

COMPARISON OF THE RATIONAL CONCEPTS OF THE PHILOSOPHER IBN BAJJAH AND THE PHILOSOPHER ARISTOTLE

Angela Angela
Alma Ata University Yogyakarta
Email: 222100271@almaata.ac.id

Copyright © 2025 The Author



This is an open access article

Under the Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike 4.0 International License

DOI: [10.53866/ajirss.v4i2.1027](https://doi.org/10.53866/ajirss.v4i2.1027)

ABSTRACT

This article is a comparative study that seeks to identify the differences, similarities and implications between Aristotle and Ibn Bajjah's concept of the perfect human being. The main source used as a reference in the study is the book *Tadbir Al-Mutawahhid* which is the work of Ibn Bajjah *Nichomachean Ethic* which is the work of Aristotle. Meanwhile, secondary sources are taken from various sources such as books, magazines and also articles that are in accordance with this research. Primary and secondary data are studied through historical and philosophical analysis (understanding and interpretation methods). The results of this study show that the concept of happiness according to Aristotle, happiness is the act of coexistence in harmony between the soul and the perfect virtue, happiness is experienced by a person when receiving pleasure (achievement), which is followed by the process of self-development in wanting and becoming something. while Ibn Bajjah said that happiness is the peak or end of all human goodness, so that the highest good can be achieved if a person can meet his physical and spiritual needs. And there is also the similarity of Aristotle and Ibn Bajjah's opinion about man, both agree that the goal of happiness is the first step towards happiness by doing good deeds with the help of reason, and the main idea is that Aristotle and Ibn Bajjah discuss metaphysics. The difference between Ibn Bajjah and Aristotle is that Aristotle includes the path to happiness, namely human goals, seeking as many blessings as possible, wisdom and rationality, while the path to happiness of Ibn Bajjah includes self-knowledge, the knowledge of Allah, the knowledge of the hereafter. and appreciation for the world. The implication of this research is that compared to today's life, we focus too much on worldly interests and end up forgetting about the problems of the hereafter and facing the challenges of increasingly modern technology.

Keywords: *Happiness, Aristotle, Ibn Bajjah*

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini merupakan studi komparatif yang berupaya mengidentifikasi perbedaan, persamaan dan implikasi antara konsep Aristoteles dan Ibnu Bajjah tentang manusia sempurna. Sumber utama yang dijadikan rujukan dalam penelitian adalah kitab *Tadbir Al-Mutawahhid* yang merupakan karya Ibnu Bajjah *Nichomachean Ethic* yang merupakan karya Aristoteles. Sedangkan sumber sekunder diambil dari berbagai sumber seperti buku, majalah dan juga artikel yang sesuai dengan penelitian ini. Data primer dan sekunder dikaji melalui analisis historis dan filosofis (metode pemahaman dan interpretasi). Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan Konsep kebahagiaan menurut Aristoteles, kebahagiaan adalah tindakan hidup berdampingan secara harmonis antara jiwa dan kebajikan yang sempurna, kebahagiaan dialami seseorang ketika menerima kesenangan (prestasi), yang dilanjutkan dengan proses pengembangan diri dalam menginginkan dan menjadi sesuatu. dapat mencapainya, sedangkan Ibnu Bajjah mengatakan bahwa kebahagiaan adalah puncak atau akhir dari segala kebaikan manusia, sehingga kebaikan yang tertinggi dapat tercapai apabila seseorang dapat tercukupi kebutuhan jasmani dan rohaninya. Dan terdapat pula persamaan pendapat Aristoteles dan Ibnu Bajjah tentang manusia, keduanya sepakat bahwa tujuan kebahagiaan adalah langkah awal menuju kebahagiaan dengan melakukan perbuatan baik dengan bantuan akal, dan gagasan pokoknya adalah Aristoteles dan Ibnu Bajjah membahas metafisika. Perbedaan Ibnu Bajjah dan Aristoteles adalah Aristoteles mencakup jalan menuju kebahagiaan yaitu tujuan manusia, mencari berkah yang sebanyak-banyaknya, hikmah dan rasionalitas, sedangkan jalan menuju kebahagiaan Ibnu Bajjah meliputi pengetahuan diri, ilmu Allah, ilmu akhirat. dan apresiasi terhadap dunia. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah dibandingkan dengan kehidupan sekarang, kita terlalu fokus pada kepentingan duniawi dan akhirnya melupakan permasalahan akhirat serta menghadapi tantangan teknologi yang semakin moderen.

Kata Kunci: *Kebahagiaan, Aristoteles, Ibnu Bajjah*

1. Introduction

Happiness is a relative thing depending on a person's purpose in life. If the goal in his life is to accumulate wealth to gain power and other pleasures in the life of the world, then that is an indicator of his happiness. But if the goal in this life is to hold fast to the ropes of faith, piety and righteous deeds in order to get happiness in the hereafter, then it is the source of happiness.

However, happiness is still not seen in real terms, there is no definite agreement or understanding of what and how happiness really is? On the one hand, there are some people who think that the happiness desired by humans is happiness related to material things: For example, we will be happy if we earn a lot of money, have a luxurious house, a position and a place of respect in the eyes of many people. On the other hand, there are some people who think that the happiness desired by humans is related to psychological (spiritual) matters, for example, it can be said to be happy if our soul feels peaceful, peaceful, and calm. This peace of soul will be realized as Plato said if man is willing to love the good, and this is true happiness not in outward happiness because outward happiness is mortal (not eternal), while true happiness is eternal happiness.

In general, happiness is the fulfillment of desires, which brings satisfaction and pleasure, and makes us feel happy and calm. A happy life always brings happiness, but the happiness you feel doesn't always make you happy. Joy is not happiness. But still unhappy. And a happy person does not mean that he does not experience suffering or difficulty. Suffering comes and goes, but the situation remains the same.

Then Ibn Bajjah emerged as a pioneer philosopher from western Andalusia who talked about happiness, this is as found in his book entitled *Tadbir Al-Mutawahhid*, which tries to formulate the essence of happiness, that *mutawahhid* is the way to achieve happiness in the sense that the imperfection of the state is due to the actions of the behaviors of its citizens that are not based on thought and reasoning.

According to Ibn Bajjah, who has a different perspective, happiness is purely spiritual when it is connected with the active mind and acquired intellect. By attaching the nature of divine spirituality to the acquired mind, happiness is purely spiritual. Based on the above research, the researcher is interested in writing and giving an in-depth study with the title "**Comparative Study of the Concept of Happiness According to Aristotle with Ibn Bajjah**".

2. Method

This research is a qualitative research with a library study method. This research focuses on a general context that is inclined, by examining the Comparative Study of the Concept of Happiness according to Aristotle and Ibn Bajjah thus, in the present century humans need a happiness based on good things in the form of love, something that makes happiness with God Almighty inseparable from the so-called challenges and guidance.

With integrity, researchers study and analyze a concept, method, and philosophy. The research focuses on writing and exploring the meaning of human beings in achieving happiness.

3. Results and Discussion

a. Theoretical Studies

According to the term, happiness is a concept that describes the condition of an individual when directing his feelings to positive things and utilizing his positive character to interpret the events he lives in his daily life. (PERWATI, 2023)

According to Ibn Bajjah, the concept of happiness is an ethical and eschatological issue, his philosophical thought shows *ittishal* (connection) with *the active intellect*, as a condition of human intellectual and spiritual achievement where his thought has merged with the omniscient, happiness according to the philosophers is the ultimate hope of attainment with *the Active Mind*, as Ibn Bajjah believed that goodness is happiness itself, meaning the universal meaning obtained in the condition of connection with *the Active Mind* and the *Mustafad Mind*, by embedding the spiritual nature of divinity in the *Mind of Mustafad*, indirectly happiness is pure spiritual.

Meanwhile, according to Aristotle, political and philosophical activities are activities that can make people happy, because philosophy is the activity of people with *theoria*, for the Greeks *theoria* is to look at, contemplate eternal reality, unchanging reality, divine reality. With *theoria*, man acquires *sophia*, wisdom, so that the *theoriate* man loves wisdom/philei. He became a *philo-sophos*, that is, a lover of wisdom, in other words, philosophy, which is to look fully at things that are eternal divine. And being a characteristic of humans, Man according to Aristotle is a *zoon logon echon* or a creature that has a spirit. Since humans are different from animals, the difference lies in *the logos/intellect*, and is the divine element that exists in humans (Ferdianwan, 2021).

b. Biography of Ibn Bajjah (d. 535 AH / 1138 AD)

i. Biography of Ibn Bajjah

Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn Bajjah was born in Sarangossa at the end of the fifth century Hijrah, then died in Morocco in 533 AH / 1138 A.D. Although it is not known to him clearly when he was a child and as a teenager, experts suspect that he succeeded in maturing in his *dirin* through his knowledge in the city where he was born. Ibn Bajjah did not always pursue philosophy and science, but participated in politics, especially when he was appointed as vizier during the Saragossa from the control of Abu Bakr as-sahrawi to the rule of Daulah Murabithun. When the city was captured by King Alfonso and Aragon in 512 AH/1118 AD, Ibn Bajjah moved to Seville and became a physician there. Through Seville, he left for Granada and then Morocco. Because he was accused of being a Kafir accused of being a scholar, he was imprisoned in Syathibah. Later after his release, he reconnected with his supreme dominion of the Murabithun Dynasty, in Fez, later becoming the Vizier. After 20 years in office, he died buried in Fez with his atmosphere chaotic at the time.

Because of his involvement in politics, Ibn Bajjah was not as productive as other philosophers. Some of his works are related to astronomy, ethics, psychiatry, logic, medicine and others. His works include *Risalah al-Wada'* which contains a description of the initial movement and the true purpose through the embodiment of nature as well as humans, as well as Governance and Mutawahhid through the order of mutawahid (Unique Person). (Rinjani1, 2021)

ii. The Work of Ibn Bajjah

During his life, Ibn Bajjah studied natural sciences, mathematics, astronomy and music. He wrote many descriptions and explanations of Aristotle's philosophy, thus opening the door for Ibn Rushd. From Ibn Bajjah's books, Ibn Rushd took a lot of the essence of his thought and even to certain limits he was influenced by it. Ibn Thufail praised Ibn Bajjah with the statement "Among the philosophers of the last days, Ibn Bajjah was the most intelligent in his mind, his most correct in his views, the most correct in his opinions." However, he further said, "He was involved in worldly matters. Until he died, all his knowledge and his wisdom (philosophy) had not had time to be published. Most of the books he wrote were incomplete and some parts were eventually lost and damaged, such as his books *Fi an-Nafsi* (About the soul) and *Tadbirul Mutawahhid*. Ibn Thufail's statement is true, Ibn Bajjah did not have time to write a book on philosophy. Unlike Ibn Sina, although he was busy working as a vizier, he was able to complete his two greatest books, namely *ash-Shifa* and *al-Qanun*. Ibn Bajjah was still fortunate because his books *Tadbirul Mutawahhid*, *Fi an-Nafsi* and *Risalatul-Ittishal* had been completed

Printed. His other treatises are still in the form of handwriting and have not been published.

To find out information about Ibn Bajjah's work, the author describes two popular works of Ibn Bajjah, namely *Tadbirul Mutawahhid* and *Risalatul-Ittishal* which the author extracted from the writings of Ahmad Fuad al-Ahwani. First, *Tadbirul Mutawahhid* is a book on morals and politics compiled according to the book *al-Madinatul-Fadhilah* by alFarabi. The conclusion of Ibn Bajjah's opinion can be seen from the title of the book itself. What is meant by mutawahhid is a human being who lives alone, lives in an ivory tower, pondering various theoretical sciences. In this way he can relate to *al-'Aqlul-Fa'al* (Full Force Mind). It is true that human nature as a civilized creature is by nature. However, Ibn Bajjah argues that a life of isolation is inherently better. As he said: "For this reason, a person who lives alone, in some aspect of his life should stay away from others as much as possible, not have contact with others except in urgent circumstances or simply according to necessity, or he goes to migrate to a place where there is a lot of knowledge if there is any. Such an attitude is not contrary to what is called the science of civilization, nor is it contrary to what is evident in the natural sciences. It is clear that man is by nature.

Second, in *Risalatul-Ittishal* Ibn Bajjah divides people into three groups, namely: the laymen (*al-jumhur*), the *an-nudzdar* (the *khawas* or the scholars) and the happy people. The layman can reach a sensible picture through his vision of the real world, or from his dependence on the natural world. The *khawas* are related to reasonable questions first, and then they are related to the real world. As for the happy people, there are very few in number, those who are directly related to everything that makes sense. They are the ones who can see everything with their souls. (Zaini, 2015)

c. Biography of Aristotle

i. Biography of Aristotle

Aristotle was a philosopher who was very influential in the thought of Ancient Greek Philosophy.

He was born in the city of Stageira, in the region of Chalcidice, Thracia, central Macedonia in 384 BC. His father was a personal physician Amyntas II of Macedonia in the city of Pella.

When Aristotle was 15 years old, his father died and he was taken care of by his uncle. When Aristotle was 17, he was sent to Athens to study at Plato's academia and at the same time became a student of Plato. He spent 20 years there until Plato

die. After Plato's death, the academia was replaced by his nephew Speusippos. At the same time, Aristotle left Athens with other Platonic disciples such as Xenocrates because they did not agree with Speusippus's views on philosophy and mathematics. After his departure from Athens, Aristotle visited Assos on the coast of Asia Minor where Hermeias was at that time the ruler. Hermeias himself is one of the students of academia. Hermeias invited Aristotle there and welcomed them gladly. As a tribute to Aristotle, she later married Aristotle to one of her nieces named Pythias. Shortly after, Pythias died and he remarried Herpyllis and was blessed with a son named Nikomakhos.

In 345 BC, Hermeias was captured and killed by the Persian army. This situation prompted Aristotle and his companions to flee from Assos. He fled to Mytilene not far from Assos. Here he and his friends conducted research in the fields of biology and zoology whose data was collected in the form of a book entitled *Historia Animalium*.

As we know that Aristotle's father was a personal physician Amyntas and it can also be said that Aristotle himself was also well known in the court. This was seen when Aristotle was invited by King Philippos of Macedonia, son of Amyntas II, to teach the education of his then 13-year-old son Alexander. He taught Alexander about Homer and other Greek poets. By 340, Aristotle's task had been completed at the court of Pella and in the end Alexander at the age of 19 had been able to succeed his father as king of Macedonia. In 335 BC, after Alexander ascended the royal throne, Aristotle returned to Athens and founded an academy named Lykeion (Latin: Lyceum) because it was in an area dedicated to the Apollo god Lykeios. With the great enthusiasm of his students, Aristotle established a library that collected various scripts and maps of the earth and also opened a museum that collected all the objects that attracted attention, especially in the fields of biology and zoology. In addition, Alexander also made a large contribution to the formation of the collection and ordered all hunters, poultry catchers and fishermen in his kingdom to report to Aristotle on all results of scientific interest.

Although the relationship between Aristotle and Alexander seemed to be so harmonious, Aristotle rejected in principle Alexander's dictatorial methods, especially when he sentenced to death Aristotle's cousin who was accused of treason. This situation makes

Aristotle wanted to kill Alexander, but he abandoned his intention because of his close relationship with Alexander and because of the Athenian beliefs. In 323 BC, Alexander died and the anti-Macedonian faction was formed with the intention of liberating Athens from the Macedonian kingdom. Aristotle was accused of being rude to the gods because of the research he had done. Then Aristotle fled to Chalcis and after a year of his escape precisely in 322 BC, he fell ill and died. (Yulanda, 2020)

ii. Karya Aristotle

Aristotle's works are very numerous in a variety of topics, so people are always different in their systematization. There are at least two systematizations of the grouping of Aristotle's works, namely: (a) the grouping of works based on the type of essay, and (b) the grouping of works based on the period of his life.

The classification of works based on the type of essay is as follows:

a. Popular Writings

It is Aristotle's works that are written for the general public outside the school (non-academic), therefore they are popular and light like poems, romances and dialogues. The number of these popular works, according to Diogenes Laertios quoted by Bertens, reached 19 works, but unfortunately all of them are not documented. Among the most important works are Eudemus, The Protepticus, On Philosophy, On the Good, and On the Ideas.

b. Works in the form of Documents and Scientific Notes.

According to the ancient records found, Aristotle had more than two hundred scientific records. Most of these works date from the period when Aristotle taught at Lykeum. Almost all of these works are no longer in existence, among which are the *Historia Animalium*, on the investigation of animals, and the *Athenaion Politeia*, which contains the constitutions of 158 Greek states.

c. Works of Philosophy and Science

These works seem to have been deliberately created by Aristotle for his learned students. Therefore, the language is straightforward, clear and full of (scientific) analysis. Systematically, these works can be classified into 5 (five) groups including: Logic (The Organon), Natural Philosophy (Physical), Psychology (Physical), Biology (Natural History), and Philosophy (Philosophy). (Purwanto, 2019)

d. The similarity of Aristotle's concept of happiness with Ibn Bajjah's

Aristotle's concept of happiness with Ibn Bajjah includes:

1. First, regarding the goal of happiness, this is agreed with Aristotle, that the first step to achieve the goal of happiness is to carry out activities that are in accordance with virtue by using reason. Ibn Bajjah also discussed the goal of happiness, namely by doing activities that have a good influence by using active reason.
2. Second, the meaning of happiness is that Aristotle and Ibn Bajjah both used the same function, namely happiness based on prioritizing good things and based on prioritizing the most important first.
3. Third, the basis of thought where Aristotle and Ibn Bajjah discuss metaphysics in which Ibn Bajjah continues to study Aristotle's philosophy of motion.

f. Difference between the concept of happiness according to Aristotle and Ibn Bajjah

The path to happiness according to Aristotle and Ibn Bajjah includes: The path to happiness from Aristotle is: a) Seeking human goals, b) Seeking blessings as much as possible, c) wisdom and rationality, d) as the main person, e) quality life. Meanwhile, from Ibn Bajjah the path to happiness is: a) knowing oneself, b) knowing Allah through active reason, d) knowing the global, e) knowing the hereafter. (Jannah, 2022)

4. Conclusion

According to Ibn Bajjah happiness is an ethical and eschatological issue, his philosophical thought shows ittishal (connection) with *the active intellect*, as a condition of human intellectual and spiritual achievement where his thinking has been merged with the omniscient, happiness according to the philosophers is the ultimate hope of attainment with *the Active Mind*. Meanwhile, happiness according to Aristotle is that political and philosophical activities are activities that can make people happy, because philosophy is the activity of people with *theoria*, for the Greeks *theoria* is to look at, contemplate eternal reality, unchanging reality, divine reality.

5. Bibliography

- Ferdiawan, F. (2021). The Concept of Happiness in the Perspective of Ibn Bajjah. 18-70.
- Jannah, M. (2022). Comparative Study of the Concept of Happiness. 53-55.
- Kohar, A. (2020). The Politics of Islam: An Analysis of Ibn Bājjah's Thoughts. *Islamic Politics*, 83.
- Perwati, N. (2023). Epicurus' Thought of Happiness. 10.
- Purwanto, D. M. (2019). *Artificial Science*. Yogyakarta: Islamic University of Indonesia.
- Rinjani1, W. (2021). The entry of philosophical thought into the Islamic world. : *Journal of Education and Da'wah*, 341-342.
- Yulanda, A. (2020). Implementation of Aristotle's Virtue Ethics. *Al-Aqidah: Journal of Philosophical Aqidah*, 92-94.
- Zaini, A. (2015). An analysis of the thought of Ibn Bajjah. *Aqidah and Religious Studies*, 61-63.