

# Subjective Well-being, Religiosity, Personality Trait, and Individual Resources among The Elderly

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**Abstract.** The elderly period commonly brings the new problem for individuals in his elderly period and his environment. This study was conducted to get an overview of the amount of subjective well-being, religiosity, and personality trait in the elderly. The subjects in this study were 226 (women n = 136) elderly aged 60 to 74 years who lived near South Jakarta, East Jakarta, and Ciputat. Data collection was done in the form of inventories those suitable for research subjects' characteristics and using a Likert scale. Based on each dimension categorization, the research variables are mostly at the medium level. The research respondents' religiosity is high only in religious practice dimension, while in other dimensions are in the medium and low category. This shows that they consider religious belief and spiritual experience as a normative thing, which possibly causes them to not feel that their well-being is affected by their religious activities.

**Keywords:** Subjective well-being, religiosity, big five personality trait, individual resources.

## 1 Introduction

Research about subjective well-being is a study focusing on the psychological happiness and well being. This study emphasizes the understanding of the process, which underlies well-being such as factors which make people happy, or factors which bring out depression or unhappiness. It is not surprising since there is a tendency of feeling or obtaining life satisfaction as the main goal of most people.

The question regarding what makes someone life is good and happy has been studied since long time ago by experts. The experts who studied subjective well-being assume that the important element of a good life is when someone loves his life. Subjective well-being is someone's judgement cognitively and affectively on his life. This assessment covers the emotional reaction and cognitive judgement on the satisfaction feeling and the fulfilment of what is desired from the experience occurs [1]. Thus, subjective well-being can be considered as a wide concept covering feeling/emotion of happiness, the low level of negative mood, and the high level of satisfaction. Positive experience is formed from a high subjective well-being which makes life more useful.

Subjective well-being is self disclosure felt by someone regarding his happiness in his recent life. Diener [2] defined subjective well-being as an emotional response of someone towards the domain of satisfaction and life satisfaction judgment globally. Gasper [3] stated that subjective wellbeing refers to the feeling of how someone thinks about his life. This has a role of determining his subjective well-being.

Elderly is a term used for individual who has an old age or already old. Aging process is a natural process accompanied by the decrease of physical, psychological and social condition, which interacts one each other [4]. Such condition tends to cause general health problems and specific psychological problem in elderly. Based on several literatures, it was stated that there are some factors faced which really affect the elderly psychological health including the decrease of physical condition, the decrease of sexual function and potential, changes in psychosocial aspect, changes related to job and changes in social role in the community. Such changes do not only affect the psychological, physical and social health, but also affect the wellbeing feeling.

Hurlock [5] stated that generally there are two kinds of behaviour the elderly owned to live. First, the old age is accepted through deep realization, while the second one is that the elderly in facing his life tend to refuse the occurrence of the old age period. The first group lives their life comfortably and accept the changes happen, while the second group does not willing to accept the reality. Attitude in living the life in the old age is significantly affected by the perspective related to the living the old age. Therefore, the aging process basically describes that such thing can be interference so that it can achieve optimal result.

According to the statistical data issued by Statistics Indonesia, the amount of the elderly in Indonesia increases from year to year. The increase of the elderly people happens because of the increase of life expectancy of Indonesian people. According to the data issued by PBB in 2002, the life expectancy of Indonesian people is 69.3 years old for woman and 65.3 years old for man. The prediction of life expectancy in 2020 increases to 71 years old. The result of population sensus is included in five nations which have the most total population in the world, which is 18.1 million in 2010 or 9.77% of the total population. If the community, government, and various program do not anticipate such condition, then the existence of the elderly will become a time bomb. As an illustration, the total population of Indonesian elderly is presented in the following.

Table 1: Overview of Indonesia's elderly population.

Year	Life Expectancy	%
2000	64,5 tahun	7,18
2006	66,2 tahun	8,90
2010	67,4 tahun	9,77
020 (prakiraan)	71,1 tahun	11,34

Data Source: Official site of coordinating minister for people's welfare  
<http://www.menkokesra.go.id>

Table 2: Population according to group age and gender in 2010 of 237,641,326 total of population.

Group Age	Male	Female	Male & Female
60-64	2,926,073	2,926,073	5,852,146
65-69	2,224,273	2,467,877	4,692,150
70-74	1,530,938	1,924,247	3,455,185
75+	1,605,817	1,605,817	3,211,634
Total	8,287,101	8,924,014	17,211,115

Data Source: Population Census 2010, BPS

The number of elderly people which is quite a lot needs to be preserved in order to keep them productive, healthy and useful. If the productivity of the elderly has proportion which is quite large, it is worried that it will become burden for the family and community both socially and economically.

One of the factors which give happiness to the Indonesian elderly is by giving them the opportunity to live together with their children at one house in their old age, gather with their grandchildren and watch their children success in their life. This is due to the emphasize of the collectively of communal values in Indonesian people. Parents have high responsibility for their children, and the children also have high dependency to their parents. Such things are different from the western people who emphasize on their children independency. An elderly person should has a concept to enjoy his recent life. It is similar to the wise statement that the past cannot be changed, and the future is not necessarily coming. What can be changed is what a person experience now as well as his understanding and comprehension of every life experience by seeing it positively and wisely. In the psychological study, such condition known as subjective wellbeing.

Several studies about subjective well-being in elderly people have been conducted by the experts. Horley dan Lavery; Stock et al; Herzog and Rodgers [6] stated that the experts agree that the life satisfaction increases or at least does not decrease because of the age. Okma and Veenhoven [7] also did not find any evidence of the decrease of life satisfaction in every range of life but they found small decrease in mood. Furthermore, it was also found that positive feeling can be lost as the age decreases. However, if it is studied using standard, then more decrease will happen in satisfaction and affection feeling and higher in the condition of energetic spirit and the feeling as if in top of the world.

The lack of significant decrease of life satisfaction shows that people are able to adapt with the condition they face. The decrease of income and marriage in all elderly group age does not affect the life satisfaction. Some researchers stated that this finding is the evidence that people will adjust their life purpose as their age increases [8]. Brandtstadter and Renner [9] believe that there are two strategies in overcoming problems, those are by changing the life condition for self preference (asimilative coping) or adjusting their self preference and purpose to overcome the coming situational struggle (accommodative coping). The handling of these two strategies related to the life satisfaction. Furthermore, Brandtstadter and Renner [10] also found that by the increase of age, there is a gradual shift from assimilative to accommodative style. This opinion is supported by the conclusion given by Campbell et.al [11] that there is discrepancy happens between someone's purpose and the condition of age decrease. Furthermore, it was stated that the small decrease of life satisfaction caused by the increase of age shows that the series between life condition and subjective well-being is mediated by expectation. Continuing this thought, Ryff [12] found that the elderly, compared to the younger people, shows a more related compatibility between ideal and actual self perception. This shows that age does not affect someone's assessment towards themselves.

Cox and Hammonds [13] stated that religiosity has a function as mechanism by the elderly. Furthermore, it was stated that religiosity can be accumulated in life, so that religious participation tends to be really important towards subjective well-being of the elderly. Furthermore, large research that has been conducted using national samples show that subjective wellbeing is significantly related to religious belief, relationship strength with the God, praying experience and piety as well as participation in religiosity activity [14]. The conclusion of the research is that the religious and spiritual activity will give highest value in finding life's purpose and self pride in the elderly. The elderly who does many dhikr and daily pray become calmer in his life and able to reduce anxiety of death.

Personality is one of the strongest and the most consistent predictor of happy feeling/subjective well-being. Research conducted by Costa and McCrae [15] ; Libr'an [16] found that there is significant relationship between the personality traits of extraversion and neuroticism with subjective well-being. Conscientiousness and agreeableness of these two traits has medium correlation with subjective well-being and lower correlation from extroversion and neuroticism. Meanwhile, openness to experience does not generally related to the experience of positive, negative feeling or individual satisfaction.

The variables of religiosity and personality trait are variables, which have functions including mechanism, giving life meaning and determiner of the elderly characteristics so that the previous study found direct significant effect on the subjective wellbeing variable. In this research, writer used individual resource variable including physical, material, social and psychological resources, which are also assumed to have correlation with subjective well being. In order to test the assumption validity, empirical study needs to be done by considering the culture background of the respondents.

### **1.1 Subjective Well-Being**

Subjective well-being is a concept and construct which is related to the subjective happiness. This concept gives insight in defining and measuring someone's empowerment. Okun and Stock [17] stated that subjective wellbeing is used to describe subjective experience, not necessarily the objective condition about one's life, because the most important thing in individual's life is how he sees and feels his real life condition. Subjective well-being is defined as someone's evaluation of his own life [18]. The evaluation is cognitive assessment including life satisfaction and affective assessment including the response of emotional event, including both positive and negative emotions. As a general term, subjective well-being refers to some components, those are: low life satisfaction and positive and negative emotions. The domains of life satisfaction include marriage, job, income, house and recreation. The domains of positive feeling include good emotion and mood in all the time and seldom experience negative feeling such as depression, stress and angry [19].

### **1.2 Subjective Well-Being in Elderly**

The elderly period is a period, which is susceptible toward problems related to the existence of the elderly. The elderly period commonly brings new problem for the individual in his elderly period and his environment. At least, there are four problems faced by the elderly, those are: first is the decrease of physic, mental and social. Second, susceptible to illness. Third is the decrease of productivity. Fourth is the limited relationship and communication [20]. In a long run can cause the elderly to become weak and does not get any significant demand to have a role in the community. The decrease of community demand for the elderly is due to the elderly strength and independency, which tend to be not prioritized anymore, so that the activities that are usually done when they are still healthy and strong decrease and limited. The decrease of physical strength causes limited activities, susceptible towards illness, and the decrease of sensory function which make the elderly become weak beings and need others' help in their daily life. This causes many people become afraid of the old age period due to the negative impression on the elderly. The impression that the elderly is a person who is: not useful, weak, does not

have any life spirit, has illness, forgetful, senile, does not get attention from the family and community, become burden for other people, etc. It is indeed that in the old age period,

people experience various changes, both in physical and mental. The willingness to become useful and worthy person, both for own-self or other people is basic willingness of every human being, both normal and elderly people. Such willingness is a desire for meaningful life. Meaningful life is the main motivation for human, because it underlies various human activity such as working and creating in order to feel a meaningful and precious life. A desire to have a meaningful life will create happiness. Frankl [21] stated that life meaning is something considered to be important, right and desired as well as giving specific values for someone. Meaningful life can be obtained through prosperous/happy feeling. If the prosperous/happy feeling is successfully obtained and fulfilled, then it can cause this life felt to be meaningful and cause happiness. Therefore, it can be considered that happiness is the product from someone's succeed in fulfilling his life meaning. Finally, a person can increase his subjective well being by behaving optimistically about his future.

### **1.3 Individual Resources**

Steuerink, et al [22] stated that individual resource is a resource used to overcome the lost of comfort and affection towards someone such as the lost of partner, income, home adaptation, self assistance, and informal help. In the other words, individual resource is the strength owned by someone which can be used in living to be more productive. Individual resource is factor which has the role as sources from self concept included in the elderly. The relevant factors cited from several theories, stated that individual resource is generally important in overcoming life and specifically in aging process. Campbell et al [23] found that individual resource is valued as an important thing from various life domains by the respondents. The individual resource is related to the physical, material, social and psychological resources [1:25]. The stable and various individual resources owned by someone enable him to not only obtain the life important purpose, but also the compensation of the lost or decrease caused by the aging process.

### **1.4 Religiosity**

Religiosity is widely defined as comprehensively sociological term used to explain various aspects of religious activities, dedication, and religious belief (doctrine). In a narrow definition, religiosity is how someone's religiosity in doing certain ritual, retelling certain myth, respecting certain symbols, or accepting certain doctrine about God and the hereafter (Wikipedia the free encyclopedia). According to Hill et al [24], religiosity is defined as feeling, thought and behaviour in finding holiness. O'Neil and Kenny [25] stated that religiosity is something related to belief system, practice/activity and knowledge of diversity as well as someone's spiritual experience. Belief in religious is related to individual feeling, thought, partnership, and value system developed from the consideration result on things related to Illahiah [26].

## 1.5 Big Five Personality

Big Five Personality is an approach used in psychology to see human's personality through traits consisting of five domains of personality formed by using factor analysis. The five personality traits are openness to experiences, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. Engler [27] stated that the big five personality is a contemporary theory which affects several research about personality. McCrae and Costa [28] stated that trait in the domains of Big Five Personality such as Openness to experiences which have the characteristics of easily tolerance, able to absorb information, focus and able to keep various feelings, thought and impulsively. **Conscientiousness (C)** is commonly described by well-organized, on time and ambitious person. **Extraversion (E)** is the characteristic of a extraversion individual which has positive feeling such as high enthusiasm, enjoy socializing, having positive emotion, energetic, attracted to many things, ambitious, workaholic as well as friendly to other people. **Agreeableness (A)**, a person who has high agreeableness score described by a person who likes to help, forgiving, and affectionate. **Neuroticism (N)**, an individual who has high value or score on neuroticism is an individual which is easy to experience anxiety, depression and has tendency of emotionally reactive.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Respondent

Respondents of this research is the individuals who belong to elderly category according to the following characteristics: the minimal age is 60 and the maximal age is 74 (elderly) with the assumption that the age still has potential and able to answer statement delivered well, not staying in nursing home, in a good physical and mental condition, as well as can read and write. The research respondents come from several assemblies (majelis taklim) in East Jakarta, South Jakarta and citizens around Ciputat. The writer chose the assemblies because most of the members of the assemblies is the elderly. The sampling used is non-probability through purposive sampling method.

### 2.2 Data Collection Instruments

The data collection in this research used four measuring instruments (according to the number or research variable) in the form of inventory of Likert scale model. The measuring instruments were arranged by the researcher himself based on the theory used in this research with four answer choices constructed in the form of questions which are easily understood with the assumption that the respondents are in the old age who are susceptible to language misunderstanding. Four alternative answers of Likert scale model are appropriate with 1 score, somewhat inappropriate with 2 scores, somewhat appropriate with 3 scores and appropriate with 4 scores for favourable and unfavourable questions.

### 3 Results

#### 3.1 General Description of Subjects

This research used 226 respondents with the range age between 60 and 74 years old. In detail, the general description is reported in the following table 3:

Table 3: Overview of the research subjects.

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Men	90	39,8
	Women	136	60,2
Marital Status	Not married	9	4
	Married	155	68,6
	Divorced	62	27,4
Education	High school	119	52,7
	College	77	34,1

According to the table 3 above, it can be seen that the respondents have different percentage for the gender variable. This research is more dominated by female rather than male.

#### 3.2 Categorization

The categorization aims to place the individual into separate groups in stages according to a continuum based on the attribute measure. The score of each research scale is the estimation of true scorer, which is converted in the form of T-score. In this research, the estimation is obtained through the approach of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using Bayes estimator. The formula for the conversion is  $T\text{-score} = [(z) \cdot 10 + 50]$ ,  $z$  is the estimation result of the true score in analyzing confirmatory factor, which has pure score form (zscore). The purpose of conversion is that the negative factor scores can be transformed to T scale which is all positive with the mean = 50 and deviation standard = 10. By using this deviation standard of T, then the following norm was determined:

Table 4: Direction of score category interpretation .

Norm	Category
$X < 40.00$	Low
$\geq 40.00 \leq X \leq 60.00$	Medium
$X \geq 60.00$	High

According to the direction written on the table 4 above, a description of research subject category was done in accordance with every research variable whose information can be seen in the following table.

Table 5: The category of results based on each variable.

Variable	Dimension	Low (%)	Medium (%)	High (%)
Religiosity	Belief	43 (19%)	183 (81%)	-
	Practice	66 (29.2%)	85 (37.6%)	75 (33.2%)
	Experience	22 (9.7%)	204 (90.3%)	-
	Physic	23 (10.2%)	182 (80.5%)	21 (9.3)
Individual resources	Material	3 (1.3%)	222 (98.2%)	1 (0.4)
	Social	56 (24.8%)	104 (46%)	66 (29%)
	Psychology	5 (2.2%)	221 (97.8%)	-
	Psy Well-being	31 (13.7%)	195 (86.3%)	-
Subjective well-being	Soc. Well-being	32 (14.2%)	190 (84.1%)	4 (1.8)
	Emo Well-being	29 (12,8%)	163 (72.1%)	34 (15%)

According to the table 5 above, it can be seen the religiosity variable in all dimensions of belief, practice and experience of the elderly respondents, in which it is commonly in medium category (more than 50%), while for the practice dimension, the elderly respondents spread in high category for 29.2%, medium category for 37.6% high category for 33.2%. It explains that the respondents in doing their religious ritual related to belief, religious activities and religious spiritual experience belong to medium category, even though the religious activities has percentage of 33.2%. This is because the respondents are commonly the assembly members. The individual resources, its three dimension, which are physic, material and psychology, are commonly in medium category (more than 80%). Meanwhile, for the social dimension, there are three categories, including low category, which is as many as 56 (24.8%), medium category, which is as many as 104 (46%), and the rest is 66 respondent (29.2%) belong to high category. It means that the respondents socially feel that people around them are quite pleasant, even though 24.8% feels unpleasant. The last one, is subjective well-being variable, with the dimensions of psychology, social and emotional well-being, the elderly respondents are commonly included in medium category, even though in terms of emotional, the respondents of 72.1% is medium, 15% is high and 12,8% is low. This explains that well-being feeling felt by the respondents is not too low or high. Furthermore, the writer classified the respondents based on the personality trait. The

classification of personality trait of each respondents was based on the true score obtained. If the true score is high in one of the personality traits, then it can be considered that the respondents belong to the trait group. Based on the classification, the following result was obtained:



Table 6: The category of results based on personality traits.

Personality	Frequency	%
Openness	8	3,5
Conscientiousness	58	25,7
Extraversion	43	19
Agreeableness	33	14,6
Neuroticism	84	37,2

According to the table 6 above, the personality trait mostly owned by the respondents is neuroticism which is as many as 84 people (37.2%). It is possibly affected by the physical and psychological condition of the respondents which experience decrease, so that it causes unstable emotion. Meanwhile, the personality trait which least owned by the respondents is openness, which is only 8 people (3.5%) from the total number of samples.

#### 4 Conclusion

Subjective well-being or happy feeling felt by someone grows and develops optimally should be supported by the person's attitude and behavior factors. Those factors are the ability to adapt, accept all changes and decrease faced, as well as the presence of feeling valued and treated normally by the environment. Realizing the aging process can be referred to life experience which is generally used for expectation in the future aging process. A hypothesis stated that a person who has positive outlook or positive expectation towards his own aging process will make him behaves well. Therefore, high positive experience will increase the well being of the person who has negative outlook. It means that negative outlook or expectation regarding the aging process tends to cause bad behaviour and cause low subjective well-being. Strawbridge et al [29] reported that religiosity strength effect on stress caused by depression, worsen the effect of other stress, such as problem and marriage abuse.

The research result conducted by Seybold and Hill [30] stated that there is positive relationship between religiosity or spirituality and well-being. It is the same as the result of the research conducted by Fry [31] which stated that the meaning of individuality, formal involvement in religious activities, participation in spiritual activities, considering religious as essential, peace feeling with his own-self, and accessibility to religious sources are the significant well-being predictors. Based on each dimension categorization, the research variables are mostly in medium level. The research respondents' religiosity is high only in religious practice dimension, while in other dimensions are in medium and low category. It means that their religious activities are high because they are mostly the members of majlis taklim. Their belief and spiritual experience are commonly in medium category. This shows that they consider religious belief and spiritual experience as normative thing which should be believed. It possibly causes them to not feel that their well-being does not affected by their religious activities.

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