Maintaining Mental Health through the Role of Self-Compassion for Adolescents in Orphanages

Menjaga Kesehatan Mental Melalui Peran Self-Compassion untuk Remaja Panti Asuhan

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the role of Self-Compassion on adolescent mental health in orphanages and analyze the causative factors and ways to overcome mental health disorders for adolescents in orphanages. The research method uses a mix method. Study 1 is quantitative data obtained from filling out questionnaires with a Likert scale with 43 samples aged 12-18 years. Quantitative data analysis using multiple linear regression. Study 2 is qualitative data obtained by conducting interviews, observations at the orphanage Minggir area, Sleman Special Region of Yogyakarta. Qualitative data analysis uses reduction techniques, display and conclusion drawing, as well. The results showed that: Study 1, there was an effect of Self-Compassion of 21.9% on the mental health of orphanage adolescents. The other 78.1% are other influences such as parenting, environment, self-openness, education, and so on. Study 2, Factors causing mental health disorders of orphanage adolescents include the background of adolescents from families of victims of domestic violence, victims of pornographic action and parenting that is not optimal. The implication of this study is that to improve mental health, it is necessary to instill a consistent self-compassion attitude for orphanage adolescents.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis peran Self-Compassion terhadap kesehatan mental remaja di panti asuhan dan menganalisis faktor penyebab serta cara menanggulangi gangguan kesehatan mental bagi remaja di panti asuhan. Metode penelitian menggunakan mix method. Study 1 yakni data kuantitatif diperoleh dari pengisian kuesioner dengan skala likert dengan 43 sampel usia 12-18 tahun. analisis data kuantitatif menggunakan regresi linear berganda. Study 2 yakni data kualitatif diperoleh dengan melakukan wawancara, observasi di panti asuhan daerah Minggir, Sleman Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta. Analisis data kualitatif menggunakan teknik reduksi, display dan penarikan kesimpulan, serta. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: Study 1, terdapat pengaruh Self-Compassion sebesar 21.9% terhadap kesehatan mental remaja panti asuhan. 78.1% lainnya merupakan pengaruh lain seperti pola asuh, lingkungan, keterbukaan diri, pendidikan, dan sebagainya. Study 2, Faktor penyebab gangguan kesehatan mental remaja panti asuhan di antara lain ialah latar belakang remaja dari keluarga korban KDRT, korban porno aksi dan parenting yang tidak maksimal. Implikasi penelitian ini adalah guna meningkatkan kesehatan mental diperlukan penanaman sikap self-compassion yang konsisten bagi remaja panti asuhan.

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Adolescents in developmental psychology are a phase of human growth from children to adults starting from 12-18 years old (Jahja, 2011). At this time, adolescents easily experience conflict among others and in the surrounding environment, which results in their mental health (Haryanti et al., 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to have parental assistance to guide children according to their needs (Rahmawati et al., 2019). However, not all adolescents receive parental assistance during their developmental phase because their parents have passed away (Jemimut, 2021). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the number of orphans in Indonesia (Setiawan, 2021). In addition, the economic factors of underprivileged families or abandoned children are reasons for entrusting childcare to an institution called an orphanage.

An orphanage is an institution that has a substitute function for the services of biological parents or children’s families and is responsible for meeting the needs of foster children, such as physical, mental and social needs (Armis, 2015). Based on data from the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, as of May 2021, 191,696 children were being cared for in 3,914 Child Welfare Institutions (LKSA) that oversee orphanages, foundations and centers throughout Indonesia (Setiawan, 2021). Teenagers who live in orphanages certainly feel a lack of parental love, resulting in them facing many problems, one of which is mental health (Vharensie, 2021). In addition, Windu (2021) stated that adolescents who live in orphanages tend to show behavioral and emotional disorders.

One example of a case of mental health disorders that occur in orphanages is where they often experience sadness, loneliness, even depression because they live far away or without their biological parents (Aziz & Rahmatullah, 2022). Orphanage teenagers cannot live freely like other teenagers who live with their parents who are still complete (Novirson et al., 2020). Jealousy sometimes arises when they begin to feel that their lives are different from other teenagers, where they must obey the rules of the orphanages, and get love and facilities that are different from teenagers outside the orphanages (Bustinoor et al., 2020). This is a trigger for orphanage adolescents to experience mental health disorders.

Mental health disorder behaviors that often occur are feelings of sadness, fear, depression, and self-harm such as cutting, scratching, burning, and hitting until get hurt, this behavior tends to be hidden and kept secret by adolescents with mental health disorders (Pietrangelo, 2019). Maintaining mental health in adolescents is important to avoid depression or excessive anxiety (Collishaw & Sellers, 2020). Adolescents’ mental health disorders can become a serious problem if they are not treated immediately, even if they do not cause death, but these mental health disorders can cause deep suffering and harm those around them (Wibowo & Zen, 2020).

Based on the observations of researchers at an orphanage in Minggir, Sleman, Yogyakarta, found that the main factor causing adolescents to experience mental health disorders is from parents. Some teenagers living in orphanages are children whose parents have died or due to family economic factors so that their care is entrusted to the orphanage (Jemimut, 2021). In addition, the lack of fulfillment of affection during the adolescent development phase is also a factor in orphanage adolescents experiencing mental health disorders (Reksodiputro & Boediman, 2019). In addition, the factor of adolescents who are less able to adapt to the orphanage environment also triggers the emergence of mental health disorders (Omari et al., 2021).

One of the way that data is used to combat the behavior associated with mental health disorder, self-compaasion can be a new approach to overcoming mental health disorders for adolescents who live in orphanages (Zaharuddin & Wahyuni, 2021). Adolescents with an open
and self-compassionate attitude can be a good asset to facing all problems in life, especially problems that can interfere with adolescent mental health, such as anxiety, anger, fear, scratching, and hitting (Puspita, 2019). Therefore, through this self-compassion approach, the researchers examined its role in adolescent mental health in more depth. This paper examined the effect of self-compassion as a new approach to the mental health of adolescents living in orphanages.

Self-compassion in orphanage adolescents needs to be done to make adolescents aware that even though their lives are different from other teenagers, they still have foster parents, friends, and teachers in orphanages who will look after and educate adolescents until they grow up (Kawitri et al., 2019). The role of loving parents is important in nurturing adolescents to foster an attitude of self-compassion to accept the destiny experienced today and living in an orphanage is not the end of everything (Beaton et al., 2022). In fact, if teenagers who live in orphanages can love life in orphanages, they can be happier and more accomplished than other teenagers who live outside orphanages (Dantas-Machado et al., 2021).

Several previous studies have examined the same topic in this paper, for example article with the titled “The Buffering Effect of Self-Compassion on the Relationship between Attachment Dimensions and Life Satisfaction of Female Adolescents Living in Orphanages” by Menon & Mohan (2020). However, none of them examined the role of self-compassion on mental health in orphanages. Therefore, this paper has the value of novelty in a new approach through self-compassion to improve the mental health of adolescents living in orphanages. This study aimed to analyze the role of self-compassion on adolescents’ mental health in orphanages and find the causal factors and ways to overcome the issues.

Study Design

This research belonged to field research with a mixed method approach and used a sequential exploration design. Sequential exploration design is a research method that prioritizes qualitative data collection and then proceeds with quantitative data collection to explain findings from qualitative data (Arini, 2018).

Study 1 is quantitative data processing with a correlational approach used to measure the instrument and the effect of self-compassion on the mental health of orphanage adolescents. While in study 2, namely qualitative data processing with a field study approach used to find the causative factors and ways to overcome mental health disorders of adolescents living in orphanages.

Participants

This research took place at the orphanage in Minggir District, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Based on the observations, the researchers chose the location because half of the foster children were still teenagers with backgrounds of low-income families and victims of domestic violence. The research population consisted of 101 teenagers and used non-probability with purposive sampling to select research subjects with the specifications of adolescents ranging from 12-18 years old to as many as 43 teenagers.

Data Collection and Instrument

Data collection techniques used observation by coming directly to the research location, interviews with orphanage administrators and instruments with a Likert scale given to the respondents. In this study, mental health became an independent variable and self-compassion was a dependent variable or that affects mental health. In addition, The mental health measuring tool uses a measurement scale from Aziz (2015) called The Mental Health Inventory by Viet and Were, which are divided into two aspects.
Both describe things that affect mental health but are differentiated in terms of the bad and good aspects of influence on mental health. First, the negative aspects include anxiety [A], depression [D], loss of control [LC], and the positive aspects include emotions [E], love [L], and satisfaction [S]. And had a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient value of 0.888 in the reliability test. Each indicator has 3 questions, so that in total there are 18 mental health variables assessed. The Example of a question is "I feel depressed living in an orphanage"; "I can't control my emotions".

The self-compassion measuring tool uses a measurement scale adapted from previous research by from Jiao & Segrin (2022) called the State Self-Compassion Scale. The Six indicators to assess self-compassion: Self-kindness [SK]; Common Humanity [CH]; Mindfulness [MF]; Self-judgment [SJ]; Isolation [IS]; and Over-identification [OI]. This instrument had a Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient value of 0.95 in the reliability test. Each indicator has 3 questions, so that in the self-compassion variable there are a total of 18 assessment items. Examples of questions are "I am kind to myself when I have problems"; "I feel wrong in doing anything".

**Data Analysis**

Quantitative data (instruments) helped find the effect of self-compassion variables on the mental health of adolescents living in orphanages, while quantitative data analysis (questionnaire) used the SPSS version 20 application, namely simple linear regression, to determine the effect of self-compassion on the mental health of orphanage youth, and the qualitative data (observations and interviews) found the factors causing mental health disorders of orphans and how to cope with mental health problems. Furthermore, qualitative data analysis (observation & interviews) using data reduction techniques, data display and concluding. In the data analysis section, two types of data are presented, namely the descriptive of average value data on each variable indicators and data to determine the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

**Results**

**Mental Health Descriptive Analysis**

![Mental Health](image)

Based on Figure 1, the satisfaction indicator has the highest total score of 383, showing that the youth at the orphanage feel relieved or satisfied with themselves and in solving their problems. At the same time, the indicator of losing control has the lowest total score of 292, meaning the teenagers can control their problems due to several factors, as expressed by The Administrator that the orphanage has a program for teaching the value of Sufism in studies after dawn and sunset by foster parents or musrif/musrifah (foster parents’ assistants). In addition, the parenting pattern of the orphanage management and foster parents is sufficient for the needs.

**Self-Compassion Descriptive Analysis**

The following results came from the assessment made on the self-compassion variable:
Based on Table 2, the correlation/relationship (R) value is 0.468. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R Square) is 0.219, meaning that the influence of the self-disclosure variable on mental health is 21.9%.

**Discussion**

Based on the results of data analysis in tables 3 and 4 above, it can be said that the self-compassion variable has a positive and significant influence on the mental health of orphanage adolescents. The mental health variable was influenced by self-compassion by 21.9%, while the other 78.1% was influenced by other variables outside this study. This finding reinforces the findings of previous research, namely from Zaharuddin & Wahyuni (2021), Lea et al. (2020), and Menon & Mohan (2020) which stated that self-compassion can affect mental health positively and significantly.(Menon & Mohan, 2020).

The influence of self-compassion on the mental health of orphanage adolescents can be an important factor in understanding and improving their quality of life. Self-compassion can be defined as the ability to face difficulties and failures with an attitude of understanding, self-acceptance, and compassion towards oneself. It involves acknowledging that mistakes and suffering are a natural part of life, and that youth are not alone in facing those
challenges.

In the context of orphanages, adolescents often face various problems and emotional distress. They may experience emotional instability because of difficult family situations, past trauma, or insecurity at feeling they don't have a stable place to call 'home'. Therefore, self-compassion can play an important role in helping adolescents overcome these challenges and build good mental health.

Some ways self-compassion can affect the mental health of orphanage teens, namely: Reduce stress levels, self-compassion involves accepting and rewarding oneself completely, including acknowledging weaknesses and failures. By having an understanding attitude towards themselves, adolescents can reduce the level of stress they may experience due to social pressure or high expectations. This can help orphanage teens better manage their emotions.

In addition, attitude of self-esteem, in an orphanage setting, teens may feel inferior or have a low sense of self-worth due to lack of family support or feelings of neglect. Self-compassion can help teens gain better self-esteem by teaching them to accept themselves with all their strengths and weaknesses. This can contribute to an increased sense of self-esteem and confidence.

Then promotes healthy coping, adolescents in orphanages are often faced with difficult situations and lack of emotional resources. By having self-compassion, they can develop healthier and adaptive coping strategies. A self-understanding attitude can help them better cope with mistakes, failures, or stressful situations, as well as encourage them to seek the necessary support.

Lastly, reduces depression and anxiety, self-compassion has been linked to a reduction in symptoms of depression and anxiety. By having a more accepting and understanding attitude towards oneself, orphanage adolescents can reduce harsh and critical self-judgment, and improve the quality of their thoughts. This can help reduce the level of depression and anxiety they may be experiencing.

It is important to note that self-compassion is not a single solution to address the mental health problems of orphanage adolescents, but it is an important factor in promoting their well-being. Social support, professional care, and a supportive environment should also be considered as part of a comprehensive approach in helping orphanage youth overcome their challenges.

To improve the self-compassion of orphanage adolescents, programs that focus on developing emotional well-being skills, such as meditation exercises or mindfulness-based therapies, can provide significant benefits. In addition, an empathetic and supportive approach from caregivers or professionals in orphanages is also important in helping adolescents build healthy self-compassion. Overall, self-compassion can play an important role in improving the mental health of orphanage teens by reducing stress levels, boosting self-esteem, encouraging healthy coping, and reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Self-compassion at the Orphanage is embedded through studies. According to the interview on July 17, 2022, the administrator, explained that the teenagers are always given an understanding that living in an orphanage is different from other teenagers who live with parents in their house. However, she always motivates them to have similar opportunities to achieve a bachelor’s degree, have academic and non-academic achievements, and have a chance of success. Therefore, the teenagers at the orphanage are expected to bring up self-compassion themselves.

Teenagers at the Orphanage generally know that living in an orphanage is different from other teenagers who live with parents in their house. However, the caretakers always try to fulfill their needs in education, health, daily needs, and guidance, so they can graduate one day and live independently. Although some are orphans or from disadvantaged families, a
A strong sense of self-compassion can help them be resilient, motivating them to rise and have an independent life. Self-compassion can positively affect them to love themselves and not blame fate, instead making it a spirit to live with gratitude and peace.

The mental health of adolescents living in orphanages can be disturbed by several factors. According to (Zakiyah et al., 2017), bullying both in and outside the orphanage can cause mental health disorders, as in the viral news in November 2021 in Malang, where a teenage girl who lived in an orphanage was bullied by ten of her friends. She also experienced sexual harassment, which pressured her psychologically (Daulay, 2021). Besides bullying, the factors that affect orphans’ adolescents’ mental health based on observations are the background of teenagers who come from problematic families, such as divorce, domestic violence, or pornographic acts victims.

The observations and interviews with the administrator on July 17, 2022, as the administrator, found some information related to the factors affecting adolescents’ mental health who live in orphanages, including victims of domestic violence. Children experience domestic violence because they see their parents fighting and receive harsh treatment. According to Yulianingsih (2020), a disharmonious family will affect adolescents’ mental health and behavior in a negative direction. Adolescents from broken homes will feel disappointment, sadness, inferiority, and pain from seeing their parents separated. They will also become vindictive, blame their parents and themselves, lose a sense of warmth and security from their family, and be more aggressive (Harahap et al., 2021). Adolescents who are victims of domestic violence also make it difficult to socialize with the environment, and it is not easy to find new friends, so they avoid themselves from the community (Desmana, 2022).

Another factor found was that some teenagers are victims of sexual harassment. Recently, especially in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, many cases of teenagers being victims of pornography. As reported in Suarajogja.id in July 2022 that there was harassment of a woman at Nol Kilometer, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, by a man with the initials TSN (Palupi, 2022). Teenagers victims of action porn, such as in the sexual harassment case above, have a traumatic impact on them and can disrupt their mental health (Mariyona, 2020). Everyone, including teen orphans, must be aware of sexual harassment. Sex education is required to track their sexual development and to maintain privacy and security from sexual harassment in orphanages.

Lastly, according to the administrator, poor parenting causes adolescent mental health problems. Parents must take care of their children well because parenting greatly impacts their children’s development towards adulthood. According to Rahmatullah and Diana (2022), parenting is done by building the quality and frequency of communication between parents and children. Parenting has the goal of ensuring that children are always safe and healthy. Besides, parents can prepare children to grow up to be productive human beings. Wrong parenting patterns, such as toxic parenting, can disturb children’s mental health and affect children’s behavior in daily life (Oktariani, 2021). Toxic parenting refers to patterns of behavior or parenting styles that can negatively impact a child's development. It includes a wide range of parental actions and attitudes that can be detrimental to a child's mental, emotional, and even physical well-being (Kirby, 2020). Parenting should be a place of communication and strengthen the emotional closeness of children and parents so that children can open. Therefore, a good relationship between parents and children can positively impact children’s mental health.

The way to deal with adolescent mental health disorders at the Orphanage is to provide counseling. There is a counseling room for teen orphans who
want to consult about their problems inside and outside the orphanage. Psychiatrists and specialists assist in counseling in orphanages in child development in collaboration with the Indonesian Doctors Association (IDI). The researchers found that although they provided a counseling room, only a few teenagers wanted to consult because the counseling program was still running for less than a year, and the orphanage youth preferred to talk directly to the foster parents/caretakers. According to interview data with the administrator of the orphanage said that:

“Teenagers often tell stories directly to their foster parents/caregivers because they already have an emotional closeness, so they are more confident in telling us about their problems.” (Interview, 2022)

Nevertheless, the counseling room is still used to deal with adolescents with mental health disorders due to domestic violence or bullying. The observations informed that the Orphanage had handled teenagers with eating disorders and were afraid to adapt to the environment that some were afraid to sleep on the floor because of the trauma. Cases of mental health disorders are assisted by psychiatrists from IDI for therapy until the teenager recovers. Besides providing counseling, the Orphanage embeds Sufism values by conducting the Koran, morning and evening remembrance, and studies at dawn and dusk. Embedding Sufism values aims to calm the hearts of teenagers, provide an understanding always to be grateful, obey worship, and implement a sense of compassion and self-awareness that everything is from Allah SWT and will return to Him.

In addition, the Sufism approach is useful for making pious teenagers devoted and willing to pray for their parents even though they have died or have no idea who their parents are. To divert negative thoughts, the Orphanage has a Muslim fashion and hijab craft program (DeTe hijab) for young females interested in fashion. There is also a program for growing vegetables and raising goats (DeTe Farm) and a rihlah program or traveling to tourist attractions for the night. Usually, this rihlah program is held every school holiday because, according to the administrator, the teenager’s enthusiasm for worship, study and activities in the orphanage began to decline, so refreshing or traveling was needed to raise their spirit.

In addition, this rihlah improves a saturated mood or entertainment as a diversion of negative thoughts and improves mental health for teenagers.

### Conclusion

Based on the results of the theme and analysis of the data above, it can be concluded that self-compassion could be a new approach to maintaining adolescents’ mental health in orphanages. Based on the simple linear regression test, self-compassion had an influence of 21.9% on the mental health of adolescents living in orphanages. Another 78.1% were other factors such as parenting, environment, studies, and education. Thus, and self-compassion influenced the mental health of teenage orphans. Factors affecting the mental health of orphanage youth included the family background, e.g., families of domestic violence victims, victims of pornography and poor parenting. The implications of this study found that improving the mental health of orphanage adolescents can be done by instilling self-compassion attitudes consistently.

### Recommendation

The findings of this study show that there is a positive and significant influence of self-compassion on the mental health of orphanage adolescents. The recommendation for future research is that research on mental health can be excluded in the form of other roles, such as self-disclosure, spirituality, resilience, and other roles.
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Daftar Pustaka


Aziz & Rahmatullah: Maintaining Mental Health through the Role …… (300-310)


