

## **Social Support and Psychological Well-Being Among Transgender Women In Yogyakarta**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Psychological well-being refers to the mental health of individuals who experience positive psychological functioning. Social support is the perceived sense of security, care, appreciation, or assistance received from others or groups. This study explores the relationship between social support and psychological well-being in transgender women in Yogyakarta. The hypothesis posited a positive correlation between these variables. A sample of 90 transgender women, aged 20-70 years, participated in the study. The data was collected using a modified psychological well-being scale and a social support scale. Pearson's correlation analysis was employed, yielding a significant positive relationship ( $r = 0.531$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), with social support contributing 28.2% to the variance in psychological well-being. This findings suggest that enhancing social support systems could improve the well-being of transgender women in the region.

**Keywords:** social support, psychological well-being, transgender women, Yogyakarta

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### **Introduction**

Transgender individuals, particularly transgender women, face numerous societal challenges, including stigma, discrimination, and exclusion. In Indonesia, where gender norms are traditionally binary, transgender women, often referred to as *waria*, encounter significant barriers in accessing social services, healthcare, and even acceptance within their communities. This marginalized status leads to negative outcomes in various aspects of life, including mental health. According to the American Psychological Association (2008), transgender individuals are at higher risk of experiencing psychological distress due to societal rejection, lack of family support, and discrimination in employment and education. Studies have shown that transgender individuals are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation compared to the general population (Bockting et al., 2013).

Psychological well-being, defined as a state of optimal mental health, where individuals experience a sense of purpose, personal growth, and positive

relationships (Ryff, 1989), is a crucial factor in leading a fulfilling life. Psychological well-being consists of six dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. For transgender women, achieving high psychological well-being can be challenging due to the multiple layers of stigma and discrimination they face. Many transgender individuals struggle with self-acceptance, identity crises, and a lack of social integration, all of which are critical to achieving psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

One important factor that has been shown to mitigate the effects of societal stigma and improve psychological well-being is social support. Social support refers to the emotional, informational, and practical assistance received from others, which can help individuals cope with stress and enhance their mental health (Sarafino, 2011). Social support can come from various sources, including family, friends, community organizations, or peer groups. For transgender women, having a robust social support network has been linked to better mental health outcomes, including reduced levels of depression and anxiety, and improved overall life satisfaction (Alanko & Lund, 2019). Research has demonstrated that social support not only provides a sense of belonging and acceptance but also buffers against the adverse effects of societal discrimination (Fuller & Riggs, 2018).

However, there is limited research on the impact of social support on the psychological well-being of transgender women in Indonesia, particularly in Yogyakarta. While studies from Western contexts suggest a strong positive relationship between social support and psychological well-being (DeVries et al., 2016), the applicability of these findings to Indonesian transgender communities is unclear due to cultural differences. Yogyakarta, as a city with a relatively progressive stance on LGBTQ+ issues, provides a unique setting to explore this dynamic.

This study aims to fill this research gap by examining the relationship between social support and psychological well-being among transgender women in Yogyakarta. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research question: *Does social support positively influence the psychological well-being of transgender women in Yogyakarta?*

The current study hypothesizes that there is a positive correlation between social support and psychological well-being in this population. By examining this relationship, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that can enhance the mental health and quality of life for transgender women in Indonesia. The findings of this study could provide valuable insights for

policymakers, mental health professionals, and community organizations working to improve the well-being of transgender individuals.

### **Methods**

This study utilized a quantitative correlational design to examine the relationship between social support and psychological well-being. The sample consisted of 90 transgender women, aged 20-70 years, selected using a purposive sampling technique. The psychological scales in this research are divided into two categories: a psychological well-being scale and a social support scale. A Likert scale is used for both measures. The psychological well-being scale used in this study is a modified version developed by the researcher from Yudhanti (2017), which is adapted from Ryff's (1989) dimensions of psychological well-being. Meanwhile, the social support scale is a modified version based on Retniardi (2021), adapted from Safarino's (2011) aspects of social support.

The study participants are 90 transgender individuals in Yogyakarta, aged between 20 and 70 years.

The psychological well-being scale demonstrated a reliability coefficient alpha ( $r_{xx}$ ) of 0.933, with item discrimination indices ( $r_{ix}$ ) ranging from 0.302 to 0.638. The social support scale demonstrated a reliability coefficient alpha ( $r_{xx}$ ) of 0.923, with item discrimination indices ( $r_{ix}$ ) ranging from 0.348 to 0.653.

Descriptive statistical analysis, which entails describing and summarizing the collected data, is applied as the primary data analysis method (Sugiyono, 2015). The Pearson product-moment correlation technique is used to analyze the data, aiming to examine the relationship between social support and psychological well-being among transgender individuals in Yogyakarta.

### **Results**

Based on descriptive data, the variables in this study were categorized accordingly. Psychological well-being was classified into three levels: high, moderate, and low. The results show that 42.2% of participants (38 subjects) reported high psychological well-being, 57.8% (52 subjects) reported moderate well-being, and 0% (0 subjects) reported low well-being. This indicates that most participants fall within the moderate level of psychological well-being. Social support was similarly categorized into high, moderate, and low levels. Results show that 42.2% of participants (38 subjects) reported high levels of social support, 57.8% (52 subjects) reported moderate levels, and 0% (0 subjects) reported low levels. This suggests that most participants also experience moderate levels of social support.

Table 1. Categorization of Psychological Wellbeing Variable

Category	Guidelines	Score Range	Total (N)	Percentage (%)
High	$X \geq (\mu + 1\sigma)$	$X \geq 108$	38	42,2%
Medium	$(\mu - 1\sigma) \leq X < (\mu + 1\sigma)$	$72 \leq X < 108$	52	57,8%
Low	$X < (\mu - 1\sigma)$	$X < 72$	0	0%
<b>Total</b>			<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that 42.2% of the subjects (38 individuals) have high levels of psychological well-being, 57.8% (52 individuals) fall into the moderate category, and 0% (0 individuals) fall into the low category. This indicates that the majority of subjects in this study exhibit moderate levels of psychological well-being.

Table 2. Categorization of Social Support Variable

Category	Guidelines	Score Range	Total (N)	Percentage (%)
High	$X \geq (\mu + 1\sigma)$	$X \geq 96$	38	42,2%
Medium	$(\mu - 1\sigma) \leq X < (\mu + 1\sigma)$	$64 \leq X < 96$	52	57,8%
Low	$X < (\mu - 1\sigma)$	$X < 64$	0	0%
<b>Total</b>			<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on Table 2, it can be observed that 42.2% of the subjects (38 individuals) have high levels of social support, 57.8% (52 individuals) fall into the moderate category, and 0% (0 individuals) fall into the low category. This indicates that the majority of subjects in this study experience moderate levels of social support.

Normality tests for social support yielded a Shapiro-Wilk  $w=0.948$ ,  $p = 0.948$ ,  $p=0.334$  ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating that social support data are normally distributed. For psychological well-being, a Shapiro-Wilk  $w=0.986$ ,  $p=0.442$  ( $p>0.05$ ) was obtained, showing normal distribution for this variable as well.

A scatterplot linearity test revealed a linear relationship between social support and psychological well-being, with data points aligning closely along an imaginary line extending from the bottom left to the top right.

Using Pearson’s product-moment correlation, a correlation coefficient of  $r_{xy}=0.531$  ( $p<0.01$ ) was found, indicating a positive association between social support and psychological well-being among transgender individuals in Yogyakarta. Therefore, the hypothesis is supported: as social support increases, so does psychological well-being, and vice versa. Additionally, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.282, suggesting that social support accounts for 28.2% of

the variance in psychological well-being, with the remaining 71.8% influenced by other unexamined factors.

## **Discussions**

Social support is a known factor in influencing psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989). Social support involves actions that offer comfort, care, and respect to others (Sarafino, 2011). Sarafino (2011) identifies four aspects of social support: emotional support, esteem support, instrumental support, and informational support.

The first aspect, emotional support, includes expressions of empathy, care, and attention that help individuals feel loved and valued (Sarafino, 2011). This study found that participants received care and concern from family, friends, and their communities during times of difficulty, indicating they felt empathy, care, and attention from those around them. Emotional support can reduce stress and foster a positive mood, enhancing psychological well-being (Sinokki, 2011). This support provides comfort and helps individuals feel understood in their situations and challenges.

The second aspect, esteem support, involves positive reinforcement, such as motivational statements, encouragement, and affirmation of ideas (Sarafino, 2011). This study found that participants received esteem support, including praise, from family, friends, and the community. According to Paramitha (2022), esteem support significantly contributes to psychological well-being by fostering happiness through attention, boosting self-confidence, and encouraging a positive outlook. This aligns with Heizomi et al. (2015), who found that individuals with higher happiness levels are more likely to experience high psychological well-being.

The third aspect, instrumental support, refers to direct, tangible assistance. Examples include financial help or direct aid in completing tasks (Sarafino, 2011). This study found that participants received such support from family, friends, and the community. Scholten (as cited in Millatina & Yanuviatnti, 2015) posited that direct assistance, such as financial aid or hands-on support, creates a sense of affection from others, motivating individuals to overcome their difficulties. Research by Indriyani (2021) further supports that individuals feel a sense of calm when receiving direct help to address their issues.

The fourth aspect, informational support, includes advice, suggestions, or feedback for problem-solving (Sarafino, 2011). The study showed that participants received information-based support in the form of advice, suggestions, or feedback from family, friends, and community members. Scholten (as cited in Millatina &

Yanuvianti, 2015) suggested that credible informational support from others positively influences individuals' approaches to life challenges. Indriyani (2021) supported this, indicating that individuals who receive informational support gain positive direction and perspective through constructive advice and feedback.

The results suggest that social support plays a significant role in enhancing the psychological well-being of transgender women. This finding aligns with previous research, which also highlights the importance of a supportive environment in improving mental health outcomes. However, other factors not explored in this study, such as personal resilience and societal acceptance, may also influence psychological well-being.

### **Conclusion**

Transgender individuals in Yogyakarta are encouraged to engage in social interactions with those around them—such as family, friends, and community members—to attain high levels of social support, which is beneficial for achieving quality psychological well-being. Furthermore, families, friends, and the surrounding community are encouraged to respect the individuality of transgender individuals regardless of their life decisions.

This study confirms a significant positive relationship between social support and psychological well-being in transgender women in Yogyakarta. Interventions aimed at increasing social support could be beneficial for improving the mental health of this population. Further research is needed to explore other factors affecting psychological well-being.

### **Acknowledgement**

Not applicable

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