

The Meaning of Happiness for Teenagers in Broken Home

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to understand the meaning of happiness experienced by broken home teenagers and efforts to achieve happiness as broken home teenagers. The method in this research uses qualitative methods, with a phenomenological approach. Data collection techniques involve interviews and the use of recording devices. The number of subjects in this study were three teenagers with sample characteristics, namely experiencing a broken home. The questions asked in the interview process are unstructured and conducted in a pleasant atmosphere. Data analysis techniques are data reduction, data presentation, conclusions and verification. The results of the research show that the three respondents in this study, namely teenagers who experienced a broken home, showed the meaning of happiness by referring to the aspects put forward by Seligman (2005), namely a pleasant life (Pleasant Life), a meaningful life (Meaningful Life), and involvement. self (Engaged Life). The three respondents gave meaning to life even though they came from broken home family backgrounds, they were able to find happiness in a unique way that involved positive experiences, meaning in life, and active involvement. These results provide insight for practitioners and families to help broken home teenagers understand and create their happiness.

Keywords: happiness, broken home, teenager

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of parental separation or divorce, known as *broken home*, has increased significantly, especially in Indonesia. This phenomenon attracts high research interest. Various studies have explored various aspects related to adolescents from broken home families, highlighting their psychological well-being, behavior, and coping mechanisms. It is an unpleasant reality for adolescents when they are in the period of searching for their identity and have personal problems as teenagers, they must be faced with the fact that their parents are divorced (Faizah, 2022). In fact, individuals definitely expect happiness in their lives, in fact, almost every individual longs for a happy life.

Seligman (2006) happiness is known in positive psychology, but until now there are still many differences of opinion about how happiness can occur and what causes it. Happiness is part of well-being, which is commonly referred to as hedonic. Seligman (2006) also said that happiness can be influenced by two basic emotions, namely positive emotions and negative emotions in a person. Happiness itself is a feeling that can be experienced by everyone, but the way people get happiness certainly varies depending on how a person perceives that happiness (Ikhsan & Santosa, 2024).

Santrock (2007) *Broken home* is a picture where there is a messy family because parents no longer care about the situation and circumstances of the family. Noni and Yolivia Ina Aviani (2024) reinforce the argument that a person who comes from a messy family tends to have low self-esteem, finding it difficult to relate to his family and the people around him. Parents no longer pay attention to their children at home and lack of attention to children, both attention at home, school and attention to social situations in the community. Research by Nadya Paramitha, Neni Nuraeni and Asep Setiawan (2020) related to changes in the attitude of adolescents who experience *broken homes* including quarrels, infidelity and lack of attention.

Thus, the relationship of happiness to children who experience broken homes, of course, is a phenomenon that also needs to be considered. Based on this, we as researchers try to look at some of

the results of previous research related to the phenomenon of happiness in children who experience *broken homes*, especially in adolescents.

Research by Sarah Hafiza and Marty Mawarpury (2018) shows that there are three aspects of happiness in children who experience *a broken home*, namely, a pleasant life, a meaningful life, and self-involvement. Another research by Siti Khusnul Faizah (2022) shows three aspects of happiness, namely a fun, meaningful, and interesting life. Research conducted by Naulia Nur Syayidah and Debora Basaria (2023) also revealed aspects of happiness such as feeling positive emotions, using their power in fulfilling their desires, and achieving their life goals by using kindness and pleasant feelings. Based on these aspects, of course, there needs to be a push for factors that are behind the happiness created.

Research conducted by Almaida Kusuma Wardani (2021) shows that the drivers of factors that affect happiness for children in broken homes include the creation of positive relationships with others, full involvement in careers and activities, the discovery of the meaning of life, optimism in reaching the future, and the resilience or ability of children to rise from failures that have been achieved. This encouragement helps achieve the meaning of happiness in children *with broken homes*, which has been proven in the research of Gabriella Their Christina Saliha and Afif Kurniawan (2021).

In the research of Amanda Irma Zafira and Atika Dian Ariana (2024), adolescents who experience *broken homes* have their own challenges in forming the meaning of happiness. *Broken home* teenagers understand the meaning of life as a vice, destruction, loneliness, freedom, enjoyment, and self-doubt so that it is difficult to feel the meaning of happiness. Thus, as researchers we see this as an urgency to try to explore the meaning of happiness for adolescents who experience broken homes.

Based on the initial urgency that we can detect, we try to look at previous research conducted by Lia Yohana Santoso and Arthur Huwae (2023) that the application of resilience can help increase the meaning of life lived by adolescents *with broken homes*. Seven aspects of resilience by Revina Sandra, Sulastri and Renyep Proborini (2024) are emotion regulation, impulse control, positive thinking and optimism, analytical skills, empathy, self-efficacy, and *reaching out*. Resilience and positive relationships are interrelated because individuals who have high resilience tend to have close relationships with others.

Research conducted by Ika Wahyu Pratiwi and Putri Agustin Larashati Handayani (2020) resulted that both subjects tended to have a positive self-concept even though they came from *a broken home family*. However, it is important to have a family role even though it is very minimal. So, teenagers who experience a broken home first go through the process of forgiveness to themselves. As happened in the research of Silfana Amalia Nasri, Haiyun Nisa and Karjuniwati (2018) shows that the process of forgiveness is greatly influenced by the appreciation of hurt towards the party who is considered guilty.

Research by Yulianti, Melisa Tria Rosantika and Marselina Susanti (2023) states that communication patterns in *broken home* families are important to help family members. Wandu Arputra Fanani and Mhd Fuad Zaini Siregar (2024) in their research show the importance of maintaining good communication in *broken home* families. However, if the family is not able to play a good role, in the research of Ardilla and Nurviyanti Cholid (2021) stated that sooner or later the family will fall apart. So that the research of Perti Regina Aulia and Adhyatman Prabowo (2023) shows that with the achievement of psychological well-being in individuals, they will be able to control how this defense mechanism appears unconsciously, such as the meaning of life to achieve the meaning of happiness.

According to Muhammad Ikhsan and Budi Santosa (2024), the efforts made to achieve happiness by teenagers *with broken homes* are to establish good relationships with others, especially family, involve themselves in all aspects of life (full compassion) in making decisions about themselves and circumstances outside of themselves and find the meaning of life. Rois Nafi'ul Umam and Maemonah (2021) also talked about efforts to achieve happiness by forgetting the disappointments they faced, seeking wisdom and problems that occurred, and preparing themselves for a new life. Therefore, the importance of achieving happiness nutrition, especially for adolescents who experience *broken homes* in their families. Based on the phenomena, urgency, and results of previous research that support the problem both in terms of aspects, factors, and efforts that can help increase the meaning of life, we as researchers are interested in researching the meaning of happiness for adolescents *with broken homes*.

Ananda, R. (2023), stated that *a broken home* refers to a condition in which the family structure is not intact due to the separation of parents, either through divorce, death, or prolonged conflict. In this context, *broken homes* are often identified with the negative impacts that children experience, including

emotional, social, and behavioral problems that can affect their development. Ananda R (2023), in his research identified several dimensions related to *broken homes*, including: Emotional Dimensions, Children often experience emotional instability, such as anxiety and depression, due to the separation of parents. This has an impact on their mental health. Social Dimension: There are difficulties in building healthy social relationships. Children may feel alienated from their peers and experience social stigma. Cognitive Dimension: Parental separation can affect concentration and motivation to study, which leads to a decline in academic achievement. Behavioral Dimensions: Children may exhibit deviant or aggressive behavior in response to the frustration and stress they experience. The Social Support Dimension, Support from the surrounding environment, including friends and family, is very important to help children cope with the negative impact of *broken homes*.

Ananda R. (2023), also stated that there are several factors that affect the occurrence of broken homes, including: Economic Factors, Financial instability in the family can cause tension and conflict between couples, which can lead to divorce. Both communication factors, poor or ineffective communication between partners can lead to misunderstandings and prolonged tension. Mental health problems, whether in one or both parents, can affect family dynamics and add stress in relationships. Fourth, the influence of the surrounding environment, including pressure from friends and social norms, can encourage or worsen existing situations in the family. Five-factor behavior, deviant actions such as domestic violence, infidelity, or addictive behavior are often the main causes of division in the family.

Seligman (2005) explained that happiness is a concept that refers to positive emotions felt by individuals and positive activities that have no emotional component at all. Seligman gives an image of an individual who finds true happiness, that is, an individual who has been able to identify and cultivate the basic strength he has and use it in his daily life. Seligman (2002) mentions that there are 3 aspects of happiness, namely: a pleasant life A happy individual is an individual who has a high pleasant experience, a low unpleasant experience, and has the ability to increase happiness in the future. Meaningful life Individuals gain meaning in life when the life they live is made into a purposeful, meaningful, and understandable experience. A meaningful life can be obtained by being actively involved and building positive relationships with others. Individuals who have happiness are not focused on themselves when doing every activity but also attach importance to the interests of other individuals. Self-involvement (*engaged life*) Self-involvement refers to a condition in which an individual involves all aspects of themselves (physical, cognitive, and emotional) to participate in the activities carried out. Full involvement is not only in the career sphere, but also in other activities such as hobbies and family activities. Individuals who are actively involved in various jobs make individuals happier.

Seligman added that there are 2 happiness factors, namely: Internal Factors, Satisfaction with the past, optimism about the future and happiness in the present and External factors, money, marriage, social life, negative emotions, age, health; education, climate, race, gender and religion. Seligman (2005) explained that happiness is a concept that refers to positive emotions felt by individuals and positive activities that have no emotional component at all. Seligman gives an image of an individual who finds true happiness, that is, an individual who has been able to identify and cultivate the basic strength he has and use it in his daily life.

The purpose of this research is to understand the meaning of happiness experienced by teenagers *with broken homes* and efforts to achieve happiness as teenagers *with broken homes*. The theoretical benefits of this research are to add information and scientific treasures in developmental psychology, social psychology in particular which discusses the meaning of happiness for adolescents who experience *broken homes*. The practical benefits of this study can provide information and knowledge about the meaning of happiness for adolescents with broken homes to researchers and readers, further revealing more deeply the aspects related to this research.

METHOD

The method in this study uses a qualitative method, the method can provide descriptive data in the form of words or behaviors that can be observed (Creswell, 2018). Based on the constraints of the problem and the goals that have been set, the approach used is phenomenology. In this study, the data collection technique involves interviews and the use of recording devices. The number of subjects in this study is three adolescents with the characteristics of a sample, namely experiencing a broken home. The questions asked in the interview process are unstructured and conducted in a pleasant atmosphere.

According to Miles and Huberman (Pratiwi, 2017) there are 3 important activities carried out in data analysis, namely data reduction, data presentation, conclusion and verification. In the phenomenological method, Creswell (2022) data validity techniques and commonly used research procedures include several important steps including triangulation, *member checking*, trail audit, and research reflection. Moustakas (2021) proposed related research procedures in phenomenology, including participant selection, data collection, transcription, data analysis, and presentation of findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews conducted on the three adolescents who have *broken home* characteristics , it can be analyzed as follows:

First, in the aspect of the meaning of a fun life by teenagers broken home. The teens described having high pleasurable experiences, low unpleasant experiences, and having the ability to increase happiness in the future. The three teenagers feel happy by being involved in a group that makes them comfortable with their families, the moments created in the individual environment will increase the sense of happiness. Happiness is a simple but meaningful positive experience, which involves a sense of comfort, joy, and peace both when with others and in personal moments. Therefore, it is known that teenagers *with broken homes* have the experience to develop their happiness and increase their happiness in the future.

Second, in terms of the meaning of life that is meaningful for teenagers *with broken homes*, a valuable lesson learned is the importance of being selfless and being able to adapt to changing situations, especially after the birth of a younger sibling, which distracts some of the attention of parents. This experience made him more sensitive to the conditions and needs of others, especially his family. On the other hand, he had a hard time when he felt like he had lost the attention that used to abound. This situation prompted him to seek professional help to maintain his mental health and develop a deeper understanding of the importance of accepting change. This life experience requires them to appreciate empathy, patience, and adaptability in facing life's challenges. They gain meaning in life when the life they live is made into a purposeful, meaningful, and understandable experience. A meaningful life can be obtained by being actively involved and building positive relationships with others. Individuals who have happiness do not focus on themselves when doing every activity but also attach importance to the interests of other individuals.

Third, in the aspect of adolescents' self-involvement in broken homes. Each of them has the opportunity to manage emotions, each individual has a different personality as well as different problem solving, individuals also need to develop attitudes as well as have life principles and involve themselves in various activities, bringing a significant impact on a person's feelings and well-being.

The results of the research that have been briefly presented can be seen in the following figure:

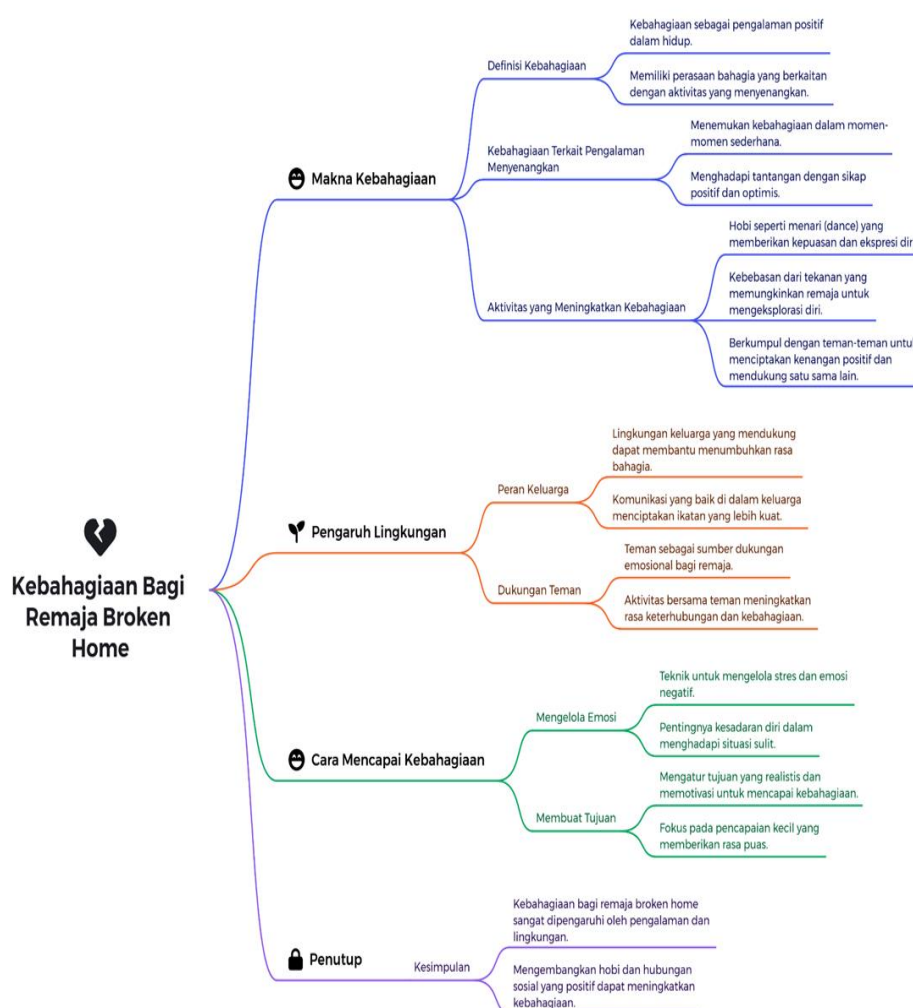


Figure I. Picture of Happiness for Teenagers *in Broken Home*

Discussion

This study aims to understand the meaning of happiness experienced by adolescents from broken home families, as well as the efforts they make to achieve it. Based on the results of data analysis, it was found that happiness for teenagers with *broken homes* can be interpreted in three aspects proposed by Seligman (2005), namely:

Pleasant Life: Adolescents feel happiness through positive experiences such as running stress-free activities, gathering with family, and enjoying hobbies such as dancing. Happiness is also felt when they can create a regular personal routine and fulfill their desires.

Meaningful Life: Broken home teens find meaning in life through involvement in positive relationships with friends and family, goal achievement, and the ability to accept and adapt to changing family situations. They show an awareness of the importance of understanding one's own condition and that of others in order to create a meaningful life.

Third, *Engaged Life*: Happiness is also defined through active involvement in activities that require physical, cognitive, and emotional focus, such as participating in extracurriculars, holding important roles in the classroom, or helping with laboratory activities on campus. Although this activity is tiring, they feel motivated because of the support from the social environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the three respondents in this study, namely adolescents who experience broken homes, show the meaning of happiness by referring to the aspects that Seligman (2005) emphasizes, namely a *pleasant life*, a *meaningful life*, and an *engaged life*. The three respondents interpreted life even though they came from a *broken home* family

background, they were able to find happiness in a unique way that involved positive experiences, meaning in life, and active engagement. These results provide insights for practitioners and families to help broken *home* youth understand and create their happiness.

The next suggestion to researchers is to be able to conduct research related to the meaning of broken *home happiness* in the characteristics of respondents who are different from the respondents of this study. The researcher can also increase the number of respondents and can analyze more deeply and optimally related to the meaning of happiness in individuals who experience broken homes. in the children's category and in the adult category.

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