The meaning of happiness for nuns

Desi Rihani[1*], Hieronymus Rony Suryo Nugroho[2]
[*1]Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
[2]Seminari Menengah St. Petrus Canisius Mertoyudan, Magelang, Indonesia
[1]andreadesirihani@gmail.com, [2]suryorony@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author:
Desi Rihani
Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta

Email :
andreadesirihani@gmail.com

Abstract
Happiness is everyone's goal of all ages, occupations, and social statuses. Because it is a subjective concept, happiness depends on different standards and factors from each individual. Externally, happiness includes property, social life, age, health, education, and religion. While internally, happiness includes positive emotions, and a person's perspective to see their past, present, and future. People strive to gain power, wealth, and life partners to achieve happiness. Nevertheless, there is a group of individuals, namely the Catholic nuns, who actually fight for their happiness without being tied to wealth, life partners, and social status. The main purpose of this research is to find out the description of happiness in the life of nuns, and how the nuns can achieve this happiness. The participants in this study were three nuns, each representing a monastic age: junior, medior, and senior. Data was collected using a semi-structured interview method, with a natural setting. Observations were conducted in a participatory manner by researchers. The research questions posed were: first, what was the source of happiness for nuns; second, how did the nuns achieve happiness; third, what was the meaning of happiness for nuns. The results of this study showed that the source of the happiness of nuns was the experience of being loved by God and inner depths. Nuns achieve happiness by reflecting on daily experiences, spiritual practice, and developing gratitude. The meaning of happiness for nuns is a close relationship with God and service to others. This paper also puts forward constructive suggestions for nun's formation or education. So, the novice formandi can balance the spiritual and human aspects.

INTRODUCTION

The World Happiness Report (WHR) in February 2019 released its latest report on the national happiness ranking of countries in the world (Helliwell et al., 2019). This is the seventh report they released after their first publication in 2012. In this report, WHR 2019 wanted to show global data on countries' happiness related to life expectancy, social support, and levels of corruption. WHR 2019 data showed that Indonesia was ranked 92 out of 156 countries. In the Southeast Asia area, Indonesia was below Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, and Malaysia, and was above Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar. Finland was in the first place.

These results demonstrate the achievements of countries in creating a conducive atmosphere for the attainment of happiness. Happiness is indeed an individual choice but it also needs to be facilitated and conditioned by the government. The WHR 2019 shows that countries providing good access to mental health services tend to have happier populations. Additionally, government policies that support social interaction by providing facilities that enable meetings between individuals and programs that encourage community participation also influence individual happiness. Consequently, social isolation experienced by those living

alone, whether due to old age or lifestyle choices, can be reduced. Life choices, community ties, and government support are necessary for individuals to achieve happiness.

Everyone, regardless of his/her age, occupation, or social status, strives to achieve happiness. The idea of happiness varies because everyone has his/her standards and influences that shape it. These factors can be categorized as internal or external factors. External factors include wealth, social connections, age, health, education, and religious beliefs. Internal factors consist of positive emotions and a person's outlook on his/her past, present, and future (M. E. P. Seligman, 2005). Happiness is also understood as a condition in which an individual has positive emotions and consistency channels these positive feelings to interpret the events experienced in life (Irianto, 2015). Well-being and contentment of the heart also form the foundation of how people experience happiness. Happiness is achieved by maximizing positive emotions and minimizing negative emotions (Tamir et al., 2017). Happiness does not only refer to the physical or bodily nature of a person, nor is it merely about the mind, but rather it is about one's self-assurance in the ultimate truth they seek, which is God (Hassan, 2015). Therefore, happiness has a religious meaning.

In addition to financial conditions, happiness is also closely related to marriage or family life. Family is one of the social supports that has an impact on a person's life satisfaction (M. E. P. Seligman, 2005). People need a community that makes them feel owned. Family, as a basic community, provides fulfillment of this self-need. Children are a source of happiness for parents and vice versa. Parents who give love and attention to their children will become their children's source of happiness. Seligman defines happiness as a life full of meaning for oneself and others (Boniwell, 2011).

In a society that considers happiness might be achieved by having money or wealth, a spouse, and high social status, there is a group of people who fight for their happiness without being tied to money or wealth, a spouse, and high social status (Radcliffe, 2009). This group is nuns. Nuns are a group of people who focus on monastic life. Nuns are in the opposite direction to the average person. They do not make economic success, family life, and social status as sources of happiness. Instead, they live in monastic communities that do not allow them to have property rights and require them to live in celibacy, and to obey monastic rules (Hagang, 2015).

Nuns strive for happiness by surrendering themselves to religion, focusing on God through prayers, and serving fellow people (Suparno, 2016). The spiritual aspect becomes crucial in the happiness of nuns. Kiplagat, Tucholski, and Njiru (2019) also revealed a correlation between psychospiritual well-being and the happiness of nuns. The higher the spiritual well-being, the higher the psychological well-being. The level of education also significantly impacts the happiness of nuns because they gain knowledge through learning, exploring their potential, becoming self-aware, and being more effective in their service. Francis and Crea (2018) disclosed that pastors and nuns have a high level of happiness, but it also indicates their vulnerability. Happiness becomes a way for pastors and nuns to cope with work-related emotional exhaustion and enhancement of work-related satisfaction.

Research on the happiness of nuns is still very limited and does not directly show the dynamics of nun's happiness. This paper specifically explores the dynamics of nuns's happiness, with the fundamental research question: what is the description of happiness in nuns? This paper is designed to answer some questions: first,

what is the source of happiness for nuns; second, how do nuns achieve happiness; third, what is the meaning of happiness for nuns.

METHOD

This research used qualitative research with a case study method. Yin explains that case studies are research that investigates phenomena that are and have been going on but still have a broad, strong, and specific influence at the time the research takes place (Gunawan, 2016). To obtain in-depth information, data are not only obtained from the cases studied, but also obtained from various informants who know the cases that occurred dan know the participants well.

This study used individual units of analysis with three nuns as the main participants, *i.e.* SF (28), ST (35), and SC (56). Each participant represented monastic age, *i.e.* junior, medior, and senior. Three other nuns became informants as significant others to provide information regarding the participants, *i.e.* SA (33), SL (34), and SE (39). The researcher conducted the initial interview to request the willingness of potential participants to join the study. The three potential participants and the researcher met in Cirebon in October 2019 during a congregation meeting. All three potential participants expressed their willingness to be involved in the study as participants. Interviews with participants were conducted between October and November 2019. Interviews with informants were also conducted between October and November 2019. Participants and informants were provided with an explanation of the research, asked about their willingness, and signed the informed consent consciously and freely.

This research was conducted in two cities: Surabaya and Yogyakarta. Interviews and observations of SF and ST were carried out at the Santa Rosa de Lima Monastery Surabaya. Interviews and observations of SA were at Santa Khatarina Monastery Yogyakarta, and those of SC were at Santa Maria Monastery Cirebon.

The data collection technique used in this research was an interview. The type of interview used in this interview was an unstructured interview which was flexible and open. This interview helped the researcher to explore ideas and concepts openly. The questions asked were simple and flexible but did not deviate from the research objectives.

The questions encompassed four categories: participant background, sources of happiness for nuns, ways to achieve happiness, and the meaning of happiness for nuns. Although there were specific categories, there were no topics that controlled the flow of conversation. The interview guidelines included central themes. Thus, the ideas and thoughts of the participants and informants could be obtained openly. After the interview guideline was developed, the researcher conducted a personal judgment with the research supervisor. The implementation of personal judgment provided feedback on several research questions to ensure the interview guide was more focused on open-ended questions.

During the interviews, the researcher also conducted observations of the participants. The aspects observed included the participants' expressions, intonation of voice, actions during the interview, physical appearance, the situation and atmosphere of the interview location, and any obstacles encountered during the

interview. This observation helped the researcher to delve deeper into the interview and the participants' personalities.

The validity of this research was examined through a source triangulation by comparing information obtained; method triangulation through interviews, observations, and documents; investigator triangulation through personal judgment and data verification by faculty members; and theory triangulation by cross-checking the research findings with various theoretical sources. Through this triangulation, the accuracy of the data and information obtained by the researcher was further validated. The researcher collected data while simultaneously testing the credibility of the data.

Spradley explains that data analysis is a search for patterns with systematic testing to determine parts, relationships between studies, and overall relationships (Gunawan, 2016). This study data analysis was carried out simultaneously with the data collection process. Data reduction, data exposure, and conclusion were the three stages of the qualitative research data analysis process. The process of nun happiness was analyzed using systems theory to observe its dynamics. Ivancevich and Konopaske (2013) divide the basic elements of a system into three steps: input, process, and output.

Data validity is the researcher's attempt to show that the research can be trusted. The data examined in this study were credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Moleong, 2008). The researcher was present and actively participated in data collection, ensuring that the data produced reflected the conditions experienced by participants. The researcher also carefully sought interpretations to analyze the data. The credibility of the research was tested through triangulation. The researcher aimed to provide a comprehensive description of the study so that other researchers or individuals could determine whether the findings were relevant to their own context. All research processes, including raw data, reduced data, analysis results, process notes, and other information, were audited by an external reviewer. The findings were examined to ensure that the data obtained truly represented the participants' perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research results on the meaning of happiness in nuns, three participants (SF, ST, and SC), had similarities and differences in answering the meaning of happiness. The research results are divided into four categories: background of nuns, sources of happiness for nuns, ways of achieving happiness, and meaning of happiness for nuns. Participant answers in these four categories were compared, as described in the following figure:
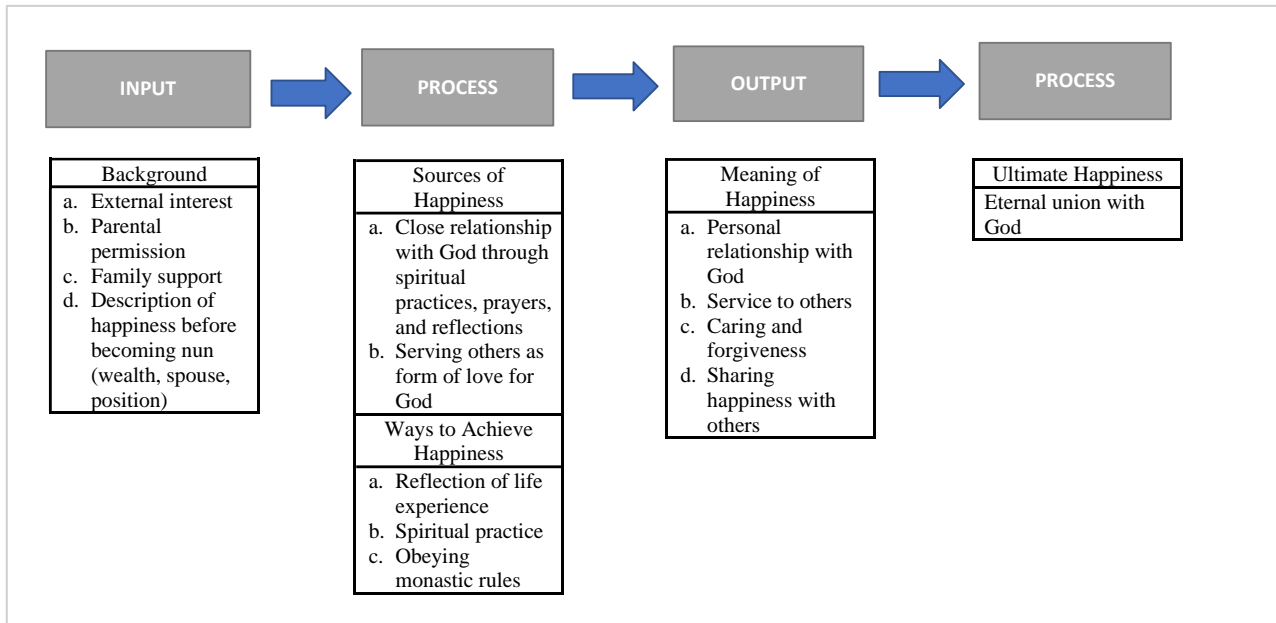
Figure 1. Description of nun happiness according to the system theory

Background

Related to the nuns' vocation background, participants were attracted to become nuns due to external factors: SF was interested in becoming a nun because she performed as an altar girl in the church; ST was interested in becoming a nun because she saw various nun ministries on television; and SC was attracted to become a nun because she heard stories about saints and wanted to wear habijt (monastic white clothes). These external interests became the initial stage of a deeper interest. Encounters and involvement in congregational service activities fostered an interest in becoming a nun. For example, this external interest emerged in an interview with SF:

> *"I felt my calling emerged when I became an altar girl and often served every morning Mass" (SF, W1, 11-11-19,4-6)*

> *"Feeling deep happiness through church activities, spiritual services, and simple experiences of God, became the beginning of my interest in becoming a nun" (SF, W1, 11-11-19, 11-15)*

SF wanted to become a nun because she has involved in Church services since her childhood by becoming an altar girl. Chuch activities, spiritual services and relational experiences with God became the initial interest in becoming a nun.

All participants have been supported by their families to become nuns. SF received support immediately, while ST and SC needed more time to get support from their parents. Certain family members needed time to give permission for their daughter to become a nun, as emerged in ST's answer:

> *"My father and two brothers supported me. But the one who didn't agree was my mother. She only opened up to accept that her daughter chose to become a nun when I was ready to receive monastic robes" (ST,11-11-19, 37-41).*

Before becoming nuns, all participants valued their happiness through their possessions, achievements, positions, relationships with family and friends, and people's attention. These criteria changed after they

experienced convent formation and became nuns. As emerged in interviews with ST and SC, happiness was a condition when people had a life guarantee and money to buy things they liked.

> *"I was happy because I was the only daughter. I was the center of attention. Money was available in abundance from my father and brother. So I went on a lot of sprees, went shopping for luxury goods, went to the salon, went out with friends, and then I also had a boyfriend to be proud of" (ST,11-11-19,60-66)*

> *"I could buy things I liked. When I worked, I had my own money. So, I didn't need to ask my mother anymore" (SC, 18-11-19, 123-125).*

Source of Happiness

Regarding the source of happiness, all participants had the experience of being loved by God. Their happiness came from : first, the spiritual source, that was the relationship with God. This close relationship with God was pursued through spiritual practices, such as prayers and daily reflections. Second, all participants' happiness came from their relationships with monastic community, their families, and the people they served.

Happiness due to a close relationship with God could arise when the participants developed reflective awareness and strove for spiritual exercises. A close relationship with God was the meaning of what happened in daily life.

> *"My happiness was when I was close to God, realizing His love and presence both in prayers and in my daily life" (SF, W1,11-11-19, 72-74).*

> *"My happiness certainly came from the depths of my heart. This happiness could not be created but arouse naturally as the fruits of reflections and relationships with God who truly loved me" (ST, W1,11-11-19,120-124).*

Happiness also arouse from relationships with other people, both monastic communities and families. This experience was also then reflected on and interpreted with spiritual framework.

> *"Togetherness with others was influential. That was why I needed to get to know the people around me so that happiness was formed not only by me but by the people around me too. I meant the sisters because they were members of my community" (SF, W1,11-11-19, 118-125).*

> *"Next was positive thinking. Next, we involved in the community because our life as nuns was to live together in community, so we had to be willing to actively involve in order to find and feel happiness in togetherness" (SC, W1,18-11-19, 165-170).*

Ways to Achieve Happiness

To achieve happiness, all participants had openness to be educated, used reflection method to gain self-awareness, and obeyed monastic rules. SF achieved happiness by doing her hobby and maintaining life balance.

> *" ... positive activities, still setting aside time to do things that I enjoyed and continued to carry out service duties as best as possible" (SF, W1,11-11-19,283-286).*

SC achieved happiness by carrying out her duties and fostering good spiritual life while ST achieved it by developing self-awareness through reflections.

> *"God taught and reminded me that happiness as a Catholic, as a nun in particular, was not a matter of always laughing, not a matter of having everything fulfilled, but that one was able to make sense of the situation and remained hopeful in God" (ST, W1,11-11-19,198-205).*

SF, ST, and SC also experienced obstacles in achieving happiness. SF and ST felt heavy and big pressure on their services. Meanwhile, SC felt that self-limitation was the main obstacle to achieve happiness. To stay happy, the three participants developed gratitude, and gained self-awareness through reflections. SC developed positive thoughts to find meaning in life, while SF and ST strove to balance prayers, services, and study.

> "Integrating prayers as an inner experience; studying to fill yourself with more quality and depth; living in community with sincere love and not getting tired of forgiving; and serving with a spirit of humility" (SF, W1,11-11-19,311-316).

> "The study assignment was difficult for me at first, because I personally didn't like studying. However, by realizing my calling as a religious person who took three vows, I lived this mission as an embodiment of my vows, so these vows had became real" (ST,W1,11-11-19,155-162).

Meaning of Happiness

Regarding the meaning of happiness, the three participants interpreted happiness as a close relationship with God and services to others. A personal relationship with God was manifested in services to others. Services to others were also ways to make God happy. Happiness was no longer tied to wealth, family life, and position, but to spiritual values and services. SF expressed her happiness by forgiving those who had guilt on her. ST expressed her happiness by being friendly and caring, while SC expressed it by creating a happy situation and atmosphere wherever she is.

> "My happiness was when I was close to God, realizing His love and presence both in prayers and in daily life" (SF, W1,11-11-19, 72-74).

> "Nun's happiness meant an inner situation that arouse from the depths of the heart, the fruit of a close relationship with Him, God, who called me, who first loved me" (ST, W1, 18-11-19, 71-75).

> "... true happiness was a unity with God. This meant that we had a personal closeness to God, so that living this life no longer depended on anything other than God" (SC, W1, 11-18-19, 149-153).

The search for the meaning of happiness has not yet reached the final point. The output took participants to another longer process, that was an eternal unity with God. This process went on for life. Participants thought that they would achieve the ultimate happiness when they were united with God in heaven.

This study aims to describe the sources of happiness for nuns, the ways nuns achieve happiness, and the meaning of happiness for nuns. The results and data analysis showed that the source of nuns' happiness was close relationships with God and serving others as a form of love for God; the ways nuns achieved their happiness were by reflecting on life experiences to gain self-awareness, spiritual exercises, and obeying monastic rules; and the meanings of happiness for nun were personal relationships with God and services to others.

These findings were discovered through data analysis using system theory. Data reduction results were analyzed and categorized into three stages: input, process, and output (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2013). The input contained background information about how people could be interested in becoming nuns. External interest, family support, and description of happiness before becoming a nun were the starting points for people to decide to become a nun and start their education in a convent. The process stage contained the sources of the nun's happiness and how the nun achieved happiness. Both of these things were the results of monastic education and were the nuns' struggles to find the meaning of happiness. The output stage contained the

meaning of nuns' happiness, which was obtained from the nun's process of achieving happiness by considering the sources of happiness.

The input stage showed how motivation and support could influence decisions. Suparno (2016) explains that the motivation behind a person's interest in becoming a nun is very diverse and can even be different from one another. The three participants had different backgrounds but had the same motivation. All three participants experienced an interest in becoming nuns to serve others who needed help. This is in line with what Maslow (Andjarwati, 2015) stated, that someone whose lower-level needs have been fulfilled will try to actualize themselves. The way to do this is by thinking about and taking steps to do something useful for other people who need it. The path of life as nuns become way for people to respond to the needs of those who require help (Binns, 2021). In the same vein, Seligman (2004) stated that people who receive a lot and are grateful will easily be moved to share with others.

The three participants received support from their families to become nuns. One participant got full support from his parents and extended family, while the others got support from his father, brother, and sister. Family support is an important factor in determining people's happiness. Seligman (2004) argued that those who gain freedom from their families will experience happier lives. Two participants received support and freedom from their families to become nuns. One participant also received support, but his parents hoped that she would go to college and work first so she could be more confident in making decisions. The parents of this participant believed that making decisions required maturity. This personal maturity allows people to make decisions bravely and responsibly, and be ready to face the consequences. Family support further strengthens and enhances nuns' gratitude in dedicating herself to God (Riskasari, 2023).

The three participants' ideas about happiness before entering the monastery were related to achievements, namely to get a lot of recognition and praise from the people around them; and, to possess goods or wealth. Participants spent money on items they liked and were trending, went to the salon, and went out with friends. This is the same as explained by Khavari (2000), that apart from positive relationships, a successful career that makes a lot of money greatly influences happiness. The same thing was expressed by Seligman (2004) that success, achievement, and money can increase happiness even though they can experience shifts in the future.

Participants' happiness is also related to relationships within the family. Participants felt that the happiness they felt was the presence of a family that provided attention, affection, and support. Regarding family, Seligman (2004) wrote that we get many happy things from family. Parental love for children is the most positive force in human life. Family is a refuge. A harmonious family brings a lot of love, security, and happiness to family members.

In the process stage, participants realized the sources of their happiness and how to achieve that happiness. The three participants said that the main sources of happiness were personal relationships with God and services to others. The participants' expressions about the source of happiness are supported by Suparno (Suparno, 2016) that the life of nuns must originate and move in unity with God. The experience of being loved by God, which has been so great since humans were born until now, needs to be realized at all times so

that it becomes strength from within to always be grateful and live the life of one's calling with a joyful and happy heart (Suparno, 2016). Likewise, Seligman (2004) wrote that sincere love from God and gratitude are the aspects that form happiness in a person. The happiness of nuns, which arises from a close relationship with God, is also expressed through service to others. Thus, serving others is not merely a moral action, but is also driven by a higher motivation—the love of God (Augusto Tamanini, 2017)

Gratitude can be found through reflection. One participant called this reflective ability the ability to process experience, and another participant called it a spiritual practice. The importance of this reflective ability was also expressed by Seligman (2004), that humans are created with an infinite sense of dissatisfaction. Humans are always faced with various events. So, it takes time for every human being to reflect on what they have experienced, whether they are married or not, to find deeper happiness, not just pleasure that easily fades. Seligman further explained that a person's inability to reflect on the life that God has given every day can be a source of unhappiness and for some people who are willing to open themselves to reflection even on sad events, they ultimately find a higher source of happiness (M. E. P. Seligman, 2004).

Service in the community is also an important element in a nun's happiness. Even though the effect is not very large, it still has an effect on the participants. In this regard, Suparno (2016) explained that nuns who live in a good and conducive community will influence their members to become more enthusiastic, more joyful, and happier. On the other hand, if nuns live in a community that is less conducive or there is a lot of conflict, then the members become less open, less enthusiastic, and feel a heavy burden. Involvement in the community means service to others. Suparno (2016) emphasized that nuns are called to live in a community and not live alone. Service to others is a basic requirement of life in a community. The feeling of belonging and being meaningful to their community makes the nuns stronger in facing life's challenges and experiences (Janotík, 2015).

In the process of achieving happiness, each participant had a unique way that was different from one another. The efforts made by the participants in common are: maintaining a personal relationships with God through spiritual exercise, diligent and disciplined reflection, and obedience to monastic rules.

Two participants stated that happiness was achieved by maintaining a personal relationship with God by seeking balance in life. This statement is supported by Seligman (2017) who says that religion can provide peace and happiness through a relationship with the Transcendent. People who believe in God will maintain the closeness of this relationship. Happiness cannot be separated from the experience of God. The closer a person is to God, the happier they become (Cancang et al., 2022). Sharma (2002) stated that the human heart is a place of God's presence which needs to always be guarded and cleaned because from there will flow peace, tranquillity, and happiness that cannot be given by anything on this earth. This is what was emphasized by a participant who revealed that maintaining a relationship with God was not only by diligently praying but also by trying to seek God's will in our lives and developing positive thoughts.

Perseverance and discipline in reflecting on experiences are also important steps to achieve happiness in the life of nuns. Reflection must be carried out by nuns starting from the initial formation stage, ongoing formation, and until the end of life. Experience needs to be reflected on because it has formative values. These

values need to be maintained, and humans need to continue to improve themselves to further develop the wisdom of life that leads to ultimate happiness and the highest truth. The quest for happiness is an ongoing journey. At times, the search feels like an enigma, but happiness is truly attainable (Alam, 2022).

The obedience lived by nuns is also a way to achieve happiness. Radcliffe (2009) emphasized that the vow of obedience is a joyful part of a nun's life because obedience makes a nun free a human being. Monastic rules were made not to limit the movements of nuns' lives but to determine the steps that needed to be taken together for the good of humanity and not goodness according to personal standards. A participant called obedience a time of aligning personal desires and hopes with the needs of the monastery. When one participant was sent to study, even though she felt it was hard and did not like it, she carried it out obediently because she was aware that his personal desires had to be harmonized with the needs of the monastery.

Regarding the meaning of happiness as a result of the process of achieving happiness, all participants had the same views. They defined happiness as having close relationships with God, services to others, forgiveness, and sharing happiness. The three participants' views regarding happiness as close relationships with God are supported by Seligman's views (Linley & Joseph, 2004) which emphasize that happiness can be achieved when people can strive for higher values than just personal needs. These higher values can take the forms of relationships and seeking God's will, as well as fighting for social and community good. Nuns set aside her own interests and are fully devoted to serving God, unhindered by worldly distractions (Stănescu, 2020).

The three participants defined happiness as an opportunity to serve others as a form of love and obedience to God. In other words, closeness to God is manifested in service to others. This view is strengthened by the idea of Peterson and Seligman (2004), that good deeds and service are forms of human obedience to God's commands. Ethical egoism, utilitarianism, and social contracts are overcome by moral laws that encourage humans to express their obedience to God through concrete actions.

A participant stated that happy nuns were nuns who forgave easily and had no feelings of revenge. Forgiveness is a form of expression of God's mercy. According to Linley and Joseph (2004), forgiveness is a person's free choice to transform by reducing the desire for revenge and contact with the guilty persons. Forgiveness helps people change interpersonal relationships and supports a better life. A participant stated that her desire not to hurt others was carried out by making others happy through her meaningful words.

The three participants emphasized that happy nuns were cheerful nuns. They paid attention to the expressions of happiness through a joyful atmosphere, laughter, and friendliness. This expression of happiness is still related to the nuns' ability to forgive people who have wronged them. Forgiveness brings people to better interpersonal relationships. Better interpersonal relationships are signs that people have succeeded in developing themselves because of happiness. Happiness has positive impact on people's success (Fitriana & Kassymova, 2021). Happiness is not only the result of human pursuit but also a source of self-improvement. Nuns also define happiness as a positive state of mind marked by a willingness to share positive feelings with others. Facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice can be ways for nuns to share these positive feelings with others (Shaji et al., 2023).

In general, it can be concluded that the input contains the nuns' background, regarding external interests, parental permission, family support, and description of happiness before becoming nuns (wealth, spouse, and position). The process contains two parts, namely: first, the source of happiness which consists of close relationships with God through spiritual exercises, prayers, and reflections; and services to others as a form of love for God; second, the ways nuns achieve happiness are through reflections on life experiences, spiritual exercises, and obedience to monastic rules. The output contains the meaning of happiness, which consists of personal relationships with God, services to others, caring and forgiveness, and sharing happiness with others. Furthermore, the process is still ongoing because the nuns' happiness is not yet final happiness. The nuns' happiness is still in the process of achieving the highest happiness, namely unity with God.

This research supports Seligman's view of happiness. Seligman stated that happiness is a life full of gratitude, full of meaning, and enjoying life together with other people. Happiness is a situation when people are able to do good and feel fullness within themselves (M. E. P. Seligman, 2004). Nuns also experience happiness because of the meaning of life and togetherness with other people, both fellow community members and the people they serve. Nuns also experience gratitude through meaning in daily reflection and spiritual practice. The uniqueness of this research is that happiness does not only arise and exist in relationships with other people but also involves close relationships to God.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, the three participants had similarities and differences in understanding the meaning of happiness. This research was divided into four categories, i.e. background, source of happiness, ways to achieve happiness, and meaning of happiness.

In the vocation background category, the three participants got support from their families to become nuns. Regarding the source of happiness for nuns, all participants had experiences of being loved by God. To achieve happiness, all participants had to have openness to be educated, use reflection methods, and obey monastic rules. Participants interpreted happiness as a personal relationship with God, services to others, caring and forgiving, and sharing happiness with others. The meaning of happiness has not yet reached the final point. Participants believed they would achieve the ultimate happiness when they were in eternal unity with God.

This research can serve as a foundation for future researchers to elaborate on the theme of nuns' happiness. Psychological research on nuns' happiness is still very limited. So, further studies are needed to expand and deepen the theme of nuns' happiness. This could include researching nuns' happiness in specific age categories, certain stages of monastic life, or within particular areas of work. This research can also assist those who mentor young nuns (formators) in designing initial and ongoing formation programs that balance spiritual with personal development, as part of efforts to achieve happiness.

The strength of this research lies in its ability to provide a comprehensive description of nuns' happiness by tracing it from their family backgrounds and initial interest in becoming nuns, differences in views on the source of happiness between lay people and nuns, methods of achieving happiness through daily life in the monastery, and discovering that the highest form of happiness is more spiritual in nature. Thus, this research

can also contribute to the field of spiritual formation. The weakness of this research is that it remains too broad in describing nuns' happiness. Nuns have various stages: aspirant, postulant, novice, junior, medior, and senior, as well as different types of nuns: contemplative nuns and active nuns from various congregations or orders. This research has not yet been able to specifically describe the experiences of nuns at particular stages or types.

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