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RELIGIOSITY AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN THE ARAB CONTEXT

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Abstract

This is a quick review of Ahmed Abdel-Khalek's seminal collection of studies on religiosity and psychology, entitled *Religiosity and Subjective Well-being in the Arab Context*, published in 2018 by Cambridge Scholars Publishing, UK. The review gives a quick introduction to the topic and proceeds to describe the contents of the work.

Keywords

Religiosity, subjective well-being, personality, Muslims, Arab World

THE REVIEW

There is no doubt that religiosity strongly correlates with subjective well-being. It is a powerful driving force to maintain – indeed to improve – our physical and mental health, well-being, happiness, satisfaction with life and longevity. As such, religiosity is a major research topic in the field of psychology, and although there has been a long time when focus was on other issues, psychologists brought back religiosity as of the mid-1950s. Since then, the field has witnessed an upsurge in empirical studies on religion and its intersection with psychological variables, in an attempt to better understand the central role of religion in the psychological, social and cultural aspects of human life.

Unfortunately, the majority of these endeavors have been concentrated in Western, Christian, industrialized countries. Empirical studies conducted by Western psychologists have enriched the literature, leaving a major lacuna when it comes to studying other religions, cultures and places in the world. Addressing this gap, Prof. Ahmed Abdel-Khalek's book entitled *Religiosity and Subjective Well-being in the Arab Context* comes as a major contribution. Published in 2018 by Cambridge Scholars Publishing, the book focuses on religiosity and its psychological manifestations among Arab Muslims in the Middle East.

The book is a fine collection of 31 chapters, 29 of which are empirical studies conducted in the period from 2006 to 2018, and published in various esteemed academic journals. The chapters are sorted into six thematic sections: Islam and Mental Health, Psychometric Measures; Religiosity, Health, and Happiness; Religiosity, Quality of Life, and Subjective Well-Being; Religiosity and Personality; Religiosity, Subjective Well-Being, and Psychopathology.

The studies cover a large diversity of samples. Age-wise, the samples range from children, to adolescents, to young and middle-aged adults, as well as the elderly. Professionally, the samples included governmental employees and retired workers. The nationalities covered in the studies include Algeria, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Another merit of these studies is the large sample sizes, which at times included as many as 7211 participants.

The book is an essential addition to any library, and represents a core reference to any scholar working on religiosity in a psychological context.