

## **The Correlation between Self-Esteem and Subjective Well-Being in Late Adolescents**

**Betharia Jenitha Embang<sup>1</sup>, Santi Esterlita Purnamasari<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta, Indonesia

200810008@student.mercubuana-yogya.ac.id

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### **ABSTRACT**

Well-being is significantly decreased during adolescence due to the biological and psychosocial transformation linked to this developmental phase. Hormonal and environmental factors contribute to emotional fluctuations during adolescence, which may lead to higher levels of conflict and stress. Negative affect such as stress and anxiety lead to low subjective well-being. One of the factors that influence subjective well-being is self-esteem. This study aims to determine the correlation between self-esteem and subjective well-being in late adolescents. The subjects in this study consisted of 100 late adolescents from 18-21 years old. The method used in this study to collect data are subjective well-being scale (Satisfaction with Life scale & Scale of Positive and Negative Experience) and self-esteem scale (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale). The data analysis technique used in this research is Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis. Based on the data analysis results, obtained a significant score of  $<0,05$  with a correlation coefficient value of 0,524. This result indicates that there is a significant and positive correlation between self-esteem and subjective well-being in late adolescents.

**Keywords:** adolescence, late adolescents, life satisfaction, self-esteem, subjective well-being

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### **Introduction**

Adolescence is a crucial stage of development for every individual. Santrock (2014) defines adolescence as a transitional period between childhood and adulthood characterized by changes in various aspects, including biological, cognitive, and socioemotional development. The cognitive capacity of late adolescents has matured, enabling them to think and evaluate both themselves and the world around them (State Adolescent Health Resource Center, 2023). Batubara (2010) posits that during the late adolescence phase, individuals exhibit greater emotional stability, a more solidified sense of self-identity, and the ability to express their feelings verbally. According to Steinberg (2023), late adolescence refers to individuals from 18 to 21 years old.

According to Santrock (2014), hormonal and environmental factors contribute to emotional fluctuations during adolescence, which may lead to higher levels of conflict and stress. Well-being is significantly decreased during adolescence due to the biological and psychosocial transformation linked to this developmental phase (González-Carrasco et al., 2020). During this developmental phase, adolescents encounter a range of common stressors that can trigger stress responses, including physical and sexual changes related to puberty, academic demands, interpersonal conflicts, and the process of fostering independence.

Adolescents often face a variety of stressors that can pose threats to their well-being (Krapić, Hudek-Knežević, & Kardum, 2015). Steinberg (2023) posits that stress negatively impacts adolescent well-being. Negative affect such as stress and anxiety lead to low subjective well-being (Diener & Suh, 2000).

Diener, Suh, and Oishi (1997) define subjective well-being as the evaluation of one's life. Subjective well-being includes the evaluation of life satisfaction, positive emotions, and negative emotions. High subjective well-being, characterized by high life satisfaction, frequent positive affect, and infrequent negative affect. Subjective well-being is defined as an individual's internal experience, measured from the individual's own perspective. Diener and Suh's (2000) model of subjective well-being suggests that this subjective experience is shaped by two main dimensions: a cognitive aspect, represented by life satisfaction, and an affective aspect, consisting of both positive and negative emotions. Subjective well-being, which is particularly important during late adolescence, is associated with lower suicide rates, higher self-confidence, conflict resolution skills, success in various life domains, positive social relationships, increased physical activity, prosocial behavior, creative thinking, strong resilience, and a longer lifespan (De Neve et al., 2013; Maddux, 2018).

Despite the expectation of high subjective well-being in late adolescence, research consistently shows that this age group is characterized by low levels of subjective well-being. This is evident in a preliminary survey by Nuranik and Ansyah (2024), which found that 56% of late adolescents have low subjective well-being, as well as in studies by Maulana and Widyastuti (2023) that found 40 late adolescents experience low subjective well-being, and 17 late adolescents experienced very low subjective well-being. Istiqomah and Alwi's (2022) study found that 60,7% of late adolescents have low subjective well-being, which collectively demonstrate the prevalence of low subjective well-being among late adolescents. Adolescents with low subjective well-being are more likely to experience negative affect such as anxiety and depression, which tend to lead to suicidal ideation, poor academic performance, and overall poor health (Ooi, 2022).

Several factors influence subjective well-being in individuals, namely self-esteem, optimism, social contacts, relationship harmony, and emotional regulation (Diener, 2009; Maddux, 2018). Self-esteem is cited as one of the factors influencing subjective well-being. Rosenberg (1965) defines self-esteem as the positive or negative evaluation of a specific object, namely oneself. High self-esteem is reflected in feelings of adequacy, self-worth, and self-respect as one is. Self-esteem is divided into two aspects: self-acceptance and self-respect (Rosenberg, 1979). Baumeister (1993) states that high self-esteem enables individuals to have a positive self-view, a desire to enhance self-respect for achievements, strive to maximize performance, and maximize their potential for success that leads to higher satisfaction. On the other hand, individuals with low self-esteem believe that they are not good enough and feel that others can do everything better than them, leading to unhappiness and dissatisfaction with life (Banarjee & Das, 2020). According to Baumeister et al. (2003), high self-esteem leads to high satisfaction in individuals. Someone with high self-esteem feels self-assured, more competent, and develops confidence to tackle difficult problems, thus enabling the individual

to achieve satisfaction. Life satisfaction is one of the indicators of subjective well-being. According to Branden (2012), individuals with low self-esteem often experience a pervasive fear of facing the truth about themselves, engaging in self-denial, harboring fears of rejection and failure, and feeling a sense of inadequacy. Consequently, individuals with low self-esteem tend to experience more negative emotions than positive ones, leading to lower subjective well-being.

According to Rosenberg (1979), self-esteem encompasses two fundamental aspects: self-acceptance and self-respect. Someone with self-acceptance has a realistic awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, avoids self-criticism, and refrains from basing their self-worth on others' judgments. Therefore, self-acceptance can help adolescents cope with stressful situations such as body image issues, identity challenges, and other developmental challenges (Bernard, 2013). According to Cordaro et al. (2024), individuals with self-acceptance tend to accept themselves without judgment and evaluate themselves positively, leading to satisfaction. Life satisfaction is a key indicator of high subjective well-being. On the other hand, someone's inability to accept themselves can lead to emotional difficulties, including uncontrollable anger and depression (Carson & Langer, 2006). This contributes to lower levels of subjective well-being. The second aspect of self-esteem according to Rosenberg (1979) is self-respect. Self-respect is characterized by an individual's belief that they deserve to experience happiness, confidence in their achievements, and satisfaction (Branden, 2001). Individuals with low self-respect feel unworthy of love or respect from others, do not deserve happiness, are afraid to express their thoughts, desires, or needs, and lack positive attributes (Branden, 2012).

Studies by Umara, Safarina, and Suzanna (2023), and Safarina, Munir, and Nur'aini (2019) have shown that there is a positive correlation between self-esteem and subjective well-being. The higher the self-esteem, the higher the subjective well-being. A study by Yanti and Hermaleni (2020) found that self-esteem is one of the variables that most influences subjective well-being. Previous studies have shown a correlation between self-esteem and subjective well-being. The background of this study aims to explore the correlation between self-esteem and subjective well-being in late adolescents. The hypothesis of this study is that there is a positive correlation between self-esteem and subjective well-being in late adolescents. Higher self-esteem is associated with higher subjective well-being in late adolescents, while lower self-esteem is associated with lower subjective well-being in late adolescents.

### **Methods**

The subjects in this study consisted of 100 late adolescents from 18-21 years old. The sampling method in this study uses a non-probability, purposive sampling, where the researcher selects samples based on criteria and the belief that the subjects meet the purpose of the research (Obilor, 2023). The purposive sampling technique is chosen in this study because this technique allows researchers to target specific groups or individuals who are relevant to the variables measured in the study, thus increasing the accuracy and reliability of data and results (Campbell, 2020). The data analysis technique used in this research is

Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis. Statistical calculations were performed using the Statistical Product and Service Solution version 27 (SPSS version 27) program.

The method used in this study to collect data are subjective well-being scale (Satisfaction with Life scale & Scale of Positive and Negative Experience) developed by Diener et al. (1985) and adapted by Akhtar (2019), and self-esteem scale (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale) developed by Rosenberg (1979), adapted by Azwar (2021). The corrected item-total correlations on the subjective well-being scale SWLS ranged from 0.656 to 0.843. For the subjective well-being scale SPANE, the corrected item-total correlations for positive affect ranged from 0.812 to 0.903. The corrected item-total correlations for negative affect ranged from 0.503 to 0.903. For the SWLS scale, an alpha coefficient of 0.886 was obtained. For the reliability of the SPANE scale, an alpha coefficient of 0.955 was obtained for positive affect and an alpha reliability coefficient of 0.899 for negative affect. For Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, corrected item-total correlations ranged from 0.345 to 0.862. For reliability, an alpha reliability coefficient of 0.900 was obtained. This suggests that the scale has a high level of reliability. This means that the scale can be used to accurately measure the construct that it is designed to measure.

## Results

A total of 100 late adolescents were involved in the study. From the collected data, the distribution of research subjects based on gender and age. Distribution of subjects based on gender and age can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic Data of Respondents**

	Description	Frequency	Percentages
Gender	Male	23	23%
	Female	77	77%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>
Age	18 years old	3	3%
	19 years old	8	8%
	20 years old	18	18%
	21 years old	71	71%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data obtained from the subjective well-being scale were also used for categorizing the subjects' subjective well-being, as shown in Table 2. Based on the categorization of subjective well-being scores, the results show that 86% (86 late adolescents) are in the low category, 14% (14 late adolescents) are in the moderate category, and 0% (0 late adolescents) are in the high category. Therefore, it can be concluded that in this study, the majority of participants have low levels of subjective well-being.

**Table 2. Categorization of Subjective Well-Being**

	Score	Category	N	Percentages
$X < (\mu - 1\sigma)$	$X < 40$	Low	86	86%
$(\mu - 1\sigma) \leq X < (\mu + 1\sigma)$	$40 \leq X < 62$	Moderate	14	14%
$(\mu + 1\sigma) \leq X$	$62 \leq X$	High	0	0%
			<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data obtained from the self-esteem scale were also used for categorizing the subjects' self-esteem, as shown in Table 3. Based on the categorization of self-esteem scores, the results show that 65% (65 late adolescents) are in the low category, 35% (35 late adolescents) are in the moderate category, and 0% (0 late adolescents) are in the high category. Therefore, it can be concluded that in this study, the majority of participants have low levels of self-esteem.

**Table 3. Categorization of Self-Esteem**

	Score	Category	N	Percentages
$X < (\mu - 1\sigma)$	$X < 23$	Low	65	65%
$(\mu - 1\sigma) \leq X < (\mu + 1\sigma)$	$23 \leq X < 37$	Moderate	35	35%
$(\mu + 1\sigma) \leq X$	$37 \leq X$	High	0	0%
			<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

The correlation analysis results between self-esteem and subjective well-being yielded  $r = 0.524$  and  $p < 0.001$  ( $p < 0,05$ ) indicating a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and subjective well-being. These findings support the hypothesis of this study. The correlation coefficient of 0.524 indicates that the direction of the correlation between self-esteem and subjective well-being is positive, meaning that low self-esteem is associated with low subjective well-being in late adolescents. The obtained R Square ( $R^2$ ) value is 0.274, indicating that the contribution of the self-esteem variable to subjective well-being is 27.4%. The remaining 72.6% (100% - 27.4%) is influenced by other factors.

The results of the independent samples t-test based on gender for the variable of subjective well-being yielded  $t = 1.521$  with  $p = 0.131$  ( $p > 0.050$ ), indicating that there is no significant difference in subjective well-being between females and males. The results of the independent samples t-test based on gender for the variable of self-esteem yielded  $t = 1.324$  with  $p = 0.189$  ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating that there is no significant difference in self-esteem between females and males.

### Discussions

The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis shows a correlation coefficient of 0.524 between self-esteem and subjective well-being with a significance level of  $<0.05$ . This indicates a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and subjective well-being. Lower self-esteem tends to correspond with lower subjective well-being. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is accepted. Acceptance of the hypothesis in this research

suggests that self-esteem can be considered as a factor influencing subjective well-being in late adolescents. These findings are consistent with the results of studies by Yanti and Harmaleni (2020), and Safarina, Munir, and Nur'aini (2019), which also demonstrate a positive correlation between self-esteem and subjective well-being.

The categorization of self-esteem among the 100 late adolescents in this study revealed that 65% have low self-esteem, 35% have moderate self-esteem, and 0% or none of late adolescents reported high self-esteem. This suggests that most of the late adolescents in this study have low self-esteem. As this research measured self-esteem based on the aspects of self-acceptance and self-respect, it can be concluded that subjects with low self-esteem have low levels of self-acceptance and self-respect. Based on the results of the analysis, there is a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and subjective well-being. This finding is supported by the categorization of subjective well-being among 100 late adolescents, which shows that the majority (86%) experienced low levels of subjective well-being, characterized by low life satisfaction and a predominance of negative affect. Only 14% reported moderate levels of subjective well-being. No subjects reported high levels of subjective well-being.

Self-esteem is a significant factor influencing subjective well-being in late adolescents. Individuals with low self-esteem tend to have lower levels of subjective well-being. According to Huang (2021), individuals with low self-esteem often evaluate themselves negatively and exhibit self-hatred. Additionally, individuals with low self-esteem frequently feel incompetent (Duraivel & Lavanya, 2019). According to Rosenberg (1965), individuals with low self-esteem feel dissatisfied and reject themselves. Those with low self-esteem are more susceptible to experiencing negative emotions such as anxiety and depression (Guindon, 2010). According to Diener and Suh (2000), low levels of life satisfaction and frequent experiences of negative affect such as stress, anxiety, and sadness lead to lower subjective well-being. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to evaluate themselves positively, accept themselves as they are, and respect themselves (Rosenberg, 1967). Those with self-acceptance tend to embrace themselves without judgment and evaluate themselves positively, leading to satisfaction (Cordaro et al., 2024). Individuals with high self-esteem tend to respect themselves by considering themselves competent and worthy. According to Pia (2019), this leads to satisfaction and pleasant feelings. Life satisfaction and positive emotions contribute to high levels of subjective well-being.

Based on additional analysis, the independent samples t-test based on gender for the variable of subjective well-being indicates there is no significant difference in subjective well-being between males and females. This is supported by the research of Batz and Tay (in Diener et al., 2017), which shows no significant difference in subjective well-being based on gender. A more balanced role distribution can reduce significant differences in subjective well-being based on gender. Additionally, males and females adapt to their respective environments and do not compare their lives with individuals of the opposite gender, thus leading to minimal differences in subjective well-being based on gender. Similarly, the independent samples t-test based on gender for the variable of self-esteem indicates there is no significant difference in self-esteem between males and females among late adolescents in this

study. This is consistent with the research by Erol and Orth (2011), which also found no significant difference in self-esteem based on gender. Furthermore, Erol and Orth (2011) suggest that these findings can help mitigate the significant impact of misconceptions, such as overlooking self-esteem issues in adolescent males because they are presumed to have higher self-esteem than females.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the research and analysis conducted, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and subjective well-being in late adolescents. The correlation coefficient between self-esteem and subjective well-being in late adolescents is 0.524 with a significance level of  $p < 0.05$ . This indicates that lower self-esteem tends to correspond with lower subjective well-being in late adolescents. Late adolescents with low self-esteem tend to evaluate themselves negatively, feel dissatisfied, and reject themselves, making them more vulnerable to experiencing negative emotions. Low levels of life satisfaction and frequent experience of negative affect lead to lower subjective well-being. On the other hand, late adolescents with high self-esteem accept themselves as they are and respect themselves, leading to satisfaction and positive affect that contribute to higher subjective well-being.

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