

## Profile of Islamic Boarding School Student' Happiness Post Covid-19 Pandemic Era

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**Abstract:** This study seeks the profile of Islamic boarding school student' happiness in post Covid-19 pandemic era. By quantitative descriptive statistical method, the finding shows that happiness level of Islamic boarding school students is on moderate level, for both genders also. By period of time staying in the cottage, they tend to increase. The frequency and degree of pleasure (positive feeling), and the average value of satisfaction with life over a period of time are on a high level. But the absence of negative feelings is on moderate level. By this finding, the school administrator is suggested to provide Islamic Counselling services to help their students to manage and cope their negative emotion, build resilience and maintain their positive emotions, so they will have a healthier and better condition to engage with every educational program and optimize their academic achievements.

**Keywords:** happiness; Islamic boarding school students; post COVID-19.

### Introduction

Islamic boarding schools are religion-based education with the cottage system, in which students are required to live in dormitories with others.

Many aspects of life are affected by COVID-19 pandemic. In the field of education, Islamic boarding schools are one of the sectors that are experiencing changes. The most common impact of a pandemic is the potential trauma if a close family member is affected by COVID, death, or loses their job due to layoffs as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even though it is not the main sector in teaching and learning activities in Islamic boarding schools, this pandemic situation certainly still provides its own pressure. Considering that as students, they cannot gather with their families because they have to stay in the cottage and there are restrictions on residents' activities so visiting students at the cottage is not as active as in the period before the pandemic hit. As we know, anxiety, worry, disinterest, depression, and general health perception are the various psychological consequences after a lockdown or restriction (Le & Nguyen, 2021)

As being said about the importance and the urgency of happiness for students, while living within their cottage alongside with what happened outside, paying attention to the happiness of students is something that should be done by many related parties.

Bearing in mind that happiness is one of the important things to increase the immunity of students. Students who are sad, worried, feel they have no one to share with, feel reluctant with boarding school administrators to complain, makes it is hard for them to focus on lessons, struggle to socialize with fellow students, make them easily get sick, and lose the motivation to engage in educational activities.

Happiness is a positive subjective well-being or subjective feeling. It is seen as a complex construct made up of various components such as hope, kindness, compassion, purpose in life, optimism, self-esteem, gratefulness and happiness itself (Feizi, 2020; Permiakova et.al, 2016). Happiness can be viewed as the degree to which an individual judges, values, or determines the quality of his/her own life-as-a-whole favorably. To put in another way: how much someone like, love, satisfy or enjoy the life one has (Veenhoven, 2012)

The indicator of a developed student's subjective well-being, in this case mainly about student' happiness, is when students have a healthy ability to manage, or to deal with issues socially, psychologically and physically. One of the ways to reach that point is by developing resilience which will help them tackle difficulties in life in a healthy way. Happiness or subjective well-being directly relates to students' psychological and educational success and has a positive impact on their motivation to elevate their performance in school (Durón-Ramos et.al, 2022; Zulfiqar et.al, 2019).

Happiness is a stable feeling in positive emotions, understanding the reality of life and is meaningful (Shavan & Adhmadi, 2012). Pleasure, meaning and engagement are three orientations to happiness. A person who strives for these three, will experience more satisfaction in life and greater well-being. Pleasure maximizes gratifications and prolongs positive feelings. In the case of students' happiness in school, meaning can be seen for students using their optimal personal strength and ability to achieve their goals and aspirations in the educational area. While engagement, in this case also, shown as the students committed and get involved with educational / academic activities in their school or as simply as doing their homework and submitting their task on time (Durón-Ramos et.al, 2022).

Based on Argyle in his book, *The Psychology of Happiness* (2001), he stated that happiness is the more positive affect dominant over negative affect. Still based on him, there are three components of happiness, namely: frequency and degree of pleasure (positive feeling), the average value of satisfaction with life over a period of time, as well as the absence of negative feelings, such as anxiety and depression [8]. Using these three components, he constructed an Oxford Happiness Inventory in 1988.

## Methods

This survey research is using a quantitative approach and applies a descriptive research design to the percentage. The population in this study were all students in Islamic boarding school in Central Java. There are no specific population criteria needed. Students voluntarily participated. They took informed consent first before assigned the online questionnaire via Google Form. .

The online questionnaires are developed to measure student's happiness based on 29 items of the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI) (Hills & Argyle, 2002).

**Table 1**  
*Subjects by Sex*

No.	Sex	Number	Percentage
1	Female	194	51.2
2	Male	255	48.8
Total		449	100

## Results

Explained by table. 2 Degree of Happiness of Islamic boarding school students, 38.5% of them are having moderate levels of happiness. This result applied to both genders, 35.1% for female and 41.2% for male.

By table 3, they have high levels of happiness (40.1% and 45.9%) on both the first and second factor of happiness, but they have a moderate level (42.1%) on the third factor of happiness.

Explained by table 4, based on how long they have stayed in their cottage, the happiness level seems to increase from moderate level to higher level. Even Though, the data for students who stayed there longer isn't proportional.

**Table 2**  
*Degree of Happiness*

Degree	All		Female		Male	
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%
Very Low	40	8.9	14	7.2	26	10.2
Low	88	19.6	36	18,6	52	20.4
<b>Mod erate</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>41.2</b>

High	122	27.2	60	30.9	62	24.3
Very High	26	5.8	16	8.2	10	3.9
Total	449	100	194	100	255	100

**Table 3**  
Degree of Happiness by its factors

Degree	Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3	
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%
Very Low	4	0.9	5	1.1	6	1.3
Low	13	2.9	15	3.3	55	12.2
Moderate	99	22	74	16.5	<b>189</b>	<b>42.1</b>
<b>High</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>40.1</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>45.9</b>	168	37.4
Very High	153	34.1	149	33.2	31	6.9
Total	449	100	449	100	449	100

**Table 4**  
Degree of Happiness by Period of Time

Degree	Period of Time (years)					Total
	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	> 12	
Very Low	30	10	0	0	0	40
Low	54	32	0	1	1	88
<b>Moderate</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>59</b>	2	2	0	<b>173</b>
High	69	42	<b>7</b>	2	<b>2</b>	122
Very High	13	10	0	<b>3</b>	0	26
Total	276	153	9	8	3	449

## Discussion

Overall, the happiness level of participants is on a moderate level. In the situation of Covid-19 and post-pandemic, moderate level is a good condition. In the time of struggle and uncertainty, every aspect of life collapsed, the students of Islamic boarding school still have the ability not to fall into the worst conditions such as pessimistic, hopeless, depressed or for more, a suicidal thought.

The moderate level of happiness can be understood as the level where they can find some joy or less stressful moment, even though it wasn't perfect. They have struggled to endure in life but they still have the ability to

survive in life. They have an alternative source of peace and strength to gain the ability to cope and deal with their problem.

Compared to other research about happiness levels with different types of participants, they have a worse condition such as lower happiness level of subjective wellbeing and suffer from many negative emotions.

Happiness, according to Argyle, has three factors. namely, frequency and degree of pleasure (positive feeling), the average value of satisfaction with life over a period of time, as well as the absence of negative feelings.

The frequency and degree of pleasure (positive feeling), which we called as the first factor before, are on a high level. This shows that Islamic boarding school students are experiencing a positive feeling during this Covid-19 era and the post-pandemic, which is hard to experience. In Islamic values, happiness or such positive feelings are the results of attaining the order of God (Allah SWT).

Here are determinant factors of happiness based on Islamic values: obedience to God (faith), remembrance the God, positive attitude to the world, beautiful interpretation of death and hereafter. In more details, ways to create happiness as Moslem are faith, satisfaction and tolerance, trust in God and rely on Him, abstain from sin, struggle with worry, smile and laugh, humor, exercise, life expectancy, work and effort, reading Quran, almsgiving (Saadati et.al, 2015).

In the Holy Qur'an, one of term that related to the meaning of happiness or positive feelings is the word "sa'adah" which has triliteral roots. It is *sīn 'ayn dāl* (س د ع), can be found twice, the first one is "su'idu" (سُعِدُ) in a verb form which means 'were glad' in verse 11:108, and the second one in a noun form is "sa'id" (سَعِيد) which means 'blessed' in verse 11:105.

In the Holy Qur'an, the other terms related to the meaning of happiness or positive feelings is various. "Farah" and its similar ones, were mentioned 22 times which means the pleasure of the heart and soul to achieve what tends to and the opposite meaning of it is grief. "Sorur" and its similar ones, were mentioned 3 time which means the true happiness.

In Islamic worldview, happiness or positive feeling can be truly achieved through mental, physical and spiritual. Based on Al-Ghazali' approach, true happiness can be achieved by faith and piety. Human need to make effort to gain knowledge and need to have a pure heart because a pure heart will receive the knowledge that would lead them to achieve eternal happiness. Elements to achieve this true happiness are 1) knowledge, deeds, spiritual and physical which would lead them to know Allah SWT through noble morals and pious deeds, 2) aqidah, syariah and morality to strengthen their faith and piety and that is how tranquility, happiness and serenity of life would come to them who has strong and sincere faith and piety without seeking (Yahya et.al, 2020).

Again, in Islamic worldview, happiness isn't only about materialistic happiness. The eternal joy or happiness is in the Heaven and the belief that hereafter is so much better than what we have now in this world (Quran 93:4), is a Quranic perspective and this build resilience when the Moslem to face every stressful condition yet still be hopeful. This doesn't mean Islam against all the worldly pleasure (Quran 28:77) but actually all the worldly pleasure needs to be under control because Moslem are forbidden for making this worldly leisure as the ultimate goal. Islam gave a purpose of life that is for worshipping the one and only Allah (Quran 51:56). Moslem are taught that this life will be filled with test and trial (Qur'an 2:155), even on one of hadits Shahih Muslim (no.2956) it is stated that this life is a prison for the believers. We live in this world just as a traveler who is on the way to their true home, and it is Hereafter. This direction is used as guidance of life and a controller of their expectation. So, they are not be so happy when things happen like they want and not to be so sad when things go against what they want (Quran 57:23). By this, Moslem are tending to feel more satisfied with anything they have in life.

Based on this understanding, it is clear how the participants of this research also have a high level of happiness in the second factor. The second factor is that the average value of satisfaction with life over a period of time. Feeling satisfied with life already knew by Moslem as the concept of contentment or Qona'ah and they are being taught about gratitude over every little blessing they receive in this life (Quran 14:7).

Various research already stated gratefulness is a key toward happiness such as by being gratefully remembering past condition significantly increases the state of happiness (Charlotte et.al, 2018). Additional, contentment itself is a sustainable notion of happiness where in it there is presence of joy and expression of delight and pleasure, it's not always reliant on extrinsically directed and generated pleasure but intrinsic state of awareness (Gibbs, 2012). The last factor is the absence of negative emotions. By this factor, they are still at a moderate level, which means the students are still experiencing negative emotions. Just like any other person whose calamity or destruction

falls upon their life, our very natural response is feeling sad, worried, and afraid. This is absolutely normal and healthy. but we can't let this stay in our mind and heart longer. There's something we need to do about these issues because this one factor would affect the overall happiness of one's life. Remember that the participants of this research are still adolescent, they still need more teaching, assistance, and help to regulate their negative emotion for them to regain peace, tranquility, and happiness itself.

Islam gives rules and guidance on every part of Muslim life include how they have to living their life, how they have to react in every happiness and every hardship they face in life, how they suggested to build a grateful and resilience character, what they should and shouldn't be doing, and how to build a healthy mindset such as a teaching of having positive thought towards Allah (husnudzon), reframing their own mind with remembering the characteristics of Allah in every life-situation that He's the Most Forgiving, the Most Accepting and Listening to their prayers, that after every hardship is ease (Qur'an 94:5-6) and His helps around the corner (Qur'an 2:214), that He would never burden a soul more than it can bear (Qur'an 2:286). These things are beneficial to their mental health, which in this case is their happiness.

To achieve that state of condition, the students need help from Islamic Guidance and Counselling to work on their mindset, emotional regulation and build their resiliency based on Islamic values. Counselling is more than teaching a certain topic, but rather a systematic psychological approach to help people or in this case, students, to work on their inner-state and build habits which are beneficial for their mental state.

Religion, religiosity or spirituality aspect giving a person such a benefit for their mental health (Rothman, 2022; Henry, 2015; Koenig, 2012). Research found that religious individuals are happier and more satisfied with life than nonreligious individuals (Shasama, 2022).

This can happen through many different mechanisms. First, religion provides many tools and ways to cope with stress. This improves the frequency a person experiences positive emotion and prevent them from a severe negative emotion such as depression, anxiety, suicide and substance abuse. Religion provides many healthy ways of thinking and powerful cognitions. Religion gives a person a sense of purpose of life and by that, every hardship now has a sense of meaning. The optimistic and hopeful worldview people find in their religions may be involved by the existence of a personal transcendental force (God, Allah, Jehovah, etc.) who is loving, and caring to humans and responsive to their needs. These cognitions also give a subjective sense of control over events (i.e., if God is in control, can influence circumstances, and be influenced by prayer, then prayer by the individual may positively influence the situation). Second, by the rules, regulation, suggestion and restriction every religion has, give people directions about how they live their life, and also how to treat and interact with others. Third, some of the values that are emphasized the most by religions are love, compassion, altruistic acts and encouraging their community to have a meeting session together in religious social events shows the importance of prosocial behaviors. Many positive effects of these prosocial behaviors such as reduce stress level and give opportunities for supporting and helping each other while facing difficulties in life. Also, many good qualities of a person are emphasized. Such as being honest, forgiving, grateful with what they have, being patient. These characteristics strengthen their social relationship (Koenig, 2012).

Religious people who are committed and strongly hold their faith, tend to have better health, physically and mentally. This health satisfaction may have an adverse effect on feeling happy. On the other hand, the people who are likely to complain, may experience symptoms of noxiousness and deleteriousness, making it harder to feel happy. People who have a positive emotional state may have healthier perceptions, beliefs and physical well-being itself (Abdel Khalek, 2006)

Islamic values and reminders contain promises of Allah about ease, peace, happiness, contentment, good reward in this world and hereafter. if they become a good believer such a relief to any stressing condition that they face in this life. This undoubtful can become a remedy when hardship befalls them so they can survive and become resilient. This can be a narrative self-talk to restructure their mind such in a cognitive- shift with a healthier mindset.

For participants who is Islamic boarding school students, providing a mental health facilitate based on religion such as Islamic Counselling service that can be easily reached by them is a must-try alternative solution in this post-Covid era.

## Conclusion

The happiness profiles of Islamic boarding school' students on the post-COVID-19 pandemic era are on a moderate level, the same way happened for both genders. The frequency and degree of pleasure (positive feeling), and the average value of satisfaction with life over a period of time are on a high level. But the absence of negative feelings is on moderate level. By the period of time, the longer they stayed in their cottage, they tend to have higher level of happiness.

The Islamic boarding school' administrator is suggested to provide Islamic Counselling services to help them manage and cope the presence of negative feeling, built resilience and maintain their positive emotions in the post Covid-19 era so they will have a healthier and better condition to engage with every educational program they have and optimize their academic achievements.

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