

Is Gratitude Decrease Stress among Early Adult?

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Abstract: Stress is one of the potential risk factors for mental disorders. Meanwhile, one of the ways to deal with stress was being grateful. This study aims to determine the correlation between stress and gratitude in early adults in Aceh. The method of this research using a quantitative approach with a correlational method. This study involved 349 early adults with an age range of 20-40 years old were selected through nonprobability sampling. Individual stress level was measured using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), and gratitude was measured using the Indonesian Gratitude Scale. Data analysis using correlation analysis Spearman-Brown Formula with result of coefficient (r) = -0,537 and significance value (p) = 0,000 ($p < 0,05$). These results indicated that there was a significant negative correlation between gratitude with stress among early adults. It's assumed that higher gratitude, lower stress, and vice versa. It showed that grateful people will focus on things that are grateful not on the existing stressor, so this causes a low level of stress.

1 INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2013) states that one of the biggest risk factors that cause the emergence of mental disorders is stress. Surveys conducted in the United States showed that millennial age groups (18 - 33 years) and generation X (34 - 47 years) are the group with the highest average stress level (American Psychological Association [APA], 2012). This age range is included in young adult age which is 20 to 40 years (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 1998). In 2017, a survey conducted in the United Kingdom (UK) showed that 74% of the UK population felt very stressed, with a variety of different stressors for each individual (Mental Health Foundation [MHF], 2018). In Indonesia, concerns about the inability of individuals to manage stress properly are shown in the high rate of suicides. It is estimated that there are around 82 suicides occurring in Indonesia every day (Bahali, 2016). The following two suicides in Indonesia are thought to be caused by stress due to pressure received in work situations, namely the suicide of a bank employee, a 26-year-old woman in early 2018 (Baskoro, 2018) and a suicide case committed by 33-year-old male an Uber Inc.'s employee (Prihadi, 2017).

The most common stressors are relationship problems, finances, work pressure, lack of sleep, and insufficient nutrition (Byrnes, 2018). Based on a

survey conducted by a health insurance company (Cigna) involving 1,000 people in 23 countries showed that 86% of respondents from all countries said they had experienced stress, while in Indonesia it was 75% (Cahya, 2018). Judging from gender, women are more easily stressed than men, and the most common cause of stress in women is financial, while men are job stress (Forth, 2018).

Someone who is not able to manage stress properly, it will have a negative impact on behavior, physical, and psychological health. Impacts on behaviors such as overeating, eating unhealthy foods, drinking liquor, and smoking, while psychological effects such as feelings of depression, anxiety, self-harm, the emergence of feelings and thoughts of suicide, and feelings of loneliness (MHF 2018). One effort to deal with stress is to be grateful, gratitude can reduce the negative effects of stress and may have a positive long-term effect on mental health (Krejtz, Nezelek, Michnicka, & Holas, 2016).

Gratitude is a tendency to recognize and respond to feelings of gratitude for the role of the goodness of others in positive experiences and the results obtained (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). Some literature states that gratitude or remember things to be thankful for can increase a significant impact on current happiness and hope in the future (Witvliet, Richie, Luna, & Tongeren, 2018). Furthermore, research conducted by Leary and Dockray in 2015

showed that gratitude intervention is the most effective intervention to reduce stress, meanwhile, mindfulness interventions are the most effective for reducing depression and increase happiness. Previous studies also supported that gratitude was related to increasing the welfare of individuals and reducing symptoms of depression, including research conducted by Martinez-Marti, Avia, and Hernandez-Lloreda in 2010 indicating that gratitude interventions had an impact on wellbeing.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Stress

The term stress was first introduced in health psychology by Hans Selye in 1926, which is the non-specific response of the body to any demands on its burden (Baqutayan, 2015). The emergence of stress is also influenced by the individual's assessment of a situation or event, as stated by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) which defines stress as a relationship between individuals and the environment that is judged by someone as a demand or inability to face-threatening or dangerous situations. The concept of stress is known as the transactional model, namely, stress is considered as the interaction between individuals and their environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The transactional meaning of stress also emphasizes subjective judgment, so that the same stimulus can produce different interpretations, responses, and coping strategies among individuals with different experiences and personality traits (Ng, 2013).

In accordance with the stress theory of the transactional model presented by Lazarus, then Cohen and Williamson (1988) developed a measuring device Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) that measures the extent to which an event is valued as stressed by someone. The original scale of the Perceived Stress Scale was developed in 1983 by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein with reference to the perspective of Lazarus theory (1966, 1977) which states that stress is determined by one's perception of their stress. The development of the PSS scale is also due to the fact that the theoretical perspective on stress perception was not accompanied by the development of valid measurement tools to measure perceived stress (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983).

Perceived stress is an individual's assessment of an event that is considered as stress (Cohen et al., 1983). Perceived stress includes individual feelings about things that cannot be controlled and predicted in a person's life, how often someone is exposed to

difficulties, changes that occur in life, and beliefs in the ability to deal with problems (Cohen et al., 1983). Lazarus (in Cohen, et al., 1983) revealed that a person's stress level is determined by one's perception of stress. The general situation in life is considered as stressful when unpredictable, uncontrollable, or overloading. The perceived stress reflects stress levels experienced as a function of objective stressful events, coping processes and personality factors (Cohen et al., 1983).

2.2 Gratitude

According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, the origin of the word gratitude is from Latin, namely *gratus* or gratitude which means thankfulness or praise (pleasing), whereas in Indonesian thank you can be combined with gratitude (Listiyandini, Nathania, Syahniar, Sonia, & Nadya, 2015). McCullough, et al., (2002) define gratitude as one of the psychological conditions as an emotion, attitude, moral virtue, personality trait, or a way of responding that can contribute to mental health. Furthermore, according to Watkins, Woodward, Stone, and Kolts (2003) gratitude is a feeling that encourages to thank and appreciate the pleasure that has been received, giving rise to calm, psychologically satisfied conditions.

The concept of gratitude that is formed in individuals cannot be separated from the learning process that leads to one value, very closely related to the cultural, religious and philosophical values that surround it (Haryanto & Kertamuda, 2016). Listiyandini, et al., (2015) define gratitude as a feeling of gratitude, happiness, and appreciation for things that have been gained during life, both from God, humans, other creatures, and the universe, which then encourages someone to do the same as obtained. Then Listiyandini, et al. (2015) suggested that several scales developed in the West to measure gratitude generally did not explicitly mention aspects of divinity. Some of these measures raise the spirituality of gratitude without involving the terms and roles of God in them and prioritizing terms such as the role of nature, the world, and others 'strengths' outside of humans. The same thing was stated by Haryanto and Kertamuda (2016) that a fairly basic difference regarding the concept of gratitude in western literature in the form of an emphasis on the existence of God as an important party in understanding gratitude.

This research refers to the definition of gratitude which is explained by this because the definition is quite representative in describing gratitude to

Indonesian people. In addition, researchers want to see the level of individual gratitude that can be expressed by the Indonesian version of the grateful scale developed by Listiyandini et al. (2015) that has been adapted to the cultural context in Indonesia.

3 RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Design and Research Sample

This study uses a quantitative method that is correlational, which aims to see the relationship between one variable with another variable. Participants in this study were young adults (ages 20-40 years) who were domiciled in Aceh. Determination of samples in this study using a nonprobability sampling method with incidental sampling technique. This study involved 349 participants (F = 264, M = 84).

3.2 The Research Instrument

a. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

The PSS-10 consists of 10 items with 6 favorite items and 4 unique items. Assessment on this scale is done using a Likert scale with five alternative choices, namely, 0 never, 1 almost never, 2 sometimes, 3 quite often, up to 4 very often. The reliability of the PSS gauge in this sample is (Cronbach's alpha = 0.804).

b. The Scale of Grateful Indonesia (SBI)

Gratitude is measured using the Indonesian version of the grateful scale (Listiyandini et al., 2015). This scale consists of 30 items with 6 available answer choices, namely 1-6 (very inappropriate to very suitable). The reliability of the SBI gauge in this sample is (Cronbach's alpha = 0.904).

3.3 The Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed to answer the problem statement or test the hypotheses that have been formulated (Sugiyono, 2012). Data that has been collected, tabulated and then processed with the help of Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) ver. 25.0 for Windows. Test the assumptions in this study using the normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) and linearity using test for linearity, hypothesis testing is done using analysis Spearman-Brown Formula to find out the correlation between stress variables and gratitude.

4 RESULT

Table 1: Demographic Data of Participants

Demographic Data	Total	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Female	264	75,6
Male	85	24,4
Age		
20-30 year	335	96
31-40 year	15	4

The study involved 349 participants with early adults ages 20 to 40 years in Aceh (M= 22,20 year). There were 75.6% female and 24.4% male.

4.1 Assumption Test

The normality test is done to find out whether the population of the data is normally distributed or not by using statistical techniques, namely One Sample Kolmogoro Smirnov. The results of the normality test show that the stress variable has a significance value (p) = 0.073 and gratitude variable has a significance value (p) = 0.000. . This means that stress variables have a normal distribution of data, while the distribution of gratitude variable data is not normally distributed.

Linearity test is done by using a test for linearity which aims to determine whether two variables significantly have a relationship with each other. two variables are called linear if the significance value is less than 0.05 (Priyatno, 2011). The results of the linearity test show a significance value (p) of 0.00 (p <0.05) so that it can be conclude that two variables were significantly linear.

4.2 Hypothesis Test

The assumption test results show that the research data were not normally and linearly distributed, so hypothesis testing was use a nonparametric method, namely the Spearman-Brown Formula correlation. The results have shown that the value of the correlation was (r) = - 0.537 with a significance value p = 0.000 (p <0.05). Based on these results it can be interpreted that there was a significant negative relationship between stress and gratitude in early adults in Aceh. This can be interpreted that the higher intensity of gratitude, the lower level of stress.

5 DISCUSSION

This study aims to determine the relationship between stress and gratitude in early adults in Aceh. Based on the results of data analysis showed that there was a significant negative relationship between stress and gratitude ($r = -0,519$; $p = 0,000$) in early adults in Aceh, thus the proposed research hypothesis was accepted. Based on these results it can be interpreted that when a person has a high level of gratitude then the individual's stress level will be low, conversely if the individual's level of gratitude is low then the stress level will be high. The results of this study are supported by previous research which found that there was a significant negative relationship between gratitude and stress Kumar, Verma, & Deba, 2019).

The term stress can be interpreted differently by everyone. Some people define stress as an event or situation that causes tension, pressure, or negative emotions such as anxiety and anger. Some others see stress in response to this situation. This response includes physiological changes (such as increased heart rate and muscle tension) and emotional and behavioral changes (Baqtayan, 2015). Various things can be sources of stress or causes of stress in each individual. These sources of stress are very numerous and very individual. Things that can cause stress also depend on individual perceptions of things that are experienced (Segal, Smith, Segel & Robinson, 2019). Most individuals experience stress at some point in their lives, some individuals experience stress more often than others, and some individuals have difficulty dealing with its effects (Loseby, 2019).

Krejt, Nezek, Michnicka, Holas, and Rusanowska (2016) found that individuals who focus every day on the things they are grateful to reducing their reactions to stress. Gratitude is an emotion that is felt when someone realizes the good things that happen in life and appreciates them (Alkozei, Smith & Killgore, 2017).

6 CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to determine the relationship between gratitude and stress in early adulthood in Banda Aceh. The results of the statistical analysis support the hypothesis that there is a significant negative relationship between gratitude and stress in early adulthood in Aceh. This means there is an inverse correlation between gratitude and stress. When

gratitude increases, stress decreases. For this reason, gratitude can be an alternative way to manage stress well.

The limitations in this study was in terms of age, this study is limited to young adults with the majority of research subjects in the range of 20-30 years, so it can not express the phenomenon more broadly in each age range.

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