The Understanding Level of Self-Service Laundry Customers on Ṭahārah in Cloth-Purifying Practice

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Abstract

This study assesses the community's understanding level of the ṭahārah term in the cloth-purifying practice as well as the extent to which it has been executed by them in daily practice. The meaning component theory is adopted to build a semantic field for the ṭahārah term, while the questionnaire method using Google Form distribution is applied for data collection. The findings of the study reveal that respondents have a high understanding level of the ṭahārah term where 82.8% of respondents were able to state the five characteristics of the semantic field of this term. However, some issues still need to be underscored, especially the understanding on the ṭahārah concept, the need of absolute water and so on as these necessities are closely intertwined with the five daily prayers for a Muslim. The implications of this study indicate the importance of basic religious education to strengthen community's understanding.

Keywords: *Componential Analysis, Ṭahārah Concept, Semantics.*

INTRODUCTION

Self-service businesses are emerging one after another, including self-service laundries. It is conceivable that the burgeoning affairs be they personal or else overstretching people nowadays witness how ubiquitous a self-service laundry industry is across the country (Chuang & Lai, 2019). The scarcity of time they had to purify everyday clothes at home, for instance, prompts them to be customers of such a facility (Lubis et al., 2015). Not only in big cities the facility being provided and well-received by its customers, but also in higher education centers (Zhou & Zhao, 2019). Thus, the emergence of the industry boosts the development of small industries in the country. Although it creates a dilemma where customers must wait longer for a washing machine due to a shortage of machines at self-service laundries (Zulkifli et al., 2021), consumers still prefer laundromats because they are convenient and save time (Phuphisith & Kurisu, 2022).

However, there still exist skeptical views about the cloth-purifying service at the laundry premises (Mstar, Sept 2, 2022), especially regarding the extent to which this service meets the purity level standards of the clothes by the religious measures (Sani, 2017), safety use of equipment at the premises (Dorsono, 2019), missing clothes (Dorsono, 2019) and taboos related to foreign customers unloading any individual clothes left unattended by their owners from the machine without permission (Hiyer, 2019; Dorsono, 2019). In addition, there were such issues that once been circulated in social media as the Muslim-only laundry (Sani, 2017; Buang, 2017), sharing the service without control (Suki, 2019), allegedly abusing pregnant cats by placing them in the dryer (Yaacob, 2018), and caught drowning three cats in the washing machine (Fuad, 2020).

From a religious point of view, the Quran and works on Islamic jurisprudence use the *ṭahārah* term when addressing the obligation to purify clothes from dirt and najis (defiling items). The *ṭahārah* term has a specific meaning component that is markedly different from the other four translation matches that exist in the Malay language, namely suci (pure), bersih (clean), nirmala (pristine), and cuci (washing). This is because *ṭahārah* entails cleanliness as is perceived by the human senses, in addition to adhering to certain Islamic law measures. Therefore, a significant difference remains between all the terms in question with regards to meaning as well as daily practice.

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The Malay language borrows many Arabic terms and vocabulary, especially regarding religion and law (Rahman et al. 2018). The borrowing constitutes a shift in meaning that includes its broadening or narrowing, ameliorating, or pejorating as well as strengthening or weakening (Pyles & Algeo, 1982). Thus, Jumat (2023) explores that the Malay community understood some such Arabic words as sunnah, tahlil, sedekah, wali, nur and rahim less accurately that they tend to narrow all these meanings. Some Arabic loanwords such as khalwat has been narrowed in Malay to only mean the negative connotation (Kamus Dewan, 2010). However, the term does also originally used to convey positive one such as al-khulwah al-shar'iyyah (to be in a situation that is not prohibited by the Islamic law) (al-Mu'jam al-Arabi al-Asasi, 1992). It is the narrowing of meaning which brings about the misunderstanding and misuse of the term amongst the Malay speakers molded by their own ideational meaning. Under this circumstance, such sentences as الخلوة حرام في الإسلام (khalwat is prohibited in Islam) were produced in student writing (Toklubok & Mezah, 2011). Ali (2015) stresses that a failure to adhere to correct dictions can lead to a misunderstanding in performing religious orders. There are some religious terms that cause confusion if incorrectly used such as muhrim and mahram, samak and sertu, sunnah and sunat (preferred) (Ali, 2015).

This study evaluates customers' understanding of the term *ṭahārah*, which is an essential requirement for purifying daily needs, along with its synonyms like pure, clean, and washing. It also assesses the extent to which this understanding is put into practice in their daily routine. Therefore, a questionnaire was distributed among the customers of self-service laundries in Malaysia. The questionnaire focuses on customers' understanding of the semantic field of the *ṭahārah* term and how well they apply it when using self-service laundry services. The study is crucial as it examines the customers' comprehension of the *ṭahārah* term and determines their inclination towards prioritizing *ṭahārah* when purifying clothes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays, the use of self-service laundry is deemed convenient in washing clothes. This facility is offered almost everywhere and received by many (Zhou et al., 2019; Moon et al., 2019). Although the machine uses water, washing techniques with a minimal amount of water (Mahaiyadin et al., 2021), mixing clean and dirty clothes together (Mahaiyadin et al., 2021), misuse of machines in self-service laundry (Yaacob, 2018) and several other issues related to the cleanliness and purity level cause doubts about the purity status of washing clothes using the service. The dispute stems from the use of the *ṭahārah* term stated in the Quran and books of the Islamic jurisprudence and its synonyms in the local language, whether pure, clean, or washing.

When referring to the need for both internal and outward purification, the Quran uses the word طَهَرَ /ṭahara/ that can be found in surah al-Baqarah verses 125, 122, 33, surah al-Muddaththir verse 4, as well as surah al-Ahzab verse 33. According to Al-Asfahāni (2009), there are two aspects of *ṭahārah* in the Quran: the exterior body's purity and the spiritual purity of the soul. When Allah says: وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا /if you are in a state of janabah, then purify yourself with lustration/ the meaning is to purify the body externally using water or any simulacrum; and: وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَّهِّرِيْنَ, it indicates soul-level purification (al-Asfahani, 2009, p. 525).

Ṭahārah in al-Muddaththir verse 4 can signify many different things, according to Ibn Kathīr (n.d., 441). These include purity from disobedience and sin, purity of soul, heart, and intention as well as excellent deeds and morality. The *ṭahārah* term also denotes the act of circumcising someone, according to Ibn Manẓūr (1999). When a man circumcises his son, it is said that /ṭahhara fulān waladahū/ [one purifies his son].

Based on the above explanation, the meaning of *ṭahārah* in the source language is quite broad. This term has been translated into several versions in the local language. A search in the the Quran translation by Abdullah Basmieh (2013) shows that the ṭahara word in the Quran is sometimes translated as [clean] (Abdullah Basmieh, 2013, p. 48, 1108 & 1590) and as [pure] (Abdullah Basmieh, 2013, p. 86). Therefore, it is essential to understand what the term *ṭahārah* means in the religious context and whether it corresponds to the Malay concepts of bersih (clean), suci (pure), or cuci (washing). This phenomenon inspired a study to evaluate the concept of *ṭahārah* from a religious perspective and assess the level of concern among customers for the necessity of *ṭahārah* when using self-service laundry services.

Ṭahārah Concept

The *ṭahārah* word is derived from [طَهُرَ – يَطْهُرُ – طَهَارَةٌ] which means to be clean from visible or unseen dirt (Ibn Manẓūr, 1999). *Ṭahārah* literally means clean and free from such external impurities as najis and internal as abominable qualities. To be pure from impurities or dirt means to be purified with water and to have a pure heart means to be clean from envy and jealousy (al-Khin & al-Bugha, 1992). Therefore, Kamali (2021) and al-Asfahāni (2009) linguistically divides the meaning of *ṭahārah* into two categories: to be pure from najis and dirt and to have a pure soul. All Quranic verses using this term imply two meanings which are the purity of the body, clothes and place occasioned by using water or any simulacrum, while the purity of the soul by abandoning sinful behaviors or doing good deeds. This word is an absorbed Arabic word in Malay and has already been included in the lists of Kamus Dewan entry (1998, p. 1343). The word is regarded as Islamic law related to cleanliness (including the five law of water, purification, najis and so on).

From a Sharia perspective, *ṭahārah* refers to any action that permits someone to perform prayer or other forms of worship that calls for it, such as lustration for those who are required to do so, ablution for those who are not, and cleaning one's clothes, body, and surroundings from impurities (al-Ghazzi, 1990; al-Khin & al-Bugha, 1992). The act of cleaning up the najis is prompted by using absolute water or any Sharia-compliant simulacrum, in this case, soil ('Abd al-Mun'im, n.d.).

Al-Zaydān (1994) asserts that *ṭahārah* concept with its meaning to be purified from najis in the religious context necessitates knowledge on the types of najis and ways to purify and remove it. The combination of these two things, which are knowing the types of najis and purifying it in the right way, will realize the *ṭahārah* level as outlined by the Sharia, which is the behavior that requires a person to perform prayer or worship that requires *ṭahārah* on the body, clothes, and place.

Najis is classified into three categories: *mukhaffafah*, *mutawassiṭah*, and *mughallaẓah* where the purification procedures of each category differ from one another. Najis *mughallaẓah* is defined as heavy najis (Kamus Dewan, 1998, p. 902) that must be cleansed by rinsing absolute water seven times one of which is water mixed with soil. This category of najis includes dogs and pigs (al-Khin & al-Bugha, 1992). Najis *mutawassiṭah*, on the other hand, is a medium najis that needs to be cleansed with absolute water until the absence of smell, taste or color is achieved, such as insect carcasses and a small amount of blood (Kamus Dewan, 1998 p. 913). Flowing water over the contaminated area until the absence of effects and properties, whether the color or smell or taste (al-Khin & al-Bugha, 1992) is achieved can purify this najis. And najis *mukhaffafah* are light najis, which is the urine of a boy aged less than 2 years old who only breastfed (Kamus Dewan, 1998, p. 904). Najis of this category can be purified only by sprinkling water (al-Khin & al-Bugha, 1992).

While in performing the *ṭahārah* process, absolute water is a necessary purification instrument for all types of dirt and things regarded as najis by the Sharia (Al-Nawawi, 1995). Absolute water is defined as completely pure water unmixed with any impurities. Some define it as water that remains in its original form. Islamic scholars reached consensus that the use of absolute water is a condition for cleaning clothes from najis (Ibn 'Abidin, 2000; Al-Hattāb, 1995; Al-Syarbīni, 1994).

It can then be concluded from the above discussion that the semantic field of the *ṭahārah* word entails five specific characteristics, namely:1. removal of Najis, 2. ways of purifying or removing Najis, 3. use of absolute water, 4. removal of smell, color, and taste, 5. legitimacy of prayer.

In Malay, some words that have quite similar meaning to the *ṭahārah* term are suci (pure), bersih (clean), cuci (washing), and nirmala (pristine). Having said that, purity possesses a more specific semantic field compared to clean or washing or pristine. Five semantic fields of purity are stated in Kamus Dewan (1998, p. 1310) as follows, namely, 1. religiously clean; 2. sinless; 3. religious (divine); 4. clean from any evil or ugliness; 5. clean or free from dirt etc.

While cleanliness is defined as not dirty, free from air pollution and others, health: inhaling clean air in mountainous areas; drink clean water; honest and sincere, and free from bad practices such as corruption, embezzlement, etc. (Kamus Dewan, 1998, p. 147). However, the word "washing" also refers to acts of cleaning, such as "cleaning one's genitals," "cleaning blood," "gazing with desire at women and others," "cleaning the stomach", "washing hands of something", and "washing with water" (Dewan Bahasa, 1998, p. 251). Another rarely used word with almost the same meaning in daily communication is pristine. It is defined as unblemished, clean, pure (Kamus Dewan, 1998, p. 931).

Based on this lexical information, purity is used more specifically to refer to the religious that is to be clean and free from dirt compared to other synonymous words. However, there is no element of the type of najis and how to purify it in the meaning component of this word. There is also a connotation that corresponds to the meaning of ṭahārah from a linguistically when the purity is associated with the purification of the soul from sin and evil. Therefore, in daily use, purity is found to have a more specific semantic field and is close to the religious concept of ṭahārah in that it is more aimed at religious necessity and is different from cleanliness, washing and pristine especially in the context of the cloth-, equipment-, body-purifying practice, and so on. It can be concluded that the ṭahārah word in the religion is closer in terms of meaning and concept when compared to the purity word in Malay.

Purifying Clothes in a Washing Machine

Al-Zuhayli (1989) provides an in-depth analysis of earlier researchers' perspectives and research on the use of washing machines for ṭahārah, including how much water should be used to clean najis-tainted clothing. According to Al-Zuhaily (1989), using contemporary washing machines for this purpose is acceptable. The Mufti Department of Penang (2020) adds that although washing clothes in a machine can eliminate najis and filth, users should still take extra care to guarantee the purity level. The Selangor State Fatwa Committee (2018) has issued a ruling that clothes washed in an automatic washing machine are pure as it complies with Shariah law, while a semi-automatic machine is not clean and must be rinsed with absolute water. In a study on the technical standards used in modern purification methods, Abdullah (2014) analyzes the methods and conditions of najis purification in light of the Hanafi school and concludes that the use of modern washing machines meets the purification parameters set by scholars of the school. While Mahiayadin et al. (2020) found that after clothes are washed, the remaining traces on samples A and B were only 1.78 ng/μl and 3.28 ng/μl while in the washing machine 3.28 ng/μl in sample A and 1.11 ng/μl in sample B. Therefore, his study concludes that a washing machine and laundry effectively removed traces of najis from clothes.

Maulida and Muslimah (2021) discover that the best solution for those using washing machines or running self-service laundry enterprises is to separate places where dirty clothes are known to contain heavy najis /mughallaẓah/; prioritize purifying clothes with light najis /mukhaffafah/; rinse them with free-flowing water before drying. In this regard, the Mufti Department of Penang (2020) outlines three solutions to overcome doubts on the purity level of clothes in a washing machine:

1- To cleanse the traces of najis such as blood, urine, and feces first from the clothes with absolute water before washing.

2- To rinse the clothes several times until it is believed that there are no more traces of najis.

3- To separate clothes containing najis from the others either in soaking or washing (Mufti Department of Penang, 2020, 46)

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted to assess the understanding level of self-service laundry customers on the ṭahārah concept in cloth-purifying practice and their concern about all it takes when performing the practice at a self-service laundry. To achieve this objective, a questionnaire consisting of four parts was distributed. Part 1 focuses on the demographic profile of the respondents, part 2 on the respondents' understanding of the ṭahārah concept

from a religious point of view, part 3 on the concern level of self-service laundry customers about the concept in actual practice when purifying clothes.

Questionnaires were randomly distributed to laundry customers across the country generally on social media and placing QR code at the laundry premises. Questionnaires were prepared using the Google Form and distributed to customers using a barcode scanning placed at several places offering self-service laundry services around the vicinity of the study area. While waiting for the washing process to be completed, the customers interactively answered related questions in the questionnaires.

To assess their understanding of the *ṭahārah* concept, respondents were asked 10 Yes or No questions related to its five characteristics as defined by the religion. Additionally, 20 instruments were used to gauge their sensitivity to the concept in cloth-purifying practice, using a 5-point Likert scale. The respondents' concern level for each construct was measured using the mean score, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean Score Ranking.

Mean score	Category	Interpretation
0.00 – 2.99	Low	Low concern level about the research constructs.
3.00 – 3.99	Moderate	Moderate concern level about the research constructs.
4.00 – 5.00	High	High concern level about the research constructs.

Through this approach, customers' preference can be evaluated, and which later can be used as a benchmark by entrepreneurs in further improving the services provided. It is hoped that through this planned process, invaluable findings can be highlighted as the main reference of the self-service laundry industry in providing quality Sharia-compliant services, in addition to raising awareness among customers on the *ṭahārah* necessity in the daily purification practices in life and boosting the growth of halal industries in the country.

FINDINGS

Respondents' Demographic Profile

Respondents are divided based on the distribution of zones into North, South, East, Central, and West Malaysia. The North Zone involves respondents from Kedah, Perlis, Penang, and Perak states while the Southern zone involves respondents from Melaka, Negeri Sembilan and Johor. The Eastern Zone involves Kelantan, Terengganu, and Pahang and the West Malaysia involves Labuan, Sabah, and Sarawak. The number of respondents and percentage based on zones in Malaysia is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Zones.

Zone	Frequency	Percentage (%)
North	56	32
East	56	32
Central	26	15
South	24	14
West	12	7
Total	174	100

According to Table 2, the respondents in the survey are representative of all regions. The highest number of respondents came from the North (56) and East (56) zones, accounting for 64% of the total responses. The Central and Southern zones were represented by 15% (26) and 14% (24) of the respondents, respectively. In contrast, West Malaysia had the fewest responses, with only 7% (12) of the total respondents from this zone. The difference in the number of respondents from each zone may be due to the varying levels of advertising and promotions across the regions. Based on Table 3, it is found that the respondents represent all ages. Most respondents are aged 40 and below, representing 62.6% (109). This data shows that young people are more prone to the use of self-service laundry compared to the older.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Age.

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 and below	10	5.7
21 – 30	84	48.3
31 – 40	15	8.6
41- 50	32	18.4
51 and above	33	19
Total	174	100

The findings show that the respondents attained different levels of education. A total of 14.4% (25 people) were SPM leavers, 17.2% (30 people) attained a diploma or equivalent while most respondents were bachelor's degree holders, which is 63.2% (110 people). The remaining 5.2% (9 people) attained a higher degree. This finding shows that the educational level of the respondents is diverse with the majority having attained a degree and above.

Most respondents, 35.6% (62 people), in terms of religious education, were graduates of religious studies at the undergraduate level, 14.4% (25 people) up to the diploma level, and 12.6% (22 people) up to the religious secondary school level. A total of 28.2% (49 people) studied religion up to the SPM level only while the rest, 9.2% (16 people) at primary level. In conclusion, all respondents have gone through religious education at various levels with 50% of them being exposed up to the diploma and degree level.

In terms of social status, the number of respondents who reported they are married and still single is almost equal. Findings show that 51% (89 people) are single, while the remaining 49% (85 people) are married. This finding shows that self-service laundry facilities are used by both social groups, whether married or single. While in terms of employment, the findings show that 58% (101 people) are government sector workers, 16% (28 people) are private sector workers and the remaining 26% (45 people) are self-employed.

There is only 21% of respondents who are regular customers of self-service laundry service while 79% of them use this service only, when necessary, in terms of frequency of using the facility. The breakdown of groups that often use the service is 13% of respondents are single, while another 8% are married. The breakdown of groups that sometimes use this requirement is the married group amounting to 41% and the single group 37%. This finding shows that customers who are still single use this facility more often compared to those who are married. This situation may be due to customers who are married having their own washing machines at home and using this service sparingly.

Respondents' Understanding on the *Ṭahārah* Concept

As has been discussed based on the meaning component theory, the *ṭahārah* concept has five semantic fields which are the effect of *ṭahārah* on the legitimacy of prayer, necessary use of absolute water as a valid condition for purification, removal of physical and unseen najis, absence of color, smell and taste and ways of purifying each type of najis. To test the understanding level of respondents on this concept, a questionnaire containing questions asking them to determine the semantic field of *ṭahārah* was presented in part B. Some distraction items were also presented to ensure that respondents mastered the true meaning of the tested concept. The results of the questionnaire are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of Scores of the *Ṭahārah* Meaning Characteristics.

Statement	Frequency	%
Respondents who stated 5 out of 5 *ṭahārah* meaning characteristics	144	82.8
Respondents who stated 4 out of 5 *ṭahārah* meaning characteristics	27	15.5
Respondents who stated 3 out of 5 *ṭahārah* meaning characteristics	2	1.1
Respondents who stated 2 out of 5 *ṭahārah* meaning characteristics	1	0.6
Respondents who stated 1 out of 5 *ṭahārah* meaning characteristics	0	0
Total	174	100

Referring to the above table 4, it is found that 82.8% (144 people) of the respondents were able to state all the five characteristics of the *ṭahārah* meaning while 15.5% (27 people) four. Only 1.1% (2 people) managed to state three while 0.6% (1 person) two of the five characteristics. Meanwhile, none of the respondents were unable to

state any characteristics. This finding shows that all respondents can state at least two of the five characteristics of the *ṭahārah* meaning. This finding shows that the respondents have a good knowledge on the meaning components of *ṭahārah* as outlined by the Sharia.

Respondents are found to be confused with the statement "the way to purify all najis is the same, which is to remove the smell, color, and taste only" when a total of 71% of respondents agree with the item in question. While the fact is that the statement of the item contradicts the statement of the previous item, which is "each type of najis has its own way of purifying it". In the *ṭahārah* concept, it is stated that najis mughallazah needs to be purified with seven washings one of which is water mixed with soil while najis mukhaffafah is by simply sprinkling water (al-Khin & al-Bugha, 1992).

The statement of the item "all water is pure and purifying" also obtained a relatively high "yes" response. A total of 40 respondents representing 23% answered "yes" to this statement, while this statement contradicts the *ṭahārah* concept as water can be classified into absolute and non-absolute, and that only the former is pure and purifying (al-Khin & al-Bugha, 1992). There are several conditions that cause water to become unpure, including when it has been mixed with something containing najis or the water is in small amount and does not flow. This finding shows that there is confusion among respondents about the overall *ṭahārah* concept.

As for the failure in stating all the five characteristics of *ṭahārah* by the respondents, the item most often marked "no" was "absolute water is a valid condition for purification" where 9 respondents said so for this item, followed by the item "each type of najis has its own way of purifiying it" which is 8 people. Then, the item "must purify the physical and unseen najis" which is 8 people, the item "affecting the legitimacy of prayer" which is 5, and the item "must remove smell, color, and taste" which is 5. This finding shows that some respondents are still had a vague understanding of the *ṭahārah* concept as emphasized by the Sharia. What even more surprising is that there are 25 respondents (14%) who answered "yes" to the item "purity of clothing has nothing to do with the legitimacy of prayer".

Most respondents grasped the *ṭahārah* concept as outlined by the religion. They can identify the characteristics of *ṭahārah* meaning and distinguish it from the distraction items, even though small portion of respondents still need to have clearer understanding on the concept.

The Concern Level of Self-Service Laundry Customers About The *Ṭahārah* Necessity in The Cloth-Purifying Practice

To test the concern level of customers about the *ṭahārah* necessity when purifying clothes at a self-service laundry, related questions were asked in section C. Respondents were presented with questions with a choice of answers using a 5-point Likert scale agreement level. The questions are divided into five constructs: concern about the *ṭahārah* concept, the methods of washing clothes, the need of absolute water, the purification practice and the *ṭahārah* necessity in worship, especially prayer. The findings for each construct are as follows:

(a.) Construct 1: Concern Level About the *Ṭahārah* Concept

To test the concern level of respondents about the *ṭahārah* concept, four items were presented. Based on the below Table 5, most respondents agree that *ṭahārah* is a necessity in religion with 15 people of them choosing to agree and 157 expressing strong agreement. Only 2 people expressed somewhat less agreement. This shows that the entire respondents (mean = 4.89) understand the need to fulfill the *ṭahārah* as a religious necessity in everyday life. However, the respondents were quite confused between the clean and *ṭahārah* concept. 35 of them agree and 75 strongly agree with the statement that the *ṭahārah* concept has the same meaning as clean in Malay. Only 29 people strongly disagree and 7 disagree. This finding shows that respondents are quite struggled to differentiate between the clean concept in Malay and the *ṭahārah* concept as outlined in Islam. Therefore, the average mean for the item is only at a moderate level, which is mean = 3.52.

Table 5. Mean Score of Construct 1.

No.	Item	Score					
		1	2	3	4	5	Mean
1	Purification of clothing from najis is a necessity in religion.	0	0	2	15	157	4.89
2	The ṭahārah concept according to the Sharia necessity has the same meaning as clean.	29	7	28	35	75	3.52
3	There is a difference between the meaning of pure, clean, and washing terms.	1	3	10	37	123	4.76
4	To be pure from najis is not to just be clean in the naked eyes.	0	2	7	23	142	4.75
	Mean average						4.48

The above table 5 reveals that respondents tend to differentiate between the meanings of pure, clean, and washing; 37 of them chose to agree, and 123 strongly agreed, that these phrases have different meanings. With a mean score of 4.76, this item is at a high level. The situation is identical for item four, where 142 respondents strongly agree, and 23 agree that being pure from najis involves more than merely being hygienic. In summary, the respondents' degree of concern with the ṭahārah notion is high (mean = 4.75), despite their apparent inability to discriminate between the ṭahārah and the clean concept employed in the local language. In general, respondents' concerns regarding the necessity of the ṭahārah are quite strong (mean = 4.48).

(b.) Construct 2: Concern Level About the Purification Methods

In this construct, four items were presented as shown in Table 6. These items include the methods of purifying clothes, categories of najis, traces of najis on clothes and pure elements in purifying clothes.

Table 6. Mean Score of Construct 2.

No.	Item	Score					
		1	2	3	4	5	Mean
1	I am very clear about the methods of purifying clothes for each category of najis.	0	1	20	49	104	4.47
2	Najis is categorized into mukhaffafah (light), mutawassiṭah (medium) and mughallazah (heavy).	0	0	1	11	162	4.93
3	The traces of urine, menstrual blood, and dirt on clothes must be cleansed so that the clothes can be used for prayer.	2	0	0	10	162	4.90
4	The element of najis is considered gone after the absence of smell, taste, and color.	3	3	1	24	143	4.73
	Mean average						4.76

Referring to the above table 6, most respondents are found to have a very high concern level about the purification methods. Most respondents state very clearly the methods of purifying clothes (min. = 4.47) and understand the categorization of najis in Islam (min. = 4.93). Respondents are also concerned about the obligation of purifying najis so that the clothes they wear can be used for prayer (min. = 4.90). Respondents also agree with the need to remove all traces of najis when purifying clothes (min. =4.73). In conclusion, the concern level of respondents about this construct is at a high level with the mean average score recorded being 4.76.

This finding shows that the respondents' knowledge of the ṭahārah concept and necessity in the purification of clothes is good. Respondents were exposed to such basic matters in Sharia as the types of najis and how to purify them, regardless of their groups and educational levels.

(C.) Construct 3: Concern Level About the Need for Absolute Water

Water is the basic medium in purifying clothes. In Islam, absolute water is a prerequisite to making the washed clothes reach the ṭahārah level to be used in prayer. To assess the concern level of respondents about this construct, three items were presented as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Mean Score of Construct 3.

No.	Item	Score					
		1	2	3	4	5	Mean
1	Water in all circumstances is pure and purifying.	64	25	30	24	31	2.61

2	Running water or water that exceeds two kolahs is a valid condition when purifying clothes.	13	9	29	33	90	4.02
3	Mixing clean water that is less than 2 kolahs with clothes containing najis will make the water impure.	9	6	28	45	86	4.11
	Mean average						3.58

It can be observed from the above table 7 that respondents' concerns over this construct are modest (min. = 3.58). The degree of agreement among respondents with the first statement "water in all circumstances is pure and purifying" is discovered to be 64 strongly disagree, 25 disagree, 24 agree, and 31 strongly agree. This item's mean score (mean = 2.61) likewise showed the lowest score. This result demonstrates that the respondents' exposure to the idea that purifying practices require absolute water is comparatively low. Absolute water is only pure and cleansing, according to Islamic law. Other sorts of water lack this characteristic.

However, the statement in the second item stating the characteristics of absolute water as a valid condition in purifying clothes obtained a high agreement score (min. = 4.02) where a total of 33 respondents agrees, 90 strongly agree, 9 disagree and 13 strongly disagree. In the third item with the statement that a small amount of absolute water can turn into the opposite if mixed with clothes containing najis, 45 respondents chose to agree and 86 strongly agree.

Overall, the concern level of the respondents about the need for absolute water in the cloth-purifying practice is at a moderate level (min. = 3.58) where they are less sensitive about the need. Thus, the score distribution for this entire construct is balanced between a scale of 1 to 5 compared to the other constructs.

(d.) Construct 4: Concern Level of Respondents in The Cloth-Purifying Practice

To test the concern level of respondents about the *ṭahārah* necessity in the cloth-purifying practice, four items were presented in Table 8. Respondents were exposed to questions that focused on their practices when purifying clothes. This is because, as recommended by the Mufti Department of Penang (2020), the best step to remove doubts in the process of purifying clothes in a self-service laundry machine is to cleanse the traces of najis before the purification process, rinse the clothes several times and separate the pure clothes from those containing najis while purifying them in a machine.

Table 8. Mean Score of Construct 4.

No.	Item	Score					Mean
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	I will remove the traces of dirt and najis first before washing them at the self-service laundry.	1	4	12	20	137	4.66
2	I will separate the clothes containing najis from the clean ones when purifying clothes at the self-service laundry.	3	6	16	19	130	4.53
3	I will wash clothes containing najis separately from those believed to be pure.	1	6	11	28	128	4.59
4	Clean clothes mixed with ones containing najis in the same container will make them all contain najis.	4	11	29	31	99	4.21
	Mean average						4.50

Based on the above table 8, it is found that most respondents practice the methods of purifying clothes as recommended. 157 respondents stated that they would first remove the traces of dirt and najis before washing. 149 respondents would separate clothes containing najis from those believed to be clean when washing while 156 would wash clothes containing najis separately from clothes believed to be clean. This finding reveals that most respondents put into practice the *ṭahārah* necessity in the practice of purifying their clothes. Most respondents also agree that mixing clean clothes with those containing najis will cause all of them to contain najis too (mean = 4.21).

Few respondents (5 for item 1, 9 for item 2, and 7 for item 3) do not demonstrate compassion in their purification rituals. When asked with an instrument on comprehending purifying practices, the mean score for

the relevant item, however, marginally fall. The statement that "clean clothes mixed with najis-containing clothes in the same container will cause them all to contain najis" is backed by 31 respondents, 99 strongly, 29 disagree, 11 disagree, and 4 strongly disagree. This item's mean score (mean = 4.21) is lower than the previous items in the same construct.

(e.) Construct 5: Concern Level About The Ṭaḥārah Necessity in Worship and Prayer

The *ṭaḥārah* necessity has a significant relationship with worship, especially prayer. A prayer will not be valid if one of the clothes, place, or body is impure from physical or unseen najis (al-Khin & al-Bugha, 1992, p. 121). Therefore, maintaining purity is of paramount importance in the life of a Muslim. To test the concern level of respondents about this necessity, several instruments are presented in this construct (Table 9).

Table 9. Mean Score of Construct 5.

No.	Item	Score					
		1	2	3	4	5	Mean
1	A prayer is invalid if the clothes, place, or body is impure.	3	0	6	28	137	4.70
2	The purity of clothes worn for worship must be ensured, not just clean.	2	0	4	24	144	4.77
3	Clothes deemed clean are pure and can be worn for prayer.	31	29	28	34	52	3.27
	Mean average						3.19

Based on the above table 9, 28 respondents are found to agree and 137 strongly agree with the statement that "a prayer is not valid if the clothes are impure". Even so, 3 respondents strongly disagree with this statement. This finding shows that there are respondents who do not associate the legitimacy of worship with the *ṭaḥārah* necessity related to clothing, place, and body. 24 respondents agree and 144 strongly agree with the statement that the "purity of clothes worn for worship should be ensured and not just clean", while 2 strongly disagree.

Regarding the third item, the respondents showed a lack of clarity regarding the differences between its substance and the second. The results for the third item show the opposite, even though a large proportion of respondents agree with the assertion that "purity of clothes worn for worship must be ensured, not just clean". Also, 86 respondents either agree or strongly agree with the assertion that "clothes deemed clean are pure and can be worn for prayer" whereas 29 disagree and 31 strongly disagree. This finding shows that respondents are confused between worship and prayer. Moreover, 168 respondents agree that the "purity of clothing should be ensured, not just clean" for worship and 86 agree that "clothes deemed clean are pure and can be worn for prayer" for prayer.

DISCUSSION

The social media platforms facilitate the distribution of questionnaires covering wide geographical areas and save costs. Researchers do not need to meet the respondents face-to-face, instead, respondents can just access the questionnaires through the shared link and provided QR code. However, this approach results in the distribution of younger respondents being higher than the older. This may have suggested that young people are more familiar with leveraging such technologies.

The combination of theory and practice shows that most respondents understand and practice knowledge in the cloth-purifying practice using self-service laundry services. They are aware that ensuring the purity of clothes from najis is a religious necessity (min. = 4.89) and that the purity concept is not just clean to the naked eye (min. = 4.75). However, the existence of other terms in the local language that have close meanings such as the clean term deprives the respondents of assessing the difference in the meaning of the two terms. Construct 1 clearly shows the disparity in the agreement level. Regarding the idea of *ṭaḥārah* having the same meaning as clean, 35 respondents (20%) and 75 (43%) highly agree; yet 37 (21%) and 123 (71%) strongly agree that the phrase pure, clean, and washing have different meanings. On the fourth question, 142 respondents (82%) strongly agree that pure is more than merely visually clean, while 23 (13%) agree. This study's results are consistent with earlier research showing that consumers' comprehension of religious phrases is confused and disrupted when there is no equivalent term in the Malay language (Jumat, 2023; Ali, 2015; Kamal, 2023; Pabiyah & Che Radiah, 2011; Abdullah et al., 2017).

According to the respondents' purification practices, many of them will remove dirt and najis from clothing (min. = 4.66), separate najis-containing clothing from clean clothing before washing (min. = 4.53), and wash najis-containing clothing apart from clothing that they believe is clean (min. = 4.59). This is in line with the Mufti Department of Penang's (2020) recommendations to eliminate any questions about purity when using a self-service laundry machine. This result demonstrates a high degree of awareness of the respondents' day-to-day activities (average min. = 4.50). Additionally, it is discovered that this result conflicts with Ana Fitria Febilia's (2019) study, which indicated that respondents to his study had quite moderate cloth-purifying practices. Furthermore, the current study's findings indicate a lack of significance for such ethical issues that were previously discussed on social media as customers overloading washing machines with clothes (Mstar, Sept. 3, 2022), washing pet accessories at self-service laundry facilities, abusing animals in the dryer (Fuad, 2020), and putting the wrong objects in the machines (Leong, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The high concern level of respondents about such basic religious knowledge as *ṭahārah* law, and the need to maintain purity in worship shows that the fardu ain (obligatory acts each Muslim must perform) education applied to the community achieves its objective. The community not only knows but appreciates and practices education in their daily practices. The high concern level about the ethical issues of ensuring the purity level of washing shows that respondents are very concerned about the cleanliness and purity of the clothes being washed. This awareness is very crucial when using such public facilities as self-service laundry services since the facilities provided are for mutual benefit. Consumers should be educated to prioritize and be rational in their everyday acts. Basic religious education at all levels of study, the use of notice outlining reminders, methods of use and capacity as well as load sizes must be engineered in educating and driving the community towards an improved quality of life.

Acknowledgment

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