THE EXPRESSIONS OF SPIRITUALITY INVENTORY: EVIDENCE FOR THE CROSS CULTURAL VALIDITY IN A MALAYSIAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT: This study sought to assess the validity of the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory (ESI) for use in the Malaysian context. The ESI was developed and validated in English to measure five overarching dimensions of spirituality that capture constructs commonly found across spirituality literature. No study focusing on the validation of a Malay version of the ESI has been reported to date. The English version of the ESI was translated into Malay in a rigorous process that included back-translation and then administered to a calibration sample of 236 Malaysian young adults, with the final model of the ESI cross-validated using a replication sample of 201 Malaysian young adults. Structural equation modelling indicated satisfactory construct validity. The $\chi^2$ difference tests supported the five factor structure of spirituality in the Malaysian context.

KEYWORDS: Spirituality, Expressions of Spirituality Inventory, Malaysia, Reliability, Validity, Young Adults.

Spirituality is a worldwide concept, made up of constructs that have been positively associated with valued wellbeing outcomes such as life satisfaction and happiness, and negatively related to social problems such as depression and substance abuse (Moreira-Almeida, Neto, & Koenig, 2006). However, despite considerable research on the topic researchers continue to differ in their definitions of spirituality or its component dimensions, this often attributed to spirituality being a subjective, personal and individualistic construct (Coyle, 2002, p. 589). The lack of agreement has led to the development of a plethora of disparate assessment techniques in the field, with over a hundred instruments, many psychometrically weak, now available (MacDonald, 2000b; MacDonald & Holland, 2003; Paloutzian & Park, 2005).

We were interested in understanding spirituality in a Malaysian context, and more specifically among Malaysian young people because of the potential for facilitating wellbeing. On reviewing existing measures of spirituality, we concluded that the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory (ESI) (MacDonald, 1997, 2000a) was the preferred instrumentalized model for a number of reasons.
First, the ESI encompasses a broad range of spirituality constructs as it is based on a meta-study of spirituality studies rather than one proponent’s theory. However, it was noted that most of this empirical work has been undertaken within the context of a Western, Judeo-Christian tradition, indicating a need for cross-cultural and cross-contextual validation of the instrument in order to ascertain cross-cultural universality and relevance.

Second, the ESI has some clear strengths over other spirituality measures such as the widely used Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Ellison, 1983) and the Spiritual Transcendence Scale (STS) (Piedmont, 2001). The ESI was developed after taking into account controversy surrounding spirituality measurements, such as the content domain that comprehensively make up spirituality (MacDonald, 2000b). Spirituality has been defined with 40 elements such as a search for meaning, supernatural beliefs, faith, and trust (Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999). With this in mind, MacDonald conducted an extensive meta-analysis of available theoretical and empirical literatures, in an effort to identify the main pervasive factors or facets of spirituality. MacDonald’s subsequent model of spirituality is thus a multidimensional construct which includes experiential, cognitive, affective, physiological, behavioural, and social components and is inclusive of “spiritual, religious, peak, mystical, transpersonal, transcendent and numinous phenomenon” (MacDonald, 2000b, p. 158).

Third, the ESI development involved a meticulous process. The items in the ESI were determined on the basis of factor analytic techniques applied across a representative sample of about 18 pre-existing scales of spirituality reflecting a broad range of conceptual models of spirituality. The analysis allowed balanced and comprehensive identification of common underlying spirituality components variously evident in those existing measures (MacDonald, 2000a).

Fourth, in terms of sound psychometric properties, the ESI has achieved sound reliability ($r > .80$) and excellent factorial, convergent, discriminate, and criterion validity (MacDonald, 2000a). In this regard, the dimensions of spirituality captured by the ESI have already been replicated in some cultures and languages significantly different from the West such as India, Japan, and Korea (MacDonald, 2009), although none as yet with a predominantly Muslim population and culture.

Fifth, with regard to predictive validity, the utility of the ESI in relating spirituality to various psychological constructs such as personality, boredom proneness, depression, paranoia, and hypochondriasis has been demonstrated (MacDonald & Friedman, 2002. As well, the ESI has been useful in investigating the validity of various measures of spirituality such as the Spiritual Orientation Inventory and the Temperament and Character Inventory-Revised (MacDonald & Friedman, 2002; MacDonald, 2009).

Finally, the ESI is proving useful for theory development. To illustrate, based on his five dimensional theoretical model of spirituality, MacDonald (2009) has proposed a structural model of spirituality and spiritual identity. The model attempt to provide a coherent picture of the contribution of the five
dimensions of spirituality to the formation of spiritual identity and its effect on one’s self-perceived sense of well-being. The development of the spiritual identity model provides an empirically testable model that allows for an understanding of the spiritual influences on the formation of identity.

The ESI’s appeal then lies in its meticulous construction, that has seen it offer psychometrically the most robust and comprehensive set of dimensions of spirituality including Islamic Spirituality (Naail, Ali, & Mohamed, 2011). As such the ESI broadly reflects the different ways in which spirituality may be expressed both in Western and non-Western contexts.

While the ESI has been translated, and used for research in non-English-speaking countries such as India, Japan, Czech Republic and Poland (MacDonald, 2009), an extensive search on Malaysian spirituality literature failed to locate any research on translated versions of the ESI suitable for use in Malay. Using an English language version or simply transliterating the ESI into Malay would not suffice as significant linguistic, cultural and religious differences between West and East would not be appropriately taken into account. Muslim researchers (Shamsuddin, 1992; Amer & Hood, 2008) have argued that the Islamic concepts of religion, and thus its measurement, are fundamentally dissimilar to Judeo-Christian perspectives.

This study set out to determine the relevance of spirituality constructs derived from the Western context for an Eastern context as represented in the Malaysian culture by appropriately translating and validating the ESI into the Malay language and testing it on a Malaysian population.

**The Current Study**

Malaysia is a developing country in the South-East Asian region that offers an appropriate context for examining cross-cultural validity. Malay or *Bahasa Melayu* is the principal and official national language (Goddard, 2000). The Malaysian population is very multicultural: 67.4% are Bumiputeras (Indigenous), 24.6% are Chinese, 7.3% are Indians and 0.7% ‘others’. The many different expressions of religious views are unsurprising: 61.3% Muslims, 19.8% Buddhists, 9.2% Christians, and 6.3% Hindus (Census, 2010); three out of four Malays are of non-Judeo-Christian faiths.

This study was part of a broader study exploring the relationship between spirituality, personality predispositions, and cognitive beliefs. Using the ESI in a Malaysian context utilised a complex translation process, taking into account linguistic and/or cultural appropriateness (Nintachan & Moon, 2007). For example, certain idiomatic English expressions and colloquial phrases have no direct equivalents in Malay so literal translation cannot adequately capture the original meaning and intent. An improperly-translated instrument would seriously threaten the validity of any research outcomes (Peña, 2007; Yu, 2004). This article reports on the principles of test translation and validation.
(Brislin, 1970, 1980) applied to translating the ESI for the Malaysian linguistic and cultural context and on the psychometric properties of the Malay version.

**Study Sample**

A packet of questionnaires including the MEV-ESI was prepared to enable validation and to allow for subsequent investigation of the relationship between spirituality and key factors such as personality and cognitive beliefs. Participants were students at a Malaysian public university recruited via flyers explaining the study’s general purpose and inviting their participation by paper and pencil or online using Survey-Monkey.

The final study sample in this research consisted of 437 students with 193 (44.2%) men and 244 (55.8%) women. The participants’ ages ranged from 18 to 25 years, with a mean of 21.15 (SD = 1.754). Eighty percent of the participants are Malay and 83.8% of the participants are Muslims. This diverse demographic reflects the cultural diversity of contemporary Malaysia. The 437 respondents were randomly allocated to a *Calibration sample* of 236 (*Mage* = 21.2, SD = 1.69) and a *Validation sample* of 201 (*Mage* = 21.1, SD = 1.83).

**Translation of the ESI**

The Original ESI

The ESI is comprised of five dimensions: *Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality* (COS), a measure of spiritual beliefs, attitudes and perceptions pertaining to everyday life experiences; *Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension of Spirituality* (EPD), a measure of spiritual experiences; *Existential Well-Being* (EWB), a measure of spirituality reflected in the sense of meaning and purpose in life and the ability to cope with life’s uncertainties; *Paranormal Beliefs* (PAR), a measure of the expressions of spirituality related to the possibility of paranormal phenomena; and, lastly, *Religiousness* (REL), a measure of religious attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and practices.

The original ESI (comprising 98 items) was reduced by MacDonald to 32 items, six measuring each spirituality dimension (MacDonald, 2000a). With this revision two extra items were included as validity items. Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale from ‘strongly disagree’ (0) to ‘strongly agree’ (4). Besides reporting favourably on discriminant, convergent and factorial validity, MacDonald (2000a) reported the Cronbach’s alpha ranged from .80 to .89 with psychometric properties comparable to the original version of the ESI (MacDonald, 2000a).

**Translation Method**

The ESI-Revised was adapted using a procedure based on Brislin’s translation/back-translation method and committee approach (Brislin, 1970, 1980) as follows:
1. Three translators (A, B and C) independently translated the English version of the ESI into Malay.

2. The principal investigator and another bilingual translator (D) compared and discussed inconsistencies in the three versions of the Malay-translated ESI. A draft version of the Malay-translated ESI was produced after consensus was reached.

3. Another translator (E), who had not seen the original English version, translated the draft back into the English language.

4. Two native English speakers (F and G) worked independently on the original version and the back-translated version comparing the similarity in language and meaning (on a Likert-type scale of 1 to 7, with 1 'not at all comparable/similar' to 7 'extremely comparable/similar'). Items scoring less than an average of 4 were revised; those scoring more than an average of 4 were retained in the questionnaire (Nintachan & Moon, 2007).

5. Steps (a) to (c) were repeated until the translated version was comparable to the original English version. Another bilingual expert (H) compared the reconciled version with the original version: the resulting Malay experimental version (MEV-ESI) was then ready for initial validation with a calibration sample of respondents.

Translation Results

The back-translated version of all 32 ESI items did not reproduce invariant items. For instance, the item “spirituality is an important part of who I am as a person resulted in “spirituality is important in determining who I am as a human being.” To optimise the preservation of meaning, equivalence testing was conducted using the procedures demonstrated by Sperber, DeVellis, and Boehlecke (1994).

Word-for-word transliteration was deemed inappropriate because it would produce awkward and unnatural sentence structures, for example, Item 13 “Much of what I do in life seems strained” was back translated into “Many things I have done in my life seem stressful.” The word “strained” was back translated into “stressful” as the English word “strained” has a different connotation in Malay where its meaning of “stress” was not the original meaning. After discussion with the original ESI’s author (personal communication, March 14, 2012), it was decided to base translation on the sentence’s whole meaning, rather than a simple transliteration. The final back-translated version of Item 13 therefore read “Most of what I do in my life is stressful and takes a lot of effort,” which differed literally from the original English item. If it captured the meaning and intent of the original item, it was considered acceptable (Cha, Kim, & Erlen, 2007).

The two versions were evaluated in terms of language and interpretability with the two evaluators seeming to agree that the back-translation version of Items 2 and 13 was not comparable to the original (mean score less than 4). These
items were re-translated until satisfactory translations were achieved (see Table 1).

**Validation of the MEV-ESI**

**Validation Results**

*Data Screening.* The raw data were examined to ensure that it met the prerequisites for multivariate analysis (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010) including multivariate normality critical for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) (Byrne, 2010). All pairs of variables were evaluated as normally distributed if Mardia’s coefficient indicating normalized estimates of multivariate kurtosis (Byrne, 2010) were less than 5 (Bentler, 2005 cited in Byrne, 2010).

Mardia’s estimate for the MEV-ESI was 15.409, indicating multivariate non-normality, making the maximum likelihood (ML) estimation method inappropriate since such non-normal data distribution adversely affects chi-square values, fit indices and standard errors (Byrne, 2010). Bollen-Stine bootstrapping (Bollen & Stine, 1992) was consequently used to accommodate the violation of multivariate normality: Multiple sub-samples were created by randomly redrawing samples, with replacement from the original sample to produce modified chi-square test statistics that adjusted for the lack of multivariate normality.

*Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).* The MEV-ESI was analysed using Maximum Likelihood Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) routines in AMOS 19 (Arbuckle, 2007) with bootstrapping. Following Kline’s (2005) and Hu and Bentler’s (1999) recommendations, six fit indices were used to evaluate the model fit: $\text{CMIN/df}$, Bollen-Stine $p$-value, CFI, TLI, SRMR and RMSEA. Cut-off values were as follows: $\text{CMIN/df}$, below 5 is acceptable, value close to 1 indicates a good fit; Bollen-Stine, $p$-value greater than 0.05; CFI and TLI, greater than 0.9 (Holmes-Smith, 2011); and, finally, SRMR and RMSEA, less than 0.08 (Byrne, 2010).

The following two-step analysis and refinement established factors supported by items maximising construct validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Jöreskog, 1993). The process, based on Jöreskog’s (1971) and Holmes-Smith and Rowe’s (1994) recommendations, involved estimating a series of one-factor congeneric measurement models: each model consisted of a set of observed variables measuring a single underlying latent construct. Using SEM, relationships between the single latent variables and indicator variables were evaluated with modification indices (MI) identifying items for removal to improve goodness-of-fit indices. Squared multiple correlations (SMC) evaluated whether a substantive relationship existed between an item and its underlying latent variables (Holmes-Smith & Rowe, 1994). If an item had SMC < 0.30; low regression weights; and several error covariances (Berry & Shipley, 2009, p. 61), item deletion was considered. The model (with the item deleted) was re-run to
### TABLE 1

Problematic Items in the Translation/Back-Translation Version of the ESI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Original version</th>
<th>Malay version</th>
<th>Reconciled version A</th>
<th>Back-translated version</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>Reconciled version B</th>
<th>Back translated into English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I have had an experience in which I seemed to be deeply connected to everything</td>
<td>Saya mempunyai pengalaman di mana saya merasakan yang saya mempunyai perkaitan yang mendalam dengan segala-galanya</td>
<td>Saya telah mengalami satu pengalaman di mana saya merasa saya dapat memahami segala-galanya</td>
<td>Saya telah merasai satu pengalaman di mana saya merasa saya dapat memahami segala-galanya</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Saya telah merasai satu pengalaman di mana saya merasa saya dapat memahami segala-galanya</td>
<td>I have gone through an experience where I felt I could understand everything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Much of what I do in life seems strained</td>
<td>Kebanyakan perkara yang saya lakukan dalam hidup ini nampak tegang</td>
<td>Banyak benda yang saya buat dalam hidup nampaknya tegang</td>
<td>Banyak perkara yang saya buat dalam hidup nampak tegang</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Banyak perkara yang saya buat dalam hidup nampak tegang</td>
<td>Many things I have done in my life seem stressful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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assess the item removal’s impact on that particular single factor. The process was repeated until a satisfactory model was gained. The fit indices for five congeneric models of the MEV-ESI are reported in Table 2.

Fit statistics for the COS and EWB models suggested that the hypothesized model fitted the data well. This was not the case for the EPD model, the Bollen-Stine p-value and SRMR, indicating that one or more items were poor indicators of the EPD trait in the Malaysian context. Most fit indices for the REL and PAR models did not show an acceptable fit; therefore some problematic items from the EPD, REL and PAR models were removed to enhance their validity and reliability. From this modelling, five observed variables were removed from four latent constructs measuring spirituality. COS was measured with six substantive items while the other ESI constructs retained either four or five observed items (see Table 3 for the deleted items).

The second step identified and eliminated multi-factorial items by conducting pair-wise multi-factor confirmatory factor analyses that identified cross-loadings between factors. Items where the standardised residual values exceeded ± 1.96 and with large MIs (Byrne, 2010; Holmes-Smith, 2011) were identified for removal. Such items were ESI22 (I have had an experience in which all things seemed divine), ESI11 (I am more aware of my lifestyle choices because of my spirituality), ESI28 (I am an unhappy person), ESI15 (I see myself as a religiously oriented), ESI10 (I feel a sense of closeness to a higher power) and ESI14 (It is possible to predict the future).

The original version of the ESI operationalised 32 items: after the two-step process, only 20 items (including the validation items) were found to be

### TABLE 2
Fit Indices for the Congeneric Models in the Calibration Sample (n = 236)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>CMIN/df</th>
<th>Bollen-Stine p-value</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COS</td>
<td>13.80</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.533</td>
<td>0.281</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPD</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.555</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWB</td>
<td>16.374</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.819</td>
<td>0.184</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL</td>
<td>50.57</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.619</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR</td>
<td>35.123</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.903</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** $\chi^2$ = chi-square, df = degrees of freedom; CMIN/df = Normed chi-square; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean-Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation.

### TABLE 3
Summary of Item Deletions After the Modelling of One-Factor Congeneric Measurement Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COS</td>
<td>No item deletion indicated as acceptable model fit indices and satisfactory SMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPD</td>
<td>ESI 12 (I have had a mystical experience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWB</td>
<td>ESI 3 (It always seems that I am doing things wrong)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL</td>
<td>ESI 30 (I believe God or a Higher Power is responsible for my existence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ESI 9 (I believe witchcraft is real)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR</td>
<td>ESI 19 (I do not believe in spirits or ghosts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
satisfactory indicators of spirituality in the Malaysian context. The final model had $\chi^2 (df = 125) = 182.239$, Bollen-Stine $p$-value = .08, CMIN/df = 1.458, SRMR = .05, RMSEA = .04, CFI = .96 and TLI = .95.

In this study, Hancock and Mueller’s (2001) Coefficient H was used to calculate the reliability of each subscales because it allows for a maximised reliability of congeneric measures (Holmes-Smith, 2011). A cut-off value of .70 for Coefficient H is recommended (Hancock & Mueller, 2001). Calculations of Coefficient H revealed that the reliability for EWB, EPD, COS, REL and PAR was 0.82, 0.78, 0.81, 0.77 and 0.61 respectively. This finding is consistent with the finding by MacDonald (personal communication, March 30, 2012) where he also found that the PAR reliability tends to be low in his other cross-cultural samples.

Model Cross-Validation with Replication. To assess chance factors, the ESI model was tested for and shown to achieve satisfactory invariance between the calibration and replication samples (Byrne, 2010), a process where the factor loadings were constrained equally across groups. The model invariance is evaluated with the $\chi^2$ difference test. Evidence of non-invariance is demonstrated if the $\chi^2$ difference value is statistically significant (Table 4).

Computation of the $\chi^2$ difference test between the unconstrained and constrained model yielded a difference of 6.713 with 13 degrees of freedom, statistically non-significant at $p = 0.92$. The $\chi^2$ difference test indicated multigroup invariance; that is, MacDonald’s five factor model of spirituality is sufficiently invariant across the calibration and replication samples to indicate robustness of the factors.

**Discussion**

Scale Translation and Adaptation

This study sought to determine the cross-cultural relevance of Western spirituality constructs for an Eastern culture exemplified by a Malaysian context by appropriately translating, adapting and validating the ESI, a well-established Western five-factor model of spirituality.

The adaptation solved a number of challenges including the preservation of meaning, which was well-achieved by comparing the similarity in language and...
meaning between the original and translated versions as demonstrated earlier. Another challenge that we addressed involved maintaining the content equivalence from the original to the translated instruments. For example, an item in the ESI “it is possible to communicate with the dead” is problematic, as in Islam (most participants were Muslim), communicating with the dead is very unlikely as illustrated by the following verse in the Holy Qur’an:

“Indeed, you will not make the dead hear, nor will you make the deaf hear the call when they have turned their backs retreating.” (An-Naml: 27:80)

The verse means that the dead are unable to listen to others or to make others listen to them preventing any communication. This item cannot be fully captured in the Malaysian context and is not applicable to a predominantly Muslim population due to its inconsistency with Islamic teachings and values. These problematic items were generated to measure the PAR dimension. As illustrated by the low Coefficient H value (0.61), the problem of content equivalence across cultures may have implications for the validity and reliability of this particular dimension. The problems that the current research faced were reported in other validation studies such as that conducted in Malaysia by Lim et al. (2003). They encountered semantic and conceptual problems in generating the Malay version of the International Index of Erectile Function (IIEF).

The translation process takes time and effort but is crucial and needs to be conducted. It enabled the identification and correction of confusing items, resulting in a more relevant and meaningful instrument.

Validity Analyses

Results showed that the ESI’s constructs are relevant for understanding spirituality in the Malaysian context, however the CFA results indicate that the original ESI needed to be modified before it could be used in the Malaysian context.

The modelling showed that four items from four different latent variables (see Table 3) were invalid indicators of spirituality in the Malaysian context. Some invalid items, “I do not believe in spirits or ghosts,” (ESI 19) and “I believe witchcraft is real,” (ESI 9) were initially covaried to improve the model fit. A possible explanation was that these items seemed redundant to the Malaysian participants; belief in spirits or ghosts tended to also mean belief in witchcraft: one of the items was removed from the scale. The SMC exhibited by ESI 9 was very small (0.04) suggesting little commonality with other items measuring the PAR dimension: as recommended by Berry and Shipley (2009), this item was removed from the scale. Accordingly, the new model was found to fit the data well.
Results from modelling confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of two multifactors showed six multifactorial items. For example, ESI 22, “I have had an experience in which all things seemed divine,” (measuring the EPD dimension) was found to cross load on the COS factor. This item’s attraction to the COS factor made substantive sense because to Malaysian participants, “I have had an experience in which all things seemed divine.” may be cognitive-perceptual and an indicator of spiritual experiences. Modelling the measurement models two by two was to identify only uni-factorial items, so this item was removed from the EPD scale. No previous research was available for comparison with the current findings.

Following validity analyses, 18 items were found to be relevant for measuring Malaysians’ spirituality. It was puzzling that items such as ESI 4, “it is possible to communicate with the dead,” suggested as being content-irrelevant during the translation process, were retained in the scale. To Muslims, the possibility of communicating with the dead was more likely to be superstitious belief than religious belief. This issue could not be explored further due to this study’s quantitative nature. Future studies should employ a mixed-method research design to enable deeper probing into the emic construct of spirituality.

In terms of factorial validity, the CFAs’ parameter estimates, consistent with MacDonald’s previous work (2000b), supported the five-dimensional structure of spirituality. This study’s results also showed that the multidimensional structure of spirituality was invariant across the calibration and replication samples, and implied that the five-factor model did not capitalize on chance relationships. Nevertheless, although this study found evidence of factorial invariance, it should be acknowledged that the findings did not establish cross-cultural invariance since as an initial study only a single Malaysian sample was involved. Nevertheless, this study gives an initial indication of likely validity of the ESI in the Malaysian context. Further research is needed to fully consider cross-cultural measurement invariance by employing two or more different cultural groups.

The validity analyses’ results support the construct validity of the five-factor model of spirituality from the MEV-ESI. The findings also imply that Western spirituality constructs are generalizable to Malaysian communities with their many religions, traditions and languages, despite some stark contradictions between religions from the West and East. The MEV-ESI can be used to evaluate spirituality in pluralistic societies such as Malaysia. This result aligns with the concept of ‘1Malaysia,’ introduced recently by Malaysian Prime Minister, Dato’ Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abd Razak, which emphasised the notion of racial harmony and unity in Malaysia (EPU, 2010). Using one spirituality measure may help, albeit in a modest way, to promote unity and oneness in Malaysia with its many different races and religions.

Future studies are needed to further the findings by overcoming some of the limitations including that neither sample was fully representative nor necessarily balanced regarding age, race and religious affiliation. Study participants were university students, mainly Malays and Muslims potentially...
reflecting a bias toward an Islamic perspective. Other demographic groups need to be considered in future. However, given the lack of validation studies, particularly within the Malaysian context, the current study contributes to more understanding of the scale’s adaptation process and of spirituality concepts in non-Western contexts.

**CONCLUSION**

In summary, our results promisingly support the Western based MEV-ESI as valid for delineating spirituality constructs in an eastern multicultural context as represented by a sample within the Malaysian context. Our results indicate that it will be worthwhile to embark on further studies validating the MEV-ESI, including investigations of the MEV-ESI in relation to other spirituality measures such as the Islamic Spirituality Scale (Naail, Ali, & Mohamed, 2011).

Our findings support the ESI as a well-designed “sociopsychometric” measure meeting Moberg’s (2002) criteria: “any well designed sociopsychometric scale to measure it should be appropriate for all people because of their common humanity, with but minor adaptations for social, cultural, and linguistic differences” (p. 49). Clearly, the constructs underlying the ESI are cross-culturally relevant in other than Western, Judeo-Christian contexts results.

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*Expressions of Spirituality Inventory-Malaysian Context*


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