Does Almsgiving Make Us Happier?
A Study of Almsgiving (*Shodaqoh*-Philanthropy) and Self-Awareness on Individual Happiness

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ABSTRACT
Everyone desires happiness. Happiness can be achieved through many things, one of which is carrying out positive activities, namely almsgiving (philanthropy). Almsgiving itself must be done with complete self-awareness. Awareness that almsgiving comes from self-motivation to do something good. Therefore, self-awareness is an essential aspect of giving alms. This research aims to determine the relationship between alms (philanthropy) and self-awareness of happiness. This research method is a correlational quantitative method that uses the Alms Scale (philanthropy), Self-Awareness Scale, and Happiness Scale measuring instruments. The sample consisted of 155 people, with the criteria being active students at the Faculty of Psychology, University X, class 2019-2022. The sampling technique used is incidental sampling. The data analysis used was a multiple linear regression analysis using SPSS 23 for Windows. The results of the major hypothesis in this research show that there is a significant relationship between happiness and the alms (philanthropy) variable and the self-awareness variable sig 0.018 (P Value < 0.05), with an effective contribution of 7.5%. The results of the minor hypothesis show that there is a significant positive relationship between alms (philanthropy) and happiness with a correlation coefficient value of rxy = 0.213 with a minor hypothesis of 0.030 (Sig 2-tailed < 0.05) and an effective contribution of 4.2%. The minor hypothesis on the self-awareness variable shows that there is no significant positive relationship with the happiness variable of rxy=0.190 with a minor hypothesis of 0.053 (Sig 2-tailed <0.05) and an effective contribution of 3.3%. This research provides implications for individuals on how to achieve happiness through spiritual experiences from charity activities, especially for people in need.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone has their virtues. Especially when it comes to giving and doing good deeds to others. In Islam, it is taught that doing good deeds is a commendable character, and if done, one will get a reward from Allah SWT.   This activity of giving to others, or what is often known as alms, has been widely carried out by the community. Both young and old are active in carrying out these positive activities. Moreover, university students are currently carrying out many activities to help other people in need. Although alms could be seen as a financial burden for university students, it can affect happiness (Rusdi et al., 2018).

According to (Sofia & Sari, 2018), every human being desire happiness. It is an essential aspect of life regardless of age. They explained that the concept of happiness, later developed, states that a person's

behavior and life always have a direction, an intermediate goal, and a final goal. Virtue is the highest goal to achieve, and the highest virtue in life is happiness.

The Central Statistics Agency also issued a happiness index in 2021, which states that the happiness index for the people of Central Java reached 71.73 points. This point increased from previous years in Central Java province. However, many provinces experienced a decline in their happiness index. Ten provinces experienced a decline in the happiness index. In 2021, people's level of happiness will be measured based on three dimensions, namely feelings (affect), the meaning of life (eudaimonia), and satisfaction (life satisfaction) (Public Relation Central Java Government, 2022).

Seligman explained that happiness is a design that shows positive emotions that a person can feel, along with positive activities that do not have an emotional component. The definition of happiness is a subjective proposition because each human being has different standards (Rusdi et al., 2018). The aspects of happiness explained by Seligman (Rusdi et al., 2018) are divided into five, namely (1) Establishing good relationships with other individuals, (2) Full involvement, (3) Finding meaning in everyday life, (4) Realistic optimism, (5) Resilience. Factors that influence happiness, according to Diener & Ryan (Patnani & Si, 2012), are emotional intelligence, social relations, income level, and employment.

Happiness can be obtained from anywhere, one of which is when we help those in need. Giving some of the wealth we have, helping people who are in trouble, feeding hungry animals, and even removing thorns on the road can also make people happy. Giving in the Islamic religion is also called alms. Almsgiving to other people can also be called philanthropy. In the Al-Quran, philanthropy is zakat, infaq, and alms, which can be interpreted as giving almsgiving (Ulza & Kurniawan, 2018). The word philanthropy comes from the Greek words philos, which means love or compassion, and anthropos, which means human. Thus, it can be concluded that philanthropy means giving love, which is usually shown by wealth and energy given to other people (Don et al., 2020).

Almsgiving, from an Islamic perspective, is not only limited to giving material things to other people, and has a very broad scope. This is as explained in the Al-Quran surah An-Nisa verse 114, which means: "There is no virtue in their many secret conversations except the secret conversations of those who tell (people) to give alms, or do good deeds, or make peace between people. Whoever does this because he seeks Allah's approval, we will later give him a great reward." Allah also mentions the rewards for those who give alms. This is explained in the Al-Qur'an surah Al-Hadid verse 18, which means: "Indeed, those who give alms, both men and women and lend to Allah with good loans, will be multiplied (in return) for them; and they will receive a glorious reward."

Don et al., (2020) explained aspects of philanthropy, namely voluntary giving, voluntary service (serving voluntarily), and voluntary organizations (voluntary organizations). Don et al. (2020) also concluded that there are two aspects of philanthropy, namely the emotional and humanitarian aspect and the material aspect. According to (Faturochman, 2009), influencing factors in philanthropy are 1) Social situation, 2) Cost of helping, 3) Norms, 4) Characteristics of the individuals involved, 5) Closeness of relationships, 6) Internal mediators, 7) Empathy, 8) Personality background.

Almsgiving certainly requires a level of self-awareness within a person. According to Goleman (Yuliasari, 2020), self-awareness is a state in which someone understands what they feel, which helps guide their own decision-making. Goleman also mentioned three aspects of self-awareness: emotional awareness or emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence or self-confidence. Self-awareness is also supported by influencing factors, namely cognitive, affection, motivation or encouragement, behavior, and knowledge (Umami & Rosdiana, 2022).

The urgency of this research is due to students' low knowledge that almsgiving can increase happiness. However, almsgiving must be balanced with each individual's level of self-awareness. Research conducted by (Rusdi et al., 2018) was entitled "Alms as a Predictor of Happiness." This research was carried out at the Islamic University of Indonesia at the Faculty of Psychology and Social and Cultural Sciences (FPSB). The population in this research was 89 psychology students, class of 2015. This research used quantitative methods with Alms and Happiness as variables. The results of this research show that there is a relationship between almsgiving and happiness. However, several important things were noted from this research, namely that this research did not use random sampling techniques, so the results should not be used as a reference for generalizations. Apart from that, other variables can be measured, namely social desirability. It has been explained in the discussion section that influencing someone to give something compulsively is the normal effect.

The research carried out by researchers has similarities, namely using the variables of almsgiving and happiness and using quantitative methods. The novelty of this research is that this research adds another word for alms, namely philanthropy. Then, this research uses incidental sampling techniques to make generalizations. This research also adds the variable of self-awareness because almsgiving requires self-awareness in each individual. Setiawan and Iman (2019) in their study titled "Islamic Philanthropy as a Medium for Increasing the Happiness of Indonesian Muslims." The results of this research showed that Islamic philanthropy has an essential role as a tool that connects and shares human happiness through the economy (Setiawan & Iman, 2019). This important task must be encouraged in any form from the local government to create an Islamic government feel. The government must encourage Islamic philanthropic institutions so that they can be more professional in developing all their existing capabilities. The tremendous economic capacity, spirit of togetherness, and Islamic religiosity that exist within every Muslim must continue to develop in order to achieve the highest happiness. Joint efforts to encourage the development of Islamic philanthropy will significantly increase the happiness of every Muslim in Indonesia. Increasing the awareness of every generous Muslim that achieving happiness by being philanthropic, as well as increasing the quality and self-improvement for the poor by receiving donations from philanthropy, is a form of achieving the feeling of a happy life together.

If every behavior can give happiness, the same action will be carried out by individuals repeatedly at various moments in order to fulfill their psychological needs. True happiness is not a life full of fun and enjoyment but a life that has meaning in which the individual's rare application of virtue has been channeled in full (Julistia & Safuwan, 2021). Every behavior that has meaning and knowledge, a message of life, and virtues in the Islamic view is called alms (Julistia & Safuwan, 2021).

The researcher proposed a question, "Is there a relationship between Almsgiving (Philanthropy) and Self-Awareness to Happiness?" Therefore, to answer the problem formulation, "The Relationship

between Almsgiving (Philanthropy) and Self-Awareness to Happiness" is the title of this research, which aims to examine the relationship between Alms (Philanthropy) and Self-Awareness to Happiness. The major hypothesis proposed by researchers is that there is a positive relationship between Almsgiving (Philanthropy) and Self-Awareness to Happiness.   Meanwhile, the minor hypothesis proposed by researchers is that there is a positive relationship between Alms (Philanthropy) and Happiness, and there is a positive relationship between Self-Awareness and Happiness.

This research is also expected to provide benefits, both theoretically and practically. The theoretical benefit of this research is that it could become the basis for knowledge about students' levels of happiness, as seen from how high their level of self-awareness is when giving alms. Meanwhile, the practical benefit is that the respondents of this study benefited from the opportunity to receive education about the relationship between almsgiving self-awareness and happiness, which helps carry out positive activities to achieve happiness. Benefits for further research can be used as a source of scientific information and as a basis for developing theories about happiness. The benefit for students is that it is a basis for students' knowledge of the relationship between alms and self-awareness on student happiness. The benefit for society is that it can increase knowledge about a high level of self-awareness in carrying out almsgiving behavior, which influences happiness.

METHOD

Design

This research used a correlational quantitative method based on the described problem. The quantitative method is a research design that presents results in numerical form. The variables involved are the Independent Variables (X1), almsgiving (philanthropy) and (X2), self-awareness, and the Dependent Variable (Y), happiness.

Participants

The population determined in this study were active students from the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, class of 2019 - 2022. Researchers used the Slovin formula to determine the estimated size. The result is 111.7, which can be rounded to 100 subjects. For this study, researchers had to take data from a sample of at least 100 people. In total, 155 respondents were willing to fill out the Google form. The sampling technique used an incidental sampling technique.

Procedures and Data analysis

This research uses scales which have been created by researchers as data collection tools. A happiness scale is arranged based on aspects: Establishing Good relationship with other individuals, full involvement, finding meaning in everyday life, and resilience. A self-awareness scale is arranged based on aspects: Emotional awareness, Accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence. Meanwhile, the almsgiving (philanthropy) scale is arranged based on aspects: feelings and humanity, material. The scales were given using Google Forms. The scale model used in this research is a Likert scale. To enhance the validity of the instrument, both face and content validity were applied. The results of the assessment carried out are given a score of 1, which is very irrelevant, to 5, which means very relevant. In addition, reliability was also assessed through alpha Cronbach analysis. This research uses multiple linear regression data analysis methods. In the process of calculating data analysis in this research, the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) program was used. Validity tests on the intensity scale showed that all items were valid with a scale validity ranging from 0.50 to 1.00. The results of the reliability test are as follows:

Table 1. The result of reliability test

Scale	Number of Item	*Cronbach Alpha*
Almsgiving (philanthropy)	24 items	0,706
Self-Awareness	25 items	0,696
Happiness	25 items	0,612

RESULT

The results of this data analysis are used to determine the relationship between almsgiving (philanthropy) and self-awareness to the happiness of university students. The following table shows the data for subject characteristics.

Table 2. Subject Characteristics Data

	Information	Quantity	Percentage
University Entry Year	2019	64	41,3%
	2020	35	22,6%
	2021	44	28,4%
	2022	12	7,7%
Gender	Female	122	78,7%
	Male	33	21,3%

The table shows that, of the 155 subjects who filled out the questionnaire, most were from the class of 2019, with a percentage of 41.3% or 64 respondents, while the fewest subjects were from the class of 2022 at 7.7% or 12 respondents. Based on the gender of the subjects, 78.7%, or 122 respondents, were female, while 21.3%, or 33 respondents, were male.

This categorization is carried out by providing intervals based on instruments that are measured using five categories, namely: very low, low, medium, high, and very high. The categorization for the subject's philanthropy is shown in the following table:

Table 3. Philanthropy Scale Categorization

Interval Scale	Categorization	Frequency	Percentage
X ≤ 42	Very Low	0	0
42 < X ≤ 54	Low	1	6%
54 < X ≤ 66	Medium	80	51,6%
66 < X ≤ 78	High	72	46,5%
78 < X	Very High	2	1,3%
Total		155	100.00%

The table above shows that there is not a single respondent with a very low philanthropy category. There is 1 (6%) respondent with a low philanthropy category, 80 (51.6%) respondents with a medium philanthropy category, 72 (46,5%) respondents with a high philanthropy category, and 2 (1.3%) respondents with a very high philanthropy category. The self-awareness categorization can be seen in the following table:

Table 4. Self-Awareness Scale Categorization

Interval Scale	Categorization	Frequency	Percentage
X ≤ 43,75	Very Low	0	0
43,75 < X ≤ 56,25	Low	14	9%
56,25 < X ≤ 68,75	Medium	124	80%
68,75 < X ≤ 81,25	High	13	8,4%
81,25 < X	Very High	4	2.6%
Total		155	100.00%

The table above shows that no respondent has a very low self-awareness category. There are 14 (9%) respondents with a low self-awareness category, 124 (80%) respondents with a moderate self-awareness category, 13 (8.4%) respondents with a high self-awareness category, and 4 (2.6%) respondents with a very high self-awareness category. The happiness categorization can be seen in the following table:

Table 5. Happiness Scale Categorization

Interval Scale	Categorization	Frequency	Percentage
X ≤ 43,75	Very Low	0	0
43,75 < X ≤ 56,25	Low	6	3,9%
56,25 < X ≤ 68,75	Medium	117	75,5%
68,75 < X ≤ 81,25	High	28	18,1%
81,25 < X	Very High	4	2.6%
Total		155	100.00%

The table above shows that not a single respondent has a very low happiness category. There are 6 (3.9%) respondents with a low happiness category, 117 (75.7%) respondents with a medium happiness category,

28 (18.1%) respondents with a high happiness category, and 4 (2.6%) respondents with a very high happiness category.

Table 6. Normality Test

Variable	Normality test	
	P Value	Distribution
Philanthropy	0,083	Normal
Self-awareness	0,083	Normal
Happiness	0,056	Normal

The results of the normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov show that the P value is > 0.05. The normality test result for the philanthropy variable is 0.083, for the self-awareness variable, it is 0.083, and for the happiness variable, it is 0.056, which means the data is normally distributed. So, hypothesis testing and correlation testing were carried out using Pearson correlation.

Table 7. Linearity test

Variable	Sig.	
	Linierity	Deviation from Linierity
Happiness Almsgiving (Philanthropy)	0,035	0,782
Happiness Self-awareness	0,052	0,345

The results of the linearity test for the Alms (philanthropy) variable can be seen from the ANOVA table; the significance value for linearity is 0.035 (p < 0.05), and the deviation from linearity is 0.782 (p > 0.05). The significance of the Self-Awareness variable seen from the ANOVA table is 0.052 (p < 0.05) for linearity and 0.345 (p > 0.05) for deviation from linearity. In this research, the linearity test can be said to be a linear alms (philanthropy) variable because p < 0.05. Meanwhile, the self-awareness variable is not linear because the linearity value is 0.052. The Almsgiving (Philanthropy) variable meets the linearity requirements, and the Self-Awareness variable does not.

Table 8. Major Hypothesis Test

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	109.979	2	54.989	4.158	0.018

Based on the results of the major hypothesis test in ANOVA regarding the relationship between happiness and the almsgiving variable (philanthropy) and the self-awareness variable, sig 0.018 (P Value < 0.05), it can be concluded that there is a relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

Table 9. Minor Hypothesis Test

	Variable	Happiness
Sig (2-Tailed)	Philanthropy	0,030
	Self-awareness	0,053

The correlation coefficient value (Pearson correlation) on the almsgiving (philanthropy) and happiness variables is rxy = 0.213 with a minor hypothesis of 0.030 (2-tailed Sig < 0.05), which means that almsgiving (philanthropy) and happiness are correlated with a positive relationship. Meanwhile, the correlation coefficient value (Pearson correlation) on the self-awareness (self-awareness) and happiness variables is rxy=0.190 with a minor hypothesis of 0.053 (Sig 2-tailed <0.05), which means that the two variables do not correlate or have a positive relationship. Furthermore, the hypothesis test results for the almsgiving variable with the self-awareness variable is sig. 0.471 < 0.05, which means that the two variables do not have a positive relationship.

Table 10. Effective Contributions

Variable	Beta	Correlation Coefficient	R Square
Philanthropy	0,200	0,213	0,076
Self-awareness	0,176	0,190	

Effective Contribution from the Major Hypothesis: The simultaneous relationship between the Philanthropy and Self-Awareness variables on Happiness obtained a result of 7.5%. Specifically, the effective contribution of Philanthropy is 4.2%, and the effective contribution of Self-Awareness is 3.3%.

DISCUSSION

Calculations in the data analysis process were carried out using the SPSS 23 for Windows program. It can be said that there is a correlation between almsgiving and self-awareness and the happiness of students from the 2019-2022 class at the Faculty of Psychology, University X. The results of the analysis of the minor hypothesis test show a correlation between the almsgiving (philanthropy) variable and happiness, and there is no correlation between the self-awareness variable and happiness. This explains that self-awareness in giving alms will helps regulation but may not directly boost happiness. Self-awareness cannot influence a person's level of happiness. This aligns with the statement by Setiawan & Iman (2019) that the increasing self-awareness of generous Muslims in achieving happiness through philanthropy as well as improving the life quality of the poor through receiving aid from philanthropy is a way to gain mutual happiness. It is known that achieving happiness can be done in various ways, one of which is doing positive activities. Philanthropy is a positive activity that can be used to increase happiness. In this activity, of course, awareness is needed from within to carry out positive activities and achieve happiness. This aligns with Seligman's statement (Hafiza & Mawarpury, 2018), which stated that happiness is carrying out positive activities which are motivated by internal positive feelings. Seligman also mentioned the internal and external factors of happiness. Internal factors are feeling

satisfied about the past, feeling confident about the future, and feeling happy about the present. External factors are education, social life, marriage, money, negative emotions, age, etc.

Self-awareness is needed in carrying out almsgiving (philanthropy) activities. Awareness that giving some of one's possessions to others is necessary for a person. Carrying out charity activities (philanthropy) will increase happiness if when done in full self-awareness. This is in line with the word of Allah, which is explained in Surah At-Taubah verse 75, which means: "And among them, there are people who have promised Allah, "Indeed, if Allah gives us some of His bounties, we will surely give charity, and we will surely be among pious people."   If we look at the results of the analysis in this research, it can be concluded that the higher the almsgiving (philanthropy), the higher the happiness of students. Conversely, the lower the almsgiving (philanthropy), the lower the happiness of students.

Giving alms fosters spiritual values, one of which is that giving alms can improve the emotional well-being of others. This act not only assists the recipient but also fosters feelings of happiness for both the recipient and the giver. Seeing the happiness of those being helped can boost one's enthusiasm for work and future almsgiving. This is due to the personal satisfaction that comes from feeling useful to others (Mariyana, Naan, & Tamami, 2019).

The results of the categorization of respondents on the philanthropy scale show that there is no respondent with a very low philanthropy category, there is 1 (6%) respondent with a low philanthropy category, 80 (51.6%) respondents with a medium philanthropy category, 72 (46.5%) respondents with a high philanthropy category and 2 (1.3%) respondents with a very high philanthropy category. Furthermore, the self-awareness scale categorization shows that there is no respondent with a very low self-awareness category.

Carlquist (in Tucunan et al. 2025) argues that although self-awareness is a cognitive assessment of an individual's life and is also used to measure one's happiness, this correlation shows that self-awareness as a cognitive component of subjective well-being cannot encompass the full meaning of happiness, where the emotional component is also no less important. In the context of the development of late adolescence to early adulthood, this is relevant to Arnett's theory (in Tucunan et al. 2025) on "emerging adulthood". He argues that this period is characterized by an intensive search for identity, and a person actively seeks a deeper understanding of themselves.

According to Risydannisa' et al (2019), the happiness of individuals who give alms is influenced by several factors, including gratitude, religious social life, usefulness and helpfulness. These factors are in accordance with the characteristics of individuals who are happy, namely open, optimistic, self-respecting and able to control themselves (Risydannisa' et al., 2019). The limitation of this research is the subject's lack of interest in filling out the research questionnaire because it was conducted in only one faculty, and there are limitations in measuring instruments that discuss the variables raised, so that researchers construct their own measuring instruments with minimal alternative references to existing measuring instruments.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as seen from the results of the analysis using Pearson correlation, the proposed hypothesis is accepted, namely that there is a positive correlation between almsgiving (philanthropy) and self-awareness and happiness in university students. This means that the higher the almsgiving (philanthropy), the higher the students' happiness. On the other hand, the lower the almsgiving, the lower the student's happiness. The result also shows that the level of self-awareness during the act of almsgiving will affect happiness in life.

Based on the results of the data analysis that has been carried out, the effective contribution of philanthropy and self-awareness to happiness is 7.5%. Specifically, the philanthropy variable (X1) contributes 4.2%, and the effective contribution of the self-awareness variable (X2) is 3.3%. Meanwhile, the other 92.5% is related to other variables outside the scope of this study. This research concluded that philanthropy tends to have a more significant correlation than self-awareness with the happiness of students at the Faculty of Psychology, University X.

The implication of this research is that almsgiving can increase a person's sense of satisfaction and happiness because giving alms to others often creates positive feelings and good social bonds. Then, self-awareness can increase feelings of gratitude and appreciation for what you have. Apart from that, charity and self-awareness can provide valuable meaning in one's life.

Suggestion

Based on the results of this research, the researcher intends to provide suggestions on problems that occur among students. The researcher advises the students to set aside some of the money they have to give to people in need. Acts of almsgiving can be done in various ways, such as participating in social activities held by the campus, and it can also be done in social environments in their respective home areas. Almsgiving can be done individually or in groups. Many places can be used to channel some of the money that has been set aside, such as through the university, and other institutions. Future research should expand the sample population to share knowledge of the positive impacts of almsgiving on a person's life. Furthermore, a qualitative method should be used to explore the information regarding almsgiving done by university students to gain a deeper understanding.

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