

How Does Spirituality Increase the Happiness of Medical Students?

Bagaimana Spiritualitas Meningkatkan Kebahagiaan Mahasiswa Kedokteran?

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Abstract: After completing education, medical students are expected to provide good medical services, so good mental health must be possessed. But in reality psychological problems occur since the time of medical education. This condition resulted in their unhappiness. Spirituality is believed to play a role in increasing happiness, so increasing spirituality will increase happiness. There has been no research on the relationship between spirituality and happiness in medical students, especially in Indonesia. The purpose of this study was to see the relationship of spirituality for individual medical students that has an impact on happiness. The study adopted an analytical observational type with a cross sectional design. The study subjects were randomly selected by sampling a population of 100 medical students at Universitas Sebelas Maret class of 2020-2023. Primary data were taken using spirituality instruments based on DSES to determine the level of spirituality and happiness instruments based on SHS and SWLS to determine the level of happiness. To analyze ordinal relationships, a spearman correlation test is used. The results showed that medical students at Universitas Sebelas Maret had a high level of spirituality, while the level of happiness was in the medium category. The relationship between spirituality and happiness showed significance with a correlation value of $r = 0.179$; $p = 0.037$ ($p < 0.005$) indicates that there is a weak relationship between spirituality and happiness. Many factors affect happiness, the higher the spirituality of medical students, the higher the level of happiness.

Keywords: spirituality; happiness; medical students

Abstrak: Selesai pendidikan, mahasiswa kedokteran diharapkan dapat memberikan pelayanan medis yang baik, sehingga kesehatan mental yang baik harus dimiliki. Namun kenyataannya permasalahan psikologis terjadi sejak di masa pendidikan kedokteran. Kondisi tersebut mengakibatkan ketidakbahagiaan mereka. Spiritualitas diyakini berperan dalam meningkatkan kebahagiaan, sehingga meningkatkan spiritualitas akan meningkatkan kebahagiaan. Belum ada penelitian mengenai hubungan spiritualitas dengan kebahagiaan pada mahasiswa kedokteran, terkhusus di Indonesia. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk melihat hubungan spiritualitas bagi diri

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individu mahasiswa kedokteran yang berdampak pada kebahagiaan. Penelitian mengadopsi jenis observasional analitik dengan rancangan cross sectional. Subjek penelitian dipilih secara random sampling terhadap populasi berjumlah 100 mahasiswa kedokteran di Universitas Sebelas Maret angkatan 2020-2023. Data primer diambil menggunakan instrumen spiritualitas berdasarkan DSES untuk mengetahui tingkat spiritualitas dan instrumen kebahagiaan berdasarkan SHS dan SWLS untuk mengetahui tingkat kebahagiaan. Untuk menganalisis hubungan ordinal, digunakan uji korelasi spearman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa kedokteran di Universitas Sebelas Maret memiliki tingkat spiritualitas tinggi, sedangkan tingkat kebahagiaan berada pada kategori sedang. Hubungan antara spiritualitas dengan kebahagiaan menunjukkan signifikansi dengan nilai korelasi sebesar $r = 0,179$; $p = 0,037$ ($p < 0,005$) yang menandakan bahwa terdapat hubungan yang lemah antara spiritualitas dengan kebahagiaan. Banyak faktor yang mempengaruhi kebahagiaan, semakin tinggi spiritualitas mahasiswa kedokteran, maka semakin tinggi pula tingkat kebahagiaan.

Kata Kunci: Spiritualitas; Kebahagiaan; Mahasiswa Kedokteran



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Introduction

Spirituality is an invisible human force, based on the belief in the existence of a non-physical or transcendent dimension that involves beliefs and practices that provide meaning, purpose and connectedness (Fridayanti, 2016; Sadhna kumari Sharma & O. P. Sharma, 2016). Spirituality is much bigger than just religiosity. But the role of religiosity is influential in building the quality of one's spirituality (Putri, 2020). By looking at people's behavior, for example, people who are diligent in worshiping look happier than people who rarely worship, causing many Indonesians to assume that the level of spirituality has an impact on one's happiness (Arsita & Soetjningsih, 2021; Junaidin & Purwanti, 2022).

Happiness is a person's positive emotional experiences throughout his life based on subjective judgments (Maharani, 2015). Happiness is a reflection of good feelings (Tamir et al., 2017). Happiness can arise when individuals succeed in fulfilling the meaning of their lives (Wahidin, 2017). The meaning of life is closely related to one's spirituality. Therefore, the instinct of spirituality possessed by humans will encourage human instincts to achieve and find a more meaningful life (Putri, 2020).

In neurobiological studies, Meditation plays a role in one's spirituality (Saepudin, 2016). The study found that meditation affects three distinct areas: the left inferior temporal gyrus, the right anterior insular and the right hippocampus. The temporal lobe has been involved in religious activities and mystical experiences. Research has found that the orbital frontal cortex plays an important role in emotion regulation by decreasing amygdala activity. The specific area in the medial orbital frontal cortex correlated with total hours of meditation practice. The medial orbital frontal cortex is directly involved with extinction retention after fear conditioning. Increased size in this area allows for an increase in the meditator's ability to change their emotional responses (Fenwick, 2018). In other studies mentioned that increased spirituality, which has an impact on happiness levels, results in increased functional connectivity of neural networks involving the cingulate/precuneus cortex, insula, and leaving the inferior frontal gyrus region (Wade et al., 2018).

Medical students are part of adolescents / young adults, intended to be able to provide medical services after going through the study period, so that in the process of education they must be able to grow as individuals with a strong and healthy perspective, soul, personality, and mentality (Miranda, 2018; Sriani Sau et al., 2024). But in fact, the ideal conditions that are expected to occur are the opposite, namely the problem of psychological dysfunction faced starting from the early days of undergoing medical education. According to conservation of resources theory (CRS), psychological distress often occurs when significant resources are lost (Cohen et al., 2013). The fulfillment of spiritual well-being is one of the significant sources that can maintain psychological health. Thus neglecting spiritual needs can contribute to higher levels of stress (Rena, 2018).

Research related to spirituality and happiness has been conducted on patients with neurological disorders (Wade et al., 2018), dormitory students (Junaidin & Purwanti, 2022), orphanage adolescents (Putri, 2020), bullying rates in adolescents (García-Vázquez et al., 2022), late adolescence (Wahidin, 2017), and other study subjects. Researchers have not found research related to the relationship of spirituality with happiness among medical students, especially in Indonesia. Therefore, the researchers wanted to see if there was a relationship between spirituality and happiness among medical students. The purpose of this study is to see the relationship of spirituality for individual medical students that has an impact on happiness. The benefits of this research will add insight and increase awareness for the public regarding the relationship between spirituality and happiness in medical students.

Method

This study is a type of analytical observational study with a cross sectional design. The research was conducted in the medical study program, Faculty of Medicine, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta with the research population being medical students of the 2020-2023 class of 926 students.

The sampling technique used is random sampling. In this study, 10% of the total number of students was taken, so that the number of samples needed was 93 students. However, to improve accuracy, researchers took 100 medical students divided into 25 students each class of 2020-2023.

The identification of the independent variable in this study is the level of spirituality of each sample, the dependent variable in this study is the level of happiness in each sample, and out-of-control variables include age, history of psychiatric disorders. Uncontrollable outside variables include genetic, psychosocial, and stress.

The instrument in this study uses a scale based on the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) which has been translated into Indonesian. DSES consists of sixteen items with positive statements. Fifteen items had six answer choices indicating the intensity of the individual's spiritual experience, and item number sixteen was a descriptive supplementary item to support the study subjects' responses. This instrument has been tested for validity with results ranging from 0.301 to 0.729 and reliability tests with results of 0.858. The Measurement Scale is ordinal with various categories (height: $65 \leq X$; medium: $65 < X \leq 40$; low: $X < 40$)

The happiness instrument in this study is based on the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) and Satisfaction With Life Schedule (SWLS) which consists of two components, namely the affective component and the cognitive component. The affective component is found in points 1-16, while the cognitive component is found in points 17-47. This happiness instrument has been tested for validity with a value of 0.361 and reliability test with a result of 0.954. The measurement scale uses ordinals with various categories (height: $172 \leq X$; medium: $110 \leq X < 172$; low: $X < 110$).

The data from the study were analyzed for ordinal relationships using the SPSS 25 program with the Spearman Correlation statistical test. This study used Ethical Clearance Number 1/170/VI/HREC/2023 issued by Dr. Moewardi General Hospital Health Research Ethics Committee

Result

The respondents of this study amounted to 100 respondents in 4 batches of medical students, namely the class of 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. Each batch was divided equally with 25 respondents. Then each respondent represented 1%. In this study, it was found that the number of respondent groups by gender was 42 men (42%) and 58 women (58%). The relationship of spirituality with happiness was analyzed using the SPSS 25 application. This study used an ordinal measurement scale, so in analyzing statistical tests the Spearman correlation was used. In addition to the correlation between spirituality and happiness, deviation scales and averages were also calculated in this study to illustrate the categorization of spirituality and happiness.

In this results section, the prevalence of each generation is also described to review differences between each generational group related to spirituality and happiness. Each generation is averaged, then categorized based on the categorization of the level of spirituality and happiness, whether high, medium, or low.

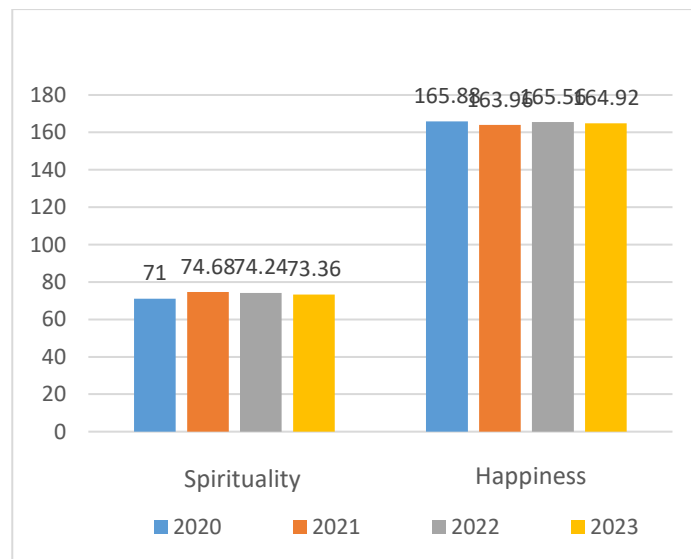


Figure 1. Prevalence and categorization of levels of spirituality and happiness by generation

From figure 1, it can be seen that the average of each batch is not much different. The level of spirituality of each generation has an average in the range of 70-75 which falls into the high category. While the happiness level of each generation is in the range of 163-166 which means medium.

Table 1*Analysis of the relationship of spirituality with happiness*

Variable	Number of samples	correlation coefficient	Significant value	Mean±SD
Level of Spirituality	100	0,179	0,037*	73,32±13,01 (height)
Level of Happiness				165,08±23,18 (medium)

*significant $p=0,037$ ($p<0,05$)

In table 1, it can be seen that the correlation between the level of spirituality and the level of happiness is positively correlated weakly with a significance of 0.179 at a significance level of 5%. This shows that the higher the level of spirituality, the higher the level of happiness. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the level of spirituality and the level of happiness is acceptable. The average shows that the level of spirituality of medical students at Sebelas Maret University is high ($65 \leq X$), while the level of happiness is moderate ($172 < X \leq 110$)

Discussion

This study also shows the level of spirituality and happiness of medical students and compares with other research subjects. The majority of medical students at Universitas Sebelas Maret have a high level of spirituality and a moderate level of happiness. The meaning of spirituality is a complex system consisting of beliefs, symbol systems, belief systems, value systems and behavioral systems that are reflected in attitudes to be able to relate to God (Ranggayoni et al., 2020). Based on the results of the study, it shows that medical students at Universitas Sebelas Maret have high confidence in their god.

Various studies on spirituality have been conducted with different research subjects. In counseling guidance students, the majority have high spiritual values (Wahidin, 2017). In employees of state or private enterprises, the level of spirituality of the subject is high (Harumi et al., 2021). In orphanage adolescents, the majority are in the high category (Putri, 2020). In parents, autistic children also have a high level of spirituality (Fath, 2015). Then also in nursing and midwifery students who do the final project, high spirituality results are also the majority (Vebrian G, 2021).

Research on happiness has also been conducted on various subjects, In counseling guidance students, the majority have moderate happiness category values (Wahidin, 2017). In migrant workers who are in long-distance contact with their partners, it shows that the majority of respondents have a moderate level of happiness (Afiffah, 2019). In teaching students, the majority of happiness levels are in the medium category (Maharani, 2015). Then in psychology freshmen, it was found that the medium category was the majority (Dini, 2019).

The results of the analysis using the Spearman correlation test, it was found that the relationship between the level of spirituality and the level of happiness in UNS medical students was significantly related, with a p value of 0.037 ($p < 0.05$) with a correlation coefficient of 0.179. These results indicate that there is a weak positive relationship between the level of spirituality and the level of happiness of medical students. The higher the level of spirituality, the higher the level of happiness. A correlation of 0.179 means that the happiness level variable can be explained by the spirituality level variable of 17.9% only, so there is still 82.1% of the happiness level that cannot be explained by the level of spirituality. This suggests that there are other factors beyond the level of spirituality that have a correlation with the level of happiness.

This research is in accordance with research on the relationship of spirituality with happiness in dormitory students of Sumbawa University of Technology. The study was conducted on 69 respondents with the results showing that there was a positive relationship between spirituality and happiness in dormitory students of Sumbawa University of Technology with a correlation coefficient of 0.457 with a significance level of 0.000 at a significance level of 1% (Junaidin & Purwanti, 2022).

Factors that affect a person's happiness are several things, namely living in a rich and democratic country, getting married, avoiding negative emotions, having a wide social network, gender, income, marital status, education level, and having a religion (Rahayu, 2016; Supriyanto, 2020). In terms of having religion, people who have spirituality, that is, people who have faith in God, will live happier and more satisfied in living their lives (Condinata et al., 2019).

Happiness is influenced by an individual's relationship with God Almighty, often even a major factor towards happiness. Religion in the sense of spirituality possessed by individuals, as a guide to connect with God, is one of the things that affect happiness. It cannot be denied that the closer we get to God, the more positive energy will be obtained in it, this of course has an impact on happiness for individuals (Syarafina et al., 2017). Happiness is also an inner/spiritual experience, where humans can enjoy every second with love, gratitude, and devotion to God (Wahidin, 2017).

Spirituality on wellness focuses on coping with stressful life events. Happy people tend to be more connected to their environment or sense of community such as tend to help others, do prosocial activities, talk to others, and so on (Ross et al., 2019). Increased spirituality results in increased functional connectivity of neural networks that involve the cingulate/precuneus cortex, insula, and leave the inferior frontal gyrus region (Wade et al., 2018).

When viewed the level of spirituality based on the year of generation, As a potential, spiritual growth and development along with physical growth and spiritual development, along with increase or age level (Jalaluddin, 2015). However, the relationship between age and spirituality is not linear and can vary among different age groups (Mehdi Nejad et al., 2021). The insignificance of the relationship between class years and spirituality in this study can be explained by the similarity of characteristics in the research group. Research on medical students tends to be the same age group (young adults). Medical students at the Faculty of Medicine come from the same age group, namely young adults (18-24 years) and come from the same local cultural background, as well as spiritual education so that they will have the same level of spirituality (Putro, 2017).

While happiness is viewed from the year of the generation, happiness depends on each individual. Happiness is influenced by an individual's mood at any given moment, beliefs about happiness, and how easily a person receives both positive and negative information. The effect of demographic factors, such as age, on subjective well-being is usually small. In students, especially medical students, in the first year some of them feel happy and some do not. Those who feel happiness, as a result of getting the desired major and tend to have goals. But on the other hand, they are also faced with a new environment so that some experience stress and require them to make adjustments (Dini, 2019). While final students, the older the class year, the higher the academic load borne and experience additional costs in their studies, such as research costs, final projects and other activities related to their graduation requirements. But there are also those who experience happiness, due to getting closer to their graduation.

Conclusions

Based on research conducted on medical students at Universitas Sebelas Maret, Spirituality has a significant relationship with happiness with a correlation of 0.179. The happiness of medical students will increase if their spirituality is also improved. Spirituality has a 17.9% role in happiness. The remaining 82.1% were other variables that influenced happiness levels. Research on similar topics is interesting to develop, especially with the subject of medical students. In the future, it is hoped that with more varied methods, researchers can find other factors that correlate with the level of overall happiness because many influences occur in the course of medical student studies.

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