

Gratitude and Happiness among Indonesian Youngster

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Abstract: Changes in the millennial era should not destabilize the development of Indonesian youngster as citizens. Indonesian youngster is the next generation who will continue the national struggle. Previous research showed that adolescents who have a positive mindset tend to live healthier as adults rather than unhappy one. Moreover, as the next generation of Indonesia, the youngster needs to be resilient in facing globalization challenges. The more resilient youngster the more resilient Indonesia as a nation. This article describes correlation between gratitude and happiness based on empirical data from 329 adolescents in Pekanbaru, Riau Province, Indonesia, who were selected by random sampling technique. The data were collected by two questionnaires which measured gratitude and happiness, then analyzed using Pearson's correlation product moment. This research showed a positive correlation between gratitude and happiness in adolescent. The higher gratitude the higher happiness in adolescent, and vice versa. It can be concluded that gratitude is one of the influencing factor in happiness, the more we feel grateful the happier we will be.

1 INTRODUCTION

According to the data from Central Statistics Bureau of Indonesia (BPS), index of happiness of Indonesian citizen is currently at the level of 68.28%, up from last year's level of 65%, of which increased by 3.17 percent. Head of Indonesia Central Statistics Bureau explained several aspects of life forming the composite level. These aspects are 71.74% free time availability, 74.29% having social relations, 78.89% family harmony, 76.63% security condition, and 74.86% environmental condition.

The interview result with Head of BPS showed that the happiness index in Indonesian from social relation aspect was high. This is to explain why Indonesian citizens tend to have a high social relation, they love to build friendship and secure when leaving the house. This is the basic component that makes Indonesian citizen happy.

Adolescents whose psychological needs are met will gain life satisfaction such as feeling joy, harmony, and productiveness. Conversely, the adolescent will experience disappointment, dissatisfaction, or even frustration, at the end will disrupt their growth and development if their psychological needs are not met (Ali and Asrori, 2012). As the needs of adolescents is increasing, resulting in new tasks that must be completed by adolescents, called developmental task.

Adolescents who have a positive outlook tend to live healthier as adults than an unhappy one. This conclusion is based on a survey in 2001 over 10,000 adolescents in America. Adolescents who feel happy are fewer in having problematic behavior, such as smoking, alcohol, or drug abuse. In general, happiness resulted in adolescents' good physical health.

In majority, adolescents' problems are failure in relationship, impulsivity, and depression (Kim, 2008). Failure in solving their problems will result in low level of happiness. Adolescents with high level of happiness shows good functioning in personal aspects, such as high motivation, positive thinking, prejudice free, and high acceptance of environmental condition (Argyle, 2013).

Happiness is one of the measuring constructs in psychology. The development of positive psychology study in the new millennium era has led to the emergence of various kinds of psychological research publications with the theme of happiness. One of them is the concept of subjective well-being, which is then widely used in studies of individual happiness (Diener and Schwarz, 2008). Some psychology studies tend to equate the term happiness with the term subjective well-being (Uchida et al., 2004). Nevertheless, there are also those who argue that subjective well-being is a broader and more

comprehensive concept that covers happiness itself. (Seligman, 2013), one of the founders of positive psychology, defines happiness as an emotional charge and positive activity.

According to Seligman (2013), happiness is a pleasant life by believing what we choose for the choice itself. Whereas about feeling happy and that the way we choose our way of life is to try to maximize our feelings. Happiness is usually characterized by life satisfaction, high positive affect such as happy, content, and proud. Someone who feels his life is not joyous will experience negative affects such as feeling disappointed, anxious, and frightened. Happiness is not only seen objectively, but happiness can also be seen subjectively because happiness depends on how much a person is able to measure and create happiness by himself.

Suryamentaram (Saksono, 2013) states that the lower the level of desire, the higher the level of happiness. Thus it can be said that looking for a happy life is not the same as trying to meet the needs or abundance of life. Happiness is the extent to which a person evaluates the overall quality of his life positively (Seligman, 2002)(Seligman, 2002).

(Eddington and Shuman, 2014) explain that the frequency of positive events correlate with positive affect. Someone who experiences a pleasant event tends to have a high level of happiness. Furthermore, Eddington & Shuman (2005) state there are several factors that influence happiness, such as gender, age, education, income level, and important events in life.

Gratitude makes a person have more positive thoughts and perspectives on life, the thought that life is a gift (Peterson et al., 2004). Being grateful can make someone get emotional and interpersonal benefits in their lives. If someone considers suffering as something positive, then he will improve his new coping skills consciously or unconsciously, this can lead to the emergence of self-views that will direct one's life in a more positive direction (Krause, 2006). Furthermore, several studies also show that being grateful can prevent depressive and pathological conditions (McCullough et al., 2004; Peterson et al., 2004).

According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2009)(NN, 2009), the word gratitude comes from Latin, namely *gratus* or *gratitudo* which means thanking or praise. In Indonesian, thankful can be equated with grateful. Referring to Emmons and Shelton in (Snyder and Lopez, 2001), gratitude shows the tendency of individuals to see their lives as valuable. Gratitude has several concepts, which are emotions, attitudes, virtue morals, habits, personality traits, and coping actions.

As a psychological state, gratitude is a feeling of awe, thanks and appreciation for life. Gratitude can be expressed to others and also to other beings such as nature or other sources other than humans.

Someone who has gratitude will usually have higher control over their environment, personal development, life goals, and self-acceptance. Grateful people also have positive coping in facing life's difficulties, seeking social support from others, interpreting experiences with different perspectives, having plans to solve problems (McCullough, Tsang, & Emmons, 2004).

Therefore, the authors came to the research question "Is there any correlation between gratitude and happiness among late adolescent?". So, the aim of this research is to get empirical evidence about the correlation between gratitude and happiness among late adolescent.

Based on the description of the theory above, the authors put the hypothesis that there is a relationship between gratitude and happiness in a late adolescent. The higher gratitude, the higher happiness in the late adolescent, on the contrary, the lower gratitude, the lower happiness in the late adolescent.

2 METHOD

2.1 Population and Sample

The population in this research was 17-20 years old adolescents, domicile in Rumbai Pesisir District, Pekanbaru, Indonesia. It consisted of 1.869 college students in one private university in that district. The sample in this study were 329 college students selected by simple random sampling technique based on the Slovin formula (Bungin, 2005) with an error rate of 5% so that the sample determination was 95%.

2.2 Data Collection Method

The data was collected by using questionnaire to assess gratitude and happiness. The questionnaire adopted the Likert model scale using five categorizations; very agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Happiness was measured by Scale of Happiness which consisted of 25 items with aspects proposed by Seligman (2002): (a) satisfaction of the past, (b) happiness in present and (c) optimism of the future. Meanwhile, gratitude was measured by 30 items scale which consisted of three aspects proposed by (Fitzgerald, 1998): (a) having a sense of appreciation to others or God and life, (b) Positive

feelings towards life owned and (c) Acting positively as an expression of positive feelings and appreciation that is owned.

2.3 Data Analysis

The statistical technique used in this study is Pearson Product Moment correlation technique, to test the hypothesis of the relationship between one independent variable and one dependent variable simultaneously and partially to the dependent variable.

3 RESULT

The correlation between two variables of this research was examined using Pearson correlation coefficient. Table 1 displays a positive correlation between gratitude and happiness in moderate level ($r= 0.529$; $p=0,00$; $p <0.05$).

Table 1: Hypotheses Test Result

Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Sig. (2-Tailed)
Gratitude	0,529	0,00
Happiness	0,529	0,00

Meanwhile, the regression analysis was conducted to know effective contribution of gratitude to happiness, as seen on the table 2 below:

Table 2: Determination Test Result Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,529 ^a	0,280	0,278	7,097

The table depicts effect size of gratitude towards happiness, which is 28% and the remaining 72% is influenced by other variables which is not included in this study. Based on previous research, other influencing factors could be positive affection, family support, peer interaction, optimism, subjective well-being, prosocial, and religiosity.

4 DISCUSSION

Result of data analysis indicated a positive correlation between gratitude and happiness in late adolescents. The higher gratitude, the higher happiness, and vice versa. Thus, the hypotheses in this study is accepted. It means that gratitude plays a role in creating happiness. This is in line with research by (Safaria, 2014) that the biggest source of happiness is gratitude.

Gratitude becomes one important contributing factor to happiness.

(Kristanto, 2016), grateful individual is be able to enjoy a positive life experience because gratitude is one form of expression of happiness which is closely related to well-being. Grateful individual tend to show expression of happiness (Rohma, 2013). Study conducted by (Eriyanda and Khairani, 2018) also found that there is a relationship between gratitude and happiness. This means that the higher the gratitude, the higher the happiness. This happens because gratitude affects happiness.

Gratitude as a cognitive construction is shown by acknowledging mercy and kindness for the blessings that we have received and focusing on the positive things. As an emotional construction, gratitude is characterized by the ability to change emotional response to make an event becomes more meaningful (McCullough et al., 2004). Gratitude involves feeling of amazement, thankful, appreciation, and happiness for abundant gifts in life. Gratitude as construction of behavior is expressed by giving something in return to others.

Being grateful can help someone to improve their ability to solve problems and to manage daily life challenge. (Watkins et al., 2003) state that gratitude indicates someone's well-being and life satisfaction. Gratitude is conceptualized in various ways, most often as moral traits or emotional states (Froh et al., 2009). The two constructs are clearly subjective-welfare, suggesting that happy people tend to be grateful people (Watkins et al., 2003). Research conducted by (Rusdiana, 2017) showed that 11% of adolescents have high concept of authentic positive happiness according to Myers' happiness indicator. As much as 30% of adolescents have concept of authentic happiness in the middle level, while 59% of adolescents have the concept of negative authentic happiness. With this percentage, adolescents are still vulnerable to the threat of problems, both personal and social.

Being thankful is also one way to acknowledge life meaning, since gratitude becomes predictor of happiness. In addition, gratitude causes individual to have a positive view of life and a spirit to improve and benefit from life (Froh et al., 2009).

5 CONCLUSION

There is a positive correlation between gratitude and happiness in late adolescents. It is concluded that the higher gratitude the higher happiness, in contrary, the lower gratitude the lower happiness.

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