

# Spirituality and Marital Satisfaction as Predictors of Subjective Happiness in Married Couples

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**Abstract.** Every individual wants to achieve subjective happiness, which is characterized by feelings of happiness and joy in assessing their life. Marital satisfaction and spirituality are factors that can affect a person's subjective happiness. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of marital satisfaction and spirituality on subjective happiness and to see the influence of demographic factors. This research uses the causality correlation method, which involves 160 participants with the characteristics of a married couple domiciled in Bandung city and the age range of 20-40 years. The measuring instruments used are the Subjective Happiness Scale from Lyubomirsky (2008), the ENRICH Marital Scale from Fowers & Olson (1993), and the Spirituality Transcendence Scale from Piedmont (2001). The validity and reliability test results show that the three instruments have validity in the range of 0.81-0.89, 0.45-0.83, and 0.53-0.83. The reliability test results of the three instruments are 0.81, 0.91, and 0.75. The data processing in this study used hierarchical multiple regression. The analysis results show that marital satisfaction and spirituality affect subjective happiness. The results of the influence test involving demographic factors showed that ethnicity and absence of disease were predictors of subjective happiness. It is suggested to the next researcher to homogenize ethnicity, which is Sundanese. Married couples are expected to maintain their marital satisfaction and spirituality.

**Keywords:** ethnicity, marital satisfaction, spirituality, subjective happiness.

## 1 Introduction

At the beginning of global Covid-19 pandemic, families were the most affected parties. This is supported by the results of research conducted by [1]. This is caused by the disruption of family stability faced by married couples in forming a family strategy. According to [2], married couples have the task of creating family identity, managing internal and external boundaries, maintaining family members' welfare, giving love and attention to each family member, and managing conflicts in the family. The findings revealed by [3] stated that almost the entire community experienced emotional disorders such as depression, stress, irritability, irritability, and even experienced a decrease in health quality marked by insomnia. Based on this phenomenon, it is found that West Java Province, during the Covid-19 pandemic, took the 29th position as the least happy province in Indonesia.

Along with controlling the death rate due to Covid-19 virus and the spread of Covid-19 virus, the pandemic situation has turned into an endemic. This was followed by various adjustments while still implementing health protocols. At the same time, married couples need

to readjust their activities and family strategies that have changed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Adaptation made by married couples is an individual effort to be able to maintain their mental health. Mentally healthy individuals are seen as happy, optimistic, confident, and confident individuals [4]. One of the psychological concepts that explain subjective happiness is the subjective happiness of the characters [4].

Subjective happiness refers to a person's positive evaluation of the life he/she leads. Subjective happiness has benefits for married couples, helps married couples to be able to adapt to the changes that occur, physically the individual becomes healthier, can improve the quality of life, prevents feelings of loneliness, depression, stress, and also feelings of isolation [5] & [6]. According to [7], the most important factor in producing a happy marriage is the quality of a marriage or what is often referred to as marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction is a comprehensive evaluation of marriage relationships [8]. Various research results show that marital satisfaction is a predictor of subjective happiness [8], [9], [10] & [11]. Marital satisfaction gives a role to someone married: making someone's life more meaningful, making their married life successful, giving each other warmth, and being able to resolve conflicts that arise, in this case, conflicts when adjusting from pandemic to endemic [12].

Another source of subjective happiness is spirituality [13]. Spirituality is a person's effort to understand a broad meaning of personal meaning in the context of life after death [14]. Several research results suggest that subjective happiness is influenced by spirituality [15], [16], [17], [18] & [19].

The explanation above shows that, at this time, two things play an important role in married couples' experience of subjective happiness: marital satisfaction and spirituality. There have been many researchers who have researched spirituality and marital satisfaction. However, so far, no research has combined the two. Therefore, using the causal correlation method, this study will raise marital satisfaction and spirituality as two variables that affect subjective happiness in married couples living in Bandung.

## **2 Method**

This study consists of two independent variables: marital satisfaction and spirituality, and one dependent variable, subjective happiness in individuals living in Bandung aged 20-40 years. Subjective happiness will be measured by the Subjective Happiness Scale, adapted by [20]. Marital satisfaction will be measured by the Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale, adapted by [21], and spirituality will be measured by the Spiritual Transcendence Scale modified and translated by the researcher. The validity of three measuring instruments was measured using the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) method. The validity test results for Subjective Happiness Scale measuring instrument range from 0.81 to 0.89. The validity test of Enrich Marital Satisfaction measuring instrument is 0.45 – 0.83. The validity test results of Spirituality Transcendence Scale measuring instrument are 0.53 – 0.83.

The three measuring instruments were tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The Subjective Happiness Scale has 4 items, but after measuring the validity, there is 1 item that is dropped, so the reliability value of Subjective Happiness Scale measuring instrument from 3 valid items is 0.81. The reliability value of the subjective happiness measurement instrument is included in the high-reliability category. The reliability value of Enrich Marital Satisfaction measuring instrument from 15 valid items is 0.91. The reliability value obtained by the marital satisfaction measurement instrument is included in the very high-reliability category. The

spirituality measuring instrument consists of 9 items but based on the validity test results, there are only 7 valid items. The reliability value of the spirituality measuring instrument is 0.75, which is included in the high-reliability category.

This study will use a quantitative approach emphasizing deductive data collection and analysis [22]. The data analysis technique used in this research is hierarchical multiple regression. The requirement for hierarchical multiple regression is to test the classical assumptions: normality, heterodacticity, and multicollinearity tests.

### 3 Result

160 respondents participate in this study. Table 1 shows that 78.8% of participants are female. The age range of respondents is 23-40 years (mean=31.78, SD=4.667). Most of the participants in this study came from ethnic Sundanese (76.9%). The marriage age range of respondents is 1-5 years (mean=2.48; SD=0.965). The range of the number of children owned by the respondents is 0 -3 children (mean = 1, SD = 0.938). There are 98.1% of participants did not have a chronic disease. As many as 98.8% of participants have activities to fill their spare time. The most education (73.1%) of participants is a Bachelor's degree (S1). A total of 79.4% of participants have a middle socioeconomic background.

### 4 Figures and Tables

**Table 1.** Respondent's Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	34	21.4%
Female	126	78.8%
Total	160	100%

**Table 2.** Result of Hierarchical Multiple Regression (Analysis of Variance)

Regression Model	Predictor	R		R <sup>2</sup>
Model 1	STS, EMS	0.47	***	0.22
Model 2	MS, ID, PF, U, C	0.61	***	0.38
Model 3	MS, ID, PF, U, C, Age	0.61	***	0.37
Model 4	MS, ID, PF, U, C, Age, Gender	0.62	***	0.38
Model 5	MS, ID, PF, U, C, Age, Gender, Ethnic	0.64	***	0.41
Model 6	MS, ID, PF, U, C, Age, Gender, Ethnic, Marriage Age	0.64	***	0.41
Model 7	MS, ID, PF, U, C, Age, Gender, Ethnic, Marriage Age, Children	0.64	***	0.41
Model 8	MS, ID, PF, U, C, Age, Gender, Ethnic, Marriage Age, Education	0.64	***	0.41

Model 9	MS, ID, PF, U, C, Age, Gender, Ethnic, Marriage Age, Education, Absence of Disease	0.67	***	0.45
Model 10	MS, ID, PF, U, C, Age, Gender, Ethnic, Marriage Age, Education, Absence of Disease, Activity	0.67	***	0.45
Model 11	MS, ID, PF, U, C, Age, Gender, Ethnic, Marriage Age, Education, Absence of Disease, Activity, Socioeconomics	0.67	***	0.45

\*Significant at the Fallacy Level 10%

\*\*Significant at the Fallacy Level 5%

\*\*\*Significant at the Fallacy Level 1%

Based on table 2, it can be seen that there is a change in the values of R Change and R Square. It means that there is an influence of marital satisfaction and spirituality on subjective happiness. The same thing happens when demographic factors are added to subjective happiness. The results of this study are clarified in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Data Calculation Results

Influence of Variables															
Model	Constant	EMS	STS	MS	ID	PF	U	C	Age	Gender	Ethnic	Marriage Age	Number of Children	Education	Absence of Disease
Model 1	6.22 ***	0.16 ***	0.07 ***												
Model 2	3.54 ***			0.10 ***	0.20 ***	0.16	0.09	0.02							
Model 5	4.22 **			0.09 **	0.21 **	0.15	0.05	-0.01	0.21	-0.46	0.27 **				
Model 9	16.09 ***			0.05	0.30 ***	0.15	0.04	0.01	0.30	-0.33	0.18	0.03	-0.19	-0.12	-5.79 **

\*Significant at the Fallacy Level 10%

\*\*Significant at the Fallacy Level 5%

\*\*\*Significant at the Fallacy Level 1%

Based on Model 1 (Table 3), it can be seen that marital satisfaction and spirituality significantly affect subjective happiness. Based on this, it can be concluded that this research hypothesis is accepted.

## 5 Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that marital satisfaction and spirituality simultaneously affect subjective happiness (Table 3, Model 1). Someone who appreciates that his/her married life is going satisfactorily will be more expressive and warm, his/her life is more meaningful, and he/she has a better ability to solve problems in marital life. This situation will be more optimal when followed by spirituality. A person will feel joy and happiness through prayer or meditation activities, also believing that he/she is in unity with the universe as an inseparable reality. This situation built from marital satisfaction and spirituality will optimally support a person's ability to positively evaluate his life, thus helping the formation of subjective happiness.

Research results on the effect of marital satisfaction on subjective happiness are in line with research [23], [9], [10], [11], & [12]. Likewise, the results of spirituality research on subjective happiness are in line with [24], [16], [17], [18] & [13].

Following up on the findings from Model 1 (Table 3), a test of the factors in the Enrich marital satisfaction and spirituality variables was conducted. The results are shown in Model 2 (Table 3). It is known that the two factors in Enrich's marital satisfaction, which are marital

satisfaction and idealistic distortion, influence subjective happiness. However, this is not the case with the factors in spirituality: prayer fulfillment, universality, and connectedness, which, when tested separately, do not contribute to subjective happiness. That is, the ability of participants to build subjective happiness in marital life comes more from the factors in Enrich marital satisfaction.

Participants with marital satisfaction are described as individuals who judge that their marriage is going well, are satisfied with their marriage, and view every event in their marriage as an event that has meaning for their life experiences. The ten aspects of marital satisfaction made participants experience their marriage as a source of pleasure, carefreeness, and joy. Meanwhile, the idealistic distortion factor explains the extent to which participants give a positive assessment of their marriage which is based more on social and cultural norms.

Through Model 3 (Table 3), it is found that the addition of the age factor does not affect subjective happiness, which in this case is still determined by the marital satisfaction factor and idealistic distortion. Similarly, the addition of gender factor (Model 4, Table 3).

Model 5 (Table 3) by adding ethnic factors found that marital satisfaction and idealistic distortion have an effect on subjective happiness. Likewise in Models 6, 7, and 8 (Table 3). This finding can be interpreted that the Sundanese ethnic background shared by most of the participants contributes to the influence of feeling happy on their married life, together with marital satisfaction and idealistic distortion factors.

Meanwhile, as stated in Models 9, 10, and 11 (Table 3), it is found that subjective happiness is influenced by idealistic distortion and the absence of disease. The meaning of this finding is that participants' appreciation of their healthy body condition together with idealistic distortion will affect the formation of subjective happiness in married life.

Further findings from the effect of idealistic distortion factors show a strengthening when added to the absence of chronic disease (Table 3, Model 9). This situation did not change even though the factors of leisure time activities and socioeconomic status of the participants were added. This finding indicates that participants' appreciation of happiness in their marital life is colored by their tendency to give positive assessments based on cultural norms for all situations encountered in their marriages.

Thus, the findings as stated in Models 9, 10, and 11 (Table 3) indicate that participants who do not have chronic diseases, together with positive assessments based on local cultural norms, will affect the subjective happiness experienced by participants in their married life. The absence of illness allows participants to carry out various activities, hobbies, and interests that they have freely and are accompanied by a positive appreciation of married life because they are motivated by local cultural norms, so the subjective happiness they feel will increase.

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