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## The Role Of Self-Management In Increasing Subjective Well-Being Of DKI Jakarta's Citizens

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## THE ROLE OF SELF-MANAGEMENT IN INCREASING SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING OF DKI JAKARTA'S CITIZENS

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### Abstract

Big cities are characterized by their dense population, limited space, and high mobility. Past research has shown that the citizens of DKI Jakarta feel quite unhappy. Therefore it is necessary to improve the happiness (subjective well-being) level of DKI Jakarta's population. Subjective well-being relates to how an individual self-manages his/her activities. Individuals with good subjective well-being tend to engage in activities of high productive values. This research aims to understand the role of self-management in the subjective well-being of the population of DKI Jakarta. 638 citizens of DKI Jakarta (males = 329, females = 309; mean age = 36) participated in the study. Data was collected through five sets of questionnaires, i.e., the satisfaction with life scale (SWLS), the positive affect and negative affect schedule scale (PANAS), The domains of life satisfaction scale, self-management questionnaire, and the demographic questionnaire. Analysis of data using multiple regression confirmed that self-management is positively associated with life satisfaction ( $R = 0.391, p = 0.05$ ) and positive affects ( $R = 0.108, p = 0.05$ ).

### Peran Manajemen-Diri dalam Peningkatan *Subjective Well-Being* Warga DKI Jakarta

#### Abstrak

Kota besar ditandai dengan populasinya yang padat, ruang terbatas, dan mobilitas tinggi. Riset terdahulu menunjukkan bahwa warga DKI Jakarta merasa cukup bahagia. Oleh karena itu perlu untuk meningkatkan kebahagiaan (*subjective well-being*) warga DKI Jakarta. *Subjective well-being* berkaitan dengan bagaimana individu mengelola dirinya dalam menjalankan berbagai kegiatan. Individu dengan *subjective well-being* yang baik cenderung untuk terlibat dalam aktivitas bernilai produktif tinggi. Riset ini bertujuan untuk memahami peran manajemen-diri dalam *subjective well-being* warga DKI Jakarta. Sejumlah 638 warga DKI Jakarta (laki-laki = 329, perempuan = 309; usia rata-rata = 36) berpartisipasi dalam studi ini. Data dikumpulkan melalui lima set kuesioner, yaitu skala kepuasan hidup (SWLS), skala afek positif dan negatif skala (PANAS), skala ranah kepuasan, kuesioner manajemen-diri, dan kuesioner demografi. Analisis data menggunakan regresi berganda mengkonfirmasi bahwa manajemen-diri secara positif berhubungan dengan kepuasan hidup ( $R = 0,391, p = 0,05$ ) dan afek positif ( $R = 0,108, p = 0,05$ ).

*Keywords: DKI Jakarta's population, life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, self-management, subjective well-being*

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### 1. Introduction

Jakarta as a big city is characterized by its dense population, limited space, and high mobility (Napitupulu, 2005). Past research has shown that in terms of subjective well-being (SWB), citizens of DKI Jakarta feel quite unhappy (Panggabean, 2007), with SWB scores that are lower than the average level of the world population. Lucas and Diener (2004) showed that

well-being (including SWB) has an influence on such life domains as productivity, positive social outcome, creativity, attention to detail, the usage of effective heuristic, and judgment making, suggesting that low SWB is associated with low levels of the aforementioned domains. Therefore it seems necessary to improve the happiness level of DKI Jakarta's population.

At the individual level, SWB has been used to refer to happiness (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). Over the past three decades, psychologists have made progress in research of subjective well-being. Andrews and Whitney (1976) started the study of SWB, followed by a widespread consensus that SWB is a multidimensional concept that includes positive and negative affect as well as cognitive evaluations of life in general. The definition of SWB includes an affective and a cognitive component (Diener *et al.*, 1999). The affective component is an actual or perceived individual's *hedonic balance* (i.e., the balance between pleasant affect and unpleasant affect) (Lucas, Diener & Larsen, 2003), whereas the cognitive component is defined as an individual's *life satisfaction* (i.e., evaluations of one's life according to subjectively determined standards). Based on this definition, psychologists can conduct scientific measurements of SWB, in which subjective well-being is assessed from a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life (Diener, Lucas and Oishi, 2005). These evaluations include emotional reactions to events as well as cognitive judgments of satisfaction and fulfillment.

In order to increase the level of SWB of the population of DKI Jakarta, it is necessary to find factors that may influence SWB. Previous research have shown that SWB is influenced by personality (Diener & Lucas, 1999), wealth and income (Headey & Wooden, 2004), self-efficacy (Tong & Song, 2004), and age (Isaacowitz & Smith, 1999, 2003). At the national level, income, individualism, human rights, and societal equality correlated strongly not only with each other, but also with SWB (Biswas-Diener, Diener, & Diener, 1995).

In various studies, four inner traits were found to mark happy people: self-esteem, a sense of personal control, optimism, and extraversion (Myers & Diener, 1995; Carr, 2004). Happy people like themselves, see themselves as a lot of fun to be with, and always have good ideas (Campbell, 1981, in Myers & Diener, 1995). The way they see themselves indicates a high self-esteem. Happy people typically feel personal control (Campbell, 1981; Larson, 1989 in Myers & Diener, 1995) and feel empowered rather than helpless. Happy people are usually optimistic, undertaking something new and expecting to succeed. Lastly, happy people tend to be extraverted (Costa & McCrae, 1980; Diener, Sandvik, Pavot, & Fujita, 1992; Emmons & Diener, 1986a, 1986b; Headey & Wearing, 1992; Myers & Diener, 1995), feeling happy both when alone and when they are with others. They are also usually more involved with social contacts.

From the four inner traits of happy people, it is understood that SWB relates to how one sees oneself and maintains his/her psychological state in order to gain happiness. Therefore, it is possible that SWB

relates to how an individual self-manages his/her activities, whereby individuals with good subjective well-being tend to engage in activities of high productive values. The term self-management has been used to refer to how one manages his/her self. According to Curtin *et al.* (2002a, 2002b), self-management is a set of activities to maintain, improve, and promote oneself using a variety of inner and outer resources (see also Biswas-Diener & Diener, 2001; Biswas-Diener, Diener & Tamir, 2004). Activities in self-management include (1) improving oneself; (2) caring, protecting, defending, and shielding oneself; (3) seeking important information and knowledge for oneself's improvement and development; (4) cooperating with others for developing oneself and others' self; (5) coping with problems in daily life for improving oneself's functioning and well-being; (6) acting proactively in anticipating various possibilities in the future; (7) acting assertively to gain respect from others; and (8) maintaining interrelations with others to increase oneself's functioning and well-being in one's environment (Curtin *et al.* 2002a. 2002b).

Various aspects of the life of DKI Jakarta's citizens influence their life satisfaction, i.e., material properties, income, characteristics of the environment, family, friendships, residence, physical appearances, social life, job, leisure times, spiritual activities, and overall self condition. These aspects are also objects of self-management, in that individuals must manage these aspect in order to make their self congruent with their life goal. Research has shown that people who choose self-concordant (i.e., congruent) goals will be happier with the goals they pursue, be more likely to put in effort towards achieving these goals, and consequently, be more likely to attain their goals (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998; Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2005).

The current research aims to understand the role of self-management in the subjective well-being of the citizens of DKI Jakarta. Based on previous research of self-management and various studies of SWB, it is hypothesized that self-management is related to SWB of DKI Jakarta's citizens.

## 2. Methods

This research employed quantitative methods to understand and explain the association between self-management and SWB. The data was collected incidentally through questionnaires. 638 citizens of DKI Jakarta with an age range of 21-60 years old (mean age = 36) participated in the study. Participants completed a survey composed of several measures. The satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) along with the positive affect and negative affect schedule scale (PANAS) and the domains of life satisfaction scale were used to gain

information about life satisfaction, as well as about positive and negative affect.

The SWLS was adapted from Pavot and Diener (1993) with a reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = 0.87$  and a validity coefficient of  $\alpha = 0.82$ . The instrument contained 5 items rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The items included in the SWLS are listed as follows: 1) In most ways my life is close to my ideal; 2) The conditions of my life are excellent; 3) I am satisfied with life; 4) So far I have gotten the important things I want in life; 5) If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

A total score was calculated by adding the scores across all 5 items, yielding a possible score range of 5-35. Interpretation of scores was made based on the guideline presented below:

5-9	very not satisfied with his/her life
10-14	not satisfied
15-19	quite not satisfied
20	neutral
21-25	quite satisfied
26-30	satisfied
31-35	very satisfied.

The PANAS was adapted from Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988) with a reliability coefficient of 0.86 for positive affect and 0.87 for negative affect. The instrument contained 20 items composed of 10 items on positive affects and 10 items on negative affects. Examples of the positive affects that were included are glad and proud, while some of the negative affects assessed are stressed and hopeless. Participants were asked to indicate how often he/she felt each of the 20 affects in the last several weeks on a 5-point scale that ranged from 1 (very rarely) to 5 (very often). The greater the assigned score on each affect, the more intense the affect was felt. A total score was obtained by adding up the scores assigned to all items. The difference between the subtotal score on positive affects and the subtotal score on negative affects was calculated to obtain a score of affect balance.

The instrument used to measure domains of life satisfaction was adapted from Biswar-Diener and Diener (2001). The instrument contained 12 items that included one item for each of the following domains: material properties, income, characteristics of environment, family, friendships, residence, physical appearances, social life, job, leisure times, spiritual activities, and overall self condition. Each item was rated on a scale that ranged from 1 (very not satisfied) to 7 (very satisfied). Because each of the 12 items addressed a distinct life domain, score on each item could be used to identify the level of satisfaction in each domain.

Self-management activities were measured using the Self-Management Questionnaire. The instrument was constructed from eight activities of self-management proposed by Curtin *et al.* (2002a, 2002b). The 'goal attainment' dimension of self-management was added to this instrument to determine whether participants' self-management activities was related to goal attainment. The Self-Management Questionnaire contained 43 items that refer to nine dimensions of self-management, and was divided into two parts. Part A measured self-management activities and part B measured goal attainment. Items in part A were measured on a 5 point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), while part B consisted of items measured on a 7 point scale ranging from 1 (very suitable with myself) to 7 (very unsuitable with myself). Scores were obtained by adding up the scores for all items in part A, all items in part B, and all items included in the questionnaire.

After scores for self-management activities and for goal attainment were obtained, regression analysis was performed between self-management and goal attainment to see if self-management is a predictor of attainment of goals. Regression analysis was performed to determine whether self-management indeed plays a role in achieving goals. Goal attainment served as a criterion of self-management. If the regression model fit, then the assumption of self-management model that was used is acceptable. Self-management scores obtained through this instrument can then be used to determine the role of self-management in increasing subjective well-being.

The participants were also asked to indicate their gender, age, marital status, residence, education, occupation, average income, and average expenses per month in the demographic questionnaire. This instrument was used to identify participants' characteristic as citizens of DKI Jakarta.

The data was analyzed in three steps. First, data was computed to obtain scores of SWLS, PANAS, and domains of life satisfaction, from which description of SWB and specific domains that contribute to life satisfaction were identified. Next, a simple regression analysis was performed to ascertain the relation between self-management activities and goal attainment. Finally, a multiple regression analysis was done to obtain the role of self-management in increasing SWB and its components.

To ensure that the respondents represented the demographic characteristics of DKI Jakarta's population, data collection was performed in five areas of DKI Jakarta. Table 1 and Table 2 describe the spread of data among the five areas.

**Table 1. Demographic Variables based on Area, Age, Sex and Marital Status**

Demographic Factors	Frequency	%
Area		
Jakarta Pusat	63	9.9
Jakarta Barat	78	12.2
Jakarta Timur	121	18.5
Jakarta Utara	131	19.7
Jakarta Selatan	245	37.6
N	638	100
Sex		
Male	329	51.3
Female	309	48.1
Marital Status		
Not Married	389	60.7
Married	231	35.9
Divorce	13	1.7
Death Couple	5	0.5
Education		
SD	12	1.9
SMP	23	3.6
SMU	258	40.3
Diploma	134	20.8
S1	187	29.2
S1, S2	24	3.8

**Tabel 2. Demographic Variables Based on Occupation and Expenses**

Demographic Factors	Frequency	%
Occupation		
unemployed	170	25.1
permanent employee	302	45.3
freelancer	117	16.8
entrepreneur	49	7.2
Expenses		
<500.000	76	11.4
500000-700000	101	15.0
700000-1000000	89	13.2
1000000-1500000	110	16.5
1500000-2000000	94	13.9
2000000-3000000	81	12.7
3000000-5000000	45	7.1
>5000000	42	6.6
N	638	100

### 3. Results and Discussion

**Life Satisfaction.** The average life satisfaction reported by participants is 'quite satisfied'. This level is below the average life satisfaction of the world's general population. Several aspects of life domains were found to correlate with the level of life satisfaction of DKI

Jakarta citizens, namely material properties, income, social life, occupation, and overall condition of self (Table 3).

Material properties and income are significantly correlated with life satisfaction, perhaps because such domains are considered vital in fulfilling everyday basic needs ( $R = 0.863, p = 0.05$ ). Material properties often act as the building blocks of one's social life and job environment, both of which are socially relevant. As a consequence, the possession of certain properties or goods may increase one's self-esteem in his or her social environment. Material properties used as principal in social life and job environment. Those have social meaning. Certain goods can increase one self-esteem in the social environment. Furthermore, income seems to be a very important domain for citizens of DKI Jakarta, perhaps because money is perceived as a primary survival tool in the city of Jakarta where almost everything can only be obtained with money. In other words, one should have a proper income for living satisfactorily in DKI Jakarta. Consistently, small changes in income was found to have a significant association with life satisfaction ( $R = 0.527, p = 0.05$ ).

Social life, which includes family relations and friendships, is considered as the domain that citizens of DKI Jakarta are most satisfied with. In general, participants tend to fulfill their needs for affiliation by being part of certain social groups based on ethnicity, occupation, hobby, and other common grounds. In addition, family is considered an important aspect and is significantly correlated with life satisfaction ( $R = 0.510, p = 0.05$ ).

Leisure time, which was reported as a satisfactory life domain by the participants, seems to be important in the life of DKI Jakarta citizens. Leisure time have quite great influence on life satisfaction of citizens of DKI Jakarta. A little leisure times can have big effect on increasing life satisfaction. This aspect are considered satisfied by participants. Leisure times are connected with social life and are used for gathering with family, friends, and conduct activities related to hobbies.

Income is considered as the life domain citizens of DKI Jakarta are most unsatisfied with, which in turn seems to be related with participants' lower life satisfaction. Those

**Table 3. Domains Life Satisfaction of Citizens of DKI Jakarta**

Domains of Life Satisfaction	Effect (R)
material properties	0.863
Income	0.527
social life	0.510
occupation	0.523
overall condition of self	0.841

dissatisfactions may be rooted in the fact that citizens of DKI Jakarta tend to compare themselves with those belonging to the upper social classes, especially since the city exposes to the public so many elements of the upper-class lifestyle. Also, the high cost of living and the high inflation in DKI Jakarta may also contribute to DKI Jakarta citizens' life dissatisfactions, with Jakarta residents having the tendency to perceive their income as inadequate to cover the living expenses in DKI Jakarta.

**Positive Affects.** On average, participants reported a 'moderate' level of positive affects. This level indicates that Jakarta citizens experience positive affects quite frequently. In relation with the situations in DKI Jakarta, various factors may play a role in individuals' affective states. These factors include high density of the city, traffic jams, competitions, high demands for higher income, and temptations to have more material properties.

The average level of positive affects experienced by the citizens of DKI Jakarta is in line with the general level of life satisfaction reported by the participants, which was 'quite satisfied'. Moreover, as positive affects as a component of SWB facilitates the attainment of pleasure or reward, a moderate level of positive affects indicates that participants have yet to optimally achieve pleasure or reward.

**Self-Management.** Self-management activities were found to have a significant positive correlation with participants' goal attainment ( $R = 0,593, p = 0.005$ ). Therefore, it may be implied that such self-management activities support the participants in attaining their goals, with each activity supporting one another. Those construct self-management as one factor that help participants to regulate their daily life and attain their goals. Those activities can perform both sequentially and simultaneously.

**Role of Self-Management in Increasing SWB.** Self-management is significantly correlated with life satisfaction ( $R = 0,391, p = 0.05$ ) and positive affects ( $R = 0,108, p = 0.05$ ). Every self-management activity is associated with increasing life satisfaction as well as positive affects, suggesting that self-management plays role in increasing or decreasing SWB. The more self-management activities are performed, the higher the intensity of life satisfaction and positive affects.

This research shows that the life domains most strongly correlated with SWB are material properties and income, which could be due to a general insufficiency of material properties and income of the citizens of DKI Jakarta. Spiritual aspect, on the other hand, has not yet become a major concern for DKI Jakarta citizens, suggesting that life satisfaction for citizens of DKI Jakarta has more to do with satisfaction of material life.

Social aspects also seemed to correlate strongly with life satisfaction, and citizens of DKI Jakarta reported being satisfied in such aspects. The results also showed that effective self-management involves good interpersonal relationships. The participants' involvement with their social environment is correlated with both life satisfaction and effective self-management. These results may be quite specific to Indonesia, as the Indonesian society has the social advantage of living in extended family households and having intensive relationships with their relatives outside the nuclear family (see Thomas & Frankenberg, 2007). The extended family structure provides them with more social support in their daily life, and in turn their social life may be a factor that plays a positive role in their life satisfaction. Even though the characteristics of Jakarta as a metropolitan city tend to encourage its citizens to be more individualistic, it does not come at the cost of their social relationships with their extended family. Such family relationships may thus play a role in Jakarta citizens' SWB.

Self-management activities were found to significantly be associated with goal attainment; however, goal attainment was not found to significantly correlate with SWB. A possible explanation for this finding may lie in the fact that goal attainment factors tend to be temporary and particular in nature, especially in terms of their contribution to life satisfaction. It may be interesting to study the relationship between goal attainment and SWB even further. That is, if goal attainments have no relationship with the life satisfaction of DKI Jakarta's citizens, then would there be a correlation between life satisfaction and achievement? Studying the relationship between life satisfaction and achievement among DKI Jakarta citizens may prove to be invaluable, considering Jakarta's reputation as a highly competitive city in Indonesia. Such a study is also necessary to better understand the roles of competitiveness and cooperation in the life satisfaction of DKI Jakarta's citizens. If the results of such a study shows that competitiveness is negatively correlated with life satisfaction, then programs that are aimed at reducing competitiveness may be needed.

The results of the current research do not recommend increasing competitive situation because there is no evidence for it. In contrast, this research shows that cooperative situations in social life are needed for increasing life satisfaction and effective self-management. The implications of this result could be interpreted as an indicator that perhaps the competitiveness in the daily life in DKI Jakarta residents may be a factor that decreases their life satisfaction. Indonesian economic policies that tend to push Indonesian people to compete thus need to be reevaluated.

The results also indicate the importance of cooperation and social support in increasing life satisfaction of DKI Jakarta's citizens. Such results are consistent with results of previous research in self-management that stated that self-management plays a significant role in increasing quality of life as well as quality of work, social interaction, and relationship through cooperation (Takooshian, 1997; Schmid, 2001). Although there is no direct evidence that would allow us to conclude that cooperation is in direct opposition with competition, there is nevertheless some insight on the positive effects of cooperation on increasing quality of life. Therefore, it simply may be that instead of competitive situation, cooperative situation is needed more.

The current research found that, consistent with previous findings (Langley, 1993; Weiss, 1999, Martyn, 2005), self-management can help people overcome their psychological problems. These findings provide us with insights about the need to develop psychotherapeutic methods (e.g., those that aim to improve self-management skills), for individuals who suffer from psychological disturbances.

Theoretically, it is understood that engaging in self-management activities are related to an increase in positive affects. It is assumed that people who conduct self-management activities can better regulate their emotions. Such a finding provides an insight about the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-management, as previously stated by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and Goleman (1995): Self-management can increase emotional intelligence (See also Cherniss, in Spielberger, ed., 2004). The association between self-management and emotional regulation is also an interesting topic to study further in order to understand the dynamics of self-management in the ability to regulate emotions.

#### 4. Conclusions

We conclude that self-management plays a role in the components of the subjective well-being of Jakarta citizens. Self-management is significantly related to life satisfaction and positive affects. Every activity of self-management was found to positively correlate with life satisfaction as well as with positive affects, suggesting that the more one performs self-management activities, the more he/she is satisfied with his/her life and the more positive affects he/she experiences.

Judging from their mean score on life satisfaction, DKI Jakarta citizens were classified as being 'quite satisfied' with their life, which places their life satisfaction level below the average level of life satisfaction of the world's population. It is possible that this finding is due to most DKI Jakarta citizens not yet performing self-management activities optimally. Both the moderate

level of life satisfaction as well as the moderate average of positive affects may imply DKI Jakarta citizens' moderate conduct of self-management activities.

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