



The Relationship of Spirituality with Emotional Awareness and Coping: A Study on School Adolescents

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 15 March 2024

Accepted 27 May 2024

Available online 9 June 2024

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DOI:

10.18326/pamomong.v5i1.1530

How to cite:

Muarifah, A., Diponegoro, A. M., Naini, R., Suadirman, S. P., Zakiyah, T. A., & Herdiansyah, D. (2024). The Relationship of Spirituality with Emotional Awareness and Coping: A Study on School

Adolescents. *Pamomong: Journal of Islamic Educational Counseling*, 5(1), 74–87.

<https://doi.org/10.18326/pamomong.v5i1.1530>

ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a period that has a very unique development. Spirituality is core to the individual's process of becoming holistically healthy. This study aims to determine the relationship between spirituality, emotional awareness, and coping among adolescents in Yogyakarta. The research method used was correlational with a direct survey of 525 students aged 14-18 years at the high school level. The research instrument used was the Wellness Evaluation of Lifestyle inventory, which Naini (2013) adopted through back translation and adaptation to the Indonesian language and culture. The data analysis technique used is Pearson correlation. The research results show spirituality with emotional awareness and coping with a Pearson correlation of .325 and $p = .000$ ($p < .05$). This study concludes that there is a relationship between spirituality, emotional awareness, and coping in adolescents.

Keywords: Spirituality; Emotional Awareness; Coping

ABSTRAK

Remaja merupakan periode yang memiliki perkembangan yang sangat unik. Spiritualitas merupakan core dalam proses individu menjadi sehat secara holistik. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui adanya hubungan antara spiritualitas dengan kesadaran emosi dan coping pada remaja di Kota Yogyakarta. Metode penelitian yang digunakan yakni korelasional dengan survei secara langsung dengan 525 siswa dengan rentang usia 14-18 tahun di jenjang SMA. Instrumen penelitian yang digunakan yakni adopsi inventori Wellness Evaluation of Lifestyle yang diadaptasi oleh Naini (2013) dengan melalui backtranslate dan penyesuaian bahasa dan budaya Indonesia. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan yakni korelasi Pearson. Hasil riset menunjukkan spiritualitas dengan kesadaran emosi

dan coping dengan korelasi pearson correlation yakni .325 dan $p = .000$ ($p < .05$). Kesimpulan studi ini yakni terdapat hubungan antara spiritualitas dengan kesadaran emosi dan coping pada remaja.

Kata kunci: Spiritualitas; Kesadaran Emosi; Coping

INTRODUCTION

The complexity of adolescence necessitates significant attention in efforts to ensure holistic adolescent health. The psychological changes experienced during this transition can be a contributing factor to mental disorders. Adolescents face many challenges and new experiences that they have never encountered before. These challenges include adapting to changing environments, managing time and personal finances, and experiencing increased loneliness while studying away from their migrant locations. The lack of community support and the pressure of new problems can cause stress that may disrupt adolescent mental health (Clarke et al., 2020). Mental health issues in adolescents can develop into serious health problems and result in high social burdens. Love and support, as well as solid relationships with family and loved ones, can directly and positively impact adolescent mental health. According to Myers et al., good emotional relationships can reduce the likelihood of young people who have mental illness (Neal Keith et al., 2023). However, the lack of community sensitivity and awareness of the importance of mental health care often results in individuals not receiving appropriate treatment (Lewis & Myers, 2012). This aligns with the wellness concept, which interrelates several components. Students often experience stress and physical problems. Although adolescence is a period of high social development, there are still issues with social interaction and peer conformity.

In the context of self-awareness and coping, self-awareness is usually induced by placing individuals in front of a mirror or instructing them to write about themselves. This strategy involves avoiding sources of self-awareness (e.g., the gaze or reminders of others) and diverting attention away from the self (e.g., through sensation-seeking or de-individuation by focusing on mindless activities and reducing attention to typical self-aspects). Besides understanding one's emotions, coping strategies are crucial in achieving individual wellness.

Emotional awareness is an inherent trait with different characteristics, such as stably understanding and responding to one's emotions. Emotional awareness illustrates how differences in individual emotional awareness can arise from various emotional experiences, related factors, and interactions (Smith et al., 2018). This is highly relevant to how adolescent coping develops. Emotional awareness and regulation significantly impact adolescent resilience, though empirical studies analyzing this relationship are still scarce. Therefore, this research aims to examine the influence of emotional awareness on resilience and the potential mediation of emotional regulation strategies, such as cognitive appraisal and reappraisal, with differences based on gender (Garcia-Blanc et al., 2023). The impact of emotional awareness has emerged as an essential factor in strengthening adolescent resilience. For example, Lee et al. (2019) found that low emotional awareness negatively affects adolescent resilience compared to adults.

Several findings indicate that adolescents' coping strategies change with age. Miller and Thoresen (2003) found that younger adolescents report coping with stress by working more and distracting themselves from problems, while older adolescents use tension-reducing techniques more often than younger ones. These findings are consistent with conclusions (Zinnbaue et al., 1999; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005) that emotion-focused coping strategies increase frequency throughout adolescence.

Certain coping types should be promoted to enhance mental wellness. In the general stress and coping literature, problem-focused and approach coping allow for instrumental actions related to distressing experiences, reducing externalizing and internalizing problems (Büssing et al., 2015). Historically, avoidant coping has been associated with more psychopathology but can also reduce distress and provide safety and resource conservation amid difficulties.

Krok (2015) explains that positive religious coping in adolescents involves using faith for comfort during difficult times, seeking spiritual support, striving to deepen spiritual relationships and understanding, praying for strength, believing in God, and being part of a religious community. These strategies can provide meaning, purpose, and connectedness, helping adolescents cope with stress and negative emotions and improving well-being and prosocial behavior. Conversely, negative religious coping involves struggles, doubts, or feelings of abandonment by a divine figure, which is linked to increased psychological

distress and reduced coping ability in adolescents. Negative religious coping may also be associated with more negative general coping forms, such as blaming others or engaging in less effective problem-solving behaviors to manage stress.

Spirituality is often defined as a personal quest, experience, and response to perceptions of the transcendent, sacred, or divine (Jastrzębski, 2022; Walsh-Bowers, 2000). Therefore, spiritual transcendence involves mentally connecting concrete perceptions and actions with broader explanations that evoke sacred values relevant to God, space, nature, art, politics, or other domains (Riveros & Immordino-Yang, 2021). This connection evokes transcendent social emotions such as awe (Omoyajowo et al., 2023), including gratitude, admiration, compassion, and moral elevation. Spirituality refers to an individual's quest or connection with the sacred, supernatural, or ultimate reality. Social science definitions of religiosity, spirituality, and secularism abound, and researchers have moved towards flexible and multidimensional definitions in the adolescent context.

Spirituality is a critical component of the health wheel, relating to other health components. Spiritual life experiences are obtained through practices inside or outside organized places of worship and achieved through prayer activities (Rahayu & Yona, 2019). Spirituality and religiosity are core dimensions of development, including the concept of health in The Wheel of Wellness (Myers & Sweeney, 2004). Religiosity as a psychological phenomenon cannot be understood only by identifying one dimension; religiosity becomes a system of beliefs, values, and specific practices that are institutionalized or personal and related to divinity, a level of reality, or the highest source of transcendence.

Spirituality is an individual's internal satisfaction, closeness to God, a sense of meaning in life, and spiritual well-being. Spirituality includes non-religious spiritual orientations, namely personal beliefs not explicitly related to religion or organized religious teachings (Good & Willoughby, 2008; Wixwat & Saucier, 2021). Religious and spiritual practices are associated with reduced risk in only one or two health risk behaviors (Malinakova et al., 2019). Their multiplicative interaction is associated with reduced risk in four health risk behaviors. High spirituality offers more protection for adolescents from health risk behaviors when combined with religious practices.

Religious or spiritual adolescents generally engage in fewer risky and externalizing behaviors (e.g., substance use, sexual risk-taking, and delinquency), struggle less with

mental wellness issues (e.g., internalization, especially depression), are more prosocial (e.g., altruism and community engagement), are more morally developed (e.g., empathy and moral identity), are more psychosocially mature (e.g., identity), are more socially and cognitively competent (e.g., self-control), have higher psychological well-being (e.g., self-esteem, purpose, and meaning), and perform better academically, among other benefits. Religiosity and spirituality play adaptive roles in adolescent development and functioning (Clarke et al., 2020; Hill et al., 2000).

Spirituality can contribute to emotional awareness by providing a sense of meaning, purpose, and connectedness. It also helps adolescents cope with stress and negative emotions, enhancing well-being and prosocial behavior (Kor et al., 2019; Shek, 2012). Various ecological factors, including family, peers, and culture, influence the development of spirituality in adolescence. Spirituality can be viewed as a form of intelligence that predicts function and adaptation, offering abilities that enable individuals to solve problems and achieve goals (Anjum et al., 2022; Wright et al., 2018). Thus, this study was conducted to understand the relationship between spirituality, emotional awareness, and coping in adolescents.

METHODS

The research method used is quantitative with a correlational approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The study began with planning, which included preparing research instruments, coordinating with partner schools, data collection processes, data entry, and data analysis, and concluding with drawing research findings. The survey was conducted offline and involved 525 students in Yogyakarta City, comprising 315 female and 210 male students aged 15 to 18 years. The technique used in taking samples is simple random sampling which can give each individual in the population an equal opportunity to be selected as a sample, reducing bias and making the sample more representative of the population as a whole. This technique also makes it easier to generalize research results to a wider population, namely students in the city of Yogyakarta who are the focus of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The instruments used to measure spirituality included adaptations from The Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMRS) developed by the Fetzer Institute (2003) and the

Wellness Inventory of Lifestyle Evaluation (Naini, 2015). There are four response options on both instruments: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The total items for The Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMRS) consist of 39 items with a content validity of .871, and 121 items for the Wellness Evaluation of Lifestyle with a content validity of .937 (tested using Gregory's technique). Subsequently, reliability tests were conducted, yielding high reliability for both instruments: .890 for The Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMRS) and .922 for the Wellness Evaluation of Lifestyle. The data analysis technique used in this study is Pearson correlation analysis ($p < .05$) (Andrande, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the descriptive analysis results of this study, it was found that out of 525 adolescents, the majority had spirituality with emotional awareness and coping in the moderate category; the research demographic data can be seen in Table 1. The results of the mean, standard deviations, and correlation between each variable are presented in Table 2.

Table 1.

Research Demographic Data

	N (total)	Mean
Male	242	
Female	283	
Spirituality Level		40.49
<i>High</i>	None	
<i>Moderate</i>	525	
<i>Low</i>	None	
Emotional Awareness & Coping Level		21.23
<i>High</i>	None	
<i>Moderate</i>	525	
<i>Low</i>	None	

Tabel 2.

Mean, Standard Deviations, and Correlation Between Each of The Variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2
1. Spirituality	40.49	4.517	-	.352**
2. Emotional Awareness & Coping Level	21.23	3.289	.352**	-

Note. **Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Based on the analysis results in Table 2, the Pearson correlation was found to be .325 with a p-value of .000. This means that spirituality, emotional awareness and coping have a significant relationship ($p < .05$). There is a strong relationship between spirituality and emotional awareness and coping, stemming from the fact that many people seek spiritual guidance during stressful life events, using spiritual practices as a supportive means. In embarking on the journey toward adulthood, adolescents face complex challenges that require a deep understanding of critical dimensions in developing holistic well-being. In this context, spiritual practice is essential in coping mechanisms and becomes the first defense against distress and pain (Branson et al., 2019). Many people see spirituality as an influential force that provides motivation and direction in life. Furthermore, emotional awareness plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' responses to various situations. When adolescents are equipped to identify, understand, and regulate their emotions, it can significantly impact how they react to challenges. Effective coping strategies can also be essential to successfully navigating difficult times.

Spirituality can influence coping in adolescents by providing a sense of meaning, purpose, and connection. It can also help adolescents manage stress and negative emotions, enhancing well-being and prosocial behavior. Religious coping is an essential predictor of mental health among child patients, who generally experience more internalizing and externalizing problems than healthy adolescents. Positive spiritual coping reflects using faith for comfort during difficult times, whereas negative spiritual coping reflects struggles, doubt, or abandonment by a divine figure (Aggarwal et al., 2023). Both positive and negative spiritual coping have been demonstrated among adolescents with chronic illnesses. Spiritual coping can be a protective factor against risky behaviors such as delinquency, substance abuse, promiscuity, and emotional issues like depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. However, the relationship between spirituality and coping may not always be clear, as some studies have found that spirituality does not significantly moderate the relationship between emotion regulation and depression (Reynolds et al., 2013).

According to Myers et al. (2000), reinforced by Brubaker and Sweeney (2022), spirituality is one of the core components of wellness that influences an individual's life development. The pattern of spiritual development is characterized by the search for life's meaning, leading individuals to have a quality of life derived from events, themselves,

others, or interactions with others or nature. Spiritual life experiences are gained through practices inside or outside organized places of worship, achieved through prayer, rituals, or community service. The purpose of life is based on the search for meaning, which creates inner peace and enables individuals to find meaning in work and intimate relationships within society. This means spiritual development through daily spiritual experiences becomes part of the normative developmental process of developing life structures manifested in responses to social, physical, and personal feelings.

In psychodynamic studies, spiritual development is crucial because attachment to God forms the basis of human relational relationships. Thus, spiritual and religious practices positively affect individuals during stress or crisis by providing resources to cope and influencing their perceptions of the events. Emotional awareness, besides being vital for achieving holistic well-being, is also essential for academic success, work, business, and social adjustment (Heydemans, 2016). This is reinforced by Ciarrochi et al. (2013) and Homayouni et al. (2020), whose research found that emotional awareness can positively impact various aspects of a person's life. It helps deal with frustration, monitor emotions, improve relationships with others, and even influence success. On the other hand, Snow et al. (2021) suggest that the inability to recognize and appreciate experienced emotions can lead to life difficulties, decision-making challenges, and susceptibility to various circumstances. Similarly, Doho (2023) argues that adolescents must have the ability to be aware of and control their emotions, leading to better attitudes and behaviors.

Moreover, emotional awareness is a crucial skill for adolescents. Lane & Smith (2021) define *emotional awareness* as recognizing emotions and understanding one's thoughts about them, supported by Reyes-Wapano (2021), who states that indicators of emotional awareness are evident in how individuals control their emotions. Adolescents with good emotional awareness are more likely to express their emotions appropriately (Febbiyani & Adelya, 2017). This, in turn, helps adolescents improve their cognitive abilities and self-awareness, allowing them to build emotional competence. This includes recognizing that emotional expression is an essential component of relationships, managing negative emotions healthily through self-regulation, understanding one's emotional states, distinguishing between various emotions, and understanding others' emotions (Damayanti & Haryanto, 2019). Good emotional awareness can help adolescents navigate their emotions

more effectively, resulting in better mental health and overall well-being. In the context of education, experiences in spiritual practice can reduce negative emotions surrounding stress-related situations or help an individual examine these situations in detail for greater clarity (Paul & Saha, 2016).

Spirituality can influence emotion regulation in adolescents by providing a sense of meaning, purpose, and connection. It can also help adolescents manage stress and negative emotions, enhancing well-being and prosocial behavior. Religion can influence the internalization of goals and self-regulation through increased self-monitoring. Spirituality has been shown to protect adolescents from risky behaviors such as delinquency, substance abuse, promiscuity, and emotional issues like depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. It is also significantly associated with indicators of subjective well-being and life satisfaction. However, the relationship between spirituality and emotion regulation may not always be clear, as some studies have found that spirituality does not significantly moderate the relationship between emotion regulation and depression (Weng & Bahari, 2022). Nevertheless, spirituality can contribute to emotion regulation by influencing how adolescents think about their problems and frame their situations (Shroff et al., 2023).

In addition to self-emotional understanding, coping strategies are crucial in achieving individual wellness. The importance of coping strategies lies in their ability to help individuals handle life's pressures without harming their mental and emotional health. Coping refers to an individual's behaviors and thoughts to reduce psychological tension under challenging conditions (Maryam, 2017). It is a conscious effort to neutralize or reduce stress by using available resources within oneself or the surrounding environment. Coping strategies aim to manage challenging situations and demands that exceed available resources (Andriyani, 2019).

Therefore, it is essential to note that the coping resources available will influence adolescents' coping strategies to solve various problems. In individual well-being, these strategies are crucial for managing stress, facing challenges, and building mental resilience, especially in achieving wellness. In the context of adolescents, a holistic approach that combines self-emotional understanding, spirituality, and the development of coping strategies can provide a solid foundation for overall wellness.

Education and support from parents, teachers, and the surrounding environment can play a crucial role in helping adolescents develop spirituality, emotional awareness, and positive coping resources. Additionally, equipping adolescents with social skills and healthy adaptive strategies can enhance their ability to face life's challenges. Therefore, the researchers suggest that counselors' role in developing spirituality, emotional awareness, and coping in schools is essential for gaining life meaning and contributing to social development as part of everyday social life. Thus, as facilitators who assist in students' developmental tasks, counselors need to understand comprehensively and encourage students to enhance their spirituality, emotional awareness, and coping abilities, thereby achieving personal-social aspects, including friendships.

The implications of this study in guidance and counseling services extend beyond adding to the literature on spirituality, emotional awareness, and coping in the context of wellness. The study results serve as a basis for developing school services such as classical or group guidance services. Adolescent spirituality needs to be enhanced as a basis for holistic health development. Spirituality also influences how students manage emotions and demonstrate emotional awareness through spiritual experiences. The authors hope students will improve their coping strategies to optimize their developmental tasks.

This study has limitations, including the need for an in-depth exploration of comprehensive aspects of spirituality. Adding moderation and intervening variables is recommended. Future research should incorporate spirituality, emotional awareness, and coping variables, such as gratitude, emotional intelligence, and relevant character strengths. Additionally, preventive interventions through classical or group guidance services should be implemented, ideally with technology. Spirituality-based counseling services can also be developed to address issues like low adolescent coping skills, lack of emotional awareness, and other related problems.

CONCLUSION

Spirituality is a core component in achieving holistic mental health. Adolescent spirituality is essential to study as part of moral and emotional developmental tasks related to emotional awareness and coping. There is a relationship between spirituality, emotional awareness, and coping. Individuals with moderate to high levels of spirituality can have

positive emotional awareness and coping mechanisms, thus avoiding negative issues and maladjustment during adolescence and beyond. This study implies that guidance and counseling teachers must integrate spirituality-based or spirituality-inclusive guidance and counseling services, as they are highly related to emotional awareness and coping.

Acknowledgments

This research was funded by Ahmad Dahlan University for the year 2023 under grant number PD-020/SP3/LPPM-UAD/VIII/2023.

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