



The Role of Recalled Spending Experiences in Shaping Adolescents' Happiness and Future Intentions

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Abstract. Although previous investigations have shown that prosocial spending can enhance happiness, most of this evidence originates from individualistic cultures and adult participants. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether recalling different types and amounts of past spending experiences affects adolescents' happiness and future spending intentions. A total of 127 adolescents aged 15–18 years were selected as the participants using a 2x2 between-subjects experimental design. The design involved a recall-based task in which participants reflected on either prosocial or personal spending at two different monetary levels (IDR 5.000 and IDR 20.000). After the recall task, participants completed the Subjective Happiness Scale and selected the type of spending they believed would lead to greater happiness. The Analysis of variance (ANOVA) results showed that prosocial spending, particularly at higher amounts, significantly increased participants' happiness compared to personal spending. However, logistic regression analysis showed that subsequent spending decisions were more influenced by the context of the recall task than by current happiness levels. These results suggested that recalling salient acts of giving could enhance adolescents' happiness. Meanwhile, the intention to engage in future prosocial behaviors appeared to be shaped more by how spending was framed than by immediate emotional states. In practical terms, the study showed the potential value of incorporating prosocial values into educational and psychological programs for adolescents, particularly within collectivist cultural settings.

Keywords: happiness, money spending, personal spending, prosocial spending

Peran Pengalaman Pengeluaran yang Diingat dalam Membentuk Kebahagiaan dan Niat Masa Depan Remaja

Abstrak. Studi-studi sebelumnya menunjukkan bahwa pengeluaran secara prososial dapat meningkatkan kebahagiaan, namun sebagian besar penelitian tersebut dilakukan pada populasi dewasa dan dalam konteks budaya individualistik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki apakah mengingat kembali pengalaman pengeluaran dengan tipe dan jumlah yang berbeda dapat memengaruhi kebahagiaan serta preferensi perilaku prososial remaja. Sebanyak 127 remaja berusia 15–18 tahun berpartisipasi dalam desain eksperimen 2x2 antar-subjek dengan tugas recall, membandingkan pengeluaran untuk diri sendiri dan untuk orang lain dalam dua nominal yang berbeda (Rp5.000 dan Rp20.000). Peserta diminta mengingat pengalaman pengeluaran sebelumnya, mengisi Skala Kebahagiaan Subjektif, dan memilih jenis pengeluaran yang dianggap akan membawa kebahagiaan. Hasil ANOVA menunjukkan bahwa mengingat pengeluaran secara prososial—terutama dalam jumlah yang lebih besar—secara signifikan meningkatkan kebahagiaan dibandingkan dengan pengeluaran pribadi. Namun, analisis regresi logistik menunjukkan bahwa keputusan pengeluaran berikutnya lebih dipengaruhi oleh konteks tugas recall daripada tingkat kebahagiaan saat ini. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa meskipun tindakan memberi yang bermakna secara emosional dapat meningkatkan kebahagiaan, niat perilaku selanjutnya lebih banyak dibentuk oleh konteks situasional daripada keadaan emosional saat ini. Implikasinya, integrasi nilai-nilai prososial dalam program pendidikan dan intervensi psikologis bagi remaja menjadi penting khususnya dalam konteks budaya kolektivistik.

Kata Kunci: kebahagiaan, pengeluaran pribadi, pengeluaran prososial, penggunaan uang

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Happiness is a central component of psychological well-being and has been a primary focus within the field of positive psychology over the past two decades (Diener et al., 2018; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). It is shaped by both internal factors such as genetics and personality as well as external factors, particularly social environments and daily behaviors (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2021). Among these external factors, prosocial behaviors, which is defined as voluntary actions intended to benefit others, has consistently been linked to greater emotional well-being (Aknin et al., 2013; Curry et al., 2018). Previous empirical studies showed that engaging in prosocial behaviors such as spending money on others, could elicit positive emotions and enhance subjective well-being more reliably than self-focused behaviors (Dunn et al., 2008; Martela & Ryan, 2016).

An expanding body of empirical evidence supports the connection between prosocial spending and elevated happiness across a wide range of populations. For instance, Aknin et al. (2013) reported that individuals who spent money on others experienced higher happiness levels compared to those who spent the same amount on themselves. This pattern appears consistent across cultural contexts, as explained by, while Hui et al. (2020) highlighted that the emotional effects of giving tend to be more sustained than those associated with personal purchases. Similarly, O'Brien and Kassirer (2019) found that even modest expenditures

on others could significantly enhance emotional well-being. These outcomes are observed across various economic conditions and national cultures, including societies that emphasize collectivist values (Tan et al., 2020; Chen, 2024; Weiss-Sidi & Riemer, 2023).

Developmental factors play an important role in how prosocial behaviors influence emotional responses. According to Hastings (2025), young children derive emotional satisfaction from generous actions, suggesting that the roots of prosocial motivation arise early in life. Extending these results to adolescence, studies by Carlo et al. (2022) and Kwak and Huettel (2016) explained that adolescents, due to their heightened sensitivity to social feedback, are particularly responsive to the emotional rewards of giving. Nelson et al. (2016) further emphasized this developmental stage was marked by increased attunement to social relationships, which might amplify the emotional benefits of altruistic behaviors. Recent studies has also explored mediating mechanisms that influence the emotional impact of prosocial behaviors. Factors such as perceived interpersonal connection and the subjective meaning attached to giving have been found to enhance emotional outcomes (Curry et al., 2018; Martela & Ryan, 2016). Additionally, scholars such as Klein (2017) and Schlosser and Levy (2016) argued that prosocial behaviors conducted within socially meaningful contexts resulted in more enduring and embedded emotional benefits compared to the transient

satisfaction derived from self-oriented consumption.

Despite the consistency of previous results, several conceptual and empirical gaps remain. Essentially, a significant proportion of existing studies has been conducted within individualistic cultures, which limits the applicability of their conclusions to collectivist societies such as Indonesia (Lu & Gilmour, 2006; Uchida et al, 2004). In these collectivist contexts, emotional experiences, particularly happiness, are more deeply embedded in social harmony, communal identity, and relational responsibilities (De Almeida et al, 2022; Zhou et al, 2023). As a result, prosocial behaviors that is line with cultural norms of interdependence may offer deeper and more sustained emotional benefits (Aknin et al, 2018; Lazar & Eisenberger, 2022). Furthermore, adolescence constitutes a critical developmental stage marked by identity exploration, emotional maturation, and heightened sensitivity to social contexts (Fuligni, 2019; Santrock, 2017). During this formative period, emotionally charged experiences may play a crucial role in shaping value systems and fostering a prosocial disposition (Nelson et al, 2016; Padilla-Walker & Carlo, 2015). However, empirical studies focusing on adolescents within collectivist cultures, particularly those using memory-based methodologies that capture real-life experiences, remain significantly scarce.

To address these limitations, the present study investigates two key issues, including (1) the lack of culturally informed empirical evidence on the relationship between prosocial spending and happiness among adolescents in collectivist societies, and (2) the limited exploration of a recall-based method in eliciting emotional responses that may influence future behaviors. Although earlier investigations has predominantly used real-time spending scenarios or hypothetical allocations, this study introduces a recall-based method that prompts participants to reflect on actual past spending experiences (Greeley & Rajaram, 2023; Zhang et al, 2021). This method not only enhances ecological validity but also provides a framework for understanding how adolescents emotionally process their spending behaviors within a culturally familiar context.

Building on the foundational insights of Dunn et al. (2008), the current study examines whether recalling different types and amounts of past spending influences adolescents' current happiness and their intentions to engage in similar behaviors in the future. Rather than replicating real-time spending experiments, the investigation adapts Dunn et al.'s (2008) framework to assess whether emotionally significant reflections on previous spending experiences can enhance subjective well-being and influence behavioral intentions. Therefore, the study contributes to the existing literature by integrating developmental and cultural perspectives. It also proposes that reflective

prosocial memory may serve as a mechanism for reinforcing emotional well-being and promoting sustained prosocial behaviors among adolescents in interdependent social settings.

Method

This study adopted a quantitative analysis to compare levels of happiness resulting from prosocial versus personal spending. The method facilitated the identification of significant differences between groups and provided a clearer understanding of the emotional effects associated with each spending type (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Conceptually building upon the work of Dunn et al. (2008), the current study adapted their framework by shifting from a real-time spending paradigm to a recall-based design. Instead of asking participants to spend money during the study, this design required them to reflect on past spending experiences. The adjustment introduced unique psychological processes such as retrospective reflection and imagined emotional response, which might engage different cognitive and emotional mechanisms compared to real-time behaviors.

Participants and sampling

The study involved 127 high school students (72 females and 55 males) aged between 15 and 18 years ($M = 16.3$). Participants were recruited from SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Purwokerto, a public secondary school located in Central Java, Indonesia. To ensure a diverse

sample across grade levels and age groups, the study used a stratified random sampling method. Approval for data collection was obtained through an official letter submitted to the school principal and relevant authorities. In coordination with the school, classes across grades 10, 11, and 12 were identified and stratified based on academic level. Within each selected class, students were randomly sampled to participate in the study, with care taken to maintain a balanced distribution across age groups and gender categories.

This sampling strategy allowed for the inclusion of participants with varied developmental characteristics and yielded a representative cross-section of the school's adolescent population. All selected students were present during data collection. Participation was entirely voluntary, and each participant provided informed consent after receiving a complete explanation of the study's purpose and procedures.

Procedure and design

This study adopted a 2 (spending type: prosocial vs. personal) \times 2 (amount: IDR 5.000 vs. IDR 20.000) between-subjects design. Before data collection, participants received an informed consent form explaining the study's objectives, affirming the absence of foreseeable physical or psychological risks, and emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation. Written consent was obtained from all students in accordance with ethical standards for study involving minors.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four recall-based task conditions, each combining a specific spending type and monetary amount. The selected amounts (IDR 5.000 and IDR 20.000) were based on preliminary demographic data showing the average range of daily allowances received by students. This ensured ecological validity and psychological relevance in the recall process. In each condition, participants were instructed to recall and reconstruct a previous real-life spending experience that matched their assigned scenario. This autobiographical recall method was used to encourage emotional engagement with familiar experiences, allowing for a more accurate examination of associated emotional responses. The recall task was administered by trained study assistants in a classroom setting designed to minimize distractions and support focused individual reflection.

Following the recall task, participants completed the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), a four-item self-report tool used to assess global subjective happiness. Each item was rated on a 7-point Likert scale, with total scores calculated by averaging the responses, after reverse-scoring the fourth item. The SHS included both absolute and comparative measures. The first item evaluated general happiness, the second compared one's happiness to that of peers, and the third and fourth required participants to show how much they relate to descriptions of

typically happy and unhappy individuals. The scores range was between 1.0 and 7.0, with higher values showing greater perceived happiness. In this study, the SHS showed strong internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$) and served as the primary measure of subjective well-being.

After completing the SHS, participants were asked to express their preferred future behaviors by selecting one of four sealed spending cards. Each card described a hypothetical scenario involving a particular amount and spending purpose. Card A invited participants to spend IDR 20.000 on personal needs or to meet obligations such as paying bills or settling debts and Card B presented a similar self-oriented scenario but with IDR 5.000. Card C involved prosocial spending of IDR 20.000, whether for someone else or for charitable purposes and Card D offered a comparable prosocial option with IDR 5.000. Participants were instructed to choose the option that they believed would bring the most happiness. This card selection was treated as an indicator of behavioral intention and was subsequently used as a categorical outcome in the logistic regression analysis.

Hypotheses

The main hypothesis posited that recalling previous spending experiences, whether for oneself or for others, significantly influenced reported happiness levels. Four subsidiary hypotheses were proposed:

H1: Recalling prosocial spending will be associated with greater reported happiness than recalling personal spending.

H2: Recalling a higher amount of prosocial spending (IDR 20.000) is associated with more happiness than recalling a lower amount (IDR 5.000).

H3: Higher reported happiness will be associated with a greater likelihood of choosing prosocial spending in future behavioral intentions.

H4: Recalling higher-value prosocial spending tends to increase the likelihood of selecting a similar prosocial spending scenario in the future.

Data analysis

Data were first cleaned and organized in Microsoft Excel before being analyzed using Jamovi (version 2.6.16) for Windows. Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize participants' demographic information and reported spending choices. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences in happiness scores across the four experimental groups (Field, 2024). Before conducting the ANOVA, assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance, and independence were checked. Post-hoc tests were applied where relevant to identify pairwise differences. Effect sizes were reported using

partial eta squared. To assess whether happiness scores predicted future spending preferences, a multinomial logistic regression was conducted. Behavioral intention was operationalized through participants' card selections. Effect sizes in this model were expressed using odds ratios (Hosmer Jr et al, 2013).

Results

Participant demographics

A total of 127 high school students from SMA Muhammadiyah I Purwokerto participated in the study. From these total participants, 72 were female (56.7%) and 55 were male (43.3%). Ages ranged from 15 to 18 years, with a mean age of 16.3 years. Most students were either 16 (38.6%) or 17 years old (32.3%), representing typical enrollment across grades 10 to 12.

In terms of daily allowance, 56.7% received between IDR 10.001 and IDR 20.000. Meanwhile, 18.1% reported receiving less than IDR 10.000, and only 12.6% received more than IDR 30.000. These figures show the financial realities of adolescents without independent income. Assignment across experimental groups was balanced, with each group containing between 31 and 33 participants. A detailed demographic breakdown is provided in Table 1.

Table 1*Participant Demographics*

Variable	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender				
Male	55	43.3	18.8	3.14
Female	72	56.7	18.8	3.26
Age				
15	26	20.5	19	3.32
16	49	38.6	18.6	3.31
17	41	32.2	18.9	3.2
18	11	8.7	18.8	2.64
Study Group				
Group 1	33	26	19.2	2.48
Group 2	31	24.4	20.9	2.43
Group 3	32	25.2	17.7	4.08
Group 4	31	24.4	17.5	2.34
Card Chosen				
Card A	37	26	18.8	3.78
Card B	16	12.6	19	2.31
Card C	41	32.3	18.4	3.03
Card D	33	29.1	19.2	3.13
Daily Allowance				
IDR 0–10.000	16	12.6	18.3	2.77
IDR 10.001–20.000	72	56.7	18.4	3.12
IDR 20.001–30.000	23	18.1	19.3	3.71
Above IDR 30.000	16	12.6	20.2	2.9

Note. *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation.

Spending card preference by group

Participants who recalled spending IDR 20.000 were more likely to choose spending card that matched both the amount and type of their earlier memory. For instance, those in Group 1 (assigned to recall high-value prosocial spending) most frequently selected Card C, showing a preference for repeating large-scale prosocial actions. This pattern suggested that emotionally salient past experiences might influence future intentions.

In contrast, those who recalled spending IDR 5.000, particularly participants in Groups 2 and 4, showed more varied preferences, with card selections distributed across both personal and prosocial options. This might show that lower-value spending evoked less emotional attachment, allowing more flexibility in future choices. In total, the results suggested that both the amount and purpose of past spending shaped behavioral intentions. Full card selection frequencies for each group are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2*Spending Card Selection by Study Group*

Card	<i>n</i>	%
Group 1		
A	6	4.7
B	8	6.3
C	11	8.7
D	8	6.3
Group 2		
A	8	6.3
B	5	3.9
C	10	7.9
D	8	6.3
Group 3		
A	16	12.6
B	1	.8
C	9	7.1
D	6	4.7
Group 4		
A	7	5.5
B	2	1.6
C	11	8.7
D	11	8.7

Predicting happiness from card selection

A multinomial logistic regression was performed to determine whether self-reported happiness predicted the type of spending card selected. The results, summarized in Table 3, showed no statistically significant relationship between happiness levels and the likelihood of selecting Cards A, B, or C in comparison to Card D (all *p*-values > .05). Specifically, the regression coefficient for happiness predicting Card A was $\beta = -.043$, *SE* = .075, and *p* = .572 and for Card B, was $\beta = -.018$, *SE* = .093, and *p* = .848.

Although these associations were not statistically significant, a minor trend suggested that participants with lower happiness scores were slightly more inclined to select Card C ($\beta = -.074$, *SE* = .074, *p* = .321). This pattern implied that spending preferences might have been influenced more by the memory induction task than by participants' emotional states at the time of selection. The results supported the idea that contextual cues could exert a stronger influence on prosocial decision-making than temporary emotional experiences.

Table 3

Multinomial Logistic Regression: Happiness Predicting Spending Card Choice

Comparison	Predictor	β	p	Odds Ratio
A vs. D	Intercept	.936	.526	2.552
	Happiness	-.043	.572	.958
B vs. D	Intercept	-.364	.847	.694
	Happiness	-.018	.848	.981
C vs. D	Intercept	1.615	.259	5.028
	Happiness	-.074	.321	.928

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Group differences in happiness

Before conducting the one-way ANOVA, key assumptions such as normality, homogeneity of variance, and independence of observations, were thoroughly examined. Shapiro–Wilk tests showed that happiness scores were normally distributed in three of the four experimental groups ($p > .05$). A mild departure from normality was found in Group 1 ($W = .915, p = .013$). Levene's test confirmed the assumption of equal variances across groups, $F(3, 123) = .750, p = .532$. Given the robustness of ANOVA to minor normality violations in sufficiently large samples, the test was considered suitable. Independence of

observations was maintained through randomized group assignment and individual administration of the survey instrument. The one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant effect of spending condition on happiness levels, $F(3, 67.5) = 11.5, p < .001$. The effect size, calculated using omega squared (ω^2), was .159, which was considered large by conventional standards. These results supported the main hypothesis, suggesting that differences in the nature and intention of recalled spending experiences were associated with variations in reported happiness. Detailed pairwise comparisons among the groups are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

One-Way ANOVA: Differences in Happiness Across Groups

Variable	F	df1	df2	p	ω^2
Spending Condition	11.5	3	67.5	<.001	.159

Further pairwise comparisons (Table 5) provided evidence in support of Hypothesis 1 (H1). Participants who recalled high-value prosocial spending (IDR 20.000) reported significantly higher levels of happiness compared to those who recalled low-value

prosocial spending (IDR 5.000), $t(61.9) = -2.80, p = .033, d = .59$, and those who recalled low-value personal spending, $t(62) = 2.826, p = .031, d = .58$. These medium-sized effects suggested that the emotional benefits of giving were amplified when the perceived value of the act

was greater. Further pairwise comparisons also provided evidence in support of Hypothesis 2 (H2). Recalling prosocial spending of IDR 5.000 resulted in significantly greater happiness than recalling high-value personal spending, $t(50.8) = 3.74, p = .003, d = 1.08$, or low-value personal spending, $t(59.9) = 5.646, p < .001, d = 1.17$. These large effect sizes reinforced the idea that even small-scale acts of generosity were emotionally rewarding and had a substantial psychological impact.

In contrast, Hypotheses 3 and 4 (H3 and H4) were not supported. Recalling high-value

personal spending did not significantly differ in reported happiness from any other condition ($t(49.6) = .320, p = .989, d = .09$). This showed that increasing the amount spent on oneself did not lead to improved emotional outcomes. Similarly, recalling low-value personal spending failed to produce significant changes in happiness levels. Overall, these results showed the consistent emotional advantage of prosocial over personal spending. The positive emotional impact was particularly pronounced when the act involved a higher monetary value, yielding medium to large effect sizes.

Table 5

Pairwise Comparisons of Happiness by Spending Recall Condition

Comparison	Mean Difference	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Group 1 vs. 2	-1.72*	-2.80	61.9	.033	.59
Group 1 vs. 3	1.43	1.70	50.8	.332	.49
Group 1 vs. 4	1.70*	2.826	62	.031	.58
Group 2 vs. 3	3.15**	3.74	50.8	.003	1.08
Group 2 vs. 4	3.42***	5.646	59.9	< .001	1.17
Group 3 vs. 4	.267	.320	49.6	.989	.09

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Cohen's *d* interpreted using thresholds from Cohen (2013): .20 = small; .50 = medium; .80 = large.

Discussion

This study investigates whether recalling different types and amounts of spending experiences influences adolescents' happiness and their future behavioral intentions. It also explores how reflecting on past spending, whether directed toward oneself or others, shapes current emotional states and future preferences. By examining adolescents within a collectivist cultural setting, this study extends the growing literature on the role of prosocial behaviors in enhancing well-being during a

critical phase of identity formation (Bartolo et al, 2023; Dempsey et al, 2024; Helliwell et al, 2017). The results show a significant variation in reported happiness across the different spending recall conditions. Specifically, the highest levels of happiness were associated with the high-value prosocial context, showing the emotional impact of generous giving during adolescence (Gross et al, 2017).

This study show the theoretical and practical relevance of prosocial behaviors as a key contributor to emotional development

during this life stage. Consistent with Aknin et al. (2022), Chen (2023), and Lok and Dunn (2022), the results confirm that prosocial spending, particularly when involving higher monetary values, leads to greater happiness compared to personal spending. The analysis is further supported by cross-cultural evidence and studies showing social connection as a psychological mechanism underlying emotional benefits (Chen, 2023; Kumar & Epley, 2018). The pattern observed is in line with the concept of a positive feedback loop in well-being analysis, where behaviors that enhance happiness increase the likelihood of repetition (Aknin et al., 2018). The consistency and strength of the response in the high-value prosocial condition suggest that reflecting on meaningful giving experiences may play a crucial role in adolescents' emotional development.

Additionally, the perceived value of the giving act appears to amplify its emotional impact. Adolescents who remembered donating larger amounts reported higher levels of happiness, supporting the argument made by Whillans et al. (2017), regarding the role of perceived impact in shaping psychological outcomes. Previous investigations by Klein (2017) and Martela and Ryan (2016) also show that meaningful contributions enhance the emotional value of prosocial behavior. For adolescents, who are navigating identity formation and developing social values, such experiences may reinforce a sense of self-worth

and encourage internalization of prosocial values (Hirani et al., 2022; Nelson et al., 2016). The observed trends offer strong support for the idea that adolescents are emotionally attuned to both the significance and scale of their giving (Schacter & Margolin, 2019; Van Hoorn et al., 2016). Moreover, the effects showed not only statistical significance but also moderate to large effect sizes, showing their relevance for real-world emotional outcomes.

Conversely, recalling instances of personal spending, regardless of whether the amount was large or small, did not significantly enhance adolescents' happiness. The lack of statistical significance was accompanied by a minimal effect size, underscoring the limited emotional influence of spending on oneself, even when the expenditure increased. These results are in line with the view that personal consumption often leads to short-lived hedonic satisfaction, which tends to diminish quickly (Gladstone et al., 2024). Kumar and Gilovich (2015) have suggested that spending on others holds deeper emotional value due to its social relevance, whereas self-focused spending frequently lacks lasting psychological benefits. Reflecting this idea, the current results show that happiness associated with personal spending was generally lower and less consistent across the tested conditions. This supports the argument that socially embedded actions, such as giving, more reliably promote emotional well-being compared to solitary consumption, particularly among adolescents (Fuligni, 2019).

Interestingly, the regression analysis showed that current happiness levels did not significantly predict participants' future spending decisions. Instead of being driven by momentary emotional states, their choices appeared more influenced by the emotional tone created during the memory recall task. This result supports earlier investigations by Karmarkar and Plassmann (2019) and O'Brien and Kassirer (2019), showing that prior emotional experiences can shape future preferences more strongly than present mood. The results are also consistent with social psychological perspectives showing the importance of situational factors, rather than enduring personality traits, in encouraging prosocial behaviors (Keltner et al., 2010). Although no statistically significant relationship occurred between happiness scores and the spending option selected, patterns observed within some groups suggest that emotionally engaging memories may influence intention formation, even when not directly predictive.

The current study further align with cross-cultural studies examining prosocial spending across individualist and collectivist societies. Weiss-Sidi and Riemer (2023) found that while the emotional benefits of giving are observed globally, their magnitude is shaped by cultural frameworks. In individualistic cultures, giving often relates to personal autonomy and self-realization (Delle Fave et al., 2011). Within collectivist cultures such as Indonesia, Thailand,

and the Philippines, generosity is more closely tied to group identity and social harmony (Lu & Gilmour, 2006; Uchida et al., 2004). Hui et al. (2020) further reported that prosocial behaviors in collectivist settings tend to have a more enduring emotional impact due to their alignment with shared norms and communal values. The results, showing a stronger emotional response to prosocial recall, support these cultural interpretations and underscore the importance of sociocultural context in shaping emotional outcomes.

This study shows the value of experience-based interventions in promoting prosocial behaviors and supporting adolescents emotional well-being. Educational initiatives that encourage adolescents to reflect on or participate in acts of giving have showed positive effects on both psychological growth and social connectedness (Chodkiewicz & Boyle, 2017; Knight et al., 2014; Nelson et al., 2016). Considering the emotional sensitivity often present during adolescence, integrating social-emotional learning strategies that activate prosocial memories may serve as an effective and sustainable method to character development (Cherewick et al., 2021). The current results suggest that even brief and low-cost memory-based interventions, specifically those centered on meaningful giving, can positively influence adolescents well-being in ways that align with both their developmental stage and cultural context.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study examines whether recalling different types and amounts of past spending influences adolescents' happiness and subsequent behavioral intentions. The results show that prosocial spending, particularly when involving higher monetary amounts, significantly enhanced reported happiness. In contrast, personal spending produced no comparable emotional benefit. This increased happiness did not directly predict participants' future spending choices, showing that emotional states alone may not fully account for prosocial decision-making. Instead, behavioral intentions appeared to be more strongly influenced by the contextual framing provided during the memory recall task. These results reinforce the psychological value of emotionally meaningful reflection while also pointing to the limitations of affective states in shaping behaviors. The current study provides strong evidence for the role of prosocial memory in promoting adolescents' well-being and offers practical insights for the design of emotional development programs. This is specifically relevant in collectivist cultural settings, where relational identity and shared meaning significantly contribute to emotional growth.

Suggestion

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the reliance on retrospective recall have introduced memory-

related biases, as participants' recollections may not accurately reflect past experiences. Second, the sample was drawn from only one school in a single urban setting, limiting the broader applicability of the results. Third, the self-reported nature of happiness measure makes it vulnerable to temporary mood shifts and subjective interpretation. To address such issues, future investigations should consider using longitudinal or mixed-method that better capture the evolving and context-dependent nature of adolescents' happiness.

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