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Hafshoh Hafshoh

*Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia, hafshoooh@gmail.com*

Airin Yustikarini Saleh

*Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia, airin.yustikarini@ui.ac.id*

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# The Effects of Family Functioning Dimensions on the Subjective Well-being among High School Students

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Hafshoh<sup>1</sup>, Airin Yustikarini Saleh<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia

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## Abstract

Subjective well-being in school offers myriad benefits for the overall development and well-being of students and is thus crucial. This study examines the effects of the family functioning dimensions of cohesion, flexibility, and communication on subjective well-being displayed by students on school premises. An aggregate of 475 students from five high schools in Greater Jakarta participated in this study. The Brief Adolescents' Subjective Well-Being in School Scale was administered to measure subjective well-being in school. The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale and the Family Communication Scale were employed to measure family functioning. The results revealed that family flexibility and family communication positively and significantly affected the subjective well-being of students. Family communication exerted a more substantial influence than the other dimensions of family functioning because it could enhance the other dimensions. Prospective studies should investigate more specific student characteristics, such as living independently without parents or living with a single parent.

## Keywords

Family Communication, Family Functioning, High School Student, Subjective Well-Being in School

Adolescence is the appropriate period for the development of the sense of well-being, which facilitates the likelihood of individuals achieving a positive quality of life in adulthood (McCabe et al., 2011). Subjective well-being in adolescence benefits the adaptive abilities of students, serving as a protective factor against the maladaptive function (Cao, 2011; Heisel & Flett, 2004; Proctor, Linley, & Maltby, 2009; Suldo & Huebner, 2004a, 2004b, 2006; Valois, 2002; Yap & Baharudin, 2016). It is vital to consider the subjective well-being of high school students because adolescents undergo several physical and cognitive changes, desire increased independence, and increase social interactions with peers

(Blakemore, 2008; Casey, Getz, & Galvan, 2008; Casey, Jones, & Hare, 2008; Casey et al., 2010). Such changes increase their vulnerability as they enter a new phase of their lives (Măirean & Diaconu-Gherasim, 2018). Moreover, the transformations occurring during adolescence may cause teenagers to experience a period of great distress (Casey et al., 2010; Spear, 2000).

Given the importance of subjective well-being, Žukauskienė (2013) asserted the need to evaluate subjective well-being in students in the daily contexts of their growth and development. The well-being sensed by students within school premises is an essential concern, especially at the secondary level. High school students who are typically aged 15–17 years require attention from other parties such as parents and teachers. Students spend significantly more time in secondary school than in middle school because of the considerable expansion of demands placed on them and other independent activities. The

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## Corresponding Author:

Airin Yustikarini Saleh

Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia  
Kampus Baru UI, Depok, West Java – 16424

Email: [airin.yustikarini@ui.ac.id](mailto:airin.yustikarini@ui.ac.id)

large amounts of time and energy expended on school premises by students imply that high schools represent institutions where adolescents imbibe varied forms of knowledge and develop their social-emotional selfhood (Tian et al., 2016). The interests, abilities, and experiences attained by students at school exert a lasting impact on their lifelong development (Park, 2004). Previous studies conducted in the United States have also evidenced that middle school students sense positive life satisfaction if they are satisfied in school (Huebner, Drane, & Valois, 2002; Hui & Sun, 2010).

Education-related quality improvements in Indonesia focus more on improving the cognitive abilities of students (Jannah, 2016; Siswoyo, 2008) than on ensuring their sense of well-being in schools. However, low levels of well-being can become risk factors that trigger behavioral problems in students. In fact, behavioral difficulties such as truancy and absenteeism observed in high school students suggest low levels of well-being sensed by such students within their schools. Further, the behavioral problems faced by students in big cities like Jakarta are also more varied and challenging: students face issues such as pollution, congestion, and overcrowding. They also confront problems because of high crime rates, delinquency, substance use and abuse, and poverty (Black & Krishnakumar, 1998). Adolescents may also experience difficulties related to family functions (Botha & Booysen, 2014).

Behavioral problems emerge when students feel disturbed, uncomfortable, and are unable to adjust appropriately to the conditions in their schools (Jannah, 2016). Several studies have shown that students who sense low levels of well-being are at high risk of facing academic issues, attendance problems, and disciplinary problems (DeBiase, 2017; Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, and Walberg, 2004).

In her study, Tian (2008; Tian, Zhao, & Huebner, 2015) asserted based on Diener's theory of subjective well-being (1994; Tian 2008; Tian, Zhao, & Huebner, 2015) that subjective well-being in school represents the personal cognitive and affective evaluation of students regarding the experiences within their school premises. Subjective well-being in school encompasses three components: school satisfaction, positive affect (PA), and negative affect

(NA). School satisfaction refers to the individual subjective and cognitive evaluation of students apropos their school lives. PA indicates affirmative emotions experienced in school, while NA refers to deleterious emotions experienced by students in school (Tian, Tian, & Huebner, 2016). Students who sense high levels of subjective well-being benefit in various ways, recording superior academic achievements and evincing adaptive school behaviors (Elmore, 2007; Huebner & Gilman, 2006). Further, the enhancement of subjective well-being in school can also improve the mental and physical health of students and ensure greater life satisfaction (Gilman, Huebner, & Laughlin, 2000; Haranin, Huebner, & Suldo, 2007; Suldo, Riley, & Shaffer, 2006; Tian, Zhao, & Huebner, 2015). High degrees of satisfaction with their school generally correspond to high levels of subjective well-being sensed by students. Fernandes et al. (2011) found that satisfaction with the school was positively correlated with all dimensions of overall psychological well-being. In addition, student satisfaction with the school is a valuable marker of student adjustment at school and predicts future student performance (Huebner & Gilman, 2006). This study on high school students demonstrates that student satisfaction with schools can reduce the negative feelings sensed by adolescents toward their school.

Considering the myriad benefits of subjective well-being in school, it is essential to make an effort to maintain and improve school well-being. Subjective well-being in school can be reviewed by looking at the factors that influence it. According to Hooghe and Vanhoutte (2011), several factors can affect well-being, namely, age, sex, family, financial condition, social relations, personality, and aspects of social status. Further, according to Tian, Huang, Liu, and Huebner (2012), the element of student satisfaction at school is also closely related to the social support students obtain from their family members, teachers, and classmates. The extant studies allow the conclusion that the factor of the family has a substantial bearing on student well-being in school. Therefore, it is essential to examine the role of the family in the subjective well-being of students.

Families discharge crucial roles in the lives of individuals because they significantly influence personality and affect the well-being of a

person (McDonald & Sayger, 1998; Uruk, Sayger, and Cogdal, 2007). As the basic unit of the social system, the family is pivotal to almost every part of an adolescent's life, including school. According to Howe, Brandon, Hinings, Schofield (1999), families provide stability at home and offer a safe emotional space for adolescents to come to terms with their new experiences. Families also provide support and affection and represent safe havens where adolescents can regain their confidence. Therefore, comprehensive examinations must probe how families systemically create the conditions indispensable to the perception of subjective well-being by students.

The ability of the family system to create a stable and safe emotional space can be better understood through the notion of family functioning. According to DeFrain, Asay, and Olson (2009), family functioning refers to the attitudes and behaviors of family members and the role each discharge during family gatherings. Botha and Booysen (2014) demonstrated that family functioning influences the perception of subjective well-being in students because every family member is pivotal to the relationships that are constructed in the family. Family functioning also influences the socio-emotional conditions of adolescent students, affecting their well-being (Van Der Aa, Boomsma, Rebollo-Messa, Hudziak, & Bartels, 2010). Olson (2000) mooted the circumplex model relating to conjugal and familial systems to assert that family functioning can balance cohesion, flexibility, and communication within the family unit. The more balanced a family is, the better it functions; conversely, unbalanced families are always at risk of becoming problematic units. There are several indicators of a well-balanced family: family cohesion requires all family members to sustain a balance between privacy and intimacy; to each family member; family flexibility involves the adapting of rules, roles, and patterns of consistent behavior to current situations; and supportive communication is the hallmark of well-balanced families.

Several studies have already evaluated the ways in which each dimension of family functioning affects well-being. For instance, Uruk, Sayger, Cogdal (2007) demonstrated that family cohesion and family flexibility had a significant positive effect on student well-being. Rask et al.

(2003) also found similar results, indicating that balanced family flexibility was correlated with subjective well-being in students. Kurniati's (2011) study of high school students demonstrated a significant relationship between good family communication and perceived subjective well-being in high school students in Jakarta. These studies suggest that the interactions of adolescents with their families, especially their fathers, bear significantly on their positive or negative feelings about themselves. Good communication contributes considerably to the overall well-being of high school students (Kurniati, 2011). Other researchers (Eisenberg, et al., 2004; Láng 2018; Satir, 1972; Watzlawick, et al., 1967) have also found that honest and open communication is essential for both the emotional development and the perception of subjective well-being in adolescents.

Studies have already demonstrated that the family functioning dimensions of cohesion, flexibility, and communication within the familial unit substantially influence the overall subjective well-being of students. However, scant extant research has measured the effects of these dimensions within the more specific domain of student perception of well-being in school. Tian, Wang, and Huebner (2015) have indicated the need for a more precise measurement of subjective well-being in schools, where the personal assessment of overall health could differ considerably from the general subjective evaluation of well-being. Research on family functioning and its effects on well-being in school is also limited. This study seeks to address these research gaps and attempts to examine how family functioning affects the subjective well-being of students within school premises.

Additionally, this study probes which of the three dimensions of family functioning most affects the subjective well-being of students. The dimensions of family functioning can indicate how the family system realizes subjective well-being in school for students. The crucial role discharged by the family in the construction of an adolescent's sense of well-being must be investigated to elucidate how family roles impact subjective well-being in the context of schools. In particular, the present study aimed to demonstrate how the perception of subjective well-being in school is influenced by the complex interplay roles discharged by family units, friends,

and teachers. The three dimensions of family functioning can aid in illuminating how family functions sustain and improve the in-school subjective well-being of adolescent students.

### ***Subjective Well-being in School***

Lili Tian and her colleagues (Tian, 2008; Tian, Zhao, & Huebner, 2015) developed the concept of subjective well-being in school based on Diener's theory of subjective well-being. Diener (1998) defined subjective well-being as a person's evaluation of the good and bad in their life. The idea of subjective well-being in school is like Diener's (1998) conception of general subjective well-being, except that it focuses primarily on the school context. The notion of subjective well-being in school concerns personal cognitive and emotional assessments made by students about their overall health vis-à-vis their school-related experiences.

Subjective well-being in school encompasses three components: school satisfaction, PA, and NA (Tian, 2008; Tian, Zhao, & Huebner, 2015). The element of school satisfaction refers to individual subjective and cognitive assessments of students apropos specific aspects of their school lives. PA at school indicates the experiencing of affirmative emotions by students, such as feeling relaxed, comfortable, and happy. Conversely, NA alludes to adverse emotions elicited in students during their school-related activities. Hence, the overall subjective in-school well-being of students can be measured through these three components. Students who enjoy a high degree of subjective well-being in school display high levels of school satisfaction and PA, and low NA. The higher the school satisfaction and PA in students, the higher their subjective well-being in school, and vice versa

### ***Family Functioning***

From the perspective of results-oriented family functioning theory, DeFrain, Asay, and Olson (2009) asserted that family functioning comprises the attitudes and behaviors evinced by family members and the roles they play in interactions with other members.

Olson's (2000) circumplex model explained the importance of the three dimensions of cohesion, flexibility, and communication in family

functioning (Dai & Wang, 2015). Family cohesion is defined as the emotional bond forged by family members with each other and is manifested in their intimacies and shared interests. The family cohesion dimension focuses on the ways in which the family system balances separateness and togetherness through specific variables. The second dimension of family flexibility denotes the number of changes occurring within the family unit in terms of leadership, relationship roles, and rules. Leadership may be further explained through the dimensions of control, discipline, and style of negotiation. In other words, family flexibility represents the manner in which the family unit balances stability and change. Finally, family communication facilitates the two other dimensions of cohesion and flexibility. Effective communication aids the maintenance and movement of family systems at the desired balanced level of cohesion and flexibility (Olson & Barnes, 2004).

### ***Adolescence***

Papalia and Martorell (2014) define the term adolescence as denoting the transition of an individual from childhood to adulthood. Adolescence is accompanied by myriad physical, cognitive, and psychosocial changes. People between the ages of 11–20 years are loosely called teenagers or adolescents. Adolescence is divided into three categories: early (11–14 years), middle (15–17 years), and late (18–20 years) (McArney 1992; Stang & Story, 2005).

### ***Methods***

This correlational study utilized simple linear regression to examine the inter-dimensional associations of family functioning and subjective well-being sensed by students apropos their school-related life. It also examines the roles discharged by each dimension of family functioning in predicting variables related to subjective perceptions of well-being in adolescents in school. The minimum number of samples required for the study was determined using *a priori* power analysis via the G Power application, version 3.1.9.2. G Power's analysis results revealed that the minimum sample size of 77 would be beneficial for regression research with a two-tail hypothesis and significance level of

0.05, the effect size of 0.3, and statistical power of 0.8. These requirements were taken into account, and 300 participants were recruited for this study to far surpass the minimum requirements. The participants comprised male and female second-year high school students in Jakarta, ranging in age from 15–18 years. Second-year high school students were selected to appropriately distinguish the time expended in school activities. First, high school students spent considerably more time in school than elementary and junior high school students. Moreover, second-year high school students had already attended secondary school for a year, so it was not too early for them to assess their high school experiences.

Subjective well-being in school was measured in this study using Tian's (2008) Brief Adolescents' Subjective Well-Being in School Scale (BASWBSS). This instrument was translated into Indonesian and adapted to the Indonesian context by Prasetyawati, Rifameutia, and Newcombe (2018). It comprises eight items distributed across two components: cognitive and affective. BASWBSS applies Likert-like scales for measurement: response choices for items 1–6 range from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree; response choices for items 7 and 8 span 1 = never up to 6 = always. The scoring is accomplished by combining the cognitive and affective component scores. Scores for the cognitive component are calculated based on average responses to items 1–6. The affective component score is calculated by subtracting the PA (item 7) from the NA (item 8).

The dimensions of family functioning were measured in this study using Olson and Tiesel's (1991) Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale-II (FACES II) and by the administration of Olson and Barnes' (2004) Family Communication Scale (FCS).

FACES II measures the dimensions of cohesion and flexibility in family functioning. The FACES II is a measurement tool adapted to the Indonesian context by Ardani (2012). This adaptation has also been tested for legibility in high school students by Pidada (2018). FACES II contains 30 items, each measured on a five-point Likert-like scale: never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always.

FCS has also been translated into Indonesian and adapted for the Indonesian context by

Ardani (2012). It is used to measure the dimension of communication in family functioning. Excellent internal consistency has also been proven for FCS with Cronbach's alpha reliability value of 0.90 (Olson & Barnes, 2004). Pidada's (2018) readability test results and the try-out analysis in high school students evinced a high result with Cronbach's alpha value of 0.880. FCS encompasses ten items measured on a five-point Likert-like scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. The final FCS results are tabulated based on the total obtained score.

This study applied several statistical analyses. First, a descriptive data analysis was performed to obtain the demographic characteristics of participants and overview distribution scores of the two measured variables of family functioning and subjective well-being in school. Subsequently, a correlational analysis was conducted using Pearson's correlation coefficient to examine the relationships between the two variables. Finally, a simple regression analysis was executed on both variables to examine the roles played by the three dimensions of family functioning in the subjective well-being of students in school.

## Results

Questionnaires were distributed to 500 high school students aged 15–18 years. However, only 493 students responded to the questionnaires. Subsequently, responses of 18 students were discarded, either because they were incomplete or because they represented outliers. Responses offered by the remaining 475 students were then analyzed for this study.

This study's participants are mainly adolescents aged 16 ( $n=382$ ), and most of them had parents who were married. Based on data collected on the occupational status of their parents, most participants had working fathers, and almost half had stay-at-home mothers. In addition to analyzing demographic data, a descriptive analysis was also performed on the dimensions of family functioning and subjective well-being in school. The results are noted in Table 1 below:

Table 1 shows that 62.5% of the participants ( $n=297$ ) reported moderate levels, and 32% ( $n=152$ ) reported high levels of subjective well-being in school. Only 5.5% of participants ( $n=26$ )

**Table 1. Demographic data**

Subjective Well-being in School	Score	n	%
Low	< 2	26	5.5
Moderate	2.1–6	297	62.5
High	> 6	152	32

registered a low level of subjective well-being in school. In sum, the majority of the study participants reported moderate levels of subjective well-being in school.

Participant responses with regard to family functioning and its associated dimensions of cohesion, flexibility, and communication were categorized as follows (Table 2):

Table 2 overviews the participant responses on family functioning. All participants were at the lowest level of being disengaged in the cohesion dimension. Participants predominantly adjudged their family flexibility to be rigid, which also denoted the lowest level of this dimension.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Family Functioning of Participants**

Dimensions	Level	n	%
Cohesion	Disengaged	475	100
Flexibility	Very Flexible	7	1.5
	Flexible	117	24.6
	Structured	161	33.9
	Rigid	190	40
Communication	Very High	35	7.4
	High	83	17.5
	Moderate	139	29.3
	Low	152	32
	Very Low	66	13.9

As many as 152 participants also marked the lowest level for the communication dimension. The scores of the three dimensions on average were thus in the low category. However, some

participants did register at the medium and high categories in the flexibility and communication dimensions in comparison to the cohesion dimension, for which none of the participants marked the medium or high categories.

Table 3 presents the results of the Pearson correlation test: a positive relationship existed between the dimensions of flexibility and communication and subjective well-being in school. For the flexibility dimension,  $r = 0.183$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , indicating that students with higher degrees of family flexibility were likely to sense higher lev-

**Table 3. Correlation Test Results for the Dimensions of Cohesion, Flexibility, and Communication Vis-à-vis Subjective Well-being in School**

Family Functioning	Subjective Well-being in School		
	r	p	r <sup>2</sup>
Cohesion	0.042	0.183	0.001
Flexibility	0.183	<b>0.000**</b>	0.003
Communication	0.280	<b>0.000**</b>	0.078

els of subjective well-being in school. For the communication dimension,  $r = 0.280$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , suggesting that students who enjoy better intra-family communication tend to feel higher levels of subjective well-being in school. Finally,  $r = 0.042$ ,  $p > 0.05$  for the cohesion dimension, denoting no relationship between family cohesion and subjective well-being in school.

Further analyses were performed after testing for correlations between the variables. A simple regression analysis was conducted in this phase to discover the effects of each dimension of family functioning on the subjective in-school well-being of the participating students.

Table 4 displays the results of the simple regression analysis, evincing a significant effect of family communication on the in-school subjective well-being of students ( $F(1.473) = 40.333$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ) with  $R^2$  of 0.079. Family communication accounted for as much as 7.9% of the variance

**Table 4. Results of the Regression Analysis between Family-Related Communication and Flexibility and the in-School Subjective Well-being of Students**

Predictors	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
(Constant)	2.003	0.524		3.822	0.000
Communication	0.092	0.014	0.288	6.351	0.000
Flexibility	0.051	0.013	0.183	4.039	0.000

noted in subjective well-being in school. However, the analysis also elucidated that the remaining 92.1% of the variance was attributable to factors other than family communication. Table 4 clarifies that the in-school subjective well-being of participants would increase by 0.092 with every unit increase in the family communication score.

This study also found a significant effect of family flexibility on subjective well-being in school ( $F(1.473) = 16.313, p = 0.00$ ) with an  $R^2$  of 0.033. Family flexibility accounted for as much as 3.3% of the variance in subjective well-being in school, while other factors outside of family flexibility represented the remaining 96.7%. Table 4 illuminates that the in-school subjective well-being of participating students would increase by 0.051 with every unit increase in the family flexibility score.

## Discussion

This study attempted to examine the effects of family functioning on the perception of subjective well-being by students vis-à-vis their school-related life. More specifically, this study tried to examine the effects of cohesion, flexibility, and communication related to the familial unit (as the three dimensions of family functioning) on the subjective well-being perceived by students with regard to school. The effects of each dimension of family functioning accord greater comprehension of the significance of family functioning in maintaining and enhancing the subjective well-being of adolescent students.

The findings of this study suggest that the scores marked by the study's respondents for all three dimensions were generally low. All participants reported their family cohesion dimension at the lowest level of being disengaged, illustrating the urban nature of the familial unit in which high privacy is favored over emotional intimacy between family members. The outcomes also clarify that family members rarely spend time together because each person is busy outside the home in varied activities, including work, education, social activities, and so on.

The participating high school students in Jakarta also described their families as rigid, which is the lowest level in the flexibility dimension. This outcome indicated the existence of a

clear division of roles among family members and underscored that prescribed familial rules and behavioral patterns were not easily altered. Although the family unit is disengaged and rarely comes together, there exist clear demarcations regarding family leadership and decision-making, and there are clear hierarchical processes of rule-making and rule-following.

Finally, this study's findings also evinced that the participating high school students in Jakarta believed that their families evinced poor communication qualities. The absence of positive interactions between family members was thus indicated. The dimension of communication can facilitate family systems to achieve the desired balance of cohesion and flexibility. The results of this study allow the assertion that the family units of the participating adolescents could not achieve the desired balance of cohesion and flexibility (Olson & Barnes, 2004).

The relationship between the flexibility dimension and the subjective well-being of participating students proved positive and significant, illustrating that the more flexible the relationships between students and their families, the more likely students were to attain beneficial levels of subjective well-being in school. A positive and significant relationship was also discerned between the communication dimension and the subjective well-being of students, demonstrating that enhanced positive communication between students and their families caused them to sense greater subjective well-being in school. This finding is congruent with Uruk, Sayger, and Cogdal's study (2007). Finally, this study found no relationship between family cohesion and subjective well-being in school, indicating that cohesion-related changes to the family unit would not affect the subjective well-being of adolescents in school.

The results of this study revealed that family flexibility exerted a significant positive effect on the subjective well-being sensed by adolescents in school. Thus, the more flexible a family, the better a student's subjective well-being. If the family has system that can balance stability and change throughout the number of changes that occur in family leadership, family role relationships, and rules in family relationships, then it has positive effect on subjective well-being of adolescents in school. This study enriched the findings of previous studies. For instance, Uruk,



Sayger, and Cogdal (2007) also found that family flexibility exercised a significant positive effect on student well-being. In addition, Rask et al. (2003) reported similar results, evincing that balanced family flexibility was correlated with the well-being of students. Families living in urban conditions may experience several changes in leadership, familial roles, and rules related to intra-family associations. Such changes can occur for varied reasons: parents could go out of town on duty, homes could be broken because of divorce, or family members could be separated, instigating changes in familial roles and rules. Family systems in urban areas need to cope quickly with such transformations, or they can become dysfunctional.

High school students, especially in big cities, are simultaneously required to become more dedicated to their in-school roles and activities. In turn, their activities in school reduce the time they spend at home. In this phase, relationships between family members must be flexible to adapt to the needs of the students. This statement is especially applicable to parents as leaders and decision-makers in the family (Muuss, 1996). Also, families must set rules or standards that are easy to understand and fit adolescents' needs, especially for mid-teens (Steinberg, 2001). The family unit should become a secure and safe space for adolescents, a haven where they can explore and identify friendships and roles, especially considering the extended time they spend at school during their high school years (Noller, Feeney, & Petersen, 2001; Robinson, 2006). Additionally, family flexibility is essential for the development of self-autonomy of adolescents, who must construct their distinct individual identities (Papalia & Martorell, 2014). Family flexibility can also support adolescents and make them feel that they can adapt and explore themselves.

This study also found that family communication exerted a significant positive effect on subjective well-being sensed by students in school. Thus, the subjective well-being of students increases in congruence with positive intra-family interactions. Effective family communication can enable the desired balance of cohesion and flexibility in family units. This outcome supports Kurniati's (2011) study on high school students, which found a positive and significant relationship between family communication and the subjective well-being of high school students

in Jakarta. The results indicate that student interactions with family members significantly influence PA in students. In sum, effective communication contributes significantly to the overall well-being of high school students (Kurniati, 2011). This finding is also aligned with the findings of several previous studies conducted by other researchers (Eisenberg, et al., 2004; Láng, 2018; Satir, 1972; Watzlawick, Bavelas, Jackson, & O'Hanlon, 1967). The prior investigations found honest and open communication to be essential to the subjective well-being and the emotional development of students. Adolescent students in urban areas face diverse and difficult challenges such as congestion, high crime rates, drug abuse, overcrowding, and poverty. In addition, they have to cope with the increasingly demanding conditions of high school education. Positive communication within their families can become a major form of support for them in such circumstances.

Further, the findings of this study also support outcomes reported by Tian, Zhao, and Huebner (2012). Their study found that high school students regarded their families as being an important source of social support and crucial to their subjective well-being. Some studies also demonstrated that a satisfactory family life correlated positively with satisfaction expressed by high school students with school life (DeSantis-King et al., 2006; Hui and Sun, 2010). Family communication encompasses the ability of family members to listen, empathize, encourage, and respond, offering constructive support for adolescent needs (Kobak, Abbot, Zisk, & Bounoua, 2017). It is thus clear that high school students need to have positive communication with family members as well as their teachers and friends to maintain and improve subjective well-being in school (Robinson, 2006). This statement is particularly applicable to adolescents residing in urban areas.

Unlike communication and flexibility, family cohesion was not found by this study to significantly correlate to the subjective in-school well-being of students. Cohesion does not improve or worsen the subjective well-being sensed by high school students. In this regard, the results of this study differ from the outcomes of previous studies that have reported family cohesion to positively influence adolescent well-being. According to these investigations, low

family cohesion rates were detrimental to adolescent well-being (Burt, Cohen, & Bjorck, 1988; Láng, 2018; Rutledge, Davies & Davies, 1994; Uruk, Sayger, & Cogdal, 2007). This discrepancy in the results could perhaps be attributed to several other factors that could have influenced this study's findings. One such factor could concern participant characteristics: high school students are categorized as middle adolescents who represent the stage of identity formation when parental roles become limited (Muuss, 1996). Their need for support and relationship patterns to change as they age (Proctor et al., 2009). The transformations occurring in middle adolescence render peer-relationships more important interactions with parents and also translate to the adolescent need for autonomy from parents (Keijsers et al., 2010).

Also, it is suspected that for high school students, teachers and friends are important and regular presences in school and perhaps function more significantly than family members in determining the subjective well-being of high school students. Tian, Zhao, and Huebner (2015) found that teachers and friends applied meaningful and positive effects on the in-school subjective well-being of students. Positive feedback from teachers (Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007) and meaningful interactions with friends (Tian, Zhao, & Huebner, 2015) were found to elicit a plethora of positive emotions in students. However, according to Tian, Liu, Huang, and Huebner (2012), the support offered by families, especially parents, still influences the subjective well-being of adolescents in school.

All families were reported in this study as disengaged, representing the lowest level of familial cohesion. This disengaged level evinces the imbalance in the cohesiveness within participants and discloses the limited attachment or intimacy between family members (Olson, 2000). The demographic data of this study elucidated that the fathers of all participants fathers worked outside the home. The mothers of almost half the participants also worked away from home. Families could evince lower cohesion because of these circumstances: parents expend substantial time at the office, and high school students spend increased time in school; hence, the frequency and intensity of family meetings are diminished. However, most participants reported moderate to high levels of sub-

jective well-being in school, and only 26 participants asserted a low level of subjective well-being. Therefore, this study's outcomes disclosed that low family cohesion did not reduce the in-school subjective well-being of students. These results reinforce the findings of previous studies suggesting that other factors such as teachers, friends, or other leading figures in schools influence the subjective well-being of adolescent students.

Nevertheless, this study is distinguished from earlier investigations in several ways. First, this study on subjective well-being was conducted in the specific context of high school students. Thus, the insights gleaned from this study enrich the extant understanding of subjective well-being in the context of schools, which could differ substantially from subjective well-being in general. Second, this study attended only to second-year high school students. In so doing, it extended the findings of the extant literature with a different sample.

Some limitations must also be acknowledged apropos this study. First, no predetermined criteria were applied to screen schools selected for the study. It is thus possible that the facilities and policies of the schools represented in this study differed and that such differences could influence the subjective well-being sensed by the participating students. Second, the subjective well-being of participants attending boarding schools was not compared against day-schoolers. Such an investigation could offer a broader picture of the in-school subjective well-being of students. Third, this study did not relate types of family units to subjective well-being in school. The subjective well-being of adolescents could differ according to types of family units. Further research should therefore be conducted on the relations between subjective well-being in school and family functioning by broadening research subjects. It is hoped that the outcomes of the present study will inform and strengthen such prospective endeavors.

Several studies have examined the family functioning dimensions of cohesion, flexibility, and family communication and reported their substantial influences on the general subjective well-being of students. However, only a few investigations have attempted to capture how these dimensions apply to subjective well-being

in the particular context of schools. Research on the links between family functioning and well-being in school is also limited.

The overall results of this study indicate that family flexibility and family communication influence subjective well-being sensed by students in their school life. Family communication exercises a more significant influence than the other dimensions because it facilitates the smoother functioning of the other two dimensions. However, the effect sizes of family flexibility and family communication are relatively small. It is posited that other factors could also influence the in-school subjective well-being of students. Perhaps the school context undertaken by this study highlighted the effects of school-related factors (such as school characteristics, teacher, and friend) on the subjective well-being of students. Further research should be conducted in the context of school to more comprehensively elucidate the effects of this factor on the subjective well-being of students with respect to their school life.

Even though the effect was limited, this study clearly demonstrated that family variables, especially those related to flexibility and communication, do influence the school-related subjective well-being of adolescents. Prospective research initiatives could examine the effects of other factors such as age and sex on the subjective well-being sensed by students in school and could also probe discrete family-related aspects.

## Conclusions

This study attempted to examine the effects of family functioning on the subjective well-being sensed by students in high schools. To achieve its objectives, it focused on the three dimensions of family function. Family flexibility and family communication were found to exercise a positive and significant impact on the subjective well-being of students. These results illustrate the ways in which the functioning of families in urban areas such as Jakarta influences the subjective well-being of high school students, particularly concerning their tractability and interpersonal interactions. The more flexible a family, the more adaptive it is in handling the changes occurring in big cities. In turn, such coping skills further increase the sense of subjective well-being in students. Further, the

more a family engages in positive communication, the more openly it can discuss varied topics. Such open communication also consequently ameliorates the subjective well-being of adolescent students. However, unlike flexibility and communication, the dimension of cohesion was not ascertained to influence the subjective well-being sensed by students in school. Further studies are required to independently confirm these findings.

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