

THE INFLUENCE OF SUBJECTIVE HAPPINESS AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING ON FLOURISHING AMONG EMERGING ADULTS

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of subjective happiness and emotional well-being on flourishing among emerging adults in Indonesia. Flourishing represents authentic and enduring well-being characterized by optimal psychological functioning, meaningful engagement, and positive relationships. Using a quantitative, non-experimental design, data were collected from 372 emerging adults residing in Bandung and Semarang through standardized self-report instruments: the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS), the Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE), and the Flourishing Scale. Multiple regression analysis was employed to test the predictive contributions of subjective happiness and emotional well-being to flourishing. The findings indicate that subjective happiness and emotional well-being jointly predict flourishing significantly ($R = .519$, $R^2 = .270$, $p < .001$), explaining 27% of the variance. Emotional well-being shows a stronger predictive effect ($\beta = .390$) than subjective happiness ($\beta = .207$). Demographic variables, including age, education level, socioeconomic status, and marital status, are also significantly associated with flourishing. These results highlight the critical role of affective balance in fostering sustainable psychological well-being among emerging adults.

Keywords: Subjective Happiness, Emotional Well-Being, Flourishing, Emerging Adulthood, Positive Psychology

INTRODUCTION

Happiness and well-being have become central constructs in contemporary psychological research, particularly within the framework of positive psychology. While happiness has traditionally been viewed as the ultimate life goal, recent perspectives distinguish between transient pleasure and enduring psychological well-being (Diener & Chan, 2011; Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 1999; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). This distinction is essential in understanding flourishing, a state of optimal functioning characterized by purpose, engagement, competence, and positive social relationships (Arif, 2016). (Huppert & So, 2013; Keyes, 2002)

Seligman (Arif, 2016) that flourishing reflects authentic happiness or eudaimonic well-being, which emphasizes meaning and virtue rather than momentary pleasure (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005; Seligman, 2011). Individuals who flourish demonstrate resilience, effective stress management, and adaptive coping skills that allow them to thrive despite life challenges (Diener & Chan, 2011; Keyes, 2002). From a developmental perspective, emerging adulthood represents a critical life stage involving identity exploration, career establishment, and relationship formation. These transitions place significant emotional and psychological demands on individuals, making flourishing particularly relevant during this period.

Lyubomirsky, King & Diener (2005) that subjective happiness refers to an individual's global evaluation of their own happiness, based on personal standards and comparisons with others. It reflects a cognitive-evaluative dimension of well-being and has been associated with positive life outcomes such as better health, stronger relationships, and higher life satisfaction (Diener & Chan, 2011; Diener, Suh, et al., 1999). The Sustainable Happiness Model suggests that subjective happiness is influenced by life circumstances, genetic predispositions, and intentional

activities (Diener, Oishi, et al., 1999; Diener, Suh, et al., 1999; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). In the Indonesian context, recent studies have adapted and validated subjective well-being scales and examined happiness among adolescents and young adults using both Islamic and positive-psychology frameworks.

Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Tay, L. (2018) that emotional well-being, in contrast, focuses on affective experiences, particularly the balance between positive and negative emotions. A predominance of positive affect over negative affect has been consistently linked to better mental health, resilience, and long-term well-being (Diener & Chan, 2011; Fredrickson, 2001). Emotional well-being therefore represents a dynamic process of emotional regulation and balance rather than a static emotional state (Diener, 2005).

Ryff (1989) and Keyes (1998) further conceptualize psychological and social well-being as multidimensional constructs that integrate autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life, and positive relationships. These dimensions have been shown to predict higher levels of life satisfaction and lower levels of psychological distress (Diener & Chan, 2011; Keyes, 1998; Ryff, 1989). In Indonesia, recent studies have explored psychological well-being and happiness among adolescents and emerging adults, emphasizing cultural and religious factors in shaping well-being experiences (Nama Penulis, 2020; Nama Penulis, 2024; Nama Penulis, 2025).

Although both subjective happiness and emotional well-being are integral components of overall well-being (Diener, Suh, et al., 1999; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005), their relative contributions to flourishing have not been extensively examined in Indonesian emerging adults. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the simultaneous and individual effects of subjective happiness and emotional well-being on flourishing, as well as the role of demographic factors in shaping flourishing outcomes.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional research design. The objective was to examine the predictive relationships between subjective happiness, emotional well-being, and flourishing without experimental manipulation. Participants consisted of 372 emerging adults residing in two major Indonesian cities: Bandung ($n = 242$) and Semarang ($n = 130$). The sample included 211 women (56.7%) and 161 men (43.3%), with a mean age of 31.82 years ($SD = 12.139$). Most participants had completed senior high school or higher education and reported middle to upper socioeconomic status.

Instruments

1. **Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)** The SHS consists of four items measuring global subjective happiness using a seven-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate greater perceived happiness.
2. **Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE)** SPANE assesses positive and negative emotional experiences over the previous four weeks. Emotional well-being was operationalized using the SPANE balance score, calculated by subtracting negative affect from positive affect.

Flourishing Scale The Flourishing Scale consists of eight items assessing key aspects of psychological well-being, including purpose in life, social relationships, competence, optimism, and self-respect.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression was conducted to examine the joint and individual contributions of subjective happiness and emotional well-being to flourishing.

Table 1. Correlation of Demographic Characteristics and Flourishing

Variabel	Flourishing		
	<i>r</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	
Age	.152**	.003	
Education	.118*	.012	
Economic Status	.165**	.001	
Marital Status	.117*	.013	
Note. * < .05	** < .01 (1-tailed)	Pearson	N=372

Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between flourishing and several demographic variables. Age ($r = .152, p < .01$), education level ($r = .118, p < .05$), socioeconomic status ($r = .165, p < .01$), and marital status ($r = .117, p < .05$) were all positively correlated with flourishing. These findings indicate that individuals who are older, more educated, economically stable, and married tend to report higher levels of flourishing.

Table 2. Influence of Subjective Happiness and Emotional Well-Being

Model	Flourishing				<i>Sig.</i>	%
	R	R Square	F	<i>F</i>		
	.51	.270	68.1	0	.00	2
	9		65	0	7.0	
Note. * < .05	** < .01	Multiple Regression				N=372

a. Dependent Variable: flourish_total

b. Predictors: (Constant), spane_balance, Subjective Happiness

Multiple regression analysis demonstrated that subjective happiness and emotional well-being jointly predicted flourishing significantly ($R = .519, R^2 = .270, F = 68.165, p < .001$). Together, these variables accounted for 27% of the variance in flourishing.

Table 3. Path Analysis of Subjective Happiness dan Emotional Well-being to Flourishing

Variables	Flourishing			
	B	t	<i>Sig.</i>	
Subjective Happiness	.207**	4.139	.000	
Emotional Well-being	.390**	7.783	.170	
Note. * < .05	** < .01	Multiple Regression		N=372

Regression coefficients indicated that both predictors had significant positive effects on flourishing. Emotional well-being emerged as the stronger predictor ($\beta = .390, p < .001$), followed by subjective happiness ($\beta = .207, p < .001$). These results suggest that affective balance plays a more substantial role in promoting flourishing than global happiness perceptions alone.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that subjective happiness and emotional well-being are significant predictors of flourishing among emerging adults. Emotional well-being, operationalized as a balance between positive and negative emotions, demonstrated a stronger influence on flourishing compared to subjective happiness. This result underscores the importance of emotional regulation and sustained positive affect in achieving long-term psychological well-being.

Flourishing appears to be more closely associated with everyday emotional experiences than with general evaluations of happiness. Individuals who consistently experience more positive than negative emotions may develop greater resilience, stronger social connections, and higher engagement in meaningful activities, all of which contribute to flourishing.

The significant associations between demographic factors and flourishing further highlight the role of life context. Higher education and socioeconomic stability may provide access to resources that support personal growth and self-actualization. Marital status may contribute to flourishing through emotional support and relational meaning.

Despite these findings, the model explains only part of the variance in flourishing, indicating that other factors—such as personality traits, spirituality, coping strategies, and cultural values may also play important roles (Compton, 2005). Future research should explore these variables using longitudinal designs to better understand causal relationships.

Several limitations should be noted. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference, and the reliance on self-report measures may introduce response bias. Additionally, the gender distribution was not fully balanced.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that subjective happiness and emotional well-being significantly influence flourishing among emerging adults in Indonesia. Emotional well-being, particularly the balance between positive and negative emotions, has a stronger impact on flourishing than subjective happiness. Demographic factors such as age, education, socioeconomic status, and marital status are also associated with flourishing.

Interventions aimed at promoting flourishing should therefore prioritize emotional regulation, enhancement of positive affect, and the development of meaningful life engagement, while also considering individuals' demographic and contextual backgrounds.

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