



Psychological Well-being Among Islamic Boarding School Teachers: A Comparative Study Based on Employment Status

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ABSTRACT

The psychological well-being (PWB) of teachers is a crucial factor in fostering an effective educational environment, particularly in unique institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). Different employment statuses, namely contract (honorary) and permanent, can potentially lead to disparities in perceived well-being. This study aimed to quantitatively compare the PWB levels between contract and permanent teachers at an Islamic boarding school. This comparative study involved a total of 182 teachers, comprising 63 contract teachers and 119 permanent teachers. Data were analyzed using an independent samples t-test to examine the mean difference in PWB scores between the two groups. The Independent Samples t-test revealed a significant difference in Psychological Well-being (PWB) between non-permanent and permanent teachers, with non-permanent teachers reporting lower mean scores than permanent teachers, $t(180) = -10.998$, $p < .001$. This difference was also found to be of a large practical significance, indicating that employment status has a strong relationship with psychological well-being. This finding implies that the job security and stability inherent in permanent employment status contribute significantly to the psychological well-being of teachers in the Islamic boarding school context.

Keywords: Psychological well-being; Teachers; Employment status

ABSTRAK

Kesejahteraan psikologis (PWB) guru merupakan faktor penting dalam menumbuhkan lingkungan pendidikan yang efektif, khususnya di lembaga-lembaga unik seperti pesantren. Status pekerjaan yang berbeda, yaitu kontrak (honorarium) dan tetap, berpotensi menyebabkan perbedaan dalam kesejahteraan yang dirasakan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk membandingkan secara kuantitatif tingkat PWB antara guru kontrak dan guru tetap di sebuah pesantren. Studi komparatif ini melibatkan total 182 guru, terdiri dari 63 guru kontrak dan 119 guru tetap. Data dianalisis menggunakan uji t sampel independen untuk memeriksa perbedaan rata-rata skor PWB antara kedua kelompok. Uji t sampel independen menunjukkan perbedaan signifikan dalam Kesejahteraan Psikologis (PWB) antara guru non-tetap dan guru tetap, dengan guru non-tetap melaporkan skor rata-rata yang lebih rendah daripada guru tetap, $t(180) = -10,998$, $p < 0,001$. Perbedaan ini juga ditemukan memiliki signifikansi praktis yang besar, menunjukkan bahwa status pekerjaan memiliki hubungan yang kuat dengan kesejahteraan psikologis. Temuan ini menyiratkan bahwa keamanan dan stabilitas pekerjaan yang melekat pada status pekerjaan tetap memberikan kontribusi signifikan terhadap kesejahteraan psikologis guru dalam konteks sekolah berasrama Islam.

Kata Kunci: Kesejahteraan psikologis; Guru; Status pekerjaan

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Introduction

Psychological well-being (PWB) is a critical part of a person's life and a major focus of research. In schools, a teacher's well-being is not just a personal matter; it directly impacts their effectiveness, the quality of their teaching, and the overall success of the institution (Ismail et al., 2023). Studies consistently show that teachers with high PWB tend to have better job satisfaction, motivation, resilience, and commitment to their (Heidari et al., 2022). These teachers are better at managing their classrooms and building positive relationships with students, which leads to better learning outcomes and a more positive school climate (Chaudhry & Chhajer, 2023). In contrast, low PWB is a strong predictor of job stress, burnout, high absenteeism, and a teacher's intention to leave the profession (Espinoza-Díaz et al., 2023). This issue not only threatens the stability of the teaching workforce but also creates a serious roadblock to educational reform and improvement (Ozdemir, 2024). For these reasons, focusing on teacher PWB is more than a way to meet educational targets. It is about recognizing well-being as a fundamental right and a sign of a healthy workplace, making it a responsibility of the entire system, not just the individual (Koshkina et al., 2022).

The concept of PWB is complex, with two main sides. The "hedonic" side is about feeling happy and satisfied with life, while the "eudaimonic" side focuses on personal growth, having a sense of purpose, and feeling in control of one's life (Sarzhanova & Nurgabdeshev, 2025). A teacher's well-being is influenced by a mix of factors. At the school level, things like job demands, the overall psychosocial climate, and excessive workloads are major determinants (Cabezas et al., 2022). In their relationships, the quality of social support from colleagues and supervisors is a vital buffer against stress (Ibrahim et al., 2021). On a personal level, individual resources like emotion regulation, resilience, self-efficacy, professional identity, energy management, and personality are crucial psychological strengths (Derakhshan et al., 2024). These factors are interconnected. Constant organizational pressures can act as a "resource drain," depleting a teacher's resilience and emotional energy. This creates a negative cycle where a poor work environment weakens a teacher's ability to cope, making them even more vulnerable to stress (Bidi et al., 2024).

Among workplace factors, employment status is one of the most significant, especially in Indonesia. International research has long identified job insecurity as a major stressor for educators (Nazari & Alizadeh Oghyanous, 2021). The teaching landscape in Indonesia often includes Permanent Teachers, who have high job security, and "honorary" teachers, who frequently work without formal contracts for low pay in very insecure positions (Sulisworo et al., 2021). This status difference leads to major disparities in financial security and career opportunities. One study found a difference in PWB between permanent civil servant teachers and government contract teachers, showing how complex this issue is (Lestari et al., 2024). More than just money, employment status sends a strong institutional message about a teacher's value and sense of belonging, a concept known as "organizational mattering" (Derakhshan et al., 2024). An insecure job can leave teachers feeling stuck in a professional limbo, which undermines their sense of growth, autonomy, and purpose in life (Ismail et al., 2023).

This study is particularly unique because it takes place in Islamic boarding schools, known as *pondok pesantren*. Here, a teacher's role is much broader than that of a typical instructor (*mu'allim*); they are also expected to be character educators (*murabbi*), spiritual guides, and moral role models (*ustadz/ustadzah*) for their students (*santri*). This high demand environment can act as a "psychological amplifier." For a teacher with a secure job, the deep sense of purpose and spiritual health involved in this work can lead to extremely high PWB (Heidari et al., 2022). For a teacher in a vulnerable position, however, these same expectations can become a crushing psychological burden. The critical problem lies at the intersection of job status and the *pesantren* context. The pressure to be a perfect role model while experiencing job insecurity creates a deep internal conflict, or cognitive dissonance. This gap between the ideal and the reality is a powerful source of stress that has not been widely explored.

Although there is significant global research on teacher PWB in various countries, and some studies on job status in Indonesian public schools are gaining attention, a significant gap in the literature remains. Very few studies have specifically investigated the PWB of teachers within the unique environment of a *pondok pesantren*. Furthermore, no research has compared the well-being of

these teachers based on their employment status. Understanding how institutional vulnerability interacts with the high professional and spiritual demands of a *pesantren* is crucial for developing targeted support programs. Therefore, this research aims to conduct a comparative analysis of psychological well-being among teachers in Islamic boarding schools, differentiated by their employment status.

Material and Method

This study employed a quantitative research approach to objectively measure and compare the psychological well-being (PWB) of teachers. This approach was chosen because the primary goal was to analyze numerical data using statistical procedures to identify significant differences between groups. The specific research design was a non-experimental comparative design, which is ideal for examining the effect of a pre-existing, non-manipulated independent variable in this case, employment status (contract vs. permanent) on a dependent variable, which is psychological well-being. This design allows for the investigation of potential relationships as they exist in a natural setting.

Participants

The population for this study consisted of all junior high school teachers within a specific Islamic boarding school foundation. Because the total number of teachers in this population was accessible and manageable, a saturated sampling technique, also known as a census, was utilized. This method was chosen because it involves including every member of the defined population in the study, thereby eliminating sampling error and providing a complete and accurate representation of the entire group. Therefore, the sample was identical to the population, comprising a total of 182 teachers. This sample was divided into two distinct groups for comparison: 63 contract (honorary) teachers and 119 permanent teachers.

Data Collection

Data were collected using two primary instruments. The main instrument was an adaptation of Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWBS) 42 items, which measures key dimensions of PWB such as autonomy, personal growth, and purpose in life, using a Likert scale format. A demographic questionnaire was also used to gather essential background information and to categorize teachers into their respective employment status groups (contract or permanent).

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted using statistical software JASP. First, the reliability of the PWBS instrument was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.907$), which indicated high internal consistency. The validity test further showed that all items had item-rest correlations greater than 0.3, suggesting that the instrument was valid. Following this, descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, were calculated to summarize the PWB scores for both the contract and permanent teacher groups. To address the main research question, an Independent Samples t-test was performed to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the mean PWB scores between the two groups.

Result

Table 1. Test of Normality (Shapiro-Wilk)

Psychological Well-being	W	p value
Honorary	0.965	0.074
Permanent	0.992	0.724

*)Significant ($p > 0.05$)

Prior to testing the main hypothesis, a series of assumption checks were conducted. The Shapiro–Wilk test confirmed that the Psychological Well-being (PWB) scores were normally distributed in both groups, as indicated by non-significant results for the honorary group ($W = 0.965$, $p = .074$) and the permanent group ($W = 0.992$, $p = .724$).

Table 2. Test of Equality of Variances (Levene's)

	F	df ₁	df ₂	p
Psychological Well-being	0.017	1	180	0.898

*)Significant ($p > 0.05$)

In addition, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, with Levene's Test showing a non-significant outcome, $F(1, 180) = 0.017$, $p = .898$. These results indicated that the data met the requirements for conducting an Independent Samples t-test.

Table 3. Descriptives

	Group	N	Mean	SD	SE
PWB	Honorary	63	131.222	12.418	1.565
	Permanent	119	152.479	12.399	1.137

Descriptive statistics showed that non-permanent teachers ($N = 63$) had a mean PWB score of 131.22 ($SD = 12.42$), while permanent teachers ($N = 119$) had a mean score of 152.48 ($SD = 12.40$). This descriptive pattern suggested higher psychological well-being among permanent teachers compared to their non-permanent counterparts.

Table 4. Independent Samples T-Test

	t	df	p
Psychological Well-being	-10.998	180	< .001

*)Significant ($p < 0.05$)

An Independent Samples t-test was then performed to test the main hypothesis. The results demonstrated a highly significant statistical difference in PWB between the two groups, $t(180) = -10.998$, $p < .001$. The negative t-value indicates that the mean PWB score of non-permanent teachers was significantly lower than that of permanent teachers, confirming that employment status is associated with differences in psychological well-being.

Discussion

The results of the Independent Samples t-test ($t(180) = -10.998$, $p < .001$) indicate that non-permanent teachers have significantly lower psychological well-being (PWB) scores than permanent teachers. This finding suggests that employment status is closely related to teachers' psychological well-being; the negative t-value implies that the uncertainty and limited access to resources typically associated with non-permanent status likely reduce PWB dimensions such as environmental mastery, personal growth, and a sense of purpose. (Chaudhry & Chhajer, 2023).

Theoretically, the PWB difference between the two groups can be explained via the job resources job demands pathway. Permanent teachers tend to enjoy greater job security, more consistent opportunities for development, and more recognition factors that strengthen attachment and organizational mattering whereas non-permanent teachers often face contract uncertainty, exclusion from decision-making, and limited access to training, all of which undermine well-being. Cross-cultural studies of teachers show that organizational mattering and resilience are strong

predictors of PWB; thus, a lower sense of being valued and supported by the organization among non-permanent teachers can help explain their reduced PWB (Derakhshan et al., 2024).

Personal factors such as emotional intelligence, emotion regulation, and resilience also play protective roles for PWB. Research indicates that emotional intelligence is positively associated with well-being and organizational commitment and that EI's impact on commitment is mediated by PWB and strengthened by principals' transformational leadership. If non-permanent teachers receive less access to EI development or less supportive leadership, they will be more vulnerable to emotional exhaustion and declines in PWB (Greenier et al., 2021).

Furthermore, aspects of energy management, thriving, and stress levels provide additional mechanistic explanations: effective energy management increases thriving and reduces stress, thereby improving PWB. Non-permanent teachers facing unpredictable workloads or variable hours are more likely to experience energy depletion and chronic stress, which in turn impair psychological functions such as purpose and environmental mastery core components of PWB according to Ryff's framework. Therefore, interventions that equip non-permanent teachers with energy management strategies and support for thriving may help narrow the PWB gap (Chaudhry & Chhajer, 2023).

Conclusion

These findings have important implications for policymakers in education and school management. Teachers' psychological well-being directly affects the quality of teaching, interactions with students, and the overall school climate. Therefore, neglecting disparities in well-being between permanent and non-permanent teachers could risk lowering the quality of education in the long term. Fairer policies are needed regarding contract systems, compensation, and professional development opportunities for non-permanent teachers to ensure that all educators can attain optimal levels of well-being.

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