

Prevalence and Underlying Structure of Students' *Sejahtera* Living *vis-à-vis* *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*

**Mohamad Sahari Nordin¹, Suhailah Hussien^{2*}, Hamidon Abd Hamid³
and Khairusy Syakirin Has-Yun Hashim^{4*}**

¹*Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling, Kulliyah of Education,
International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

²*Department of Social Foundations and Educational Leadership, Kulliyah of Education,
International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

³*Department of Fundamental and Interdisciplinary Studies,
AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences,
International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

⁴*Department of Quantity Surveying, Kulliyah of Architecture and Environmental Design,
International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

**Corresponding Author: suhailah@iium.edu.my*

Abstract

This study explored the prevalence of *sejahtera* living—an idea rooted in the belief that Islam is a way of life and aligned to *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*—among students at an Islamic university in Malaysia, and tested the extent to which the students' responses to the questionnaire items on the concept constituted meaningful and interpretable facets of *sejahtera* living. A total of 596 students voluntarily participated in the study, with the sample being split into two random halves. The first subsample ($n_1 = 298$) was used to identify the underlying facets of *sejahtera* living, while the other half ($n_2 = 298$) served as the sample for a cross-validation procedure. The respondents filled out an online questionnaire containing 50 items that measured the prevalence of *sejahtera* living. Descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis were used to address the two research objectives. Results showed that students' reports of experiencing *sejahtera* living varied across items. The exploratory factor analyses, with principal axis factoring and the Promax rotation procedure, extracted five strong and reliable factors that explain the inter-correlations among items. The five-factor solution was supported by the results of a parallel analysis. As expected, the underlying facets of *sejahtera* living were factors associated with the preservations of faith (*al-dīn*), life (*al-nafs*), intellect (*al-'aql*), property (*al-māl*) and progeny (*al-nasl*). The findings contribute to our current limited understanding about Muslim students' *sejahtera* living, which would lead up to policy formulation and intervention.

Keywords: *Sejahtera* living, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, *exploratory factor analysis*, *instrument validity*

INTRODUCTION

The nature of the good life has been of concern among philosophers and psychologists since time immemorial. The literature is replete with conceptual and empirical studies on it, albeit being mooted with varied terms, such as “happiness,” “social-emotional wellbeing,” “life satisfaction,” “quality of life,” “meaning in life,” and “spiritual intelligence” (Genç, 2021; Hassan, 2020; Sarifuddin et al., 2021; Schuur et al., 2020; Skrzypińska, 2021; Stammer & Toivanen, 2022). Similar terms also exist in other cultures and languages: these include the Japanese word *ikigai*, which means “a reason for being or something that make one’s life worthwhile”; the Nguni Bantu term *ubuntu*, which means ‘humanity’ and is often understood as “the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity”; and the Swedish word *lagom*, that implies “in moderation” (Abdul Razak, 2020, p. xiii-xiv). In the Malay language, the term that is often used to convey a similar meaning is *sejahtera*. Generally, the term *sejahtera* is understood as peace, happiness, prosperity and wellbeing, though its accurate meaning may never be captured in a single word in English or any other language (Baharom, 2020). According to Baharom, (2020), “sejahtera is a highly valued aspiration in Malaysia” as the concept explains “a nuanced wellbeing for seeking meaning and fulfillment in one’s daily life” amidst the joys, sorrows and challenges that one may face while remaining focused on one’s goal in life i.e., the attainment of happiness and a successful life (p. xi).

Success for a Muslim is related to achieving the purpose of a Muslim’s life that is to attain *Falāḥ* i.e., felicity in the Hereafter which simultaneously indicate success in the worldly life too. A Muslim is not supposed to renounce the worldly life by living in seclusion due to man’s role as a *Khalifah* or a vicegerent of Allah. According to Al Fārūqī and Yusuf (2012), a *Khalifah* is expected to “transform the world from what it is not into what it ought to be” (p. 68). The concept of *Khalifah* implies that a Muslim is responsible and accountable not for him or herself alone, but also for other human beings and other creatures. It is the duty and an obligation of a *Khalifah* to ensure the wellbeing of the world and safeguard Allah’s creatures from harm and destruction. This includes upholding social wellbeing and justice for other fellow humans regardless of their ethnicity, economic status, and religion. Thus, a Muslim is compelled to strive for success in this world if he desires *Falāḥ* in the Hereafter. In light of this understanding, a Muslim needs to also live in a *sejahtera* manner if *Falāḥ* is to be achieved. Mohd Kamal Hassan’s (2020) description of *sejahtera* as a way of living is most apt to be used for the context of this study. Hence, *sejahtera* living is explained as “a state of holistic and integrated wellbeing consisting of success, happiness, security and balance in this world and in the Hereafter,” and it demands “an alternative paradigm of holistic and sustainable development from the worldview of Islamic monotheism” (p. 2).

The idea of *sejahtera* living also indicates Muslims’ quality of life that would help them get closer to attaining their purpose of life and achieving *Falāḥ*. In living life as good Muslims, they may face many challenges and new problems that require them to make judgments and decisions aligned to Islamic principles and values. Here lies the role of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī’ah* to guide their decisions and actions. The term *Maqāṣid al-Sharī’ah* literally means the “objectives of Islamic Law, but it is also understood as knowledge that helps Muslims understand the purpose and reasons for the rulings in Islam” (Abdul Aziz, 2020, p. 22). Allah’s commands and

rules are not meant to be to be obeyed alone but also to be understood, because everything that Allah permits and disallows is for the benefit of mankind and is in accordance with human nature. This further explains the comprehensiveness of Islam as the complete and best religion for all. In this sense, the concept of *sejahtera* living is aligned to the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, if the final destination for Muslims is *Falāḥ*. Hence, it is important to understand what Muslims view as '*sejahtera* living' as they strive for happiness and how it relates to *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. Yet, there is a paucity of empirical data on *sejahtera* living. Since a robust scale for measuring *sejahtera* living is hardly in existence, not much is known about the underlying structure and prevalence of *sejahtera* living among the Muslims. It is only recently that an effort to validate a five-factor measurement model of "*Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* Quality of Life" (MSPQoL) was documented (Mohamad et al., 2016). Thus, this study aimed to address a substantive gap in this area of research.

Objectives

In this article, we examined university students' state of being. Precisely the study aimed to assess the prevalence of *sejahtera* living, which is the quality of living and learning as perceived by students who reside within an Islamic environment. In doing so, the study tested the likelihood of a five-factor *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* solution, which underpins *sejahtera* living. It was expected their responses are influenced by their beliefs in the five facets of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, which are the preservations of faith (*al-dīn*), life (*al-nafs*), intellect (*al-'aql*), property (*al-māl*) and progeny (*al-nasl*).

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the prevalence of *sejahtera* living—an idea rooted in the belief that Islam is a way of life—among students at a public university in Malaysia.
2. Establish whether university students' responses constituted interpretable facets of *sejahtera* living.

LITERATURE REVIEW

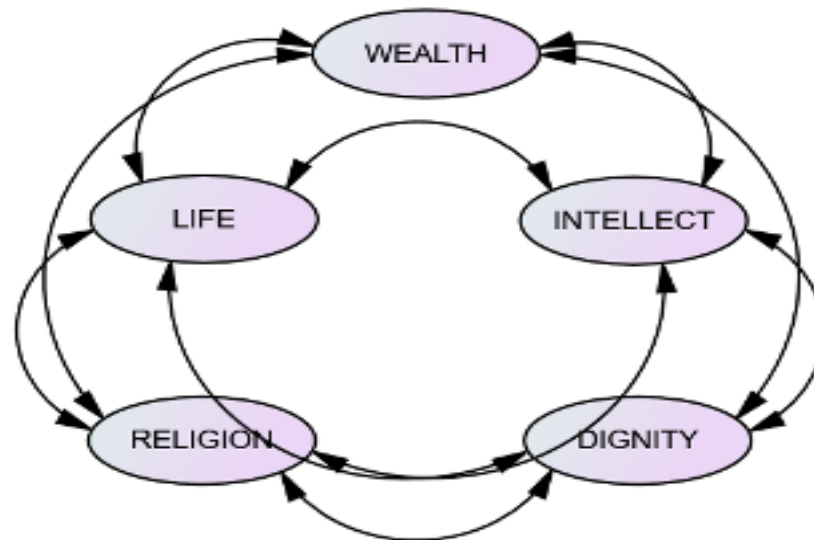
Sejahtera Academic Framework

Sejahtera is a Malay term that cannot be simply translated into a single English word. It is a multi-faceted term that includes the balanced wellbeing of the spiritual, physio-psychological, intellectual, cognitive, cultural, ethical, emotional, ecological, economic and societal aspects of human life. The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) as the context of the students' living and learning environment adopts the *Sejahtera* Academic Framework (SAF) that attempts to articulate the "humanization of education as an enterprise of knowing and glorifying Allah and seeking knowledge and practicing it for the sake of Allah, for the benefit of the society, consequently realizing *rahmatan lil 'alamīn*" (Borhan et al., 2021, p. 23). *rahmatan lil 'alamīn* which means 'mercy to the world' is referred to graduates with particular attributes such as one who is capable in effecting change and advancement in humanity via the

knowledge, wisdom, and skill sets that one has gained. As mercy to the world, IIUM graduates should “do good to all people regardless of creed, and to all the worlds - nature, animals and the built environment” (Borhan et al., p. 19). Hence, SAF is not just about academic programmes in IIUM but, it aspires to put together important elements of IIUM in order to provide a transformative educational experience to the students. It is hoped that such experience will lead to students' change of worldview, attitude, personal growth, development and adaptation, and practices. SAF strives to achieve this whilst helping students to flourish in an Islamic environment (Borhan et al., 2021). The primary element of SAF is *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, which does not only inform the “development of academic programmes nor its administration and the university affairs, but it also guides the values to be embedded in the formal and informal curricula”, thus pervading the students' life in the campus and ideally wherever they go (Borhan et al., 2021, p. 24).

***Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*: Basis of *Sejahtera Living* for IIUM Students**

The principles, teachings and values in Islam are to be practiced simultaneously at the individual and collective levels of a Muslim life. Equally important is the idea that all practices in Islam should be based on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* with the main aim of benefiting the people (*maṣlahah*) and preventing them from harm (*mafsadah*) (Arifin & Abdul Basir, 2012). The focus on *maṣlahah*, which constitutes the axis of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* was initiated by Imam al-Juwaynī ((El-Mesawi, 2018). Al-Ghazālī further elaborated the application of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in a Muslim's life and categorised the objectives of *Sharī'ah* into three basic levels of *maṣlahah*, namely necessities (*darūriyyāt*), complementary (*hājiyyāt*), and embellishment (*taḥsīniyyāt*). Necessities are those essential elements that facilitate the basic existence and life of human beings without which proper human development and the realisation of his potentials may not be made possible. Meanwhile, complements are elements that relieve people's life while; embellishments are related to moral and ethical conducts in a system. Al-Ghazālī further expound on “safeguarding the five essential elements or universal values (*al-darūriyyāt al-khams*) of the *Sharī'ah*, namely religion (*al-dīn*), life (*al-nafs*), intellect (*al-'aql*), lineage (*al-nasl*), and property (*al-māl*) that constitute the basis for all the affairs of mankind” in various aspects including economic, political, social, and educational (Abiodun Oladapo, & Ab Rahman, 2017, p. 293). Criticisms of Al-Ghazālī's classical theory of *Maqāṣid* by Ibn Taymiyyah for its limitations have consequently led to “modern scholars such as Ibn Ashur and Al-Shāṭibī to explain the dimensions of *Maqāṣid* beyond the legal framework” (Abiodun Oladapo, & Ab Rahman, 2017, p. 293). The five principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in the study is presented in Figure 1 and explained in subsequent discussions.

Figure 1*Framework of Sejahtera Living*

These five essential elements of the *Sharī'ah* are to be manifested through the responsibilities, and duties performed by the Muslim individuals and society. When these are performed well, it will bring about the idea of *sejahtera* – a state of peace and harmony into a reality. In contrast, if they are not fulfilled, the consequence would be disastrous not only to the individuals, but also to the various social units and organization, namely the family, community, school, and nation at large. These elements or principles are to be manifested in the Muslim affairs simultaneously where one should not be placed more important than the other.

Preservation and Protection of the *al-Dīn* (Faith)

Delineating the five principles in the Muslim affairs of his daily life, the first principle, protection of din or faith in Islam remains a priority. All decisions and actions of the Muslim should reflect this principle which is grounded in the pillars of Islam, *Īmān* and concept of *Ihsān*. The affirmation of the *shahādah* or bearing witness to the Oneness of Allah and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is His messenger should be followed with commitment and conviction through actions of worship or *ibadah*. The implication of this principle is reflected in the Muslims' living of Islam as a way of life as they accept the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* as their guide to reach their final destination i.e., success in the *akhirah* through success in the world.

Preservation and Protection of *al-Nafs* (Life):

Meanwhile, the second principle, protection of life is viewed as efforts and actions related to the protection of the individual's self, and life from danger, destruction, tyranny, and death. Treating one's life as an *amānah*, a Muslim is also responsible for the development of his potentials, wellbeing, and success. In this regard, a Muslim strives to ensure that all aspects of himself submits to the will of God to attain the highest state of *īmān* for his ultimate happiness.

Preservation and Protection of Intellect or *al-'Aql* (Mind/Knowledge):

Similarly, the third principle of protecting *'aql* includes ensuring the sanity, functioning and well-being of mind and its capabilities. This implies the responsibility to develop its potentials and abilities with positive values and beneficial and valuable knowledge. It also includes the advancement of knowledge that further promotes the Islamic creed and teachings including efforts to assist Muslim in promoting Islam as a way of life.

Preservation and Protection of *al-Nasl* (Lineage/Dignity):

Next is the fourth principle i.e., the protection of lineage, which includes promoting legal marriages, good education, and social interactions that adhere to the Islamic principles and values. Protecting the lineage will determine a positive and harmonious social system in the community. Thus, a Muslim is responsible in advocating a lifestyle that primarily preserves and protect his lineage and dignity, while remain firm in eschewing and opposing ideologies that could lead to the destruction of the Islamic way of life.

Preservation and Protection of *al-Māl* (Wealth/Property):

Finally, protection of *al-māl* or wealth and property implies the management and utilization of one's property from theft, loss, and destruction. Property is not to be viewed in a narrow manner, rather it is extended to include resources that Allah's creations in this world require to live such as water, clean air, and healthy environment. This fifth principle also includes an effective management for equal distribution of wealth to those in need such as management of zakat, charity, providing infrastructure for public use. Misuse and mismanagement of funds, wealth and property are against the *Sharī'ah* and should be avoided at all cause. All these principles should be considered for the benefit of the individuals and society (Awang Ahmad et al., 2020).

In addition, the realization of these principles consequently leads to a successful life in this world and the Hereafter i.e., *Falāḥ*. Since Islam places equal importance on success in this world and in the Hereafter hence, one cannot do without the other. This implies the close relationship between the concept of *Falāḥ* and the idea of *sejahtera* where a Muslim who has achieved *Falāḥ* would also be in the state of '*sejahtera*'. Since the successful realization of *Falāḥ* cannot be objectively measured in this worldly life, hence, only the Muslim's Islamic way of life and a *sejahtera* living can be measured by identifying the five principles-constructs of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in his belief and daily practices.

Previous Studies

According to El-Mesawi (2018), there are four trends observed in the 'field of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* studies' (p. xii). The first trend was concerned with previous works of pre-modern Islamic legal theorists and jurists such as commentaries of al-Juwaynī's, Al-Ghazālī's, and Ibn

Taymiyyah's views, doctrines, and their contributions to the study of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. The second trend concerns the 'theoretical and methodological interest in *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* to explain its conceptual foundations, the inference of its components and the taxonomy of the five fundamentals from the textual sources of *Sharī'ah*' (El-Mesawi, 2018, p. xii). Meanwhile, the third trend investigates the theoretical implications of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in terms of Muslim scholars' methodological approaches in interpreting the *Qur'ān* and Sunnah. In addition, this trend also relates to its 'possibilities to open up the way the principles, values and commands of the *Sharī'ah* are formulated in a more systematic manner, reflecting the internal structure, dynamic and order of priorities' (El-Mesawi, 2018, p. xiii). Finally, the fourth trend, which concerns this study, deals with the implementation of the *Sharī'ah* principles, commands, and values within the actual context and complexities of the contemporary world.

The literature in the application of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in various aspects of a Muslim's life has indicated that most studies concentrate in economics such as zakat, waqf (endowment), and Islamic banking (Manan et al., 2018; Mohamad Suhaimi & Ab Rahman, 2019). Apart from this, *Maqāṣidic* studies related to the psychological, social and political aspects tend to focus on specific social institutions such as family and society (Abdul Aziz, 2020; Awang Ahmad et al., 2020; Md. Ali et al., 2022; Mohamad et al., 2017). Meanwhile, *Maqāṣidic* studies in education explored students' perceptions and level of knowledge in Islamic economic and finance, and the development of students' identity and soft skills (Johari & Suzastri, 2018; Mohd. Ali & Shafiite, 2014; Siti Aishah Maliki et al., 2015).

A number of studies related to *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and contemporary issues has been observed (Arifin & Abdul Basir, 2012; Sabariah & Nik Ab Halim, 2020), which of late, gravitate towards sustainable development (SD), for example biotechnology and food products (Mohd Izhar Ariff & Ahmad, 2017), sustainable water, energy and land resources (Mohd & Syed Abdul Kadir, 2020; Shamsuddin et al, 2014), while many continue to focus on wealth management (Abdullah, 2018; Ismail & Mohd Rasid, 2017). In fact, the steady increase of research in SD has also been observed in various fields of study throughout the world (Abiodun Oladapo & Ab Rahman, 2017; Haq & Wahab, 2019) when more institutions of learning have responded to UNESCO's promotion of Education for Sustainable Development (Sanusi, 2021). IIUM as a university that strategize its efforts of SD through a whole institutional transformation is driven towards this direction since one of its seven mission statements aims to 'produce better quality, integrated and balanced graduates who will serve as agents of comprehensive and balanced progress as well as sustainable development in Malaysia and in the Muslim world' (Borhan et al, 2021, p. vii). Since the two basic aims of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* are for the *maṣlahah* of the society and to avoid *fasad* (Arifin & Abdul Basir, 2012), this indicates the close relationship between *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* with Sustainable Development (SD). In view of this point, it would be interesting to investigate whether *sejahtera* living prevails among IIUM students throughout their learning experience while they are studying and 'situated' within the SAF.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

A total of 596 students at a Malaysia public university participated in the study voluntarily. The respondents were systematically split into two random halves. The first sub-sample ($n_1 = 298$) comprised 85% undergraduate students. This sub-sample was used to identify the underlying facets of *sejahtera* living. The second sub-sample ($n_2 = 298$), also consisting of mainly undergraduate students (79%) was used for cross-validation. The procedure tested the stability and replicability of the underlying factors extracted from the first sub-sample. Cross-validation reduces the prospect of capitalizing on chance in the extraction of reliable and stable factors. The sample size of 298 for each analysis was deemed adequate for an exploratory factor analysis since the number of observations per item exceeded the threshold of 5:1.

Instrumentation

The instrument to collect data was developed by a group of 20 trained researchers, who were assembled by the Office of Institutional Strategy and Change (OSIC), IIUM. The backdrop of the instrumentation was the university's environment and culture. To capture students' perspectives on the quality of living and learning experiences, a series of focus group discussion was conducted. The results of qualitative data analysis were then calibrated against the university's vision to humanize education, in which *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* is the founding component (*Sejahtera* Academic Framework, 2021).

Based on the 5-dimension concept of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, the team initially identified more than 150 indicators of *sejahtera* living. To verify the efficacy of the indicators, the study applied content-validation procedure (Colin & Andrew, 2013; Lawshe, 1975; Lewis, Templeton, & Byrd, 2005). First, the study operationalized the construct and facets of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, resulting with a content-validation instrument. It contains a definition of each facet of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* relevant to students' living and learning experiences, items that represent the indicators of *sejahtera* living, options, that is the scale of measurement for students to respond, and a checklist to each of which an expert can check the adequacy of the item, given the definition of its respective facet.

Second, the study made use of expert-judgment to content-validate the importance and relevance of the items prior to data collection. A panel of nine experts was formed to examine and evaluate the operationalized variables. Each expert, working independently reviewed and rated the adequacy of definition of the dimensions of *sejahtera* living *vis-a-vis* *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, item-definition alignment, and the sampling of items. The panel registered their response to each item on a 3-point scale, which are "Essential," "Important but Not Essential," or "Neither Important nor Essential." In addition, the experts panel was prompted to provide feedback on item clarity and to comment on scale instructions, item format, use of language, and response options in completing the evaluation.

Third, the study calculated content validity ratio (CVR) of each item to document its quality in terms of content validity (e.g., Allahyari et al., 2011; Baheiraei et al., 2013; Lawshe, 1975; Norashady et al., 2016). CVR values range between -1 (perfect disagreement among experts) and $+1$ (perfect agreement among expert) with CVR values above zero indicating that

over half of panel experts endorsed that an item is essential (Lawshe, 1975). Using a simplified content validity table, the threshold of critical level of agreement among a panel of nine experts is .778 (Ayre & Scally, 2014). Accordingly, the study retained only those items with CVRs exceeding the threshold value.

An online self-reported Student *Sejahtera* Living questionnaire was then created to collect the data. Finally, the study created the questionnaire. It contains a total of 50 items measuring content-validated indicators of the five facets of students' *sejahtera* living. Each facet is represented by 10 directly measured variables.

Data Analysis

Data collected from each group of 298 students were subjected to exploratory factor analysis (EFA). While the first EFA sought to reduce the data to fewer number of meaningful variables (factors), the second EFA cross-validated the replicability of the solution. To achieve the two purposes, each set of data were factor analyzed using variance-covariance matrix, with Principal Axis Factoring method and Promax rotation. The reach the best fitting model, results of inter-item bi-variate correlations, sampling adequacy, communalities, eigen values, proportion of variance explained, and factor loadings were examined. In addition to eigenvalue > 1, the study used screen plot, parallel test, and factor interpretability to decide on the number of factors to be retained.

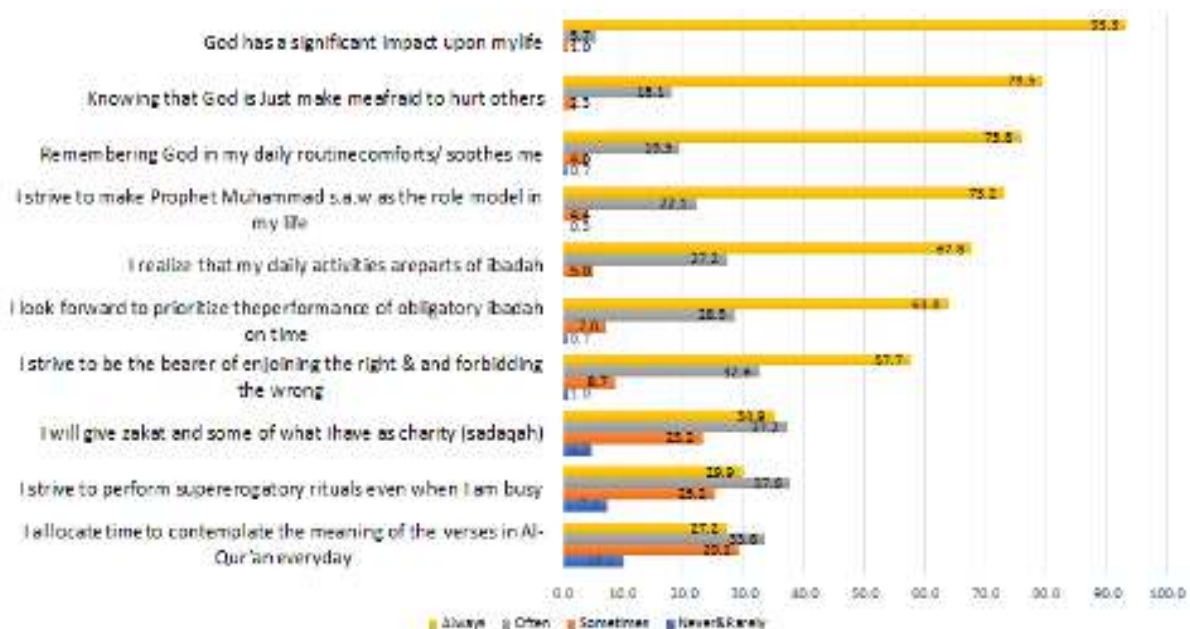
RESULTS

Prevalence of *Sejahtera* Living

Figure 2 shows the percentage distributions of students' adherence to and engagement in Islamic values, norms, beliefs, and expectations in their daily living. Taken together, the items loaded on the first dimension of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, which is the preservations of faith (*al-dīn*).

Figure 2

Percentage Distributions of Prevalence of al Din.



The data suggested that the prevalence of religious commitment varied across items. On average, more than 60% of the sample reported that they always committed in their beliefs and practices of Islam. The data suggested that nine out of every 10 students always considered the belief that "God has a significant impact upon my life."

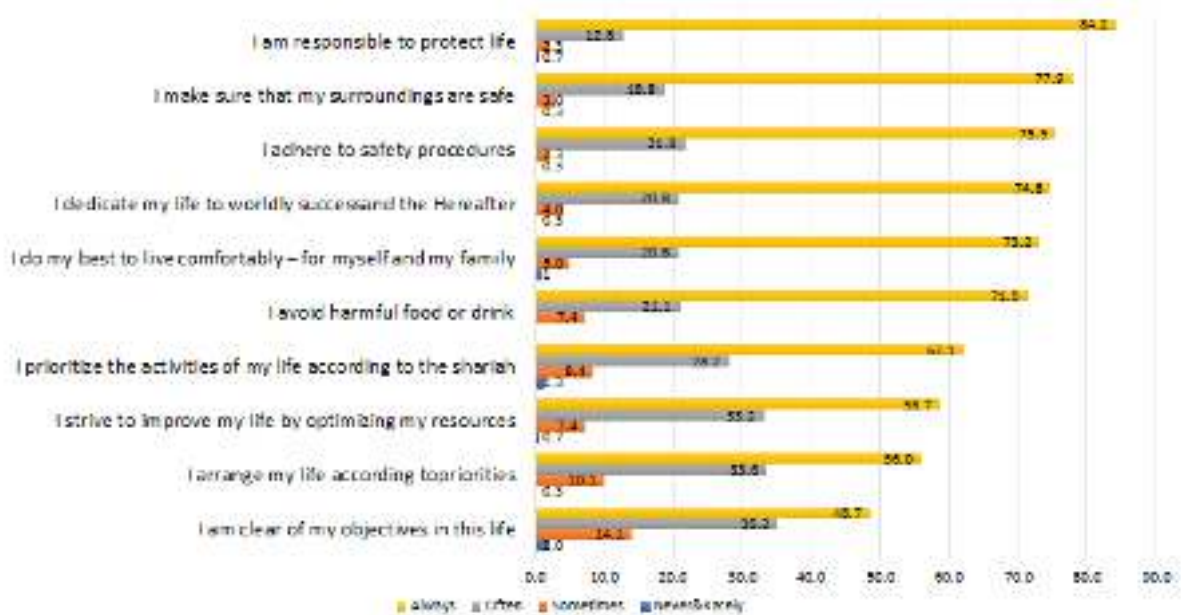
None of the respondents reported they never or rarely belief in it. On the other hand, only three out of every 10 students never or rarely spend time to study the meaning of Quránic verses and perform extra rituals.

Preservation of Life (*al-Dīn*)

Figure 3 summarizes the percentage distributions of students' self-reported awareness and behaviors in preserving life. On average, more than two thirds of the sample responded that they stick close to the ideals of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in protecting their wellbeing; more than 75% respondents reported that they always "adhere to safety procedure," "make sure that [their] surrounding are safe," and "are responsible to protect life." Nevertheless, less than one half of the students were having clear objectives in their life.

Figure 3

Prevalence of Life Preservation

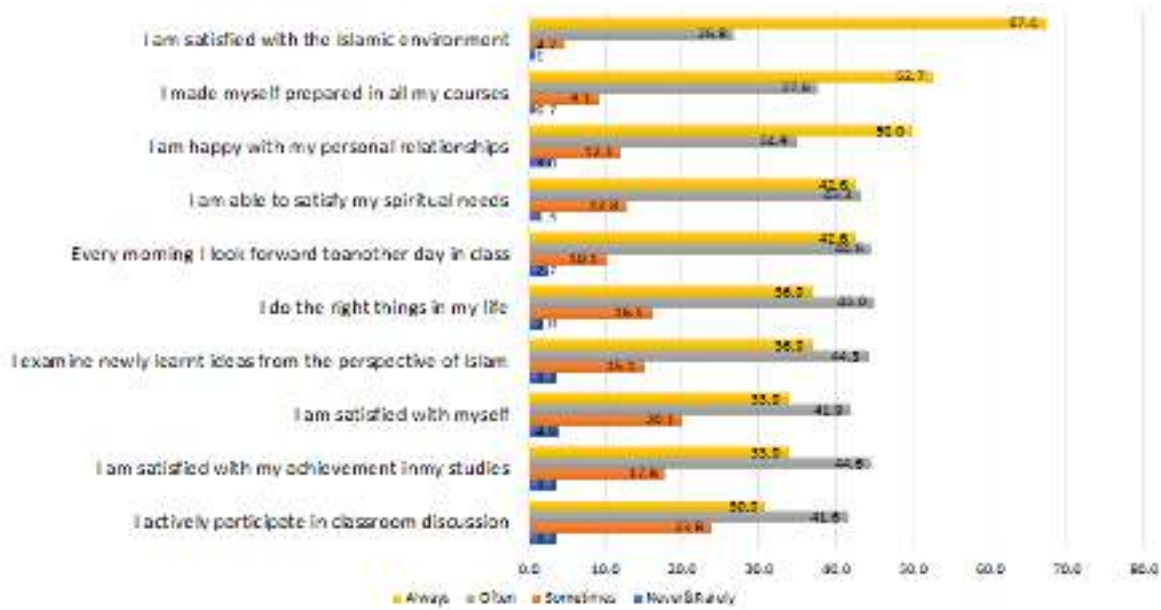


The results of the descriptive analysis also suggested that more than 40% sample reported lower levels of living positive *sejahtera* life. Four out of every 10 students agreed that they "never or rarely," "sometimes," and "often" experience in setting clear objectives and prioritizing what's matter in their life.

Preservation of Intellect (*al-'Aql*)

Figure 4 contains a summary of the percentage distributions of students' living experience with respect to the preservation and advancement of intellect (*áql*). In comparison to their responses to the first two dimensions of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, the data showed lower frequency of "always" response in the preservation and advancement of *aqal*.

Figure 4
Percentage Distributions of Prevalence of Intellect

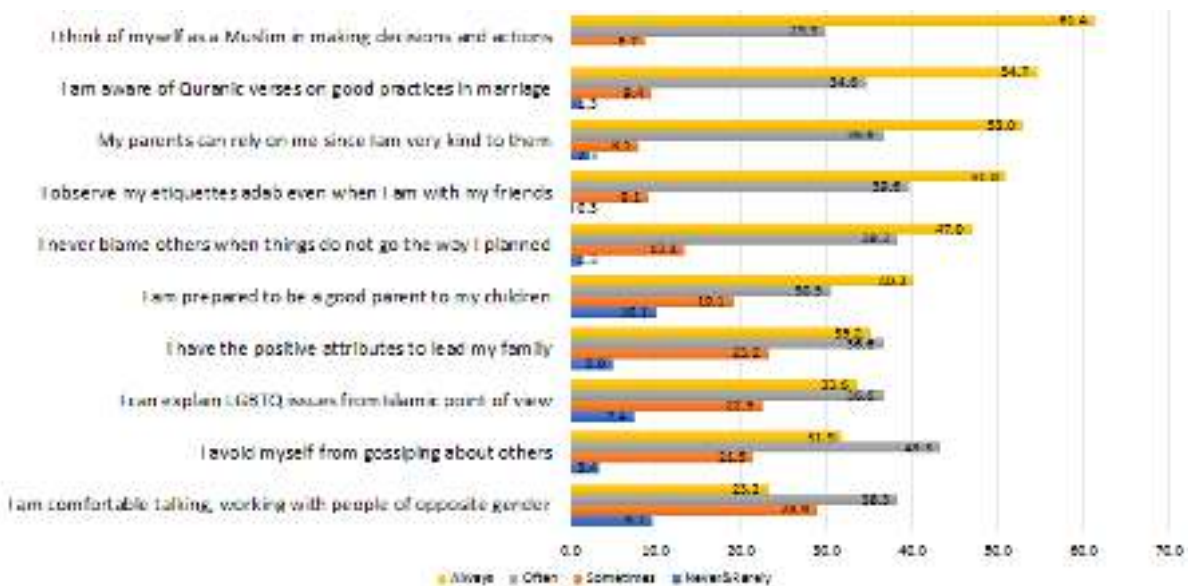


On the average less than one half of the sample agreed that they were always aware of and committed in protecting and improving intellectual growth. While about one-third of the sample were satisfied with the Islamic environment, only three out of every ten students always actively participated in classroom discussion. Additionally, only four out of every 10 respondents always examined the newly learnt ideas from the perspective of Islam.

Protection of Human Dignity and Continuous Existence (*al-Nasl*)

A somewhat similar patterns of responses were observed in student responses to the indicators of preservation and advancement of human dignity and continuous existence, *al-nasl* (Figure 5). Resembling the patterns of responses towards the construct *al-‘aql*, the data also showed the prevalence of lower frequencies of "always" response in the preservation and advancement of dignity and continuous existence. On average less than one half of the sample agreed that they were always aware of and committed in protecting and improving human dignity and existence.

Figure 5
Prevalence of Protection of Human Dignity and Existence



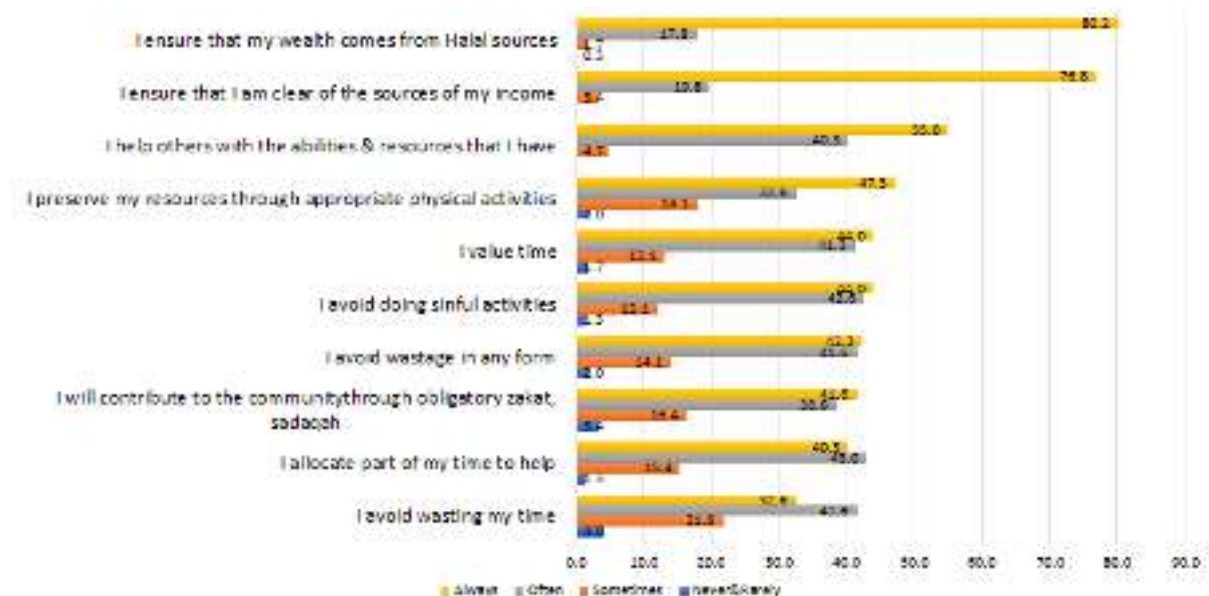
The data suggested that only six out of every 10 respondents always considered him/herself as a Muslim in daily activities and living. In addition, only three out every four students were always comfortable working with people of opposite gender, explaining LGBTQ issues from Islamic point of view, and avoiding gossiping about others.

Preservation of Wealth and Resources (*al-Māl*)

Figure 6 summarizes the percentage distributions of prevalence of *sejahtera* living related to preservation of wealth and resources. Comparable to the sample's responses to the previous two constructs of way of living, the data showed variability of responses across the wealth and resources items. On average, less than one half of the sample endorsed that they always made decisions and acted according to *sejahtera* living. The self-reported data showed that they always adhere to the ideals of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in helping others (55%), ensuring sources of income (77%), and in ensuring that their wealth is halal.

Figure 6

Prevalence of Preservation of Wealth and Resources



Underlying Factors of *Sejahtera* Living: Initial Solution

The second objective of the study was to explore the underlying constructs that influence the variability of the first subsample's responses ($n_1 = 298$). Exploratory factor analysis was applied on the data. In doing so, the analysis reduced the data; it identified a smaller number of latent variables, called factors. The factor analytic approach assumed that the underlying variables were conceptually related, and therefore it facilitated the testing of multidimensional measurement model of *sejahtera* living at its simplest factor structure.

The first run of the Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) was conducted on the reproduced correlation matrix of the 50 items. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was at .945, indicating that the sample size was sufficient for the application of

Principal Axis Factoring (PAF). The degree of intercorrelation among the 50 items justified the use of exploratory factor analysis; Bartlett Sphericity Test was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1225) = 9843$, $p = .001$.

The initial PAF extracted 10 underlying factors of students' responses to the *sejahtera* variables, the accounting for 67.5% of the total variance. This means to say that taken together, the 10 factors explain about two thirds of the variability in the direct measure of the *sejahtera* phenomenon. It also suggests that a smaller number of variables, that is 10 unobserved variables, can be used to interpret the incidence of the *sejahtera* living. The variance of the first factor, with the largest eigenvalue was 39.38, while the 10th factor carried the smallest acceptable eigenvalue of 1.

However, the PAF results were contaminated with several noises. First, the solution was inflicted with the threats of factorial complexity. The solution showed cross-loaded items, each of which loaded on two or more factors. Second, the 10-factor solution contained items which failed to uniquely contribute to common variance shared between items ($r < .2$; communality $< .3$). Third, there were items that loaded on its respective factors insubstantially; $\lambda < .35$ being the threshold of a useful item. Fourth, two of the factors were loaded with only two items each, which reflect the problems of reliability and stability of the measure.

The Revised Measure of *Sejahtera* Living

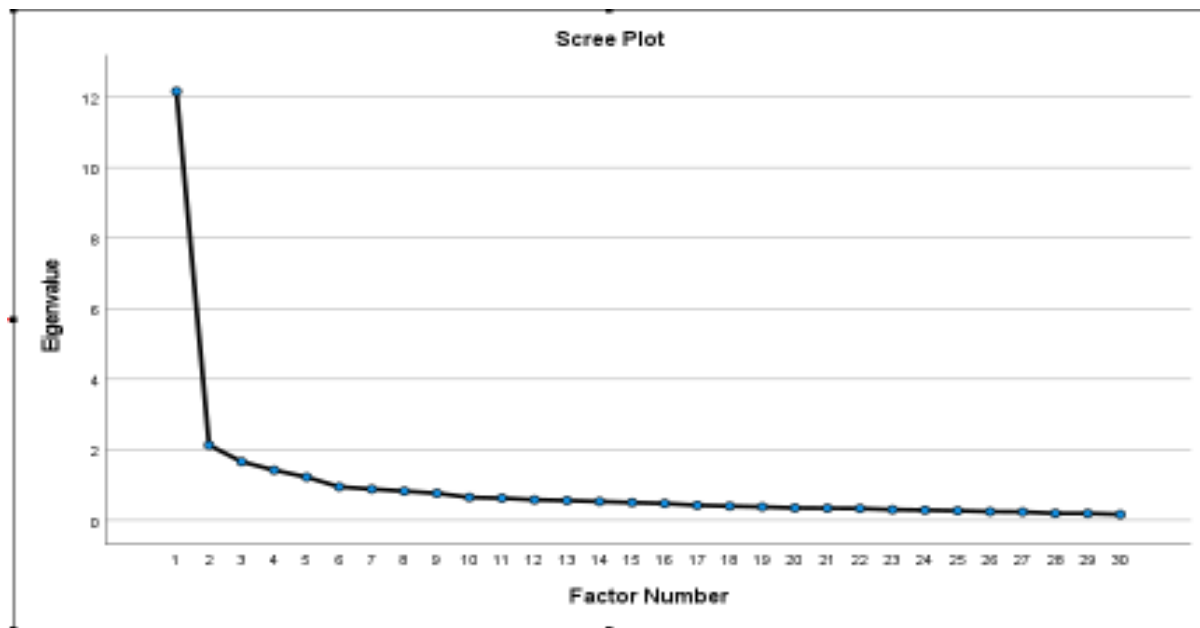
Based on the preceding results, the search for an alternative good fitting model to measure *sejahtera* living was in order. Thus, a series of PAF was conduct; each problematic item was removed from the equation one at a time. Excluding 20 items from the 10-factor solution, the final PAF extracted a-5 factor that "best fit" the intercorrelation among the retained variables. The model showed an internal structure that adequately aligned to the conceptually expected measure of students' *sejahtera* living.

Table 1
Intercorrelation among 30 Items of Cross-Validation Analysis

	M	SD	IW1	IW2	IW3	IW4	PL1	PL2	PL3	PL4	PL5	PL6	PL7	PL8	PL9	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6	SA7	SA8	SA9	SA10	DY1	HE1	HE3	HE4	HE5	PS6	PS7	PS8		
IW1	3.83	0.55	1.00																														
IW2	3.48	0.74	0.48	1.00																													
IW3	3.57	0.69	0.59	0.64	1.00																												
IW4	3.67	0.62	0.61	0.60	0.69	1.00																											
PL1	3.74	0.59	0.47	0.45	0.50	0.45	1.00																										
PL2	3.65	0.63	0.41	0.46	0.55	0.48	0.58	1.00																									
PL3	3.71	0.55	0.35	0.41	0.53	0.45	0.61	0.59	1.00																								
PL4	3.75	0.54	0.41	0.41	0.56	0.47	0.64	0.62	0.73	1.00																							
PL5	3.28	0.87	0.34	0.45	0.46	0.44	0.53	0.51	0.61	0.49	1.00																						
PL6	3.62	0.64	0.46	0.44	0.49	0.53	0.58	0.54	0.58	0.64	0.63	1.00																					
PL7	3.46	0.79	0.43	0.52	0.58	0.59	0.54	0.60	0.56	0.58	0.63	0.71	1.00																				
PL8	3.50	0.73	0.33	0.46	0.46	0.52	0.54	0.54	0.55	0.58	0.59	0.70	0.73	1.00																			
PL9	3.43	0.72	0.30	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.53	0.49	0.54	0.61	0.60	0.67	0.60	0.74	1.00																		
SA3	3.00	0.88	0.26	0.33	0.32	0.32	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.30	0.42	0.40	0.38	0.37	0.36	1.00																	
SA4	3.33	0.78	0.29	0.35	0.36	0.40	0.37	0.30	0.37	0.32	0.41	0.48	0.41	0.50	0.47	0.64	1.00																
SA5	3.16	0.91	0.24	0.28	0.36	0.35	0.31	0.33	0.38	0.31	0.45	0.44	0.39	0.44	0.43	0.63	0.71	1.00															
SA6	3.24	0.91	0.29	0.30	0.40	0.35	0.39	0.36	0.34	0.32	0.43	0.43	0.40	0.40	0.35	0.57	0.51	0.62	1.00														
SA7	3.48	0.75	0.35	0.30	0.38	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.37	0.41	0.43	0.47	0.41	0.43	0.42	0.49	0.55	0.55	0.53	1.00													
SA8	3.06	1.01	0.26	0.34	0.36	0.33	0.33	0.29	0.30	0.29	0.47	0.43	0.41	0.40	0.40	0.65	0.62	0.68	0.70	0.56	1.00												
SA9	3.10	0.86	0.25	0.34	0.38	0.34	0.38	0.33	0.41	0.37	0.58	0.52	0.49	0.50	0.49	0.56	0.59	0.67	0.62	0.62	0.73	1.00											
SA10	3.19	0.88	0.32	0.37	0.46	0.42	0.44	0.39	0.40	0.46	0.49	0.54	0.52	0.52	0.48	0.57	0.61	0.68	0.60	0.59	0.74	0.77	1.00										
Dy1	3.48	0.73	0.47	0.44	0.51	0.53	0.33	0.38	0.29	0.33	0.37	0.40	0.54	0.40	0.34	0.43	0.46	0.44	0.45	0.51	0.48	0.53	0.54	1.00									
HE1	2.75	0.97	0.13	0.24	0.20	0.15	0.26	0.25	0.24	0.25	0.32	0.36	0.24	0.28	0.26	0.30	0.25	0.29	0.30	0.24	0.24	0.27	0.27	0.20	1.00								
HE3	2.92	1.09	0.17	0.30	0.21	0.26	0.27	0.24	0.26	0.19	0.46	0.35	0.38	0.40	0.38	0.35	0.39	0.43	0.36	0.30	0.40	0.46	0.41	0.30	0.39	1.00							
HE4	3.00	0.96	0.24	0.45	0.35	0.39	0.38	0.36	0.37	0.29	0.56	0.48	0.51	0.51	0.50	0.44	0.51	0.52	0.46	0.42	0.46	0.55	0.52	0.40	0.39	0.76	1.00						
HE5	2.95	1.00	0.37	0.40	0.39	0.40	0.34	0.33	0.30	0.32	0.41	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.40	0.34	0.35	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.39	0.44	0.42	0.32	0.46	0.57	1.00					
PS6	3.31	0.80	0.27	0.37	0.37	0.42	0.30	0.36	0.43	0.31	0.50	0.46	0.49	0.48	0.49	0.38	0.45	0.42	0.34	0.41	0.38	0.49	0.42	0.40	0.20	0.36	0.47	0.38	1.00				
PS7	3.16	0.92	0.30	0.45	0.41	0.42	0.36	0.37	0.39	0.35	0.44	0.44	0.50	0.45	0.44	0.36	0.37	0.35	0.30	0.38	0.25	0.34	0.36	0.41	0.21	0.33	0.49	0.46	0.53	1.00			
PS8	3.22	0.85	0.19	0.38	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.33	0.41	0.37	0.47	0.48	0.46	0.50	0.52	0.44	0.50	0.49	0.42	0.39	0.47	0.50	0.48	0.36	0.30	0.46	0.57	0.40	0.65	0.58	1.00		
PS10	3.17	0.82	0.17	0.44	0.36	0.38	0.23	0.32	0.36	0.32	0.43	0.44	0.46	0.45	0.45	0.39	0.41	0.41	0.37	0.36	0.39	0.47	0.48	0.39	0.29	0.38	0.52	0.48	0.46	0.60	0.60		
Reliability (alpha)			AD DEEN; .86				NAFS; .93									ÁQL; .93						AI ANSL; .79					AL MAL; .84						

Figure 7

Scree Plot of the Five-Factor Solution Students' *Sejahtera* Living



The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was at .937, and therefore, the degree of intercorrelation among the 30 items justified the use of exploratory factor analysis. The Bartlett Sphericity Test yielded statistically significant, $\chi^2(435) = 5209$, $p = .001$, indicating the overall correlation among items was significant. The revised PAF extracted five underlying factors of students' *sejahtera* variables, explaining more than 61% of variance. The eigenvalue of the first factor was 12.16, while subsequent eigenvalues were 2.17, 1.66, 1.42, and 1.22.

An inspection on the resulting scree-plot supported the stability of the five-factor solution. Additionally, the results of parallel test were also in keeping with the prevalence of 5-factor structure. The results showed that the first five eigenvalues derived from the revised PAF were larger than did the eigenvalues of the randomly generated in parallel analysis. Each factor was loaded with at least four items, and the value of all loadings exceeded the .4.

Considering the five-factor solution, the first Promax rotated factor has significant loading on nine directly observed variables (Table 2). Each of these variables suggested the presence of one common trait of *sejahtera* living, which is the preservation and advancement of intellect (al 'Aql). The empirical clustering of significant loadings on this factor perfectly matched the logical grouping of the questionnaire items. These variables, in a nutshell measure the degree to which students were aware of and committed to learning to improve good living.

The second factor with nine strong and significant loadings represents students' commitment to protect life. The items measured the degree to which the students were, for example, responsible to protect life, avoid harmful food or drink, adhere to safety procedures, and make sure that their surroundings were safe. It is therefore reasonable to label the factor as *al-nafs*, the protection of life. The third rotated factor contained four items that represent protection of family's dignity, reputation, and humanity. High scores on this dimension portrays

the students' strong commitment in preparing oneself to be a good parent, having positive parenting attributes, being comfortable in working with people of opposite gender, and being able to explain LGBTQ issues from Islamic point of view.

In addition, the results of the revised PAF analysis showed the clustering of four strong loadings which constituted the fourth underlying dimension of *sejahtera* living. The four corresponding items collectively measured the prevalence of students' devotion in using their time and resources. Thus, the factor reflects the meaning of *al-māl* as a way of life. The final rotated factor was loaded with five items which were created as instances of Islamic fundamental beliefs and worldview. Evidently, students' responses to, "God has a significant impact upon my life," "striving to be bearer of enjoining right and forbidding wrong," "realize that my daily activities are parts of ibadah," "striving to make Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as [one's] role model," and "thinking of [oneself] as a Muslim in making decisions and actions" reasonably contributed a strong underlying facet of *sejahtera* living.

Table 2

Factor Loadings of the Revised and Cross-Validated Principal Axis Factoring

	PAF Model	Factor Loading				
		al Aql	al Nafs	al Nasl	al Mal	al Deen
God has a significant impact upon my life	Revised	0.103	0.160	-0.019	-0.315	0.677
	X-validated	0.024	0.090	0.006	-0.200	0.777
I strive to be bearer of enjoining right & forbidding the wrong	Revised	0.022	0.066	0.009	0.134	0.568
	X-validated	-0.113	0.038	0.123	0.180	0.588
I realize that my daily activities are parts of ibadah	Revised	-0.035	-0.048	0.014	0.233	0.596
	X-validated	0.040	0.195	-0.098	0.013	0.706
I strive to make Prophet Muhammad saw as my role model	Revised	-0.041	-0.017	0.052	0.045	0.845
	X-validated	-0.022	0.084	-0.058	0.142	0.710
I am responsible to protect life	Revised	0.112	0.805	0.183	-0.352	-0.083
	X-validated	0.036	0.739	0.083	-0.258	0.168
I avoid harmful food or drink	Revised	-0.187	0.446	0.081	0.302	0.082
	X-validated	-0.037	0.635	0.006	-0.073	0.229
I adhere to safety procedures	Revised	-0.067	0.762	-0.044	0.010	0.170
	X-validated	-0.016	0.836	-0.085	0.037	-0.022
I make sure that my surroundings are safe	Revised	0.004	0.796	-0.104	-0.007	0.081
	X-validated	-0.016	0.952	-0.152	-0.105	0.059
I am clear of my objectives in this life	Revised	0.105	0.359	0.064	0.459	-0.128
	X-validated	0.087	0.530	0.231	0.066	-0.041
I do my best to live comfortably – for myself and my family	Revised	0.078	0.512	-0.040	0.346	-0.047
	X-validated	0.081	0.663	0.062	0.060	0.035
I prioritize the activities of my life according to the shariah	Revised	0.117	0.328	0.088	0.284	0.119
	X-validated	-0.036	0.491	0.056	0.190	0.227
I strive to improve my life by optimizing my resources	Revised	0.087	0.493	-0.128	0.372	-0.050
	X-validated	0.023	0.631	0.070	0.210	-0.059
I arrange my life according to priorities	Revised	0.064	0.366	-0.052	0.465	0.000
	X-validated	0.014	0.688	0.038	0.260	-0.183

Table 2
Continued

	PAF Model	Factor Loading				
		al Aql	al Nafs	al Nasl	al Mal	al Deen
I am satisfied with my achievement in my studies/work	Revised	0.590	0.050	0.016	0.098	-0.005
	X-validated	0.709	-0.046	0.004	0.056	0.028
I made myself prepared in all my courses	Revised	0.556	-0.108	-0.109	0.346	0.030
	X-validated	0.681	-0.003	-0.035	0.168	-0.008
Every morning I look forward to another day in class	Revised	0.608	-0.162	-0.104	0.284	0.103
	X-validated	0.828	-0.019	0.024	0.051	-0.078
I am happy with my personal relationships	Revised	0.760	0.058	0.017	-0.045	-0.044
	X-validated	0.740	0.021	0.081	-0.152	0.084
I am satisfied with the Islamic environment	Revised	0.632	0.228	-0.040	-0.230	0.046
	X-validated	0.616	0.099	-0.088	0.039	0.098
I am satisfied with myself	Revised	0.825	-0.010	0.027	-0.016	-0.013
	X-validated	0.975	-0.075	0.003	-0.102	0.001
I do the right things in my life	Revised	0.814	-0.004	0.045	0.051	-0.036
	X-validated	0.777	0.092	0.048	0.049	-0.099
I am able to satisfy my spiritual needs	Revised	0.620	0.031	0.022	0.207	-0.005
	X-validated	0.761	0.106	0.007	-0.025	0.047
I think of myself as a Muslim in making decisions and actions	Revised	0.357	0.002	0.111	0.218	0.079
	X-validated	0.398	-0.206	-0.040	0.132	0.525
I am comfortable working with people of opposite gender	Revised	-0.143	0.058	0.423	0.166	-0.025
	X-validated	0.053	0.161	0.434	-0.095	-0.051
I am prepared to be a good parent to my children	Revised	0.040	-0.071	0.789	0.033	0.072
	X-validated	0.023	-0.060	0.925	-0.073	-0.063
I have the positive attributes to lead my family	Revised	0.063	0.008	0.837	0.024	0.024
	X-validated	0.025	-0.047	0.836	0.100	0.031
I can explain LGBTQ issues from Islamic point of view	Revised	0.096	-0.019	0.368	0.172	0.009
	X-validated	-0.011	-0.060	0.413	0.164	0.272
I avoid wastage in any form	Revised	0.147	-0.026	0.100	0.557	-0.025
	X-validated	0.089	0.062	-0.101	0.705	-0.014
I contribute to the community through zakat, sadaqah	Revised	-0.090	0.120	0.353	0.486	-0.087
	X-validated	-0.147	-0.029	-0.034	0.796	0.166
I value time	Revised	0.103	-0.146	0.048	0.693	0.071
	X-validated	0.130	0.036	0.005	0.766	-0.151
I allocate part of my time to help others	Revised	0.038	-0.053	0.192	0.648	-0.069
	X-validated	0.049	-0.090	0.055	0.716	0.021

The Cross-Validated Measure of *Sejahtera* Living

To examine the reliability of the data on *sejahtera* living and the stability of the 5-factor measurement, the study conducted a cross-validation analysis. The procedure also applied PAF on the second subsample ($n_2 = 298$). However, the cross-validation analysis was conducted on the intercorrelations among the 30 items which had been behaving appropriately the initial PAF (Table 1). The results of the cross-validation procedure showed that The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was at .950, and therefore, the use of the PAF was justifiable. The Bartlett Sphericity Test yielded statistically significant results, $\chi^2(435) = 6268$, $p = .001$, indicating that the overall correlation among items was sufficient for the PAF.

Consistently, the cross validation PAF analysis also extracted five underlying factors of students' *sejahtera* variables, explaining more than two thirds of variance. The eigenvalue of the first factor was 12.16, while subsequent eigenvalues were 2.55, 1.65, 1.39, and 1.08. The PAF scree-plot maintained that the slope of the curve started to level off after the fifth factor. Furthermore, the parallel analysis supported the decision to retain five factors structure. The results showed that the first five eigenvalues derived from the revised PAF were larger than the eigenvalues of the randomly generated in parallel analysis. Each factor was loaded with at least four items, and the value of all loadings exceeded the critical value of .4 (Table 1).

A reliability analysis was also undertaken to estimate the internal consistency of the factors. Using Cronbach' alpha procedure, the reliability index of the factors exceeded the acceptable value of .7; specifically, the distribution of the alpha values was $.78 > \alpha < .93$. Finally, the bivariate intercorrelations among the five factors were substantial and statistically significant ($.43 > r < .70$). Hence, the results supported the assumption that the five dimensions of *sejahtera* living are interrelated.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study aimed to achieve a two-fold objective, the first was to identify prevalence of *sejahtera* living among students at an institution of higher education in Malaysia. The data suggested that the prevalence of religious commitment varied across indicators of *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah* subconstructs. Out of every ten students, seven reported that they always committed to preservation and protection Islamic faith; six of them always protected their life and wellbeing; five of them practiced the preservation of wealth and resources. However, merely four of them always preserved their intellect and lineage (dignity). High rates of endorsement were observed with regards to the basic practices that are obligatory upon a Muslim like a strong belief in God, Prophet (pbuh), and understanding matters of halal and haram in food and wealth. On the other hand, and not surprisingly, less than one-third of the sample disclosed lower occurrence of "always" in the practice of a deeper level of commitment and conviction of a Muslim. This includes the practice of contemplating the meaning of the *Qur'ān*, performing supererogatory acts, setting objectives in life, examining newly learnt ideas and able to discuss issues like LGBTBQ from the Islamic perspective.

The second major purpose of the study was to examine whether students' responses to the locally developed questionnaire of *sejahtera* living constituted a meaningful and interpretable measure of the construct. It was expected their responses could be clustered according to their beliefs in the five subconstructs of *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah*, which are the preservations of faith (*al-dīn*), life (*al-nafs*), intellect (*al-'aql*), property (*al-māl*) and progeny (*al-nasl*). The results of exploratory factor analysis found that the *sejahtera* living construct is multidimensional. The observed data adequately yielded the five underlying variables of *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah*-based *sejahtera* living. Evidently, the finding is consistent with the meaning of *sejahtera* living among Muslims (Mohamad et al., 2016). Theoretically the study provided additional evidence supporting the validity of *sejahtera* living construct, which is and should remain a matter of importance for Muslims and Islamic education alike.

The second objective of the study also attempted to establish a quality instrument to measure the state of being *vis-à-vis sejahtera* living of individuals in an Islamic environment, particularly in an Islamic higher education institution. The findings of the study indicated that the measurement can be used to identify the prevalence of *sejahtera* living among students at an Islamic university. The instrument would be useful in diagnostic assessment, monitoring of students' *sejahtera* growth and identifying areas of living which need improvements through the development of suitable and effective intervention programs for the students. The practical contribution of the study, therefore, primarily lies in the successful development of a valid and reliable instrument of students' *sejahtera* living.

The five subconstructs of *sejahtera* living scales are stable and reliable. Using it to assess student *sejahtera* living would inform lecturers, managers, and institutional policy makers what and how to design and conduct intervention programmes. For example, the findings of this preliminary study pointed out the students scored low in the preservation of intellect and dignity. This means to say that those scored low on these two dimensions are in need of instructional intervention that could bring about changes in the *sejahtera* living.

Considering the trends in the students' responses in light of the aspiration of SAF, the informal curricula could also play a more important role in enhancing students' commitment and conviction to Islam either through student activities organised by the *Mahallah* (hostel), student affairs office, and student bodies. The University Mosque can also play an equally important role of promoting spiritual programs. Besides these, the University may come up with strategies to create an environment that promotes higher level of spiritual, intellectual, and moral development of the students to drive them towards embracing and practising Islam as a way of life in its totality.

LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Despite its merits, the study is not without limitations, one of which concerns the specific context of the sample, where the participants were confined to one Islamic university in Malaysia. Due to its sample restriction, the findings of the study shall not be generalized to the populations of other Islamic universities. In addition, the development of the instrument which involved the specific context of the study is guided by the University's Vision and Mission statement, and *Sejahtera* Academic Framework, which may differ to the foundations of other institutions. Hence, future studies may consider the unique background, environment and mission statement of the institutions when adopting the measurement of *sejahtera* living in a different institution of education.

Furthermore, the nature of the cross-sectional survey implies that the data were gathered at a single point in time. The temporal limitation of cross-sectional studies is that the constructs under investigation may fluctuate over time or in reaction to external real-life circumstances. Future studies should consider replicating the study using qualitative approach to further identify the factors influencing students' *sejahtera* living after engaging in the implemented intervention programs of the university.

Findings of the study will benefit the University as they can be used to inform and guide the development of necessary and appropriate intervention programs for the students. More importantly, the programs can address the appreciation and internalization of Islamic teachings among the students, such as promoting a deep understanding of the Islamic faith to the extent that it drives them to embody and practise Islam as a way of life. It is hope that by strengthening their Islamic faith, helping them to deeply understand their purpose of life, and inducing them to understand reasons why Islam is the perfect Din will help them to remain resilient and wise when confronting the many challenges of the contemporary time. In conclusion, the measure of *sejahtera* living may assist in further improving the quality of a Muslim's life in terms of how close their way of living is according to the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, while striving for happiness in this world and in the Hereafter.

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