RELIGIOSITY AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING TOWARDS A BALANCED CIVILIZATION: A STUDY AMONG MUSLIM OLDER ADULTS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

The aim of the conceptual paper is to shed more light on the significant of religiosity as a psychosocial determinant of elderly subjective well-being, and its role of as a resource copping strategy, social support, and meaning to life experience. This paper draws on the observation of other scholars in the relationship of religion to health, happiness and well-being research. The deductive and exploratory approach was used to select, analyze and summarize the related literature. The literature indicates that religiosity is associated with elderly people life satisfaction, happiness, and self-esteem. Religious affiliation buffers negative effects of stress on physical health; Prayer buffers the effects of stress on depressive. The paper reviewed the literature on both concepts of well-being and religiosity from Malaysian context. Highlighting the issue of the increase in population of people aged 60 and above, who will need an extra care.

Keywords: Religiosity, Subjective Well-Being, Muslim older adults, Malaysia, balanced civilization, life satisfaction.

Introduction

Ageing is a natural biological process, by 2050, the population of people aged 60 and older will be double the existing numbers,[1] and thus, Aging is an irreversible inclination in many countries. In cognizance of the world's increase in elderly people, researchers in Malaysia are concerned with knowing the needs of the elderly and the determinants of their well-being. Malaysia is not facing an aging issue yet, but the increase in the cost of living may affect the citizens' income, health, and education and might as well as well-being. As a developing country, Malaysia has undergone considerable economic growth over the past 70 years. Whereas, Malaysian human development index has increased from 0.563 in 1980 to 0.789 in 2015. The fertility rates have been fallen considerably during this period, for example, the average annual growth in the period 2000-2005 was 1.9 dropped to 1.5 in 2010-2015.[2] The relation between economic growth and fertility rates of the nations is complex. However, with regard to these global and local demographic changes, the world health organizations are stressing on the necessity of helping old people attain successful aging. According to the 'world values survey' wave 6 in 2014, out of 1300 Malaysian respondents those aged 50 and above 83.2% find religion very important in their life, and 87.8% of them consider religion necessary for their state of health (subjective). The present study exploring the effect of religiosity on the subjective well-being of elderly people in the Malaysian context.

Choudhury highlighted the interactions of causes and consequences regarding well-being.[3] He stressed on the circular causation between well-being and other variables. Scientific reasoning, just as the systems of the human world, is thus seen to be framed in the same circular causation and

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[1] UN (2015), Population ageing and sustainable development. No. 2014/4/Rev.1*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Population Division, accessed on 7th June 2018, retrieved from: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/popfacts/PopFacts_2014-4Rev1.pdf.

[2] UN (2016), Human Development Report. UNDP. New York, accessed on 7th June 2018, retrieved from: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2016_human_development_report.pdf.

[3] Masudul Alam Choudhury (1998), *Studies In Islamic Social Sciences*, New York: St.Martin's Press,Inc., p. 29.

continuity methodology of knowledge creation.[4] Those variables have the same unique dynamics from the Tawhidi ontology which forms well-being and unity of knowledge as the Qur'anic representation of religiosity in self and other. In view of assuring this aging in a well order, the concept of well-being has gain a wide acceptance in the psychological science researches as an evaluation of people to their life from cognitive and emotional aspects.[5] Religiosity was also seen as a possible contributing factor to subjective well-being,[6] and plays a significant role in the lives of old people by defending them against the stages of ill-being.[7]

Research Method

This study used inductive and analytical method which is considered to be the best research method and most frequently used in the human and social studies. The present study was based on the literature review and previous studies were used to identify the basic and related literature that had been published in relation to the key issues of the present study (e.g. Religion/Religiosity, subjective well-being, and life satisfaction). The purpose of this related literature review is to demonstrate the effect of religiosity on Muslim older adults' well-being in Malaysia context.

Muslim Elderly in Malaysia

Malaysia has used the Malaysian Well-being Index (MWI) (EPU, 2013) to measure the level of well-being and quality of life of the country. Well-being in the MWI refers to the physical, social and economic benefits that contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and the satisfaction of individuals, families and communities.[8] However, there are no specific factors to measure the level of well-being among elderly in Malaysia. A study of Osman and Ismail measured the level of well-being among elderly in Selangor, Malaysia.[9] Using a survey method, the data was collected from 466 respondents, and analyzed using t-test and multiple regression analysis; the results showed that the spiritual and social needs had influenced the level of prosperity among elderly. However, income factor was not an essential factor in the welfare of old people. Another recent study from the Malaysian context by Harith and Noon, 2018 aimed to determine the meaning of well-being among the Malay Muslim respondents. The study adopted a qualitative approach that involved 16 people who worked in University MARA Technology Shah Alam. Which has also stressed on the significance of religiosity in Malaysian quality of life and well-being.

Malaysia is fortunate in many domains of its existence and development. It has in many ways keeps in tandem with and satisfies the goals and demands of a modern society and cultural setting. As a multi-religious society with Islam as the official religion of the federation. The Malaysian population comprises several ethnic groups, which makes the country ethnically, racially, religiously, and linguistically diverse. The Malaysian Constitution states that every person has the right to profess, practice and to propagate his/her own religion. Religions may differ in their emphasis on specific spiritual or materialistic aspects of faith, creed, and different matters of daily life. Some of these differences are subtle and disguised, whereas others are clear and major. In this respect, Husain elucidated the relation between religion and mental health from the Islamic perspective. He illustrated the spiritual and moral systems of the Islamic faith, and the value that Islam attaches to the spiritual, mental, and physical health of mankind. He discussed the concepts of righteousness, equality, wellness, and illness from the Islamic point of view.[10]

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Diener, E. (2012), "New findings and future directions for subjective well-being research," *American psychologist*, Vol. 67, No. 8, pp. 590-597.

[6] Naser Aghababaei and Agata Błachnio (2014), "Purpose in life mediates the relationship between religiosity and happiness: Evidence from Poland," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, Vol. 17, No. 8, pp. 827-831; Brown, Philip H. and Brian Tierney (2009), "Religion and subjective well-being among the elderly in China," *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, Vol. 38, No. 2, pp. 310-319.

[7] E. D. Diener, Louis Tay and David G. Myers (2011), "The religion paradox: If religion makes people happy, why are so many dropping out?" *Journal of personality and social psychology*, Vol. 101, No. 6, pp. 1278-1290.

[8] E. P. U (2013), *Malaysian well-being report 2013*, Putrajaya: EPU.

[9] Umi Abidah Noor Osman and Ramlee Ismail. (2019). "The Factors Influencing the Level of Well-being among Elderly in Selangor, Malaysia," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, Vol. 9, No. 3.

[10] Husain, Syed Arshad (1998), "Religion and mental health from the Muslim perspective," in *Handbook of religion and mental health*, Cambridge: Academic Press, pp. 279-290.

Religiosity

For over 50 years, sociologists and psychologists have been debating the aspects of religiosity, defining a variety of multidimensional models.[11] Academics have examined the religiosity as a result of religious behaviors such as the frequency of religious activities (i.e. prayer) performed attachment to God, religious salience, and the spiritual depth.[12] Researchers found religiosity a difficult concept to be defined because the present views of it crossing different academic disciplines, each researcher tackling religiosity from various vantage points, while, its multiple dimensions were rooted in theories of religion from the early 1900s that have been repeatedly revised. There was no general agreement on its conception and dimension among researchers.[13] Therefore, religiosity was stated as the behaviors, feelings, thoughts, and experiences that stem from a search to identify, articulate, maintain, or transform one's relationship with a divine being, divine object, ultimate reality, or ultimate truth.[14]

On other hand, religiosity has been broken down into ideological, ritualistic, intellectual, experiential, and consequential dimensions.[15] These dimensions, respectively, represent beliefs, practices, knowledge, feelings, and effects of religion. In another notion, religiosity was realized as comprising of practice, belief, and experience domains.[16] Martos and Steger concluded that life appears more meaningful when religiosity notion is complex and open.

From an Islamic perspective, Al-Goaib defines religiosity as the commitment to the empirical and theoretical fundamentals of the religion (Islam) through which Muslims would fulfill the rights of God, protect the rights of others, adhere to the divine decrees, abstain from wrong deeds, and do worship.[17] Religiosity also connotes the relationship between God and man; with the Islamic social responsibility understood as the relationship between man and his fellow man, nature, and other creations.[18] Tiliouine and Belgoumidi propose four categories of religiosity – belief, practice, religious altruism and religious enrichment.[19] Muslims make use of reliance as one of features of religiosity on trust in God (tawakkul) as an effective strategy to dealing with and managing the challenging events of life and to achieving well-being.[20]

Well-Being

Throughout history, scholars recognized happiness as man's general evaluation of psychological and physical health and life satisfaction. On the surface, examining happiness in today's research may look naive. Since 1975, well-being has become more accurate term referring to an individual's subjective (positive/ negative) evaluation of his/her lives.[21] In The comprehensive history of the notion of well-being, it was addressed as the backbone of the humanist tradition in psychology.[22]

The concept of well-being is very broad and diverse. Choudhury pointed out that well-being examines the degree of complementary relations among human beings in monotheistic law. Chowdhury has studied well-being from the tawhidi methodological worldview.[23] Choudhury reports that compassion,

[11] Holdcroft, Barbara B. (2006), "What is religiosity?" *Catholic Education: A Journal of inquiry and practice*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 89-103; Bergan, Anne and Jasmin Tahmeseb McConatha (2001). "Religiosity and life satisfaction," *Activities, Adaptation & Aging*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 23-34.

[12] Hogg, Michael A., Janice R. Adelman, and Robert D. Blagg (2010), "Religion in the face of uncertainty: An uncertainty-identity theory account of religiousness," *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 72-83.

[13] Demerath, Nicholas Jay and Phillip E. Hammond (1968), *Religion in social context: tradition and transition*, Random House.

[14] Hill, Peter C. et al. (2000), "Conceptualizing religion and spirituality: Points of commonality, points of departure," *Journal for the theory of social behaviour*, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 51-77.

[15] Glock, Charles Y. (1962), "On the study of religious commitment," *Religious Education*, Vol. 57, no. 4, pp. 98-110.

[16] Martos, Tamás, Barna Konkolÿ Thege, and Michael F. Steger (2010), "It's not only what you hold, it's how you hold it: Dimensions of religiosity and meaning in life," *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol. 49, No. 8, pp. 863-868.

[17] Al-Goaib, S. (2003), "Religiosity and social conformity of university students: An analytical study applied at King Saoud University," *Arts Journal of King Saoud University*, Vol. 16, No.1, pp. 51–99.

[18] Mohsen, N. R. M. (2007), Leadership from the Qur'an, operationalization of concepts and empirical analysis: relationship between Taqwa, trust and business leadership effectiveness, doctoral dissertation, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

[19] Tiliouine, Habib, Robert A. Cummins and Melanie Davern (2009), "Islamic religiosity, subjective well-being, and health," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 55-74.

[20] Ghazali, Muhammad (2001), *The socio-political thought of Shāh Walī Allāh*, International Institute of Islamic Thought.

[21] Diener, E. (1984), "Subjective well-being.," *Psychological bulletin*, Vol. 95, No. 3, pp. 542-563.

[22] Brown, Marjorie M. (1993), *Philosophical studies in home economics: Basic ideas by which home economists understand themselves*, Michigan: Michigan State University.

[23] Masudul Alam Choudhury (2015), "Res extensa et res cogitans de maqasid as-shari'ah," *International Journal of Law and Management*, Vol. 57, No. 6, pp. 662-693.

love, justice and fairness are derived from the divine mercy and circularly connected by the Islamic unity of knowledge.[24] Tetrick noted that well-being was generally known as an absence of illness in the traditional medical model.[25]

The most specific description to the subjective well-being concept has appeared in 1967 by Warner Wilson on "avowed happiness". He stated that the happy person is a "Young, healthy, well-educated, well-paid, extroverted, optimistic, worry-free, religious, married person with high self-esteem, job modest aspirations, of either sex and of a wide range of intelligence" (p.294). According to Dinner, Suh, Lucas, and Smith subjective well-being is regularly defined as the total of affective and cognitive components.[26] The affective wellbeing is all about balancing between positive and negative emotions. Cognitive well-being is estimated by the human's evaluation of his experience in life. The high subjective well-being can be attained by an in increasing positive emotions and decrease in negative ones. Although subjective well-being literature is now more comprehensive, according to Diener et al., (2003) comprises cognitive judgments e.g. life satisfaction, and affective reactions e.g. moods and emotions. Wellbeing is the objective criterion of the holistic ontological design of monotheism in terms of its principle of organic unity of knowledge inducing the generality and particular of the world-system.[27] Research on subjective well-being is still less describing the demographic characteristics that associate with it.[28]

Religiosity and Well-Being

The literature suggests that religion may enhance various aspects of well-being in at least four ways; 1) through social integration and support; 2) through the establishment of personal relationships with a divine other; 3) through the provision of systems of meaning and existential coherence and 4) through the promotion of more specific patterns of religious organization and personal lifestyle.[29] The human interpretation of the monotheistic law is shown to go through a process of learned discourse to establish the purpose and objective of the shari'ah. Thus, the shari'ah has a core that remains immutable in terms of its ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological meanings. Islamic law in as far as it arises from the premise of the Qur'an and the Sunnah reaches out to the farthest extant of knowledge of the universe in its holistic (interconnected) totality by way of organic relations in the framework of unity of knowledge.[30] The Qur'anic meaning of blessings gained through pairing by knowledge premised on the Tawhidi worldview reflected well-being as very important evaluative criterion function. According to Choudhury, the ontological formalism of wellbeing as the Qur'anic representation of religiosity in self and other, which forms the 'pairing' of entities of good things in the form of unity of being is referred to in the Qur'an in several verses.[31] Of these is the verse (36:36): "Glory to Allah, Who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own kind and other things of which they have no knowledge" (see also 2:164). Thus, 'Pairing' conveys the idea of pervasive complementarities, which we will use in this paper to propose the relationship between well-being and religiosity.

The domains of science and society do not remain independent of the extended understanding of the shari'ah as derived from the monotheistic law. The linkage between religiosity and well-being was well intertwined in many studies within United states boarder. There was a substantial number of studies linking religion to both physical health[32] and mental health.[33] Religion and belief were always

[24] Masudul Alam Choudhury (2010), "The Dynamics of the Shari'ah and the World-System," *Journal of King Abdulaziz University: Islamic Economics*, Vol. 362, No. 3061, pp. 1-56.

[25] Tetrick, Lois E. (2002), "Individual and organizational health," in *Historical and current perspectives on stress and health*, Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing, pp. 117-141.

[26] Diener, Ed et al. (1999), "Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress," *Psychological bulletin,* Vol. 125, No. 2, p. 276.

[27] Masudul Alam Choudhury, Ari Pratiwi and Mohammad Shahadat Hossain (2018), "From the ontology of tawhid to Islamic social finance: Conceptualization and application," in *Islamic Social Finance*, London: Routledge, pp. 27-50

[28] Dodge, Rachel et al. (2012). "The challenge of defining wellbeing," *International journal of wellbeing*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 222-235.

[29] Ellison, C. G. (1991), "Religious involvement and subjective well-being," *Journal of health and social behavior*, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 80-99.

[30] Masudul Alam Choudhury (2000), "Contrasting models of knowledge and 'de-knowledge'," in *The Islamic World View: Socio-Scientific Perspectives*, London: Kegan Paul International, pp. 259-86.

[31] Masudul Alam Choudhury (2018), "The ontological law of Tawhid contra 'Shari'ah-compliance' in Islamic portfolio finance," *International Journal of Law and Management*, Vol. 60, No. 2, pp. 413-434.

[32] George, Linda K., Christopher G. Ellison and David B. Larson (2002), "Exploring the relationships between religious involvement and health," *Psychological Inquiry*, Vol. 13, pp. 190–200; Swyers, David B. Larson and Brian J. Zinnbauer (1998), Scientific research on spirituality and health: A report based on the Scientific Progress in Spirituality Conferences, Bethesda, MD: National Institute for

seen as perceived sense of purpose and direction[34] and meaning[35] in life. In the last two decades, social scholars have provided several explanations for the relationship between religion and well-being in theoretical and empirical methods.[36] Steger and Frazier using an experience sampling method they have found meaning in life as a mediator in relationship between daily religious activities and well-being.[37]

Scholars keep on investigating what aspects of religious involvement influence well-being, and which mechanisms may justify these observed relationships. Choudhury found that wellbeing function is firstly a theoretical abstraction defined in terms of Tawhidi unity of knowledge.[38] This in turn is explained Choudhury's using of the circular causation method between specific variables to measure the degree to which such positive complementarities exist between the well-being and other representative choice variables.

Although, there was some variation in the lists of possible explanations of religious effects on well-being, still there are five common components so far were suggested by many scholars; i.e. social support, meaning in life, health practices, coping resources and behaviors, and positive affect.[39] Out of 850 various studies reviewed by Koenig and Larson, which were attempting to test religious commitment correlation with life satisfaction, 80% of these studies demonstrated a positive relationship.[40] The people who have strong social Support from their workplace, family, friends or religious community are more likely to have a greater well-being.[41] Social support and social relationships have been long seen as an explanatory mechanism located in the relationship between religiosity and well-being.[42] Religiosity was also recognized as the most effective resource of coping with life issues.[43] Moreover, there is a general line of an agreement that the religion promotes an optimistic, positive world view that provides meaning to life experience.[44] As a result of these arguments, religiosity is reflecting positively on well-being see below table 1.

Healthcare Research; Thoresen, Carl. E. (1999), "Spirituality and health: Is there a relationship?" *Journal of Health Psychology*, Vol. 4, pp. 291–300.

[33] Gartner, John, Larson, Dave. B and Allen, George. D. (1991), "Religious commitment and mental health: A review of the empirical literature," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 6-25; Ellison, Christopher G. and Jeffrey S. Levin (1998), "The religion-health connection: Evidence, theory, and future directions," *Health Education & Behavior*, Vol. 25, No. 6, pp. 700-720; Ventis, W. Larry (1995), "The relationships between religion and mental health," *Journal of social Issues*, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 33-48.

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[35] Steger, Michael F. and Patricia Frazier (2005), "Meaning in life: One link in the chain from religiousness to well-being," *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, Vol. 52, No. 4, pp. 574-582.

[36] Ahmed Abdel-Khalek (2010), "Religiosity, subjective well-being, and neuroticism," *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, Vol. 52, No. 1, pp. 67-79; Achour, Meguellati et al. (2015), "Measuring religiosity and its effects on personal well-being: a case study of Muslim female academicians in Malaysia," *Journal of religion and health*, Vol. 54, No. 3, pp. 984-997; Ellison, C. G. (1991), "Religious involvement and subjective well-being," *Journal of health and social behavior*, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 80-99; Boey, K. W. (2003), "Religiosity and psychological well-being of older women in Hong Kong," *The international journal of psychiatric nursing research*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 921-935.

[37] Steger, Michael F. and Patricia Frazier (2005), "Meaning in life: One link in the chain from religiousness to well-being," *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, Vol. 52, No. 4, pp. 574-582.

[38] Gartner, John, Larson, Dave B and Allen, George. D. (1991), "Religious commitment and mental health: A review of the empirical literature," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 6-25.

[39] Levin, Jeff (2010), "Religion and mental health: Theory and research," *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 102-115; Masudul Alam Choudhury (2000), "Contrasting models of knowledge and 'de-knowledge'," *The Islamic World View: Socio-Scientific Perspectives*, London: Kegan Paul International, pp. 259-86.

[40] Koenig, Harold. G and Larson, David. B. (2001), "Religion and mental health: evidence for an association," *International Review of Psychiatry*, Vol. 13, pp. 67–78.

[41] Diener, Ed (2000), "Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and a proposal for a national index," *American psychologist*, Vol. 55, No. 1, pp. 34-43.

[42] Park, Jisung, Soonhee Roh and Younsook Yeo (2011), "Religiosity, social support, and life satisfaction among elderly Korean immigrants," *The Gerontologist*, Vol. 52, No. 5, pp. 641-649.

[43] Achour, Meguellati, et al. (2015). "Measuring religiosity and its effects on personal well-being: a case study of Muslim female academicians in Malaysia," *Journal of religion and health*, Vol. 54, No. 3, pp. 984-997.

[44] Martos, Tamás, Barna Konkolÿ Thege and Michael F. Steger (2010), "It's not only what you hold, it's how you hold it: Dimensions of religiosity and meaning in life," *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol. 49, No. 8, pp. 863-868; Steger Michael and Frazier Patricia (2005), "Meaning in life: One link in the chain from religiousness to well-being," *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, Vol. 52, No. 4, pp.574-582.

Table 1. The Effect of Religiosity on Subjective Well-Being

Author	Association	Author	Association
Abdel-Khalek (2008)	Both measures of religiosity are positively correlated with all measures of well-being except for self-rated health	Aghababaei, Sohrabi, Eskandari, Borjali, Farrokhi, & Chen (2016)	Religiosity was positively related to life satisfaction, happiness, and self-esteem
Abdel-Khalek (2007)	Religiosity accounted for around 15 % of the variance in predicting happiness	Mazidi & Ostovar (2006)	Religious affiliation is significantly associated only with lower somatic symptoms
Abdel-Khalek (2011)	Religiosity is positively correlated with happiness, mental and physical health, while negatively correlated with anxiety and depression	Kodzi, Gyimah, Emina, Ezeh (2011)	Religious participation is positively associated with subjective well-being
Abdel-Khalek & Naceur (2007)	For men, religiosity is positively correlated with mental health. For women, religiosity is positively correlated with physical health, mental health, happiness, satisfaction with life, and optimism, while negatively correlated with anxiety and pessimism	Lazar & Bjorck (2008)	Support from religious leaders and God support are related to lower anxiety; support from religious leader and religious community relate to a higher level of life satisfaction; support from religious community and God are related to better perceived health
Aflakseir & Coleman (2009)	Religious coping positively affects general mental health and PTSD	Copeland-Linder (2006)	Formal religious affiliation buffers negative effects of stress on physical health; Prayer buffers the effects of stress on depressive symptomatology

Several studies in the last decades have shown a positive relationship between religiosity and subjective well-being. However, to explain these findings, it has been suggested that people who experience more connection with and direction from a higher power, that is, people who show high religious and spiritual involvement, tend to give a more positive appraisal of their lives.[45] Further support to this view consists in the role of religious beliefs and practices that are usually positively related to life satisfaction.[46] However, other research failed to find any connection between religiosity and life satisfaction.[47] As for the effect of religiosity and spirituality on the affective dimension of SWB, findings are mixed as well. Some studies, which reported a weak relationship between religiosity/spirituality and positive affect, highlighted a possible effect of the social structure provided by religious affiliation on experiencing positive affect.[48] Furthermore, according to Ramsay et al.,

[45] Ramsay, Jonathan E. et al. (2019) "Teleological explanation and positive emotion serially mediate the effect of religion on well-being," *Journal of personality*, Vol. 87, No. 3, pp. 676-689.

[46] Abu-Raiya, Hisham et al. (2015), "Robust links between religious/spiritual struggles, psychological distress, and well-being in a national sample of American adults," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. 85, No. 6, p. 565; Krause, Neal (2015), "Religious doubt, helping others, and psychological well-being," Journal of religion and health, Vol. 54, No. 2, pp. 745-758.

[47] Mak, Miranda Chi Kuan et al. (2011), "Building life satisfaction through attachment to mother and beliefs about the world: Social axioms as mediators in two cultural groups," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture,* Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 223-239.

[48] Diener, Ed, Louis Tay and David G. Myers (2011), "The religion paradox: If religion makes people happy, why are so many dropping out?" *Journal of personality and social psychology*, Vol. 101, No. 6, pp. 1278- 1290; Lun, Vivian Miu-Chi and Michael Harris Bond (2013),

another important mechanism that can explain the relationship between religiosity and well-being is that of emotional regulation, which consists in the modulation of emotional states functionally to the environment's demands.[49]

The majority of published research papers in this domain have been carried out from western perspective. From the Malaysian context as Islamic country, study using a cross sectional design, attempted to test the religiosity effect on social isolation and psychological well-being among 1415 old Malay Muslims age 60 and above. Religiosity was found significantly moderating the relationship between social isolation and psychological well-being.[50] A combination of events such as, deaths of relatives and friends, residential relocation, and retirement can lead to disruption of social support resources and increases risk of social isolation in old people life.[51] Momtaz, Ibrahim, Hamid, & Yahaya examined the role of social and personal religiosity as a mediating mechanism on the psychological well-being of 1367 widowed elderly people found widowhood negatively affects psychological well-being of elderly people. Religiosity can reduce he negative effect of widowhood.[52]

Religiosity and Well-Being among the Elderly People

Islam recognizes the tawhid of God's creation as the core of the epistemological foundation of both abstract and operative knowledge. Therefore, the radical distinction denotes the western and Islamic methodologies in all their details, as well as in their explanation of the universe and its structures, where the analytical investigation of such details is pursued in the light of the inherent differentiations between the two worldviews.[53] Age is associated with positive and negative affect, or cognitive self-evaluation. Aging process can be a source of life stress depending on how one perceives it. Existing studies suggest that cognitive components of subjective well-being (e.g., life satisfaction) increase with age in general.[54] Whereby, older women report lower subjective well-being than men.[55] Canda and Furman reported in their book that people become conscious of religiosity and spirituality as they grow older, with an increasing sense of spiritual development from their mid-50s to older adulthood.[56] In general, older adults are more likely than younger adults to say religion is very important in their lives.

In the current literature review, the majority of studies of subjective well-being in middle and later life, reported the important positive role of religiosity in elderly age and correlated strongly with their subjective wellbeing see below table 2.

Table 2. The Role of Religiosity in Elderly Age in the Subjective Well-Being

Author	Country	Samples	Association
Ali, Marhemat, sara & Hamid (2015)	Iran	N-141: above 60	a positive correlation between spiritual well-being and quality of life.
Brown, Tierney (2009)	China	N=9619	Religious participation is negatively associated with subjective well-being
Momtaz, Ibrahim,	Malaysia	N=1367,	Religiosity can decrease the negative

"Examining the relation of religion and spirituality to subjective well-being across national cultures," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality,* Vol. 5, No. 4, p. 304.

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Hamid, & Yahaya (2010)		60 and above	effects of widowhood on the psychological well-being of widowed elderly people
Ismail and Desmukh (2012)	Pakistan	N=150: 18 to 60 years	religiosity have a strongly negative relationship with loneliness and strongly correlated in relationship with life satisfaction.
Tiwari, Singh, Chand (2016)	Uttarakhand	N=200	Spirituality and psychological wellbeing were found to be positively correlated thus it can be concluded that elderly who have higher levels of spirituality have higher levels of psychological wellbeing.
Jackson & Bergeman (2011)	USA	N=529, 31–88	The effects of religious/spiritual coping and spiritual experiences on subjective well-being were partially mediated by perceived control PC in the full sample
Park, Roh, & Yeo (2011)	Korea	N= 200, 65-89	Greater religiosity was related to greater life satisfaction and that social support partially explained the positive relationship between religiosity and life satisfaction
Gull & Dawood (2013)	Pakistan	N=100, 60 and above	Religiosity was a significant positive predictor for life satisfaction

Reciprocity was assumed as a universal norm and has become a widely accepted social rule that affirms the obligation to return the favour. Reciprocity norm can be applied to the religiosity and well-being relationship by exploring its important role in one's self and other. Well-being is the objective criterion of reciprocity and is a principal concern in the Tawhidic methodological worldview.[57] Choudhury also pointed out that well-being examines the degree of complementary relations among human beings in monotheistic law. Religions have added the spiritual dimension to the reciprocity norm and referred to it as the 'Golden Rule'. The Torah teaches, "Do to others what you want them to do to you. This is the meaning of the law of Moses and the teaching of the prophets" (Matthew 7:12 NCV; Luke 6:31), and the Holy Qur'an states, "Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbour, the neighbour farther away, the companion at your side, the traveller, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful" (Al-Nisa' 4:36). Given the fact that the ultimate goals of the secular and Islamic worldviews differ substantially, their perspectives of human development have to differ as well. Islam is not a marginal religion dealing with dealing spiritual life alone. It is a religion providing guidance and well-being for both this life and the hereafter. Therefore, Islam aims to achieve its goal through its value-based and God-centered moral and spiritual worldview.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study attempted to explore the latest literature on the relationship between religiosity and well-being in terms of elderly age. The literature review shows that people religious involvement and commitment was highly correlated with their life satisfaction. There was some variation in the lists of possible explanations of religious effects on well-being. But the results of previous studies, show that there are five common components were suggested by many scholars; i.e. social support, meaning in life, health practices, coping resources and behaviors. The religiosity was seen as an effective resource of coping with life issues, promotes an optimistic, positive world view that provides meaning to life experience. From an Islamic point of view, it can be said that God makes

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[57] Masudul Alam Choudhury (2015), "Res extensa et res cogitans de maqasid as-shari'ah," *International Journal of Law and Management*, Vol. 57, No. 6, pp. 662-693.

Himself known to humanity through His words and works. If a man listens to the divine revelations and read his works in the universe, he will know his attributes. Thus, older people begin their reading from the self because the knowledge of the self will help them to know God. Once they understand that they are absolutely impotent and needy, they will realize that nature could not produce anything on her own.

This research focused on religiosity and subjective well-being among Muslim older adults in Malaysia context. Persons with limited religiosity achieved low well-being. Furthermore, religiosity has become the main coping strategy for Muslim older adults in coping with life problems. The current study highlights the importance of religiosity for Muslim older adults as good strategy to achieve a greater value of well-being. Future research needs to inquire into empirical evidence and examine ways and means leading to an understanding of how those concepts and religious coping strategies operate in Muslim life. This study shows that religiosity is to a large extent used by Muslims as a common strategy to cope with life stressors and that turning to religiosity through belief and faith, forgiveness, prayer and supplication, recitation of the Qur'an, exercise of trust in God, beginning one's day with positive ideas, remembrance of God, performance of prayer, patience and thankfulness for God for His bounties and many blessings all serve as effective coping strategies and mechanisms to cope with life stressors.

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