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Self Esteem and Depression: Relations with Muslims' Happiness

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Abstract- Happiness is negatively correlated with depression and anxiety. Likewise, self-esteem has close relationship with the element of happiness. Previous research mentioned that it possesses high correlations between measurement of happiness and self-esteem [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8]. Thus, one aim of this study is to view both positive and negative aspects, by exploring the differential level of depression, self esteem and happiness on Muslim students. The method of this research is quantitative, and the respondents were selected in several states in Malaysia, which approximately 500 people. This research used Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES), Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS 21) and happiness instrument developed by the researcher based on al-Ghazali's concept of happiness. After conducting the descriptive analysis for every construct, this research used the average of construct, whereas to determine the correlation between depression and self-esteem aspects, Pearson correlation has been computed and the result is significant which is $r = -0.462$, $p < 0.01$. It shows that the direction of relationship was found to be negative at the moderate level. As a conclusion, there is positive relationship with happiness and self esteem, and it negatively correlated with depression.

I. INTRODUCTION

This study employs developed instrument of happiness which is based on al-Ghazali's concept of happiness that contains the aspect of religious knowledge, practices and the individual element. The happiness instrument also contains several sub-domains, for example, the construct of religious knowledge encompasses of several aspects namely knowledge of self, knowledge of God, knowledge of the World, and knowledge of the hereafter. For the construct of practices, it includes the element of soul purification practice and social relationship which contribute to Muslim's happiness.

This study looks at three different elements as dependent variables that relate to Muslim's happiness. First, in line with previous research, we examined religious knowledge which reflected as related contributor of happiness based on al-Ghazali's model (e.g: knowing several religious concept contributes to happiness). Second, to focus more on practices, we examined soul purification (e.g. performing prayer contributes to happiness) and social relationship (e.g. people would be happy if they interact well with society) aspects. Third, we examined individual's perspective regarding happiness (e.g. whether or not wealth and health acts as an indicator of happiness).

Arguably, does religious knowledge, practices and individual's happiness have an impact on Muslim's society's happiness and what is the correlation with depression and self esteem? There is also related findings in which the described element assists the individuals to achieve happiness. Based on Western psychologists' findings of a new movement that simple intentional positive activities, such as practicing kindness and expressing gratitude contribute to individual's happiness [9]. This is also closely related with other studies which demonstrate that social relationship, economic factors and participating in religious activities lead to elderly's happiness [10]. For example, [11] has examined the relationship between the significance of personal meaning, psychological wellbeing, and religiosity of a group of Muslim students in England.

Participating in religious activities is reported acquiring better subjective wellbeing [12]. Accordingly [13] also reveals that there is positive significant between happiness, physical health, mental health and religiosity among Kuwait students. Apart from that, spiritual practice is closely related to subjective wellbeing [14]. It also contributes to positive psychological factors and assists them to handle stress and depression [15, 16]. There has been very limited research about the specific happiness scale according to Islamic perspective [17], but the evidence from positive psychology suggests that we clearly would expect a tie between happiness and other Islamic contributors of happiness.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research from Islamic positive psychology indicates that it is more important to emphasise on developing positive and righteous practices as well as avoiding or diminishing negative ones, such as depression. From Islamic point of view of positive psychology, it is important to focus on developing righteous practices, similarly avoiding the negative aspect such as depression. The findings of [18] stated that the technique of Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) would help to decrease depressive symptoms and improve positive well being. It would appear that those positive and negative affect are distinct dimensions. In other words, they are asymmetrical and not inversely related in form and effect [19]. Hence, if this study focuses on the positive aspects such as happiness and self-esteem, as well as the negative level of depression. The main religious elements relating to happiness, well-being encompasses moral, spiritual and integrative strength behind all sects and religious orders and brotherhoods

[20]. Islamic perspective of happiness is based on the Quran and the Prophet's sayings, thus the fundamental beliefs of Islam underlie them. Religion and spirituality are keys to comprehend the mental well being concept in Muslim society [21]. The empirical research pertaining to the positive impact of Islamic faith on Muslims' mental health is reviewed by other researchers, and one of the findings mention that Islam is similar to, but is different from other religion [22].

In Western perspective, happiness related to the state of wellbeing, experiencing pleasures and good feeling. The research of happiness goes a long way back in time, but to date, it is only positive psychology started to restudy it as a psychological construct. The target of positive psychology is to assist human to accept and enjoy human life, and attain happiness in their daily life [23]. Several positive psychologists have suggested various definitions of happiness. Some defines happiness as acquiring a good sense, enjoying life and requesting the sustainability of such feelings [24]. [25] describes happiness to a feeling of overall satisfaction with human's whole life. A more comprehensive description is provided by [26], who define happiness as a subjective well-being that encompasses a combination of life satisfaction and a balance between positive and negative feelings. Obviously, happiness has various definitions for different people. Some research has proposed that the meaning of happiness is similar across individuals [27], but some scholars have argued that its definition is highly subjective and idiosyncratic [28]. Based on research that explores emotions expressed on 12 million people, and also from surveys and laboratory experiments. [29] reviewed that the meaning of happiness is not fixed. Instead, it tends to change systematically over the course of a human's lifetime.

Meanwhile, self esteem is the personal view about him or herself and appreciation of his/her worth. It relates to a favourable or unfavourable response towards the self. It describes how much the individual values his or herself and how important he/she thinks is in this world. It is how a person feel about his/her accomplishment and how a person sees him/herself [30]. It connects to the individual general feeling of self worth [31]. It is the main element of mental health; and has impactful effect on human emotion, behavior and motivation [32]. Person who possesses high degree of self esteem is likely to acquire low level of stress and depression [33].

The findings of [34, 35] mention that the aspect of happiness and self esteem have significant effects on physical and mental wellbeing. Positivism predicts significantly towards happiness [36]. Likewise, self esteem has positive relationship with happiness and optimism [37]. Low degree of self esteem is connected with severe problems such as maladjustment, suicidal tendencies and psychological problems like stress, anxiety, depression and loneliness [38].

Additionally, the findings of [39] mentioned that the symptoms of depression encompass insomnia, deep sorrow or grief, hopelessness, self-dislike and suicidal tendencies. Depression may spoil academic performance, delinquency, and teenage pregnancy [40, 41]. Even though some teenagers have some difficulty in building self esteem, yet the findings revealed they were able to maintain positive self esteem and they tended to expose more positive affect, greater wellness and fewer depressive signs [42, 43]. Additionally, fears of happiness have high correlation with depression, anxiety and stress. Fear of happiness was revealed to be the best predictor of depression, anxiety and stress. Thus, the findings also proved that fears of positive emotion mediate the connection between depression and alexithymia [44]. On the basis of above literature, the researcher summarises that happiness and self esteem act positively, whereas depression correlate negatively with happiness and depression.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Population and Sampling

This study chose participants based on non-probability, which is convenience sampling, due to the fact that every case in the population does not have a known probability of being encompassed in the sample, and the representativeness of the sample may be compromised [45]. It was about 250 samples among students. The questionnaire was also distributed to university students, whereas the other 155 are for the elderly, and the rest are among middle aged people. This study was conducted in several areas in Malaysia, namely Kelantan (east Malaysia), Perlis (north Malaysia), Melaka (south Malaysia), and Selangor (west Malaysia).

3.2 Instrumentation

Instruments: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and Depression Anxiety Stress (DASS 21) were utilized as the information gathering devices in the exploration. On the one hand, the researcher builds happiness instrument which has been used to measure the level of respondents' happiness.

RSES: It was created by Dr Morris Rosenberg (1965). It is a scale made of 10 things in which five of the items have positively worded statements and another five have negatively worded ones. It comprises of ten-item Likert-type scale with items answered on a four-point scale.

DASS 21: The Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scales were introduced by researchers at the University of New South Wales (Australia). It was designed to identify the elements of emotional disturbance; for example, to assess the level of severity of the main symptoms of depression, anxiety or stress. It contains 21 items Likert-type scale with items arranged on a four-point scale.

Happiness instrument: It was developed by researcher based on al-Ghazali's concept of happiness. The Cronbach alpha and composite reliability have exceeded 0.7 exhibits that the value is within the acceptable range [46].

Analysis of the Data: The researcher decides to use Pearson correlation to measure the relationship between happiness, self-esteem and depression. Meanwhile, average construct has been calculated to identify the relationship of all instruments.

Procedure: The researcher contacted the person in charge to collect the data in universities. Whereas for the elderly respondents, the researcher focuses on several places as mentioned above. With a specific end target to complete 500 polls, the researcher approached the respondent individually to answer the survey. It will provide a capacity to deal with the complex survey if the respondents are unsure to reply and every questionnaire took about 15 minutes to answer. It took for about one month to finish data collection.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Average of construct

From each developed construct of happiness, it can be observed that Knowledge of self has attained a mean of 3.84 ± 0.76 implying that most of the respondents agree with the construct. Moreover, the construct knowledge of Allah has attained a mean of (3.99 ± 0.65) meaning the participant agreed with the latter construct/ in regards to knowledge of world (3.99 ± 0.65) it can be observed that most of the participants agree with the latter construct. In reference to knowledge of hereafter, which has attained a mean of 3.98 ± 0.60 meaning most of the participants agree. Coherently, the construct spiritual practices has attained mean of 3.85 ± 0.62 implying that the participants agree. In response to the individual happiness construct, it has attained a mean of 3.98 ± 0.60 proving that most of the respondents agree with the latter. Coherently, the individual happiness construct can be observed to have attained a mean of 3.98 ± 0.60 showing that most of the participants agree with the latter construct. Notably, depression, as a construct has a mean of 2.10 ± 0.55 displaying the disagreement of the respondents with the construct. Lastly the self-esteem construct has attained a mean of 3.82 ± 0.61 implying the agreement among most of the participants with the latter construct.

Table 4.12: average construct

Construct	Mean	SD
Knowledge of Self	3.84	0.76
Knowledge of Allah	3.99	0.65
Knowledge of world	3.99	0.65
Knowledge of hereafter	3.98	0.60
Spiritual practices	3.85	0.62
Individual happiness	3.98	0.60
Relationship society	3.92	0.61
Depression	2.10	0.55
Self esteem	3.82	0.61

4.2 Correlation between Depression and self-esteem

Pearson correlation has been computed to determine the correlation between depression and self-esteem. The findings revealed that there was a significant correlation between depression and self-esteem [$r = -0.462$, $p < 0.01$]. The direction of relationship was found to be negative at the moderate level. It means that self-esteem increases whenever depression decreases.

Table 4.15: Correlation between depression and self-esteem.

		MEAN_ Depression	MEAN_ Self_ Esteem
MEAN_ Depression	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	500	
MEAN_ Esteem	Pearson Correlation	-.462**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	500	500

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

V. CONCLUSION

The analysis showed that happiness and self-esteem are correlated aspects in which most of respondents consider that the elements positively affects their well-being. In contrast, the positive contexts are contradict with the feeling of depression and anxiety. From the tables, they show that the respondents who possess high degree of self-esteem and happiness consider that they have low level of depression and anxiety. This research is relevant to be conducted to other Islamic states so that they would measure their subjective well-being especially based on Islamic concept of happiness. .

Scientifically, this study supports past research indicating the importance of religious aspect and righteous practices as predictor of happiness. However, both scientifically and educationally this research fits well with the current emphasis on improving the religious elements for indicating Muslim’s well being. It is important that this Islamic scale becomes part of the educational and public understanding of Muslim’s well being. More than that, we need to distinguish the important components of well-being, such as the cognitive and affective components, as they relate to the Islamic psychology.

Well-being is regarded as to play an integral role in Muslim society, thus it is recommended that further research would able to develop another instrument related to negative aspect such as depression and anxiety, so that it could be acknowledged as the aspect related to depression which depicted by Islamic law. Thus, it will ensure the society to avoid this negative affect and attain successful well-being in their life.

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