

Religiosity and Social Support as Predictors for Subjective Well-Being of Overseas Students during Pandemic

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic, which led to the wide use of online services to conduct lectures and other academic-related services, negatively impacted the well-being of overseas students. Therefore, it is necessary to have predictors that can increase their subjective well-being (SWB). The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of religiosity and social support on SWB of overseas students during the pandemic. A quantitative correlational study was employed with data collected from 100 people aged 18-25 through a purposive sampling technique. The instrument used religiousness, social support, and Positive Affect and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) and Life Satisfaction to measure SWB. The multiple linear regression analysis results showed that religiosity and social support simultaneously significantly affected students' SWB during the pandemic, while social support partially affected SWB.

Keywords: social support, overseas students, Covid-19 pandemic, religiosity, subjective well-being

Abstrak

Pandemi Covid-19 berdampak terhadap kesejahteraan hidup mahasiswa rantau akibat kuliah daring dan kondisi merantau yang dapat menimbulkan afek negatif, sehingga perlu adanya prediktor yang mampu meningkatkan *subjective well-being* (SWB). Penelitian ini bertujuan mengetahui pengaruh religiusitas dan dukungan sosial terhadap *subjective well-being* mahasiswa rantau di masa pandemi Covid-19. Metode penelitian menggunakan kuantitatif korelasional. Subjek sebanyak 100 orang berusia 18 – 25 tahun diperoleh melalui teknik *purposive sampling*. Alat ukur menggunakan skala religiusitas, dukungan sosial, serta skala *Positive Affect and Negative Affect Schedule* (PANAS) dan *Life Satisfaction* untuk mengukur SWB. Hasil analisis regresi linier berganda menunjukkan religiusitas dan dukungan sosial berpengaruh signifikan secara bersama-sama terhadap *subjective well-being* mahasiswa rantau di masa pandemi Covid-19, sedangkan secara parsial, hanya dukungan sosial yang berpengaruh terhadap SWB.

Kata Kunci: dukungan sosial, mahasiswa rantau, pandemi *covid-19*, religiusitas, *subjective well-being*

Introduction

Covid-19 is a new disease outbreak affecting the world, including Indonesia. Due to this pandemic, the Indonesian government implemented a social restriction policy by limiting people's activities outside the home, including in the field of education. This led to the use of online learning, which provides opportunities, especially for students to return and learn from the comfort of their homes. However, many students still lived overseas during the pandemic for fear of getting infected on their way home (Rizal, 2020). Online lectures are quite expensive due to the increase in internet access. According to Argaheni (2020), this learning method can

psychologically trigger stress for students due to the burden of lectures and the pressure of adjusting.

In accordance with the understanding given by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Halim & Dariyo (2016) defined overseas students as individuals who study and live at universities far from their home. The stress experienced by these students during the pandemic due to wandering can trigger negative effects. According to Rufaida and Kustanti (in Adyani et al., 2019), the stress experienced is caused by a culture shock and adjusting to new environmental challenges, including lecturers, colleagues, academics, personal relationships, etc. They

often experience low self-esteem, feel unaccepted, dissatisfied, discriminated against, and withdraw from social activities. Halim and Dariyo (2016) further stated that the low psychological well-being of overseas students occurs due to a sense of loneliness. The research by Kurniawan and Eva (2020) stated that 30 overseas students at the State University of Malang have low psychological well-being due to a lack of money and poor time management. These results strengthen phenomena related to the well-being of overseas students, specifically during the pandemic.

Well-being in psychology is subjective. Although psychological well-being (PWB) and subjective well-being (SWB) are not synonymous terms, Kashdan et al. (in Pello dkk., 2018) stated that both have similarities. SWB is a state of self-characterized by the presence of positive affect and life satisfaction without negativity (Diener, 1984). The indicators include general life satisfaction, specific life satisfaction, positive effect characterized by pleasant emotions and moods, as well as the absence of negative effects characterized by negative emotions and moods.

Diener (1984) stated that the factors affecting SWB are subjective self-satisfaction, income, and demographics, such as occupation, beliefs, education level, marital status, family environment, personality, and age. A person with high SWB feels happy, satisfied, and supported (Adyani et al., 2019). Furthermore, SWB can make a person complete every planned goal (Rosyadi & Laksmiwati, 2017). This shows that SWB is important for every overseas student to be able to face problems related to pandemic conditions and complete their educational life goals.

The initial study was conducted through an open-ended questionnaire regarding SWB based on Diener's (1984) theory. The questionnaires were distributed to 20 overseas students comprising 16 females and 4 males living in the university surrounding on November 4, 2021, under pandemic

conditions. Approximately 70% stated that they felt sad to live far from home and are only opportune to visit during holidays. Furthermore, 15% were happy, while the remaining 15% found living in a new environment normal, difficult, and challenging.

Previous studies showed that most of the answers regarding the SWB indicator lead to a negative effect, which is more dominant than the positive. Therefore, overseas students must have a high SWB to complete every planned goal and lecture (Rosyadi & Laksmiwati, 2017). Hamdani (2015) also showed a significant correlation between SWB and students' achievement.

Regarding the SWB predictor variable of overseas students during the pandemic, 50% of the answers lead to parental support through long-distance communication and from friends by meeting people with similar perspective and motivation. Furthermore, 25% overcome sadness through introspection, contemplating and remembering Allah, worshipping, as well as praying. Meanwhile, the remaining 25% led to catharsis by performing hobbies and listening to music, which is refreshing. According to Dewi and Nasywa (2019), the two factors affecting SWB are internal (forgiveness, personality, self-esteem, and gratitude) and external (social support) factors.

A second preliminary study was conducted on August 1, 2021, by giving open questions to the same respondents to determine which predictor variable played a significant role. In terms of social support, the respondents stated that the source of reinforcement was verbal and nonverbal. Verbal support provides positive and constructive invitation sentences to motivate students facing life's challenges. Meanwhile, non-verbal support provides material assistance such as money, internet quota, attention, affection, trust, and prayers for overseas students to survive. The pandemic made it difficult for students to meet with their close pals. Therefore, sources of social support were obtained through online

communication with family, and by conducting activities with friends from the same area living with the surrounding environment.

According to Sarafino and Smith (2011), social support is any factor that affects feelings of pleasure related to the form of care, assistance, and help from others. This is in line with the previous study that the social support obtained comes from parents and friends. Kurniawan and Eva (2020) stated that social support is a form of help from one party to others. Therefore, the recipients feel care, affection, and a sense of security when assisted by friends, spouse, family, or organizations.

Social support can be a predictor of SWB, as reinforced by Kurniawan (2020) on 375 overseas students who showed a positive relationship with psychological well-being. Furthermore, Harijanto and Setiawan (2017) stated that social support has a positive relationship with happiness for overseas students at X University in Surabaya, where happiness is one of the positive effects of SWB. Samputri and Sakti (2015) reported that social support has a positive relationship on SWB of female PT Arni Family Ungaran workers.

Besides the social support variable, this study obtained an overview of the religiosity of overseas students during the pandemic. The respondents stated that the things related to worship rituals are performing five daily prayers, remembrance, reading the Qur'an, praying to Allah, being sincere, patient, trusting, carrying out sunnah worship, such as *tahajjud* and *dhuha* prayers, as well as trying to make every effort to become closer with Allah SWT. Furthermore, these activities were able to have a good effect on students because they felt more comfortable, calm, peaceful, stronger in facing difficulties, and receiving sustenance from Allah SWT.

A sense of closeness characterizes the effect of religiosity on SWB of God through prayer and worship. According to Ellison (in Pramithasari & Suseno, 2019), the feeling of closeness to God and the frequency of a

person when praying are predictors that affect SWB. People, who are closer to God and pray more often, tend to have a high level of life satisfaction. Daradjat (in Mayasari, 2014) stated that religiosity is characterized by feelings and inner experiences regarding matters related to divinity, such as the last days and other things about religion. Therefore, it can be interpreted as a concept that can explain individual spirituality and religious conditions. It is also an attempt to reduce anxiety about life and death. Through this process, a person can pray and reduce the negative effect felt as an overseas student.

The research carried out by Sukri (2018) showed a significant relationship between religiosity and SWB of employees. The positive relationship between religiosity and SWB was found in coronary heart patients, marked by a feeling of being able to face every life problem, such as illness or mental health (Tina & Utami, 2018). A positive relationship between social support and religiosity with SWB was found in Israeli Muslim parents whose children were cancer-treated (Abu-Raiya et al., 2015). Akhyar et al. (2019) also found a relationship between life satisfaction and positive emotions with religiosity. According to Glock and Stark (in Khairudin & Mukhlis, 2019), religiosity is a system of beliefs and values manifested in religious behavior. Based on this definition, religiosity is an aspect that is inseparable from humans and becomes an important part of them, specifically in mental health qualities such as SWB.

Several preliminary studies provided an overview of how religiosity and social support are related to SWB on various subject criteria. Therefore, this study aims to determine the role of religiosity and social support on the SWB of overseas students during the pandemic.

Methods

This quantitative research was conducted using correlational design to measure the degree of relationship between two or more variables (Creswell, 2018). The population is

students of Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Bandung. Based on data from the 2020 Higher Education Database, there are 35, 789 students. Subject characteristics include 1) Overseas students studying outside their homes, 2) Registered at Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Bandung, 3) Living around campus during the Covid-19 pandemic, and 4) Aged 18-25 years. The target population based on these characteristics is unknown, therefore, the determination of the total samples still refers to the overall population obtained using the Slovin formula (Sugiyono, 2017) with a standard error of 10%. The result obtained is 99.7, rounded up to 100 students. According to Hikmawati (2018), the purposive sampling technique is used based on certain criteria.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire using Google Forms. The respondents rated statements on all three scales where 1, 2, 3, and 4 denote very inappropriate, inappropriate, appropriate, and very appropriate, respectively. The religiosity scale is compiled with reference to the five dimensions of Glock and Stark (1968), namely ideological belief, religious ritualistic, religious experiential, religious intellectual, and religious consequential. This scale consists of 36 items with the validity value of each dimension between .619 to .864 and a Cronbach Alpha reliability value of .924. Examples of items include "Feeling less sure of Allah SWT" and "Believing in Allah SWT" at values of .512 and .502, respectively.

The social support scale is structured into four aspects of support, namely emotional, reward, instrumental, and informational (Sarafino & Smith, 2011). This scale has 27 items with the validity value of each dimension between .688 and .895 with a Cronbach Alpha of .917. Examples of items include "My friends cheer me up when I am sad" and "My family provides the college necessities I need," with item analysis values of .467 and .433, respectively.

The SWB scale uses PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) and the life satisfaction scale from Diener (1984), which

measure three aspects, namely positive effect, absence of negative effect, and global life satisfaction. PANAS has negative, positive, and Cronbach Alpha coefficient values of .884, .864, and .772, respectively. The number of items is 14, with the example of "Feeling that my friends are friendly to me" having a value of .499. Meanwhile, the global and specific life satisfaction scale has a dimension validity value of .950 and .910, respectively, with a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .886. The number of items is 27, with the example of "Grateful to be a student where I study" at a value of .533.

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential multiple linear regression analysis with the stages of classical assumption tests such as normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and autocorrelation, as well as F, and coefficient of determination tests.

Results and Discussion

Results

The respondents are overseas students of Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Bandung. It comprises 100 people from outside Bandung who lived in the university surrounding environment during the pandemic. Based on Table 1, the demographics of the home areas with the highest percentages are Bekasi and Bogor, followed by Central Java and Sumatra at values of 19%, 15%, 9%, and 8%, respectively.

The classical assumption tests showed that the data are normally distributed (one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov $.200 > .05$), have no symptoms of multicollinearity (tolerance value $.821 > .10$ and VIF $1.218 < 10.0$), and do not experience symptoms of heteroscedasticity ($1.000 > .05$). Based on Table 2, the significance value obtained is $.000 < .05$, meaning that religiosity and social support had an effect on SWB of overseas students during the pandemic. Meanwhile, Table 3 shows that social support has a partial effect on SWB ($.000 < .05$) as opposed to religiosity ($.105 > .05$).

Table 1
Overview of the Samples by Home Areas (City/Province)

Home Areas	Frequency	Percentage
Java		
Jakarta	2	2%
West Java		
Bekasi	19	19%
Bogor	15	15%
Depok	1	1%
Cianjur	1	1%
Ciamis	1	1%
Majalengka	5	5%
Kuningan	4	4%
Garut	5	5%
Tasikmalaya	4	4%
Purwakarta	4	4%
Sukabumi	4	4%
Sumedang	1	1%
Indramayu	4	4%
Cirebon	1	1%
Subang	1	1%
Banten	2	2%
Central Java	9	9%
East Java	3	3%
Yogyakarta	1	1%
Kalimantan	2	2%
Sulawesi	1	1%
Riau	2	2%
Sumatera	8	8%

Table 2
F Test Results

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	9561.117	2	4780.558	46.433	.000 ^b
Residual	9986.673	97	102.955		
Total	19547.790	99			

Table 3
Partial Test Results

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	27.023	12.490		2.164	.033
Religiosity	.172	.105	.131	1.638	.105
Social Support	.875	.111	.634	7.913	.000

Table 4
Coefficient of Determination Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.699 ^a	.489	.479	10.14669

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Table 4 shows that the coefficient of determination (R²) obtained is .489, meaning that religiosity and social support have a simultaneous effect of 48.9% on SWB, while the remaining 51.1% is affected by other variables.

Discussion

According to the purpose of this study, religiosity and social support had an effect on SWB of overseas students during the pandemic. This is in line with the research by Akhyar et al. (2019) that the relationship between religiosity and SWB becomes stronger with age. Aspects of SWB related to religiosity in the elderly are life satisfaction and positive emotions.

Asanov et al. (2020) stated that self-restrictive behavior during the pandemic allowed individuals to keep their distance from others and stay at home, creating feelings of pleasure. However, when they live in the campus environment, a good SWB is needed. Kamaliya et al. (2021) stated that the well-being of students during the pandemic is in the moderate category, meaning that the subjects can still evaluate their experiences and positive emotions. In this study, SWB felt by overseas students during the pandemic was strengthened by social support and religiosity of 48.9%. Meanwhile, several other factors are gratitude, forgiveness, personality, and self-esteem (Dewi & Nasywa, 2019).

Sukri (2018) stated that religiosity has a significant relationship with SWB of employees. Furthermore, Tina and Utami (2018), in research on coronary heart patients, stated that religiosity has a positive relationship with SWB. This enabled the subjects to accept their situation, solve problems, and maintain mental health stability. This means that religiosity played a

role as a factor affecting SWB of overseas students during the pandemic.

Religiosity is a variable capable of reducing negative effects by praying and worshipping God. According to Ellison (in Pramithasari & Suseno, 2019), the feeling of closeness to God and the frequency of a person when praying are predictors that affect SWB. When individuals become closer to God and pray more often, they tend to have relatively high life satisfaction. Religiosity enables people to pray, and it had an impact on negative emotions or moods of students living overseas during the pandemic.

The results showed that social support is a factor that also affected SWB of overseas students during the pandemic. This is in accordance with Ryan and Deci (2017) that the living environment can be a source of social support that plays a role in the well-being of individuals. Samputri and Sakti (2015) which researched female workers of PT. Arni Family Ungaran stated that social support has a positive relationship with SWB. Furthermore, Harijanto and Setiawan (2017) reported that social support had a positive relationship with the happiness of overseas students in Surabaya, which is one of the positive effects of SWB indicator. It is clear that social support can affect SWB of overseas students during the pandemic.

Currently, the state of being far apart is not an obstacle for individuals to continue interacting with each other and receiving social support. Indirect communication with the help of technology makes it easier for individuals to stay connected even during the pandemic (Saltzman et al., 2020). Sarafino and Smith (2011) stated that the potential sources of social support come from significant others such as family, spouse, friends, neighbors, and professionals, including lecturers who can help overseas students, specifically regarding study problems.

Religiosity and social support are predictor variables that increased SWB of overseas students during the pandemic. Rosyadi and Laksmiwati (2017) stated that

the SWB level affects the goals and achievements of one's life, such as lectures, hence, overseas students need to have high religiosity. According to Mayasari (2014), religiosity can reduce anxiety about life because praying lowers adverse effects during lectures and other associated difficulties. This study confirms that religiosity alone is not enough to support overseas students to have a high SWB but should be accompanied by sufficient social support to make them more confident and stronger.

Conclusion

In conclusion, religiosity and social support played a significant role in SWB of overseas students during the pandemic. The existence of religiosity as a factor in the individual can reduce the negative effect of the pandemic due to a sense of closeness to God by praying and worshipping. Meanwhile, social support is an external factor, usually from family, spouse, friends, surrounding individuals, and professionals such as lecturers with material and non-material support. Currently, social support can be obtained indirectly through communication with the help of technology. These two variables should function as a unit for overseas students to improve their SWB, specifically in lectures during the pandemic.

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