



## Student's Psychological Flexibility Based on Gender Differences in Indonesia

Alrefi<sup>✉1</sup>, Juntika Nurihsan<sup>2</sup>, Nandang Rusmana<sup>2</sup>, Nurhudaya<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Program Doktor Jurusan Bimbingan dan Konseling, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Jalan Setiabudi 229 Bandung, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Jalan Setiabudi 229 Bandung, Indonesia

✉ [alrefi@upi.edu](mailto:alrefi@upi.edu)

**Abstract.** The purpose of this study is to determine the level of psychological flexibility of Tenth Grade Students of Senior High School and Vocational School based on gender differences. Research activities are conducted in the even semester of the 2018/2019 school year. This research uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The data measurement tool is a questionnaire in the form of a scale developed by Rolffs based on psychological flexibility indicators. The study participants were Tenth Grade Students of Daarut Tauhid Boarding School Bandung Vocational High School 2018/2019, totaling 116 participants consisting of 58 men and 58 women. The result showed in general psychological flexibility in male students is higher than the psychological flexibility of female students. As for the general description obtained general psychological flexibility of students that is about 14 (12%) students have psychological flexibility at a high level, 75 people (65%) are at a moderate level, and 27 people (23%) are at a low level. This data provides a strong position that efforts to develop psychological flexibility in students become an important issue and become the main goal with the need for guidance and counseling services.

**Keywords:** Psychological, Flexibility, male, female, differences

**INTRODUCTION** ~ Psychological flexibility is an integral part of mental health and behavior effectiveness. This is marked by one's ability to focus on their current situation, take appropriate actions to achieve goals and values, even be prepared to face psychological events that are challenging or unwanted. The importance of psychological flexibility was expressed by Kashdan and Rottenberg (2010) which included various individual abilities to recognize and adapt to various situations, change mindsets or behaviors, maintain balance, be aware, open and commit to behavior in accordance with held values. Kashdan and Rottenberg further stated components in psychological flexibility such as the ability to change cognitive experiences quickly. Other components relate to an individual's

ability to withstand pressure, have openness and self-control. In other words, someone who is psychologically flexible can act according to the situation in accordance with the values believed, able to deal with situations when depressed, does not cover themselves and is able to control his behavior.

Psychological flexibility is closely related to well-being, where to achieve a prosperous life one of which is influenced by psychological flexibility. Several research results have revealed that psychological flexibility significantly correlates with well-being (Marshall et al, 2016). This means that to achieve an ideal condition of well-being, one of them needs to develop psychological flexibility in life, so that by achieving a flexible life, individual welfare is also achieved.



## ICEE-2

The implication of psychological flexibility is that a person needs to be flexible in dealing with situations and conditions. Individuals sometimes experience internal events such as depression, anxiety, self-doubt, self-confidence that can frustrate their commitment to act in accordance with their values and goals. However, psychologically flexible people can deal with these difficult internal events in a particular way that is attentive. In paying attention to their psychological events, people deliberately observe their internal experiences from time to time, in ways that are not elaborative, open, and non-judgmental (Brown & Ryan, 2003). By adopting a wise approach, psychologically flexible people need not focus too much to avoid, suppress, or control unwanted or difficult internal experiences. This, by itself, can facilitate better mental health (Baer, 2003).

The importance of psychological flexibility has attracted the attention of researchers. Various studies conducted to see the relationship between psychological flexibility with various related variables have been carried out including psychological flexibility positively correlated with well-being (Imani, et al, 2016; Marshall, et al, 2016; Wersebe, et al, 2017), self-efficacy ( Jeffords, et al, 2018; Wei, et al, 2014), quality of life (Leonidou, et al, 2016), attention (Masuda and Tully, 2012), compassion (Marshall et al, 2016), self-adjustment (Montiel et al, 2016)

Various studies on psychological flexibility

began to be associated with cultural factors. Psychological flexibility begins to develop and is oriented towards cultural practice. Psychological flexibility is considered important in cultural evolution such as reducing interpersonal and inter-group conflicts, raising values of caring and reducing punishment (Biglan, 2009). Studies on psychological flexibility have been included in various cultures such as, Marshall et al (2016) who conduct research on the correlation of psychological flexibility, compassion and well-being in Australia; Azadeh et al (2016) conducted research on the role of psychological flexibility in high school students who experience social anxiety in Iran; and the study of Xu et al (2018) who validated the Chinese version of the questionnaire in China.

The importance of psychological flexibility in education can be explained through the opinions of several experts. Zaheer (2015) explained the results of his research that psychological flexibility contributes to the quality of life and peer support in learning, when students have high psychological flexibility they feel a greater level of peer support in learning. Another study conducted by Jeffords, et al (2018) states that psychological flexibility has an influence on student self-efficacy, which results in students who have high psychological flexibility, have high self-efficacy. Psychologically flexible students have the opportunity to persevere and complete tasks related to the education being pursued. In addition, an increase in



## ICEE-2

social competence through the contribution of psychological flexibility experienced by students (Rosenberg, 2018).

The results of previous studies suggest that low psychological flexibility results in adverse effects on individuals. A person who does not have psychological flexibility is prone to experiencing several problems and disorders (Chawla & Ostafin, 2007; Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010), including depression (Bohlmeijer, et al, 2011; Montiel et al, 2016; White et al, 2012), stress (Wersebe, 2017), eating disorders (Bluett et al., 2016; Masuda, Price, Anderson, & Wendell, 2010), higher emotions (Nevanpera et al, 2013), psychological distress (Wiggs and Drake, 2016), and anxiety (Arch, et al., 2012; Berryhill et al, 2018; Morris et al, 2014).

Based on the explanation that has been described researchers intend to find out the differences in psychological flexibility based on the sex of students in the country of Indonesia, especially SMA / SMK Daarut Tauhid Boarding School Bandung. Research on psychological flexibility is still very limited in Indonesia, so that through this research it can contribute and further research directions on psychological flexibility in Indonesia.

## METHOD

The approach used is a quantitative

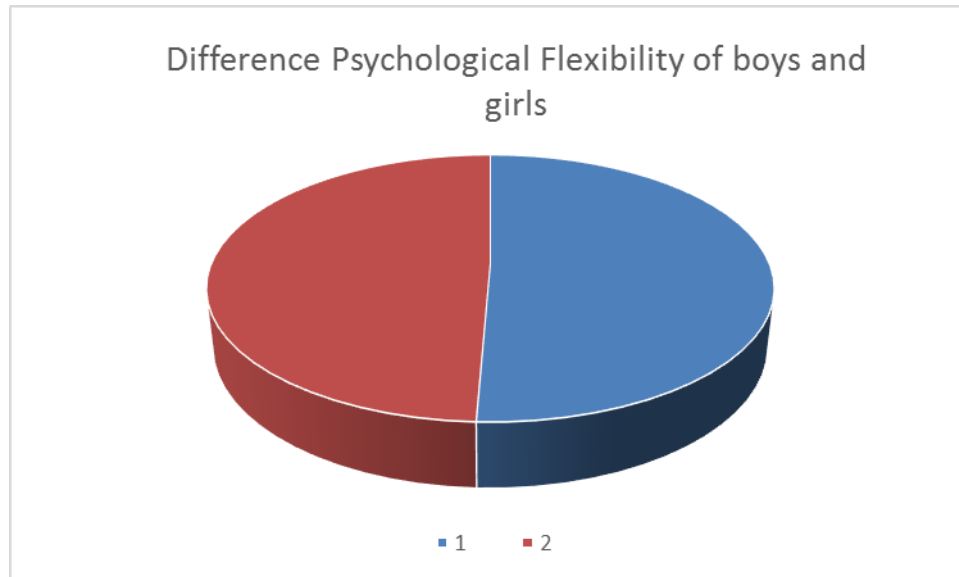
approach with a survey type descriptive method. Descriptive method seeks to make a description, describe or describe systematically, factually and accurately about the facts, properties and relationships between the phenomena under investigation. The study participants were grade X students of High School and Vocational Schools in the 2018/2019 school year with 116 participants consisting of 58 men and 58 women. Research data collection using an instrument consisting of a psychological flexibility scale questionnaire. Analysis of research data is carried out quantitatively, namely by calculating the level of psychological flexibility. As for knowing the differences in the level of psychological flexibility of male and female students is done by using an independent sample t test hypothesis.

## RESULTS

The description of the results of the study describes the description of psychological flexibility, the following is an initial description of psychological flexibility of students in general. Based on the table above, it can be seen that the psychological flexibility of students in the 2018-2019 Academic Year is in the majority category, from 116 students sampled in the study, as many as 12% (14 students) are included in the high category, 65% (75 students) are in the medium category and 23% (27 students) are in the low category.

**Tabel 1.** Frequency Distribution of Psychological Flexibility

Skor	Students	Frequency	Level
211-242	14	12 %	High
180-211	75	65 %	Middle
149-180	27	23 %	Low



**Chart 1.** Difference Psychological Flexibility of boys and girls

The results of differences in scores between psychological boys and girls show boys are more flexible than psychological compared to girls. This can be seen from the average boys get an average score of 195, 41 while girls get an average score of 188,41.

From the results of different tests with statistical tests, students in female students and male students have a significant difference with a value of  $0.60 > 0.05$ , which means it is very different between what is needed by psychological trainees of male students and women, higher than women.

## DISCUSSION

Empirical evidence in this study shows that psychological flexibility of students in Indonesia still needs to be developed. The findings of this study support the results of previous studies that have been studied by Azadeh et al (2016), Jeffords et al (2018) and Zaheer (2015) who stated the importance of psychological flexibility for individuals, especially in the world of education.

Therefore, to help individuals develop flexibility, there are efforts and interventions that can empirically be used to help individuals increase psychological flexibility. Various efforts and interventions that have been used in developing



## ICEE-2

psychological and cognitive flexibility include the interaction of children and parents (Williams et al, 2012), cognitive behavioral counseling (Nazarzadeh, et al, 2015), Mindfulness-Based Intervention (Ruskin, et al, 2018), dialectical behavior therapy (Kashdan and Rottenberg, 2010) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Morris, 2012).

## CONCLUSION

General description of psychological flexibility that has been proven empirically in Indonesia has shown the importance of developing psychological flexibility in students. The results showed there were still many students who were at low and medium levels. Various efforts have been developed by researchers before, but still very limited in Indonesia.

Research suggestions addressed to various parties involved. First, school counselors are expected to develop students' psychological flexibility by: Learning and practicing optimizing psychological flexibility in themselves before it is developed for students. Actively participates in seminars, training and workshops related to counseling approaches. Instill positive values in yourself and hone emotional intelligence as an effort to integrate personality competencies in daily life and professional practice.

Secondly, for the LPTK the counselor educator in the BK Study Program in Bandung Indonesia is expected to be able

to hold a training program on an ongoing basis for BK teachers in the School.

Third, the next researcher is expected to be able to study the factors that influence psychological flexibility from various aspects based on the results of previous studies. Conduct research on the development of instruments of psychological flexibility from other perspectives. Explore more deeply the contribution of other factors that are predictors of the formation of psychological flexibility. Conduct further research on interventions to increase the psychological flexibility of students.

## REFERENCES

- Arch, J. J., Eifert, G. H., Davies, C., Vilardaga, J. C. P., Rose, R. D., & Craske, M. G. (2012). Randomized clinical trial of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) versus acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) for mixed anxiety disorders. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 80*(5), 750–765. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028310>
- Azadeh, S. M., Kazemi-Zahrani, H., & Besharat, M. A. (2015). Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy on Interpersonal Problems and Psychological Flexibility in Female High School Students With Social Anxiety Disorder. *Global Journal of Health Science, 8*(3), 131–138. <https://doi.org/10.5539/gjhs.v8n3p1>



- Baer, R. A. (2003). Mindfulness training as a clinical intervention: A conceptual and empirical review. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10(2), 125–143. <https://doi.org/10.1093/clipsy/bpg015>
- Berryhill, M. B., Hayes, A., & Lloyd, K. (2018). Chaotic-Enmeshment and Anxiety: The Mediating Role of Psychological Flexibility and Self-Compassion. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 40(4), 326–337. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-018-9461-2>
- Bluett, E. J., Lee, E. B., Simone, M., Lockhart, G., Twohig, M. P., Lensegrav-Benson, T., & Quakenbush-Roberts, B. (2016). The role of body image psychological flexibility on the treatment of eating disorders in a residential facility. *Eating Behaviors*, 23, 150–155. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eatbeh.2016.10.002>
- Bohlmeijer, E. T., Fledderus, M., Rokx, T. A. J., & Pieterse, M. E. (2011). Efficacy of an early intervention based on acceptance and commitment therapy for adults with depressive symptomatology: Evaluation in a randomized controlled trial. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 49(1), 62–67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2010.10.003>
- Charalambous, A. (2019). Social Media and Health Policy Why Influencing Cancer Policy is. 24–27. <https://doi.org/10.4103/apjon.apjon>
- Gulf, T., & Council, C. (2012). This electronic thesis or dissertation has been downloaded from the King ' s Research Portal at Surviving the Arab Spring :
- Holm-Hadulla, R. M., Hofmann, F.-H., & Sperth, M. (2011). An integrative model of counseling. *Asia Pacific Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 2(1), 3–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21507686.2010.546864>
- Jeffords, J. R., Bayly, B. L., Bumpus, M. F., & Hill, L. G. (2018). Investigating the Relationship Between University Students' Psychological Flexibility and College Self-Efficacy. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 152102511775107. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025117751071>
- Kashdan, T. B., & Rottenberg, J. (2010). Psychological flexibility as a fundamental aspect of health. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 30(4), 865–878. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2010.03.001>



**ICEE-2**

- Koszycki, D., Raab, K., Aldosary, F., & Bradwejn, J. (2010). A multifaith spiritually based intervention for generalized anxiety disorder: A pilot randomized trial. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 66(4), 430–441. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp>
- Marshall, E.-J., & Brockman, R. N. (2016). The Relationships Between Psychological Flexibility, Self-Compassion, and Emotional Well-Being. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 30(1), 60–72. <https://doi.org/10.1891/0889-8391.30.1.60>
- Masuda, A., Price, M., Anderson, P. L., & Wendell, J. W. (2010). Disordered Eating-Related Cognition and Psychological Flexibility as Predictors of Psychological Health Among College Students. *Behavior Modification*, 34(1), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0145445509351569>
- Montiel, C. B., Moya, T. R., Venditti, F., & Bernini, O. (2016). Contribución de la flexibilidad psicológica en la predicción del distrés psicológico en pacientes con cáncer de mama. *Psicothema*, 28(3), 266–271. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2015.271>
- Nevanperä, N., Lappalainen, R., Kuosma, E., Hopsu, L., Uitti, J., & Laitinen, J. (2013). Psychological flexibility, occupational burnout and eating behavior among working women. *Open Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 03(04), 355–361. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpm.2013.34048>
- Rosenberg, E. R. (2018). Promoting competence in college students: The role of psychological flexibility. 78(10-B(E)), No Pagination Specified-No Pagination Specified.
- To, L. (2009). Increasing Psychological Flexibility To Influence Cultural Evolution. *Behavior and Social Issues*, 24, 15–24.
- Wersebe, H., Lieb, R., Meyer, A. H., Hofer, P., & Gloster, A. T. (2018). Relación entre estrés, bienestar y flexibilidad psicológica durante una intervención de autoayuda de Terapia de Aceptación y Compromiso. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 18(1), 60–68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijchp.2017.09.002>
- White, R. G., Gumley, A. I., McTaggart, J., Rattrie, L., McConville, D., Cleare, S., & Mitchell, G. (2013). Depression and anxiety following psychosis: Associations with mindfulness and psychological flexibility. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 41(1), 34–51. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1352465812000239>



**ICEE-2**

Wiggs, K. A., & Drake, C. E. (2016). Building psychological flexibility to mitigate adjustment disorder. Clinical Case

Studies, 15(1), 18–34.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1534650115585387>