



## Integration of Murotal Art in Peer Counselling for the Development of Subjective Well-Being

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### ABSTRACT

*The study of subjective well-being is a very important and urgent need now and in the future especially in Islamic boarding schools as a culture of education in Indonesia. The research aimed to develop subjective well-being through the integration of murotal art in peer counselling. The research method was quasi-experimental action research, namely carrying out an initial assessment, providing treatment, and a final assessment. The research subjects were 273 male students at the Al-Mukmin Muhammadiyah Tembarak Temanggung Islamic Boarding School as the population, and 17 male students as samples based on random sampling technique with subjective well-being as the problem variable and the integration of murotal arts and peer counselling as the intervention variable. The data collection technique used closed questionnaire instruments, and then data analysis used descriptive analysis. The results showed that there was an increase in the average subjective well-being score of 19.16 (15.45%) which was confirmed by understanding and changes in behaviour in self-acceptance, opening up, and networking. These findings were evidence that the integration of murotal art in peer counselling can be used to develop subjective well-being.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Research into subjective well-being is an urgent requirement and has always been a topic of intense discussion (McCuaig et al., 2019). Subjective well-being refers to the comparison between an individual's expectations and their actual reality (Gokcen, Emre, & Nihal, 2014). It's a product of a myriad of factors and personal perceptions toward various objective conditions one encounters. Subjective well-being research is not confined to a particular age bracket, but rather, extends across all age groups. For instance, it includes studies focused on children (Lampropoulou, 2018), adolescents (Sabato, & Kogut, 2018), adults (Tavernier, Hill, & Adrien, 2019) as well as the elderly (Murillo et al., 2018).

The study of subjective well-being in schools (Cornish, 2019), strengthens the construct of the degree of student effectiveness in school (Fraillon, 2004), becomes an important indicator of school role

assessment and is adapted to cultural values. These cultural values include six dimensions: physical, personal, social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual (Karyani et al., 2015). Research in boarding schools has been undertaken by Boyce and Boyce (1983) and more recently by Foliano, Green, and Sartarelli (2019). A significant focus in boarding school research - subjective well-being - is currently and will continue to be of significant importance (Holder, 2012). These studies in boarding schools specialize in Islamic religious-based educational institutions, commonly referred to as Islamic boarding schools. It's important to note that boarding schools are a significant component of the educational culture in Indonesia, a primarily Muslim country boasting the world's largest Muslim population (Purvis, 2015).

Art therapy can enhance subjective well-being in boarding schools (Muriel & Reigersberg, 2017). Artistic exercises such as crafting songs can augment social work and counselling methodologies, aiding students in exploring life's meaning, and can be paired with other techniques when required. An apt form of art therapy in Islamic boarding schools involves the traditional Quranic chant, Murotal. Given the communal nature of students' activities, this collective experience of Murotal offers valuable therapeutic benefits.

The value of subjective well-being can be derived from three key advancements. First, it allows for a holistic understanding of how a community or a group of people is economically impacted. Second, it offers a means for preliminary assessment of community groups or individuals with suboptimal well-being. Lastly, it is a powerful tool for evaluating the societal effect of policies (Thompson & Aked, 2009).

The closeness of fellow students is an opportunity to provide peer counselling services, as a way to help others in daily life (Suranata, 2013). Several important factors underlie the need for peer counselling, which were explained by Carr (1981), most adolescents are more likely to trust friends as a source of problem-solving, the need for friends to be a source of satisfaction, similarity of developmental tasks, and adolescent orientation to be independent. Tindall & Gray (1985) emphasized that peer counselling can be done one by one (individual format), in group leadership, and discussion (group format or forum group discussion). This study primarily focuses on advancing subjective well-being employing a group-based approach through peer counselling. It is incorporated into daily murotal art activities. These documents provide an understanding and alter the subjective well-being behaviour of students during the implementation of the research. The elevation of subjective well-being through the blending of murotal art and peer counselling is deemed successful, given there's an improvement in the value and percentage of the questionnaire data analysis. A study conducted by Zhua et al. (2018) explored the ongoing connection between students' subjective well-being in school and their behaviour-related school engagement. Findings from the research indicated that students' subjective well-being and behaviour-related school engagement are mutually influential over time among students.

Meanwhile, the issue of subjective well-being is also a concern of the British Government. Evidently, from 1940 to 1960, the British Government was very concerned about the subjective well-being of students who came to the UK from the British Commonwealth region (India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka). The basic reasons are economic, political, and cultural issues. Departing from these problems requires a study of subjective well-being. Researching students' subjective well-being is vital and should be conducted given its significance in the establishment of educational regulations aiding in fostering our future generation's quality in alignment with legislative goals. Tracking the status of students' subjective well-being represents a tactical approach to determining if the school has successfully and accurately fulfilled its obligations (Karyani et al., 2015).

The term subjective well-being of students in Indonesian legislation does not exist explicitly, except for the term child welfare. It is stated in Article 1 that child welfare is a system of life and livelihood for children that can ensure their proper growth and development, both spiritually, physically, and

socially. Subjective well-being can adopt the sociological theory of welfare, which is combined with the concept of well-being in the school entity, so that subjective well-being is associated with teaching, education, learning, and achievement. Subjective well-being in this study is related to the art of murotal. In 2017 in Australia, there was a study that was almost similar to this murotal art. The study mentioned that art music-based interventions were efficient in reducing the severity of internalizing symptoms in children and adolescents (Geipel et al., 2018). Art therapy counselling in education has traditionally focused on supporting social, communication, and behavioural developmental outcomes in the physical domain (McFerran et al., 2009).

Arts therapy fosters a wider interest in how music can be used to positively influence the whole school community (Twyford & Rickson, 2013). Therapy can be done by utilizing case study research to foster knowledge, interest in creative arts, and well-being. According to Stickdorn et al. (2018), art therapy can change the way people think and interact with others. Art therapy can significantly improve a child's social interaction skills, social-emotional reciprocity, and communication skills. Cognitive-motor abilities can be improved when brain function is stimulated by art and music with rhythm control (Bernardi et al., 2009).

Counselling with art therapy to Islamic culture is described in Bonab and Koohsar (2011). It is explained that one of the contents of Islamic values is the spiritual virtue of togetherness and mutual help as a psychological construct in determining individual well-being. Empirical studies show the importance of Islamic values as coping strategies in the reduction of anxiety, depression, restitution, and well-being in mental health. Khodayarifard et al. (2006) explained that positive psychology in Islamic spirituality is largely centred on Islam's positive view of humans universally. The Islamic approach to human nature and its capacity for the growth of positive thinking feelings and actions in the face of illness, adversity, and disaster.

The enhancement and recognition of the importance of art creativity is recommended to use a consultative practice model so that the attractive conditions for interpersonal interaction created are more well integrated into students' daily routines. In the implementation of the art therapy model development, Holmes and Cheung (2014) asserted that (1) selecting songs (types of songs according to the culture of the age group), (2) the intervention testing process, (3) identifying feelings and thoughts, (4) literature review, and (5) analyzing results by analyzing role dynamics, analyzing song identity, song aspirations and song references for types of disorders and their impact, analyzing emotional awareness, and analyzing access to support.

The type of art therapy examined in this study is a specific practice related to the recitation of the Quran, known as murotal. It's useful to note that murotal practice for students in boarding schools frequently involves a communal aspect, reflecting the shared experiences of joy, sorrow, and everyday routines. Given this context, peer counselling services are found to be particularly fitting and potent.

Peer Counselling is a method, a combination of two aspects, known as techniques and approaches (peer support), as a variety of behaviours to help interpersonally carried out through one by one, group leadership/focus group discussion, advice, and tutorials and or interpersonal activism (McFerran et al., 2009). Based on the theoretical framework and the results of empirical studies above, it can be understood that the development of subjective well-being is a very important need, especially for students in Islamic boarding schools by integrating murotal art therapy in peer counselling. The intended outcome of this research includes developing and implementing peer counselling modules, and presenting research findings in scholarly journals for scientific accountability.

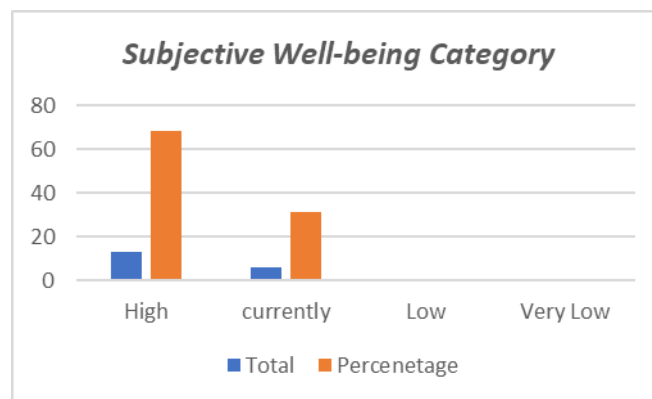
## METHOD

The research methodology adopted in this study was an experimental model. A statement by Gall, Gall, & Borg (1983) attested that experimental designs are potent and top-notch research methods for

corroborating cause-effect suppositions. The study progressed as a quasi-experimental design, commencing with a preliminary evaluation of subjective well-being, followed by the provision of peer therapy incorporating mural art, and concluded with reassessing subjective well-being. Subjective well-being acted as the problem variable that evolved with intervention variables, specifically, mural art embedded in peer counselling. The research study was conducted within a population comprising 273 male students from Al-Mukmin Muhammadiyah Islamic Boarding School, located in Tembarak Temanggung. Using a randomized system, a sample of 17 male students was selected for this study. Data collection was executed using a closed questionnaire, which was designed based on specific indicators of subjective well-being development. These included aspects such as satisfaction, joy, self-control, cheerfulness, positive thinking, peace, optimism, enthusiasm, the joy of social interaction, physical health happiness, and meaningful life religiosity as per the model suggested by Thompson & Aked (2009). The test results from the administered instrument indicated that the questionnaire was both valid and reliable. This was determined by the comparative value results derived from Cronbach's alpha value, which exceeded 0.60, and the observations of the count demonstrating the same. The acquired data was subsequently processed through a descriptive examination of the questionnaire's percentage, as well as peer counselling result documents. Statistical data analysis using the SPSS 25.0 for Windows program by comparing the differences in pretest and posttest scores, at a significance level of 5%.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

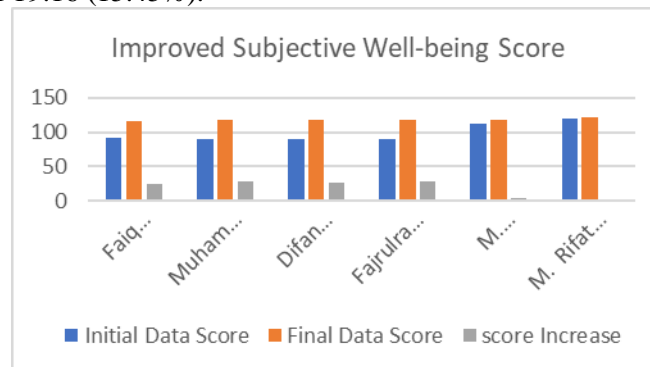
The findings demonstrated that the subjective well-being of the students at Al-Mukmin Muhammadiyah Islamic Boarding School Tembarak Temanggung was classified into two levels - high and medium. Fig. 1 further noted that none of the students' subjective well-being scores were in the categories of low or very low.



*Fig. 1 Subjective Well-being Category*

The implementation of mural art pursuits, intertwined with peer counselling for the promotion of subjective well-being, spans five sessions. The first session is dedicated to introducing the session's intent, aims, benefits, and approach to actualizing the activities. The comprehension of the session's objective was communicated by peer counselor, Muhammad Rifat Sardan. Self-acceptance, which serves as the primary foundation for attaining contentment, joy, self-restraint, and joviality, is the core subject discussed in the second session. The third session concentrates on the exploration of positive thinking, tranquillity, optimism, and drive, which are shaped by intentionality. Social interaction, felicity, and physical health are discussed in the fourth session, with an emphasis on how they are influenced by righteous and truthful normative behaviours. The concluding session underscores the belief that spirituality and life's purpose can be reached through proximity to Allah SWT, the God of all creation.

After the treatment was given, the final data was taken, and the results obtained were a significant increase in subjective well-being. Fig. 2 shows an increase in the subjective well-being of students, with an average increase of 19.16 (15.45%).



**Fig. 2** Improvement Subjective Well-being Score

Different improvement results were found for students in the high and medium categories. The average score increase for medium-category students was very significant with an average score of 27 (87.09%), and high high-category students with an average score of 3.5 (5.64%). Another important finding in this study was that two students did not complete the activity until the end. The two students did not participate in the last two meetings without giving a clear reason. After an in-depth study with Ustadz and the students, it was finally found that the two students had problems related to self-adjustment.

The evidence results from the study reveal a rise in subjective well-being amongst students, facilitated by the incorporation of peer counselling into murotal art activities. Given the all-encompassing nature of boarding school life, with students spending all their time in this environment, subjective well-being becomes an essential component to foster. Under these circumstances, feelings of monotony due to the repetitive routines are inevitable. The management of these boarding schools must acknowledge this issue to prevent any potential complications that could affect the student's academic objectives. Therefore, the cultivation of subjective well-being is a necessity for supporting students in their future life-planning efforts. Based on the findings of this study, murotal activities show strong potential as an option for improving subjective well-being.

The results prove that murotal art activities integrated with peer counselling can increase the score of the subjective well-being aspects of students, it means that it can be emphasized that the integration of murotal art activities in peer counselling is proven to develop subjective well-being. Understanding the aspects of subjective well-being, the results of discussions, and changes in students' behaviour are important factors in the indicators of the achievement of research findings. The students argue that self-acceptance of all their strengths and weaknesses determines the achievement of subjective well-being. Wayne (1993) asserted that self-acceptance is not an individual who rejects himself so that he is unhappy and unable to relate well with others. Individuals who can accept themselves can increase their intelligence to open up and build interpersonal relationships and networking (Wulandari & Rahmi, 2018).

Individuals can unlock untapped talents and skills as well as gain new insights and future guidance through the attainment of optimal subjective well-being (Tansley, 2011). It's further important to note that the actions of students significantly contribute to the research findings' success (Ansar & Baloch, 2018). Among the observed behaviours is voluntary Qur'an reading with artistic practices, which has been seen to cultivate calmness, happiness, tranquillity, and a strengthened connection to Allah SWT.

According to Sarnoto (2016), feelings such as tranquillity, contentment, peace, and delight can induce positive thought patterns and influence physical health, resulting in overall well-being. Both health



and illness are intricately intertwined with one's psychological state, hence a mentally healthy individual is often physically healthy. Conversely, frequent ill health can indicate psychosomatic issues as proposed by Djam'an (1975). Supporting this, a study by Filsafati and Ratnaningsih (2016) confirmed that volunteerism or Organizational Citizenship Behavior greatly impacts an individual's psychological state, thereby affecting their subjective well-being.

The potential limitations of the study findings are that two students did not fully participate in the activities due to issues related to self-adjustment. As noted by Novia and Cristiana (2015), self-adjustment is associated with developmental factors and the maturity to manage emotions, particularly where these create adverse psychological impacts. Thus, the handling of self-adjustment can be facilitated through individual counselling services.

## CONCLUSIONS

The integration of mural art into peer counselling has proven to be very significant in improving the subjective well-being of students at the Al-Mukmin Muhammadiyah Islamic Boarding School Tembarak, Temanggung, with a high category classification. One thing that is a limitation of this study is they cannot use electronic media so they cannot communicate more widely and in depth because it is related to the policies and rules of the boarding school. The research also only examines aspects of subjective well-being, not the behavioural aspects so it experiences limitations in determining indicators of research achievement.

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