

Conference Paper

Family Factors Affecting Adolescents' Happiness During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to large-scale behavioral changes and a significant psychological burden. This study aims to determine the effect of parent-adolescent relationships and parental marital quality on adolescents' happiness during the pandemic. The research subjects were male and female adolescents between the ages of 18-21 that studied at state and private universities and lived with their parents. A binary logistic regression technique was used to examine the independence of the association between perceived parent-adolescent relationship, parental marital quality, sex, and allowance with happiness during the pandemic. The logistic regression analysis results showed that only two independent variables, namely perceived parent-adolescent relationship and parental marital quality, made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. However, the strongest predictor was perceived parental marital quality, which recorded an odds ratio of 7.25.

Keywords: adolescent happiness, parent-adolescent relationship, parental marital quality, covid-19 pandemic

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is a massive global health crisis that has led to large-scale behavioral changes and a significant psychological burden. Therefore, various insights into the social and behavioral sciences can be used to help align human behavior as recommended by epidemiologists and public health experts (J. J. V Bavel et al., 2020). Yang and Ma (2020) stated that 74% of respondents' emotional well-being that experienced pandemic in China has generally decreased. Furthermore, Rossouw *et al.* (2020) reported that New Zealand was in an unhappy state for a prolonged period. In a research carried out by Rodríguez-Rey *et al.* (2020) on the effects of a health crisis on the Spanish population, 63% of participants reported minimal to mild symptoms of acute stress during the early stages of the pandemic. This was similar to the research conducted by Megatsari *et al.* (2020) in Indonesia, which indicated that 56.53%, 41.96%, and 1.51% of the respondents experienced high, moderate, and low anxiety levels.

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Several studies related to happiness during the pandemic have been carried out in recent times. For instance, Yang and Ma (2020) examined the factors capable of influencing happiness, such as the possibility of contracting the disease by living near the epicenter, level of potential harm (becoming elderly), and relational problems (marriage). However, it is believed that a higher perception of knowledge on the outbreak generally increases happiness. Yıldırım and Güler (2020) stated that a positive outlook on self and the environment has a significant and direct effect on death distress and happiness. Meanwhile, mediation analysis shows that a positive outlook mediates the effects of perceived risk on death distress and happiness.

Rossouw *et al.* (2020) stated that the increase in happiness levels to pre-pandemic rate enables policymakers' free mobility, creates economic stimulation, and allows international travel between New Zealand and low-risk countries affected with Covid-19. Furthermore, a study by Moroń and Biolik-Moroń (2020) in Poland demonstrated the dynamics of complex emotional experiences during the first week of the COVID-19 pandemic. These results stated that the traits associated with emotional intelligence significantly predict lower frequencies of anger, disgust, and sadness during the first week of the pandemic. In addition, positive conditions on relaxation and happiness are experienced more frequently and intensely than negative valence.

Studies on the relationship between children and parents during the pandemic were carried out by Chung *et al.* (2020), which stated that parenting stress tends to be high when parents try to balance work with family, with low social support. Chung further stated that working parents are also faced with the dual role and challenges of supervising their children at home. In Rossouw *et al.* (2020) research, participants with children over 11 years and those not living with their children showed lower stress levels.

(Haiyang Yang & Ma, 2020) reported that relationships influenced happiness during the pandemic, with married people having a higher level of emotional well-being than those that are unmarried. Furthermore, Luetke *et al.* (2020) stated that romantic couples tend to experience increased conflict levels during pandemics in America. According to (J. J. V. Bavel *et al.*, 2020), marital status influences stressful conditions because married participants and those that cohabited with their partners showed significantly lower psychological effects than the single. Meanwhile, the separated participants showed significantly less stress than single or married. The participants with the most stress, anxiety and depression were those in relationships and not living together, followed by the singles. (G. Chung, Chan, Lanier, & Ju, 2020) reported that marital conflict tends to be high when work-family balance and social support are low.

Silva *et al.* (2020) summarized the studies from several literatures by stating that the occurrence of marital violence during a pandemic can be due to financial and uncertain conditions, as well as the use of illegal drugs and alcohol. In most cases, this affects married couples because they tend to limit the wife's access to support. Furthermore, Pietromonaco and Overall (2020) showed that more partners are vulnerable to pandemic-related stress due to individual vulnerability and maladaptive relationship processes. This category of people tends to benefit from working with practitioners to establish or strengthen adaptive relationship processes, such as learning how to effectively communicate and support each other, irrespective of their characteristics and circumstances.

The results of Hair, Day, and Moore (2009) study show that adolescents in families who experience poor quality of marriage have a worse fate in physical health, mental health, and the results of drug use. Adolescents who have poor relationships with their parents tend to be less successful in all health measures. Overall, bad relationships consistently hurt mental health, physical health, and substance use. Suh (2016) in general also showed that parental marital quality independently predicted adolescent mental health, as well as parents-adolescent relationships.

Therefore, based on the description above, this research was carried out to empirically determine the effect of parent-adolescent relationships and parental marital quality on adolescent happiness during the pandemic.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

Respondents of this study were adolescents aged 18 to 21 years who were recruited through social media (WhatsApp) and were willing to become research respondents. Respondents who meet the requirements, namely those who lived with their parents during the pandemic and have stated their willingness in writing via google form then continue to fill out the research questionnaire. Overall, the number of respondents who were willing and fulfilling the requirements was 378 respondents. Based on the gender distribution, 19,6% (N=74) respondents were boys and 80,4% (N=304) girls. Respondents are college students from state universities (N=210) and private universities (N=168). Regarding allowance, approximately 52,9% (N=200) gets an allowance under five hundred thousand rupiah, 28% (N =106) between five hundred thousand rupiah up to one million, and as much as 19,1% (N=72) gets an allowance of over one million.

2.2. Measurement

One of the most commonly used tools for measuring an individual's subjective happiness is a single question that usually asks, "In general, how happy are you right now with your life as a whole?" (Lim, 2008). The happiness during the Covid-19 pandemic in this study also used a single question. This was measured using the following question "Does the pandemic affect your happiness? The possible answers were: (1) Yes, or (2) No. The independent variables included in this study were: (1) perceived parent-adolescent relationship, (2) perceived parental marital quality, (3) allowance, and (4) sex. The perceived parent-adolescent relationship was measured by the following question "Does the pandemic affect your relationship with your parents?". Perceived parental marital quality was measured by the following question "Does the pandemic affect the marital harmony of your parents?"

2.3. Data Analysis

The analysis technique used to test the effect of the perception of the parent-adolescent relationships, the quality of parents' marriage, sex, and allowances to happiness during a pandemic is a binary logistic regression. Binary logistic regression was used because of the dichotomous nature of the outcome variable. The results presented in the Odds Ratios with 95% confidence intervals.

3. Results and Discussion

Direct logistic regression was conducted to assess the impact of perceived parent-adolescent relationships, perceived parental marital quality, gender, and allowances on adolescent happiness during the pandemic. The analysis showed that the model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(4, N = 379)$ with $p < 0.001$. This suggests that the model can distinguish between reported subjects and those who failed to report the happiness they felt during the pandemic. The overall model explained between 18.6% (Cox and Snell R square) and 27.9% (Nagelkerke R squared) of the variants and correctly classified 76.7% of the number of cases. Table 1 shows that only two independent variables, namely perceived parent-adolescent relationships, perceived parental marital quality, make a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. The strongest predictor was the quality of the parents' marriages, which recorded an odds ratio of 7.25.

TABLE 1: Result with logistic regression

| | B | S.E. | Wald | df | p | Odds Ratio | 95,0% C.I.for Odds Ratio | |
|---|-------|------|--------|----|------|------------|--------------------------|--------|
| | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Perceived parent – adolescent relationship in covid-19 pandemic | 1.634 | .336 | 23.604 | 1 | .000 | 5.126 | 2.651 | 9.911 |
| Perceived parental marital quality in covid-19 pandemic | 1.981 | .627 | 9.965 | 1 | .002 | 7.248 | 2.119 | 24.795 |
| sex | -.104 | .333 | .098 | 1 | .755 | .901 | .470 | 1.730 |
| allowance | -.350 | .344 | 1.033 | 1 | .309 | .705 | .359 | 1.384 |
| Constant | .371 | .175 | 4.492 | 1 | .034 | 1.449 | | |

4. Discussion

The research showed that parental marital quality and parental marital relationships are strong predictors for adolescent happiness during pandemics. Furthermore, the marital quality variable increased the probability by sevenfold when the other variables were controlled. This research results in line with the study carried out by Ribar (2015) on the relationship between parental marriage and adolescent happiness. According to Ribar, marital quality is a strong factor for adolescent happiness because it has an element of relationship stability. Conversely, Koss et al (2011) and Sorek (2019) stated that when marital quality is low and leads to conflict resolution, it affects adolescent happiness.

Moreover, the healthy relationship between parents also affects their children’s emotional well-being (Kim, Choi, Trahan, Bellamy, & Pierce, 2020; K. J Koss et al., 2011). In addition, a stable marital condition correlates with low emotional and behavioral problems in children (Mooney, Oliver, & Smith, 2019). Meta-analysis study conducted by Wahyuningsih, Kusumaningrum, and Novitasari (2020) also showed that parental marital quality has a significant relationship to psychological well-being of adolescents. Therefore, it is evident that parental marital quality during the pandemic remains a significant predictor.

Studies indicate that the family played an important role in adolescents’ lives during the pandemic because the majority stayed at home. One important issue that arises is the pattern of relationships between individuals in the family that affect emotional well-being (Haiyang Yang & Ma, 2020). Communication between family members during this period was shown to correlate with emotional well-being in patients with prolonged care (Monin et al., 2020). According to Marques de Miranda et al (2020), adolescents had

a mental health connection with their family during this period. However, the opposite condition occurs in domestic violence cases that are vulnerable to being witnessed or experienced by adolescents (D Marques de Miranda, da Silva Athanasio, Sena Oliveira, & Simoes-e-Silva, 2020; Wilke, Howard, & Pop, 2020). Family cohesiveness and conflicts that arise are also significantly correlated with stress in children (Daks, Peltz, & Rogge, 2020). Therefore, the relationship between family members, including parental marital quality, affects adolescent happiness.

This research found that gender and allowance were insignificant predictors for adolescent happiness during the pandemic. The result is different from the analyses of previous studies that indicated significant differences between men and women in mental health depression (Chen et al., 2020) and loneliness (Li & Wang, 2020). Megatsari *et al.* (2020) also showed that males had a lower probability of experiencing medium to high anxiety levels than females.

These results are different from the research carried out by (Haiyang Yang & Ma, 2020), which examined the main effects of demographic variables on emotional well-being. The research indicated that income had a significant and consistent effect on emotional well-being during a pandemic. Furthermore, Rodríguez-Rey (2020) stated that more than 36% of participants felt a risk of losing their job, and 44% feared the possibility of having a decreasing income. For depression, unemployed respondents showed a higher rate than other participants with an increase in the perception of reducing family income. According to Chung *et al.* (2020), parents experience a financial decline, increased difficulty in accessing resources, and adverse psychological health due to the pandemic.

The research carried out by (Rocío Rodríguez-Rey, Garrido-Hernansaiz, & Collado, 2020) indicated that allowance did not affect adolescent happiness during the pandemic because they do not have a financial responsibility to fulfill their needs. Furthermore, the social distancing policy keeps adolescents at home, therefore, their needs have been fulfilled by their parents. These results further showed that the parent-adolescent relationship and parental marital conditions influence adolescent happiness.

This study has several limitations. First, the data in this study are nominal data, so the results are not yet powerful. Future studies will need to conduct research on similar topics with more precise data such as interval data. In addition, this study also needs to further examine the influence of parental gender as a moderating variable because previous results show that parental gender is a moderator for the influence between parent adolescent relationship with adolescent well being. The age range of

respondents, which is limited to the age of 18-21 years, needs to be expanded from early adolescence to late adolescence..

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