

Happiness Among Adolescents: The Role of Psychological Entitlement

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by significant psychological, physiological, and biological changes. These changes can influence adolescents' mental health and overall happiness. Psychological entitlement, defined as an excessive sense of deservingness, has been linked to negative emotions and aggressive behaviors, potentially impacting happiness. This study aims to investigate the relationship between psychological entitlement and happiness among adolescents in Yogyakarta. It is hypothesized that there is a negative relationship between psychological entitlement and happiness among adolescents in Yogyakarta. A non-experimental quantitative research method was employed, involving 91 male and female adolescents in Yogyakarta. Data were collected using validated scales for psychological entitlement and happiness. The results indicated a negative correlation ($r_{xy} = -0.209$, $p = 0.047$) between psychological entitlement and happiness. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.0437, suggesting that psychological entitlement accounts for 4.37% of the variance in happiness. The remaining 95.63% is assumed to be influenced by other factors not examined in this study. These findings highlight the importance of addressing psychological entitlement to enhance adolescent happiness. Future research should explore additional variables that may impact happiness, such as marriage, age, health, religion, and environmental adaptation.

Keywords: adolescence, happiness, mental health, negative emotions, psychological entitlement

Introduction

Adolescence is a developmental period during which individuals first exhibit secondary sexual characteristics until they reach sexual maturity (Sarwono in Hikmandayani et al., 2023). This phase represents a transition from childhood to adulthood, characterized by numerous psychological, physiological, and biological changes (Afifa & Abdurrahman, 2021). These changes can stem from both internal and external factors. Internally, adolescents experience physical transformations, such as the continuous development of their body shape towards an adult form. Externally, the treatment adolescents receive from adults—whether they are treated as children or adults—also plays a significant role (Hikmandayani et al., 2023).

Adolescence begins at approximately 10 to 13 years of age and ends in the late teens (Santrock, 2019). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adolescents are individuals aged 10-19 years. Meanwhile, the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) defines adolescents as individuals aged 10-24 years who are unmarried (Rahmawati & Bahtiar, 2023).

During adolescence, individuals face numerous changes, often leading to emotional instability. Santrock (2019) posits that the developmental transition during adolescence can result in biological, socio-emotional, and cognitive changes. Adolescents are thus required to adapt to these various changes (Halik & Rakasiwi, 2020). The changes occurring during puberty can affect mood, self-esteem, and increase the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors due to heightened curiosity (Shaffer & Kipp, 2010). If adolescents fail to manage these changes effectively, it can lead to mental health issues (Lana & Indrawati, 2021).

Mental health is a crucial factor influencing adolescent happiness. Broadbent et al. (2017) assert that mental health is a primary factor in enhancing adolescent happiness. According to Seligman (2002), individuals with depression are likely to feel unhappy. Therefore, mental health significantly impacts individual happiness, as happier individuals tend to recall more positive than negative experiences, thereby avoiding mental health issues such as depression (Seligman, 2002).

Seligman (2012) defines happiness as a positive emotion arising from within an individual, marked by life satisfaction, positive thoughts, and positive affect. Positive emotions can be fostered through engaging in enjoyable activities. Seligman also notes that an individual's happiness level can be gauged by their life satisfaction.

Happiness comprises several aspects. According to Seligman (2012), these include: (1) positive emotions; (2) full engagement; and (3) meaningful life. Previous research by Kamilah and Rahmasari (2023) on 214 samples found that adolescent happiness is generally moderate (66.8%), characterized by a pleasant life experience. Another study by Rina et al. (2022) involving 306 adolescent respondents revealed that 3 respondents had low happiness levels, 155 had moderate levels, and 148 had high levels, indicating that adolescent happiness tends to be moderate.

To corroborate previous research, a field survey was conducted through interviews with 10 adolescent respondents in Yogyakarta, revealing that respondents generally felt quite happy. This was evidenced by their statements of achieving desired goals and experiencing positive benefits from their activities. The happiness level of these 10 respondents was categorized as moderate.

Adolescence is a challenging period. Adolescents face various challenges and obstacles in adapting to numerous changes, including physical, hormonal, emotional, and psychological changes (Rina et al., 2022). Failure to adapt well to these changes can trigger other issues, such as mental health problems (Lana & Indrawati, 2021). Therefore, happiness is essential for adolescents.

Several factors influence happiness. According to Seligman (2002), these factors include: (1) money; (2) marriage; (3) social life; (4) negative emotions; (5) age; (6) health; and (7) religion. Among these factors, psychological entitlement is particularly relevant to negative emotions. Negative emotions are expressions of feelings such as sadness, disappointment, anger, and frustration (Iye & Tenriawali, 2020). Rochwidowati and Rismarini (2019) state that individuals tend to exhibit aggressive behavior when experiencing negative emotions. Individuals with high psychological entitlement are often selfish and aggressive, attacking and behaving aggressively towards those who criticize them (Campbell, 2004).

Psychological entitlement is defined as an excessive sense of deservingness, where individuals believe, they are entitled to rewards or special treatment often without merit (Campbell, 2004). Entitlement is considered maladaptive as it can lead to cognitive distortions (Lange et al., 2019). Campbell (2004) identifies several aspects of psychological entitlement: (1) self-esteem; (2) narcissism; (3) authority; (4) exhibitionism; (5) superiority; (6) entitlement; (7) exploitation; (8) independence; and (9) arrogance.

Happiness arises when individuals experience more positive affect. To feel positive emotions, individuals need to experience fewer negative emotions to minimize adverse events in life (Seligman, 2002). Negative emotions influence individual behavior (Amanullah, 2022). Rochwidowati and Rismarini (2019) note that individuals tend to behave aggressively when experiencing negative emotions. High psychological entitlement is associated with selfish and aggressive behavior, particularly towards critics (Campbell, 2004).

Previous research by Oviatt (2015) found a negative relationship between psychological entitlement and happiness. Psychological entitlement is linked to aggressive and hostile behavior, which increases stress levels. Thus, high psychological entitlement can reduce individual happiness.

Based on the above discussion, the research problem is formulated as follows: "Is there a relationship between psychological entitlement and happiness among adolescents in Yogyakarta?" The objective of this study is to determine the relationship between psychological entitlement and happiness among adolescents

in Yogyakarta. The hypothesis is formulated as follows: “There is a negative relationship between psychological entitlement and happiness among adolescents in Yogyakarta”.

Methods

This study employed a non-experimental quantitative research method. The subjects included 91 male and female adolescents residing in Yogyakarta. Data collection was conducted using the Psychological Entitlement Scale and the Happiness Scale, both of which had been pre-tested and psychometrically validated.

The Happiness Scale consisted of 26 items with four response options, scored from 1 to 4 for favourable items: Strongly Disagree scored 1, Disagree scored 2, Agree scored 3, and Strongly Agree scored 4. The item discrimination ranged from 0.253 to 0.666, with a reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.909.

The Psychological Entitlement Scale consisted of 12 items with five response options for favourable statements, scored from 1 to 5: Strongly Disagree scored 1, Disagree scored 2, Neutral scored 3, Agree scored 4, and Strongly Agree scored 5. The item discrimination ranged from 0.208 to 0.544, with a reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.734.

Data analysis was conducted using Karl Pearson’s Product Moment correlation analysis. The calculations were performed using the JAMOVI software, version 2.3.28.

Results

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants. For the variable of psychological entitlement, the mean scores for male and female subjects were not significantly different. The scores tended to be higher among participants aged 12-15 years and slightly higher among those who were employed.

Tabel 1. Descriptive Statistic

	Psychological Entitlement	Mean	SD	Happiness	Mean	SD
Sex						
Male	23	32.6	5.23	23	81.7	7.47
Female	68	32.8	4.45	68	78.2	7.48
Age						
12-15 years	4	34.5	7.00	4	69.8	9.54
16-18 years	7	31.1	5.01	7	81.6	7.87

	Psychological Entitlement	Mean	SD	Happiness	Mean	SD
Sex						
19-22 years	80	32.8	4.50	80	79.3	7.23
Employment Status						
Not working	64	32.3	4.80	64	78.7	7.45
Employed	27	33.7	4.11	27	80.1	7.95

Based on Table 2, it is evident that none of the respondents fell into the low category, 42.9% (39 respondents) were in the moderate category, and 57.1% (52 respondents) were in the high category. Thus, it can be concluded that many subjects had a high level of happiness.

Tabel 2. Happiness Categorization

Category	Criteria	Score	N
Low	$X < (\mu - 1.0\sigma)$	$X < 52$	-
Medium	$(\mu - 1.0\sigma) \leq X < (\mu + 1.0\sigma)$	$52 \leq X < 78$	39
High	$(\mu + 1.0\sigma) \leq X$	$78 \leq X$	52
Total			91

Note:

X : Subject's score

μ : Theoretical mean

σ : Standard Deviation

Table 3 shows that 14.3% (13 respondents) were in the low category, 83.5% (76 respondents) were in the moderate category, and 2.2% (2 respondents) were in the high category. Therefore, it can be concluded that most subjects had a moderate level of psychological entitlement.

Tabel 3. Psychological Entitlement Categorization

Category	Criteria	Score	N
Low	$X < (\mu - 1,0\sigma)$	$X < 28$	13
Medium	$(\mu - 1,0\sigma) \leq X < (\mu + 1,0\sigma)$	$28 \leq X < 44$	76
High	$(\mu + 1,0\sigma) \leq X$	$44 \leq X$	2
Total			91

Note:

X : Subject's score

μ : Theoretical mean

σ : Standard Deviation

The normality test results for the happiness scale showed a K-S value of 0.781 ($p > 0.05$), and for the psychological entitlement scale, a K-S value of 0.215 ($p > 0.05$), indicating that both variables were normally distributed. The linearity test results

between the psychological entitlement variable and the happiness variable showed $t = -2.02$ and $p = 0.047$ ($p < 0.05$), indicating a linear relationship between the two variables.

After meeting the assumption tests, a correlation test using the Product Moment was conducted, yielding a correlation coefficient (r_{xy}) of -0.209 with a significance level of $p = 0.047$ ($p < 0.05$). This indicates a negative correlation between psychological entitlement and happiness. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is accepted.

Discussions

The results of Karl Pearson's Product Moment correlation analysis showed a coefficient of 0.209 between psychological entitlement and happiness among adolescents in Yogyakarta, with a p-value of 0.047 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates a negative relationship between psychological entitlement and happiness among adolescents in Yogyakarta. The higher the psychological entitlement in adolescents, the lower the happiness they experience. Conversely, the lower the psychological entitlement, the higher the happiness experienced by adolescents in Yogyakarta. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is accepted. The acceptance of the hypothesis indicates that psychological entitlement is a factor that can influence happiness.

These findings are consistent with previous research by Oviatt (2015), which also found a negative relationship between psychological entitlement and happiness. Psychological entitlement is associated with aggressive and hostile behaviour, which can increase stress levels in individuals. Thus, high psychological entitlement can reduce individual happiness.

Seligman (2002) also posits that one of the factor's influencing happiness is negative emotions, which can be linked to psychological entitlement. Carra (in Royanulloh & Komari, 2019) states that individual happiness is characterized by low levels of negative emotions and high levels of positive emotions. According to Seligman (2002), happiness can be achieved by reducing negative emotions and increasing positive emotions.

The categorization results on the happiness scale showed that none of the subjects were in the low category, 42.9% (39 respondents) were in the moderate category, and 57.1% (52 respondents) were in the high category. Thus, it can be concluded that most subjects had a high level of happiness. Meanwhile, the categorization results on the psychological entitlement scale showed that 14.3% (13

respondents) were in the low category, 83.5% (76 respondents) were in the moderate category, and 2.2% (2 respondents) were in the high category. Therefore, it can be concluded that most subjects had a moderate level of psychological entitlement.

Individuals with high psychological entitlement tend to be influenced by aspects of authority and exploitation. Those with moderate psychological entitlement are influenced by aspects of superiority. In contrast, individuals with low psychological entitlement are influenced by aspects of self-esteem, narcissism, exhibitionism, entitlement, independence, and arrogance. High psychological entitlement indicates a preference for higher authority positions and exploiting others for personal gain. High psychological entitlement among adolescents in Yogyakarta suggests a sense of superiority over others (Suhardoyo, 2022).

Furthermore, individuals with high happiness levels are influenced by positive emotions, while those with moderate happiness are influenced by full engagement. High happiness in adolescents in Yogyakarta indicates a desire to engage in positive activities and live a life filled with positive experiences to achieve life satisfaction. This aligns with Seligman's (2012) assertion that happiness is associated with positive emotions and can be measured by life satisfaction.

Subjects with high psychological entitlement tend to have moderate happiness. This is evident from the happiness scale scores, where 42.9% (39 respondents) had moderate happiness. Subjects with high psychological entitlement are influenced by authority, enjoying higher authority positions over others. In contrast, subjects with moderate happiness are influenced by full engagement, which relates to individual responsibility. Authority is often associated with responsibility. When individuals have high authority, they also bear significant responsibility for their use of authority. Responsibility can relate to tasks, jobs, or obligations (Oktarina et al., 2024; Seligman, 2012; Suhardoyo, 2022).

Conversely, subjects with low psychological entitlement tend to have high happiness. This is evident from the happiness scale scores, where 57.1% (52 respondents) had high happiness. Individuals with low psychological entitlement are influenced by aspects such as humility. Consistent with previous research, arrogance can disrupt happiness (Harahap & Alawiyah, 2024). Conversely, humility or low self-esteem can positively influence happiness (Sujanto et al., 2019). Thus, individuals with low psychological entitlement, characterized by humility, tend to experience higher levels of happiness.

The correlation analysis also revealed a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.0437, indicating that psychological entitlement accounts for 4.37% of the variance in happiness. This suggests that the remaining 95.63% can be influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as marriage, age, health, religion, and environmental adaptation (Seligman, 2002).

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that there is a negative relationship between psychological entitlement and happiness among adolescents in Yogyakarta. This indicates that higher psychological entitlement is associated with lower happiness among adolescents in Yogyakarta, and vice versa. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted, and it is acknowledged that other variables may also influence happiness among adolescents in Yogyakarta.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that there is a negative relationship between psychological entitlement and happiness among adolescents in Yogyakarta. The negative correlation indicates that the higher the psychological entitlement in adolescents, the lower their happiness. Conversely, the lower the psychological entitlement, the higher the happiness among adolescents in Yogyakarta.

Thus, the hypothesis of this study, which posits a relationship between psychological entitlement and happiness among adolescents in Yogyakarta, is accepted. The psychological entitlement variable contributes 4.37% to happiness, while the remaining 95.63% is assumed to be influenced by other variables not included in this study.

Based on the results and discussion, the following recommendations are provided: (1) Future researchers are encouraged to delve deeper into the psychological entitlement variable, as research on this variable is still limited; (2) Future researchers conducting similar studies are encouraged to explore other variables that may influence happiness, as mentioned in this study, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting happiness.

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