

# Correlation Between Mindfulness and Happiness in University Students on West Jakarta

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## ABSTRACT

University life requires students to face new challenges. Happiness is needed by university students to face these challenges, because unhappiness can lead to problems in adjustment, mental health, lower academic performance, and deteriorating social relations. Previous studies have proven that mindfulness can help individuals foster a sense of happiness. This study aims to determine the correlation between mindfulness and happiness in university students on West Jakarta. The study was conducted on 393 students on West Jakarta aged 18-21 years chosen through simple random sampling technique. This research is quantitative non-experiment with correlation method. Measuring instruments used are Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ). The analysis using Spearman Correlation shows  $r(393) = -0,362$  and  $p = 0,000 < 0.05$  which means that there is a negative and significant correlation between mindfulness and happiness. The higher the level of mindfulness, the lower their happiness, and the lower the level of mindfulness, the higher the happiness.

**Keywords:** *mindfulness, happiness, university student*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Someone who studies at a university or college is a university student. According to Siswoyo (quoted in Papilaya & Huliselan) [1] students are individuals who take part in the learning process at tertiary institutions, whether it is private, public or other equal level institutions. Generally, university students who complete their study in four years, are at their final stages of adolescent development. Steinberg (quoted in Hidayat & Fourianalistyawati) [2] explained that the age range of 18 to 21 years is the age of the late adolescent development stage.

As students, their daily lives revolve around the university. Ramadhani and Hadiyati [3] explained that university life requires students to face challenges like academic problems, managing personal finances, not depending on parents, adapting to be independent, building new social relationships with individuals of different backgrounds and ages, and searching and developing personal identity. The various challenges above require students to make adjustments. Yussof, Mat-Pa, Esa, and Rahim (quoted in Ramadhani & Hadiyati) [3] said that when students fail to adapt to these challenges, it will jeopardize their academic achievement, their psychological conditions, their social skills, and making them susceptible to mental health problems such as depression, stress and anxiety.

Mental health problems such as depression cannot be underestimated. Utomo and Meiyuntari [4] stated that

depression can affect daily life, such as changes in emotions, cognitive, motivation, and behavior. Indrayani and Wahyudi [5] revealed that the results of the *Riset Kesehatan Dasar* (Rikesdas) in 2018 showed that 6.1% of Indonesians over the age of 15 were depressed and for DKI Jakarta the number is 5.9%. Depressed individuals have the possibility to commit negative and harmful actions such as suicide, drug abuse, and destructive and aggressive behavior [4].

In 2014, a mental health observer said that Jakarta contributed the most to the number of suicides compared to other cities that accounted for 6 percent of the total population and one of the causes was depression [6]. According to WHO Global Health Estimates in 2016 the mortality rate in Indonesia at the age of 20-29 is higher than the age of 30-59 years [7]. Based on the results of a study conducted by YouGov in 2019, it was found that the suicide thinking rate in Indonesian youth aged 18 to 24 years old was far higher than in people aged 55 years and older with a ratio of 33% to 20% [8].

Failure to adjust to the challenges in university life can cause problems, especially mental health problem. Therefore, happiness is needed by students. Ramadhani and Hadiyati [3] explained that unhappiness in students can lead to the lack of adjustment to various things, both personally and socially in life. Diener (quoted in Ramadhani & Hadiyati) [3] also explained that without happiness in university life, it can result in poor academic performance, poor student performance, poor social relations, and susceptibility to mental health problems

such as depression. Because happiness is needed by students, mindfulness can play an important role in helping students foster a sense of happiness in themselves. A study conducted by a neuroscientist named Richard J. Davidson proved that mindfulness plays a major role in health and happiness [9]. According to Arif (quoted in Waskito, Loekmono, & Dwikurnaningsih) [10] in positive psychology, mindfulness is one aspect of happiness.

Mindfulness can be understood with an explanation from Kabat-Zinn (quoted in Rinaldi & Retnowati) [11] that mindfulness is a condition in which individuals are able to give attention by not giving critical analysis or assessment of the experience experienced, such as not giving an assessment of cognitive states, physical and psychological experiences that are happening. Afandi (quoted in Agustin & Kusnadi) [12] says that mindfulness can help individuals to be able to manage themselves, focus on the current situation, and accepting, being open, and doing good when facing things that are not desired. When individuals have mindfulness, individuals will develop confidence, optimism, life satisfaction, have good social relationships, and happiness [13].

Happiness can be understood with an explanation from Kittiprapas [14] stating that happiness is a condition where there is a lack of physical and mental suffering that is not desired by individuals. Techapalokul [15] says that happiness is not something that can be pursued but happiness is obtained from trying to let go of a desire or attachment that causes suffering. He also explained that when an individual is in a state of mindfulness and in full attention, the individual can see the rise and fall of the feelings of happiness, so that when suffering arises, the individual knows the cause and try to remove the thoughts or feelings that cause suffering. Moaser [16] says that happiness is something every individual in the world will feel.

## **2. METHOD**

### **2.1 Participants**

This study involved 393 participants, who are active students (not currently taking academic leave), in their late adolescence (18 to 21 years old), studying at a university located on West Jakarta, male or female. Participants were chosen using simple random sampling technique.

### **2.2 Research Type**

This research is a quantitative non-experiment research with correlational method. Data were collected by asking participants to fill out an online questionnaire containing a mindfulness scale and a happiness scale.

### **2.3 Measures**

The mindfulness variable was measured using Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) developed by Brown and Ryan [17] and has been adapted by Jonathan [18]. MAAS is unidimensional. MAAS consists of 15 negative items with 6 alternative answers in the form of a Likert scale. Prior to testing, Cronbach's alpha value of MAAS was 0.789. After testing, the 15<sup>th</sup> item must be discarded because the item's value did not meet validity, improving the Cronbach's alpha value to 0.794. Therefore, the total items declared valid are 14 items.

The happiness variable was measured using Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) developed by Hills and Argyle [19] and has been adapted by Danny [20]. OHQ is unidimensional. OHQ consists of 29 items, 17 of which are positive items, and 12 of which are negative items with 6 alternative answers in the form of a Likert scale. Prior to testing, Cronbach's alpha value of OHQ was 0.899. After testing, the 14<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> item must be discarded because the items' value did not meet validity, improving the Cronbach's alpha value to 0.909. Therefore, the total items declared valid are 27 items.

## **3. RESULTS**

Mindfulness was measured using Mindful Attention Awareness (MAAS) with a hypothetical mean of 3.5 and an empirical mean of 3.2196. Empirical mean being lower than the hypothetical mean means that the participants have low mindfulness.

Happiness was measured using the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) with a hypothetical mean value of 3.5 and an empirical mean of 4.3530. The results show that empirical mean value is greater than the hypothetical mean. Therefore, it can be concluded that the participants have high happiness.

Normality test was conducted using One-sample Kolmogorov Smirnov. The results showed that for the mindfulness variable, the value of  $Z = 0.062$  and the value of  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$  were obtained. For happiness variable, the value of  $Z = 0.048$  and the value of  $p = 0.032 < 0.05$  were obtained, which means that the data distribution of the two variables were not normally distributed.

The main data analysis (relationship test) was performed using Spearman Correlation because the data obtained was not normally distributed. The results showed the value of  $r(393) = -0,362$  and  $p = 0,000 < 0.05$ . From these results it can be concluded that there is a negative and significant relationship between mindfulness and happiness.

**Table 1. Correlation test between Mindfulness Variables and Happiness Variables**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Description</b>
Mindfulness and Happiness	-.362	.000	There is a negative relationship

Comparative test on mindfulness variables based on sex was performed using Mann Whitney U analysis. The results showed  $Z = -2.363$ ,  $p = 0.018 < 0.05$  which means

that there were significant differences between the mindfulness of male and female participants ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 2. Comparative test of Mindfulness based on Sex**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>Description</b>
Male	165	212.91	-2.363	.018	There is a significant difference
Female	228	185.49	-2.363	.018	

Comparative test on happiness variable based on sex was conducted using Mann Whitney U. The results showed  $Z = -0.011$ ,  $p = 0.991 > 0.05$  which means that there were no

significant differences between the happiness of male and female participants because the  $p$  value was greater than 0.05.

**Table 3. Comparative test of Happiness based on Sex**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>Description</b>
Male	165	196.92	-.011	.991	There is no significant difference
Female	228	197.05	-.011	.991	

Correlation test between mindfulness and age was conducted using the Spearman Correlation. The results showed  $r(393) = 0.039$  and  $p = 0.442 > 0.05$ . This means

that there is no relationship between the mindfulness and age because the value of  $p$  is greater than 0.05.

**Table 4. Correlation test between Mindfulness and Age**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Description</b>
Mindfulness and Age	.039	.442	There is no relationship

Correlation test between happiness and age was conducted using Spearman Correlation. The results showed  $r(393) = 0.036$  and  $p = 0.476 > 0.05$ . This means that there is no

relationship between the happiness and age because the value of  $p$  is greater than 0.05.

**Table 5. Correlation test between Happiness and Age**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Description</b>
Happiness and Age	.036	.476	There is no relationship

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the main data analysis it was found that mindfulness has a negative and significant relationship with happiness in university students on West Jakarta. The results of this study are not in line with Nurjannah's [21] research regarding the relationship between Work Family Balance and Mindfulness and Happiness in female employees in the city of Yogyakarta. Nurjannah [21] found that mindfulness is positively related to happiness in female employees in the city of Yogyakarta.

According to the researcher's analysis negative results can occur due to several possibilities. First, it is possible that mindfulness is not the main reference for students to foster a sense of happiness within themselves. Happiness in students

can be fostered through other factors such as social life and financial factors.

The second possibility that might have occurred is the lack of understanding of mindfulness among the subjects who are students, so when filling out the questionnaire, participants tend to choose the answers that they think are the most morally correct rather than answers that are in accordance with their current experience. It might also be that the participants filled the questionnaire carelessly, leading to data that shows extreme scores.

The results of the study are also supported by the results of data analysis of each variable. The results showed that participants in this study might have a high level of happiness even with a low level of mindfulness.

Mindfulness comparative test based on sex found that there is a significant difference between the mindfulness of male and female participants. This is supported by a study by Alispahic and Hasanbegovic-Anic [22] who found that there are significant differences between the level of mindfulness of men and women in Bosnia. However, differences were found in certain aspects of mindfulness.

Happiness comparative test based on sex found that there was no significant difference between the happiness levels of male and female participants. This finding is in line with a study by Hassanzadeh and Mahdinejad [23] that explained there is no difference between the happiness levels of men and women. Another study by Maharani [24] which found that the happiness of male and female students does not show different emotional levels also supported this.

Correlation test between mindfulness and age found no relationship. This finding is supported by Ahmadi, Mustafa, Haghdoost, and Alavi [25] who explained that there is no relationship between age and the level of mindfulness in students. However, it contradicts a study by Alispahic and Hasanbegovic-Anic [22] who found that there was a relationship between mindfulness with age, and that older participants had higher mindfulness scores compared to younger participants.

Correlation test between happiness and age found no relationship between the two variables. According to the researchers' analysis, the lack of a relationship is because happiness cannot be measured by one's age. This is due to how the meaning of happiness in certain age groups can vary. This statement is supported by a study by Mogilner, Kamvar, and Aaker [26] titled "The Shifting Meaning of Happiness". They found that the way people interpret happiness can change with age.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the main data analysis, it was concluded that mindfulness has a negative and significant correlation with happiness in university students on West Jakarta. This means that the higher the level of mindfulness, the lower the level of happiness, and the lower the level of mindfulness, the higher the level of happiness. The results show that the research hypothesis was accepted.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thank you to all students who have been willing to become participants and provide all the data needed in research and thank you to all lecturers and friends who helped in completing this paper.

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