

Culture, Socio-economic Status and Religious Coping As Predictors of Happiness: A Review

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Abstract--- Happiness importance cannot be overemphasized this has been confirmed by many researches and world happiness report 2012—2018. As a result, factors predicting happiness have been employed by researchers and scholars in various studies on Muslim women. Thus, this study examined and found out the factors predicting happiness such as culture, socio-economic status (SES) and religious coping as well as identified the foremost and major predictor and research design used by these scholars. A systematic review of the literature on culture, socio-economic status and religious coping as predictors of happiness among Muslim women was carried out. A total of number of 30 articles from different disciplines have been examined. The factors and research design found were divided in to those that belong to happiness predicted by culture, by socio-economic status, by religious coping and by culture, socio-economic status and religious coping, happiness related to culture, happiness related to culture, to socio-economic status, to religious coping and related to culture, socio-economic status and religious coping. The research designs were quantitative, qualitative, mixed method and systematic literature review (SLR). Quantitative research design was found to be the leading research design. The studies were also examined based on countries of study; Iran, Turkey, Palestine, Oman, Qatar, New Zealand, England, Bangladesh, Algeria, Jordan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Lebanon. Iran was the leading country. But no model of happiness was found in the studies analysed. It is hoped that findings from this study will be beneficial to Muslims in women centre for continuing education and counsellors especially in sub-Sahara Africa (Nigeria).

Keywords--- Happiness, Culture, Socio-Economic Status, Religious Coping and Muslim Women.

I. INTRODUCTION

Happiness has long been a topic from the perspective of philosophical tradition. Empirical studies started to give attention to this area of research in the past few decades (Ye, Ng, & Lian, 2015; Oishi & Gilbert, 2016; Khan, A., et al. (2020); Khan, A (2013). The study of happiness, life satisfaction, and well-being has achieved greater momentum and acceptance (Agbo., Nzeadibe & Ajaero, 2012), which has made it to be one of the indices globally on which nations are ranked (UN, 2010). In the beginning of the 20th century, when research on human well-being burgeoned, this led individuals to have interest in conducting several researches on academic disciplines in the social sciences context such as, counselling, economics, sociology, anthropology and psychology (Mcbride, 2010). With this progress, various researches were carried out on happiness and other domains related (Lucas, Clark, & Diener, 2003).

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Happiness is a psychological or passionate condition of wellbeing portrayed by positive or charming feelings running from satisfaction to serious happiness (Bajwa, Bibi, & Ali, 2016). Jalali & Heidari (2016) argued that happiness is comprised of positive affect (in the absence of negative affect) and general life satisfaction (Clemons, 2018); as a subjective, emotional experience of individual's happy well-being Veenhoven (2006); it does not necessarily mean opposite of depression, but it means absent of depression (Brailovskaia, Schonfeld, Kochetkov & Margraf 2019) and as significant to life for several people, this makes it to be worthy of investigation (Zhou, 2013). Singh (2010) asserted that life satisfaction relates with happiness and is seen to be a life goal paramount based on the finding of prominent scholars.

According to Conceicao, Pedro & Bandura (2008), they are external or situational factors and internal or psychological factors that predicts happiness. Internal predictors involve, psychological (self-esteem and optimism), personality traits (neuroticism, agreeableness, extroversion,) and genetic roles, objectives, cope and coping ability on people's happiness, while external factors include cultural, socio-economical and institutional factors (Conceicao, Pedro & Bandura, 2008). Zungu, (2016); Okwaraji, Nduanya, Okorie, & Okechukwu, (2017) opined that so many factors predict people's happiness in different ways. The common ones include; marital satisfaction, employment, good social relationships, culture, age, gender, material wealth and income, socio-economic status, family background, better health condition, education level, career satisfaction, leisure satisfaction, religion, the level of democracy in one's country personal freedom of individual (Zhou, 2013; Zungu, 2016; Steptoe, 2019). Based on this pleasure, meaning and engagement are important construct in measuring happiness.

Culture is a group's way of life. It is seen and unseen, affective and cognitive, conscious and unconscious, and much more (Vontress, 2003). Happiness happens to be defined in different perspective, since its evolvement. According to (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky (2006) happiness may be universal as a state of mind it meaning took specific cultural forms. (Uchida & Ogihara,(2012) gave backing to Pflug's (2009) definition asserting that the construct of cultural happiness was based on historically nurtured beliefs and religious ideas. This notion gave raise to national campaigns and movements for building happier societies (such as Action for Happiness) (Pogosyan, 2016). Schofield, (2017) a psychologist has shown that culture is said to play a major role on individual's ways of thinking (Chen, 2017) and behaviour (Hofstede & Bond, 2007). Happiness may be hindered by culture in terms of compass or happiness level (Ye, Ng, Lian & 2015). Diener, Oishi, & Lucas (2003) reported the influence of culture on happiness, social relationships are significantly associated to happiness (Mamoudou, 2013). To study happiness and culture of people knowing context of culture on which the people operate on is paramount, which is known as individualistic and collectivism. People in Africa operate on collectivism cultural type. Early marriage, gender role and equality, as culture constructs plays a significant role in predicting happiness. Happiness is seen as a most cherished goal across cultures by individuals.

Islamic culture can be defined as the cultural practices common to Muslim people's historically. Islamic culture normally comprises all the practices within Islamic religion (Abdel-Khalek 2010). Variations in the submission to Islamic beliefs in various traditions and cultures exist. The variations occurred based on differences between Islamic practice and Muslim practice, Individualism or collectivism and patriarchy or matriarchy system. These differences

lead to application of some cultural practice that are against Islam on women. Such practices include prejudice and discrimination of women in most societies, thus forgetting the rights given to them by Islam.

Socio-economic status is a combination of social and economic factors that are used as an indicator of household income and opportunity (Pettigrew, 2009). Socio-economic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequalities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power and control. Socioeconomic status (SES) is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation.

Socio-economic status is an important predictor of happiness. A clear positive link between average levels of happiness and SES exist (Stevenson & Wolfers 2008; Easterlin 2010). Socio-economic status is the economic and sociological combination to measure person's total work experience, and that of an individual's or family's social and economic position in relation to others, based on his or parent's income, education, occupation and status (Joseph, 2016; Oishi et al 2016). It is divided into three namely 'high', 'middle', and 'low'. Adegboye, (2016) stated that socioeconomic status is the societal hierarchy which an individual or family stand on, and is based on average basic predominant cultural asset, sufficient income, material ownership and involvement in community's activities. Bad economic situations might show the unreliable nature of life, thus might be related with the luck-based concepts of happiness in turn (Oishi & Diener, 2013) the idea of happiness might be correlated with the mean level of happiness and wealth of nations.

Religious coping refers to the use of religious beliefs or practices to cope with stressful life situations (Reutter, Kirby, K & Bigatti, Silvia, 2014). Religious coping has been a growing research interest centre and in the field of psychology (Kim & Seidlitz, 2002). A psychologist described coping in the context of religion i.e. "looking for importance in the realm of life stressful condition", usually religious coping offers serenity to individuals suffering with distress. For effectiveness of religious coping to be most effective, one must understand and accept life classically (Pargament, Feuille, & Burdzy, 2011). An individual's physical and mental well-being is affected by positive and negative coping techniques towards coping with stress (Arthur, 2012). Amrai, Zalani, Arfai, & Sharifian, (2011) opined that studies have revealed that religious practices and beliefs can be helpful to people in coping with difficult situations such as physical illnesses, depression and stress. Those persons who applies religious coping seems to handle their conditions more efficiently compared to those who do not (Paloutzian, Raymond, F & Park, 2015). Spirituality was found to be a technique used for coping with stress by students, and also spirituality is a strong coping strategy (Cornish & Wade, 2010; Cornish, Wade, Tucker, & Post, 2014). Singh (2010) opined that spiritual principles gave provision of cognitive structure which can limit stress. Tabatabaeilofti, (2016) found spirituality to positively associated with coping with stressful events. Coping is seen as a significant overriding approach between cognitive and behavioural appraisals and stressful situation results (McGrath, 2011). Oman, Shapiro, & Thoresen, (2008) posited that spirituality was found to be another converter of stress after social relationships, which increases the level of happiness. Positive and negative religious coping exist (Pargament 1997),

on Islamic teachings positive coping based on benevolent appraisal, practice, passive and active will be more beneficial than negative coping.

Grossoehme, et al., (2010) carried out research on parents' religious coping strategies of parents within the Initial year after diagnosing their ward's with cystic fibrosis. Youngblut, Brooten, Glaze, Promise & Changwon, (2017) investigated the spiritual coping skills used by race, religion, gender and ethnicity within 1 and 3 months after child's death in intensive care unit. Needs for effective strategies are necessary, for new stressors prevention and to manage appropriately the present stressors. A positive relationship exists between happiness and spiritual factors (Singh, 2010). Several researches have shown that positive correlation existed between physical or mental health and religious coping application. Is necessary to discover the kinds of religious practices which women apply during coping with stressful conditions (Aflakseir & Mahdiyar, 2016). Aflakseir & Mahdiyar (2016) opined that several religious coping types have diverse consequences towards adjusting to core life situations. In times of distress turn out to be more religious leading to application of religious coping (Francis & Robbins, 2014).

Shin & Johnson, (1978) considering past theoretical and empirical researches on happiness, they proposed an overall predictors of happiness model theoretically. This model remains one of the comprehensive utmost models concerning happiness; however, many present researches have verified various elements regarding this model; and it will serve as reference for the present research. This model has in combination the importance of comparison theory and affective theory. Some previous happiness studies in China developed and tested a systematic model of determinants of happiness. (Oishi & Diener, 2011) developed a model of happiness based on income. Seligman, (2011) developed happiness model known as PERMA model. The model was based on five dimensions namely, positive emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning and achievement. Koenig et al., (2012) proposed a causal model which links religiosity to happiness and health. Zhou (2013) developed and tested a comprehensive model of happiness, it was based on objective resources possession, quality and self-assessment of life, past social comparison and with others. Winzer & Gray (2019) proposed a model which links Buddhist practices to self-perceived health status mediated by happiness and culture in a large sample of Thai Buddhists.

From the previous studies, it can be observed that numerous progress has been logged in the literature upon how happiness can be predicted by various factors. Thus, despite the massive literatures discussing such issue, only little studies that examined culture, SES and religious coping as predictors of happiness existed. Less study of happiness on Muslim women, whereby those researches from the west cannot be applied. When studying happiness among Muslim women in Nigerian context, aspects such as inadequate happiness studies, less explored studies based on Muslim women happiness, applying religious coping as mediator between the variables under study and little studies developed model of Muslim women happiness based on the present predictors, marginalization and high illiteracy rate based on cultural practices, socio-economic status, stressful factors and individual adjustment or coping must be put into consideration. This is because Muslim women faces challenges such as; early marriage (Lawal, 2017), gender inequality, gender role, poverty and illiteracy (Yakubu, Binji, & Muhammad, 2014) and stress (Uchezuba, 2014). That is why Brailovskaia, Schonfeld, Kochetkov & Margraf (2019) opined that happiness reduces stress and depression and it is a significant and connected perception in this respect. The work, for instance, of Risvi &

Hossain (2016) was limited to a search of only happiness and religious beliefs or religiosity; while this study pushed to other factors, it also captures other discipline's curricula beyond counselling.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This is a systematic review which tends to study and synthesize the present literature associated to happiness, with the aim of exploring and finding culture, socio-economic status and religious coping as factors predicting happiness, in Sokoto state, Northern Nigeria and the world generally. This paper apparently intended to answer the following research questions:

1. Does culture, socio-economic status and religious coping play a significant role in predicting the level of happiness?
2. Is there any significant relationship of happiness with culture, socio-economic status and religious coping?

III. METHODOLOGY

The present paper adopted a systematic review of literature (**SLR**) to obtain the significant articles to be involved in the study. Kitchenham (2004) defined SLR as a systematic process used in identifying, evaluating and interpreting every research pertinent to a given research question, topic or area of interest. Therefore, this section described by what method the articles were obtained, screened and analysed. The review type for this study is known as mapping review (Grant and Booth 2009). Mapping review purpose is mapping out and sorting current literature on a precise topic. It characterizes the quality and quantity of literature it also aimed at identifying gaps in research literature in order to further research. It was divided into three stages,

- **Planning Stage:** The important fact of this paper is on culture, socio-economic status and religious coping as factors predicting happiness. Thus, the resources and publications were primarily searched and collected from six (6) bibliographic databases sources, these include Scopus, Taylor & Francis online, Web of Science, ERIC, Google Scholar and Science Direct using keywords: Happiness or Well-Being AND Culture, Happiness AND Culture AND SES, Happiness AND Culture AND Religious Coping. This led to large number of materials which makes it almost impossible to work on such large literatures. In order to lower the number of articles to a handy size;
- **Conducting Out Stage:** was done under the following criteria:
 - i. Document type was constrained to 'articles' only.
 - ii. Only peer-reviewed empirical studies published from 2009 to 2019 (period of 10 years) were considered.
 - iii. Search was restricted to the title of the papers;
 - iv. Restricted to Muslim women and
 - v. Language of the publication to be English.

No boundary on the subject area and journal type was set by the authors, apart from the criteria above. Accordingly,

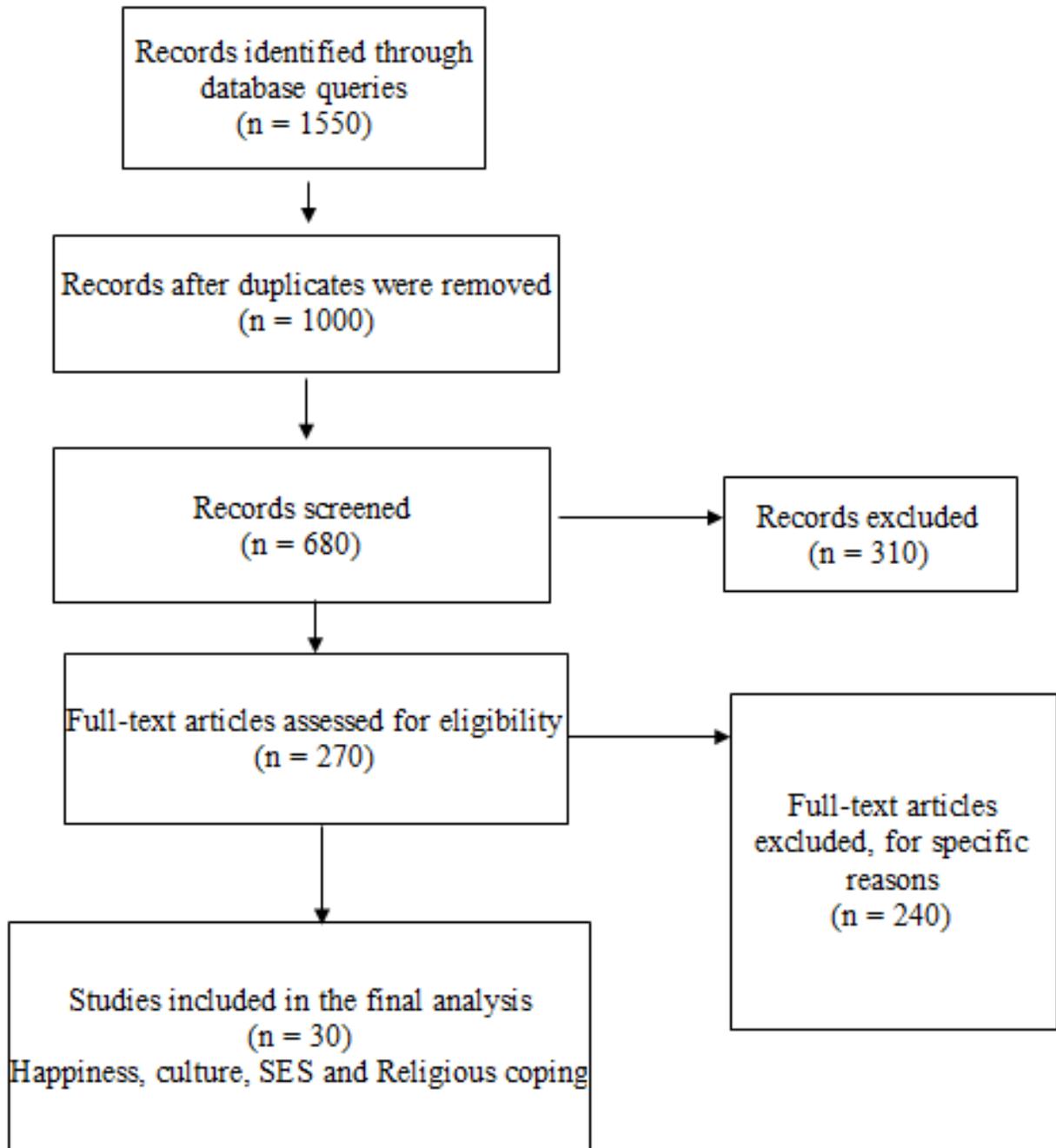


Figure 1: Study Search and Selection Flow Chart

- **Reporting Stage:** Was the next stage, the exploration produced the following articles below:

RQ1: Does culture, socio-economic status and religious coping play a significant role in predicting the level of happiness?

Table 1: Analysis of Predictors of Happiness, Country and Research Design Applied

Studies/ Country	Journal	Design
Talebzadeh & Samkan, (2011),	International Conference on Social Science and Humanity 5	Quantitative design
Mehrdadi, Sadeghian, Direkvand-moghadam, & Hashemian, (2016)	Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research., 10(5), 01-03	Quantitative design
Aflakseir & Mahdiyar, (2016)	Journal of Reproductive Infertility,17(2),117-122	Quantitative design
Rizvi & Hossain, (2017)	Journal of Religious Health. (56), 1561–1582	SLR design
Abdel-Khalek, (2010)	Quality of Life Research 19,1133–1143	Quantitative design
Abdel-Khalek, & Eid (2011)	Journal Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 14(2), 129-140	Quantitative design
Abdel-Khalek, (2012)	Journal Mental Health, Religion& Culture15,1.39-52	Quantitative design
Abdel-Khalek, (2013)	Journal Mental Health, Religion & Culture 16,3.306-318	Quantitative design
Abdel-Khalek, (2014)	Journal Mental Health, Religion & Culture 17,1, 30-38	Quantitative design
Abdel-Khalek & Lester 2017	Personality and individual difference 109, 12-16	Quantitative design
Abdel-Khalek, (2015)	Journal of Cogent psychology 2(1)	Quantitative design
Adam 2016	Journal of Muslim Mental Health 10(2) 1-11	Quantitative design
Sahraian, Gholami Javadpour& Omidvar (2013)	Journal of Religious &health, 52(2) 450-453	Quantitative design
Bayani (2014)	Journal of Social Science& Humanities 22(3), 709-716	Quantitative design
Abu-Rahim (2013)	Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 11 (1), 34-38	Quantitative design
Hossain & Rizvi (2016)	Journal Mental Health, Religion & Culture 19(7), 781-790	Quantitative design
Ghaffari & Çiftçi (2010)	International Journal for the Psychology of Religion 20 (1), 14-25	Quantitative design
Ali, Ambler, Strydom & Rai (2013)	Journal of psychological medicine, 43(6), 1303-1312	Quantitative design
Abde and Salih (2015)	Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture. 3(2), 179-194	Qualitative design
Abdel-Khalek & Singh (2019)	Journal Mental Health, Religion & Culture	Quantitative design
Eryilmaza, (2015)	Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 15(2), 433-444	Mixed method design
Devine, Hinks & Naveed (2019)	Journal of happiness studies 20(2) 351-371	Quantitative design
Tiliouine, Cummins & Davern (2009)	Mental health religion & culture 12(1) 55-74	Quantitative design
Abolmaali, Ghafari and Ajilchi (2014)	Advances in Applied Sociology, 4, 121-127	Quantitative design
Achour, Roslan, Nor, Yakub and Yusoff (2015)	Journal of Religious Health, 54, 984–997	Quantitative design
Sujarwoto, Tampubolon & Pierewan. (2018)	Applied Research Quality Life, 13, 927–945	Quantitative design
Yorulmaz (2016)	Journal of The Faculty of Economics, (6)1,801-818	Quantitative design
Alaedein-Zawawi, (2015)	European Scientific Journal, (11)5, 117-141	Quantitative design
Jelali & Heidari (2016)	International Education Studies, 9(6), 45-52	Quantitative design
Abdel-Khalek and Lester (2009)	Journal of Psychological reports 105(2), 381-382	Quantitative design

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Does culture, socio-economic status and religious coping play a significant role in predicting the level of happiness?

Table 1 above analysed the significant role culture plays in predicting women's happiness. The table revealed diverse findings by researchers. Happiness is predicted by culture (24); by SES (18 and 29); by religious coping (3,4, 8, 12,13,15,17, 21 and 30); by culture, SES & religious coping (19, 26, 27)

Most of the above researches were carried out on both Muslim men and women (2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,26,27,29 and 30) few were only on women alone (1,3,12,24,25 and 28)

The researchers also used different research designs in reporting their findings, with quantitative research design being the most applied by the scholars (1,2,3,5,6,7,8, 9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,20,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29 and 30). This is followed by qualitative design (19), mixed method (21) and SLR (4).

4.1.2 Is there any significant relationship of happiness with culture and socio-economic status and religious coping?

Table 1 above analysed the relationship among happiness, culture, SES and religious coping. It revealed different results. Such as; Happiness is related to culture (1); SES (2); religious coping (4,5,6,7,9,10,11,14,20,23,25 and 28); religious coping and SES (27) and culture, SES and religious coping (16 and 22).

The above table further indicated that some of these researches were conducted in Iran (1,2,3,4,12,14,24 and 29); Kuwait (5,7,10 and 30); Turkey(17,21 and 27); Lebanon (9 and 11); Malaysia (15 and 25); Qatar (8); Kuwait and Palestine (6); India (20); New Zealand (12); Oman (16); England (18); Bangladesh (22); Algeria (23); Jordan (28) and Indonesia (26).

From the table above no study was found to have developed a model of Muslim women happiness based on the variables (culture, SES and religious coping) and none applied religious coping as a mediator.

4.2 Discussion

The major aim of this work was to find how culture, SES and religious coping predicts happiness among Muslim women students by previous researchers. The number of studies used were few because the authors limited themselves to consider only a ten-year period, which might subject the results to smaller precision

Table 1 above revealed that happiness is predicted by culture (24), this finding is in line with (Ye, Ng & Yian, 2015; Bartels and Salo, 2018), by SES (18 & 29) goes with the findings of Deaton and Stone (2013); Ugwu & Ugwu 2015; Oishi & Gilbert 2016; Ngamaba & Soni, 2018) by religious coping (3,4, 8, 12,13,15,17, 21 and 30) supported the findings of Youngblut 2014). By culture, SES and religion (19, 26 & 27) (Agbo, Nzeadibe, & Ajaero 2012). Steptoe (2019) also supported the above findings in his studies where he found culture, SES as factors predicting happiness, in his findings he added family, stress exposure, marital status and personality predicts

happiness. Bajwa, Bibi and Ali 2016 studied the relationship between happiness of Muslim women and marriage and found out a positive correlation between the two. Bahiraei, Eftekhare, Zarei and Soloukdar (2012) conducted a research on happiness and personality of students in Iran, they found a relationship between the two. Bergsma & Ardel (2012) happiness and wisdom. Hartman (2016) conducted a study on the factors predicting happiness (SES, culture and religious coping). Thus, Campante and Yonagizaya-drott (2013); Ateca-Amestoy, Gerstenbluth, Mussio and Rossi (2016) found happiness to be predicted by religious coping.

Some of the studies on women's happiness conducted in different countries, yet there is shortage of these researches especially in the developing countries where, studies on happiness and women particularly is given less attention. Women are the backbone of every nation but actually are regarded as second-class citizens in many situations. Hasnain et al., (2011) posited that working females (Muslims) were more satisfied with life than the working females. Ali & Haq, (2006) found out that autonomy leads to Muslim women's happiness in Pakistan, though not all variables of autonomy contributes to women happiness. Positive correlation existed between Muslim women and happiness (Bajwa, Bibi & Ali., 2016). Bajwa, Bibi & Ali (2016) reported less researches conducted on women' happiness in Pakistan. Shek, (1995) argue that women experience much effect of marital quality on happiness than in. Sooky et al., (2014) conducted a research on Muslim women in Shahroud, Iran, which they reported that women happiness is significantly related to social activity, and economic status. Casale & Posale (2010) found out that South African women from rural areas are the most disadvantaged group, hence been unhappy. Stevenson, Wolfers, & Stevenson (2009) posited that in USA for the past 35 years women's lives of women have advanced, but women's happiness has fallen according to subjective well-being measures, both relatively and absolutely to men leisure. Bajwa, Bibi and Ali 2016 studied the relationship between happiness of Muslim women and marriage and found out a positive correlation between the two

Ugwu & Ugwu 2013; Balogun 2014; Francis & Robbins 2014; Ye, Ng & Yian (2015); Aflekseir & Mahdiyar (, 2016) applied Quantitative research design in their studies while, Hu (2016); Okwaraji, Nduanya, Okorie & Okechukwu (2017) applied qualitative research.

Based on the findings of **RQ2** Relationship between happiness and culture (1) was supported by (Zhou, 2015; Smit, 2015; Oishi & Gilbert 2016; Oishi 2018) with SES (Devoe and House 2012; Waught, 2013; Tays, Zyphur & Batz, 2017; Ogwuche, Ijiga, Kuruku and Okwoli 2019) and with religious coping (Sargent 2015; Francis & Robbins 2014) mediation. However, no relationship was found between religious practice and happiness (Leslie, Hans-Georg and Christopher 2003), with culture and SES Zawojaska (2013) had the same finding

In connection with the findings of the countries where the studies were conducted; Zungu (2016); Casale & Posale carried out a study in South Africa; Kasuto (2012) in Namibia, Zhou (2015) in China; Hu (2016) in Japan; Sithey, Li, Wen, Kelly & Clarke (2015) in Bhutan. Others from Nigeria are Balogun (2014); Agbo., Nzeadibe & Ajaero, (2012); Ugwu & Ugwu (2013) Okwaraji, Nduanya, Okorie & Okechukwu, (2017); Ogwuche, Ijiga, Kuruku and Okwoli (2019), Tahir et al, (2014).

V. LIMITATION

We want to admit that, like other studies, this study has certain limitations. First, the number of articles related predictors (culture, SES and religious coping) of happiness in the context of Muslim women turned out to be surprisingly less, especially in Africa. Studies concentrating mainly on happiness were few, and most of the researches selected for this review, Muslim women were investigated alongside Muslim men, but were not the main focus. Secondly, words like well-being in place of happiness and religious practice in place of religious coping were added due to shortage of researches. Nevertheless, the cumulative outcomes managed to capture the major predictors related to happiness in the literature. Thus, we recommend conducting more researches on predictors of Muslim women happiness especially in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

VI. CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to find out the factors predicting happiness with special reference Muslim women students. The main purpose was to find the leading and predominant predictors, research design applied, whether on women alone or both men and women and countries of study so that more researches on Muslim women happiness can be conducted especially in sub-Saharan Africa, can have an idea of what factors predicts their women's happiness. The findings of this study are in conformity with previously published suggestions that happiness is important for student development.

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