

# The Dynamic of Psychological Well-Being and Gratitude in Adolescence

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**Abstract**—The research aims to investigate the adolescents' psychological well-being and gratitude. The research type is a quantitative study with a survey method. The research subjects are adolescents aged 17-21 years old comprising 13 males and 41 females. The psychological wellbeing and gratitude are measured with a scale. The instrument test items are evaluated from the correlation of total items with the product moment formula. Psychological well-being variable has 26 valid and 10 invalid statement items with the reliability value of 0.877. Meanwhile, the gratitude variable has 19 valid and 1 invalid statement items with the reliability of 0.892. The research data are analyzed using a percentage descriptive technique. Based on data analysis, it can be concluded that the adolescents' psychological well-being is classified into the high category, while the gratitude is classified into the very high category. Due to the psychological well-being aspects, the highest percentage belongs to Purpose in Life (understanding the purpose of life). Meanwhile, the highest percentage in gratitude aspects belongs to Thank God (expressing gratitude to God).

**Keyword**—*psychological well-being, gratitude, adolescent.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Each human development is generally accompanied by several psychological needs to fulfill. Similarly to adolescents' needs, they should be able to accept their physical conditions and maximally utilize their potentials. As adolescents may obtain emotional freedom from their parents, they may also socialize with people of both male and female sex, acknowledging and accepting their self-competence and strengthen their self-mastery based on values and norms [1].

The adolescents who have not been able to meet their needs in life tend to experience various problems, such as juvenile delinquency which recently becomes one huge concern due to their various criminal actions [2]. Juvenile delinquency is frequently committed by the adolescents, including fighting, alcohol

consumption, rape, drug abuse and others [3]. Thus, psychological well-being may become a foundation for adolescents to face their arising critical period [2].

Psychological well-being can provide many benefits, just as revealed by Diener, Derrick, William, Chu, Dong-won, Shigehiro, Robert [4] that having high psychological wellbeing will support better health, increase life expectancy, prolong life and describes the quality of life and individual functions. Strengthening the previous statement, Wood, Joseph and Maltby [5] explain that gratitude has a positive relationship with several aspects of psychological wellbeing such as personal growth, life goals, positive relationships with others, and self-acceptance. The effect of grateful intervention in life is on the well-being of the hedonist (purpose of life), eudemonic (meaning of life), so the factors that are consistently regarded as an integral part of welfare are gratitude [6].

Gratitude is an attitude and emotional state of life as a source of humans' strength to improve their personal and relational well-being [7]. A frequently expressed gratitude may provide more positive experiences and emotion for individuals to face depression. Gratitude is also considered as a foundation for mental well-being and health [8].

Gratitude has many positive impacts, as explained by Froh, Kashdan, and Ozimkowski [9] that gratitude can decrease the negative influences that gratitude interventions may raise well-being through writing thank-you letters. A person with higher gratitude, in facts, has lower sense of envy and depression [10]. The research conducted by Wood, Joseph, and Linley [11] explains that gratitude may positively collaborate with positive reinterpretation, active coping, and life planning.

Those with lower gratitude tend to be less interested in goodness of others and always have narrow minded in dealing with the goodness received and then

responded with cursing and anger [12]. Schwarz reinforces the earlier opinion [13] mentioning that poor gratitude may result in jealousy and too many complaints since people with poor gratitude just focus on what they do not have, and compare with those belonging to others. By having these poor attitudes, the individuals may be isolated from their environment.

Based on above explanations, expressing gratitude is greatly necessary to achieve the psychological well-being. Thus, the proposed research problem is "psychological well-being and gratitude in adolescents".

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Individuals are said to have psychological well-being when freed from anxiety, achieving happiness, and so on. Ryff [14] describes psychological well-being as a concept that seeks to explain about positive psychological functioning. Individuals are said to have psychological well-being when they are able to accept their own strengths and weaknesses, create positive relationships with others around them, have the ability to make decisions, are autonomous, capable and competent to regulate the environment, and have a purpose in life [14].

Gratitude is a cognitive affective state that usually associated with the perception that a person has received personal gain unintentionally sought, or accepted because of the good intentions of others [15].

## III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a quantitative approach with a survey method. This research is conducted in October, 2017 until January, 2018. This research is conducted at some tutoring agencies (*Lembaga Bimbingan Belajar*) located in Yogyakarta. The procedure consists of: 1) identifying problems, 2) formulating aspects, 3) assembling behavior indication, 4) writing items, 5) conducting field test, 6) selecting items, 7) conducting contract validity, and 8) finalizing the compilation [16].

The gratitude data collection is conducted using a gratitude scale referring to McCullough's theory [15]. The Scale includes 5 aspects comprising thanking others, thanking God, cherishing all blessing, appreciating hardship, and cherishing every moment. Scoring is conducted by summing up the total values on each item. The higher the value, the higher the level of psychological well-being and gratitude on the subject. This scale has five aspects: thanks others, thanks God, cherish blessings, appreciate hardship, and cherish the moment [17].

The characteristics of instrument items are shown from the correlation of total items with the product moment formula. The results indicate that all items of the psychological well-being variable have good values ( $> 0.3$ ), except for item 2, 4, 7, 13, 20, 28, 29, 32, 33 35 which have the poor values ( $< 0.3$ ). Thus, the physiological variable has 26 valid items and 10 invalid items. Meanwhile, all items of gratitude variable have good scores, except for item 1 wit only 0.224 value. Thus, the gratitude variable has 19 valid items and 1 invalid item.

The reliability of items of psychological wellbeing variable is 0.877 and for those of gratitude variable is 0.892. The research data are analyzed using descriptive percentage supported with the statistical program of SPSS 16.

## IV. RESULT

The research results start with the description of data scale:

### A. Psychological well-being

TABLE I. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Psychological well-being	54	88	134	111.98	9.687

The description of psychological wellbeing shows mean = 111.98, minimum score = 88 and maximum score = 134 with standard deviation= 9.687.

TABLE II. DESCRIPTION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

No.	Score	Frequency	Interpretation
1	36-72	0	Low
2	73-90	5	Less
3	91-108	14	Medium
4	109-126	31	High
5	127-144	4	Very high

Based on the calculations of adolescents' psychological wellbeing presented in table 1, it shows that 4 adolescents are at the very high category, 31 adolescents at the high category, 14 adolescents at the medium category and 5 adolescents at the less category.

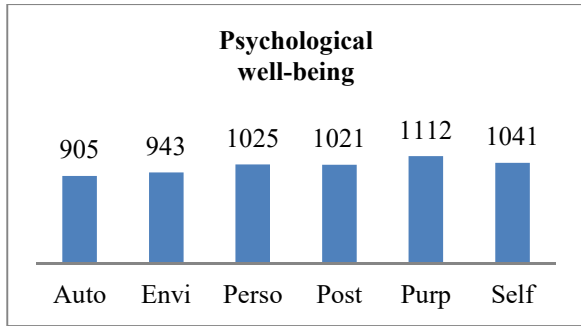


Fig. 1. Graphic Dimensions of Psychological Well-being

Figure 1 shows that the value of Autonomy aspect = 905, Environmental mastery = 943, Personal Growth = 1025, Positive Relationship with other = 1021, Purpose in Life = 1112 and Self-Acceptance = 1041.

B. Gratitude

TABLE III. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gratitude	54	48	80	65.33	7.055

The description of gratitude shows mean= 65.33, minimum score = 48 and maximum score= 80 with standard deviation = 7.055.

TABLE IV. DESCRIPTION OF GRATITUDE

No.	Score	Frequency	Interpretation
1	20-37	0	Low
2	38-45	0	Less
3	46-53	3	Medium
4	54-61	15	High
5	62-80	36	Very High

Based on the calculations of adolescents' gratitude presented in table 2, it shows that 36 adolescents are at the very high category, 15 adolescents at the high category, and 3 adolescents at the medium.

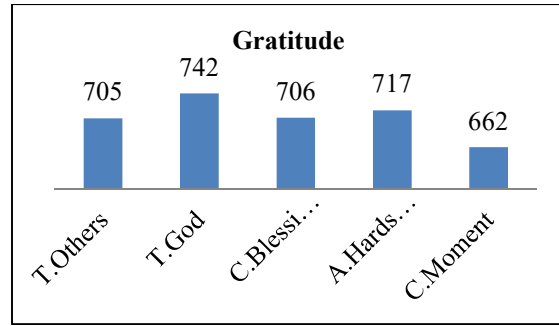


Fig. 2. Graph of Aspects of Gratitude

Figure 2 shows that the value of aspect thank others = 705, Thank God = 742, Cherish Blessing = 706, Appreciate Hardship = 717, and Cherish the moment = 662.

V. DISCUSSION

The research is conducted on 54 adolescents consisting of 13 males and 41 females in Yogyakarta. From the research on the psychological well-being variables, the adolescents are at the high category. It means that most adolescents participating in the study have high psychological well-being.

In this research the "purpose in life" dimension is at the first position. This is supported by the researchers' subject phenomena that most adolescents want to be admitted at one reputable state university in Yogyakarta. Thus, the adolescents are highly enthusiastic to achieve their future ideal to be successful in life and career. Similarly, the research conducted by Ryff and Keyes [18] explains that the adolescents who have a good intention are those with future targets and ideals. Thus, the adolescents may also tightly hold their beliefs that life always has a purpose and meaning.

The "self-acceptance" dimension in this research is at second position. The results show that the adolescents have already possessed (positive) good attitudes toward themselves, such as accepting their strengths and weaknesses. This result is also supported by the research conducted by [19] mentioning that the adolescents' self acceptance improves along with their confidence on their body image, both from self and others' points of view.

The third position is the "personal growth" dimension. The adolescents believe that they may obtain maximum results in line with the efforts they have made. The statement is also strengthened by the research conducted by David, Oscar, Richard, and Phoebe [20] mentioning that the support and trust given by the closely related people may improve the adolescents' personal growth.

The fourth position is the “relationship with other” dimension. In line with the research conducted by Demaray and Malecki [21] explaining that social support may help the adolescents in terms of adjustment, especially in building relationship with friends that enable the adolescents to change their mood and become more positive to improve their well-being.

Fifth is the “environmental mastery” dimension. It is in line with the research conducted by Wenita and Ratih [22] explaining that the adolescents may increase the dimension of mastery at the environment when the adolescents have already possessed a high mindfulness. In this research, the adolescents have not yet possessed a mindfulness to understand the situation that the adolescents find it difficult to deal with the environment.

The last position in this research is the “autonomy” dimension, in which the research subjects are mostly adolescents coming from outside of Yogyakarta and only meet in relatively short period of time. In line with the results of research conducted by Lisa, Netta, Jahlil, Michael, Christian, and Afzal [23] that the adolescents with high personal autonomy may integrate their positive and negative identities, feel satisfied and are close to their groups. Meanwhile, the adolescents with lower autonomy only recognize their positive identity and do not feel dissatisfied and close to their groups.

The next discussion is related to the adolescents’ gratitude variable. The adolescents’ gratitude is at the very high category. It means that most adolescents under study have a very high gratitude level.

The highest aspect in gratitude is thank God. Mahfud [24] explains that the gratitude dedicated to Good is a great contribution to the success and happiness of adolescents. Moreover, gratitude also has a broader dimension of benefits and social well-being.

The second aspect is “appreciate hardship”. The adolescents believe that everything requires struggle since they believe that maximum effort may generate maximum results. The research conducted by Allisa and Avin [25] shows that the adolescents with good self-esteem may generate positive emotions, mood, and cognitive to help them facing various situations and conditions in their lives. Thus, adolescents may provide positive evaluation in dealing with their life difficulties.

The third aspect is “cherish blessing”. The related adolescents think that all blessings come from God. More gratitude may improve the favors. Similarly, the research conducted by Andy, Nurulita and Siska [26] explains that life satisfaction is well supported by the gratitude. The higher the gratitude, the higher the life satisfaction. Adolescents may still be able to gain

happiness when they appreciate each blessing. Thus, their life satisfaction may be well fulfilled.

The aspect of thank others is at the second lowest position. It explains that most adolescents still do not completely trust the goodness of others. Thus, adolescents still have fears in receiving all goodness offered by others. The research conducted by Dzikrina and Annastasia [27] explains that the adolescents’ good mood may encourage them to have better awareness and to share their happiness with their environment. Thus, the adolescents’ gratitude, especially the aspect of “thank others” is not maximally fulfilled due to their poor social relationship.

The aspect with the lowest value is “cherish the moment”. Similarly, the research conducted by Agoes [28] also explains that everyone may face various types of life situations. The adolescents with a good mood may easily appreciate any situation in their life. However, those with a bad mood may find it difficult to accept the situations. The related adolescents are considered having poor awareness to the given favors in every life chance, both in easy and difficult situations.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The research results show that the adolescents’ psychological well-being is classified into the high category while their gratitude is classified into the very high category. Regarding the psychological well-being aspect, the highest percentage is on the purpose in life (understanding the purpose of life) while on the gratitude aspect, the highest percentage is on Thanks God.

This research still has many shortcomings, one of which is related to subjects which involves only a small part of adolescents. The further researches are expected to involve more number of adolescents.

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