

The Relationship Between Gratefulness and Psychological Distress on the Quality of Life of Juvenile Offenders During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: *Purpose:* The study aims to examine the relationship between gratitude and psychological distress to the quality of life of juvenile offenders during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Method:* The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Aitem Form (6 items, $\alpha = 89.1$), Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale – 21 (21 items, $\alpha = 88.9$), and WHOQOL-BREF (26 items, $\alpha = 87.5$) were administered to fifty-nine juvenile offenders from Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak (LPKA) Kutoarjo and LPKA Yogyakarta. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression. *Result:* A significant regression equation showed that gratitude and psychological distress were associated with quality of life ($F(2.56) = 9.949, p < .01$), with an $R^2 .262$. In detail, gratitude was associated with a positive quality of life. ($t(58) = 4.170, p < .01$), meanwhile, experiencing psychological distress does not provide any meaningful association with the juvenile's quality of life ($t(58) = -1.411, p > .01$). In addition, there were no differences in all additional statistical tests based on age group, education level, and ethnicity. *Conclusions:* These new findings highlight how juveniles' quality of life can be improved by involving gratitude during hardship, specifically during a pandemic. Future research can examine gratitude intervention programs as part of rehabilitation programs in prison to improve the juvenile's quality of life in the new standard era.

1 INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are vulnerable to delinquency in later life and have a significant risk of committing a crime (Tisak & Goldstein, 2021). Many factors influence juvenile delinquency, including education level, social environment and friendships, and violent family background (de Boer et al., 2022). In Indonesia, juveniles who are found guilty according to the law are called Penitentiary Students (Andikpas) and are placed in the Special Child Development Institute (LPKA) to receive guidance proper education (Ariani, 2014). Research conducted

(Ariani, 2014). Based on Law No. 11 of 2012, children in conflict with the law are children aged 12-18 who commit criminal acts (Ariani, 2014). In addition to the Correctional Database System, as of October 2020, there are around 1,322 juveniles in Indonesia (Kristianto, 2021).

The existence of Andikpas at LPKA encounters various new problems even though the coaching program at LPKA has a specific goal: to provide legal protection rights so that Andikpas can still grow and develop with

by Borschmann et al. (2020) found that various

physical and mental health problems were more common among adolescents in prison than those who had never been prisoned. Furthermore, various issues occur in Andikpas, including sadness, boredom, laziness, less motivation to participate in activities, sleep and appetite problems, and suicide (Pratomo & Soeparno, 2018).

Juvenile quality of life problems were also the main problems that often occur (de Ruigh et al., 2019). In Indonesia, juveniles risk experiencing post-imprisonment bullying by peers and the environment (Fardian & Santoso, 2017). In addition, about 32.56% of the 31 Andikpas in Blitar Prisons were found to be experiencing very high stress (Ariyanto, 2016). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Directorate General of Corrections (Ditjen PAS) closed visits to prisons, detention centers, and LPKA (Nuraini, 2020). A survey conducted by the Howard League for Penal Reform (2020) stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has limited Andikpas in recreational activities such as sports, worship, or library visits. The survey also showed that visitation restrictions had a dramatic impact on Andikpas. They expressed concern about not being able to see their parents and worried because they did not know how long the situation would last.

The problem of quality of life in Andikpas impacts the emergence of psychosocial issues (Barendregt et al., 2018), being more vulnerable to various psychological pressures and increasing the risk of becoming a recidivist (Hassan, 2020). Therefore, it is essential to analyze multiple things that have the potential to be positive or negative predictors of Andikpas' quality of life (Hassan, 2020). The research of Valikhani et al. (2019) and Ningsih (2021) found that gratitude has an essential role in maintaining the welfare and quality of life of Andikpas. Gratitude is an emotion that expresses appreciation for what someone has (Sreenandhini, 2020). Gratitude can affect the quality of life through awareness directly and indirectly (Anand et al., 2021).

On the other hand, psychological distress was found to be a negative predictor of quality of life (Saeed et al., 2021). Psychological distress is a term widely used to describe a state of emotional turmoil characterized by symptoms of anxiety and depression (Zigmond in Malfa et al., 2021). In the United States, it was found that severe psychological distress has a significant relationship with decreased quality of life (Dismuke et al., 2014). The same thing was also conveyed by Wu et al. (2022), who state that psychological distress is associated with a decreased quality of life. However, existing research

has not revealed its condition in Andikpas and has focused more on other vulnerable groups, for example in research (Dismuke et al., 2014) focusing on diabetics and research by Wu et al. (2022) focused on lung cancer patients.

This study aims to reveal whether there is a relationship between gratitude and psychological distress in the quality of life of correctional students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2 METHOD

2.1 Design

This study uses a quantitative research design. The data collection technique used a psychological questionnaire with informed consent and filled in participant demographic data on June 17, 2022. Three questionnaires were used in this study, The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Aitem Form (GQ-6) to measure levels of gratitude, Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale 21 (DASS 21) to measure psychological distress, and WHOQOL-BREF to measure Andikpas quality of life.

The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Aitem Form (GQ-6) (McCullough et al., 2002) consists of six items that measure the range, frequency, intensity, and density of gratitude and primarily focus on the unidimensional emotional component of gratitude. This scale has a reliability of 89.1. An example of an item on this measuring instrument is "a long time can pass before I feel grateful to something or someone," with the response category on this scale consisting of seven Likert choices, namely Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), Neutral (4), Somewhat Agree (5), Agree (6), and Strongly Agree (7).

Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale 21 (DASS 21) (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). consists of 21 items with a reliability coefficient of 88.9. The DASS-21 was designed to measure the negative emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress. An example of an item on this measuring instrument is "I feel that my lips are often dry." This instrument is in the form of a Likert scale consisting of four response categories, namely Never (0), Sometimes (1), Often (2), and Very often (3).

WHOQOL-BREF assesses Andikpas quality of life and can be applied in cross-cultural contexts (WHOQOL Group, 1998). This scale consists of 26 items covering four domains (physical health, psychology, social relationships, and the environment) and has a reliability coefficient of

87.5. An example of an item on this measuring instrument is "howsatisfied are you with your health?". Five answer choices are available to answer the WHOQOL-BREF, with various answer choices in each item group.

Participants in this study were Andikpas who were selected using purposive sampling with the following inclusion criteria: 1) having received a verdict for being sentenced; 2) 12-18 years old (based on article 1 paragraph 8 of Law Number 12 of 1995, which states that the maximum age limit for children in correctional institutions is 18 years old (Ilmi et al., 2023); 3) Willing to participate in the research process as evidenced by signing an informed consent.

2.3 Data Analysis

The hypothesis in this study was tested using multiple linear regression data analysis techniques. We ensure that the assumption test of normality, multicollinearity and residual homoscedasticity had been fulfilled.

Researchers also used additional analysis using the T-test and One-Way Anova as different tests of the dependent variable based on the differentiation of age groups, education levels, and ethnicity to enrich the research results. The statistical analysis was carried out with the SPSS version 25 computer program for Windows.

3 RESULT

3.1 Demographic

Table 1 shows the subjects' distribution based on age, education level, and ethnicity. A total of 59 (100%) correctional students in this study were male, with most aged under 18 years (50.8%), had the last education level in Elementary School (62.7%), and came from Javanese ethnicity (91.5%).

Table 1. Demographic Data

Category	n (%)
Age	
Under 18	30 (50,8%)
18-24	29 (49,2%)
Education Level	
Not	7 (11,9%)

2.2 Participants

Table 2. Participants

Completed Primary School	
Primary School	37 (62,7%)
Junior High School	15 (25,4%)
Ethnicity	
Jawa	54 (91,5%)
Luar Jawa	5 (8,5%)

3.2 Variable Categorization

The results of the categorization and distribution of research subjects on research variables can be seen in table 3. The analysis results show that most participants have a state of gratitude at a high level (62.7%), quality of life at a moderate level (88.1%), and psychological distress level at normal levels both in conditions of depression, anxiety, and stress.

3.3 Hypothesis Test Result

The hypothesis test results are presented in table 3, which shows a significant influence of gratitude and psychological distress on Andikpas' quality of life ($F(2,56) = 9.949, p = .000; R^2 = .262$). The contribution of gratitude and psychological distress can simultaneously affect the quality of life by 26.2%, while other factors influence the additional 73.8%.

Based on the results of statistical tests, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant effect of gratitude on Andikpas' quality of life ($t(58) = 4.170, p < .01$) and contributes as much as 23.6% to quality of life. On the other hand, it shows a difference in the analysis of the second independent variable, that there is no significant effect between psychological distress on life satisfaction ($t(58) = -1.411, p > .01$).

3.4 Different Test Result

The results of the different tests for the Quality of Life variable can be seen in table 4. The T-test

results showed no significant difference in the quality of life in subjects under 18 years and 18-24 years ($p = .741$) and Javanese and non-Javanese ($p =$

$.741$). Likewise, the results of the One Way Anova test were found not to differ significantly by level of education ($p = .962$).

Table 3. Variable Categorization Gratitude and Quality of Life.

Categorization	Range	n (%)
Gratitude		
Low	< 19,2	1 (1,7%)
Medium	19,2-28,8	21 (35,6%)
High	> 28,8	37 (62,7%)
Quality of Life		
Low	< 62,4	1 (1,7%)
Medium	62,4-93,6	52 (88,1%)
High	> 93,6	6 (10,2%)
Psychological Distress		
Depression		
Normal	0-9	55 (93,2%)
Mild	10-13	4 (6,8%)
Moderate	14-20	0 (0%)
Severe	21-27	0 (0%)
Extremely Severe	> 28	0 (0%)
Anxiety		
Normal	0-7	52 (88,1%)
Mild	8-9	4 (6,8%)
Moderate	10-14	2 (3,4%)
Severe	15-19	1 (1,7%)
Extremely Severe	> 20	0 (0%)
Stress		
Normal	0-14	55 (93,2%)
Mild	15-18	4 (6,8%)
Moderate	19-25	0 (0%)
Severe	26-33	0 (0%)
Extremely Severe	> 34	0 (0%)

Table 4. Regression Analysis Result.

Predictor	b	SE	b*	t
(Constant)	54.089	8.495		6.367
Gratitude	1.123	.269	.479	4.170
Psychological Distress	-.228	.160	-.163	-1.422
R²	.262			
F	9.949			

Note. Dependent Variable: Kualitas Hidup. * $p < .01$.

Table 5. Different Test Results for Quality of Life Variables Based on Subject Characteristics.

Characteristic	Mdn (Min-Max)	<i>p</i>
Age (years)		
< 18	82 (61-103)	.741 ^a
18-24	82 (68-115)	
Education Level		
Not Completed Primary School	77 (72 - 115)	.962 ^b
Primary School	83 (61 - 112)	
High School	83 (73 - 95)	
Ethnic		
Java	81 (61-115)	.766 ^a
Outside Jawa	83 (72-87)	

Note:
Mdn = Median
Min = Minimum
Max = Maximum
p = Significant $p < .05$
a = Independent Sample T Test
b = One Way Anova

4 DISCUSSIONS

4.1 The Relationship between Gratitude and Psychological Distress on Andikpas' Quality of Life

The results of multiple regression analysis showed that gratitude and psychological distress were simultaneously associated with Andikpas' quality of life. The gratitude variable indicates that the higher the level of individual gratitude, the higher the quality of life experienced by Andikpas. In line with the results of this study, Anand et al. (2021) stated that gratitude was significantly positively related to the quality of life in adolescents. Another survey by Valikhani et al. (2019) shows that gratitude substantially affects the quality of life and mental health. In the context of the inmates, gratitude can be a promotive factor that affects the psychological well-being and criminal attitudes of Andikpas

(Danioni et al., 2021). Gratitude is a higher factor than cognitive dysfunction, fatigue, and depressive symptoms in predicting quality of life (Crouch et al., 2020).

Interestingly, the results of the descriptive analysis show that most Andikpas have a high level of gratitude. These results are supported by Septiani et al. (2019). They revealed that Andikpas at LPKA Bandung have an attitude of gratitude in the form of a sense of appreciation, positive feelings towards life, and a tendency to act positively as an expression of positive emotions and preference. Andikpas' high level of gratitude is essential. However, his imprisonment impacted the self-recollection process and the emergence of the value of gratitude. Unfortunately, this study has not delved deeper into the study. However, LPKA Kutoarjo and LPKA Yogyakarta as research sites have explained the existence of personality development programs and children's mental and spiritual development as a means to increase Andikpas gratitude (Institute for Special Guidance for Class 1 Kutoarjo Children, 2022). This is supported by Ariani's research (2014) which states that the coaching program at LPKA in

Indonesia has optimized proper education for Andikpas according to the age of growth and development. Subsequent research can reveal to what extent the effectiveness of LPKA coaching is in increasing the gratitude aspect of Andikpas.

The analysis results separately show that psychological distress does not affect life satisfaction. This was explained by Skowroński & Talik (2021) that Andikpas' experience of depression only affects the psychosocial and subjective dimensions but has not fully affected Andikpas' metaphysical aspects, such as quality of life. In contrast to the results of previous studies, Muller & Evidence (2019); Saeed et al. (2021); and Chachamovich et al. (2010) found that psychological distress has a negative correlation with the quality of life in incarcerated individuals. Future research can explore the study of factors that can strengthen or weaken the relationship between psychological distress and Andikpas's quality of life.

The results of the descriptive analysis found that Andikpas' psychological distress was included in the normal category. Dachew et al. (2015) revealed that the psychological well-being of Andikpas could be caused by the length of the detention period, satisfaction with the services of prison officers, and the location of the LPKA, which is close to where they live. In this study, 91.5% of Andikpas came from the island of Java, so they had affordable access to LPKA locations, making visiting interactions with family and relatives easier. LPKA Yogyakarta provides an opportunity to visit Andikpas' nuclear family and for Andikpas' school friends to visit and provide social support. In addition, LPKA Yogyakarta also designed LPKA without bars with a "dormitory" life scheme. This aims to comfort Andikpas to grow and develop during coaching and eliminate the scary impression of a "punishment." Further research can explore the extent to which service quality and access to home locations with LPKA affect the quality of life of Andikpas in Indonesia.

4.2 Quality of Life on Participant Characteristics

The results of the different tests showed no significant differences in the quality of life at the subject's age, ethnic origin, and level of education. In line with the results of this study, Ausín et al. (2020) and Musarezaie et al. (2012) found no significant relationship between demographic variables such as age, education level, and quality of life. Furthermore, a systematic literature review

conducted by Gaspar T. et al. (2017), involving 48 studies, stated that quality of life is more influenced by various individual psychological aspects, namely hope, sense of coherence, self-esteem, purpose in life, and positive influence. Furthermore, the way adolescents view their bodies, physical appearance, and the quality of relationships with peers can also influence Andikpas' perceptions of health and quality of life (Haraldstad et al., 2011). In this study, most of the Andikpas came from the same tribe, namely the Javanese, making it easier for Andikpas to build social communication with the same culture.

All participants in this study were male, so this study has not been able to reveal differences in the quality of life of male and female Andikpas. Previous studies produced various analyses related to differences in quality of life, gratitude, and psychological distress in male and female Andikpas. For example, Prost et al. (2020) research stated that the quality of life for female Andikpas is lower than that of male Andikpas. The study by Van Droogenbroeck et al. (2018) said that female Andikpas had higher psychological distress than men. Furthermore, Froh et al. (2009) and Reckart et al. (2017) found that girls showed more gratitude than boys. Further research can increase the scope and number of participants and explore the quality of life of Andikpas in gender differences so that it can be a recommendation for prison officers in handling female and male Andikpas.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The results show that gratitude can improve the quality of life of Andikpas under challenging times, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The higher the appreciation for Andikpas, the higher the quality of life experienced and vice versa. Unfortunately, all participants in this study were male, so this study has not been able to reveal differences in the quality of life of male and female Andikpas. Future research can conduct a gratitude intervention program as part of rehabilitation for Andikpas and test its effectiveness in improving the quality of life of Andikpas during the new normal.

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