

Social Self-Concept and Life Satisfaction: A Preliminary Study on Indonesian College Students

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Abstract. The preliminary study examined the relationship between social self concept and life satisfaction in college students. This study tested the hypothesis that social self concept has positive correlation with life satisfaction. Social self concept subscale of *Multidimensional Self Concept Scale* (MSCS; Bracken, 1992) and *Satisfaction With Life Scale* (SWLS; Diener 1985) were administered to 100 Universitas Islam Indonesia students. One hundred (63 men and 37 women), age 19-24, completed measure on social self concept and life satisfaction. The result indicates that student's perception of his or her social competence with respect to social interaction with others is significantly correlated with satisfaction with life. The research findings, limitations and recommendations are discussed.

Keywords: Social Self Concept, Life Satisfaction, and College Students.

1. Introduction

Life Satisfaction is an essential construct in positive psychology (Gilman and Huebner, 2007). A research shows that the level of satisfaction in a person plays a very critical role in adapting with his or her environment (Lyubomirsky, *et al.*, 2005 in Proctor *et al.*, 2008). Based on a sample of non-clinical study, it is found that an adolescent that has a low level of life satisfaction will be at the increasing risk of doing a maladaptive behaviour such as the drug and alcohol abuse (Zulliget *et al.*, 2001 in Proctor *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, the value in the level of life satisfaction is frequently used to show happiness or unhappiness in which the level of happiness (LS) could change as the time goes by. Negative evaluation, on the other hand, is related to the unhappiness and depression. The healthy psychological state such as happiness and Life Satisfaction (LS), additionally, is commonly assumed as a result of satisfied social and economic state (Lyubomirsky *et al.*, 2005 in Proctor *et al.*, 2008). The life satisfaction (LS) is defined as a cognitive evaluation of people from their life entirely or dominantly on certain aspect of life (Diener *et al.*, 1999).

The preliminary research data (Fajrina dan Kurniawan., 2012) shows the problems on life satisfaction of college students. By analyzing the collected data, it can be concluded that there is a problem on the college students' life satisfaction. This can be proved by the fact that there were only 3.1% of the students who responded "always" think that their lives were close to ideal, and 31.6% of the students responded "sometimes" their lives were very good. 3.1% of the students responded "always" thought to do a lot of changes in their lives, and 48% "sometimes" thought that they had already got what they wanted in life. 4.1% of the students answered "always" satisfied with their lives, and 30.6% answered "sometimes" to do a lot of changes in their lives. The students' response in the category "always" is lower than the category "sometimes". So, the further study on college students' life satisfaction is necessary.

According to Frisch (1998) in Valois *et al.* (2004), life satisfaction define as person's subjective evaluation of the degree to which his or her most important needs, goals, and wishes have been fulfilled. Life satisfaction comes to be an evaluative response towards life entirely or referred to certain aspect of life such as family, friend and school (Diener, 1985). Diener discusses some aspects in his journal entitled *Subjective Well Being: Three Decades of Progress* (1999). He states that in the life satisfaction there are some components such as desire to change life, satisfaction with current life, satisfaction with past, satisfaction with future, and significant others' views of one's life. Several previous studies (e.g. Chang *et al.*, 2003, Dew and Huebner, 1993; Leung and Zang, 2000; Leung and Leung, 1992; and Tery and Huebner, 1995) showed that self-concept is positively related to the life satisfaction. Self-concept in general refers to perception,

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individual belief about his or herself and influences an interaction or relationship with others (Shavelson *et al.*, 1976). Furthermore, social self-concept comes to be a dimension of self-concept and reflects how an individual to feel to have competence to interact with other, participate in social and is accepted in social environment (Bracken *et al.*, 2000).

Byrne and Shavelson (1999) in Rinn (2006) said that social self-concept represents one's perception of his or her social competence with respect to social interaction with others and derives from the assessment of one's behavior within a given social context.

An individual that has a high social self-concept will assess or perceive his or herself positively in having interaction with his or her environment, accepts other people surrounding and perceives his or herself to run life better. Hence, the individual will be satisfied for what is belonged to. By having a high social self-concept, he or she will also be able to have a high life satisfaction as well.

The practical significance of this research is to add knowledge for everyone, particularly for the college students about social self-concept. It is expected that when the individual is able to understand about social self-concept and apply it in his or her everyday life, the individual is able to be more grateful for what have been belonged to. The proposed hypothesis is about the positive relationship between social self-concept and life satisfaction in college students.

2. Methods

2.1. Partisipan

This study used quantitative research method. The number of subjects involved in this research is 100 college students coming from 2006 to 2011 involved including 63 males and 37 females. The students were from Law Faculty (52%) and Economics Faculty (48%).

2.2. Instruments

The independent variable in this research is Life Satisfaction, while the dependent one is Social Self-Concept. The measuring devices used is SWLS that is the scale of Life Satisfaction (Diener, 1985), MSCS that is a scale of Social Self-Concept (Bracken, 2000) and supported by scale of Social Desirability from Reynolds Short Forms of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale Short Form A (Reynolds & Gebasi, 1982). Those scales are the ones adapted by the writer.

2.3. Method of Data Analysis

This study used statistical analysis to examine research hypothesis. In this research, those two variables did not follow the normal distribution and hypothesis test was conducted by using non-parametric statistic.

3. Result

Furthermore, the assumption test on linearity refers to a test for the regression line between the independent variable and the dependent one. This test is used to find out the given linear relationship between those two variables in the research. The result then showed a relationship between life satisfaction and social self-concept that forms a straight line with $F_{\text{linearity}} = 7.110$, $p < 0.05$ and $F_{\text{Deviation from linearity}} = 0.756$, $p > 0.05$.

Correlations

			kepuasanhidup	Konsepdirisosial
Spearman's rho	Kepuasanhidup	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.218(*)
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.015
		N	100	100
	Konsepdirisosial	Correlation Coefficient	.218(*)	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.015	.
		N	100	100

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

As seen in the table of correlation below, it can be found that there is a significant relationship between social self-concept and life satisfaction among college students. It can be seen from level of significance $p=0.015$ in which $p > 0.05$ meaning that the higher social self-concept, the higher life satisfaction among the college students.

The further correlation is how the impact of social self-concept and life satisfaction by concerning with social desirability of the subject. In the subject with the low social desirability (social desirability < 0.5) shows an insignificant correlation between social self-concept and life satisfaction ($r = 0.66, p > 0.05$). Meanwhile, in the subject with high social desirability (social desirability > 0.5) shows a significant correlation between social self-concept and life satisfaction ($r = 0.014, p < 0.05$).

The researcher conducts a further analysis to see the pattern of relationship between those two variables by concerning the gender. The result of analysis then shows a significant correlation between social self-concept and life satisfaction in subject of female ($N=37$) ($r = 0.016, p < 0.05$) and in male it does not show a significant correlation between social self-concept and life satisfaction ($N = 63$) ($r = 0.084, p > 0.05$).

4. Discussion

From the result of the research, it is found that there is a positive relationship between social self-concept and life satisfaction in the college students. This result is in line with the proposed hypothesis of the research; namely there is a positive relationship between social self-concept and life satisfaction in the college students. Hence, the higher the social self-concept is, the higher the life satisfaction in college students will be. Conversely, the lower the social self-concept in the college students is, the lower the life satisfaction will be. Both variables have correlation at 0.015.

According to Frisch, 1998 in Valois *et al.* 2004 life satisfaction is defined as a subjective evaluation of a person on what has been the most critical in his or her life, goal of life, and expectation that have been obtained. Life satisfaction comes to be an evaluative response towards life entirely or refers to certain aspect of life such as family, friends, and school (Diener, 1985). This is almost in line with what has been stated by Huebner (1991) in Nickerson and Nagle, 2004 that life satisfaction is an evaluation of life satisfaction of someone entirely that can be more prioritized than the consideration towards family, friends, and school. Teenager, equal to the college students, that has been satisfied with his or her life will be able to face his or her psychological problems such as being able to think and consider positively towards himself or herself and others. When being able to positively think and can interact with social environment, the college students will have a good social self-control.

The further correlation is how the impact of social self-concept and life satisfaction by concerning with social desirability of the subject. In the subject with the low social desirability (social desirability < 0.5) shows an insignificant correlation between social self-concept and life satisfaction ($r = 0.266, p > 0.05$). Meanwhile, in the subject with high social desirability (social desirability > 0.5) shows a significant correlation between social self-concept and life satisfaction ($r = 0.014, p < 0.05$). This means that there is no any impact of social desirability of the subject on the result between social self-concept and life satisfaction. Social desirability is defined as a form of conformity towards the social stereotype since the subject requires an acceptance that as a result will lead to the desire for the social acknowledgment (Chen, 1997). In other word, social desirability refers to a subject desire to be acknowledged in society. Fredericksen in Huang 2001 shows that social desirability is tightly related to a desire to have security (self-protection), an effort to avoid criticism, social conformity and social approval. By having a comfortable and composed thought, the individual will be prevented from the negative thinking when being interacting and participating with his or her social environment. Hence, the individual will have a high social self-concept.

The researcher conducted a further analysis to see the pattern of relationship between those two variables by focusing on the gender. The result of this analysis shows that there is a significant correlation between social self-concept and life satisfaction on the subject of female ($N= 37$), ($r = 0.016, p < 0.05$) and in male, there was no any significant correlation between social self-concept and life satisfaction ($N=63$ and $r = 0.084, p > 0.05$).

From several explanations above, it can be concluded that social self-concept is positively related to *life satisfaction* among the college students. However, *life satisfaction* in the college students has no any correlation with gender, age and generation and monthly pin money. The college students that have life satisfaction, in this case, those having a high social self-concept will not have a negative thought and assessment towards their social environment and accept other people without any conditions.

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