The Level of Happiness among Javanese, Madurese, and Banjarese Elderly

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Abstract. **Elderly happiness is a situation which describes the positive emotions felt by individuals, impacting on positive activities carried out in daily life. One of the factors that influence the happiness of the elderly is a cultural background. A culture which relates to values, beliefs, habits, and daily activities could determine happiness. The purpose of this study was to find out the happiness among the elderly of Javanese, Madurese, and Banjarese. The design of the study is quantitative descriptive. The subjects were Javanese, Madurese, and Banjarese elderly, aged 56-75 years, totaling 117 people. The measuring instrument used was the Happiness Orientation Scale from Seligman. The analysis of the research data was conducted using percentage analysis to determine the level of happiness among the elderly with different demographic backgrounds. The results showed that the majority of the elderly of Javanese, Madurese, and Banjarese showed a moderate level of happiness, both men and women, while the Madurese elderly showed a higher level of happiness compared to Javanese and Banjarese elderly.**

Keywords: happiness of elderly, Javanese, Madurese, Banjarese

Introduction

Happiness is a situation where positive emotions are felt by someone which could impact on the activities carried out daily. There are three aspects of happiness [1], the first is a pleasure, which is an effort to increase positive emotions related to current, past, and future conditions. The second is engagement, which is involved in fun activities, and the third is meaning, which refers to the purpose of life that makes a person survive and understand the values of life. For the elderly, happiness is important and meaningful. Through happiness, the elderly feel that their life is meaningful.

Several factors influence happiness, one of which is a cultural factor. Culture is a ritual, tradition, and behavior, which exists from one generation to the next generation [2]. The results of the research by [3] show that there is an influence of Javanese cultural values, namely respect, harmony, and *nrima* (acceptance) towards the happiness of the elderly. Cultural values noted for 63.5% in the formation of happiness among the elderly. The results of the study [4] show that the happiness of the elderly in Mexico is shaped by several aspects in culture, including the existence of children, peace, health, well-being, and family meaning.

Furthermore, the results of research by [5] show that the happiness of female elderly in Rayong province, Thailand, is influenced by self-esteem, social support, and family relations. All three predict happiness by 91.4%. While in Chonburi province, the happiness of the elderly is more influenced by demographic factors such as formal education, geographic area, and gender. Slightly difference, the happiness of the elderly in Kanchanaburi province, Thailand, was determined by three factors, namely a feeling of confidence in family care, interaction with other people, and good health, while economic factors influence the happiness of younger people [6].

Research in China conducted by [7], shows that the happiness of the elderly in China is triggered by their closeness to their grandchildren. Those who live with grandchildren show a higher level of happiness. Research by [8] found that elderly happiness in Hong Kong and Beijing was influenced by social support and social networks of the elderly. The elderly in Beijing feels happier and has a wider social network than the elderly in Hong Kong. [9], found that elderly happiness was influenced by individual internal factors, namely looking at the shortcomings or poverty they had. Those who feel that they are not poorer than their neighbors feel happier than people who feel that their neighbors are richer or more capable than them. The role of culture in the happiness of the elderly has become an increasingly empirical finding generated from various studies, not only from countries or communities in the Asia Pacific but also in other countries with different cultural values.

Research conducted by [10], shows that the happiness of Maori and Non-Maori elderly is determined by how much they are involved in voluntary activities in the community. The feeling was especially felt by the elderly with low economic background. [11] concluded that the happiness of the elderly living in nursing homes in Canada was influenced by the ability to "grasping" more, the frequency of group activities in institutions or community, and the flexibility of doing activities.

From the previous research results, it can be concluded that the happiness of the elderly was influenced by cultural backgrounds such as values, habits, and daily activities. Therefore it is necessary to do research on the happiness of the elderly from different cultural backgrounds to gain more finding relating to factors that can affect the happiness of the elderly.

Research purposes. This study aims to determine the happiness of the Javanese, Madurese, and Banjarese elderly with various demographic backgrounds such as gender, educational background, and employment status.

Research benefits. The results of this study are expected to enrich science in the field of Psychology and Population, also as a basis for parties who make decision making and policy related to the elderly's welfare.

METHOD

Research design. The design of this study is descriptive quantitative, which explains the results of the study using a percentage value. Research subject. The subjects in this study were 117 elderly, aged 56 - 75, with backgrounds of Javanese (44), Madurese (30), and Banjarese (43).

Research Variables and Instruments. The research variable is the happiness of the elderly, which will be measured using the Happiness Orientation Scale from [1], consisting of 12 items, with aspects of pleasure, engagement, and meaning. The scale is a Likert scale with four choices. Procedure and Research Data Analysis. Percentage analysis is used to analyze the collected data to determine happiness among the elderly from different demographic factors, such as gender, education, and employment status.

RESULT

This research was carried out to 117 elderly people consisting of Javanese (44), Madurese (30), and Banjarese (43). Figures 1 and 2 show a description of the subject as a whole and a description of the variables of happiness.
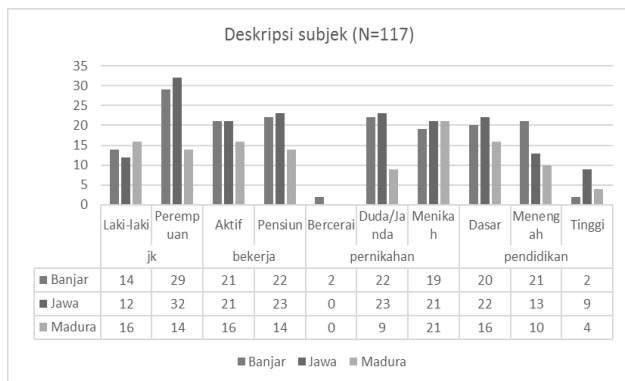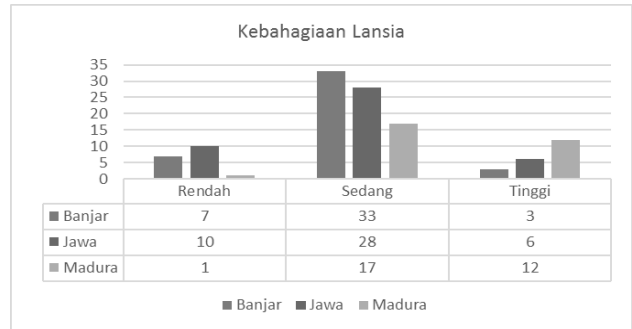

Figure 1. Description of the subject

Figure 2. Description of happiness

Figure 2 indicates that most elderly from the three tribes have a moderate level of happiness. Madura shows the largest number of happiness (12), while Banjar has the smallest amount of happiness (3). Low happiness was mostly owned by the elderly in Java (10), while the smallest number belongs to the Madura elderly (1).

The percentage of happiness of the elderly from the three tribes can be seen in figures 3, 4, and 5.

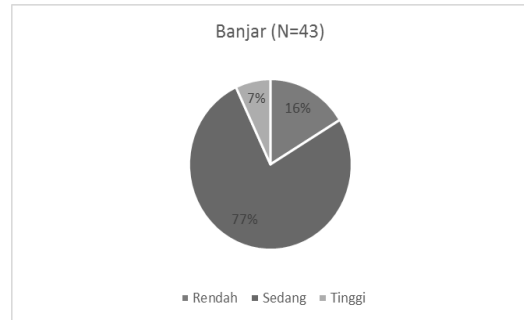Figure 3. Percentage of Happiness in Banjar Elderly (N = 43)

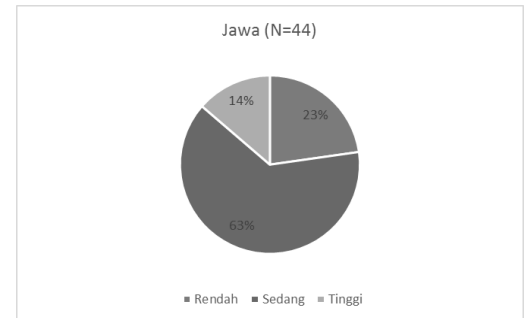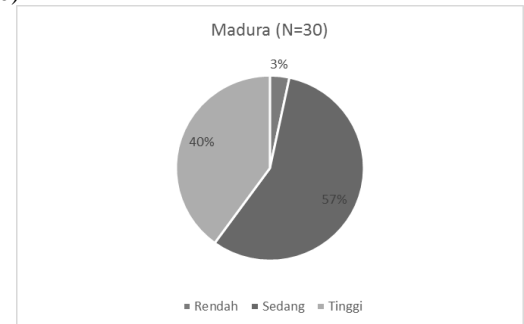Figure 4. Percentage of Happiness in Java Elderly (N = 44)

Figure 5. Percentage of Happiness in Madura Elderly (N = 30)

Figures 3, 4, and 5 represent the percentage of the condition of happiness of the elderly described in the previous description.

Happiness is one of the goals that every elderly person wants to achieve in many ways. Happiness is a positive psychological state based on subjective judgment, which is characterized by the presence of emotions and positive activities, which include satisfaction with the past, happiness with the present and feeling optimistic about the future [1]. Feelings of peace and pleasure could be obtained after doing good deeds according to religious orders; helping others could also become an inner satisfaction for an individual. Feelings of happiness felt by the elderly can come from various activities, including activities to help others or worship more intense.

Culture is a whole way of life passed down from generation to generation in forms of ritual, tradition, inheritance, and behavior [2]. Although the development of technology and the influx of western culture occur in Indonesia, cultural values are still inherited and carried out from generation to generation and are rooted in the daily lives of people, especially the elderly. Likewise, with the ethnic groups owned by the elderly, the existing ethnic groups are also one of the predictions to create happiness among the elderly.

In this study, the subjects were the elderly of Javanese, Madurese, and Banjarese. The average happiness among the elderly of the three tribes are categorized as moderate, yet the elderly of Madurese have a higher level of happiness than the elderly of Javanese and Banjarese, although the difference is not significant. The different happiness among the Javanese, Banjarese, and Madurese elderly could occur because happiness is greatly influenced by the meaning of life. In her research [12] explained that the main value emphasized in Madurese culture is migrating to different areas to achieve economic prosperity and being able to manage relations with God. By doing these things, Madurese could find the meaning of happiness in their life. Achievements that have been experienced in the previous development periods, namely wandering for economic welfare and managing relations with God became the basis of greater happiness.

The educational background of the Javanese, Madurese, and Banjarese elderly states at various levels, namely basic, medium, and high. The educational background of the elderly in Javanese, Madurese, and Banjarese does not give a significant picture of happiness among the elderly, but a little picture shows that the elderly with a level of primary and secondary education have a slightly greater percentage of happiness than the elderly with higher education. Based on this fact, an argument can be drawn that the higher the level of education of the elderly does not guarantee that the elderly will feel happier. It is based on self-perception that having a higher level of education can lead to an increase in self demands, so that requires the elderly to achieve various things. When these demands cannot be achieved, it could reduce the level of happiness among the elderly. Elderly people from primary and secondary education levels may have a simpler perception of life; the course of life is passed comfortably without demands to achieve difficult things.

From this explanation, it can be concluded that happiness is subjective because the individual has different benchmarks in assessing happiness. An individual has a happiness factor. There is no guarantee that ethnicity or culture could define happiness compared to others. The factors underlying the individual happiness include financial, marital status, social life, age, health, emotional balance, education, climate, race, gender, religion, and the level of religiosity[1].

In this study, education and tribes are not a differentiator in the process of happiness in the elderly; however, marital status is one of the keys to happiness. The elderly who still have a husband/wife and live with their husband/wife seems to feel happiness higher than the elderly who live alone, either because of divorce or death. This is in sync with the research conducted by [13], which shows that family support can be a major influence on the happiness of the elderly. In this case, family is referred to husband/ wife, child, grandchild, and other closest family members.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that the majority of the elderly from the three tribes had moderate levels of happiness. Madurese has the largest number of happiness level, while Banjarese has the smallest amount of happiness level. Low happiness is mostly owned by the Javanese elderly, while the smallest amount belongs to the elderly Madurese. Additionally, elderly Madurese women have the highest happiness, and none of them have low happiness. On the contrary, none of elderly Banjar women have high happiness, yet elderly Javanese women who have high happiness. Lastly, most elderly with primary and secondary education background tend to have high happiness compared to the elderly with higher education background, and elderly with marital status and still living together identified to have high happiness compared to those who live alone as widows or widowers.

For the next researcher, the data from the results of this study can be used as a basis for conducting more specific research on how dimensions in culture affect the happiness of the elderly. They can also develop an instrument or measure of happiness that specifically considers local cultural factors. Thus it could produce an appropriate measure of local culture.

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