

The Relationship between Autonomy and Life Satisfaction of Migrant Students

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Abstract. Migrant students are required to be autonomy and have the ability to adjust to their new environment, so that with the high level of autonomy that students have they are expected to feel the high life satisfaction. This research aimed to examine the relationship between autonomy and life satisfaction of migrant students. This research is a correlational quantitative research with the subjects of 40 migrant students who came from outside Malang and aged between 18-22 years old. The data were obtained by autonomy and Life Satisfaction Inventory-A (LSI-A) scales. This research produced finding that there was a significant positive relationship between autonomy and life satisfaction with a significance value (p) that was $0.001 < 0.05$ and the value of $R = 0.514$. Autonomy contributed as much as 26.4% to life satisfaction on the research subjects ($r^2 = 0.264$), which means that 73.6% of other factors contributed to life satisfaction.

Keywords: Autonomy, life satisfaction, migrant students

Introduction

Various ways are done by humans to obtain a good quality of life. An important element in a good quality of life is how a person enjoys and likes his life. This is one of the concepts of positive psychology which is often called life satisfaction. According to Diener (2009) life satisfaction is a cognitive aspect of subjective wellbeing. A person who has a high life satisfaction is expected to have an adjustment and happiness with his life situation and vice versa (Kang & Princy, 2013).

Life satisfaction refers to self-assessment of quality of life in general based on criteria determined by the individual itself, in the form of cognitive assessment which is a multidimensional concept consisting of satisfaction derived from family, friends, school, environment and oneself which is a positive aspect of subjective wellbeing in one's life (Antaramian, Huebner, & Valois, 2008). Ryff & Singer (1998) also show that the components of life satisfaction could include prevention or susceptibility to psychopathology.

The individuals who are satisfied with their lives tend to be adaptive in facing difficult situations and stressful conditions. In addition, it can be ascertained that the individuals are able to be more explorative in living their life activities. Similarly for migrant students who come from outside their home regions. They are required to be able to adapt in different place. Their ability to adjust to the new social environment can certainly determine their life satisfaction. According to Huebner (2000) the living environment is one of the supporting dimensions of one's life satisfaction, where the satisfied individuals will feel happy with the conditions in which they live, like their surroundings, like their neighbors and judge that the city where they live is filled with meaningful people and lots of fun things they can do.

When entering a new environment, individuals face a variety of new problems caused by differences in language, customs, humor, and cuisine (Thurber & Walton, 2012). In addition, Hurlock states that migrant students must experience various adjustments, namely the absence of parents, a new friendship system, adjustments to the norms that exist in the local community and a new learning socialization. This is the reason for migrant students to be demanded to be autonomy and responsible in dealing with social changes that occur (Lingga & Tuapattinaja, 2012).

Autonomy is a behavior that must be owned by everyone, especially for students who choose to migrate and leave their homes. In developmental psychology theory, students who are aged ranging from 18-21 years old belong to late adolescence (Monks, 2006) where at this time, autonomy should have been achieved considering that late adolescence is a period that has approached adulthood. According to Fleming (2005) the desire to become autonomy has been seen since the beginning of adolescence, which is around the age of 12 and 13 years old. Achieving autonomy for adolescents is something that is not easy and requires a long process, because in adolescence there is a movement of psychosocial development from the direction of the family environment to the environment outside the family. Migrant students, especially those who have just graduated from high school, are trying to release the attachments that have been experienced where everything is regulated and determined by parents.

Autonomy is usually defined in a variety of ways, generally reflecting the ability to self-regulate, make decisions and choose their own path and think for themselves (Collins, 1990). In general, according to Steinberg (2002), autonomy includes three aspects,

namely emotional autonomy, behavior autonomy and value autonomy. The migrant autonomy students naturally feel free emotionally, able to make their own decisions and able to set boundaries, values and morals by themselves.

From the result of Jannah's (2016) study there were differences in the level of autonomy of students who migrated and those who did not. The autonomy of students who migrate is higher than students who do not migrate or live in their home with their parents. This means that migrant students are able to make their own choices and make decisions to leave home to undergo those decisions. In accordance with Fleming (2005) who states that someone who is autonomy, dare to choose to be far from parents, can make their own choices without the help of others, find a way out of their own problems, be responsible for what they have chosen, can regulate their behavior and emotions, think critically, can manage their own finances, etc.

In this case autonomy is more than just behavior, but a sense of fundamental freedom. When individuals succeed in achieving their autonomy, they experience positive outcomes in their lives such as great wellbeing (Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon, Ryan, Deci, & Kasser, 2004). Life satisfaction is a component of subjective wellbeing related to personal development throughout the life span including adolescence (Bringle, 2003). Not surprisingly, a number of studies show that individuals who have high subjective wellbeing when they feel free in their choices and actions (Cheng & Furnham, 2001; Sheldon, Kasser, Houser-Marko, Jones, & Turban, 2005). When viewed from the above explanation, autonomy can have a positive impact on one's life, including increasing subjective wellbeing. For this reason, in this research the researcher was interested in knowing the relationship between autonomy and life satisfaction of migrant students.

Literature Review

Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a process of cognitive assessment in a person as a whole which depends on the comparison of his own situation with the standards that are appropriate for him (Diener and Diener, 2009). Another definition by Veenhoven (1996), life satisfaction is the extent to which a person positively evaluates quality as a whole or in other words how much a person likes his life. Briefly Huebner et al (2000) reveal that life satisfaction is a person's cognitive evaluation of his life as a whole. While Sousa and Lyubomirsky (2001) explain that life satisfaction can be achieved by having a decent income, excellent health, and an active lifestyle both in family and friendship. From the explanations above, it can be concluded that life satisfaction is a subjective assessment to know how well and satisfied someone live their life by comparing the current situation with the appropriate standard.

Although life satisfaction is a subjective assessment of oneself, however, to make individuals feel a

satisfaction in their lives, it can be influenced by several dimensions. Here are the five dimensions proposed by Huebner (2000): (a) Family dimension; a person who is satisfied with the life of his family will enjoy his time with his family and judges that his family is better than other families and always gives a positive assessment of his family. (b) Friend dimension; in this condition the individual will judge that he has enough friends, his friends treat him well, and assesses that his friends are valuable people in his life because he has plenty of time to have fun together. (c) School dimension; the individuals assume that the school or campus where they are studying is an attractive place so that he likes to be in school and enjoy the activities in it. (d) Self-dimension; someone's satisfaction towards himself and judgement that he/she is kind, good looking, lovable, and able to do many things well. (e) Environment dimension; someone's pleasure towards their neighborhood. Judgement towards a nice house and kind family. The person loves their neighbor and judge that their residence surrounded by worthy people and there are many fun things that can be done within it.

Autonomy

Steinberg (2002) states that autonomy is individual ability to act by themselves and adolescent autonomy is presented by acting appropriately with their desire, taking decision by themselves, and be able to be responsible on their own behavior. Autonomy is an individual behavior obtained cumulatively during growth, where individual will kept learning to act autonomy in facing some various situations in the environment so that finally they will be able to think and act by themselves.

Steinberg (2002) states that autonomy is divided into three aspects, they are: (a) Emotional autonomy is a change of emotional closeness among individual, like individual emotional relationship with friends or parents. To what extent adolescent can do de-idealized toward parents, viewing parents as common adult, depends on their self-ability without expecting emotional help from other and to what extent adolescent can do individualized in their relationship with parents. (b) Behavior autonomy is an ability to take decision without depending on other and doing it responsibly. Adolescent who has autonomy behavior is free from the influence of other in taking choice and decision. However, it does not mean that they do not need others advice. (c) Value autonomy, is an ability to interpret a series of principle about right and wrong, about what is matter and what is not. Adolescent can consider some various possibility in value field, for instance, adolescent consider some various possibility that would happen when taking moral decision

According to Suhanan (2012) there are three characteristics of autonomy behavior: (a) Taking initiative to act. First, autonomy people has a tendency to take initiative by themselves in thinking about something and doing action without command, order, remind, or suggest by others. In other words, autonomy people consciously that important thing and has been their job

and responsibility, then doing it by their own will without any force or command from others. (b) Controlling activity. Second, instead of taking initiative, autonomy people can control their own mind, act, and activity without any force or pressure from others. For example, the ability to manage between study time and playtime, work job and family matter, when to start, continue and stop working, and when the work should be started until it is done. All of them are done based on self-will, without need to be reminded or forced by others. (c) Empowering self-ability. Third, autonomy people tend to believe and optimally leveraging their abilities in doing task, taking decision, or solving problem without any expectation to others help. (d) Appreciating self-work. The last, autonomy people surely appreciate or feel satisfied toward something done or produce by themselves include their simple works. This is because they have empowered several own abilities as well as energy and mind, even some material without involving others help in the working process. Psychologically, it could be said that someone's satisfaction toward their works is proportional to the extent of the efforts. The bigger the effort and the hardest the task or job, then the higher the satisfaction emerged after all. Thus, autonomy behavior is related to appreciation, satisfaction, and pride behavior toward what has done and produced by oneself. Otherwise, if there is no appreciation, satisfaction, and pride value, someone tend to be dependent to others.

Adolescent autonomy does not formed casually but growing because of the influence from some factors. According to Hurlock (1999), the factors influence autonomy are: (a) Parenting pattern. Parents has the best culture value in treating their child democratically, this pattern allow parents to act as an advisor who pays attention for each activity and needs of their child, especially which relates to the academic and social needs both in the family and school environments. (b) Gender. Gender differs male and female, where this differentiation favors male because they are expected to be masculine, dominant, aggressive, and active in comparison to female who is expected to be feminist, passive, obedient and dependent. (c) Birth order in the family. First child is usually oriented to adult, able to do self-control, afraid to be fail and passive in comparison to their siblings. Middle child tend to be extrovert and less motivated, but they have principle. The last child is one who mostly loved by parents. (d) Family size. In a family, it could be found that they have different family size. There is a big family whose children is more than six people, moderate size family whose children is four until five people, and small family whose children is one until three people. The differentiation of family size has positive and negative impacts to the relationship of parents and children or children and their siblings. Usually, the negative impact is most felt by the family who has a big size because the parents should divide their attention equally to their children which sometimes one is ignored.

The hypothesis in this research was there was a positive relationship between autonomy and life

satisfaction of migrant students. Thus, the higher the autonomy level owned by the migrant students, then the bigger the life satisfaction felt by the students. Otherwise, the lower the autonomy level owned by the migrant students, then the smaller the life satisfaction felt by the students.

Method

This research used quantitative approach. According to Sugiyono (2012) quantitative research is a research in the form of numbers which use statistical analysis. The method used was correlation design, which was a research that finds the relationship between the observed variables. Correlation research aimed at observing the variable in a factor relate to the variation of other factor. In this research, correlation research was used to know the relationship between students' autonomy and life satisfaction.

The subjects of this research were 40 students of Muhammadiyah Malang University with the following criteria: migrant student came from other region of Malang or originated from other regency, aged 18-22 years old which was categorized as late adolescence, living separated with parents (in a boarding house or dormitory).

This research used two variables that were autonomy as independent variable and life satisfaction as dependent variable. Autonomy is the tendency to determine the action by themselves (activity) to be done and do not determine by others. The activities covering: thinking, decision making, problem solving; carrying out duties and responsibilities, selecting favorite activities. Whereas, life satisfaction is the subjective assessment to know how good or satisfied someone in life by comparing the current condition with the standard one.

The scale used in this research was the autonomy scale developed by Suharnan (2012) that consisted of three aspects or criteria that were: taking the initiative to do an action, controlling the activities carried out, and appreciating the results of work itself. This autonomy scale was in the form of likert scale that consisted of four scores (SS = very appropriate, S = appropriate, TS = inappropriate, STS = very inappropriate). There were 36 valid items with reliability of 0.935.

For life satisfaction used Life Satisfaction Inventory-A (LSI-A) scale that was developed firstly by Neugarten et al and had been modified and adapted into Indonesian Language which consisted of five aspects of life satisfaction including positive self-concept, congruence, mood tone, zest, and resolution and fortitude. There were 22 valid items with the reliability as much as 0.918.

Generally, this research was conducted through several stages that were started by preparation, implementation, management the data result of the research, and report writing. In the preparation stage was begun by preparing the research proposal and research instruments that were autonomy scale developed by Suharnan (2012) and life satisfaction scale. Then, it went to implementation stage by distributing instruments to the migrant students in University of Muhammadiyah

Malang. After the data were collected, then it was managed by using SPSS software with Pearson product moment correlation analysis. The last stage was report writing of the research according to the format that had been set.

Result

Statistical analysis in this research were divided into two stages, prerequisite test and hypothesis test. The prerequisite test that must be fulfilled is the variables measured must be close to the normal distribution and have a linear relationship between the autonomy and dependent variables (Sugiyono, 2012).

Normality test was done by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov measurement with the help of a computerized SPSS program. The data of the research was claimed as normal if $p > 0.05$. Based on the normality test done by the researcher, it was known that the research data in the autonomy scale and life satisfaction scale had normal distribution with the value of 0.56 ($p > 0.05$). While, in the linearity test showed that the value of 0.839 with $p > 0.05$. This means that both variables were linear. Thus, the researcher could administer a Pearson Product Moment correlation test with the help of a computerized SPSS program.

From the results of correlation test, it was found that there was a significant positive relationship between autonomy and life satisfaction on the migrant students with the r value of 0.514 and the p value was 0.001 ($p < 0.05$). This means that the hypothesis of this research was accepted. The existence of positive relationship showed that the higher the autonomy that migrant students had, the higher the life satisfaction they had. In addition, the autonomy gave contribution as much as 26.4% on the life satisfaction of migrant students ($r^2 = 0.264$).

Discussion

The results of the research revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between autonomy and life satisfaction, it means that the higher the autonomy that migrant students had, the higher the life satisfaction they felt. In the contrary, the lower the autonomy owned by the migrant students, the lower the life satisfaction that the migrant students felt. Furthermore, this also means that the hypothesis proposed by the researcher was accepted.

The results of this research was supported the previous research which was almost similar conducted by Ferguson & Kasser (2010) that was about the perceived autonomy support from parent on the adolescence' life satisfaction. To be autonomy, individuals need an opportunity, support and encouragement from the family and surrounding environment to achieve autonomy over themselves so that they can improve their life satisfaction. Furthermore, the research by Puente-Díaz & Cavazos (2013) also showed the similar result that autonomy as the significant predictor of someone's life satisfaction. Through the autonomy process, the migrant students improved their capabilities to make it good so

that they were able to drive on their own behavior. As individuals who transform from adolescence to adulthood, this transition phase is often signed by the effort to achieve the life goals by separating themselves from the family. This changes accelerate the individuals to reach their autonomy. When the adolescent enter the college, they will have a desire to be more autonomy and want to be separated from their parents, besides the parents also have the same expectation as their children have that is to be autonomy (Kenyon & Koerner, 2009). Thus, the more autonomy a person is, the greater the life satisfaction is perceived.

The information obtained in this research was that autonomy gave contribution as much as 26.4% to the life satisfaction of migrant students. Meanwhile, another 73.6% was influenced by other factors. In accordance with the concept drawn by Ryff & Keyes (1995) who state that there are six characteristics that determine life satisfaction, one of them is autonomy in which the individuals are self-determined, or being able to choose and determine the best things for themselves and feel free, can restrain themselves social pressure, set his own behavior and evaluate themselves with their personal standards. In addition, according to Ryff and Keyes, five other factors that determine life satisfaction are self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, environmental mastery, life goals, and self-development.

Some characteristics included in autonomy such as: taking the initiative to act, being able to control the activities they do, empowering the abilities they possess and appreciating the results of the work itself have a correlation to life satisfaction.

The migrant students who were autonomy have the ability to adapt to the social environment so that they feel the high life satisfaction as well. The dimension of life satisfaction felt by the migrant students covered family, friends, school, self and living environment (Huebner, 2000).

According to family dimension, migrant students who were satisfied with their family life would enjoy the time spent with their families as the amount of time spent gathering together was very limited, for instance was during the college break. In addition, migrant students also considered that their families were better than other families and always gave positive rating to their families. This positive rating was one of supports come from the families to obtain their autonomy, which were greater freedom and autonomy to obtain goals related to personal satisfaction and interest (Ferguson & Kasser, 2010). Therefore, the migrant students directly had their autonomy from their families regarding to the decision to live away from their families and choose their own education/university and the department they wanted to achieve their goals. Thus, migrant students felt satisfied of their lives.

On friend dimension, for the migrant students, friends should be like their families as they were far from their homes. Migrant students who were satisfied with their lives had an opinion that they had enough friends and treated themselves well, and considered that their

friends were valuable in their lives since they had plenty of time to have fun together. In the dimension of school, the place of study or university that had been chosen by migrant students to study was the decision they made before. As the goal had been reached, the student felt satisfied and put into their minds that the university where they studied was an interesting place so they liked studying in that place and felt comfortable in school and enjoyed the activities in the university.

Meanwhile in the dimension of self, one's satisfaction on himself and evaluated himself as a nice and good looking person, being liked by many people and he was able to do many things well. The last was the dimension of the neighborhood was one of supporting dimensions of one's life satisfaction, in which the satisfied migrant students would be happy with the condition of place where they lived, liked the surrounding environment, liked their neighbors and evaluate the city where they lived was filled with people who meant a lot and many fun things he could do.

Conclusion

Based on the result of this research, the research hypothesis was accepted. There was a positive relationship between the autonomy and life satisfaction. The importance of autonomy possessed by migrant students gave an impact on their life satisfaction. The higher the autonomy of the migrant students was, the higher their life satisfaction would feel by the student and vice versa. This was proved through statistical calculations with significance value (p) of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$) and the value of $R = 0.514$. Autonomy gave contribution as much as 26.4% to life satisfaction to research subjects ($r^2 = 0.264$), which means that 73.6% of other factors contributed to life satisfaction.

The limitation of this study was the small research samples and disseminating data only at one university in Malang. Therefore, it is suggested to do it in larger samples.

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