

THE ROLE OF EMOTION AND SPIRITUALITY IN COUNSELLING SESSIONS: THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence are a combination of constructs that are important in conducting counselling sessions. However, this implementation receives less attention from counsellors and clients. This study was conducted to assess the relationship between emotional intelligence (self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, social skills, and emotional receptivity) and spiritual intelligence at one of the counselling agencies in Malaysia. A total of 200 counselling clients responded to the questionnaire, and

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SmartPLS analysis was employed to test the study's hypothesis. The results revealed some significant findings. First, a positive but insignificant relationship exists between self-awareness and spiritual intelligence. Second, a positive and significant relationship exists between emotional regulation and spiritual intelligence. Third, a positive and significant relationship exists between self-motivation and spiritual intelligence. Fourth, a positive and significant relationship exists between social awareness and spiritual intelligence. Fifth, a positive but insignificant relationship exists between social skills and spiritual intelligence. Sixth, a positive and significant relationship exists between emotional receptivity and spiritual intelligence. This study confirms that emotional intelligence is a crucial factor in the development of spiritual intelligence. The findings of this study can assist practitioners in understanding the diverse perspectives on the construction of emotional intelligence, guiding counselling sessions to help achieve and maintain the emotional well-being of clients. Nevertheless, for future research recommendations, scholars are encouraged to conduct a more comprehensive assessment of spiritual elements in relation to emotional intelligence within counselling sessions.

Keywords: Self-awareness; emotional regulation; self-motivation; social awareness; social skills; emotional receptivity; spiritual intelligence.

Khulasah

Kecerdasan emosi dan kecerdasan spiritual merupakan gabungan konstruk yang penting dalam pelaksanaan sesi kaunseling. Namun demikian, pelaksanaannya masih kurang diberikan perhatian oleh kaunselor dan klien. Kajian ini dijalankan bagi menilai hubungan antara kecerdasan emosi (kesedaran sendiri, pengawalan emosi, motivasi sendiri, kesedaran sosial, kemahiran sosial dan kepekaan emosi) dan kecerdasan spiritual di salah sebuah agensi kaunseling di Malaysia.

Seramai 200 orang klien kaunseling telah memberikan maklum balas terhadap soal selidik dan analisis SmartPLS telah digunakan untuk menguji hipotesis kajian. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan beberapa penemuan penting: Pertama, terdapat hubungan positif tetapi tidak signifikan antara kesedaran sendiri dan kecerdasan spiritual. Kedua, terdapat hubungan positif dan signifikan antara pengawalan emosi dan kecerdasan spiritual. Ketiga, terdapat hubungan positif dan signifikan antara motivasi sendiri dan kecerdasan spiritual. Keempat, terdapat hubungan positif dan signifikan antara kesedaran sosial dan kecerdasan spiritual. Kelima, terdapat hubungan positif tetapi tidak signifikan antara kemahiran sosial dan kecerdasan spiritual. Keenam, terdapat hubungan positif dan signifikan antara kepekaan emosi dan kecerdasan spiritual. Kajian ini mengesahkan bahawa kecerdasan emosi merupakan pemboleh ubah penting dalam pembentukan kecerdasan spiritual. Dapatan kajian ini dapat membantu para pengamal memahami pelbagai perspektif dalam pembinaan kecerdasan emosi, seterusnya membimbing sesi kaunseling ke arah mencapai serta mengekalkan kesejahteraan emosi klien. Namun begitu, bagi cadangan kajian akan datang, para penyelidik disarankan untuk mengukur unsur spiritual secara lebih mendalam dalam hubungannya dengan kecerdasan emosi dalam sesi kaunseling.

Kata kunci: Kesedaran sendiri; pengawalan emosi; motivasi sendiri; kesedaran sosial; kemahiran sosial; kepekaan emosi; kecerdasan spiritual.

Introduction

A world without borders will continue to turn the tide as the rest of the world faces the boom of ICT, science, technology, and robotics. Despite the pursuit of physical and material development, the aspect of human development remains the most important element in shaping useful human capital. Human capital development

is highly emphasised by the government, as evident in the Twelfth Malaysia Plan (12MP), the nation's five-year development plan. This development is not only focused on the interests and benefits of the country but also the sustainability of identity through the "Malaysian Family Concept". This suggests that human capital development should not focus solely on the physical aspect but also prioritise the spiritual and emotional aspects.¹ This situation aligns with the government's intention to cultivate well-rounded human capital that encompasses intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects. Efforts to develop human capital should be balanced in these aspects. Therefore, guidance and counselling services serve as an important alternative to ensure that the nation's aspirations are achieved.

In the 21st century, the need for a proactive counselling approach has become increasingly important as every individual has the right to seek help from others in times of disaster.² Counsellors are urgently needed by individuals in the face of psychological crisis, as every individual needs help in the aspects of intellect, spirit and behaviour.³ The counsellor bears the heavy responsibility of guiding and understanding the client and the environment amidst

¹ Noor Shakirah Mat Akhir & Muhammad Azizan Sabjan, "Pembangunan Modal Insan Dari Perspektif Kerohanian Agama: Islam Sebagai Fokus," *Journal of Human Capital Development (JHCD)* 7(1) (2014), 46.

² Lusi Ramadhani, Yeni Karneli, & Rezki Hariko, "The Dance of Empathy and Understanding: Nurturing Rapport in the Counselor-Client Connection," *Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling Terapan* 8(1) (2024), 79.

³ Zainal Abidin et al., "The Practice of Islamic Psychospiritual Therapy in the Treatment of Drug Addiction at Rehabilitation Centres in Malaysia," *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam* 24(2) (2022), 152.

hardships, with the aim of shaping the individual's potential well-being in both this world and the hereafter.⁴

Trained counsellors are able to balance counselling techniques by optimising the consultation process and promoting the achievement of client goals. A great and quality counsellor is always ready to listen, build and maintain strong therapeutic relationships, show concern and empathy, and always work towards the goals agreed by the client.⁵ For example, individual counselling can help clients deal with many personal issues in life, such as anger, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, marital and relationship problems, educational problems, school difficulties and career changes. Counselling is a great personal opportunity to provide support to those who are having a difficult time in life. Counsellors are healers for every psychological injury because, with good sensitivity and understanding skills, they are able to explore the feelings, beliefs, and behaviours of their clients, identify aspects of their lives that they desire to change, set personal goals, and work towards the desired changes.⁶ In individual counselling, it focuses on the immediate future concerns of the individual.

⁴ Helen Efeyadu, et al., "Counsellors' Perceived Health Promoting Behaviours for Enhancing Physical Well-Being of Clients," *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management (IJSRM)* 11 (03) (2023), 1391-1395.

⁵ Nurshahira Ibrahim et al., "Emotional Intelligence, Spiritual Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being: Impact on Society," *GEOGRAFIA OnlineTM Malaysian Journal of Society and Space* 8(3) (2022), 101.

⁶ Siti Hamidah & Irwan S., "The Urgency of Guidance and Counselling in Dealing with Students' Spiritual and Emotional Intelligence Problems," *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Multikulturalisme* 5(2) (2023), 428.

In Arabic, counselling is known as *irshād*.⁷ In etymology, *irshād* can be translated as guidance, truth, education and guidance.⁸ Counselling involves a process of guiding, educating and showing individuals the right path when they face problems in life. Hence, the use of *irshād* to describe the concept of counselling is accurate and appropriate. The derivation of *irshād* is repeated 19 times in the Quran.⁹ In addition to the word *irshād*, other Quran pronouncements can also be attributed to counselling, such as derivation *wa'z* (reminder), *nuṣḥ* (advice), *mushāwarah* (discussion), and *hudā* (hint).¹⁰ All the derivations of these words can be found in the Quran. This shows that Islam is a counselling-friendly religion. It can be concluded that counselling is essentially a dominant and prominent activity in the history and development of Islam. In other words, counselling in Islam is not a new concept, but rather has existed since the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent as a messenger.¹¹

Counselling in Islam can be viewed as a process in which the counsellor helps people to understand the causes for their problems and guides them through the process of knowing or learning how to make effective decisions and

⁷ Mahmud al-Syad et al., *Mu'jam Muṣṭalaḥat al-'Ulūm al-Tarbawīyyah wa al-Nafsiyyah* (Damascus: Majma' al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah, 2021), 95.

⁸ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-Arab* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1414H), 3:175.

⁹ Muḥammad Fū'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī, *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Qur'an al-Karīm* (Cairo: Dār al-Hadīth, 2001), 320-321.

¹⁰ Shākīr al-Maḥāmīd & Aḥmad 'Arabiyyāt, "al-Irshād al-Nafsi al-Tarbawī fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm," *Majallah Kulliyah al-Sharī'ah wa al-Dīrāsāt al-Islāmiyyah* 24(1) (2006), 63-116.

¹¹ Lilis Karlina, "Profil Rasulullah Shalallahu 'alaihi Wasallam sebagai Konselor Ideal Dan Kontribusi Terhadap Pembentukan Konselor Profesional," *Ahsani Taqwim: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Keguruan* 2 (1) (2025), 99-114.

changes based on teaching of Islam¹² Based on the concept of *al-amr al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy al-munkar* (encouraging goodness and forbidding evil), a Muslim should not be selfish and allow another individual to commit actions that could affect his religion, self, intellect, property and ancestry. The responsibility of each Muslim indirectly promotes the process of counselling in the daily life of the community.

The Prophet Muhammad himself often carried out the counselling process when his companions were experiencing some psychological issues. Even dialogue or communication between the Prophet and the companions did not happen in a 'setting' or process planned or organised based on the current concept of counselling, but what is certain is that a process or 'setting' is formed through a serious meeting between the counsellor and the client.

Once upon a time came a young man loudly asked the Messenger of Allah to allow him to commit adultery. The request drew the ire of the companions who were with him. However, the Messenger of Allah kindly asked the young man whether he would be happy if his mother, daughter or sister committed adultery. The young man answered the Messenger of Allah's question with no answer. Immediately after the questioning took place, the Messenger of Allah put his hand on the young man's chest while praying, "O Allah, cleanse the young man's heart, forgive his sins and take care of his genitals."¹³

The event mentioned in the above hadith indicates the condition of an individual who struggles to control their desires. The Messenger of Allah did not reproach or punish

¹² ES. El-Aswad, "Islamic Care and Counselling," in *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*, ed. D.A. Leeming (Germany: Springer, Cham, 2017), 1-4.

¹³ Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 2001), 36: 85.

the young man. He communicated well and guided the young man with a simple analogy. The Prophet (PBUH) also offered a special prayer to the young man as a form of motivation and therapy to help him control his future passions. In this regard, the Prophet (PBUH) also did not dominate the dialogue between him and the young man. There was a positive discussion about solving the problem that the young man, a client, was experiencing.

Interestingly, recent studies have revealed a close association between emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence.¹⁴ Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, use, and positively manage emotions to reduce stress, communicate effectively, empathise with others, overcome challenges, and resolve conflicts. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings, to distinguish between different emotions, to identify them and use emotional information to guide thoughts and behaviours.¹⁵ The capacity model developed by Salovey and Mayer defines emotional intelligence (EI) as a set of skills and traits that drive leadership performance.¹⁶ EI is a node point where cognition and emotion come together. It enhances our capacity for resilience, motivation, empathy, reasoning, stress management, effective communication, and the ability to understand and navigate various social situations and conflicts. The idea of emotional intelligence is considered a distinct cognitive ability and is associated with general intelligence.¹⁷

¹⁴ S. Joonna, "Emotional and Rohani Intelligence of Future Leaders: Challenges for Education," *Educ. Sci.* 10(178) (2020), 2.

¹⁵ A. Khorakian, et al., "Household Food Waste Prevention Behavior: The Role of Religious Orientations, Emotional Intelligence, and Spiritual Well-Being," *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 67(1) (2024), 59-84.

¹⁶ Peter Salovey & John. D. Mayer, "Emotional Intelligence," *Imagination, Cognition and Personality* 9(3) (1990), 188.

¹⁷ Salovey & Mayer, "Emotional Intelligence," 185.

According to an Islamic perspective, human beings are composed of five components: *rūh* (spirit), *qalb* (heart), *nafs* (soul), *aql* (reason), and *jasad* (body).¹⁸ Emotional intelligence is essentially closely related to the intelligence of the *qalb* component. In addition to functioning as an emotional force, *qalb* also involves cognitive aspects.¹⁹ Therefore, al-Ghazālī defines it as a trait contained in man that enables making and considering good and bad decisions.²⁰ Intelligence regarding the *qalb* component can help train the control of impulsive and aggressive passions. The role of *qalb* to man is hinted at in the word of God in al-A‘rāf 7:179:

Translation: "Indeed, We have destined many jinn and humans for Hell. They have hearts they do not understand with, eyes they do not see with, and ears they do not hear with. They are like cattle. In fact, they are even less guided! Such people are entirely heedless."

Qalb plays a significant role in the process of analysing, synthesising and giving meaning to something that is being faced and experienced. Therefore, the meaning and reaction to a phenomenon will differ according to the difference in *qalb* intelligence possessed by an individual. The event of a profiteering person can generate a variety of reactions and emotions from various parties. That reaction depends closely on the level of *qalb* intelligence possessed by a person. *Qalb* can also be considered a centre for behaviour control. No deed, decision, or behaviour prevails without the encouragement of *qalb*.²¹ Therefore, the

¹⁸ Abu Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1982), 3:3.

¹⁹ Al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur‘ān* (Beirut: Mu‘assasah al-A‘lamī, 1997), 2: 228.

²⁰ Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 3: 3.

²¹ Tohirin, "Islamic Psychology Perspectives on Intelligence," *Islamic Psychology: Philosophy, Theory and Application* (2017), 72-94.

formation of an individual's behaviour should be oriented towards the construction of *qalb*. In the Islamic view, the *qalb* can be transformed towards perfection. The highest level is a *qalb* that is free of any evil and bad feelings towards others, saved from *hasad* (spitefulness), and always connected to Allah Ta'ala. The cultivation of a memorable *qalb* can lead to individuals who can monitor their own feelings and those of others and be able to control behaviour and self-thinking.

The Prophet (PBUH) also faced life conflicts. He faced a boycott by the Quraysh, the death of his loved ones, his grandfather and wife. The Prophet (PBUH) also lost all his sons. The Prophet PBUH faced the failure to deliver the Islamic message in Taif and was almost defeated in the War of Uhud.²² In the face of the conflict, the Prophet (PBUH) also experienced various emotions. But the reaction and treatment of the Messenger of Allah are never based on anger. He was wise to control his emotions and still did not give up on the responsibility of preaching to the community at that time.

Spiritual intelligence is defined as beliefs, values related to goals, and religious beliefs.²³ In other words, spirituality is a motivating and driving force in life, an energy that inspires a person towards a specific goal or a goal beyond individualism.²⁴ That spiritual intelligence consists of abilities that enable us to recognise our other spiritual abilities and resources, and solve existential and

²² Şaffiy al-Rahman al-Mubārakfūrī, *al-Raḥīq al-Makhtūm: Baḥth fī al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah 'alā Şāḥibihā Afḍal al-Şalāh wa al-Salām* (Qatar: Wizārah al-Awqāf wa Shu'ūn al-Islāmiyyah, 2007), 125.

²³ L. Selman, et al., "The Measurement of Spirituality in Palliative Care and The Content of Tools Validated Cross-Culturally: A Systematic Review," *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* 41(4) (2011), 730.

²⁴ R. Mc Knight, "Spirituality in the Workplace," *Transforming Work* 10(5) (1987), 23-45.

practical issues.²⁵ Spiritual intelligence facilitates problem-solving and enhances an individual's ability to make informed decisions. Thus, spiritual intelligence is one of the abilities that distinguishes man from other beings.²⁶

Spiritual intelligence involves deep self-awareness, where individuals become increasingly informed about the dimensions of themselves, not only as physical beings but also as minds and souls.²⁷ This suggests that when we utilise spiritual intelligence, we reach a point where the mind accelerates the necessary data processing.²⁸ With due attention to components such as the ability to utilise spiritual resources to solve problems, we can claim that its application in everyday life enhances the individual's flexibility. On this basis, many believe that spiritual intelligence plays a vital role in solving existential problems and searching for meaning and purpose in everyday actions and life events.²⁹

The study's results show that spiritual intelligence has a meaningful and positive relationship with components such as overall health. The study notes that, among

²⁵ Mas'ud Muhammadiyah et al., "Teacher Performance Modeling Based on Spiritual, Intellectual, and Emotional Intelligence with Job Satisfaction," *Community Practitioner* 20(12) (2023), 144-154, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10398889>.

²⁶ D. Nasel, *Spiritual Orientation in Relation to Spiritual Intelligence: A Consideration of Traditional Christianity and New Age/Individualistic Spirituality* (Australia: University of South Australia, 2004), 42.

²⁷ D. Sisk, "Spiritual Intelligence: The Tenth Intelligence that Integrates All Other Intelligence," *Gifted Education International* 16 (2002), 208-213.

²⁸ R. A. Emmons, "Spirituality and Intelligence: Problems and Prospects," *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 10 (2000), 57-64.

²⁹ D. Sisk, "Engaging the Spiritual Intelligence of Gifted Students to Build Global Awareness in the Classroom," *Roeper Review* 30 (2008), 24-30; King, D. B., "Personal Meaning Production as a Component of Spiritual Intelligence," *International Journal of Existential Psychology and Psychotherapy* 3(1) (2010), 1-5.

demographic characteristics (age, gender, workplace, marital status, and academic degree type), only workplace has shown a significant and positive relationship with spiritual intelligence. This study shows that spiritual intelligence and strengthening tenacity as personality traits can help the general health of nurses. Another study states that instruction in spiritual intelligence affects the octopod dimension of quality of life (physical function, physical health-related role limits, role limits related to emotional problems, cheerfulness, emotional well-being, social functioning, pain, and general health) in the wives of disabled veterans.³⁰ This indicates an effect of spiritual intelligence on mental health.

It is noted that the increase in mental illness is becoming more pronounced, highlighted by the National Health and Morbidity Survey Report, which shows that approximately 40% of the 32.4 million Malaysians are feared to be suffering from mental health issues. Additionally, out of 273,203 individuals receiving health care in hospitals and clinics, a total of 18,336 have reported suffering from mental health disorders such as depression, schizophrenia and suicidal tendencies.³¹ The symptoms of suicide in Malaysia have reached alarming levels, with an increase of 631 cases reported in 2021 compared to 609 cases in 2020.³² Recognising this concerning trend necessitates proactive measures from stakeholders, such as expanding counselling services, to prevent the spread of

³⁰ H. Haditabar, et al., "Effect of Training on Spiritual Intelligence on Quality of Life Among Veteran Spouses," *Iran Journal War Public Health* 4(2) (2012), 1-11.

³¹ N. S. A. A. Malek, et al., "Peranan Kesihatan Mental sebagai Moderator Terhadap Kecenderungan Bunuh Diri," *Malaysian Journal of Social Science* 5(1) (2020), 87-99.

³² P K A. Phoa, et al., "The Malay Literacy of Suicide Scale: A Rasch Model Validation and Its Correlation with Mental Health Literacy among Malaysian Parents, Caregivers and Teachers," *Healthcare* 10(7) (2022), 1304.

this harmful behaviour and hinder community development. Thus, this study aims to investigate whether emotional intelligence can enhance spiritual intelligence when individuals participate in counselling sessions.

Literature Review

The Nexus of Emotional Intelligence with Spiritual Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to control the feelings and emotions of oneself as well as others, and to lead all their actions and thoughts rationally.³³ Salovey and Mayer divided EQ into 4 aspects: identifying emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions, while categorising EQ into five dimensions, namely, self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.³⁴ However, recent studies have developed emotional intelligence using two main aspects (i.e., personal competence and social competence) and focusing on six main elements.³⁵ Among the six elements contained in individual and social skills are self-awareness, self-motivation, emotional regulation, social awareness, social skills and emotional receptivity.

In essence, self-circulation refers to the ability to see oneself objectively. Self-awareness involves the interaction between thoughts and feelings that recognise the positive and negative emotions of a person in a particular situation. Islam emphasises this concept of self-awareness through *muhāsabah* activities. According to al-Ghazālī, *muhāsabah* is a process of self-assessment, whether the actions that have been performed fall into the category of positive or

³³ S. Pinto & C. Pinto, "Emotional Intelligence in End-of-Life Simulation Scenarios Lack Where Spiritual Intelligence is Proven to Succeed," *Evidence-Based Journal* 27(4) (2024), 147.

³⁴ Daniel Goleman, *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 2008), 47.

³⁵ Sandhya, *Development of the Emotional Intelligence Scale*, 1255.

negative.³⁶ Positive actions will continue, while negative actions will be stopped and replaced with better actions. *Muḥāsabah* can be mobilised before an action occurs and after an action occurs.³⁷ *Muḥāsabah* before acting means to think and plan before doing an act to avoid mistakes and defects. *Muḥāsabah*, after-action review, means assessing an action to determine whether it aligns with the teachings of Islam or not. Allah's word, which encourages *muḥāsabah* activities, can be seen in sūrah al-Ḥashr (59:18):

Translation: "O you who believe! Be wary of Allah (by doing His commandment and abandoning His prohibition); and let every soul see what it has prepared for the next day."

According to al-Sa'dī, this verse is the basis for the obligation to reason in the life of a Muslim. If any offence has ever been committed, then an individual should try to correct the offence and repent.³⁸ If there are deficiencies and defects in worship, then the individual should strive to perfect them. Self-motivation is the ability to act without being influenced by external factors or situations. A self-motivated person can find reason and strength to complete a task, even in challenging situations and circumstances, without giving up or needing others to refuse it.

According to Kadar, self-motivation from an Islamic perspective can be expressed as *hawā*.³⁹ *Hawā* is a tendency in the heart that can encourage a person to do

³⁶ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4: 405.

³⁷ Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn Bayn Manāzil Iyyāka Na'bud wa Iyyāka Nasta'in* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabi, 1996), 1: 187.

³⁸ 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Sa'dī, *Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥman fī Tafsīr Kalām al-Manān* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 2000), 853.

³⁹ M. Y. Kadar, "Pembentukan Perilaku dalam Perspektif al-Quran dan Orientasi Pendidikan," in *Psikologi Islam: Falsafah, Teori dan Aplikasi*, eds. Khaidzir Hj Ismail et. al (Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 2017), 111-128.

something. *Hawā* is essentially neutral and does not take sides in positive or negative traits. It only serves as an impetus for a human to move his body to do something. Uneducated and controlled *hawā* has the potential to form a negative impulse. In such cases, *hawā* will give rise to *ammarah nafs* (individuals inclined towards damage and harm). Conversely, when well-educated and controlled, it is able to form *nafs al-muṭma'innah*, an individual who consistently embraces goodness and truth.⁴⁰ Through the formation of *nafs al-muṭma'innah*, a person will always be motivated and have the strength to complete the task of kindness without being influenced by other human beings or specific situations. Individuals with *nafs al-ammarah* possess a propensity to engage in forbidden and harmful actions.

Thus, Islam always commands its *ummah* to strive for improvement in order to attain the level of *nafs al-muṭma'innah*. Emotional regulation is the ability to observe and control one's emotions.⁴¹ According to the Islamic perspective, emotional control aligns with the concept of patience. Patience in Arabic comes from the root word *ṣabr*. *Ṣabr* means withholding.⁴² Thus, patience in the Islamic context is defined as the ability to restrain negative emotions such as anxiety and anger. Patience also includes the ability to refrain from acts that may cause chaos.⁴³ Relying upon the concept of patience, the soul and desire will be limited to achieving something better and sublime. Patience will produce an attitude that does not complain

⁴⁰ Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 3:4.

⁴¹ Lin, P. & L. Yang, "Building a Virtual Psychological Counselor by Integrating EEG Emotion Detection with Large-Scale NLP Models," in *Proceeding SPIE 12924*, Third International Conference on Biological Engineering and Medical Science (ICBioMed2023), 129241X, 8 January 2024.

⁴² Ibn Fāris, *Mu'jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1979), 3:329.

⁴³ Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, 2:155.

due to pain or misfortune.⁴⁴ The advantages of emotional control through patience can be seen through the word of Allah in *Āli 'Imran* 3:134:

Translation: "That is, those who donate their wealth in times of ease and hardship, and those who endure their anger, and those who forgive the wrongs of the people. And Allah loves those who do good things."

According to al-Jazā'irī, this verse records that patience is the identity of the believers promised by Allah, the Creator of mankind.⁴⁵ In fact, Allah places this quality that qualifies the love of Allah. Through patience, a person will have the ability to respond to various emotions in a socially acceptable way. A patient individual is not someone who cannot control their emotions. According to Ibn Āshur, this group is referred to as *kāzimīn al-ghayz*, which means being able to resist and hide its anger until it is invisible.⁴⁶ The concealment of anger is emphasised in this verse because anger is the most difficult emotion to control compared to other emotions. A patient person has the ability to postpone the spontaneous response and is flexible in managing their emotions.

Social consciousness refers to the ability to perceive, understand, and respond to the emotions of others, and feel socially comfortable. Islam emphasises this through the concept of *rahmah*. In essence, *rahmah* means a person's empathy for his brother who is experiencing misfortune and stalemate, leading the person to try to resolve or alleviate

⁴⁴ 'Alī Al-Jurjānī, *al-Ta'rifāt* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1405H), 131.

⁴⁵ Jābir al-Jazā'irī, *Aysar al-Tafāsīr li Kalām al-'Alī al-Kabīr* (Madinah: Maktabah al-'Ulūm wa al-Ḥikam, 2003), 1: 379.

⁴⁶ Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir ibn 'Āshur, *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr* (Tunisia: Dār Suḥnūn, 2003), 4:91.

the situation.⁴⁷ *Rahmah* individuals have a tender heart. They can rejoice in one's joy and are able to feel sad with one's grief. Typically, the ability to understand and respond with emotions is limited to those who are known or have close relationships. However, the nature of *rahmah* enables one to understand and respond positively to everyone.⁴⁸ This trait or skill requires training, effort and determination from oneself.⁴⁹ The nature of this *rahmah* is also emphasised in the saying of the Prophet (PBUH):

Translation: "The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever"⁵⁰

According to al-Nawawī, this hadith illustrates how Islam places great emphasis on *rahmah*, being gentle, and helping one another in the relationships among Muslims.⁵¹ This trait indirectly requires a person to understand and know others in terms of their feelings, thinking patterns, points of view, achievements, facial expressions, and non-verbal messages. This knowledge and understanding will make it easier for a person to generate a positive response according to the situation at hand.

Social skills are the ability to communicate, persuade, and interact with other members of society without conflict or undue disharmony. This aspect of social skills aligns

⁴⁷ Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Khulq al-Muslim* (Cairo: Dār al-Rayyān li al-Turāth, 1987), 209.

⁴⁸ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥabannakah al-Mīdānī, *al-Akhlāq al-Islāmiyyah wa Ususuhā* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1999), 1:6.

⁴⁹ Al-Sa’dī, *Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān*, 366.

⁵⁰ Al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar*, Kitāb al-Adāb, Bāb Raḥmat al-Nās wa al-Bahā’im (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1993), 8: 10.

⁵¹ Al-Nawawī, *al-Minhāj Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1392H), 16: 139.

with the Islamic concept of guarding one's tongue. Through this concept, an individual is not allowed to hurt another person by using their tongue. An individual is advised to take care of himself, constantly uttering words that bring harmony. Opting for silence is better than saying a word if silence is beneficial.⁵² Safeguarding one's tongue is so important that it is associated with faith. This trait is reflected in the words of the Prophet (PBUH):

Translation: "The faith of a servant is not upright until his heart is upright, and his heart is not upright until his tongue is upright."⁵³

This concept of safeguarding the tongue is also emphasised in communication through the saying of the Prophet (PBUH):

Translation: "The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe."⁵⁴

Hadith indicates that a perfect Muslim is an individual who does not hurt another person verbally or physically. Acts such as cursing, condemning, and defamation are categorised as verbally hurting individuals.⁵⁵ Through the concept of safeguarding the recommended by Islam, an individual will have the ability to express positive and negative feelings in an interpersonal context. Those who are able to control the tongue possess social skills, including the art of persuasion and the ability to create a friendly atmosphere at work. This group is also capable of dealing with difficult people and annoying situations wisely without using inappropriate words.

⁵² Al-Nawawī, *al-Azkār* (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2004), 529.

⁵³ Aḥmad, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad*, 20: 343.

⁵⁴ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Īmān, Bāb Bayān Tafāḍul al-Islām wa Ayy Umūriḥ Afḍal (Cairo: Matba'ah Isa al-Ḥalbī, 1955), 1:65.

⁵⁵ Al-Hussayn al-Muzhirī, *al-Maḥāṭib Sharḥ al-Maṣābiḥ* (n.p.: Dār al-Nawādir, 2012), 1:66.

Emotional receptivity refers to accepting and encouraging the views of others by being open to their emotions. This concept closely resembles the concept of *tasāmuḥ*, which is found in Islam. *Tasāmuḥ* basically means appreciating and accepting differences. It is a trait that prevents one from ignoring others due to differences in views and thoughts.⁵⁶ In order to practice *tasāmuḥ* successfully, it must be accompanied by the principle of love, openness, and rationality in action and speech.⁵⁷ The basis of the concept of *tasāmuḥ* can be seen in the words of the Prophet (PBUH):

Translation: "No one of you becomes a true believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself."⁵⁸

The above hadith encourages a believer to serve and interact with their brother, such as service and interaction with others.⁵⁹ In general, a person likes others who are open to expressing their views; similarly, a believer will do to his brother. An atmosphere of appreciation and openness with the emotions of others produces an emotionally and socially competent individual. Additionally, it fosters empathy and sensitivity to the needs of others.

In general, EQ is a person's ability to manage and control their feelings and the feelings of others while providing a positive impetus towards establishing

⁵⁶ Amir Ṣabāḥ Ahmad al-Kabīsī, *Dawr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm fī Ishā'ah Rūḥ al-Tasāmuḥ fī al-Mujtama'* (paper presented at Dawr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm fī al-Iṣlāḥ al-Mujtama', Baghdad, April 2019), 30.

⁵⁷ Ruhaizah Abdul Ghani & Jaffary Awang, "Tasamuh Versus Tolerance as Practical Approach to Encounter the Conflicting Issue," *Akademika* 90(1) (2020), 15-23.

⁵⁸ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Īmān, Bāb al-Dalīl 'ala anna min Khīṣāl al-Īmān an Yuḥibba li Akhīhi Muslim ma Yuḥib li Nafsih min Khayr, 1: 67.

⁵⁹ Al-Husayn al-Jurjānī, *al-Minhāj fī Sha'b al-Imān* (Berut: Dār al-Fikr, 1979), 3:415.

interpersonal relationships that can lead to the achievement of a goal.⁶⁰ Although emotional intelligence is important for control and understanding, spiritual intelligence is a very important construct in a person's life. This is because spiritual intelligence can help individuals tap into their inner wisdom, values and beliefs to overcome challenges and make important decisions. It provides a framework for exploring existential questions, coping with grief or loss, and finding resilience in times of difficulty.⁶¹

The Theory of Spiritual Intelligence, introduced by Emmons, is a set of capabilities and abilities that enable individuals to solve problems in everyday life.⁶² This theory suggests that spiritual intelligence provides a framework for identifying skills and abilities necessary for the adaptive use of spirituality. It proposes five components for spiritual intelligence: firstly, the ability to use spiritual resources to solve problems; secondly, the ability to enter the state that causes consciousness to increase; thirdly, the ability to carry out daily social activities with a sense of sacredness; fourthly, the ability to go beyond physical and material; and fifth, the ability to be virtuous.⁶³

Different from the opinion of Abdollahzadeh et al., which highlights two main elements in spiritual intelligence, namely, first, understanding and communicating with the source of the universe. This concept relates to the ability to understand and establish a relationship with the transcendent or divine power that is often viewed as the origin of the universe. People with

⁶⁰ R. K. Cooper, & A. Sawaf, *Executive EQ: Emotional Intelligence in Leadership and Organisations* (New York: Grosset/Putnum, 1997), 327.

⁶¹ Septi Gumiandari et al., "Islamic Resilience as Spiritual and Psychological Coping Strategies for Muslims during COVID-19 Pandemic," *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam* Special Issue (2022), 316.

⁶² Emmons, "Spirituality and Intelligence," 59.

⁶³ Emmons, "Spirituality and Intelligence," 57.

intelligence based on this model possess the skill to grasp, interpret, and engage in meaningful interactions with a higher power or the universal source. This could involve feelings of transcendence, a bond with an entity, or a broader comprehension of the cosmos. Second, spiritual life or reliance on the inner core. The second aspect focuses on leading a life and relying on one's core.⁶⁴ This dimension of intelligence revolves around an individual's dedication to living depending on an internal set of values and beliefs. It suggests that individuals with intelligence derive strength, guidance and purpose from their deepest convictions influencing their actions and choices in accordance with their spiritual values. This inner core acts as a guide for navigating challenges and making decisions in life.

On the other hand, the model of spiritual intelligence introduced by Amram and Dryer categorises it into five main constructs: consciousness, transcendence, grace, meaning, and truth.⁶⁵ First, consciousness refers to the ability to be aware and sensitive to oneself, others, and the world around.⁶⁶ These include emotional awareness, social awareness, and spiritual awareness.⁶⁷ As for emotional awareness, an individual who is aware of his anger and chooses to take time to calm down before reacting, social awareness allows a leader to be sensitive to the feelings and needs of his team and adjust his leadership style to meet those needs.

⁶⁴ Abdollahzadeh H. et al., *Spiritual Intelligence: Concepts, Measurements and its Applications* (Tehran: Ravansanji Publications, 2009), 1-5.

⁶⁵ Y. Amram & C. Dryer, "The Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS): Development and Preliminary Validation" (paper presented at the 116th Annual Conference of the American Psychological Association, Boston, 2008), 4.

⁶⁶ S. Smith, "Exploring the Interaction of Emotional Intelligence and Spirituality," *Traumatology* 10(4) (2004), 232.

⁶⁷ Selman et al., "The Measurement of Spirituality", 730.

Meanwhile, spiritual awareness enables an individual who practices daily meditation to enhance their spiritual awareness and overall well-being. Second, transcendence refers to the ability to transcend everyday experience and reach a higher state of consciousness. These include mystical experiences, cosmic awareness, and connection to something greater than oneself.⁶⁸ Mystical experiences enable individuals to access a higher state of consciousness through meditation, prayer, or other spiritual experiences. Cosmic consciousness feels a connection with the universe and all living beings. While the relationship with the greater will feel the presence and guidance of something greater than oneself. Third, grace refers to the ability to feel and express love, compassion, and kindness. These include empathy, forgiveness, and kindness.⁶⁹ As for empathy, it is feeling and understanding the feelings of others. Forgiveness is forgiving yourself and others. Whereas kindness shows kindness and compassion to oneself and others. Fourth, meaning refers to the ability to find and create meaning in life. These include purpose, service, and existential awareness.⁷⁰ For this purpose, it can set and achieve goals that are consistent with its spiritual values. Services provide services to others and the community. While existential awareness realises and reflects on the meaning of life and death.

⁶⁸ F. Vaughan, "What is Spiritual Intelligence?" *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 42(2) (2002), 20.

⁶⁹ M. Esmaili, H. Zareh & M. Golverdi, "Spiritual Intelligence: Aspects, Components and Guidelines to Promote It," *International Journal of Management, Accounting and Economics* 1(2) (2014), 165.

⁷⁰ H. Zarei Matin et al., "Identifying and Assessing the Components of Spiritual Intelligence in the Workplace: Labbafinejad Hospital Case Study on Tehran", *Public Administration Studies* XII (2010), 79.

Fifth, truth refers to the ability to find and express the truth. This includes integrity, honesty, and transparency.⁷¹ As for integrity, it is acting in accordance with spiritual values and principles. Honesty is the truth honestly and openly. While transparency is the nature of being transparent in actions and communication. The spiritual intelligence model introduced by Amram and Dryer offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and developing spiritual intelligence. By understanding and practicing these constructs, individuals can improve their well-being and daily functioning, as well as achieve life goals that align with their spiritual values. This also shows that spiritual intelligence is a field that continues to grow and offers a lot of potential for self-development, interpersonal relationships, and the achievement of life goals.

Spiritual intelligence from the perspective of Islam stands on the principles of faith, Shari'ah and morality. A unified appreciation of all three principles can result in a holistic spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence that does not integrate all three principles does not deserve to be called the Islamic version of spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence in Islam is when a person knows God and feels the presence and supervision of God. In other words, the spiritual intelligence of Islam has a close connection with the divine principle.⁷²

This principle needs to be strengthened through two dimensions. The first dimension requires a person to be confident in the existence of a god who created everything. He is the giver of sustenance, the regulator and the

⁷¹ R. A. Emmons, "Is Spirituality Intelligence? Motivation, Cognition, and the Psychology of Ultimate Concern," *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 10(1) (2000), 3-26.

⁷² H. B. Adz-Dzakiey, *Prophetic Intelligence: Kecerdasan Kenabian Menumbuhkan Potensi Hakiki Insani Melalui Pengembangan Kesehatan Ruhani* (Yogyakarta: Islamica, 2015), 187.

administrator of the universe. Everything that happens in this world is centred on Him (God), whether it happens physically or not. This dimension is better known by the name of *tauhid rububiyah*. In Islam, spiritual intelligence can be judged by the ability of a person to associate everything that happens in life with divinity. A person who has not yet succeeded or does not yet have the ability to associate life with divinity cannot be categorised as a person with a high level of spiritual intelligence.

The second dimension of the divine principle requires a person to build self-confidence, recognising that everything done in life should be aimed at God. This aspect affirms the intelligence of spiritual intelligence as a result of the manifestation of deep faith and belief in God's oneness, giving birth to positive emotions, thoughts, and actions.⁷³ In other words, everything, whether physical, emotional or spiritual, should be directed to only one entity, which is Allah. This dimension emphasises self-servitude to God (worship) and God is everything (the supremacy of God), and is better known as *tauhid uluhiyah*. Through this dimension, a person is judged to have a high level of spiritual intelligence if they are able to attribute the main motives of each decision and action to God alone. The success of focusing on God will make every decision and action considered a form of worship, as it is a form of servitude to God.

This divine principle will inspire a person to always strive to do something right; the outcome will be piety in oneself. These dimensions and divine principles should be based on the unity of faith. This competence needs to be intertwined with two dimensions of divinity to ensure that the divine principles are successfully cultivated and the spiritual of the individual. Spiritual intelligence in Islam is not just about understanding the meaning of a phenomenon,

⁷³ B. Bensaid et al., "A Qur'anic Framework for Spiritual Intelligence," *Religions* 5(1) (2014), 184.

but the realisation that something is done because of God and happens with the permission of God. This intelligence is closely related to the ability to associate oneself with God.

Apart from the divine principle, another key component that makes up the spiritual intelligence of Islam is the quality of *qalb* in the handling of impulsive and aggressive passions. Al-Ghazālī has divided the state of the *qalb* into three levels: *nafs al-ammārah*, *nafs al-lawwāmah*, and *nafs al-muṭma'innah*. The state of one's heart defines their qualities, beliefs, and character, determining whether they lean towards positive attributes, such as faith, love, and humanity, or negative ones, like anxiety and sadness.⁷⁴ Quality *qalb* is able to free oneself from impulsive passions, liver diseases and spiritual diseases such as irritation.⁷⁵

This shows the condition of perfect *qalb* called *nafs al-muṭma'innah* by al-Ghazali.⁷⁶ At this stage, there is a parallel between the *qalb* and the treatment. Every treatment is based on pure and true intentions. This situation can thus generate happiness, calmness and motivation in the person to produce good, commendable, true and meaningful conduct. This is because there is no conflict between the *qalb* and the treatment, which can lessen conflict in a person. At the same time, a quality of *qalb* will drive a person to desire goodness, rights and justice and despise all things bad, falsehood and tyranny.⁷⁷ A person whose *qalb* is at the level of *nafs al-ammārah* and

⁷⁴ I.Tarmuji, et al., "Fostering Value-Driven Leadership among Accounting Educators using the *Qalb*-Guided Framework," *International Business Education Journal* 17(1) (2024), 85.

⁷⁵ Adz-Dzakiey, *Prophetic Intelligence*, 293.

⁷⁶ S.M.H.S.A. Rahman, et al., "Developing Islamic Psychospiritual Guidelines for Covid-19 Task Counsellors," *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam* 25(1) (2023), 139.

⁷⁷ Muhammad 'Uthmān Najāti, *al-Qur'ān wa 'Ilm al-Nafs* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2001), 269-270.

nafs al-lawwamah is not worthy of being said to have a high spiritual intelligence. Thus, a Muslim who wants to have a high spiritual intelligence should always strive to change the quality of his qalb in controlling impulsive passions.

Moreover, spiritual intelligence from the point of view of Islam connects affective internal potential (soul, heart and spirit) with cognitive activity.⁷⁸ Cognitive activity in Islam is closely related to the principles of obedience and worship. Literally, worship (*'ibādah*) means obedience and submission. The concept of worship is also related to the meaning of grace. In other words, worship can be defined as obedience and submission to all instructions and prohibitions from God and the feeling of being despised by God. Basically, this principle of obedience is centred on the knowledge and practice of the six pillars of faith and the five pillars of Islam. However, the concept of worship is not limited to worship which is listed in the competence of Islam. Every good deed that is divinely motivated is worthy of being categorised as worship. In Islam, a person's spiritual intelligence can also be seen through the amount of worship and obedience that a person practices. The more worship activities a person engages in, the higher their level of obedience, reflecting the level of their spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence in Islam can be seen based on the individual's ability to give meaning of worship to every thought and action in life.⁷⁹

There has been substantial empirical support for the theory of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence. Studies have been conducted on 190 students at the University of Technology in Poland,⁸⁰ 217 cadets at

⁷⁸ Khaidzir & Khairil, "Pengukuran *Virable* Psikologi Islam", 183-197.

⁷⁹ A. G. Agustian, *The Islamic Guide to Developing ESQ (Emotional Spiritual Quotient): Applying the ESQ Way 165, 1 Value, 6 Principle and 5 Action* (Jakarta: Arga Publishing, 2007), 423.

⁸⁰ Joanna, *Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence*, 1.

Surabaya Polytechnic,⁸¹ 250 students from various higher education institutions in Malaysia,⁸² 354 students during the 2014-2015 academic session at Zabol University⁸³ and 157 counselling clients in one of the government agencies in Malaysia.⁸⁴ These studies collectively show that emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence are intertwined and strengthen each other. Spiritual intelligence can develop intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies that constitute the components of emotional intelligence and are closely related to good attitudes such as humility, forgiveness and gratitude. This discussion leads to the following hypotheses:

- i. Hypothesis 1: Self-awareness has a positive and insignificant relationship with spiritual intelligence.
- ii. Hypothesis 2: Emotional regulation has a positive and significant relationship with spiritual intelligence.
- iii. Hypothesis 3: Self-motivation has a positive and significant relationship with spiritual intelligence.
- iv. Hypothesis 4: Social awareness has a positive and significant relationship with spiritual intelligence.
- v. Hypothesis 5: Social skill has a positive and insignificant relationship with spiritual intelligence.

⁸¹ Puspitacandri Ardhiana et al., "The Effects of Intelligence, Emotional, Spiritual and Adversity Quotient on the Graduates Quality in Surabaya Shipping Polytechnic," *European Journal of Educational Research* 9(3) (2020), 1075-1087.

⁸² Md. Aftab Anwar et al., "Effects of Spiritual Intelligence from Islamic Perspective on Emotional Intelligence," *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* 11(1) (2020), 216-232.

⁸³ M. Keshtegar & H. Jenaabadi, "Relationship among Emotional Intelligence, Spiritual Intelligence and Resilience of Students at University of Zabol," *International Journal of Clinical Medicine* 6(10) (2015), 759-768.

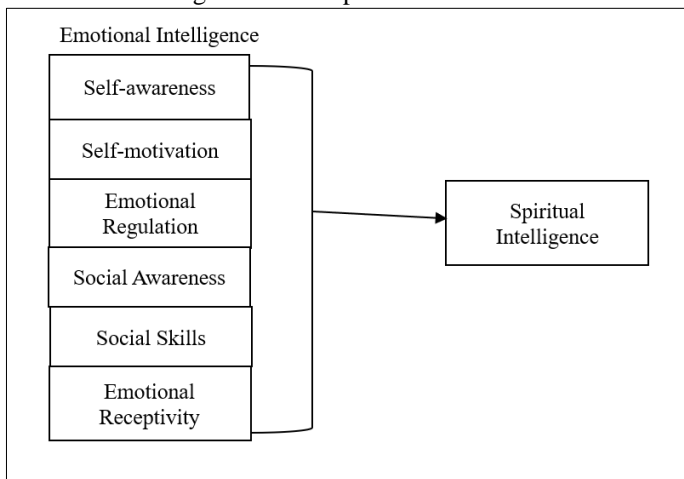
⁸⁴ Nurshahira, "Emotional Intelligence," 1.

- vi. Hypothesis 6: Emotional receptivity has a positive and significant relationship with spiritual intelligence.

Although many past studies have examined the influence of emotional intelligence in improving spiritual intelligence, most of the studies focused on the emphasis of the characteristics of emotional intelligence and the direct effects between variables. In conclusion, past studies show limitations by studying emotional intelligence while removing the six dimensions to be measured, i.e., self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, social skill and emotional receptivity. Past studies used simple correlations to measure the strength of the relationship between dependent and non-dependent variables. One study used a simple interview method to describe the perceptions of different respondents related to emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence. Past studies clearly indicate a lack of significant evidence regarding the link between emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence. This encourages researchers to fill in the existing gaps and, at the same time, discover empirical evidence substantiating this relationship. The results could suggest that counsellors should give due attention to EI and SI in enhancing the effectiveness of counselling sessions. The outcome of this study will provide guidance to counsellors, educators, and leaders of organisations on the importance of their role in enhancing spiritual intelligence.

The analysis of the literature has guided the researchers in framing the conceptual framework for this investigation, as depicted in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Methodology

Study Design

This study was conducted at one of the government agencies offering counselling services in Pahang, Malaysia, a federation consisting of thirteen states. The name of this institution is not displayed on the grounds of confidentiality. The study employed cross-sectional research survey and design methods to help researchers gather accurate data, reduce bias, and improve the overall data quality.⁸⁵ The questionnaire was formulated based on literature related to emotional intelligence, happiness, and psychological intimacy. Furthermore, back-to-back translation techniques were employed to translate the survey questionnaire from English into Malay, ensuring

⁸⁵ U. Sekaran & R. Bougie, *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach* (New York: John, 2010), 179.

compatibility between the two versions and thereby enhancing the quality of the research results.⁸⁶

In addition, the study employed a sampling method, distributing 250 questionnaires to counselling clients at one of the government agencies offering counselling services in the state of Pahang. The choice of this sampling technique was necessitated by the agency's management, which did not furnish detailed information about counselling clients due to confidentiality concerns. This limitation precluded the use of a random sampling technique, which is generally considered a more robust approach for participant selection. The study's questionnaire comprised two main parts, with the first part focusing on emotional intelligence, incorporating 25 items adapted from the studies of Sandhya and Namrata.⁸⁷ This construct was evaluated using six elements: self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, social skill and emotional receptivity.

Additionally, spiritual intelligence was evaluated using 9 items adapted from a previous study.⁸⁸ A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree", was used to evaluate the items. Demographic variables, including gender, age, place of residence, religion, citizenship, higher education, occupation, marital status, and monthly income, were included in the study as it assessed the emotions of counselling clients. These items provide pertinent references about the clients. The survey questionnaire data were analysed using SmartPLS to provide latent variable scores, addressing challenges such as small sample sizes,

⁸⁶ T. C. Lomand, *Social Science Research: A Cross Section of Journal Articles for Discussion and Evaluation* (British: Routledge, 2012), 264.

⁸⁷ Sandhya & Namrata, "Development of the Emotional Intelligence," 1255.

⁸⁸ Abdollahzadeh, *Intelligence: Concepts, Measurements*, 1-5.

less normal data, and the evaluation of complex research frameworks.⁸⁹

Results

Following the guidelines of Hair et al. (2017), the survey questionnaire data underwent initial filtering before being analysed for measurement models and structural equation models. Based on this recommendation, questionnaires with *no missing values* were retained, and items exhibiting suspicious answers, as well as those with Skewness and Kurtosis values exceeding +/- 2.0, were excluded from the analysis. Only questionnaires meeting the criteria for validity and reliability analysis were considered in this study.

Characteristics of the Respondent

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents were female (67.5%), and aged between 25 and 40 years old (43.5%). Most lived in cities (56.5%), identified as Muslims (100%), and Malays (100%), held a bachelor's degree (50.0%), were self-employed (44.5%), married (52.2%) and had earnings in the lower range of RM1999 (51.5%).

Table 1: Demographics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	65	32.5
	Female	135	67.5
Age	Below 25	87	43.5
	25- 40	87	43.5
	41- 56	26	13.0
Residence	City	113	56.5
	Rural	87	43.5
Religion	Muslim	200	100
Race	Malay	200	100
	Miscellaneous	8	4.0

⁸⁹ J. F. Hair et al., *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*, 2nd ed. (Los Angeles. Sage, 2017), 81.

Education	LCE/SRP/PMR	2	1.0
	MCE/SPM/SPM V	24	12.0
	HSC/STPM/STAM	4	2.0
	Certificate/Diploma	55	27.5
	Diploma	100	50.0
	Miscellaneous	15	7.5
Work	Government	80	40.0
	Private	31	15.5
	Work alone	89	44.5
Marital status	Married	85	42.5
	Footman	107	53.5
	Miscellaneous	8	4.0
Income	< 1999	103	51.5
	2k – 2999	34	17.0
	3k – 3999	16	8.0
	4k – 4999	20	10.0
	5k – 5999	12	6.0
	>6k	15	7.5

Note: SPM/MCE (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia/Malaysia Certificate of Education)

STPM/HSC (Higher School Certificate/Higher School Certificate) PMR/SRP/

LCE (Low Secondary Assessment/Low Certificate of Education/Lower School Certificate)

Reflective Measurement Model

Table 2 indicates that all outer loading values, as suggested by Hair et.al (2017), exceeded the recommended value of 0.708. Convergent validity was supported by the AVE value, which surpassed the minimum requirement of 0.5. Regarding internal consistency reliability, the CR value remained >0.708.

Table 3 shows the results of the validity and reliability of the construct. The Heterotrait-Monotrait Correlation Ratio (HTMT) for each construct was below 0.90, meeting

the criteria for discriminant validity. Additionally, the secret interval values for each construct, shown in brackets, fell below 1, indicating that the constructs satisfied the minimum standard for discriminant analysis.⁹⁰

Table 2: Reflective measurement model values

Indicator	Convergent Validity		Internal Consistency Reliability
	Outer Loadings	AVE (>0.50)	Composite Reliability
Self-awareness			
I understand how I feel, what I think, do and say.	0.822	0.635	0.897
I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses.	0.802		
I am open to continuous learning, improving self-development, seeing new perspectives & giving honest feedback.	0.804		
I am organized and careful in my life.	0.809		
I can make the right decisions despite uncertainty and stress.	0.746		
Self-motivation			
I feel happy and satisfied with my life.	0.711	0.615	0.917
I can clearly predict whether my emotions are happy or sad.	0.744		

⁹⁰ Hair et al., *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*, 81.

I am myself, not someone else's.	0.725		
I manage upset emotions well.	0.818		
I keep myself positive and calm even in frustrating situations.	0.858		
I stay focused and think clearly even under pressure.	0.854		
I was able to avoid external temptations to fulfill my dreams.	0.764		
Emotional Regulation			
I am determined to achieve my goals despite obstacles and obstacles.	0.941	0.891	0.943
I have the confidence to take full responsibility and make my own decisions.	0.948		
Social Awareness			
I understand how other people think, feel and behave.	0.754	0.729	0.915
I show sensitivity and understand the point of view of others.	0.872		
I recognize and appreciate the strengths, achievements and development of others.	0.903		
I respect and get along well with people from different backgrounds.	0.879		

Social Skills			
I am friendly and have good social skills.	0.805	0.731	0.891
I make and maintain friendships among friends.	0.895		
I maintain a balance between work and relationships.	0.863		
Emotional Receptivity			
I like working with others to complete a task.	0.778	0.589	0.851
Others feel comfortable to reveal their personal problems to me.	0.788		
I help others feel better when they are in a bad mood.	0.781		
I act as a mediator in resolving conflicts between two parties.	0.721		
Spiritual Intelligence			
I always felt that God was watching my actions.	0.868	0.755	0.965
I have a sense of gratitude and be grateful in life.	0.852		
Feeling happy when I can pray and I feel calm after worship.	0.826		
In the face of difficulties and suffering, I believe that God will help me.	0.891		

I pray and strive throughout the encounter problem.	0.867
I do not forget God when I feel hopeless.	0.868
I feel God's love for me.	0.894
For me, the source of strength and guidance is the foundation of religion and spirituality.	0.847
I believe that I will not lose because Allah is the real owner of everything.	0.904

Table 3: Discriminant analysis decisions

Construct	Self-awareness	Emotional Regulation	Self-Motivation	Social Awareness	Social Skills	Emotional Receptivity
Emotional Regulation	0.887					
Self-Motivation	0.743	0.796				
Social Awareness	0.645	0.669	0.705			
Social Skills	0.664	0.747	0.656	0.746		
Emotional Receptivity	0.515	0.505	0.578	0.721	0.831	
Spiritual Intelligence	0.548	0.611	0.593	0.580	0.590	0.509
	(-0.156, 0.189)	(0.024,0.405)	(0.003, 0.335)	(0.034, 0.331)	(-0.066, 0.230)	(-0.007, 0.234)

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

Construct Analysis

Table 4 presents the results of the variance inflation factor analysis and descriptive statistics. The mean values of all constructs, ranging from 4.25 to 6.50, indicated that some

respondents perceived varying levels of self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, social skills and emotional receptivity within the (4) to (7) range. On the other hand, the variance inflation factor for the relationship between independent variable (i.e., self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, social skills, and emotional receptivity) and the dependent variable (i.e., spiritual intelligence) was below 5.0. This indicates the absence of serious collinearity problems in the data.

Table 4: Analysis of variance inflation factor and descriptive statistics

Construct	Min	Standard Deviation	Variance Inflation Factor
			Spiritual Intelligence
Self-awareness	4.073	0.612	2.713
Emotional Regulation	3.964	0.673	3.444
Self-motivation	4.098	0.741	2.375
Social Awareness	4.004	0.649	2.287
Social Skills	4.037	0.683	2.679
Emotional Receptivity	3.804	0.674	2.134

Structural Model Measurement

Table 5 shows that 42.4% of changes in SI were accounted for by Self_A, E_RE, SM, Social_A, SS, and ER in the direct impression models. This implies that 57.6% of the SI variance is explained by other factors not addressed in this study. An R^2 value greater than 0.33 indicates a substantial effect for this model. Furthermore, the hypothesis test study addressed six important issues. First, Self_A significantly correlated with SI ($B = 0.028$; $t = 0.327$), supporting H1. Second, E_RE correlated with SI ($B = 0.221$; $t = 1.971$), supporting H2. Third, SM significantly correlated with SI ($B = 0.154$; $t = 1.868$), supporting H3. Fourth, Social_A significantly correlated with SI ($B = 0.182$; $t = 2.014$),

supporting H4. Fifth, SS significantly correlated with SI ($B = 0.083$; $t = 0.884$), supporting H5. Sixth, ER significantly correlated with SI ($B = 0.115$; $t = 1,764$), supporting H3.

Further, the effect measure (f^2), the appropriate model (SRMR value), and the predictive relevance (Q^2) were assessed. The value of f^2 for the relationship between Self_A, E_RE, SM, Social_A, SS, and ER with SI were mostly 0.025, lower than 0.15 (Hair et al., 2017), indicating a moderate effect. The average standardise root mean square residual (SRMR) value was 0.066, below 0.1, indicating the model's suitability. The value of Q^2 for SI was 0.309, higher than zero, indicating relevant forecast capabilities in the model.

Table 5: Structural model measurement analysis decisions

Hyphotesis	Relationship	B	t	Result
H1	Self_A → SI	0.028	0.327	Not Accepted
H2	E_RE → SI	0.221	1.971	Accepted
H3	SM → SI	0.154	1.868	Accepted
H4	Social_A → SI	0.182	2.014	Accepted
H5	SS → SI	0.083	0.884	Not Accepted
H6	ER → SI	0.115	1.764	Accepted

Note. Significant at * $t > 1.96$ (two tail testing); Self_A: Self-Awareness; E_RE: Emotional Regulation; SM: Self Motivation; Social_A: Social Awareness; SS: Social Skills; ER: Emotional Receptivity; SI: Spiritual Intelligence

Conclusion and Discussion

Many past studies have extensively used direct impact models to investigate the relationship between emotional awareness (self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, social skills and emotional receptivity) and spiritual intelligence.⁹¹ The results of testing these models only determine the strength of the

⁹¹ Joanna, "Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence", 4.

association between variables. However, most researchers have not measured the effect size of each element of emotional intelligence as a significant dependent variable with spiritual intelligence. This limitation inspired the researchers in this study to contribute further to the literature by assessing the intermediate effect of emotional intelligence on spiritual intelligence.

The study forms a conceptual framework based on emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence. Structural models have shown that the four elements of acting emotional intelligence have a significant association with spiritual intelligence. There are two elements which are self-awareness and social skills that show no significant association with spiritual intelligence. Based on interviews with counsellors, this issue is closely related to the personality or oneself of the client. This is because the effectiveness of a counselling session is based on the client's own self. In toffering solutions to client problems, the counsellor will use the spiritual element in the literacy approach as the client will inform that their emotional changes occur due to the self-impact and social. When emotions are disturbed, self-behavioural changes such as not focusing on a thing will automatically engage as much as wanting to be alone and will affect daily life.

In other words, it is not the counsellor who solves the problem, but the client themselves who need to make changes, including in managing their own emotions. Even if many programmes are implemented and followed, if the client does not make changes, the effort will be in vain. These findings suggest that counsellors' ability to apply the importance of spiritual intelligence in counselling, formal and/or informal coaching sessions, can drive the effectiveness of clients' emotional intelligence. As a result, this condition can improve their well-being and guide them to lead fulfilling daily lives.

In Islam, the changes that occur in a person are determined entirely by himself. This principle is recorded in verse 11 of Sūrah al-Ra'd:

Translation: "For each one are successive [angels] before and behind him who protect him by the decree of Allah. Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah intends for a people ill, there is no repelling it. And there is not for them besides Him any patron."

The gift of Allah (God) to man begins with something positive ⁹² such as pleasure, goodness, fidelit. ⁹³ This positive condition will remain unchanged by God as long as humans do not engage in actions that could alter this state. ⁹⁴ God's gift expects initiative from within. This suggests that the main element that can change the human condition is the individual himself. If the actions undertaken by the individual lead to harm, Allah will not block the harm from harming the individual. At that time, not a single entity can prevent the harm that Allah has already determined. ⁹⁵ The same is true of the negative conditions that are afflicting humans. If there is any act or effort that can be an indicator of a change towards a positive condition, then Allah will grant it as long as it does not contradict the *sunnatullāh* [the laws of nature].

Human beings are creatures endowed with freedom of will and freedom of choice, the latter being referred to as *ikhtiyār*. This gift is not given to other creatures. This concept of *ikhtiyār* entitles a man to the status of a

⁹² Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1420H), 19:30.

⁹³ Muhammad Sayd Ṭaṇṭāwī, *al-Tafsīr al-Wasīṭ li al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Cairo: Dār Nahḍah, 1997), 7:453.

⁹⁴ Ibn 'Ashur, *al-Tahrīr wa al-Tamwīr*, 13:102.

⁹⁵ Ṭaṇṭāwī, *al-Tafsīr al-Wasīṭ*, 7:453.

caliphate. This freedom makes a man do things with his efforts and ability to achieve the best results for himself.⁹⁶ It will also give the individual strength and motivation to act. Thus, a person who is facing problems needs to realise that he has freedom of will and action to deal with the problems. If this *ikhtiyār* is not taken advantage of, only disappointments, failures, and misfortunes will befall the individual. Islam abhors fatalistic traits and despairs in every choice and action performed by Muslim individuals. This is reflected in the hadith:

Translation: "Strive for that which will benefit you and seek the help of Allah and do not be helpless. If anything (bad) happens to you, do not say, 'If only I had done such-and-such, then such-and-such would have happened.'" ⁹⁷

According to Islam, human beings are endowed with freedom. However, they still need guidance to refrain from harmful actions because humans, by nature, have the potential to experience anxiety. This phenomenon is recorded in the statement of Allah in al-Ma'ārij 19-21:

Translation: "Indeed, mankind was created anxious: When evil touches him, impatient, and when good touches him, withholding [of it] ..."

The above verse shows that stress exists as a natural trait in humans. When confronted with a problem, a person often feels anger and fear. However, when he gets a favour, a person refuses to share his favours because of his

⁹⁶ Mu'ammār, "Kajian Hadis Tentang Konsep Ikhtiar dan Takdir dalam Pemikiran Muhammad Al-Ghazali dan Nurcholish Madjid: Studi Komparasi Pemikiran" (Master diss. UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2011), 37.

⁹⁷ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitab al-Qadr, Bāb fi al-Amr bi al-Quwwah wa Tark al-'Ajz, 4: 2052.

stinginess (*bakhīl*).⁹⁸ The feeling of worry is an irresistible nature in human life. If left unguided, there is a fear that humans will feel restless and unable to find a good solution. They may benefit from advice or guidance from another person. A Muslim should give advice when others seek counsel from them. The counsellor should encourage the requester to pursue positive actions and discourage engaging in negative actions. If the proposed act is not known to be harmful, then the giver should give a clear explanation and comparison between the harm and the benefit to the requester for advice. The process of sharing and asking for advice was also employed by the Prophet Joseph (Yusuf in Arabic) with his father when he experienced a strange dream. This event is recorded in Surah Yusuf verses 4-5:

Translation: "[Of these stories mention] when Joseph said to his father, "O my father, indeed I have seen [in a dream] eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating to me." He said, "O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers or they will contrive against you a plan. Indeed Satan, to man, is a manifest enemy."

In the above verse, Joseph was able to seek the advice of his father, Prophet Jacob (Ya'qub in Arabic). Prophet Jacob then advised Joseph of the proposed improper action of the Prophet Joseph, which was to share the dream with his brothers. The Prophet Jacob's advice indirectly avoids the murky relationship between the Prophet Joseph's brothers.⁹⁹ In this event, Joseph obeyed his father's suggestion and avoided a major strife as a result of the dream. The action of the Prophet Joseph to carry out his

⁹⁸ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Azīm* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1998), 8:240.

⁹⁹ Ibn 'Ashur, *al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, 12:213.

father's recommendation saved him at that time from the impending tyranny of his step-siblings. If Prophet Joseph chose not to heed the advice of Prophet Jacob, he would have exposed himself to a variety of negative consequences.

In the context of this study, the role of counsellors has been broadly established by the Board of Counsellors based on global challenges to address various human problems in various situations (e.g. family, work, education, rehabilitation, community and others). The ministry has granted autonomy to various agencies (e.g., schools, institutions, public sector, private sector, community, industry and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)) offering counselling services to enhance the personal development and well-being of individuals and communities. In community counselling agencies, responsible centres, particularly the Department of Social Welfare and LPPKN, are empowered to provide comprehensive assistance services, involving intervention and service strategies, to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Interactions between counsellors and clients are crucial as they can determine the achievement of coaching objectives in the community. The majority of participants indicated a low level of emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and psychological well-being. This situation emphasises the importance of the counsellor's ability to facilitate comfortable communication and provide adequate support in counselling sessions, thereby improving the client's spiritual intelligence. Consequently, emotional intelligence and psychological well-being can be enhanced in any client.

The study provides two important impacts: theoretical and practical contributions. In terms of theoretical contributions, the results of this study confirm that emotional intelligence influences the spiritual intelligence

of counselling clients. This result is consistent with existing notions.¹⁰⁰ The Bar-On emotional intelligence model argues that emotional intelligence involves interrelated emotional and social competency relationships. This theory suggests how people understand and express themselves, comprehend others, engage with those around them, and navigate daily emotional challenges. Lending additional support is Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, which establishes that spiritual intelligence meets the criteria for the modality of independent intelligence.

The Bar-On emotional intelligence model posits that emotional intelligence involves interrelated emotional and social competency relationships. This theory sheds light on how individuals understand and express themselves, comprehend others, engage with those around them, and navigate daily emotional challenges. Providing additional support is Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, which establishes that spiritual intelligence meets the criteria for the modality of independent intelligence. This view is supported by Emmons who states that the use of adaptive spiritual information can facilitate the solution of everyday problems and achieve certain goals in life.¹⁰¹ As a result, emotional intelligence and psychological well-being can be enhanced through the role of spiritual intelligence clients. The theories are supported, revealing that the counsellor's ability to apply emotional intelligence is contingent on the client's personality, needs, expectations, and the diversity in both formal and informal coaching activities. All of these have enhanced their spiritual intelligence.¹⁰² Therefore, this

¹⁰⁰ Reuven Bar-On, "The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI)," *Psicothema* 18 (2006), 14.

¹⁰¹ Emmons, "Spirituality and Intelligence," 57.

¹⁰² K. H. Ahoie et al., "Psychological Well-Being of Patients with Breast Cancer and its Relationship with Emotional Intelligence," *Journal Babol University Medical Sciences* 19(8) (2017), 24.

efficacy can improve the psychological well-being of clients in each counselling service agency.

Furthermore, in terms of practical contribution, the results of this study can be used by practitioners to improve the effectiveness of guidance management and counselling in counselling services agencies. To achieve this, management should be concerned about the following aspects: First, creative training programs should be precisely designed to help clients use content and standard methods in the application of practices for everyday life that have different needs and expectations. This practice can make it easier for counsellors to measure their clients' ability to achieve guidance and counselling targets. Secondly, responsible centres in schools, universities, the public sector, the private sector, communities and NGOs should plan formal assembly sessions at least three times a year.

This session is important in guiding the client to use their intellect to distinguish between truth and error, contemplate the existence of nature and the power of Allah, and manage the desires of evil with good intentions. This practice can enhance the personality, morals, and confidence of clients to continue their lives like normal human beings. Thirdly, the peer coaching programme should start by highlighting high-performing clients to become group leaders. They can directly share successful stories, motivate and guide group members to support the emotional, spiritual and psychological well-being of other clients. Fourth, special mentoring programs for low-performing clients should be organised to strengthen cognitive behaviours (e.g., fostering clients' positive beliefs and expectations about realising life goals, establishing strong relationships that grow between counsellors and clients, and increasing motivation within the client.

This socio-motivational aspect can improve client adaptation, increase success, and maintain greater psychological well-being. Finally, mentoring and counselling programs should diversify their focus from aspects of life such as soft skills, ethics, thinking skills, career, and personality development. The improvement of such aspects helps prepare clients in improving their psychological well-being. The above recommendations are essential to encourage and help the client in adapting to the various problems they face. Other recommendations are related to improving the methodological and conceptual limitations that exist in the study.

First, some of the client's important characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, occupation, income and level of education should be explored in future studies. This can improve our understanding of how different client characteristics affect counselling sessions in different agencies. Secondly, longitudinal studies should be considered, as they can show variable patterns over a long period of time, provide useful data on individual changes, and assess the strength and nature of the relationship between variables. Thirdly, to enhance understanding of the intermediate effects of spiritual intelligence in counselling sessions within other agencies in Malaysia, it should be a focus in future research. Fourth, other specific theoretical terms on spiritual intelligence need to be explored and published so that they can be widely recognised as an important link between the relationship of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence. Finally, probability sampling plans, especially stratified random sampling, should be considered as they will collect data at random so that they can reduce bias from normal methods. The importance of the above-mentioned proposals should be incorporated into future studies.

This research has identified some methodological and conceptual limitations. First, it overlooks testing of the

relationship between specific dimensions of the mediator variable and the dependent variable. Second, it relies solely on client perception as a measure to assess the relationship between variables in the hypothetical model. Third, the research was conducted at a counselling agency in the state of Pahang only. Lastly, the research's sampling plan is designed to minimise response bias. These limitations may impact the ability to generalise the results of this study to another agency.

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