

THE ROLE OF GENDER AND FRIENDSHIP QUALITY ON HAPPINESS AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN BANDAR LAMPUNG

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Abstrak: Adolescence is a crucial transitional phase with significant physical, emotional, social, and psychological changes. Studying happiness during this time is important, as adolescents' emotional well-being heavily depends on their social relationships, particularly friendships and gender influences. This topic is increasingly relevant due to rising social, academic, and digital pressures that can enhance or undermine happiness. Exploring adolescent happiness provides insights for improving mental health and laying a foundation for adult well-being. Happiness drives individuals to engage in positive behaviors. This study investigates how gender and friendship quality impact adolescent happiness and examines other related factors. Conducted with 200 participants aged 18 to 21 uses the Authentic Happiness Inventory (AHI) measure for friendship quality. The hypothesis is assessed via multiple regression analysis, revealing that the connection between gender and friendship quality accounts for 8.7% of variance in adolescent happiness, while 91.3% is linked to unexamined factors.

Keywords: adolescence, gender, happiness, quality of friendship

Abstrak: Remaja adalah fase transisi penting yang ditandai dengan perubahan fisik, emosional, sosial, dan psikologis. Mempelajari kebahagiaan pada masa remaja merupakan hal yang penting, karena kesejahteraan emosional remaja sangat bergantung pada hubungan sosial terutama persahabatan, serta pengaruh gender. Topik ini semakin relevan karena meningkatnya tekanan sosial, akademis, dan digital yang dapat meningkatkan atau merusak kebahagiaan. Menjelajahi kebahagiaan remaja memberikan wawasan untuk meningkatkan kesehatan mental dan meletakkan dasar bagi kesejahteraan hingga dewasa. Kebahagiaan mendorong individu untuk terlibat dalam perilaku positif. Studi ini menyelidiki bagaimana jenis kelamin dan kualitas persahabatan mempengaruhi kebahagiaan remaja serta meneliti faktor-faktor terkait lainnya. Penelitian ini melibatkan 200 subjek berusia 18 hingga 21 tahun dengan menggunakan skala Authentic Happiness Inventory (AHI) untuk menilai kualitas persahabatan. Hipotesis ini dinilai melalui analisis regresi berganda, yang mengungkapkan bahwa hubungan antara jenis kelamin dan kualitas persahabatan menyumbang 8,7% dari varians kebahagiaan remaja, sementara 91,3% terkait dengan faktor-faktor yang belum diteliti.

Kata Kunci: remaja; jenis kelamin; kebahagiaan; kualitas persahabatan.

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Introduction

Adolescents are individuals transitioning from childhood to adulthood, typically between 12 and 20 years old (Shaffer, 2010) divides adolescence into four stages: pre-adolescence or pre-puberty (10-12 years), early adolescence or puberty (12-15 years), middle adolescence (15-18 years), and late adolescence (18-21 years). The term adolescence refers to the phase spanning from early to late adolescence. During this time, adolescents usually explore their identity, distinguishing between childhood safety and adulthood independence (Santrock, 2017). According to Broadbent (2017), Indonesia has a high prevalence of depressive symptoms in adolescents aged 15-19 years. Less happy individuals tend to experience depression, anxiety, stress, or other disorders. King (2014) explains that depression is a condition where individuals experience a prolonged lack of joy in life. Achieving happiness in adolescents can bring several benefits in everyday life, as happiness fosters enthusiasm and motivation to participate in various activities (Sativa, 2014).

At the same time, adolescents and young people in their early twenties are increasingly at risk of severe mental health problems. The researchers found that rates of major depression by more than 50% in adolescents, from 8.7% to 13.2%. In 18-25 year olds, it jumped by more than 60%, from 8.1% to 13.2% (Lenterakaji, 2021). Furthermore, a pre-survey conducted by researchers, out of 15 respondents, nine were found to be unhappy, while the remaining six were classified as happy. The pre-survey involved respondents aged 18 to 21 years and was conducted by distributing the Authentic Happiness Inventory and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) questionnaires online via Google Forms. In addition, interviews were conducted based on the aspects covered in these questionnaires. this is consistent with Twenge, et al (2019) Found that the increase in depressive symptoms is associated with a decrease in happiness among adolescents and teenager

Adolescents with strong mental health typically enjoy increased happiness; in contrast, individuals with mental health disorders are prone to reduced pleasure or misery (Diener, et al, 2011). This aligns

with Broadbent (2017), who asserts that physical and mental health are the primary determinants of adolescent happiness. Furthermore, when teenagers experience heightened levels of happiness, they are likely to feel satisfied, display positive emotions, and rarely confront unpleasant sensations (Diener,et al 2011). Harmaini (2016), Happiness and sorrow are among the many emotions experienced by individuals; often, individuals desire to experience happiness, avoiding melancholy, worry, or other unsettling feelings exclusively. Happiness is a universal dream, including for teenagers.

According to Seligman (2018), several factors influence happiness, one of which is external factors, including gender; this is consistent with BPS data in 2022, showing differences in levels of happiness between men and women, namely men at 71.96% and women at 71.04%. The data indicates that men's satisfaction levels exceed women's, but only slightly, with a difference of only 0.92%. Research conducted by Oetami(2011) indicates that factors contributing to the happiness of teenage girls include affection, financial resources, and familial relationships. Conversely, the primary factors for males are friendships, accomplishments, leisure, and spirituality. However, according to Seligman's theory (2018), gender does not significantly influence an individual's happiness. Gender has minimal influence on an individual's pleasure. No research establishes a correlation between gender and happiness. In addition to gender, the quality of friendship profoundly influences happiness; this is consistent with Selvam (2017), who discovered that friends can offer positive experiences in school for adolescents and serve as encouragement for academic achievement. Conversely, teenagers and their peers will be lonely and face limited social interaction. Intimate friendships foster a deeper emotional bond and can evolve into profound relationships. Adolescents require friendship formation to aid in the development of self-identity (Dariyo, 2017). Some empirical studies have shown that friendship affects well-being and psychological adjustment (Mendelson, 2012). The quality of friendship can affect a person's happiness because

they feel someone needs them, feel valuable, and are not lonely, such as one aspect of friendship, namely self-validation. Strong friendship quality will produce a suitable environment for adolescent development (Tomé, 2013). This is supported findings by Lestari (2020) that friendship quality contributes 7.5% to a person's happiness. This study aims to examine the influence of gender and the quality of friendships on adolescent happiness, as the interplay between these variables has not been sufficiently investigated in the current literature.

Method

Research Participants

The research participants in this study made up 20% of Malahayati University's student population in Bandar Lampung, with 200 respondents. The study involved 200 undergraduate students from various academic disciplines at Malahayati University, all meeting specific requirements. The selected sample consisted of undergraduate students of both genders, aged 18 to 21, who had strong friendships and frequently interacted with their peers.

This study employed a quantitative approach using two primary instruments, the happiness and friendship quality scales, alongside demographic data. The Authentic Happiness Inventory (AHI) happiness scale, developed by Schueller (2016), comprises 24 items and demonstrates a high-reliability coefficient of 0.933. Demographic data was represented using dummy variables, where 0 indicated male and 1 indicated female. The Friendship Quality Scale, adapted from the McGill Friendship Questionnaire by Nasyukha (2018) and developed based on the aspects of friendship quality from Mandelson and Aboud's (2012) theory, specifically stimulating companionship, assistance, intimacy, dependable alliance, self-validation, and emotional security, consisting of 28 items. The validity coefficient ranges from .423 to .850. The analysis used in this scientific work uses statistical methods, namely, multiple regression techniques using the SPSS 26.0 for Windows.

Results

Characterisation of Research Subjects Based on the results of the univariate analysis, the findings are presented in the table below:

Table 1.
The demographic data

Demographic data		N	%
Gender	Male	84	42
	Female	116	58
Age (Year)	18	14	7
	19	77	38.5
	20	67	33.5
	21	42	21
Semester	5	125	62.5
	3	55	27.5
	7	20	10

Table 1 shows that most respondents were female, making up 116 individuals (58%), with most being 19 years old, including 77 respondents (38.5%). The largest group of participants in this survey was third-semester students, totalling 125 individuals, representing 62.5% of the overall population participants.

Table 2
Categorisation of the AHI Scale

Categorisation	N	%
Very Low	17	8.5
Low	35	17.5
Average	95	47.5
High	20	10
Very High	33	16.5

Table 2 shows that the happiness levels among adolescents at Malahayati University are mainly classified as average, with 95 respondents making up 47.5%. according to the AHI scale, teenagers mainly experience happiness within the framework of a meaningful life, suggesting that they view their current existence as significant.

Table 3.
The categorisation of the Friendship Quality Scale

Categorisation	N	%
Very Low	17	8.5
Low	22	14.5
Average	99	49.5
High	40	20
Very High	15	7.5

Table 3 shows that the quality of adolescent friendships at Malahayati University in Bandar Lampung is predominantly average, with 99 respondents making up 49.5%. According to the quality of adolescent friendships, adolescents achieve the highest average in the Reliable Alliance category regarding the qualitative dimensions of friendship, suggesting that they believe having their best friend present enhances their friendships.

Based on the results of the normality test statistics using standardized residuals above, the Kolmogorov Smirnov significance value obtained is .200. This Kolmogorov Smirnov significance value is higher than the 5% significance level (0.05) or $\text{sig} > 0.05$. This indicates that the data is normally distributed. Based on the results of calculations performed using the SPSS 26.0 program, a significance value of .000 was obtained where $.000 < .05$. Calculations conducted with SPSS 26 yielded a significant value of .000, less than .05. This indicates that gender and friendship quality concurrently affect happiness. Upon individual examination, it is found that friendship quality does not significantly correlate with adolescent happiness. This is due to the interrelation of both components within a social context. Research demonstrates that gender has a more substantial influence than the quality of friendships on adolescent happiness. Consequently, when analysed in isolation, the correlation between friendship quality and happiness lessens due to variations in coping mechanisms, the effects of social media, and the prevalence of other characteristics that exert a more considerable influence on happiness. The Coefficient of Determination (R^2) is .087, indicating that 8.7% of the variance in the happiness variable is accounted for by gender and friendship quality. The remaining 91.3% is attributed to factors not considered in this study. The independent variables, namely gender and friendship quality, effectively elucidate their potential influence on happiness as the dependent variable. This suggests that the gender variable exerts a considerable positive influence on happiness, with each additional gender category enhancing happiness by .275 and indicating that men experience greater happiness than women.

The t statistic for friendship quality is 1.900, accompanied by a beta coefficient of .130 and a significance threshold of $p > .01$, indicating no significant impact of friendship quality on happiness. The effect of friendship quality on increasing happiness is merely .130. The quality of friendships does not consistently influence adolescent happiness, as other factors such as family, social media, subjective perceptions, and personality may have a more substantial influence.

Discussion

This study indicates that gender and friendship have collectively impacted happiness, contributing to 8.7%, with gender being the predominant factor at 0.275, suggesting that men experience greater happiness than women. The attainment of happiness in teenagers can offer several advantages in daily life, as happiness nurtures passion and motivation to engage in various activities (Sativa, 2014). This aligns with Seligman (2018), who asserts that happiness is a positive emotion that motivates individuals to participate in various constructive behaviors. In developmental psychology, identity formation is a vital process in personality development, anticipated to be achieved by the end of adolescence (Grotevant & Cooper, 1998). Happiness varies for each individual because it is subjective, reflecting Snyder's assertion that happiness is a positive emotion defined subjectively by each person. This study's findings contrast with Lestari, (2020) research, which indicates that friendship quality accounts for 7.5% of an individual's happiness, whilst gender contributes 0.275, suggesting that males experience greater happiness than women. According to BPS data from 2022, the disparity in happiness levels between men and women is just 0.92%, with males exhibiting more satisfaction. The theory from Seligman (2018) The typical emotional levels of men and women are comparable, yet women tend to be more sensitive than men. The emotional ranges of both genders are not significantly different, as women rely more on their feelings, whereas men often utilise logic; therefore, women may express a greater sensitivity to some issues. This aligns with Lippa's hypothesis, which maintains that perceptions of men and women vary

in specific personality traits. Men are viewed as more aggressive, arrogant, competitive, rude, cruel, dominant, independent, violent, and unemotional. In contrast, women are seen as more intimate, anxious, loving, dependent, emotional, gentle, sensitive, sentimental, and submissive. This results in greater happiness and resilience in males, diminishing feelings of helplessness.

This study demonstrates that gender significantly affects happiness, with males exhibiting greater happiness than females. The findings indicate that the happiness of male teenagers at Malahayati University is moderate. Data from the BPS in 2022 show a disparity in happiness levels between men and women, with males displaying significantly higher happiness than females. Research conducted by Oetami (2011) shows the events or circumstances that bring happiness to teenage girls, specifically love and being loved, financial stability, and family. In contrast, for men, happiness primarily comes from friendships, achievements, and leisure time spirituality. Inglehart in Eddington (2005) conducted survey involving 170,000 respondents across 16 nations reported no difference in satisfaction ratings between women and men. Research indicates that women tend to exhibit higher levels of negative emotion and depression compared to men. However, additional findings suggest that women experience more significant negative effects and elevated levels of depression relative to men (Eddington, 2005). This may happen because women display these feelings more openly than men, who often conceal them. This study's findings align with prior research by Bagwell (2015), which highlights differences in happiness based on gender, indicating that men tend to be significantly happier than women. This can be attributed to various biological, social, and psychological factors that vary between men and women. This aligns with contemporary theories Timmers, dkk (2020) contends that variations in emotional expression and coping mechanisms are crucial. Men typically utilise problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies, such as separation and diversion, to alleviate emotional pain and enhance positive affect. Conversely, women tend to adopt relationally oriented coping techniques, like seeking social support or engaging in emotional sharing, which may sometimes

exacerbate negative emotions and diminish overall well-being satisfaction.

Medina dkk (2022) emphasises the influence of sociocultural variables and gender socialisation in shaping these disparities. Men are frequently socialised to prioritise independence, success, and emotional suppression, which results in higher self-esteem and well-being. Meanwhile, women encounter societal expectations regarding nurturing roles, emotional expression, and relational harmony, which can heighten stress and diminish happiness. Furthermore, Sandra (2024) emphasises the role of hormonal differences, noting that higher testosterone levels in men are linked to increased resilience to stress and enhanced emotional well-being. In contrast, hormonal fluctuations in women, such as those of estrogen and oxytocin, contribute to heightened emotional sensitivity and vulnerability to stress, diminishing happiness.

Braun and Clarke (2022) examines how social comparisons and gender norms contribute to these differences. Men tend to base their self-worth and happiness on independence, achievements, and autonomy, which societal standards reinforce. Women, however, often internalise societal expectations regarding appearance, relational roles, and family responsibilities, leading to increased self-criticism and lower happiness levels. Finally, Shields and Kneave (2020) Emphasise the role of psychological well-being, noting that men tend to possess more extensive social networks that offer more outstanding stress-buffering support. In contrast, women often experience smaller yet more emotionally supportive networks, which may not always provide the same level of relief, thereby contributing to lower levels of happiness. These contemporary theories highlight the intricate interplay of biological, social, and psychological factors contributing to gender differences in happiness.

This study's results indicate that friendship quality is not significantly linked to happiness. The findings of this research refute the hypothesis and prior studies that suggest a correlation between friendship quality and happiness. This study yields different results, as happiness is influenced by friendship quality and various other factors such as wealth,

marital status, age, health, negative emotions, education, climate, race, and religion. Research by Lestari (2020) demonstrates that the quality of friendship contributes 7.5% to an individual's happiness, a relatively minor percentage. Men generally maintain several friendships and exhibit greater sociability, while women typically require more time to form friendships. This aligns with the theory from (Azzahra, 2020) which posits that friendships between men and women vary in form or function. The study also indicates a tendency for men and women to select friends of the same gender. This suggests distinct characteristics for women and men when forming friendships. The finding that males and females establish friendships differently, as emphasized by Aiken's (2002) theory, further supports these results. Male tend to have more broader friendships, while females may forge more profound, more intimate connections. These differences may affect how each gender perceives the influence of friendships on their happiness. However, external factors such as family support or life circumstances play a more significant role in determining adolescent happiness.

This study indicates that the quality of friendships may not be the sole determinant of adolescent happiness. Broader and more impactful factors, such as familial support and external conditions, significantly shape teenager happiness.

Conclusion

The results and analysis of this research indicate that gender and friendship quality collectively influence happiness, contributing 8.7% to its variance, while the remaining 91.3% is attributed to other factors. Further analysis reveals that gender has a more substantial impact, accounting for approximately 27.5% of the variation in happiness, suggesting that men experience greater happiness than women. In contrast, the quality of friendships does not significantly influence happiness, as other factors such as family, social media, subjective perceptions, and personality may play a more significant role in shaping adolescent happiness. These findings emphasized the complexity of happiness determinants, highlighting the need to consider broader social and psychological influences beyond gender and friendship quality.

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