

Tawadhu and Happiness Among University Students

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Abstract: This study aims to survey the relationships between *Tawadhu* (humility in Islamic Psychology perspective) and happiness among the university students who are studying in Yogyakarta. The participants of this study were 100 muslim students who were recruited through a purposive sampling as samples of this study. Using Nashori's *Tawadhu* Scale and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) constructed by Hills and Argyle, the data were analyzed by using a product moment correlation test. The results found that there was a positive relationship between *tawadhu* and happiness among the university students. The higher the *tawadhu*, the higher the students' happiness.

Keywords: *Tawadhu, Happiness, University Students*

1. Introduction

Happiness is one of the most important emotional states of human life from which the true meanings of happiness are viewed differently from one individual to another (Nashori, 2015). For some individuals, including university students, happiness is perceived as their self-psychological functions. With this in mind, they would feel happy when they can contribute something that is meaningful for other people or society where they live, establish a positive relationship with others, and can contribute positive impacts for their environment. Therefore, individuals or university students, who share their views of happiness, would spend their time thinking of benefit they can contribute to others.



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In addition, some other individuals construe happiness from the point of view of materialism so that they would be happy when they have much money. This kind of happiness is categorized as “acquisition as the pursuit of happiness”, which views happiness from the possessions and the money they own (Husna, 2015). These people believe that success in achieving financial viability or having materialistic belongings is the reason to achieve happiness and they assume this as a key of happiness. Hence, they start to work hard as they wish to collect branded properties and attributes such as the latest version of sophisticated gadgets, or the brand new trending clothes.

Individual beliefs and perceptions of happiness as elaborated above can be practiced in their lives and it shows that the practices are different from one to another. The issue of happiness has been justified in the Holy Quran, which says that religiosity is one influential factors of happiness. In Islamic teaching perspectives, one of the characteristics of religiosity that can affect one’s happiness is tawadhu (humility). This understanding is heavily influenced by one of the verses in the Holy Quran (Ar-Ra’d:28), saying that *“Those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearth find comfort”*. Considering this verse, the remembrance of His magnitude and greatness causes one’s humility and submission towards Him. Being humble as a reflection of the remembrance of Allah (God) could lead people to have comfort and pleasant feelings (Ali, 1946).

Therefore, Hills and Argyle (2001) agree with the concept of happiness as a pleasant feeling, a comfortable state, a positive emotion or satisfaction of an individual on his/herself. Meanwhile, Engry and Ambarini (2019) assert that happiness is influenced by an individual’s relationship with God. The individual’s relationship with God, which is represented and institutionalized within religion, is closely related to the happiness of an individual. When an individual relates closely to his/her God by doing what He loves, it can stimulate positive energy to him/herself which then leads to happiness. This is in line with Islamic perspectives that consider happiness as spiritual aspects reflected in positive emotion such as feeling calm and peace, agreeing and satisfying with the provisions of Allah (Aziz, 2011) Hence, this study provides causal understanding between tawadhu and happiness of university students in Yogyakarta.

2. Literature Review

Tawadhu originates from the word *wadh’a*, meaning “condescending” and from *“ittadha’a”*, meaning being humble. According to Nashori (2023), the aspects which can define tawadhu include (1) submitting and obeying to the truth of God, (2) treating others equally and not feeling superior to others, and lastly (3) seeing the strengths or dignity of others.

Relationship between tawadhu and happiness has been discussed by Seligman (in Zawadzka & Zalewska, 2013), which suggests that practicing virtues, such as modesty and humility, can create happiness. This is in line with the view of Salim (2006) who suggests that humility can be increased through a couple of ways. Firstly is respecting others and being polite when meeting anyone who is older or better than him/her. Secondly is, being humble and gentle to others, and lastly is submitting to the truth because an individual who upholds the truth can have a positive influence on him/her as he/she will feel happy in this life. Happiness has six

virtues and they are reflected in 24 characteristics (some of them are transcendence, humility and modesty. Practicing these characteristics, especially humility, individuals can achieve happiness (Seligman in Harmaini & Yulianti, 2014).

A previous study by Munawaroh (2018) aims to observe santri (students) at the Al Munawwir Islamic Boarding School Yogyakarta. Her findings of study suggest that a level of psychological well-being (happiness) could be explained significantly by tawadhu. Thus, the higher the level of tawadhu, the higher the level of psychological well-being in the students. Although Munawaroh' (2018) study has the same theme of research with this study, this current study is different from Munawaroh's study (2018) in terms of subjects or methods. More specifically, this study aims to observe relationships between the tawadhu and the happiness of university students in Yogyakarta. A hypothesis of this study is formulated as follows. There is a positive relationship between tawadhu and happiness among the university, from which those who have a high score of tawadhu will have high score of happiness.

3. Method

This study used a quantitative approach as the data of dependent and independent variables were collected using relevant scales. The questionnaires, which have been converted to google form, were then administered using social media platforms to gather the desired respondents.

3.1. Sample

The population of this study includes male and female university students who are currently studying in Yogyakarta, and who are practicing Islamic religion. 100 university students were determined by a purposive sampling method as samples of this study.

3.2. Measurement Tools

3.2.1. Questionnaire 1

To measure the variable of happiness, the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) by Hills and Argyle (2002) is employed. Adapted from the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI) created by Argyle et al in 1989 (Engry & Ambarini, 2019). This questionnaire used a Likert scale, consisting of 29 items. Each item consisted of six scales which are ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. These scales represent the subject's assessment on components influencing happiness. The components of happiness include self-satisfaction, pleasure, self-esteem, calmness, self-control and efficacy. This scale has a high reliability score of 0.932 indicating that the OHQ scale could measure the subjective well-being adequately with low measurement errors (Ekawardhani et al, 2019).

3.2.2. Questionnaire 2

The instrument to measure the tawadhu behaviors was developed by Nashori (2015) in the form of the tawadhu scale. This scale included three dimensions, namely submitting and obeying to the truth, treating others equally and not feeling superior to others, and being able

to see strengths or dignity of others. These three dimensions were translated into 38 items of favorable and unfavorable statements. In his study in 2015, the tawadhu scales provide five choices of answer. The results of this study showed that the reliability value of respondents was in an adequate category (0.79) and the item reliability was in a special category (0.97). Then, the interaction between respondents and reliability items was measured by Cronbach alpha (KR-20) and the score was taken place as a very good category (0.88) (Nashori, 2015).

4. Results and Discussion

To analyze data some tests, including normality test, linearity test, and homogeneity test were conducted. The result of the normality test was illustrated in table 1 below.

Table 1. Results of Normality Test

Variable	Sig.	Conclusion
Happiness	0.200	Data distribution was normal
<i>Tawadhu</i>	0.051	Data distribution was normal

Table 1 displays that Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test is used to measure the normality test. The calculation used the SPSS program. The results show that all variables indicated a significance value of > 0.05 . It means that all the samples are normally distributed.

Table 2. Result of Anova Test

Variable	Sig
Happiness* <i>Tawadhu</i>	0.277

Table 2 displays the linearity test is done by applying Anova test through the SPSS program. The results show that the deviation of linearity was 0.277 ($0.277 > 0.05$) and this means that the data are not linear.

Table 3. Results of Homogeneity Test

Variable	Sig.	Conclusion
Happiness	0.312	Homogeneous
<i>Tawadhu</i>	0.78	Homogeneous

Table 4. Results of Correlation Test

Variable	R	p	Interpretation
<i>Tawadhu</i> on Happiness	0.234	0.01	Significant

It could be seen in table 4, that the significance value is 0.010, hence, the data is correlated. In addition, the correlation value between the happiness and the tawadhu is 0.234, and this indicates that the level of correlation is low. Therefore, it could be concluded that tawadhu and happiness have a low correlation level in the form of a positive relationship. These results indicate that the higher the level of tawadhu, the higher the level of happiness.

The analysis of this study indicates that there is a positive relationship between tawadhu and happiness. Thus, this implies that the higher the level of the tawadhu, the higher the level of happiness is. Conversely, the lower level of the tawadhu, the lower level of happiness is. The result of this study is in line with Seligman's theory (in Zawadzka & Zalewska, 2013) from which practicing virtues, such as modesty and humility, can lead to happiness. Reported by Widiatoro et al. (2017), Argyle points out that a human relationship with God can significantly affect his/her happiness, or in other words religion has a close relationship with an individual's happiness. When an individual relates more closely to Allah SWT by doing what He loves, this will generate positive energy that then leads to his/her happiness. This indicates that tawadhu, an attitude that is loved by Allah SWT, will produce positive energy for an individual such as happiness. In addition, reported by Harmaini and Yulianti (2014), Seligman asserts that of 24 strengths characteristics of an individual to achieve happiness, humility is one of them. People who maintain tawadhu will certainly get positive benefits, as it is an attitude which is loved by Allah SWT.

Furthermore, the results also found that the correlation between the tawadhu and happiness tends to show a weak relationship category. The effect of tawadhu on happiness is not significant enough although the tawadhu is related to happiness. Therefore, this might indicate that tawadhu is not a main way of achieving happiness for the university students in Yogyakarta, yet other factors could have more effective effects than tawadhu. One of these factors is materialistic aspects, which was suggested by Husna (2015). Her study reveals that students believe in "acquisition as the pursuit of happiness", so that possessions and money are considered as essential factors to achieve happiness; however, this belief is not in accordance to Islamic teachings.

5. Conclusion

This study indicates that there is a positive relationship between tawadhu and happiness among the university students in Yogyakarta. Therefore, it could be concluded that the higher level of the tawadhu, the higher level of the happiness is, and conversely the lower level of the tawadhu, the lower level of the happiness is. The authors suggest that the university students in their early adulthood had better apply the tawadhu continuously in their daily lives and practice it as a way to achieve happiness.

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