

Life Satisfaction, Self-awareness and Personal Responsibility in Seminary Students

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Abstract

This study investigated the associations among life satisfaction, self-awareness, and personal responsibility. It also examined whether life satisfaction, self-awareness, and personal responsibility vary according to the year of study. The respondents were 36 students at the Seminary of Surya Wacana in Malang. For data collection, the Self-Consciousness Scale, Personal Responsibility Scale, and Satisfaction with Life Scale were used. Pearson correlation coefficient results showed that life satisfaction was significantly positively correlated with self-awareness ($r = .454$, $p < .05$), but not to personal responsibility ($r = .002$, $p > .05$). Multiple regression analysis revealed that self-awareness and personal responsibility accounted for 25.1 % of life satisfaction ($F = 5.522$, $p < .05$). Self-awareness ($\beta = .554$, $p < .05$) and personal responsibility ($\beta = -.234$, $p > .05$) simultaneously make a significant original contribution to the model. In addition, results showed that seminarians do not vary according to year of study in terms of self-awareness ($F = 1.217$; $p > .05$), personal responsibility ($F = .980$; $p > .05$), or life satisfaction ($F = .631$; $p > .05$). The study results showed that self-awareness and personal responsibility are significant predictors of life satisfaction in seminary students.

Keywords: life satisfaction, self-awareness, personal responsibility, seminary students

Introduction

Life satisfaction is the central component of human welfare, as well as the ultimate objective that drives people to achieve it throughout life. Life satisfaction refers to an individual's assessment in general of evaluating his or her life. This assessment denotes the sign of individuals feeling satisfied with what they are experiencing[1]. [2]define life satisfaction as a term of cognitive assessment over a longer period of an individual's life, which is not based on the use of specific criteria such as health, career, and family, but rather on any criteria deemed relevant by the individual. Therefore,

assessment of life satisfaction is subjective and has a positive effect on ourselves. This has been confirmed by positive psychology which says that life satisfaction is a positive subjective experience[3]. According to positive psychology, life satisfaction is in the affective domain, which can be the basis for measuring happiness, but the assessment involves a cognitive dimension. [4]mentioned the affective and cognitive dimensions in this assessment as components of subjective well-being. While even equated the [5]term of subjective well-being with life satisfaction. These two terms are interchangeable.

[4]defines subjective well-being as an evaluation of how people experience their lives both positively and negatively. According to him, subjective well-being is composed of affective and cognitive components. The affective domain is explained by happiness [6]and the cognitive domain is represented by life satisfaction[7, 8]. According to [9]based on their investigation of the literature, terms of life satisfaction, subjective well-being, and happiness are different in use for some researchers, while others use these terms interchangeably.

[10]explained life satisfaction as a scientific term for happiness which is seen as one of the important components of subjective well-being. Other components of subjective well-being are the presence of positive emotions and the absence of negative emotions. [11]found in various research findings that life satisfaction is dependent on the concept of well-being. Moreover, in general, they defined subjective well-being as happiness. While, according to[12], individuals who experience life satisfaction are generally characterized by the following five things: satisfaction of idealized conditions, satisfaction with extraordinary living conditions, satisfaction with feelings of happiness, satisfaction with important things obtained in life, and satisfaction that is characterized by nothing in life that needs to be changed by the individual.

In our day, predictors and indicators of satisfaction with the life of people are valued within a very vast context. Some researchers in the latest decades have tried to find out factors that predict and determine an individual's life satisfaction in different phases of a human's life. For instance, [13]investigated socio-demographic, health, economic condition, and social relations as predictors of life satisfaction among older adults in Dakar. Their findings showed that in terms of socio-demographic factors, advancing age older adults have greater life satisfaction and older women were more satisfied than older men. It was also revealed that economic condition and good social relations factors are associated significantly with life satisfaction. So, it can be said that both factors are predictors for the life satisfaction of older adults. However, health factor is not correlated to life satisfaction. This differs from the previous study conducted by [14]that found the relationship between health and life satisfaction in aging adults.

Other studies also have indicated that life satisfaction can be predicted by factors such as spirituality and health just as performed by undergraduate students in the UK[15]; gratitude through social support and self-esteem as experienced by Chinese undergraduate students from the ages 18 to 27; purpose and hope of adolescents, emerging adults and adult[16] attachment relationships in emerging adulthood; self-directedness, self-transcendence, and cooperation as shown by students at Kongju National University, Republic of Korea[3]; metacognitive awareness and self-efficacy as shown by students attending high school[11]; religious attitude and self-efficacy as performed by high school teachers of Mahshahr City[16]; resilience and wisdom in the life of elderly adults with age ranging from 50 to 90 years[17]; the mindfulness through self-evaluation as found in the life of Chinese adolescents[10]; and self-compassion in the study of 252 undergraduate students in Bursa, Turkey[18].

Life satisfaction can be experienced by students who are living and learning at the seminary of Surya Wacana in Malang (*note: seminary of Surya Wacana is the formation and educational institution for candidates of priest specifically for those who want to become missionary priests in the Society of Divine Word*). As a formation institution, of course, it has several rules and guidelines that bind each member to be

followed or obeyed with full awareness and responsibility. So, everyone who enters this institution should realize that being a priest is his personal choice and decision. Therefore, he must be responsible for his choice, too. This means that the awareness of his own choice to become a missionary priest in the Society of Divine Word or SVD (*Societas Verbi Divini*) must become his internal motivation in carrying out his daily activities joyfully and faithfully.

In other words, being self-aware of the candidates of religious priests must be the pivot of their daily life wherever they are. Self-awareness becomes the main or key competence for the seminary students (*note: seminary student is usually called seminarian or frater*) to be happy and cheerfully carrying out daily activities in the formation house (*note: formation house is usually called seminary*). This means that seminarians must pay attention and take full responsibility for any demands required from the formation house. In the seminary, he must be ready and willing to seriously commit to the daily activities related to aspects of the formation such as spiritual (prayer, meditation, eucharist, etc.), work, community, and academic life. Besides, they should care and pay attention fully and consciously to other aspects of the formation such as psycho-emotional, vows, and health. In short, all aspects of formation in seminary must be done based on self-awareness and personal responsibility, for living based on self-awareness and carried out with full responsibility is the sign that the person is experiencing satisfaction or happiness by his own life choice.

According to [19], self-awareness is a basic capacity that underlies human freedom in determining his life choices, and therefore he is responsible for himself. Corey further said that the more we are aware of these choices available to us, the more we are responsible for the consequences of these choices, because we are the writer of life and the designer of our way of life. Sartre, the French philosopher in 1953, stated: "I am my choice"[20]. This indicates that one's growth is an individual's attempt to realize his or her potential through conscious choices and plans made by himself or herself. It does not automatically happen like a growing tree [21]. Through conscious choices, a person becomes fully responsible for him/her, so that in the end he/she experiences life satisfaction.

Investigation of the relevant literature in the past decade shows the dominance of research that examines the influence and impact of self-awareness on other aspects of individual life that are not related to the variable in the current study, especially life satisfaction. For example, low self-awareness causes individuals to pay less attention to their behaviors that are already considered taboo or forbidden in social life, so peers often feel uncomfortable living around them and even avoid them and do not want to accept them as friends[22]. Studies on aspects of self-awareness among nursing students in India show that most are at an average level (60.5%) and a bit at a low level (7.4%) so that self-awareness training needs to be given because for professional nurses, self-awareness is needed or becomes essential in developing therapeutic relationships with patients who need therapeutic healing[23]. The lack of awareness in nursing students about the importance of empathy with patients in developing therapeutic relationships was also found in a simple survey of three nursing schools in Germany. As a result, practical reflection exercises to increase self-awareness about the importance of empathy had to be given to them[24].

Conversely, high self-awareness has a significant influence on an individual's life and development. Individual students who have self-awareness of intellectual potential and can monitor, regulate and control themselves will feel responsible for the learning process[25]. It was further explained that personal responsibility is closely related to awareness of and control of individual feelings and thoughts, awareness of and control over behavioral choices, computational desires or consideration of the results generated, and awareness of attention to the impact of behavior on others[21]. Self-awareness can also help individuals to develop positive self-regulation and establish healthy interpersonal relationships with others[26]. According to [27], self-awareness can become a primary tool or means to reduce psychological pressure and at the same

time a path for self-development towards psychologically healthy individuals. Therefore self-awareness can be seen as a tool and a goal. Furthermore, a self-conscious person has a great opportunity to succeed not only in relationships but also in business and work because he can see his own mistakes, find ways to improve, set personal goals and overcome things that he considers not good[22].

Thus, self-awareness can be seen as an internal motivation that lasts long. It differs from external motivation which is the result of external pressures that are more temporary, situational, and not durable. This internal motivation of self-awareness drives a person to be proactive and responsible for this life. Someone who is self-aware of his duties and roles in this world will exert all his thoughts and actions to achieve his life goals. In short, self-awareness is an important first step in controlling one's life. Through it, one creates or produces what an individual wants, expects a better personal future and eventually experiences life satisfaction.

However, there are very few studies examining the role of self-awareness on life satisfaction while more researchers focused on the effect of mindfulness on life satisfaction[10, 28, 29]. However, no studies were found examining the variables of self-awareness, personal responsibility, and life satisfaction together. We think that, in addition to filling a gap in the field, this study will also contribute to an understanding of the characteristics of seminary students regarding self-awareness, personal responsibility, and life satisfaction. On that basis, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship among life satisfaction, self-awareness, and personal responsibility and to determine whether or not self-awareness, personal responsibility, and life satisfaction vary according to the year of study in seminary students. The hypotheses of the study based on a correlational model:

1. There is a significant correlation between life satisfaction and self-awareness levels of seminarians and their responsibility.
2. Self-awareness and personal responsibility are significant predictors of life satisfaction.
3. Self-awareness, personal responsibility, and life satisfaction vary according to the year of study.

Methodology

This study, which investigated the associations among life satisfaction, self-awareness and personal responsibility in seminary students, was designed in line with a correlational model. It aims to permit full understanding or clarification of the complexity of the phenomena present in relational research. Associations can thus be determined between thought patterns and behavior descriptive variables[30]. [31]state that correlational research serves two main purposes: (1) to explain human behaviors regarded as important and (2) to predict the probable outcomes of human behaviors. In agreement with the nature of correlational research, this study was intended to determine the power of independent variables (self-awareness and personal responsibility) to predict a dependent variable (life satisfaction).

The data collection in this study was carried out by distributing instruments of self-awareness, personal responsibility, and life satisfaction to 36 students at the Seminary of Surya Wacana in Malang. Before conducting the research, a letter has been submitted to the Rector of the Seminary to get permission. The researchers then explained the purpose of the research to the participants (seminary students) and got their consent to make sure that they were willing to participate in the study.

The instrument used to measure self-awareness is the Self-Consciousness Scale (SCS) by Michael F. Scheier[32]. The SCS is a 22-item scale that focused on the assessment of an individual's self-consciousness in both public and private situations. It also includes a measure of social anxiety which is an apprehensiveness about being evaluated by others. This scale is scored by summing up the scores, which range from values of 0 to 3, where 0 = Not at all like me, 1 = A little like me, 2 = Somewhat like

me, and 3 = A lot like me. The SCS has fairly good internal consistency, with an alpha of .75 for private self-consciousness, .84 for public self-consciousness, and .79 for social anxiety. The scale also demonstrates good stability, with test-retest correlations of .76 for private, .74 for the public, and .77 for social anxiety.

The Personal Responsibility Scale (PRS) was developed by Amanda Mergler and Paul Shield to measure personal responsibility. There are three aspects of PRS, namely personal accountability, behavioral and emotional control, and cognitive control, which are arranged in 23 items. This scale uses a Likert scale with four (4) possible answers, namely 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree [21]. The PRS was considered adequate, with an alpha of .81 for personal accountability, .81 for behavioral and emotional control, and .71 for cognitive control (Mergler & Shield, 2016).

Meanwhile, to measure life satisfaction, researchers used the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, Randy J. Larsen, and Sharon Griffin. SWLS which refers to the theory of subjective well-being [1] is a scale to measure life satisfaction in general, arranged in five points. SWLS uses a Likert scale with seven (7) possible answers, i.e. 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly Disagree; 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 5 = Slightly Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree. The total score is obtained by adding up the participant's answers. Scores can range from 5 to 35 with the highest score indicating having better life satisfaction. The internal consistency of the SWLS was found to be excellent (Cronbach's alpha = 0.83 - 0.92), whereas the test-retest reliability for the total SWLS was adequate ($r=.65$).

The data were analyzed by using IBM SPSS version 20. In the first analysis, the researchers looked at the relationship between life satisfaction and self-awareness as well as life satisfaction and personal responsibility by using Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis techniques. Furthermore, this study employed multiple regression analysis to predict the effect of self-awareness and personal responsibility on the life satisfaction of seminary students. T-test was used to determine whether there is a partial influence given the independent variable (X), namely self-awareness and personal responsibility for the dependent variable (Y), namely life satisfaction. If the value of sig < .05 then there is the influence of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y); conversely if the sig value > 0.05 then there is no influence of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y).

In addition, the researchers also used the F test to find out whether there was a simultaneous influence (together) given independent variables namely self-awareness and personal responsibility for the self-satisfaction of seminary students. If the sig value < .05 then there is the effect of the independent variable (X) simultaneously on the dependent variable (Y); conversely if the sig value > .05 then there is no effect of the independent variable (X) simultaneously on the dependent variable (Y).

Subsequent analysis used the coefficient of determination to find out what percentage of influence exerted simultaneously variables of self-awareness and personal responsibility on life satisfaction of seminary students. Finally, analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were also conducted to verify whether the year of study difference would emerge in self-awareness, personal responsibility, and life satisfaction among seminary students.

Results

Findings regarding the study of hypotheses are given below.

Correlation Analysis

Results of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis performed to answer that hypothesis are given in Table 1. This revealed that life satisfaction was significantly positively correlated with self-awareness ($r = .454$, $p < .05$), but not to personal responsibility ($r = .002$, $p > .05$). In addition, the data also showed that self-

awareness was significantly positively correlated to personal responsibility ($r = .426, p < .05$).

Table 1

Life satisfaction associations with self-awareness and personal responsibility

Variables	1	2	3
Life satisfaction	1		
Self-awareness	,454**	1	
Personal responsibility	,002	,426**	1
Mean	25.56	45.19	68.53
Standard deviation	3.828	6.449	5.700

** $p < 0.05$

Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to answer this hypothesis. The results are shown in Table 2. Self-awareness and personal responsibility account for 25.1 % of total life satisfaction variance ($F = 5.522, p < .05$). Self-awareness ($\beta = .554, p < .05$) and personal responsibility ($\beta = -.1405, p > .05$) made a significant contribution to the model. It was concluded that the research hypothesis was accepted, for there is a significant effect simultaneously of self-awareness and personal responsibility on life satisfaction of seminary students. In other words, variations in the variable of self-awareness and personal responsibility were able to explain 25.1% of the variation in the life satisfaction variable, while the remaining 74.9% is influenced or explained by other variables not included in this study.

Table 2

Multiple linear regression analysis results for prediction of life satisfaction by self-awareness and personal responsibility

Variable	B	SE	β	t	p	R Square Change	F Change
Constant	21.477	7.061		3.042	.009	,251a	5.522
Self-awareness	.329	.099	.554	3.323	.002		
Personal responsibility	-.157	.112	-.234	-1.405	.169		

Meanwhile, the results in Table 3 showed that there were no significant differences among seminary students according to year of study in terms of self-awareness ($F = 1,217, p = .319$), personal responsibility ($F = .980, p = .414$), and life satisfaction ($F = .631, p = .600$). Therefore, a hypothesis which states that self-awareness, personal responsibility, and life satisfaction vary according to the year of study was rejected.

Table 3

ANOVA results regarding the year of study-based variations in life satisfaction, self-awareness, and personal responsibility

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Self Awareness	Between Groups	149,056	3	49,685	1,217	,319
	Within Groups	1306,583	32	40,831		
	Total	1455,639	35			
Personal Responsibility	Between Groups	95,706	3	31,902	,980	,414
	Within Groups	1041,267	32	32,540		
	Total	1136,972	35			
Satisfaction with Life	Between Groups	28,656	3	9,552	,631	,600
	Within Groups	484,233	32	15,132		
	Total	512,889	35			

Discussion

Life satisfaction reveals the way seminary students evaluate their lives and focuses on this continuous assessment. It includes their reflection and assessment of their present and past life. This assessment could be seen as a result of self-awareness and personal responsibility. Therefore, the purpose of this present study was to investigate the association between the life satisfaction of seminary students and their self-awareness and personal responsibility and to establish the role of self-awareness and personal responsibility in predicting life satisfaction. In supporting the first hypothesis that there is a significant correlation between the life satisfaction and self-awareness levels of seminary students and their responsibility, as shown in the results (Table 1). The variable most powerfully correlated with life satisfaction was self-awareness (55.4 %). This may be interpreted that the life satisfaction of seminary students is capable of varying in proportion to the ability to use self-awareness capacity effectively. When individuals encounter situations in their lives requiring the exhibition of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral performance as well as success in problem solving, using self-awareness capacity may influence their life satisfaction. Life satisfaction as an individual's assessment of their life as a whole is the result of self-awareness[33]. Self-awareness encourages people to accept the reality of life with all the potential strengths and weaknesses that help them feel satisfied with their lives[25, 34]. Moreover, a study done by [35]concluded that self-awareness is a unique and important construct related to satisfaction with life (and also to the quality of life and perception of memory ability), for self-awareness is viewed as metacognition of the self, and particularly, reflecting on one's weaknesses, strengths, and monitoring and adjusting behavior as a result[36]. Thus, it can be said that self-awareness influences life satisfaction in seminary students.

The second hypothesis that self-awareness and personal responsibility are significant predictors of life satisfaction is completely supported by the data of the currents study (Table 2). This may be interpreted that when seminary students have high self-awareness, they can position themselves well and responsibly in their daily life and activities in the formation house as a personal commitment to his calling as a candidate of the priest in the Society of Divine Word. [19]asserts that the greater the level of human awareness of life choices, the greater the sense of personal responsibility for the consequences of the choices he makes. Personal responsibility here means one's belief that the person is the master of his own life, who is aware of choices and goals and is responsible for his behavior and consequences[37]. Thus,

through the self-awareness of their choices, seminary students perceive fully responsible for their life, and in the end, they will experience satisfaction with life.

However, the data confirms that the percentage contribution of self-awareness and personal responsibility to life satisfaction is only 25.1%. It means that self-awareness and personal responsibility have a role in determining or predicting life satisfaction even though there are other determinants or predictors of life satisfaction (74.9 %) found by several researchers such as marital status, the standard of living, and the role of government[9]; attachment relationships[14]; self-compassion[18]; metacognitive awareness and self-efficacy[11] [38]; meditation[39]; and friendship in intensity and quality[40]. In short, it can be said that this present study has a contribution in bringing out a new aspect for predicting or determining life satisfaction just as done by previous studies.

This research concluded that seminary students' life satisfaction, self-awareness, and personal responsibility do not vary based on the year of study. The third hypothesis that life satisfaction, self-awareness, and personal responsibility vary according to the year of study was not confirmed with the results (Table 3). This may be interpreted that the length of study does not influence the levels of self-awareness, personal responsibility, and life satisfaction of an individual. It is dependent on that person. A person who has high self-awareness is a person who can see clearly, evaluate and accept himself as he is because he is aware of various aspects of his life experience both positive and negative[25]. In other words, self-awareness can lead someone to accept himself/herself as he/she is. The ability to accept ourselves as we are is truly a gift that leads us not only to self-acceptance but also to true freedom[41].

[42]further added that self-awareness is only owned by a person who is accustomed to doing self-reflection, which is an activity to evaluate his entire life experiences. These experiences become valuable learning resources for him because people who have self-awareness can find meaning in their lives[34], and this leads to life satisfaction. [43]explained that self-conscious individuals can improve negative things and reinforce positive experiences so that they are increasingly able to control themselves. The ability to control oneself is an important key for an individual to be able to live and appreciate his life, so he can achieve and experience satisfaction in his life. According to[28], satisfaction with life is a general cognitive assessment of an individual's life based on one's standards. The assessment of life satisfaction is dependent on the criteria made by an individual; he/she evaluates how satisfying his/her life is depending on his/her chosen standards rather than externally imposed standards[1]. [9] added that education, gender, and age are not significant determinants of life satisfaction. So, it can be concluded that the year of study does not imply differentiation of level of self-awareness, personal responsibility, and life satisfaction among seminary students.

Conclusion

The major objective of the study was to investigate the association among life satisfaction, self-awareness, and personal responsibility as well as to investigate whether seminary students vary according to the year of study in terms of life satisfaction, self-awareness, and personal responsibility. The findings of the study concluded that self-awareness has a significant role in their life satisfaction, however personal responsibility did not a play role. Besides this, it can be concluded that life satisfaction, self-awareness, and personal responsibility do not vary according to the year of study among seminary students.

Recommendations

The participant group of this study consists of seminarians of SVD (Societas Verbi Divini) living in Malang with too small numbers. Therefore, it should be better and recommended for future studies to expand the population of collecting data from other seminaries, too, in order to have accurate and acceptable results. Moreover, supporting study results by qualitative data from meetings and observations should be beneficial to comprehend deeply the cognitive aspects of life satisfaction.

Limitations

Although satisfactory results for determinants or predictors of life satisfaction were gathered, there are several limitations in this study, as expected in every study. The primary limitation of the current study is the size of the sample gathered from a small population of a single seminary using the quantitative research methods. It can hardly be expected that our findings, drawn from the small population reflect the results of all seminaries. Therefore, it should be better and recommended for future studies to expand the population of collecting data from other seminaries, too, in order to have accurate and acceptable results. Moreover, supporting study results by qualitative data from meetings and observations should be beneficial to comprehend deeply the cognitive aspects of life satisfaction. Notwithstanding these limitations, it should be noted that the present study is quite meaningful in terms of homogeneity, in that all students at the Seminary of Surya Wacana in Malang participated. Thus, the present study should be assessed in light of those limitations.

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