min= 8.54, SD=±5.728), keletihan emosi sederhana (Min=20.51, SD=±9.866), dan pencapaian peribadi yang tinggi (Min=31.87, SD=±7.956) kalangan pekerja. SWB berkorelasi positif dengan pencapaian peribadi dan negatif dengan keletihan emosi dan depersonalisasi ($p<.05$). Kajian ini menekankan bahawa mendengar jenis muzik Islam yang berpotensi menyokong kesejahteraan mental dan produktiviti pekerja.

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1. Introduction

The working nature in a university involves many tasks as to deal with the students, colleagues, authority and the organization which demand a high level of communication skills and patience. Religiosity can handle negative emotions and employees with high religiosity tend to have a peaceful mind (Mohamad & Badawy, 2015; Zahid, 2017). A study conducted by Ho et al. (2016) and Rose (2019) found that prayers, meditation, and similar rituals can help in reducing burnout and managing distress. Corresponding to this, Hanapiyah, Daud and Abdullah (2019) mentioned that organization needs to give more consideration and attention to the religiosity components in maintaining high-quality employees.

Burnout is a condition resulting from persistent stress in the workplace that has not been handled successfully, and it affects both employees and organizations (Legg, 2019). For instance, those employees with burnout are likely to have problems with their performance, take frequent sick leave, or pursue other jobs (Wigert & Agrawal, 2018). According to World Health Organization (WHO), burnout is considered in the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as one of the occupational phenomena. It has become a factor that affects health status, yet it is not classified as a disease or health condition (Legg, 2019). Regarding university employees' burnout, a study finding by Alves, Oliveira, and Paro (2019), involving 366 faculty members from public universities indicates that 36.6% of the participant with burnout was associated with students' outcome and engagement.

At the global context, spirituality in the workplace has been substantially enhanced the well-being of the employee, improve motivation and promote success (Garg, 2017; Shaharuddin, Abd Majid, Abdullah, Usman, & Amran, 2020). Spiritual well-being (SWB) has been described as a sense of connection or communication with others, provision of meaning and purpose in life, promotion of well-being (through an

effect of stress-buffering), and a belief and a relationship of power higher than self (Hawks, Hull, Thalman, & Richins, 1995). Few studies suggested that spirituality and religiosity can reduce the stress level and burnout levels among employees (Kim & Yeom, 2018; Piatkowska et al., 2014), while promoting job satisfaction (Wyatt, 2017). A study by Moore (2017) revealed that the employees have a moderate sense of spiritual well-being but it is not associated with the employees' job satisfaction.

In Malaysia, there is a dire need to look at factors that promote employees' well-being, and one of the factors is religiosity and its influence on well-being could be understood in a highly religious dense workplace. According to Héliot, Gleibs, Coyle, Rousseau, and Rojon (2019), religious identities interact with the individual occupation and the working environment. Bouarif (2015) stated that religiosity shows dedication, feeling of obligation, duty and, in general, an arrangement of qualities that makes people focused on their work. A study conducted by Ahmad and Omar (2016) found that public service employees in Malaysia experienced reasonably high levels of spirituality at work; thus, they are satisfied and understand the meaning and their responsibilities towards their work.

In Malaysia, religious form of music (ie. *dhikr*, Quranic audio, *nashīd*) among Malaysian population should be explored together with its effect on the psychological well-being. This is in particular to the cultural values in which the Malaysian population prefers to listen more to relieve stress. Covid-19 pandemic gives challenges to both teachers and students during the outbreak. Al-Kumaim et al. (2021), examined and analyzed the student's perspectives during the Covid-19 outbreak from different universities in Malaysia and reported that 70% of students felt overloaded with their online courses (n=486). While the previous study by Al-Kumaim et al. (2021), focused on the students' point of view, a survey among university employees should be conducted to highlight how they maintain their spiritual and psychological well-being.

According to Abdul Razak, Abdul Razak, and Zaroum (2019), the spiritual dimension of human being when they are reminded to Allah can create bond with Him and cherish a positive state of mental health. Muslim scholars conceptualize Islamic music as the music in line with the rule of Islam: It focuses on nurturing the soul to closeness of Allah; hence music is required (ie. permissible) as according to Imam Shafiite Islamic law in Malaysia (*Fatwā*). Islamic music is believed to reduce the sadness and refresh the spiritual side of humanity (Tarmizi, 2019), and listening to Islamic music is considered as a form of therapy (Ulfiah, 2018). When we focused on the religious-spirituality in the workplace, practices that could enhance spirituality would be a form of Islamic music listening; for instance, listening to *dhikr*, Quranic recitation and *nashīd*. In considering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for peace, justice and strong institution, this study aims to examine the relationship between listening to Islamic music, the spiritual well-being, and the burnout of employees in an Islamic university.

2. Methodology

This study employs a cross-sectional study and was conducted at one public Islamic University in Malaysia, involving the staff members, ie., academicians and non-academicians. Convenience sampling was employed by the researcher as study participants were conveniently invited via email during the Covid-19 movement control order. Inclusion criteria were that those were currently working as a full-time employee, despite the MCO, and voluntarily participated in this study. Employee who is on maternity leave or study leave were excluded from this study. The respondent who fulfils the inclusion criteria and willingly to participate can click the google link or scan QR code for the questionnaire. The respondents then submit their response online using the goggle link. The online link closed after one month. Data was collected from April till May 2021 following the ethical approvals obtained research committee in that university.

The questionnaire was in bilingual of English and Malay, and was divided into four parts:

Part A comprises of the employees' background, the choice and frequency of listening to music. For the music listening preferences, variety of genres were in the options or participants can freely provide the non-listed genre as their other option.

Part B was the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)-22-items to measure burnout level. The MBI consists of three domains; 1) emotional exhaustion (EE) (9 items), 2) depersonalization (DP) (5 items), and 3) personal accomplishment (PA) (8 items). The respondents have to rate how frequent the statement apply to them range from 0= never to 6=every day [22]. The range of score for each sub-domains are as follow: emotional exhaustion (0-54), depersonalization (0-30) and for personal accomplishment (0-48). Maslach Burnout

Inventory (MBI) had been tested for validity and reliability for each burnout element from previous research; EE ($\alpha = 0.90$), DP ($\alpha = 0.79$), and PA ($\alpha = 0.71$). Convergent validity had been used by the inventor to test the validity of the questionnaires (Woodhead, Northrop, & Edelstein, 2016).

Part C was the Duke University Religion Index Malay version (DUREL-M) consists of five-item scale that assesses the three main dimensions of religious participation, namely religious organizational behaviour, religious non-organizational activity and inherent religiosity (or subjective religiosity). Based on the study by Nurasikin, Aini, Syarinaz, and Ng (2010), the overall scale of The Duke University Religion Index (DUREL-M) possesses fair internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha's, $\alpha = 0.45$) and exhibits good parallel reliability and test-retest reliability ($r = 0.68-0.7$).

Part D was the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB) modified by Imam, Abdul Karim, Jusoh, and Mamad (2009), has been used to measure of spiritual well-being among university employees. SWB scale is a 20-item self-reporting test consisting of two subscales, one representing the vertical dimension (religious wellbeing, RWB) and the other representing the horizontal dimension (existential wellbeing, EWB) (Imam et al., 2009). Each scale contains 10 items. For the Malaysian version modified by Imam et al., (2009), all RWB items have the word "God" and have been replaced by "Allah". The EWB covers topics like meaning of life, happiness, and relationships with people and circumstances around us. To reduce bias, half of the items are worded in the opposite direction so that the difference with the object reflects greater well-being. The object is scored on a Likert Scale 6-point starting from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (6), with no midpoint. RWB and EWB scores vary from 10 to 60, and overall SWB scores vary from 20 to 120, respectively. Ellison and Smith (1991) reported strong internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = 0.78$ to 0.94) and high construct validity and two-factor scale structure.

Data was treated with confidentiality and anonymity and was analysed using SPSS version 26.0. Result of descriptive analysis was presented in the table by using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. For the music listening preferences, variety of genres chosen by the participants were categorised into two categories: 1) Islamic music, and 2) non-Islamic music as described by Tarmizi (2019). Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal Wallis and Spearman correlation were conducted as the data was not normally distributed. The relationship between variables were analysed and interpreted based on p value with level significant set below 0.05.

3. Results

3.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Islamic Music Listening

A total of 140 study participants has voluntarily responded the online survey, comprising of 64.3% academician and 35.7% administrative staffs in the Islamic university during MCO has voluntarily responded to this survey. Among the academician, 71.4% hold a master degree or Ph.D. The majority were female (72.1%), married (80.7%) and are in the category of M40. For the service duration in the university, 44.3% has served the university between 3 to 10 years. A total of 51.4% of study participants has listened to the Islamic type of music (ie. *nashīd*, *Quranic recitation*, and *dhikr*), and among these, only 5% of the participants listened exclusively to Islamic types. For the frequency of music listening, 52.1% of the study participants listened to music everyday (refer to Table I).

3.2 Religiosity Level, Burnout, and Spiritual Well-Being of the Study Participants

The religiosity level of the study participants is considered as high with the mean of 24.02 ($SD = \pm 2.352$). For the burnout, the level of depersonalization (DP) is low which is 8.54 ($SD = \pm 5.728$), emotional exhaustion (EE) is moderate, 20.51 ($SD = \pm 9.866$), and personal accomplishment (PA) can be considered as high with mean of 31.87 ($SD = \pm 7.956$). As for the spiritual well-being (SWB) in total, the mean level is high with mean of 109.84 ($SD = \pm 9.014$). For the sub-domain of existential well-being (EWB), the mean score is 53.24 ($SD = \pm 6.141$), and 56.61 ($SD = \pm 4.170$) for the mean score of religious well-being (RWB) of the study participants.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics, Islamic Music listening, religiosity, burnout, and spiritual well-being of study participants (N=140)

Variables	Mean (±SD)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age (in year)	38.28 (6.806)		
Range from 22 to 65-year old			
Gender			
1) Male		39	27.9
2) Female		101	72.1
Job category			
1) Academician		90	64.3
2) Administrative staff		50	35.7
Economic status			
1) B40		37	26.4
2) M40		90	64.3
3) T20		13	9.3
Duration in service			
1) Less than 3 years		28	20.0
2) 3 to 10 years		62	44.3
3) More than 10 years		50	35.7
Marital status			
1) Married		113	80.7
2) Single/ divorced/widow		27	19.3
Educational level			
1) Sijil pelajaran Malaysia		7	5
2) Diploma		11	7.9
3) Bachelor degree		22	15.7
4) Master/Ph.D		100	71.4
Music listening preferences			
1) Include Islamic types (Quranic recitation, <i>dhikr</i> , <i>nashīd</i>)		72	51.4
2) Exclude Islamic types		68	48.6
Frequency of listening to music			
1) Almost everyday		73	52.1
2) A few times a week		40	28.6
3) A few times a month/seldom		27	19.3

In this study, existential well-being among those in the group that listened to Islamic music types along with other non-Islamic types was significantly higher than those who only listened to non-Islamic types ($U= 1903, p< .05$). For socio-demographic characteristics which as the gender, marital status and job category were observed as the non-significant variables for the spiritual well-being as well as its sub-domains (refer to Table 2).

There is a significant relationship between the duration in service at the university and the spiritual well-being as well as religious well-being ($p<.05$). Those working more than 10 years has higher spiritual well-being than those working less than 3 years. For the religious well-being, those working less than 3 years at the university has lower religious well-being as compared to those working more than 3 years ($p<.05$) (refer to Table 3).

There is a significant correlation between the age and spiritual well-being, and its sub-domain (RWB and EWB), with the indication that the spiritual well-being (SWB), existential (EWB) and religious well-being (RWB) is higher with the increase of age. As for the religiosity level, it only showed significant positive weak relationship with spiritual well-being.

For the burnout domains, there is a weak inverse relationship between emotional exhaustion (EE) and depersonalization (DP) which indicates that EE and DP could negatively affect the SWB and its sub-domain (RWB and EWB). Meanwhile, positive accomplishment (PA) has shown positive correlation with SWB, EWB and RWB (refer to Table 4).

Table 2: The relationship between socio-demographic characteristics, Islamic Music listening, and spiritual well-being among study participants (N=140)

Variables	SWB		EWB		RWB	
	U	p	U	p	U	p
Gender						
Male	1788	.398	1809	.454	1736.5	.26
Female						
Marital status						
Single/ divorce	1291	.215	1212.5	.097	1465	.74

Married								
Job category	2222.5	.901	2171.5	.732	2132	.59		
Academic								
Non-academic/ Administrative								
Music listening preferences	2045.5	.093	1903.5	.023*	2434.5	.95		
Include Islamic types (Quranic recitation, dhikr, nashīd)								
Exclude Islamic types								

* p is significant at <0.05

Table 3: The relationship between duration in service at the Islamic University, frequency of listening to music and spiritual well-being (n=140)

Variables	SWB			EWB			RWB		
	Mean rank	H	p	Mean rank	H	p	Mean rank	H	p
Duration in service									
Less than 3 years	53.34	9.445	.009*	60.25	5.150	.076	46.52	14.876	.001*
3 to 10 years	68.69			67.22			71.81		
more than 10 years	82.36			80.31			82.31		
Post-hoc pairwise comparison (p is significant)									
Less than 3 years vs. 3 to 10 years									.005*
Less than 3 years vs. more than 10 years			.002*						.000*
Frequency of listening to music									
Almost everyday									
A few times a week	64.82	3.254	.196	65.12	3.772	.152	67.16	1.241	.538
A few times a month/seldom	74.64			72.15			75.66		
	79.72			82.59			71.89		

Table 4: The relationship between age, religiosity, burnout and spiritual well-being (n=140)

	SWB		EWB		RWB	
	r_s	p	r_s	p	r_s	p
Age	.259	.002*	.249	.003*	.262	.002*
Religiosity-DUREL	.172	.042*	.144	.091	.148	.081
Burnout domains						
1) emotional exhaustion	-.32	.000*	-.333	.000*	-.167	.048*
2) depersonalisation	-.325	.000*	-.305	.000*	-.256	.002*
3) personal accomplishment	.345	.000*	.308	.000*	.283	.001*

4. Discussion

Our findings reported the burnout characteristic of employees in the face of Covid-19 pandemic with low DP, moderate EE and high PA during Malaysian Movement control order. According to Garcia-Rivera et al. (2022), high burnout level was indicated among academician in their study during Covid-19. High adaptative mechanism on Pandemic situation is needed for academics to decrease burnout induced by problematic online teaching (Garcia-Rivera et al., 2022).

High score of DUREL indicate that the employees were having good religious engagement in their daily life, and this evidence supported their high spiritual well-being, high personal achievement (PA), moderate emotional exhaustion (EE) and low depersonalisation (DP). This study showed that there is significant weak correlation between spiritual well-being and burnout domains (PA, EE and DP) among the employees ($p>0.05$). Similarly, Kim and Yeom (2018), supported this with the evidence that spiritual really help in preventing job burnout.

Our finding suggested stated that spirituality can increase productivity at workplace as evident in the high personal achievement. Piatkowska et al. (2014) suggested that both spiritual and religiosity gave positive impact towards life and it can reduce the stress level and burnout level at the same time. However, Kim and Yeom (2018) stated that the finding of relationship of spirituality and burnout might be diverse according to the surrounding and type of work where the study was done. As this study was conducted in Malaysia which most of the Malaysian citizen hold on a religion belief in their life, perhaps spiritual is a component that every people have which include their work life, thus affect the burnout level.

According to Perkins, Mason-Bertrand, Fancourt, Baxter, and Williamon (2020), in their critical appraisal of 46 articles concluded that participatory music engagements support the mental well-being. In

particular to existential well-being, music facilitates a sense of purpose, facilitate connections, with and promoting self-confidence. Music is used in all religious traditions to enhance prayer and faith, provide a means for petition, prayer and praise. Music can remind people of their connection with creativity and ultimately with the creative life force (Moss, 2019). Our finding suggests that listening to Islamic music could promote the benefits especially in the connection to purpose of life with Allah.

In this study, those who served longer the Islamic university is significantly associated with high spiritual well-being and religious well-being. This finding is parallel to the increase in age of the employees indicated higher SWB, EWB and RWB. Indeed, our finding supported that being affiliated at Islamic university indicated a form of spirituality at work field. An analysis of models on workplace spirituality or carries the organisational values and commitment and potentially supported personal spirituality emerge through shared norms (Rathee & Rajain, 2020). Nevertheless, our findings limit to the situational pandemic Covid-19 with most employees were working from home. More empirical evidence needs to measure the sense of employees' connectedness to the organisation and its outcome on organisational performance (Zare & Beheshtifar, 2013). There are several limitations which have been identified by the researcher which listed below:

- a) The used of cross-sectional study with non-random convenience sampling allow for selection biased during data collection. Hence, the findings cannot be generalized and applied to other public university.
- b) The data collection was done during the pandemic Covid-19 which need to use both online and offline survey. It also difficult for the researcher to collect data as there is restricted movement to face to face with the respondent.
- c) The sample size is small, and this reflects the time frame for data collection also the situation of pandemic.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights on the Muslims' religiosity and the value of Islamic music as not merely an entertainment but lessening burnout and promoting spiritual well-being in a context of working life. The finding of this study may provide some recommendations towards the university authorities on the need for any mental health interventions among employees which may integrate religion and spiritual components to reduce the level of burnout. Hence, the university authorities could be well informed on burnout related issues among their employees which it can give bad effect towards the employees' performance as well as can reduce the productivity at workplace. Our empirical evident on the outcome-based spirituality and its relation to working in Islamic university provides only preliminary data and future research should provide more evident on the relationship between workplace spirituality and its outcome.

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