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SERMAYE BİRİKİMİ VE POSTMODERN MUTLULUĞUN ÇOK DİSİPLİNEL BİR DEĞERLENDİRMESİ

Ahmet EFE¹

Öz

Modernizm sürekli sermaye birikimine ve ekonomik kazanç odaklı büyümeye öncelik verirken, postmodern toplum artık çevrenin korunmasına, çeşitliliğe ve kültürel kimliğe değer vererek insanları mutlu etmeye önem vermektedir. Eski paradigma, zihnin doğal yasaya dayandığı ve belirli bir fikre karşı önyargılı olmadığı zaman mutluluğun gerçekleşeceğini öne sürmekteydi. Bütün saf semavi dinler, bu dünyada her şeyin geçici olduğu argümanına dayanarak paylaşmayı ve yardım etmeyi önerirken, insan açgözlülüğü, sermaye birikimi ve egoist saiklerle kendini tatmin etme eğilimi nedeniyle pratikler teoriyle uyumlu olmamıştır. Ekonomi, psikoloji ve teoloji üzerine multidisipliner bir araştırma olan bu çalışma, postmodern felsefeye göre 'mutluluk nesnellik gerektirir mi?' sorusunu yanıtlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Anahtar kelimeler etrafında bazı anahtar sorular sorarak literatür bilgisi ışığında siber-kapitalist ve dijital çağa uygun mutluluk arayışı üzerine genel değerlendirmeler yapılmaktadır. Bilhassa İslami referanslarda, mutluluğun yegâne kaynağı olan hayat sermayesini bir İlâhi lütuf açısından en uygun şekilde kullanmak için yaratılış amaçlarını ve mantıklı düşünceleri 'gerçek mutluluk' anlayışına uyarlamanın gerekli olup olmadığı noktasında çok boyutlu olarak tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Postmodernizm
Multidisipliner Yaklaşım
Sermaye Birikimi
Mutluluk
İlâhi Lütuf

Makale Hakkında

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A MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT OF CAPITAL ACCUMULATION AND POSTMODERN HAPPINESS

Abstract

While the modern world prioritizes continued capital accumulation and economic gain-driven growth, postmodern society now tries to make people happy by valuing environmental protection, diversity and cultural identity. The old paradigm suggested that happiness would occur when the mind was based on natural law and not biased toward a particular idea. While all pure celestial religions suggest sharing and helping the poor leaning on the argument that everything is transient in this world, the practice does not seem to be in compliance with the theory due to human greed and tendency towards capital accumulation and self-satisfaction with egoistic characteristics. This study, as multidisciplinary research on economics, psychology, and theology aims to answer, 'Does joy require objectivity according to postmodern philosophy?'. We try to ask some key questions around the keywords and thus make assessments on the pursuit of happiness suitable in the cyber-capitalist and digital era in the light of literature knowledge. It is argued if it is necessary to adapt creational objectives and logical ideas to our understanding of 'real happiness' to make the most appropriate use of life capital that is the sole source of happiness from point of view of Divine bounty particularly in the Islamic references.

Keywords

Post-modernism
Multidisciplinary Approach
Capital Accumulation
Happiness
Divine Bounty

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INTRODUCTION

Economics, at least in its established definition, is a discipline that deals with the production, consumption, and distribution of goods (or services) that satisfy material needs and how the resources to be used in production of these goods in different areas. From this point of view, the satisfaction properties of goods, namely utility, are at the heart of economics with the very limits of worldly life perspective. In other words, while conventional economics finds the source of happiness in the satisfaction that people get through consumption, or in the sense of pleasure in general, it neglects temporary nature of human, life, and all material possession and hence, the entire afterlife. The more a person consumes, the more joy he will of materialistic philosophy feel in temporary structures of worldly life. The 'rational economic man' (homo economics) whose primary goal is to achieve self-satisfaction is a selfish being who does not think about anything but self-benefit, does not like to work, loves only himself, and sees nature and people as only tools to achieve happiness. Another consequence of this view is that creating a 'consumer society' is the most important, if not the only, the way to increase people's happiness.

In this article which uses a multidisciplinary approach, the research problem, theory, and literature are introduced; the relations between the sense of pleasure and the market society are discussed; the human adopted by the economics are addressed, and the opportunities and problems created by capitalism are examined, and wisdom as lessons-learned collected from analysis over religion, capitalism, and happiness in conclusion.

1. Research Design

We try to use a curious and descriptive approach at the intersection of economics, religion, and psychology. We assume that to understand the interacting variables of the equilibrium in the new world order of cyber-capitalism, scientific reasoning, and paradigms that causes unique formations need to be studied well. However, before diving into sophisticated subjects, it is better to ask some guiding questions related to the research problem definitions:

- Is this an indication of human incapability and the need for covering his vulnerabilities and deficiencies with new knowledge and wisdom?
- Does the accumulation of knowledge by new paradigms indicate the perfection of human beings in the process of development?
- Is there a peak of perfection of humanity that is the end of history where there will be no need for new paradigms anymore?

Research Problem Statement

The research problem of this study is to determine whether the pursuit of happiness in the context of postmodern philosophy, which values environmental protection, diversity, and cultural identity, requires objectivity, and to investigate the impact of capital accumulation on happiness. This study aims to reconcile the multidisciplinary perspectives of economics, psychology, and theology to understand the factors that contribute to happiness in a cyber-capitalist and digital era.

Research Assumptions

- The pursuit of happiness in the context of postmodernism may differ from the traditional understanding of happiness based on natural law.
- Capital accumulation and self-satisfaction with egoistic characteristics may not be in compliance with the principles of sharing and helping the poor as suggested by pure celestial religions.
- The paradigm shifts theory may provide insights into the development and progress of human knowledge and understanding of happiness.
- Interdisciplinarity and the combination of different knowledge domains are essential for addressing complex and comprehensive issues related to happiness and capital accumulation.
- The pursuit of happiness may be affected by various subjective factors, including sociological, religious, and cultural influences.

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is that real happiness in the context of postmodern philosophy may require objectivity, and that adapting creational objectives and logical ideas to our understanding of happiness may lead to the most appropriate use of life capital, as the sole source of happiness from the point of view of Divine bounty, particularly in Islamic references. Moreover, the multidisciplinary approach may provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to happiness and the impact of capital accumulation on individual well-being in the cyber-capitalist and digital era.

2. Theoretical Background and Related Literature

The paradigm shifts theory seems to be apt in providing appropriate answers. The late Thomas Kuhn had introduced 1962 the concept of scientific crisis because of paradigm shifts. Many books and articles have been published on his book called 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,' one of the most cited academic books of all time. These transformations can be various and contradictory, nullifying the former ones. Even in health, some of the new paradigms sometimes open a new way of treatment and refute and falsify the former methods of cures. How can we explain this kind of revolution, paradigm shifts, history denial, ignorance of old times, or perfection of human knowledge? Furthermore, how can we integrate this with the Divine knowledge? According to the Divine perspective, embodiments, creation, and science have a high truth based on a Divine name. Based on that name, many curtains and various manifestations/reflections can be found in multiple differing disciplines denying or trying to fathom to make the most of it.

With the impact of the Enlightenment era, scientific knowledge has become increasingly dominant. All society institutions that had been revised in the light of scientific knowledge are primarily based on denying religious paradigms. After the scientific revolution, the attitude toward science has changed, and the concept of 'scientific knowledge' has emerged. The progress of knowledge, a scientific, social, cultural, and ethical process, has been discussed differently after scientific knowledge and practices. The experience of postmodern paradigms appeared after other scientific revolutions such as depicted below in the Figure 1:

Figure 1. Different Paradigms Shifts

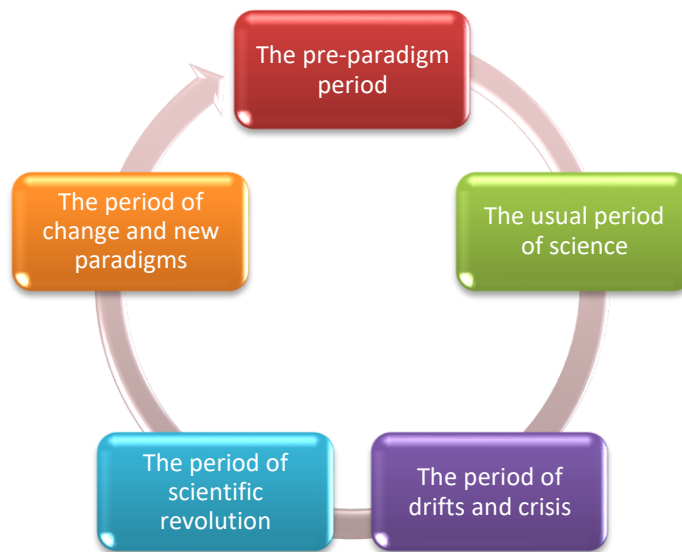
Source: Designed by the author

The basic idea of Enlightenment is that scientific knowledge is constant, progressing, and trending to self-accumulating while religious ones are dogmatic and static. The main emphasis of the Enlightenment period is 'relevance to reason and science,' which has made efforts to assess what is 'reasonable' in all areas of society and revise social institutions in the light of scientific knowledge. In this period, it is argued that science is a product of human nature, affected by emotions. According to Kuhn, scientific knowledge progresses periodically with leaps rather than moving linearly and continuously, as in the classical thinking of the Enlightenment period. Kuhn calls these scientific leaps 'paradigm shifts.' These paradigm shifts lead to a new understanding of scientific hypotheses that scientists have not previously deemed valid. Therefore, scientifically correct concepts cannot be completely objective, positive, and experimental. Kuhn argues that scientific knowledge is not the result of research and simple accumulation of facts, but different intellectual environments and possibilities stirred by various needs, problems, and perspectives in which subjectivity and relativity may exist. According to Kuhn, scientific knowledge emerges mainly through three stages.

The first period is the pre-paradigm period, a preliminary period for all sciences. In this period, various methods and theories were used for knowledge, whether scientific or not. In this emerging and accepted theory, Kuhn calls it the 'paradigm,' a method or scientific view that implements scientific theories and laws as a view accepted by a specific scientific community. The second period is defined as the usual period of science. Studies and research

supporting the paradigm adopted in this period are carried out. During this period, science is in the process of uninterrupted progress. Thus, the belief and confidence in the paradigm are now shaken. However, despite all the contradictory data, no matter how numerous the anomalies are, the scientists remain committed to the current paradigm and maintain normal science by using the existing paradigm until a reliable option arises. The third period is the period of the scientific revolution. A new group of scientists emerges in the scientific community and suggests a new paradigm. Some individuals contradict the majority in all communities and develop new thought and action 'paradigms' during the crisis. First, the new paradigm is met with a great reaction by the scientific community that accepts the old paradigm. Then, whenever the new paradigm gathers more scientific supporters than the old paradigm, the new paradigm prevails, and the scientific revolution occurs. Thus, as depicted in the figure below, we can detail the three periods into five consecutive ones: the pre-paradigm period, the usual period of science, the period of drifts and crisis, the period of the scientific revolution, and the period of scientific revolution period of change and new paradigms.

Figure 2. How Paradigms Shift Through Different Phases



Source: Designed by the author

Therefore, knowledge is ever being renewed by new information that produces new paradigms. Paradigms are the pillars of a standard body of knowledge in every scientific domain, demonstrating its internal coherence with assumptions and central hypotheses. The integrity and coherence of paradigms are affected by new information requiring and indicating different aspects of existing definitions, beliefs, and theories. This is an innovation that causes scientific crises of dominant paradigms. While trying to be as objective as possible, sociological, religious, and cultural factors and thus subjective factors are influential in creating scientific knowledge. Again, in the development of scientific knowledge, trends of the era and the foresight of scientific authorities and schools are also the guiding determinants. Another point is that culture has gained a more decisive role in blurring the difference between

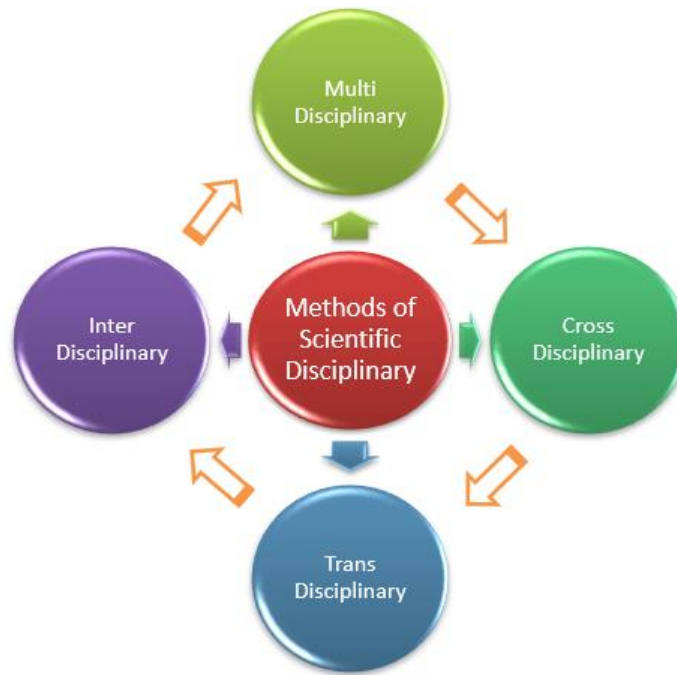
disciplines as a field of study. Today, the 'theory' mentioned without any restrictive description in humanities and social sciences does not refer to forms based on discipline as it used to be. For example, according to a standard definition, interdisciplinary studies refer to 'a process aimed at solving an issue or problem that is too complex or comprehensive to be adequately addressed by a single discipline or area of expertise' (Klein and Newell, 1998: 3). The knowledge, tools, concepts, and rules used by other disciplines should be integrated so that after the integration, a much more analytical power is to be revealed than their sum. It is this methodical maneuver that gives strength to interdisciplinarity (Hanisch and Vollman, 1983: 100). In the context of interdisciplinarity, this is only possible by switching between different disciplines' cognitive and theoretical structures and comparing and applying their methodological principles to the areas studied by these disciplines (Değirmenci, 2017: 45-50). In this case, interdisciplinarity, by definition, aims to unite different disciplines in coherent integrity rather than bringing them together. This combination informs humanity's effects on the natural world and civilization. The main dimensions of knowledge in a discipline can be seen in the figure below.

Figure 3. Elements of Basic Knowledge Domains



Source: Designed by the author

Of course, the studies of these knowledge areas at the academic level must be universal. Philosophy of science is comprehensive with a methodology of mental origin, rationale, and epistemological organization. Its purpose is to capture universal laws that determine objects and events and their meaning and aim to provide talismans of creation. The goal of an academician is to discover the design, operation, and utilization of universal laws, which are hidden in detail that can be found from different perspectives, methodologies, tools, and techniques.

Figure 4. Different Ways of Scientific Inclusion and Mixture

Source: Designed by the author

Throughout history, humankind has looked at objects and events with suspicion and developed methods to solve the secrets of life, to satisfy the sense of curiosity of many questions.

- What is a human being?
- From where does the human come?
- To where is it going?
- So, what is right and wrong?

These are the questions that the humanitarian riddle has been standing on for a long time requiring a multi-disciplinary approach. The whole matter of humanity is hidden in these questions. However, those questions are related to many scientific disciplines since they have their perspectives. All prophets, sane philosophers, and saints have responded to their people and their rulers, in fact, for the cause of human salvation showing the best possible guidance. Those who are confident about their answers have shown better progress in their lives. For this reason, the response is the recipe for the salvation of humanity and long-term happiness. According to religious references, many questions and problems may be arising from disbelief or infidelity. The answers to the questions like 'How are people deceived in the matters of faith and belief?' can be given as such:

a) Continuous engagement with material issues distances man from spirituality. It makes man incomprehensible against the truths of faith.

b) To compare God to the creatures is also a significant cause of errors, problems, distress, and denial. God is the Creator and sustainer of the universe, and everything is His

creature. The master will not be like his work, nor will the Creator of the universe be like the universe.

c) Not to think that the mind cannot fully comprehend their nature because of the greatness of the faith issues knowing the existence of something is different from knowing it is the very nature. We do not know the nature of so many things, even though we know their presence in the universe. Therefore, it is not necessary to deny God, the angels, Heaven, and Hell, as failure to comprehend the natural structure of those things does not require us to deny the existence of those things.

d) The sheer number of unbelief and their unification in denial of some faith issues is one reason that intrigued people. However, value and importance are not in the number. Human beings dominated all animal species, while animals had a large majority.

e) Not to refer to those who have specialized in spirituality.

In line with the religious and philosophical perspectives mentioned above, it is crucial to consider how these views are connected to various academic domains. This connection can be assessed through the lens of psychology, sociology, anthropology, and theology, among others.

From a psychological standpoint, the emphasis on faith and spirituality as critical sources of happiness and contentment can be related to the study of human well-being and mental health (Seligman, 2011). The role of belief in a higher power, the importance of religious practices, and the sense of purpose they provide are factors that can significantly impact one's psychological state (Pargament, 2013). For example, research has shown that individuals with strong religious beliefs tend to report higher levels of life satisfaction, resilience, and overall mental health (Koenig, 2012).

Sociologically, the discussion of faith, spirituality, and the importance of multidisciplinary approaches to understanding human life can be connected to the study of religion's role in society. Religion can be considered a powerful social institution that provides individuals with a sense of belonging, shared values, and collective identity (Durkheim, 1915/1965). Moreover, religious teachings and practices can shape social norms and influence the development of various social systems, such as family, education, and political structures (Berger, 1967).

Anthropologically, the concepts mentioned above can be analyzed by examining the cultural dimensions of religion and belief systems. Different societies around the world have developed their own unique religious and spiritual traditions, which reflect their specific historical and environmental contexts (Geertz, 1973). The study of these cultural variations can provide valuable insights into the ways human beings make sense of the world and their place in it, as well as the social functions that religion and spirituality serve across diverse cultural settings (Tylor, 1871/1958).

Finally, from a theological perspective, the ideas presented in the passage can be assessed in relation to the broader religious discourse and the study of sacred texts, doctrines, and religious practices. Theological inquiry can contribute to a deeper understanding of the

core beliefs and principles that underlie various religious traditions, as well as the ways these beliefs are interpreted and applied in different historical and cultural contexts (Hick, 2004).

In a matter that has been the subject of controversy of science, the words of those who do not know that science are not valid, no matter how extensive and mighty their knowledge in another science. For example, a great engineer does not have the authority to diagnose and treat disease as a medical student. The same applies to spiritual matters. The denial of those who have been distanced from spirituality, who have come to their senses, and narrowed their understanding of spiritual matters cannot be valid because they are too busy with matter and tangible visual things. In general, the 124 thousand prophets, saints, and great scholars who have been engaged for centuries are experts in religious and spiritual matters. One needs to listen to their words on matters of spirituality and faith. Therefore, respect for expertise is critical in seeking the truth and reality. A multidisciplinary approach becomes the essential element of discovering wisdom to fill the gap in different knowledge areas on intertwining issues. As a necessity of modern scientific accumulation of knowledge, it is an indispensable tool in analyzing every discipline, universe, and life during the inevitability of multidisciplinary work and dialogues. No field and academic domain are more valuable than others; they are vital to scientific functioning as part of a whole, filling the in-between gaps and complementing missing pieces of the puzzle.

3. Capital Accumulation and Postmodern Happiness

Even though it is based on different religions or philosophies throughout history, one of the common goals of humankind is to spend and invest in the life of this temporary abode. In this sense, the purpose of every human being is to maximize 'happiness function' or 'capital accumulation.' However, differences in views and faiths about the variables that affect happiness and investments have differentiated the paths to joy while striving for capital accumulation for the transient life.

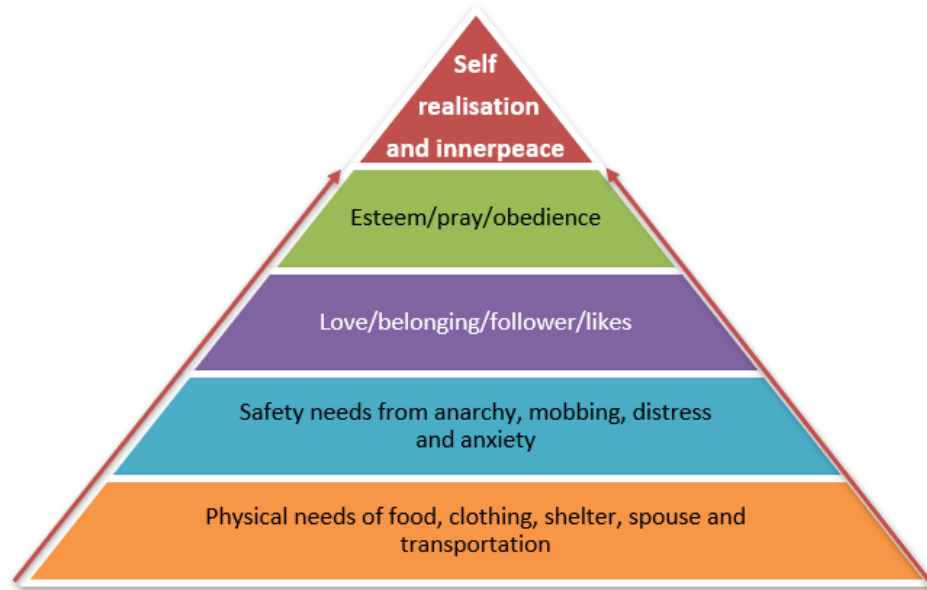
We can make sense of life through our own experiences. We are obliged to think about the nature of the central spine where life flows are determined. It is possible to say that mercy, compassion, and love determine the quality of the relationship between God and the creatures and the correlation between the existences themselves. We can say that the universe is equipped with a feature that facilitates human life and is surrounded by pervasive mercy. That is why the universe makes life easier for a human to maintain his existence. As a responsibility, we need to act following its natural laws (as a form of Divine legislation) without intervening and spoiling the functioning of the universal ecosystem. Capital accumulation is much more critical in approaching nature, animals, and plants for our economic or social needs with tender respecting the ecosystem.

The human being assumed by economics is the rational economic person who only thinks about his interests. What is essential for a person is the benefit from consuming goods and services. The advantage of man, or the pleasure he obtains, is also the key to his happiness. In other words, economics adopts a hedonistic perspective regarding human beings. Although this point of view can be traced back to ancient Greek thought, especially Epicurus, the French Claude Adrien Helvétius (1715-1771) and especially the English Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) was the most prominent advocates of this view during the Enlightenment period. According

to Bentham, "Nature has placed the man under the rule of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is these two masters who determine everything we do, say, and think" (Quoted from Bentham: Hunt, 1992: 520-550). It is clear how disturbing such an approach is in some respects, not only for Bentham's late eighteenth-century England but even today. It adopts equality and freedom as fundamental values (Buğra, 1989: 192). Every individual with the ability to reason can make his own choices and evaluate them. Economic value can be optimized only when a comprehensive and holistic approach is used to address the real needs of ecosystems stakeholders, satisfy customers, and increase market share. Therefore, how to use the resources to produce goods and services in different production areas is a key question for economists. In other words, economics finds the source of happiness in people's satisfaction with their needs or the feeling of pleasure in general.

According to modern economics, it is assumed that the more people consume, the more they will enjoy. So, the most fundamental goal is to reach the pleasure of a rational economic person (homo economicus), who does not think of anything other than his benefits, does not like to work, does not like others and has a selfish perception devoid of spirituality. Another consequence of this view is that creating a consumer society is essential to increasing happiness. However, if we look at pleasure in terms of Maslow's hierarchic logic, its ultimate point would be self-realization and inner peace.

Figure 5. Reasoning of Happiness in Line with Maslow's Pyramid

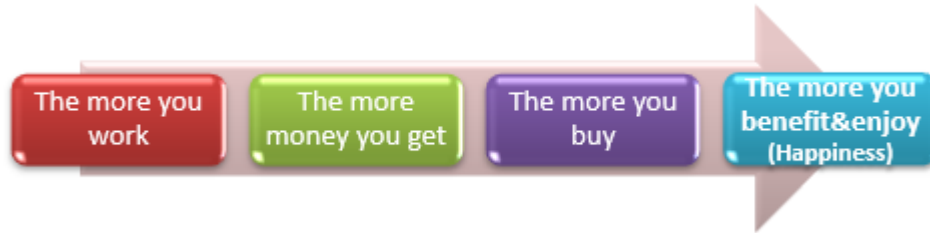


Source: Designed by the author

Although the ways of searching for happiness were different from century to century, from society to society, and even from person to person, the desired result was always the same. Even the most prominent capitalists and tycoons are seeking happiness in capital accumulation and wealth. Some leaders or kings searched for it by occupying large land areas and capturing other nations. The relative highness to others gave them some artificial short-term and transient happiness. In Western societies, happiness has been sought through materialist consumption since the Enlightenment. The happiness formula (utility

maximization) that capitalism offers to humans is simple: the more you work, the more money you get, the more goods and services you can buy, and ultimately the more you can increase the benefits (happiness) and realize self-achievements. Nevertheless, unfortunately, capitalism has brought profits and the market above society and human values and reduced everything to a property level.

Figure 6. Materialistic Reasoning of Economics and Welfare



Source: Designed by the author

Without prudent understanding of life, in a world in which approximately 160.000 people are passing away in each day, materialism will continue to capture people's souls and devoid them of real happiness in this world and hereafter (Efe, 2022: 124-130). The dramatic rise of distress, anxiety, suicides, abuses, and crises in capitalist countries, along with economic prosperity, shows that the capitalist system has been on the brink of a deep crisis in bringing real happiness to humanity. According to the capitalist ideology, individuals with higher purchasing power and more goods and services receive more favor than others. Since the person satisfied with his life is not expected to commit suicide or depression, the social problems in the capitalist societies that gain economic prosperity point to a mistake in the capitalist happiness formula. Many researchers have revealed that increased income and consumption are not absolute joy. Money has a positive effect on happiness until it meets the minimum needs, but it is understood that there is little to no impact beyond. Worse, the studies that adopted materialist values revealed that self-interest seekers were more likely to have higher depression, anxiety, narcissism, and lousy substance addiction, rather than searching for happiness in themselves and nature. Likewise, it was understood that the capitalist system encourages people to the egoistic glory and fame that does not make people peaceful in the long term. As a result, those pursuing the materialist targets appeared to be unhappy.

In developed countries, real income per capita, which shows the consumption power of individuals, has increased several times over the last century. However, paradoxically, it appeared that the improvement in living standards and the increase in consumption did not bring happiness as expected. The same goes for other developed capitalist countries. In other words, the possibility of Americans fulfilling their life responsibilities increased threefold while divorce rates doubled, suicides of young people tripled, and depressions increased tenfold. In literature, this paradoxical development is known as the development paradox or the American paradox. Perhaps the materialist model of happiness is the main flaw of joy because it is based on wealth, body, and sexual pleasures. It neglects or denies fundamental human needs, primarily intellectual and spiritual needs and tastes. Despite the contradictory findings of scientific studies, most humankind thinks that real peace is more of wealth and consumption. While money contributes to peace for a while, it has little effect after meeting

basic needs. Despite its failure to bring happiness, the consumer culture of global capitalism is spreading everywhere, including materialist values and the miserable lifestyle.

4. Happiness Index

The World Happiness Report² website has announced its ranking of the happiest countries in the world in 2021. Criteria such as per capita income, freedom, health, and social assistance opportunities, corruption record, education, and purchasing power are considered in the list. People from 149 countries were interviewed while preparing the United Nations World Happiness Report, which evaluated the gross domestic product, social support, average healthy life expectancy, citizens' freedom. This is to assess their own lives, generosity, and the level of corruption in the country.

Finland, Denmark, and Switzerland are in the first three places in the World Happiness Report, which the United Nations determine according to its assessment among 149 countries. One of the world's largest economies, the United States (USA) ranked 19th, China 86th, Germany 15th, Japan 58th, and England 19th. In the list of 150 countries, Afghanistan took the last place, followed by Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Botswana, and Lesotho from the African continent, respectively. While Yemen, where the civil war continues, ranks 143rd and Libya 82nd, countries like Syria and North Korea were not considered. While Türkiye ranked 93rd last year, it fell to 104th this year, only three steps ahead of Venezuela, the world's worst economy.

Türkiye lagged behind underdeveloped countries such as Bangladesh, Niger, Turkmenistan, Armenia, and Libya. While the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was evaluated as a country ranking, it ranked 75th. Southern Cyprus was 40th and Greece 69th. While Germany, which was in seventh place last year, fell to 17th place, Croatia, in 79th place in 2020, achieved great success and rose to 23rd place. According to the report, Afghanistan was also the most unhappy country. Nine of the top 10 countries in the report are European countries. The only non-European country in the top 10 list is New Zealand. Since the first World Happiness Report was released in 2012, four countries have made it to the top: Denmark in 2012, 2013, 2016, Switzerland in 2015, Norway in 2017, and Finland in 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021.

According to Gross National Happiness (GNH) index, many elements need to be considered to assess happiness in general. Indeed, as depicted in the figure, it should include more aspects of spirituality than materiality to reflect real happiness. The state of unhappiness in capitalism is not merely the de facto result of objective processes such as exploitations and powerful dominance. Instead, it employs happiness chiefly in its companies to motivate its employees during working hours and in social life as a hedonistic and consumeristic substitute a virtual and temporary happiness marketing method. Happiness was about running away from pain and running for pleasure. People should turn to whatever pleasure they give them of their free will. Capitalism is a system that would make people happy by liberating people in their choices and offering them satisfaction in consumption. How can a human soul be happy if it is faced with death, disappearance and losing all its material possessions/career/dreams at every moment, if it does not have a solid and correct belief for

² For further details of the report see: <https://happiness-report.s3.amazonaws.com/2021/WHR+21.pdf>

the afterlife? How can we explain why suicides occur most in developed countries? How can a truly happy and hopeful person commit suicide?

Figure 7. Recommended Key Elements of GNH Index



Source: Designed by the author

Finland, which has been at the top of the list of the happiest countries in the world for years, is also one of the places where suicide cases are most common. Finland is followed by other Scandinavian countries such as Denmark, Norway and Iceland in the list of the happiest countries, where factors that facilitate human life such as freedom, education, health services, income level are developed. The United States of America (USA), which has the world's largest economy, ranks 19th on the list of happiest countries. Looking at the data, the suicide rate per 100 thousand people in Finland is 11.6, while this figure is around 10.1 in the USA. Scandinavian countries, where the welfare level is good, also draw attention with the high rate of suicide cases. But why do people commit suicide in developed and prosperous countries like Finland or the USA where the citizens are happy? (Congar, 2020)

5. The Relationship Between Capitalism and Happiness from Religious Perspective

It can be said that the source of this design is the thought of Enlightenment in general. The individual who describes himself in a 'community' characterized by the solidarity among the members of the community, the regulation of economic relations according to the needs of the community, and the direct, face-to-face, and concrete nature of human relations will have a sense of trust (Fromm, 1941: 50-75). All these assets are potential tools that we can use to achieve our ends (Taylor, 1985b: 87). In addition, individuals no longer define themselves from the point of view of a particular community but instead feel independent and free, whatever

society expects from them. For example, in this respect, the property belongs not to the individual but to social status. Traditions and customs determine the use of the property and its change of hands (Buğra, 1989: 190). Therefore, relations between persons are also in the form of subordination, not relations between equal parties. Economic activities are also carried out mainly through kinship relations, subordination to a political or religious central authority, or between self-sufficient, closed groups. Therefore, the fundamental values adopted in these relations are not interest or profit motive (or pleasure), but matters such as in-group loyalty, solidarity, and honor based on status, tradition, tradition, or religion. The family is seen as a necessary institution for reproducing the community rather than a pleasure source. A sense of love or aspirations for private life would potentially jeopardize this reproduction by eliminating feelings of solidarity within the community. Such demands would first mean that the individual differentiates himself, pursuing his desires independently of the other members of the community. In such societies, individuals could not be allowed to assert themselves. It is no wonder then that capitalism, or a 'community' type of social organization, seems to increase people's happiness. In such social organizations, the sense of individuality and individual freedom demands come to the fore. In transitioning from a community-type social organization to a community-type organization, it is necessary to create a free, self-judged individual and remove the community's constraints that prevent this individual from exercising his natural rights.

Besides, when looking at the history of the market system, another point that draws attention is that people's living standards, in general, are getting higher and bigger. What enables this is that the new organizational forms created by capitalism and new technologies gradually facilitate human life and increase the average life expectancy. In other words, the contemporary world is now characterized by the 'consumption society.' If consumption is the source of pleasure and joy, as economics predicts, it is possible to say that the market economy creates opportunities that will gradually increase this pleasure. Therefore, in any case, it is possible to say that the market economy is one of the primary sources of joy in terms of allowing people to make free choices and offering opportunities to increase their pleasure. This result, at least, is one that contemporary economic theory is very eager to deduce.

When we look around, can we say that such new possibilities and different consumption patterns are the only or the essential way to increase our happiness? Don't we become increasingly alienated from the world, our environment, and nature, and we consider our environment only as a tool for ourselves, detaching us from nature and dehumanizing us? As one of the materialist philosophers Karl Marx noticed at the very beginning, we now think so one-sidedly that "an object exists only as capital for us, or when we directly possess it, eat, drink, wear, live in it, etc. In short, we think it is ours when we use it" (Marx, 1976: 144). More importantly, why do we often have to experience the powerlessness or insecurity we feel in our individual and social lives? (Fromm, 1941: 30-75). That is, are we no longer turning into "one-dimensional people"? (Marcuse, 1964: 233-260). Perhaps the answer to these questions lies in the fact that the market creates the conditions that will eliminate these opportunities it provides for our personal development. Maybe we should not throw away the society we live in, which is crucial in developing our personality, self, and even our identity, so quickly, just for our joy, pleasure, and happiness. Maybe we should see that the only source of pleasure is

not the satisfaction provided by continuous consumption. Perhaps the primary way to reach happiness is not pleasurable from consumption or wealth accumulation. Perhaps we should learn that we are not all actually 'political animals' simultaneously. Therefore, the problem may be that the human design behind the practical approach adopted by economics is insufficient to reveal the 'human condition'. According to this alternative perspective, people, beyond thinking only of their immediate gratification, as 'political animals,' also think of the Aristotelian 'good life' necessities. The requirements of this 'good life' are determined by individuals and the continuous dialogue the individual enters with the society he lives in. A good life, which means that people realize their potential, refers to the development of different cognitive, emotional, and practical abilities in a social environment, as well as meeting different material and metaphysical human needs (Buğra and Irzık, 1999: 188).

In the framework of Aristotelian ethics, since the individual is essentially a social being, A good life defined as referring to 'self-sufficiency' can only be realized in society (Taylor, 1985b: 56). This is because even the individual himself is a 'social product,' defining his identity due to the dialogue he engages with other people in the society (Taylor, 1991: 80). This is precisely the point that the atomist approach, which focuses only on the individual, misses the fact that the individual can only be realized through language, religion and culture preserved and sustained. A community is not simply a collection of individuals, nor is the relationship between the individual and society a simple causal interaction. A man alone is an impossibility, not de facto but de jure (Taylor, 1985a: 97). In other words, people can be 'deeper' than utilitarianism thinks. If we believe a person is insensitive, unaware, or not interested in quality-of-life issues that are fundamental to us, we see that person as 'empty.' This person lives only on the surface. While trying to fulfill their wishes, they fail to see their relevance to the 'deeper' problems, such as the articulation and maintenance of lifestyles.

Harvard University School of Medicine, Dr. Herbert Benson's extensive research on the relationship between religious belief and physical health has also yielded remarkable results. Although Benson was a non-believer, he concluded that belief and worship in God had a positive effect on human health that could not be seen in anything else. Benson further explains that he concluded that "no other belief gives peace of mind like belief in God" (Gross, 1993: 140-180). The conclusion reached by Benson, a secular researcher, is, in his own words, that the human body and mind are "tuned to believe in God" (Rod et al., 1996: 166; Charles et al., 1991: 422). No matter how hard they try, unbelieving people can never experience true happiness because they cannot have the joy of faith. Even if they really want to, they can't manage to act with sincere and sincere joy. Because it is Allah who makes the human soul feel the feeling of happiness, and He gives this feeling only to His servants who believe. The fact that they cannot see their insides prevents them from believing in Allah. They lose the happiness they gain by believing in Allah sincerely because of their foolishness and lead an unhappy life. As for believers, Allah rewards them for taking him as a friend and guardian with spiritual power as a blessing for the ones seeking His pleasure. This power leads them to work to gain Allah's approval more and to 'seek a means to get closer to Allah'. It also makes it easier for them to be patient in times of difficulty. Allah has 'fixed patience and determination' in their hearts. Their efforts help them to get closer to the moral values of the

people of Paradise with each passing day. The happiness of doing good deeds creates a desire to do good deeds all the time. No matter how much effort they show, they do not feel tired because of it. Allah will not limit what He will give in Paradise, His blessings are endless. Believers also do not put any limits on their good deeds, they seek the most of Allah's approval.

In Risale-i Nur Collection, the basis and source of happiness and bliss are generally shown as faith and worship. Happiness literally means being happy and contented. Happiness is divided into two parts, material and spiritual. Material happiness means meeting one's bodily needs. The most basic material needs are things like food, drink, sleep, shelter, and marriage. When a man provides them, he attains bodily bliss. The bodily happiness of all organs and emotions in the human body is different. The happiness of the eye is seeing, the happiness of the ear is hearing, the happiness of the nose is smelling and so on. Material happiness is the satisfaction of these organs in the best way. If a person cannot feed himself, he cannot be happy financially if he does not have a house to shelter or a wife to continue his generation. Since materialist philosophy only takes this point into consideration, it describes happiness only in material terms. Man, also has spiritual organs and emotions, including mind, heart, conscience, soul, imagination, and secrets. The bliss of these feelings is not like the satisfaction of material feelings or bodily needs. For example, the heart is satisfied only with God, and it can attain happiness with him. Since the soul is a luminous being, it can only be satisfied with luminous and sublime truths. Since the conscience is a map of the otherworldly realms, the human being is happy to accept the existence of those realms. Many such spiritual tricks and feelings can only be satisfied and happy with faith and ingenuity. As the materialist philosophy claims, happiness does not only come from the satisfaction of material desires. Among the philosophical schools, there are also perverse sects that see happiness only in hedonism and lead people to vile desires. At the beginning of these is hedonism (pleasuristic hedonism) established by Epicurus. In other words, according to their thesis, real happiness consists of bodily pleasures. He says that people should abandon moral values and pursue bodily pleasures like animals.

However, the fact that the world is mortal, and the executioner of death is constantly following us shows how untrue and rotten this philosophy of material hedonism is.

You say to the devil and that man who encourages you to mischief and debauchery: If there is a solution to kill death and remove it from the world, and to remove impotence and poverty from human beings, tell us, let's listen. Otherwise, shut up!..(Nursi, 1960: 130). O man who is addicted to pleasure and taste! At the age of seventy-five, I knew very well through thousands of experiences, proofs and events that true pleasure, painless pleasure, sorrowless joy and happiness in life are only in faith and within the framework of the truths of faith. Otherwise, there is a lot of pain in a worldly taste. It would eat a grape, it would miss the taste of life, as if it were ten slaps (Nursi, 1960: 283). So belief carries a spiritual seed of Paradise. Unbelief hides a spiritual seed of Hell oleander. So, peace and security are only in Islam and belief (Nursi, 1960: 356). "In short, even the happiness of the world, like the hereafter, is in worship and is a soldier for Allah. Therefore, we always say 'Alhamdu lillahi ale't-tâati ve't-tawfik.' We should say and be grateful that we are Muslims (Nursi, 1960: 344).

If the human spirit in the world is incomprehensible, and if the human being does not know the nature and values of religion, and if the religion is not true, the world will be a

prison. In this way, if you want to understand that the irreligious person is the most miserable creature, and that he is “O Allah and La ilaha illallah” who unlocks the talisman of this world and saves the human spirit from oppression, you must listen to the lesson of the Qur'an (Nursi, 1960: 320).

CONCLUSION

We have found that there is a need for using a multidisciplinary approach to happiness and economic satisfaction at the conjecture of economics, psychology and religion. In this study we have tried to develop key questions related to the multidisciplinary keywords:

- What is a human being?
- From where does the human come?
- To where is it going?
- Is the ultimate aim of humankind continuous material progress?
- Does the accumulation of knowledge by new paradigms indicate the perfection of human beings in the process of development?
- Is there a peak of perfection of humanity that is the end of history where there will be no need for new paradigms anymore?
- Is there any other reason for modern capitalist societies other than capital accumulation?
- Why are most attempts of suicide higher in developed countries rather than undeveloped ones?
- How can real happiness and joy be achieved in this mortal and transient life span?
- Is there a talisman that can provide a glorious eternity out of this tiny capital of life?
- Is it possible for humankind to achieve its own resources' economy, effectiveness, and efficiency in its long journey?
- How likely is it to think of 'leisure' as a space of freedom in which human existence and human potential can be developed without reorganizing the business and socio-psychological processes with the axis of developing human possibilities?
- How will rebellion, conflict, emptiness, all kinds of heresy, rape, suicide, insecurity, anarchy, chaos, depression, and all sorts of drugs be given up?
- Isn't it evident that such a life would be the source of mass anxiety and disorder?
- How far will postmodernity continue to rationalize this world with the prosperity and happiness it provides to one-sixth of seven billion people?
- How will humanity try to make such a world more exciting?

These are the most critical questions that need to be contemplated to find the real source of bliss and joy without wasting lifetime. The Qur'an describes the human as the best creature, and the ways of attaining this honor are inscribed in revelation one by one. In the Qur'an, man has value simply because he was created in the best way. This is a theoretical

value step covering the entire human species without exception. The second value given to the human species by the Qur'an and the Islamic thought inspired by whether he recognizes the Creator or not. If a person knows his Creator and believes in his existence and unity, he becomes the addressee of Allah in practice, and a second value, namely life, is attributed to him. In this system, people determine their worth with their consciousness by choosing faith and denial. The third level of value in Islamic thought is an unconditional value step that he will achieve through his religious-moral actions. When a person act following the orders and prohibitions of Allah, he becomes valuable. Otherwise, he loses value. At this point, man is in a dynamic state, and everything is left to his hands, and whatever happens to him will be what these hands have earned. At this point, a person is either grateful or ungrateful, and he will reveal his worth by choosing one. Islam's maximum value is beyond world systems such as capitalism and socialism or intellectual oppositions such as idealism and materialism. Therefore, his positioning of humans never entirely coincides with these systems. Because in this system, the human being is handled sensibly, neither is he exalted nor is he humiliated and humiliated. This system inspired man's faith, taqwa and devotion and supported him with revelation. Man will get his real value from his belief and religious-moral actions, and they will find their reward both in the world and in the Hereafter, the natural home of evaluation.

This formula has features that protect people from fatigue and complacency, instill a fresh and vigorous spirit, and keep the enthusiasm for work alive. Most importantly, there is a philosophy of life in this formula. According to this philosophy, the main thing in life is to work. Man exists to work and strive in this world. On the other hand, today's civilization sets an opposite goal to man and makes him believe that he came to this world for pleasure. His formula is 'Run to another before one fun ends.' However, it is clear where humanity has come from with this understanding:

- Consumption has become a lifestyle.
- Attention is focused on consuming, not working for good.
- Selfish feelings have become dominant.
- People become indifferent to each other.

The reality shows that we can make our days productive without consuming our energy if we schedule different tasks appropriately. For example, after a job that requires intense mental effort, when we engage in another activity that requires physical strength, this creates a resting effect. In the meantime, there is time to relax and have fun—but as much as necessary! It should not be forgotten that rest and entertainment are for work. Otherwise, work should not be a means of entertainment and enjoyment. While the Qur'an gives a formula that will keep our enthusiasm alive and protect us from complacency by saying, "When you are discharged from one job, it guides us to a lifestyle that will give meaning to our lives." The formula contained in this verse is a formula that will be applied to all areas of life.

Man is a being made up of the union of body and soul. Just as our body needs food and drink, our soul also needs pertinent food. The essential food for the soul is firm belief. A person who believes and trusts in Allah gets his spiritual nourishment and gains excellent strength.

Because man always needs the help, bounty and grace of an omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent Allah. Thinking and connecting to that supreme being that we need is a source of peace and security. Almighty Allah says: "They are those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction and peace by always remembering and reciting Allah. For you to know, hearts find contentment and peace only by remembering and reciting Allah" (Qoran, Surah Ra'd, 28). In life, a person encounters various difficulties. At such times, believers whose hearts are devoted to Allah do not fall into despair. They take refuge in Him, solely rely on Him and patiently wait for the result. Connecting to such a strong friendship with love and respect gives a person great happiness.

People who lack faith, on the other hand, fall into despair. They squirm in unease. While having no real support from someone that can repeal all hurdles, defy enemies and cure wounds, with the thought of getting rid of distress, they seek peace by drinking alcohol and using drugs, and they are dragged into more significant disasters. Thus, they lose their happiness both in this world and the Hereafter. In short, the request for joy is not limited to any society or culture. Although global capitalism has been successful in some areas that affect peace, such as health, wealth, quality of life, it has failed in family, trust, spirituality, and serenity. Instead of living a sustainable, peaceful life, it has presented a miserable lifestyle based on excessive consumption and modern savagery. It is recommended by revelation that we purify our material and spiritual existence and act with a sense of responsibility by spending our material resources in the way of Allah and sharing them with those in need to have eternal properties that never end. For most of us, our possessions are indispensable and inalienable. So much so that we are attached to the property with passion. First, we struggle to have and hold it, and then we fear, worry, and worry not to be deprived of it. However, what will make the property value is that it is shared with the needy in the most beautiful and measured way. Therefore, we can deduct some wisdom from the theoretical, religious, and conceptual understanding assessments given above:

- **Accumulating wealth and property are key trials and not a source of real happiness:** A person is mistaken by thinking that he is the actual owner of his property. However, property and wealth are a test given to man as a trust. Allah reminds us that we are not the property owner with donations, zakat, and charity, but only trustees. A person who does not own his property does not own himself. A person who does not hold himself should act according to his owner, not his ego. In this way, the message is given to people: spend freely and expect your reward only from the owner. If we want to believe and fulfill the requirements of our faith indeed, we must finish what we have without hesitation.
- **Sharing is the best relief for real happiness:** Sharing and helping each other activates and reveals the good feelings in our core. However, on the other hand, stinginess and insatiability darken the good side of us and brighten the evil. Therefore, the stingy one essentially is harming with himself (Qoran, Surah Muhammad, 38). Again, those who do good by spending will also do good to their selves: "So be mindful of your duty to Allah as much as you can, listen and obey. Donate to be good for your soul. Whoever is protected from the selfish passions of his soul. Those are the ones who will be successful" (Qoran, Surah Tegabun, 16). God does not want us to spend what belongs to us, but what He has given us as a trust. No one is the actual owner of the property, nor is he an heir:

"What prevents you from spending in the way of Allah? The inheritance of the heavens and the earth already belongs to Allah" (Qoran, Surah Hadid, 10).

- **God increases what is given:** Giving Allah's approval and pleasure willingly provides a person with genuine relief and pure joy. As a result, Allah increases the wealth spent following His consent, both in this world and in the Hereafter: Allah multiplies whomever He wills, and Allah is all-encompassing, all-knowing" (Qoran, Surat al-Baqara, 261). There is no need to be stingy for fear of loss. Because God will replace every spending sincerely made for His pleasure: "Say: Surely, my Lord extends the provision to whom He wills of His servants and narrows it down for him. Whatever you spend, it (Allah) will replace it; he is the best of those who provide sustenance" (Qoran, Surah Saba, 39). The fact that the sustenance offered to people is too little or too much is a test. The scarcity and abundance of sustenance test people: "He has made you heirs on earth (to those who came before you) and has elevated some of you in degrees relative to others to test you with what He has given you. Surely, your Lord is swift to conclude, and surely, He is Forgiving, Merciful" (Qoran, Surah Anam, 165). The abundance and scarcity of the blessings given is a test by Allah, and we must learn the lesson to be learned from this test.
- **Real value from god:** We need to spend and make good deeds only for the sake of Allah's approval, expect only Allah's reward, and stay away from putting our spending on people's heads: "Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah and then do not reproach or harm after what they have spent, their reward is with their Lord, they will have no fear, and they will not grieve" (Qoran, Surat al-Baqara, 262). If we want to win Allah's approval, we should also avoid spending our wealth to show off and harm people. Again, in the verses, it is clearly stated that to achieve true salvation, we should pay not from the things we do not condescend to but from the things we love and carefully reserve for ourselves.
- **Give what you love not your trash:** Even though we try to deceive ourselves, Allah knows best what we spend, and for what purpose and for what purpose we give in abundance and scarcity:

You will never attain real goodness until you spend from what you love. Whatever you spend, surely Allah knows it (Qoran, Surah Ali Imran, 92). O you who believe, spend of the good ones of what you have earned and what we have produced for you from the earth. Don't try to spend and give things that you can't take for yourself without closing your eyes and know that Allah requires nothing worthy of praise (Qoran, Surat al-Baqara, 267).

Suggestions for Future Research: There is a very fertile land on this area to make further research:

1. Future research could explore how different disciplines (e.g., economics, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and religious studies) can work together to provide a comprehensive understanding of happiness in the context of capitalism and postmodern society.
2. Researchers could conduct empirical studies to analyze the effects of materialism on individual happiness and overall life satisfaction, considering both secular and religious perspectives.

3. Investigate how religious beliefs, practices, and rituals contribute to individuals' happiness and well-being in a postmodern society where traditional religious institutions may be losing influence.
4. Future research could focus on understanding the role of giving and helping others in enhancing personal well-being and happiness, as well as the potential psychological and social benefits of such actions.
5. Researchers could explore how alternative economic models, such as those based on sustainability, social justice, or cooperative principles, might contribute to greater happiness and life satisfaction among individuals and societies.
6. Future research could examine how various cultural values and norms, such as individualism versus collectivism or materialism versus spirituality, shape people's experiences of happiness and well-being.
7. Researchers could develop and test interventions that aim to enhance individuals' happiness and well-being, particularly those that integrate multidisciplinary perspectives and address both material and spiritual aspects of life.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

I confirm that this work is original and has not been published elsewhere nor is it currently under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

This article was prepared by a single author.

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