

RELIGIOSITY INDICATOR AS PART OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING FOR MUSLIM MIGRANT WORKERS IN MALAYSIA OIL PALM PLANTATION

Chyairreil Annwar Akmal ^{1*}

Mahazan Abdul Mutalib ²

Wan Mohd. Fazrul Azdi Wan Razali ³

¹ Faculty of Leadership and Management, University Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Malaysia, (Email: chyairreil@gmail.com)

² Faculty of Leadership and Management, University Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Malaysia, (Email: mahazan@usim.edu.my)

³ Faculty of Leadership and Management, University Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Malaysia, (Email: wmfazrul@usim.edu.my)

Corresponding author: Chyairreil Annwar Akmal

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Abstract: *Palm oil is one of the largest contributors to Malaysia's economy and accounts for 8.5% of global oil and fat production. It was estimated that a total of 429,351 laborers worked in the plantation sector in 2016 and out of this total, 77% or 330,185 were foreign workers, with most of them coming from Indonesia and Bangladesh. Despite being a renowned palm oil producer, this sector is highly dependent on migrant workers. There are several issues beleaguering this sector, particularly labor, that disrupt their well-being. Among the common labor issues are labor exploitation, debt bondage, abuse of vulnerability, deception, and restriction of movement. These issues are commonly associated with the well-being of workers. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to explore the indicators of well-being among Muslim migrant workers in oil palm plantation in Malaysia. The study adopts a qualitative approach and semi-structured interviews as data collection. By using word frequency and thematic analysis, among the findings from this study suggested that religiosity indicator play a vital role in influencing the well-being of the Muslim migrant workers. Therefore, the emergence of religiosity indicator may provide a more comprehensive evaluation of well-being from different perspectives and relevant to the actual situation.*

Keywords: *Migrant Worker; Palm Oil; Religiosity; Well-Being; Indicator*

Introduction

Malaysia is a well-known country that produce palm oil and palm oil products since 1960s through rapid expansion and encouragement from Malaysian Government. Throughout the years, Malaysia is ranked as the second world's largest exporter of palm oil and second largest producer of the oil after neighbouring Indonesia. Malaysian crude palm oil accounts for 8.5% of global oil and fat production (Ghulam Kadir et al., 2022). The palm oil industry is labour intensive, especially in the oil palm plantations, in activities such as harvesting, collecting fruits, weeding and general work. There were 142,597 migrant workers with visit pass (temporary employment) until 31 December 2021 that worked in the plantation sector as shown in Table 1 (Ministry of Human Resources, 2022). According to International Organization for Migration (2023), nearly half a million of workers employed in Malaysia's oil palm plantation, with about 80% of them being migrants, primarily from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Indonesia.

Table 1: Statistics of Migrant Workers with Visit Pass (Temporary Employment) by Countries and Sectors (Until 31 December 2021)

BIL	COUNTRIES	SECTORS							TOTAL
		MANUFACTURING	CONSTRUCTION	PLANTATION	SERVICES	AGRICULTURE	FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPER	MINING & QUARRYING	
1	Indonesia	72,155	72,793	99,487	20,067	45,001	61,183	0	370,686
2	Bangladesh	124,440	145,042	15,308	55,708	12,639	68	4	353,209
3	Nepal	124,080	3,577	2,178	44,154	6,211	54	5	180,259
4	Myanmar	95,835	7,383	563	10,720	2,823	42	42	117,408
5	India	1,449	3,759	16,852	23,889	8,775	819	0	55,543
6	Philippines	2,523	1,383	6,164	2,838	2,979	23,267	0	39,154
7	Pakistan	2,833	11,502	1,741	5,021	9,078	13	0	30,188
8	Vietnam	6,151	828	22	743	445	1,009	0	9,198
9	Thailand	75	120	165	3,438	1,839	268	0	5,905
10	China	746	1,552	3	1,310	2	36	15	3,664
11	Sri Lanka	2,624	94	70	722	59	380	0	3,949
12	Cambodia	390	57	44	236	456	1,015	0	2,198
13	Lao PDR	5	0	0	3	519	18	0	545
14	Uzbekistan	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
15	Kazakhstan	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
16	Turkmenistan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL	433,306	248,090	142,597	168,851	90,826	88,173	66	1,171,909

Source: Ministry of Human Resources (2022)

Although plantation sectors offer a huge number of employment opportunities, it is not attractive enough for local workers since this sector is perceived by them as 3D sector (Dirty, Dangerous and Difficult), low wages and unappealing location in rural area (Kamaruddin et al., 2018). This has contributed to the influx of foreign labour in oil palm plantation to fill up the undesired job (Kamaruddin et. al, 2018). However, the high dependency to foreign workers has over the years created negative impacts to Malaysia in areas such as social, health and economic (Crowley, 2020). Nowadays these negative impacts have been broadened by labour violation issue specifically forced labour. This issue was highlighted by various media such as International Organization for Migration report in 2023, Malay Mail online newspaper in 2018 and supplychaindive website in 2018 (International Organization for Migration, 2023; Rosli, 2018; Kapadia, 2018). Consequently, United States Department of Labour in accordance with the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) in 2020 had published a report “2020 List of Goods Produced by Child Labour or Forced Labour” which identified palm oil sector in Malaysia as good produced by forced labour or child labour (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). These are some issues that demonstrate migrant workers in Malaysia in the state of poor well-being condition.

The growing interest in related to well-being has prompted many researchers to conduct studies in this specific area. Among the renowned research conducted in this subject are Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs by Maslow (1943), subjective well-being by Diener (1984), social well-being by Keyes (1998) and personal well-being by Cummins et al. (2003). The interest on this subject grew significantly when the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a global network of United Nation (UN) that is mainly responsible to reduce inequalities and eradicate poverty among nations through the sustainable development program, introduced the report on Human Development Index in 1990 (Anand & Sen, 1994). Consequently, substantial studies had been conducted in the area of human well-being in particular migrant workers such as study by Reza et al. (2019) on economic and social well-being of Asian labour; study on psychosocial working conditions and well-being of migrant workers in Spain by Bretones et al. (2020) and study on the determinants of well-being among international economic immigrants by Bak-Klimek et al. (2015). Despite this, previous studies have paid little attention to the overall well-being of migrant workers in particularly relationship between migrant workers and religiosity within well-being domain.

It is important to understand the relationship between religiosity with migrant workers because of their vulnerability condition that expose them to abuse and exploitation situation despite the presence of the authority and civil society that unable to protect them due to various reasons such as lack of enforcement and applicable law in place (David et al., 2019). According to study by Williams & Horodnic (2018) suggested that migrant workers tend to be the subject of extra work compared to local workers in order to keep their work contract. Furthermore, migrant workers tend to be exposed to exploitation, abuse and discrimination situation because of their vulnerability condition (Global Migration Group, 2013). Due to these reasons, it is imperative that the migrant workers that face those hardship exhibit their locus of control either internally or externally as one of the ways to deal with those challenges and continue to lead a happy and contented life. In this aspects, religiosity and spirituality have been identified as one of the medium that able to provide locus of control and as a strategy to cope with difficult life situations. Therefore, the primary objective of the article is to explore the indicators of well-being among Muslim migrant workers in oil palm plantation in Malaysia.

Literature Review

Subjective Well-Being (SWB)

Subjective Well-Being (SWB) is one of the leading studies in the area of well-being. The term SWB was introduced by Diener (1984), who suggested that well-being was associated with life satisfaction, and positive and negative affect. According to Diener (1984), the tripartite model for SWB consisted of three primary components: life satisfaction (LS), positive affect (PA), and negative affect (NA). For an individual to achieve high SWB, LS and PA (example happy and optimism) should be experienced frequently with infrequent NA (example anger and sadness), and vice versa for an individual to achieve low SWB (Proctor, 2014). The model is shown in Figure 1.

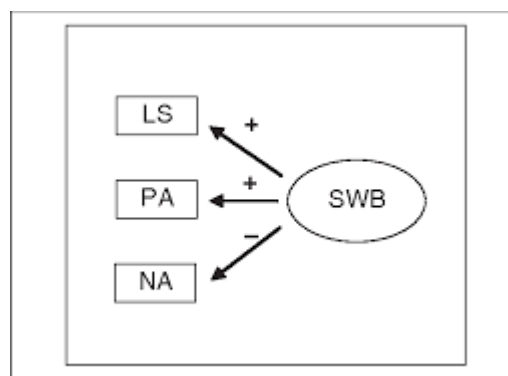


Figure 1: Tripartite Model for Subjective Well-Being

Source: Diener et al. (1999)

Well-Being From Perspective Of Islam

In the Muslims' perspectives, the overall concept of humanity, such as psychological and lifestyle, including well-being is closely related with the religion of Islam with the ultimate objective to worship only Allah. Therefore, religion cannot be separated from a Muslim's life (Joshnloo, 2013). In this context, the concept of well-being is evolved on teachings of the Al-Quran and Al-Hadith (sayings from prophet Muhammad SAW). Based on these sources, the concept of well-being in the Muslim's perspective could be narrowed down to *shahadah* and *deen*. *Shahadah* is declaration of faith in one God (Allah) and His messenger, and *deen* is the way of life. Faith and Islam's way of life are two important dimensions in a Muslim's life that can constitute well-being. Muslims believed that having faith in Allah and living in accordance to the teachings of Islam could lead to well-being (Joshnloo, 2013). This is indicated in surah Yunus as follows:

“Those who believe and (constantly) guard against evil; for them are glad tidings, in the life of the present and hereafter: No change can there be in the words of God. This is indeed the supreme felicity.” (Al-Qur'an. Yunus 10:63-64)¹

¹ All Quranic translations in this writing were based on Abdullah Yusuf Ali. 1991. The Holy Qur'an, English translation of the meanings and Commentary. AL-Madinah AL-Munawarah: King Fahd Holy Qur-ān Print. Complex. Translations from other sources will be cited accordingly.

The concept of well-being in Islam is considered as not only to gain happiness in this world but the afterlife as well. This can be achieved by devoting to the teachings of Islam, such as praying, fasting, giving zakat (donation to poor people), and living in Islam's way of life, such as be good to your neighbors, helpful to the community, promote peace and prosperity, and contribute to society. All of these good deeds will bring joy and happiness to us, and to the public at large. According to Joshanloo (2013), by following Islam's way of life, the Muslims could gain a balanced and healthy lives. Therefore, one of the Islamic models suggested is *Maqasid Al Shari'ah*.

Islamic Model Of Well-Being - Maqasid Al Shari'Ah

This model is developed by Islamic scholar, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali using *Maqasid Al Shari'ah* approach that emphasized on the *Shari'ah* perspectives that clarifies the reasons behind these factors. *Maqasid Al Shari'ah* means "the objectives/purposes behind Islamic rulings" (Auda, 2007). Auda (2007) concludes, by referring to earlier Islamic scholars for examples Abd al-Malik al-Juwayni (d.478AH/1185CE), Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d.505AH/1111CE), Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d.606AH/1209CE), and Najm al-Din al-Tufi (d.716 AH/1316 CE), that in Islam the understanding and definition of *maqāsid* has close link with *maslahah* or people's interest. Purpose or *maqāsid* of the Islamic law were classified into several dimensions or first levels of necessity (traditional classification), second scope of rulings aiming to achieve purposes, third scope of people included in the purposes, and fourth level of universality of the purposes (Auda, 2007). The theoretical framework is shown in the Figure 2 below.

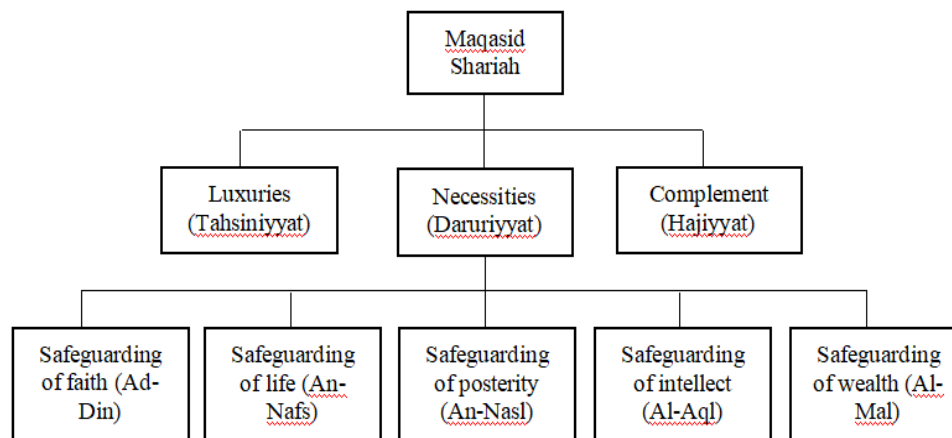


Figure 2: Al-Ghazali's Theoretical Framework of Maqasid al-Shari'ah

Source: Abdul Rasool et al. (2020)

There are 3 level of necessity under *Maqasid Al-Shari'ah*'s framework which are known as *daruriyyat* (necessities), *hajjiyyat* (needs) and *tahsiniyyat* (luxuries) (Abdul Rasool et al., 2020); (Azila et al., 2017); and (Auda, 2007). In order to elaborate the *Maqasid Al Shari'ah* further, *Daruriyyat* means the basic needs that must be fulfilled by individuals. It is a necessary to be fulfilled to the extent that people cannot live without them and that losing them pose a threat to the very survival of normal. Necessities are further classified into what 'preserve one's faith, soul, wealth, mind, and offspring'. Some *usulis* added 'the preservation of honor' to the above five widely popular necessities. *Hajjiyyat* is complementary to *Daruriyyat* and aims to support and promote them. It is also may be viewed as semi-essential benefits, which are aimed at preventing hardship. *Hajjiyyat* is not essential to human itself in the sense that losing it do not

pose a threat to the very survival of normal order and that people can live without them if they have to. Nevertheless, preserving *Hajiyyat* is necessary to increase the quality of life in long term. *Tahsiniyyat* is the third category of *Maqasid Al Shari'ah* which are benefits that come beyond *Hajiyyat*. *Tahsiniyyat* are desirable in the sense that they offer convenience, attain betterment or refinement of human life, and allow for perfection in the order and conduct of people at all levels. Preserving the *Tahsiniyyat* is important to portray beauty and completeness in one's community and this should be attained by Islamic societies.

Derive from the level of necessity are the dimensions. *The Maqasid Al-Shari'ah* model comprise of 5 dimensions which are Religion (*al-Din*), Intellect or Mind (*al-'Aql*), Economic/Wealth (*al-Mal*), Posterity (*al-Nasl*) and Life/Health (*al-Nafs*) (Abdul Rasool et al., 2020); (Kader, 2020) and (Kamali, 2018). The dimension of religion (*al-Din*) is the most vital element that require every human being to worship, submit to Allah and to execute all the teachings of Islam. The dimension of intellect or mind (*al-'Aql*) is an essential element to seek knowledge that being obliged by every Muslim. The dimension of economic/wealth (*al-Mal*) is related to the resources either in material or economic gain. The dimension of posterity (*al-Nasl*) is related to future generation of the people. The posterity is included to preserve and protect the lineage of human being through marriage, children inheritance and family relationship (Abdul Rasool et al., 2020). The last dimension, Life/Health (*al-Nafs*) is comprising of physical and mental health (Abdul Rasool et al., 2020).

Religiosity Indicator

Previous studies and researchers have agreed that religion is associated to various variables and not limited to psycho-behavioral variables. In the context of this article, the authors argue that Islamic religiosity indicators can be integrated in the assessment of well-being. In various disciplines, we can see that various conventional literature fails to provide a comprehensive understandings of human behaviors especially when it relates to psycho-social variables like religiosity and comprehensive well-being. In the field of leadership for example, researchers agree that conventional leadership literature fail to provide any precise and exact definition of leadership (Meindl et al., 1985). This also involve the uncertainty to categorize leadership as either position, skill, relationship or management (Barker, 2001). Hence, taking leadership as an example, it is important to guide conventional concepts and theories by using a firm, certain, and godly-purposed concept for example the objectives of *shariah* or *Maqasid Al Shari'ah* as used in Islam. This is very useful in giving us the picture of how important the concept is and it directly connect to the understandings and values of human being very well. This is also the same in the context of defining wellbeing from Islamic psycho-social perspectives.

The religiosity indicator is varied and among the common usage are as faith and worship purpose, coping mechanism and *Maqasid Shari'ah*. Faith and worship purpose are among the popular usage of Islamic indicator throughout the existing literature. Recent selected studies using faith and worship as one of the indicators to evaluate well-being of individual are shown in the Table 2 below.

Table 2: Islamic Well-Being Indicator (Faith and Worship) and Elements

Title	Author	Elements
An Investigation of Islamic Well-Being and Mental Health	Ali Eryilmaz and Naci Kula (Eryilmaz & Kula, 2020)	Faith and Worship
Developing a Model of Wellness among Muslims: Examining the Role of Spirituality	David R. Hodge, Tarek Zidan and Altaf Husain (Hodge et al., 2016)	1. Pray five times daily 2. Read Quran 3. Attend masjid
Islamic religiosity, subjective well-being, and health	Habib Tiliouinea, Robert A. Cummins and Melanie Davernc (Tiliouine et al., 2009)	1. Obligations or duties 2. Prohibitions or interdictions 3. Allowances
Islamic Personal Religiosity as a Moderator of Job Strain and Employee's Well-Being: The Case of Malaysian Academic and Administrative Staff	Meguellati Achour, Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor and Mohd Yakub Zulkifli MohdYusoff (Achour et al., 2016)	1. Belief 2. Extrinsic religiosity 3. Intrinsic religiosity

Apart from faith and worship purpose, there are also a few studies that using religion or Islam as coping mechanism. Coping is defined as a process when a person handles the challenges and pressure that are produced by appraisal (Jannati et al., 2011). Coping can also be associated with religion and known as search for God or sacred things during the time of stress with spiritual qualities (Pargament et al., 2011). Religious coping mechanism has been used by people since the early time as a way to get better in psychological functioning by reducing mental health symptoms such as depression, anxiety and trauma (Tarakeshwar et al., 2006). Example of religious practice are prayers, mediating, rituals and fasting. The selected studies are shown in the Table 3 below.

Table 3: Islamic Well-Being Indicator (Coping Mechanism) and Elements

Title	Author	Elements
Religion and Well-Being: The Mediating Role of Positive Emotions	Patty Van Cappellen, Maria Toth-Gauthier, Vassilis Saroglou and Barbara L. Fredrickson (Van Cappellen et al., 2016)	positive emotions
Administrative Stressors and Islamic Coping Strategies Among Muslim Primary Principals in Malaysia: A Mixed Method Study	Lokman Mohd Tahir, Aqeel Khan, Mohammed Borhandden Musah, Roslee Ahmad, Khadijah Daud, Shafeeq Hussain Vazhathodi Al-Hudawi, Aede Hatib Musta'Amal and Rohaya Talib (Tahir et al., 2018)	1. Perform the hajat prayer. 2. Reading the Quranic 3. Say dhua to Allah 4. Saying Quranic verses 5. Perform the dhikir 6. Consultation with religious teachers 7. Attending religious classes 8. Mused own mistakes 9. Recite the Yassen 10. Reading religious books

Title	Author	Elements
Measuring Religiosity and Its Effects on Personal Well-Being: A Case Study of Muslim Female Academicians in Malaysia	Meguellati Achour, Fadila Grine, Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor and Mohd Yakub Zulkifli MohdYusoff (Achour et al., 2015)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. faith (<i>iman</i>) 2. forgiveness 3. supplication (<i>du'a</i>) 4. recitation of the Qur'an 5. trust in God 6. beginning the day positively 7. remembrance of God (<i>zikr</i>) 8. prayer 9. exercise of patience (<i>sabr</i>) 10. thankfulness (<i>shukr</i>) to people and to God,

A few scholars have suggested using a variety of approach and model that based on Islamic teaching. Study by Abdul Rasool et al. (2020) has suggested using *Maqasid Al-Shari'ah* approach, a multidimensional concept to promote human well-being. *Maqasid Al-Shari'ah* is defined as objectives and intents behind the law of *shari'ah* that pursue to understand and protect (Kamali, 2018) and (Auda, 2008). It is a concept of greater good will be achieved upon the understanding of the law enacted that leads to fulfilment of public interest (*maslahah*) and prevention of mischief (*mafsadah*). In short, it explains the rational of the Islamic law for the sake of interest of humanity (Auda, 2008).

According to Abdul Rasool et al. (2020), Kader (2020) and Kamali (2018), *Maqasid Al-Shari'ah* approach introduce 5 basic concept which include faith (*al-din*), lives (*al-nafs*), intellect (*al-'aql*), posterity (*al-nasl*) and wealth (*al-mal*). The summary of the element of *Maqasid Al-Shari'ah* is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Islamic Well-Being Indicator (*Maqasid Al Shari'ah*) and Elements

Title	Author	Dimensions	Elements
Wellbeing of the Society: A <i>Maqasid Shari'ah</i> Approach,	Mohamed Saladin Abdul Rasool, Mohamed Azmil Mohd Yusof and Siti Mariam Ali (Abdul Rasool et al., 2020)	Religion (<i>Al-Din</i>)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Religious obligations 2. Religious education 3. Contribute to charity 4. Seeking Knowledge 5. Mosque activities 6. Trust in Allah
		Intellect or Mind (<i>Al-'Aql</i>)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education level 2. Motivational programs 3. Skill 4. School attendance 5. Knowledge 6. The literacy level of household
		Economic/ Wealth (<i>Al-Mal</i>)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Skill 2. Income 3. Purchasing power 4. Savings 5. Productivity 6. Assets, income, land, footstock

Title	Author	Dimensions	Elements
		Posterity (<i>Al-Nasl</i>)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better future for family 2. Harmony 3. Anti-social activities 4. Participation in community activities 5. Marriage 6. Children 7. Personal liberty and freedom
		Life/Health (<i>Al-Nafs</i>)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consumption of food and nutrition 2. Access to healthcare 3. Awareness of health 4. Frequency of sickness 5. Nutrition 6. Body fluid weight

Based on this elaboration, we can assume that common usage of religiosity indicator such as faith, worship and coping mechanism are embodied in the element of religion (*Al-Din*) under *Maqasid Shari'ah*. Thus, *Maqasid Shari'ah* as the overarching framework of the Islamic indicators is best suited in evaluating well-being of individual from the Islamic perspectives. The religiosity indicator is also best suited as part of Subjective Well-Being (SWB) as evidenced by study by Churchill et al. (2019) that indicated the relationship between religiosity and subjective well-being in developing countries was positive and significant and study by Vang et al. (2019) that showed that religiosity was influencing higher levels of life satisfaction.

Methodology

This study is using a qualitative approach for exploring the relationship between migrant workers and well-being. There are two in-depth interview sessions using semi-structured interview. Firstly, in-depth interview with the experts during preliminary stages and secondly in-depth interview of migrant workers. This study engaged a few reputable experts in various fields to gather their opinions regarding migrant workers and well-being. The input from the experts is used to develop a more concise questionnaire for the purpose of in-depth interview with the migrant workers at a later stage and verification of the current issues. The list of experts is Department of Labour Peninsular Malaysia, Ministry of Human Resources; Malaysian Palm Oil Board, Ministry of Plantation and Industrial Commodities; International Labour Organization (ILO); and Academician (expert on law, migrant workers, religiosity, and spirituality)

The location of the study is conducted in oil palm estate in peninsular Malaysia. The target population for this study is migrant workers. The list of companies is acquired from the directory of oil palm estates in Malaysia by MPOB (Malaysian Palm Oil Board, 2021). The migrant worker in this subject is referring to foreign workers who fall under these oil palm occupations: 4321-22 (Weighing clerk); 6111-04 (Grower, Oil Palm); 6111-17 (Grader, Oil Palm); 8341-01 (Operator, Motorized Farm Equipment); 8341-02 (Driver, Farm Tractor); 9211-09 (Worker, manuring); 9211-22 (Palm Oil Harvester) and 9211-13 (Crop Farm Labourer, Palm Tree) that are based on Malaysia Standard Classification of Occupations (MASCO) 2020 (Ministry of Human Resources, 2020).

Result

Initially 25 migrant workers signed up for the interview sessions. Those 25 migrant workers signed the consent forms and participated in the screening tests, as a prerequisite prior to the interviews session. However, only 21 migrant workers passed the screening tests, which acquire at least a basic command of *Bahasa Melayu*. There are two types of analysis conducted by using Nvivo version 12, word frequency and thematic analysis. According to Brysbaert et al. (2018), word frequency was described as an observation of high frequency words that were processed more efficiently compared to low frequency words. It will help the researchers to focus on specific words, and serve as a connection between ideas, concepts, and beliefs for the portrayal of collective ideas (Vasconcellos-Silva et al., 2013). One of the methods to illustrate word frequency is employing word cloud as a graphic representation as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Word cloud for migrant workers' interviews

Among the most frequent words used related to migrant workers were *kerja*, *kehidupan*, *agama*, *kawan*, *solat*, *Islam*, *bersih*, *pendapatan*, *selamat*, *amalan*, *halal*, *berpuas*, *kemahiran*, *kesejahteraan*, *kesihatan*, *selesa*, *gembira*, *sihat*, and Muslim. The frequently words were meant to suggest the general picture in this study, which could be related to several indicators, such as religiosity, cleanliness, income, safety, social, health, satisfaction and happiness. This result reinforces findings from the literature review regarding the religiosity indicator. This has furnished a valid sign about the emerging themes that would be analyse later. Therefore, among the themes emerged from the data analysis is the indicators of well-being. The detail of the indicators is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Theme 1 -The indicators of well-being

Theme 1: The indicators of well-being					
Category	Esteem needs	Social needs	Physiological and safety needs	Subjective well-being	Transcendence needs
Codes	Workers' right - Freedom of movement - Freedom of association	Social	Housing and amenities Security	Positive affection Negative affection	Religiosity - Cleanliness - Facilities - Leisure

Theme 1: The indicators of well-being					
Category	Esteem needs	Social needs	Physiological and safety needs	Subjective well-being	Transcendence needs
	Welfare - Treatment of workers - Financial aid Jobs satisfaction Work life balance Knowledge and skill		Safety Health Income Environment	Life satisfaction Happiness	- Adequate house space - Freedom to practice - Religious place - Social - Sufficient income - Belief - <i>Halal</i> food - <i>Zakat</i> (Charity) - Negative feeling - Positive feeling - Religious practices - Coping

Another way to illustrate the connection between codes and sub-codes with the respective themes was by mapping it through project maps. It shows connections between codes and sub-codes with the theme by a connector. Additionally, it could be further explored to identify which respondents are associated with that particular codes or sub-codes. By using a project map, it gives flexibility to the researcher to examine data more holistically, gain greater understanding about the project, and able to identify connections between items by visually observing the link. The project map for Theme 1 is shown in Figure 4.

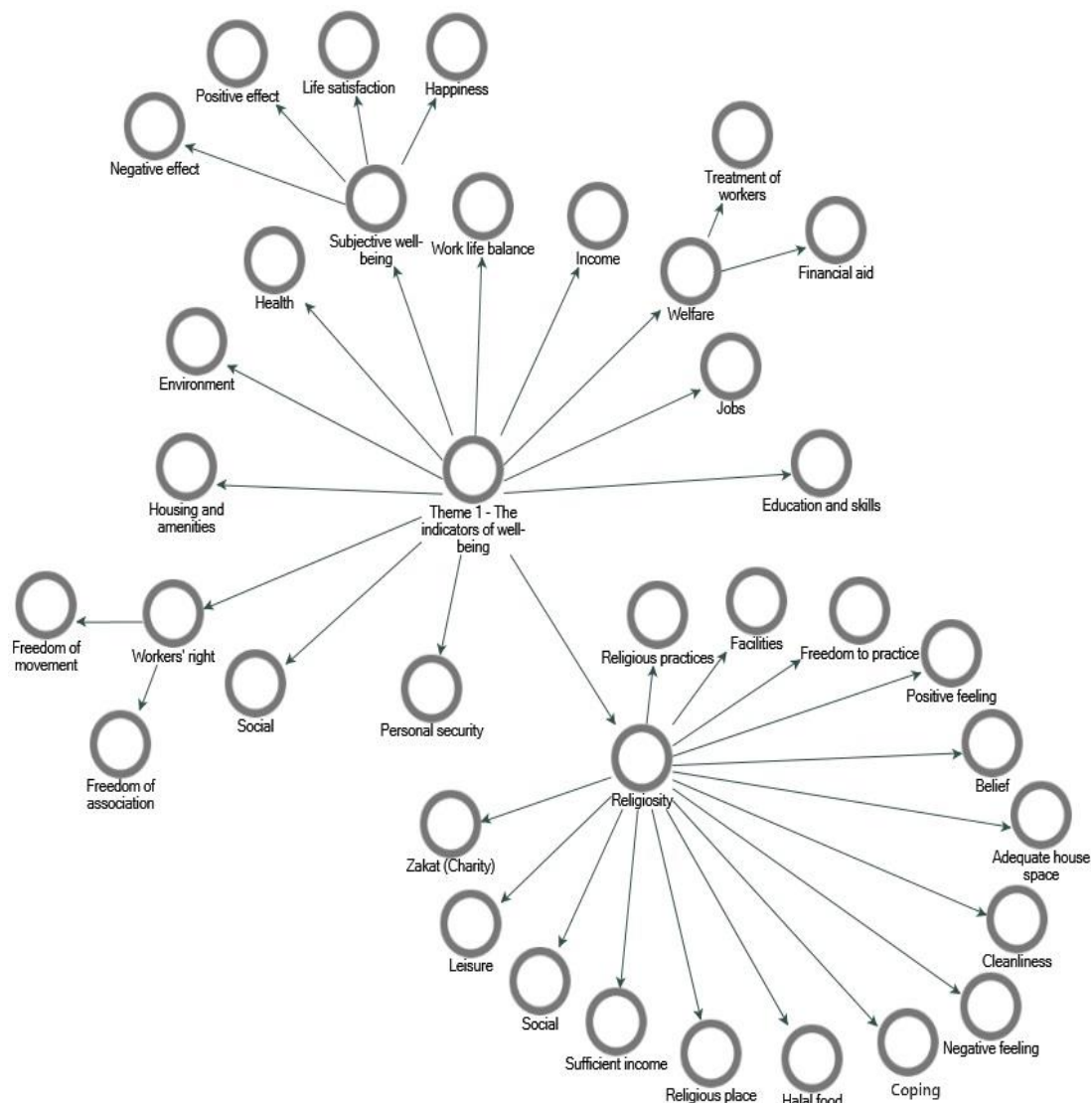


Figure 4: Word Cloud For Migrant Workers' Interviews

Discussion

The findings highlighted that besides the typical indicators that influenced their well-being such as income, health, housing and amenities, there were other additional indicators that were equally important to them. The additional indicators were religiosity, workers' rights – freedom of movement and freedom of association and welfare – treatment of workers and financial aid. Although, there were a lot of interesting findings obtained via in-depth interviews, this article is focusing on religiosity indicator. This finding was in line with the principle of happiness by Al-Ghazali and Al-Farabi that indicated true happiness could be discovered when turning to Allah (Al-Ghazali, 1909; Mahdi, 1962). At the same time, some of the experts were agreeable with the view of Muslim scholars. For instance, one expert said:

“The religious practices are important to fortify the inner strength of the migrant workers. As far as family is concerned, migrant workers in Peninsular Malaysia are

not allowed to bring in their spouses and children to Malaysia. Thus, strong relationship with God is vital for them to fill in the gap and to support the emotional needs. Apart from that, religiosity and spirituality are also important in safeguarding the relationship between the co-workers. A mutual respect between the co-workers particularly while practising their respective religion is pivotal in ensuring well-being of the workers are preserved.” (Expert’s interviewee 4)

The responses from the migrant workers were mostly in tandem with the views from the experts. They highlighted that religiosity played a major role in their lives. Not only in the aspect of economic, but in other area such as social, physiological, and SWB as well. This had to do with the concept of Islam, as the way of life. It meant that Islam is being a part of everyday life for the migrant workers, such as eating halal food and gaining halal income, contributing to *zakat/sedekah*, performing various religious activities, and source of coping for some of them. The evidence could be found through the interviews with migrant workers. The following are some examples:

Positive feeling

“Selepas solat itukan, kita merasakan ketenangan. Tenang kalau udah solatkan itu macam bebas lah kan. Hati pun agak baik lah.” (Interviewee 21)

Coping

“Kalau saya masa itu yang membuat saya itu terkesan sangatlah, hidup tak selesa sekarang ini hidup memang penuh dengan liku-liku. Tapi Alhamdulillah, dengan doa dan usaha saya menjadi lebih baiklah. Dalam keadaan posisi kehidupan macam itu. Setiap doa. Doa, doa, doa, alhamdulillah adalah doa yang terkabulkan, tak semua doa terkabulkan dulu sebab tunggu masa dia dulu. Kena tunggu.” (Interviewee 2)

Life satisfaction

“Saya sangat-sangat berpuas hati saya sebab saya selalu bersyukur, itu saja. Apa pun kalau kita tak bersyukur, tuan apa yang dapat, tak ada. Kalau kita tak bersyukur, memang tak pernah cukup, itu saja.” (Interviewee 3)

Happiness

“Alhamdulillah. Secara rohani dan jasmani sebagai makhluk Allah, kita diciptakan untuk bersyukur. Alhamdulillah kita puas. Ada, tak ada duit itu sebentar sahaja puas. Kalau kita rasa tak puas, kita tahu mana nak cari kepuasan itu. Kepuasan itu ada dalam diri kita sendiri. Bukan terletak pada material, harta kita sendiri. Di mana sahaja kita duduk. Kalau kita rasa tak boleh nak capai ataupun secara kasar, tak boleh berfikir, tidak boleh bersyukur, sekaya mana pun, sebanyak mana pun duit kita, kita tidak akan berasa puas.” (Interviewee 7)

From the dimension of SWB, most of the migrant workers indicated that religion plays a vital role in generating positive affect, gaining life satisfaction, and elevating happiness. These positive traits will lead to better performance and competencies of the workers which will contribute towards the productivity of the organization (DiMaria et al., 2020); (Dijkhuizen et al., 2018) and (Bryson et al., 2017). The evidence clearly indicated that religiosity play a major role in the life of Muslim migrant workers.

Conclusion

The religiosity dimension is considered as one of the important indicators to better evaluate the subjective well-being of Muslim migrant workers. The peril of migrating, living and adapting to the destination country have brought out undesirable challenges to them. Those challenges can be in many forms, such as exploitation, debt, excessive workload and adhere to rules and regulations. Despite those challenges, Muslim migrant workers often depend on religiosity as a way to seek comfort, coping mechanism and uplifting their spirituality. Hence, the religiosity indicator must be included in the overall assessment of SWB since religiosity is vital to them as part of their lifestyle. The whole concept of well-being is invigorating on the idea of religiosity is part of their life and they use it daily through religious activities such as praying, fasting and *zakat* (charity). Therefore, it is crucial that religiosity is to be part of the whole assessment of SWB.

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