

## An Overview of Life Gratitude on Ex-Prisoner Adolescents

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**Abstract.** Adolescence is a very important and critical part of an individual's development. This is because, in the stages of adolescent development, it is often marked by an identity crisis which causes an adolescent to be very vulnerable to conduct behavior that is not following prevailing norms and rules, such as deviant behavior. Adolescents who are found guilty according to the applicable law will be placed and fostered at the Special Development Institution for Children (LPKA) and referred to as Correctional Students (Andikpas). After serving a criminal period, adolescent ex-prisoner will come out and live again in society. However, this is not easy due to environmental resistance and the difficulty of carrying out social reintegration. On the other hand, this brings its lessons for adolescent ex-prisoners so that they can be grateful by seeing life more positively. This paper will discuss the different and unique overview of life gratitude of ex-prisoner adolescents. The discussion is hoped to be able to provide knowledge related to the gratitude of life and adolescent ex-prisoners.

**Keywords:** *Life gratitude, Ex-prisoner, adolescent*

**Abstrak.** Masa remaja merupakan bagian dari perkembangan seorang individu yang sangat penting dan krisis. Hal ini dikarenakan dalam tahapan perkembangan remaja sering ditandai dengan krisis identitas yang menyebabkan seorang remaja sangat rentan untuk melakukan perilaku yang tidak sesuai dengan norma dan aturan yang berlaku, seperti perilaku menyimpang. Remaja yang dinyatakan bersalah menurut hukum yang berlaku akan ditempatkan serta dibina di Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak (LPKA) serta disebut sebagai Anak Didik Pemasarakatan (Andikpas). Setelah menjalani masa pidana, remaja mantan narapidana akan keluar dan menjalani kehidupan kembali di tengah masyarakat. Namun hal ini tidak mudah karena adanya penolakan dari lingkungan dan sulitnya untuk melakukan reintegrasi sosial. Di sisi lain, hal tersebut membawa pelajaran tersendiri bagi remaja mantan narapidana sehingga membuat mereka mampu bersyukur dengan melihat kehidupan secara lebih positif. Makalah ini akan membahas gambaran kebersyukuran hidup dari remaja mantan narapidana yang berbeda-beda dan juga unik. Pembahasan diharap dapat memberikan pengetahuan terkait kebersyukuran hidup dan remaja mantan narapidana.

**Kata kunci:** *Kebersyukuran Hidup, Mantan Narapidana, Remaja*

Article history:

Received: 10 February 2021

Received in revised from: 11 February 2021

Accepted: 11 February 2021

Available online: 1 June 2021

### **Introduction**

The word gratitude is taken from the Latin word *gratia* which means tenderness, kindness, or gratitude (Pruyer, Emmons & McCullough, in Sulistiyarini & Ria 2010). In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, gratitude means gratitude to Allah (KBBI, 2020). Emmons and McCullough (in Sulistiyarini & Ria 2010) argue that gratitude is a form of emotion or feeling which then develops into an attitude, good moral traits, habits, personality traits and ultimately affects a person to respond or react to something or situation. Gratitude can change a person to be better, wiser and create harmony between himself and the environment (Emmons, 2007). Emmons also added that gratitude is joyful, makes you feel good, and can even spur motivation. Armenta, et al (2017) state that positive emotions - especially gratitude - can also play a role in motivating individuals to engage in positive behaviors that lead to self-improvement.

Some psychology figures in Peterson and Seligman (2004) define gratitude as a feeling of gratitude and pleasure in response to receiving a gift, where the gift provides benefits from someone or an event that provides peace. According to Emmons and Shelton (in Snyder & Lopez, 2005) gratitude is a sense of awe, gratitude, and appreciation for the life that is felt by individuals. Also, gratitude can be expressed towards other people and impersonal objects (God, nature, animals, etc.). Besides, Watkins, et al (2003) defined gratitude as an attitude of appreciating every life as a gift and realizing the importance of expressing this appreciation.

Based on some of the understanding of the experts above, the authors concluded that gratitude is a form of positive emotion that expresses happiness and gratitude because of the appreciation, gift, and kindness that someone receives. Gratefulness can be manifested in a compliment to the giving source (other people and impersonal objects, namely God, nature, animals, etc.) or by expressing gratitude

and appreciation for the life that the individual feels. This paper will further discuss concepts and theories of life gratitude on ex-prisoner adolescents.

### **Ex-Prisoner Adolescents**

According to the Indonesian Big Dictionary, prisoners are define as people who are currently serving a sentence for criminal acts (KBBI, 2020). Prisoners who are in LPKA are called "Andikpas" which means Correctional Students because in Indonesian Law there is no term teenager as stated in Law No. 23 of 2003 article 1 explains that the age range of children is recorded up to the age of 18 years. In that age range, children who are involved in legal cases and must undergo a period of guidance at the Children's Prison and are called Andikpas. Andikpas, who underwent his guidance at the Child Prison, have an average age of 14-20 years (Irawan, 2011).

According to Harsono (in Utami, 2014), a prisoner is someone who has been convicted by law and must undergo a sentence or sanction which will then be placed in a building called a detention center, prison, or penitentiary. Azani (2012) states that an ex-convict is someone who has been convicted and served time in a correctional facility but has now finished serving his sentence in a correctional facility.

Based on some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that ex-prisoners are people who have completed the sentencing process within a certain period in the Penitentiary as a consequence of the criminal act committed and have gained independence to return to society. Furthermore, the author will describe aspects, factors, psychological effects, and a picture of the gratefulness of ex-prisoner adolescents.

### Aspects of Gratitude

According to McCullough et al (2002), mentioning several aspects of gratitude consists of four elements:

- a. Intensity, that is, someone with a tendency to be grateful will be more intensely grateful for favors than someone who is less grateful when experiencing the positive events expected in his life.

- b. Frequency, that is, someone with a tendency to be grateful will feel many feelings of gratitude every day. This can lead him to do positive things.
- c. Span, The gratitude that arises in him can be obtained from life events such as feeling grateful for family, work, health, etc.
- d. Density, that is, someone who is grateful is expected to be able to write down more names of people who are considered to have made him grateful including parents, friends, family, and all those who contributed to making him feel grateful.

According to Watkins et al (2003), there are four aspects of people being grateful:

1. Have a sense of abundance

Watkins (2003) states that grateful individuals will not feel deprived in life. In other words, the more the individual feels that his life is abundant and filled with many blessings, even though the individual is not well off materially, the individual will be more easily grateful, and vice versa. The more individuals feel that their lives are lacking in any case, the more difficult the individual is to be grateful.

2. Have an appreciation for others

Grateful individuals will appreciate or appreciate every contribution given by others so that it can be their welfare. The theory of gratitude emphasizes that other people have important benefits in an individual's life (Toussaint and Friedman, 2009). Thus it can be concluded that the more individuals are aware of and appreciate the presence and benefits provided by others, the easier the individual will feel grateful, and vice versa.

3. Have a simple appreciation

Grateful individuals are characterized by a tendency to appreciate simple pleasures. Simple pleasures refer to the pleasures in life that are available to most people, such as air to breathe, water to live daily, and so on. The more often the individual appreciates and appreciates the slightest

happiness in his life, the easier the individual will be grateful, and vice versa.

#### 4. Expressing gratitude

The grateful individual must recognize the importance of experiencing and expressing gratitude in life. The more the individual recognizes and is aware of any experiences that occur in life, the easier the individual will be grateful, and vice versa.

Based on the aspects described above, it can be explained that the aspect of gratitude is shown through how intensely and often someone is grateful, either through experience or other people who make him grateful, a sense of abundance, a sense of appreciation for others, and also simple things and can express thankfully.

#### Factors Affecting Life Gratitude

McCullough et al (2002) stated that several factors influence gratitude, namely:

##### a. Psychology well-being

Psychological well-being is a concept that is related to what individuals feel about activities in everyday life and leads to the expression of personal feelings for what is felt by the individual. Based on the results of research conducted by Wood, Joseph, and Maltby (2009), gratitude is significantly correlated with psychological well-being. The more grateful a person is, the higher his wellbeing, he will have a positive cognitive and affective evaluation of his life, and vice versa.

##### b. Prosociality

Prosocial behavior is all forms of behavior aimed at helping others without expecting a reward from the help so that the person being helped can get positive benefits both materially, physically, and psychologically. Gratitude is recognized as a prosocial effect because it is a response to

others that helps one's well-being and in turn motivates the emergence of the behavior itself.

c. Spirituality/Religiousness

Religiosity is a person's understanding of the religious values he believes in. Religious values make the implementers have high hopes and optimism (Ciarrocchi, Liacco, Deneke, 2008; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008). Religion and spirituality provide social and cognitive resources that help believers experience a wider range of well-being. A person's understanding of religious values affects the extent to which a person can be grateful. These studies are corroborated by the results of research by Watkins et al. (2003), which found that religiosity is positively associated with gratitude and that the experience of gratitude can increase belief in God. In other words, gratitude can increase positive emotions.

Meanwhile, according to Froh, et al. (2009) the factors that influence gratitude, namely:

1. Positive affect, namely individual positive feelings that can lead to gratitude.
2. Peer perceptions that influence individuals to be grateful.
3. The role of the family in providing support to individuals when facing problems so that individuals will feel more grateful for the support and attention received.
4. Optimism makes individuals tend to judge everything positively.

Based on the opinions of the experts above regarding the factors that influence gratitude, the researchers concluded that the factors that influence gratitude can come from outside oneself (such as emotionality, religiousness, positive affect, and optimism) and from within a person (such as prosociality, perception peers, as well as family roles).

Psychological Effects of Gratitude

McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002) reveal that there are positive psychological effects that occur when a person is grateful, including:

a. Positive effective nature and well-being

Grateful people tend to feel more loved, accepted, and appreciated so that they have a higher level of subjective well-being. Grateful people also have the view that life is a gift and appreciate everything that happens in their life.

b. Prosocial Traits

Gratitude is a positive emotion that triggers someone to do good to people who have paid attention to their welfare. Someone grateful will have empathy, are willing to forgive, and provide help and support to others. This results in a person who is grateful to be more sensitive to other people's conditions and actions in interacting with his social environment.

c. Nature of Spirituality

A grateful person has the view that there is a greater power that does not come from humans, namely God and the universe which affects his welfare.

Thus, it can be concluded that grateful people have a happier life with whatever is in their life, feel more loved, and are appreciated and accepted by their social environment. Someone grateful tends to provide emotional support in the form of help and support for others, has empathy, and is easy to forgive. A grateful person also has faith in God and the universe that has more power than himself.

Factors that Cause Adolescents Behavior Deviation

Two factors cause adolescents to deviate from behavior, namely internal factors, and external factors, namely:

A. Internal Factors

1. Weak Self-control

According to Santrock, weak self-control occurs because juvenile delinquency can be described as a form of failure to develop self-control in adolescent behavior. Some children develop the self-control that should have been accepted during the growth process (Santrock, 2007).

2. Lack of understanding of religion

With a lack of understanding of religion in a person, the controlling power that is in him is lost so that he falls into deviant behavior. Thus, the only means of moral control and control that is owned is a society with its laws and regulations (Sumarno, 2017).

B. External Factors

1. Family Factor; The criminal pattern of the father, mother, or one of the family members can print the criminal pattern of almost all other family members (Kartono, 2003 in Mantiri 2014). Also, family integrity also affects adolescent development (Ahmadi, 2007 in Mantiri 2014).

2. School Factors (Mulyono, 1993 in Mantiri 2014); School is an educational environment which in general is still formal. Adolescents who are still in junior high and high school, in general, spend 7 hours at school every day.

3. Community Factors; the community environment is a living condition that influences the mindset and development of youth souls. One form of manifestation and opposition to the environment is youth gangs. Currently, youth gangs have led to negative things, such as mass fighting, drinking alcohol, drugs, committing sexual crimes, and robbery. (Sofyan, 2012 in Mantiri 2014).

4. Playgroup (Dhori, et al. 2003 in Mantiri, 2014); the neighborhood and the playgroup are the most related socialization media because an individual will have a playgroup or association in the neighborhood.

Based on the opinion of experts regarding the factors that influence adolescent behavior deviations, the researchers concluded that 2 factors underlie the formation of adolescent behavior deviations, namely internal factors (such as weak self-control and lack of understanding of religion), and external factors (such as family factors, school factors, community factors, and playgroups).

### **Conclusion**

Adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood and is known as a period of searching for identity so that at this time it is not uncommon for teenagers to do things that violate applicable rules. When a teenager is proven to have committed a mistake that violates the rules or norms that apply in society, the teenager will be legally processed so that he is admitted to a special child development institution.

After serving the stipulated criminal period, the ex-convict teenager will be expelled and return to live life in the community. Of course, holding the status of an ex-convict will be unpleasant because it will get rejection and pressure from the environment. This attitude of rejection and pressure sometimes makes them treated inhumanely and can also make them feel anxious, inferior, depressed, and even suicidal (Yuliani in Aprilia, 2016). In a situation like this, adolescent ex-prisoners are required to have the ability to adapt positively to an environment that can accept this situation as a lesson that can lead them to do better things.

Peterson and Seligman (in Listiyandini, Nathania, Sonia, & Nadya, 2015) see that amid adversity facing a pressing situation, someone always has the opportunity to see life more positively. When someone can accept a stressful situation and give thanks as a lesson in life, it will make the individual feel happy in life. When you decide to be grateful, your life will become more meaningful because you have had

enough and accept with a happy heart. Grateful individuals also tend to appreciate even small happiness so that if they experience suffering or calamity, they remain steadfast and aware that there is always wisdom behind that disaster (Maulidah, 2016).

In the process of becoming a life-grateful individual, adolescent ex-convicts must have an aspect of gratitude which is shown through how intense and often they are grateful, either through experiences or through other people, which makes them a less deficient individual, has a sense of appreciation for others and also. simple things and can express gratitude. Besides, it can be seen through the factors that influence gratitude, among others, it can come from outside oneself (such as emotionality, religiousness, positive affect, optimism, and personality factors) and from within a person (such as prosociality, peer perceptions, family roles, as well as environmental factors). Then, gratitude can be manifested personally (to people who have benefited the recipient or to themselves) and transpersonal (to God, a greater power, or the universe) and gratitude can also be expressed with the heart, tongue, and limbs. Gratitude-based intervention can help these teenagers as they are threatened with various environmental risks (Kiling et al., 2018) as severe as poverty, lack of basic care and services, and also human trafficking (Kiling & Kiling-Bunga, 2019).

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