

Can Self-Compassion Improve Adolescents Psychological Well-being?

Dapatkah Welas Asih Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan Psikologis

Lutfi Hidayati Fauziah*¹, Miftakhul Izza Rofiqoh¹

¹Faculty of Psychology Merdeka University, Malang, Indonesia

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A B S T R A C T

Individual always prioritizes the achievement of psychological well-being, as well as adolescents who live in Islamic boarding schools also have their own challenges in achieving it. Self-compassion is a factor affecting psychological well-being. Self-compassion offers a way for individuals to be able to have kindness with their self, mindfull into their life and a sense of common to other individuals, and will see an obstacle in life to be their best friend. The researchers' aim was to examine the effect of self-compassion on the psychological well-being of adolescents. This study used quantitative research design, with 200 youth as subjects living at the Salaf Islamic Boarding School in Singosari. Data collection used random sampling, using the Ryff Psychological Well Being Scale (RPWBS) ($\alpha = 0.869$), the Self Compassion Scale (SCS) ($\alpha = 0.721$). The correlation test technique to see the effect of the variables is linear regression test to test the effect of the two variables. The results give show that self-compassion can have a positive effect on psychological well-being in adolescents. F count value $>$ F table value ($17.104 > 3.942$), r value of $0.289 >$ r table 0.138 , the contribution made by self-compassion to psychological well-being is 8.4%. These results show that both variables are positively and significantly related. The implication given to this research is that with the significant influence of self-compassion on psychological well-being in adolescents, it is important for adolescents to have good and optimal self-compassion so that they love and care for themselves, understand their own needs, have the strength to face all challenge, so that adolescents can have good psychological well-being that is able to grow, develop, achieve and work optimally.

A B S T R A K

Setiap individu selalu mengutamakan pencapaian Kesejahteraan psikologis (*psychological well-being*) dalam dirinya, begitupun remaja yang tinggal di Pondok Pesantren juga memiliki tantangan tersendiri dalam pencapaiannya. *Self-compassion* merupakan salah satu yang mampu mempengaruhi kesejahteraan psikologis. *Self-compassion* menawarkan cara untuk individu agar mampu melampaui hambatan-hambatan dalam kehidupannya, dengan *Self kindness*, *mindfulness* dan *a sense of common humanity* individu akan memandang sebuah hambatan dalam hidup menjadi kawan terbaik mereka. Tujuan Peneliti ialah untuk menguji pengaruh *Self-Compassion* terhadap kesejahteraan psikologis pada remaja. Penelitian ini menggunakan design penelitian kuantitatif, dengan subyek sebanyak 200 Remaja yang tinggal di Pondok Pesantren Salaf di Singosari. Pengambilan data menggunakan *random sampling*, dengan menggunakan skala *Ryff Psychological Well Being Scale*

(RPWBS) ($\alpha = 0,869$) dan *Self Compassion Scale (SCS)* ($\alpha = 0,721$). Teknik Uji korelasi untuk melihat pengaruh variable ialah uji regresi linear untuk menguji pengaruh kedua variabel. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa *self compassion* mampu memberikan pengaruh yang positif terhadap kesejahteraan psikologis (*psychological well-being*) pada remaja. Nilai $F_{hitung} > \text{nilai } F_{tabel}$ ($17,104 > 3,942$), nilai r sebesar $0,289 > r_{tabel}$ $0,138$, kontribusi yang diberikan oleh *Self compassion* terhadap kesejahteraan psikologis sebesar 8,4 %. Hasil tersebut menunjukkan kedua variable berhubungan positif dan signifikan. Implikasi yang diberikan pada penelitian ini ialah dengan adanya pengaruh yang signifikan *self compassion* terhadap kesejahteraan psikologis (*psychological well-being*) pada remaja, maka pentingnya remaja memiliki *self compassion* yang baik dan optimal agar mencintai dan peduli akan dirinya, memahami kebutuhan diri, memiliki kekuatan menghadapi segala tantangan, sehingga remaja bisa memiliki kesejahteraan psikologis yang baik yang mampu tumbuh, berkembang, berprestasi dan berkarya dengan optimal.

Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed to Lutfi Hidayati Fauziah via e-mail: fauziah.hidayati@unmer.ac.id

Indonesia is known as the Country of 1000 Islamic Boarding Schools, because Indonesia has 1.64 million students in Islamic boarding schools throughout Indonesia in 2022. East Java has the highest number with 564,299 students (Rizaty, 2022).

Islamic boarding schools are religious educational institutions organized by the government and/or religious community groups, in accordance with laws and regulations (paragraph 1), and can be held on formal, non-formal and informal system (Zahra & Sukirno, 2022). The purpose of establishing Islamic boarding schools is to provide strong religious knowledge and produce students who have noble morals and strong character, so that the learning system in Islamic boarding schools is carried out for quite a long time for twenty-four hours per day so the students stay in Islamic boarding schools (Nihwan&Paisun, 2019).

The challenge for adolescents living in Islamic boarding schools is being away from their parents, away from their families, so they are required to be independent, able to take care of themselves, and are expected to be able to

adjust well, to be able to adapt to all the rules in Islamic boarding schools, to adapt to a busy schedule, and also adapt with new friends.

Quite different challenges are felt by students who live in modern Islamic boarding schools and *Salaf* Islamic boarding schools. The *Salaf* Islamic Boarding School system is still very traditional, studying a lot of yellow books (Islamic text books) and *sorogan*, memorizing, living traditional lifestyles such as self-cooking, self-laundry, cleaning rooms independently so that the tasks, activities and burdens of the students increase. As the result, Islamic boarding school students are more respectful and obedient to their *kiai* (leader) and teachers (Ibrahim, 2014). Whereas Modern Islamic Boarding Schools have a more modern learning system such as keeping up with the technology, teaching religious and general knowledge in a balanced way, having a modern lifestyle, serving the food, providing laundry service and the students' task is only to study and take care of themselves. (Nihwan&Paisun, 2019)

Teenagers who live in Islamic boarding schools have quite worrying stress levels,

which are moderate (66%), low (24.5%), high only (8%), so that students face a lot of pressure which can affect the psychological well-being of students in Islamic boarding schools (Zahra et al., 2022.). The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) released data that bullying cases were found around 87.6% that male victims were more than female and bullying behavior was more prone to occur in early adolescence (Nashiruddin et al., 2019). Likewise, research of Tasnim and Satwika (2021) shows that *Santri* (students) who live in Islamic boarding school X have moderate levels of psychological well-being (67.86%), low (16.07%), and high (19.64%).

Teenagers who live in *Salaf* Islamic Boarding Schools where the traditional learning system requires students to be more able to adapt to circumstances, to obey the rules of the boarding school properly and precisely have pressure which can cause psychological barriers in them. The magnitude of the challenges and obstacles that are passed by students studying at *Salaf* Islamic boarding schools requires greater effort to achieve self-optimization in the learning process. During adolescence there is a transition process such as social, emotional, biological, and cognitive changes (Curtis, 2015).

The process of individuals receiving all information is a cognitive process and also includes emotional processes that are processed in such a way that it requires efforts to control all forms that will exist in the process of their life, and that requires good environmental support such as parental, family, friend, and the environmental support so that teenagers are able to respond well. If teenagers live in an environmental situation that does not provide enough support, they are less able to defend themselves. So that negative behaviors appear such as aggression, bullying, leaving the boarding school

without permission, drugs, and suicide (Neff & Costigan, 2014)

A research conducted on athletes who took part in their competitions and they also stayed in quarantine for months apart from their families, and did everything independently and under high pressure so that mental health problems emerged such as difficult sleeping, stress, eating disorders, difficult adapting, and depression, so that their psychological well-being is low (Walton et al., 2022).

Teenagers in the transitional period admitted in higher school levels also show mental health vulnerabilities encountered in the first semester such as conflicts with racism, problems with adaptation difficulties, independence, which make teenagers experience anxiety, sleep disturbances, prolonged stress, impaired physical health, depression etc. (Kroshus et al., 2021). Psychological well-being in individuals, especially teenagers, is a process of achievement that faces many changes, which include physiological, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, social, and physical aspects (Machin et al., 2019)

Teenagers who live separately from their parents may also experience negative feelings such as feeling less cared for by their family, resulting in negative perceptions or feelings such as feeling lonely even though there are friends around them, feeling there is no meaning in life, feeling lost and not knowing clear direction of life goals, and feeling hopeless (Karen & Priscilla, 2014). Difficulties in childhood and adolescence account for nearly half of mental health disorders (Leventhal et al., 2015).

At the time of adulthood, Psychological well-being (PWB) was coined by Ryff who grew up based on the *eudaimonic* view of the Greek language quoted by Aristotle in his book *Nicomachean Ethics*, it is said that the highest thing of all the best achievements by humans is "*eudaimonic*"

or “happiness” by being completely happy (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Ryff defines psychological well-being as a self that has the following concepts: 1) Self-acceptance is an important characteristic that individuals need to have in order to function optimally, by being able to fully accept themselves with their strengths and weaknesses and accept the past positively, living the present positively and welcoming the future positively will lead individuals to achieve self-actualization. 2) Environmental Mastery is an individual effort to be able to master their environment, individuals are able to create and choose the best environment, to grow and develop positively, and to see opportunities, to give each other positive energy to their environment. 3) Autonomy is the manifestation of being free/independent, to make choices independently, not showing dependence on anyone, strong in facing challenges. 4) Individuals who are able to grow (Personal Growth) are individuals who are able to understand their potential and demonstrate their productivity by continuing to develop themselves and being open to new experiences. 5) Having a positive relationship between individuals (Positive relations with others) is the embodiment of the ability to establish positive, warm and empathetic interactions, 6) Purpose in life refers to the meaningfulness of individuals in living their lives, having principles and values of life meaningful for him so he has the confidence to move on to the future (Zessin, Dickhauser, & Garbade, 2015).

Individuals are considered to have psychological well-being if they are able to master the six dimensions of psychological well-being (Bucheli, 2022). It is stated that their psychological well-being is high not in those who are happy or unhappy or have mental disorders or not, but they have truly optimal psychology and being able to manage pressures and obstacles in life into positive things (McKay & Walker, 2021a,

2021b)

Teenagers are psychologically prosperous if they are able to develop their potential well, able to develop their talents and potential well, master the environment, have good relationships and focus on goals. Meanwhile, adolescents who are said to have low psychological well-being when they are unable to accept negative things in themselves well, instead they feel isolated, not independent, unable to adapt well, so they are easily stressed, disappointed, and even depressed (Prentice et al., 2021).

Psychological well-being describes an individual's ability to interpret and evaluate himself wisely both cognitively and emotionally (Ulli, Oliver, & Sven, 2015). In the *eudaimonic* approach, psychological well-being focuses on how individuals are able to realize themselves, are able to express themselves, and the extent to which an individual is able to actualize himself by developing his potential (Jongen et al., 2023a).

Psychological well-being is a sustainability which is more than happiness and how individuals are able to accept and love themselves unconditionally (McKay & Walker, 2021a). It takes a good effort so that teenagers have a strong ability to develop themselves.

Self-compassion can also be a significant increase in psychological well-being (Anggraeni & Kurniawan, n.d.). The originator of the self-compassion theory, Neff, stated that self-compassion is a process of self-understanding of all kinds of problems that occur by understanding the problem well, interpreting it without criticism, and being able to understand that all these sufferings are also felt by humans in general (Neff & Costigan, 2014).

Self-compassion has a positive relationship with psychological well-being such as happiness, self-optimism, stable emotions and has a negative relationship with self-criticism, depression, anxiety,

suicide (Viskovich & de George-Walker, 2019). Therefore, if we have Self-compassion within us, we can neutralize negative perceptions or views of ourselves, by acknowledging our weaknesses and also the good in ourselves (Dunkley-Smith et al., 2021). Then we can be healthy mentally so there is no excessive anxiety and other psychological disorders (Egan et al., 2019).

Self-compassion is also known as an important construct in mental health. High self-compassion is able to accept and consider all forms of suffering experienced with a positive outlook, still treat oneself with compassion, able to understand oneself by not judging oneself and sees that what is experienced by him is also experienced by others (Voni, 2021).

Self-compassion comes from the word compassion from a Buddhist perspective which means compassion for oneself and others (Durkin et al., 2016). Kristin D Neff defines self-compassion as caring for oneself, uncritical acceptance of all suffering, failure and inadequacy that is part of the human experience in general (McKay & Walker, 2021). High self-compassion in individuals will be able to feel comfortable in life, increase wisdom and trigger better emotional coping skills (Gill et al., 2018). An individual is said to experience a process of self-compassion when the individual feels suffering or failure instead of making himself worse off but appears to have the urge to fight through the failure by making efforts to help himself (Poots & Cassidy, 2020).

Research shows that self-compassion is negatively related to self-criticism, depression, anxiety (Watson & Watson, 2018). Neff divides self-compassion into three components of self-kindness vs Self judgment, a sense of common humanity vs isolation, and mindfulness vs over identification (Akin, 2010). Research In a self-compassion intervention, in a

psychotherapy session conducted for 33 traumatized veterans, significant results were obtained and self-compassion was shown to be able to make positive changes in veterans (Marchand et al., 2023)

Self-compassion has also proven to be a positive intervention for 20 teenagers who experience high anxiety, in this study it revealed that one aspect of being self-compassion, namely self-kindness, is also one of the sessions that teenagers like the most, namely by emphasizing reducing self-criticism, this is considered most efficacious for reducing anxiety in adolescents (S. J. Egan et al., 2022). Research by Sun et al (2016) found that there is a relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being, and states that female adolescents show higher psychological well-being than male adolescents in Hongkong (Sun et al., 2016).

Jongen et al (2023) also obtained significant results that self-compassion can be an influence on the Psychological Well-being of adolescents in Vietnam (Jongen et al., 2023b) A significant effect was also found between self-compassion on Psychological Well-being in a study by Voon et al which was conducted on counselors in Malaysia (Voon et al., 2022)

Based on the explanation above, the researcher in this study wanted to further investigate the effect of self-compassion on psychological well-being. The subjects of this study were adolescents living in Salaf Islamic Boarding Schools. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of self-compassion on psychological well-being in adolescents living at the Salaf Islamic Boarding School. This research is relatively new because there has been no previous research that examines the subject of adolescents living in Salaf Islamic Boarding Schools.

METHOD

Researchers focused on using quantitative methods in this study to show the relationship between these variables and processed using statistical methods. The variables that the researchers used were self-compassion as the independent variable (X) and psychological well-being as the dependent variable (Y).

Researchers used 200 teenage participants who have been living at the Salaf Islamic Boarding School in Singosari consisting of 114 women and 86 men. Simple random sampling technique was used by researchers in this study. Participants consisted of the age group 13-14 years (88 people), the age group 16-17 years (112 people).

The researchers used simple random sampling method. Data collection was done by filling in the instrument offline. This study used two psychometric measuring instruments, namely the Ryff Psychological Well Being Scale and the Self Compassion Scale. The RPWBS (Ryff Psychological Well Being Scale) scale, there are 6 dimensions, namely (1) Environmental mastery, (2) positive relations with others, (3) Autonomy, (4) Self - acceptance, (5) Purpose in life, (6) Personal growth, Total all items are 57 items. PWB is made in the form of a Likert scale with 5 answer choices from Very Appropriate (5), Somewhat Appropriate (4), Appropriate (3), Not Appropriate (2), and Very Unsuitable (1) . A high score indicates having high psychological well-being. Example item: I believe in my abilities. The reliability test from the previous study Cronbach's alpha = 0.91 (Anggraeni & Kurniawan, 2012) while in this study, the reliability test was 0.869.

Self-compassion was measured using the self-compassion scale from Neff (2003) which consists of 5 dimensions, namely self - kindness, common humanity, self - judgment, mindfulness, over-identity, isolation (Neff, 2003). SCS was measured in the form of a Likert scale with 5 answer

choices from Very Appropriate (5), Somewhat Appropriate (4), Appropriate (3), Not Appropriate (2), and Very Inappropriate (1). A high score indicates having high self-compassion. Example item: when I am down I remind myself that there are many people in this world who feel the same way that I do. Reliability test from previous research was Cronbach's alpha 0.853 (Mustikasari et al., 2019) while in this study the reliability coefficient was 0.721.

RESULT

This study used the data analysis method of SPSS v.25 for windows using multiple regression analysis techniques. The technique was used to make predictions which are adjusted to the purpose of the research we studied, to find out whether there is an effect of self-compassion on the psychological well-being of adolescents.

Results and colomgraph test $0.200 > .0.05$ data were normally distributed

Table 1. Regression Analysis Results

Model	R	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,289 ^a	,084	,079

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-compassion

b. Dependent Variable: well-being

The results above indicate that self-compassion has an influence and an important role in the psychological well-being of adolescents. In the R2 section, a score of 0.084 was produced. This value indicates that the contribution made by self-compassion to psychological well-being is 8.4% and 28.9% is a contribution to other variables.

The score of the correlation of these two variables was 0.289, including the

value of the person correlation in the weak correlation category. Based on the results of research data analysis, the empirical average score was obtained on the variable Self-compassion ($M = 190.52$). The results of the self-compassion variable categorization, most of the adolescents showed results in the high category of 68% and the psychological well-being variable also showed an average in the high category of 87.5%.

Based on the results of analytical tests in research, it has been able to provide evidence that there is a significant effect of self-compassion on psychological well-being. It can be said that cultivating ourselves to be self-compassionate by processing every negative thing that we experience into positive things, loving ourselves by not judging ourselves and assuming that everything that happens to us is normal and that everyone will never feel the same way, then the individual will become a comfortable person in the process of life (Tran et al., 2022)

In this study, the level of psychological well-being in adolescents was 87.5% in the high category and 12.5% in the medium category, so adolescents who live in Islamic boarding schools of the Salaf are able to process negative feelings and unpleasant things in themselves. capable of being managed properly. Teenagers are able to adapt well, and focus on the goals they have.

Based on the data, the Islamic boarding school institution that we studied was an institution that still has a chairman of the Islamic boarding school foundation who is very attentive and guides the students better, so he is able to manage teenagers in Islamic boarding schools well.

As Neff said (2018), environmental support such as families that support their children to learn and be able to process well at the boarding school will make it easier for teenagers to be better prepared to live in boarding schools, and also a conducive and

caring boarding school environment makes teenagers who live far from people parents feel safe and comfortable (Gill et al., 2018).

When adolescents feel comfortable and safe, cognitively, emotionally and socially, they will develop well, adolescents are able to learn well, and are able to overcome all obstacles in themselves well (Hassani, Tizdast & Zarbakhsh, 2021). Teenagers who have high psychological well-being do not mean they are called teenagers who are always happy, without pressure and never suffer anything like that, but teenagers who have high psychological well-being are those who are able to endure every suffering, to find solutions in every obstacle, and to focus on the goal so as not to pay attention to the unimportant things that are going on around you (John et al., 2022)

When teenagers' self-compassion is also high, they are able to make peace with circumstances, are able to become individuals who love themselves, they understand what they feel and are able to understand every problem well. Teenagers are able to control these unhealthy emotions into emotions that can strengthen themselves to be much better (Biddle, et al., 2019).

According to Neff, self-compassion has a negative correlation with anxiety, isolation, judgment, depression, juvenile delinquency, aggression, etc., so self-compassion within oneself is able to create positive and strong energy to face all challenges (Rahman et al., 2019).

So it is important for individuals to have self-compassion within themselves so they can grow and develop properly.

CONCLUSION

The results of the research showed that there was a significant effect of self-compassion on psychological well-being. So as to be able to answer the purpose of this study is that there is a significant

influence of variable X, namely self-compassion on psychological well-being (psychological well-being). So it showed that good self-compassion possessed, adolescents are able to increase psychological well-being, feel comfortable and safe in themselves, to independently manage themselves well, to focus on the goals they want to achieve, also to establish a good relationship which is the key for adolescents to be able to grow well when living far away without parents or family.

The implications of this research for parents who leave their teenagers in Islamic boarding schools are expected to be able to provide good support to their teenagers so that they are ready to study in Islamic boarding schools. For education providers in Islamic boarding schools, they can provide comfort and security in institutions by paying attention to the psychological needs of young students and other needs in order to reduce negative things that make teenagers appear negative behavior on negative feelings, such as providing a method of good learning, conditioning the environment well and having a good and fun education system so as to be able to provide positive energy to teenagers. Mental health services must be facilitated properly so that they are able to accommodate all forms of problems that exist in adolescents. For further research, it is expected to examine other factors that affect the psychological well-being of adolescents. There are many other ways for us to give good things to support the needs of youth, so that they become a generation that grows well.

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