

	<b>Jurnal Konseling Komprehensif: Kajian Teori dan Praktik Bimbingan dan Konseling</b>	<b>Vol. 11, No. 1, 2024</b>
	Tersedia di <a href="https://jkk-fkip.ejournal.unsri.ac.id/index.php/JKK">https://jkk-fkip.ejournal.unsri.ac.id/index.php/JKK</a> e-ISSN 2828-2965                      p-ISSN 2548-4311	<b>hlm. 1—8</b>

## Profile of FKIP UNSRI Students Psychological Flexibility During Pandemic

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**Abstract:** This research was motivated by the importance of psychological flexibility in individuals, especially students who were studying during pandemic. This study aimed to get an overview of the psychological flexibility of 2019 batch students at the Faculty of Teaching and Education, Sriwijaya University. Studies on psychological flexibility have been carried out in many countries and researchers have expanded the research to higher education, namely universities. The instrument used was the multidimensional psychological flexibility inventory (MPFI) which consisted of 60 items, but in this study, the researchers only used 30 items. The method used in this research was descriptive quantitative. The results showed that as many as 513 students got an overview of psychological flexibility in the categories in order of very high to very low. The results of this study indicated that UNSRI students already had good psychological flexibility, but there were still students who had a level of psychological flexibility in the low and very low categories.

**Keywords:** Psychological Flexibility, Pandemic Period

### INTRODUCTION

Individuals generally want to achieve an ideal condition, namely welfare. Prosperity is a dream for every individual and is important, Prosperous individuals are individuals who have the potential for good mental health. Kitko (2001) states that well-being includes physical, occupational, social, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional dimensions so that someone who has well-being can achieve happiness and harmony in life.

Some factors influence welfare including economic, spiritual/religious, and psychological factors. Stevenson and Wolfers (2008) states that economic growth in several countries can increase people's happiness or welfare. As for other factors, such as spirituality, presented by Musa (2017) explained that 355 Muslim nurses from nine hospitals in Jordan felt the benefits of spiritual values were closely related to well-being so these nurses were advised to get intervention training in spiritual care to serve their patients, similarly with Abdel-Khalek (2008) in his research examining as many as 424 respondents stated that religiosity is an important element in the life of

the majority of Kuwaiti Muslim employees. Religiosity is significantly and positively correlated with physical health, mental health, and happiness and well-being. Whereas in psychological factors several variables correlate and influence individual well-being, including quality of life (Gangwar & Kiran, 2017), compassion (Raque-Bogdan & Hoffman, 2015), self-efficacy (Alkhatib, 2020; Santos et al, 2014; Siddiqui, 2015), self-esteem (Avci, et al, 2012), hope (Pleeging et al., 2019), life satisfaction (Argan et al., 2018), self-regulation (Fomina et al., 2020), and psychological flexibility (Marshall & Brockman, 2016).

Flexibility has various terms including cognitive flexibility, emotional flexibility, and psychological flexibility. Canas et al (2005) stated that cognitive flexibility is the human ability to adjust cognitive processing strategies to deal with new and unexpected conditions in the environment. Emotional flexibility is the ability to respond in an emotional way that is appropriate to different contexts or another. Emotional flexibility has been linked to psychological health (Beshai, Prentice, and Huang, 2017).

The term psychological flexibility reflects cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and physiological functions (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). Psychological flexibility has to do with increasing the individual ability to recognize and adapt to situational demands (Waugh, Thompson, & Gotlib, 2011), identify and commit to behavior that is by deeply held beliefs (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2016), which all of which function to form a healthy psychology (Twiselton, 2020).

Some experts state about psychological flexibility, including Robinson et al (2010: 18) states that psychological flexibility "flexibility is learning to be aware and accepting of the pain that comes into our life while continuing to pursue what we value." This means that psychological flexibility is learning to be aware of and accept the pain that comes, while on the one hand still making meaningful values from an incident. Meanwhile, Zaheer's view (2015 p. 7) "psychological flexibility specifically defines the process in terms of accepting difficult internal experiences and committing to adaptive behavioral responses". This means that someone who is psychologically flexible can accept difficult internal experiences and is committed to responding adaptively. The view of Hayes et al (2006) that psychological flexibility is "the ability to contact the present moment more fully as a conscious human being, and to change or persist in behavior when doing so serves valued ends". This refers to a psychologically flexible individual who can see situations to change or survive, and have the will and openness to experience difficult or unwanted events including thoughts, feelings, emotions, physical sensations, and memories without getting entangled with them to achieve the goals set. valuable.

Students are students at the higher education level who have different needs to achieve goals through the educational process they are undergoing. By the educational goals outlined in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education Chapter I, Article 1, Paragraph 1 it is stated that the purpose of higher education is to produce students to actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by himself, society, nation, and state.

Students undergo a process of learning and education in lectures, the college years are an important period of development for students making the transition from late adolescence to early adulthood (Arnett, 2000). However, in this developmental range, students are a group that is vulnerable to experiencing psychological disorders (Saleem et al, 2013). This problem is even more concerning with the COVID-19 pandemic because many students experience mental disorders in the learning and education process. The results of research by Son et.al (2020) state that the mental health of students in tertiary institutions is increasingly apprehensive, out of 195

students, 138 ( 71%) showed increased stress and anxiety. These include fear and worry about their health and those of their loved ones (177/195, 91%), difficulty concentrating (173/195, 89%), disturbed sleep patterns (168/195, 86%), decreased social interactions due to physical distancing (167/195, 86%), and increased concern for academic performance (159/195, 82%).

Concerning psychological flexibility, this study aims to analyze an overview of the psychological flexibility of students who experience pandemic times during lectures. Participants are students of the Faculty of Teaching and Education, Sriwijaya University class of 2019. With a general description of psychological flexibility, the level of psychological flexibility of students can be seen.

## METHOD

This research is a quantitative approach that focuses more on results in the form of numbers. The research method used in this research is quantitative descriptive. Through quantitative descriptive research methods, we obtained an overview of the psychological flexibility of the 2019 class of students at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University. A total of 513 students participated in this study. The data collection tool used in this research is the psychological flexibility scale. The psychological scale used is the psychological flexibility scale which was adapted and modified from Rolffs et al. (2018) with the results of psychological flexibility categorization. The instrument used in this research has been validated by the instrument developer, so its validity and reliability have been tested. This instrument is in the form of a questionnaire which has 6 aspects with 30 statements, in each aspect there are 5 statements. The aspects of the statement are acceptance, self as context, contact with the present moment, defusion, values and committed action.

The categorization or level of psychological flexibility of students from each other certainly has differences. The scores obtained by students ranged from 30 to 180 on the Psychological Flexibility scale (Rolffs et al, 2018) with 30 being the lowest score and 180 being the highest score. In this study, students who scored 151-180 on the Psychological Flexibility Scale (Rolffs et al, 2018) were categorized into a very high level of psychological flexibility, students who scored between 111-150 were categorized into a high level of psychological flexibility, students who scored 71-110 is categorized into a low level of psychological flexibility, and students who get a score of 30-70 are categorized into a very low level of psychological flexibility.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research involved 513 participants in the class 2019 students of the Teaching and Education Faculty of Sriwijaya University. The following is a profile of student psychological flexibility which consists of very low, low, high, and very high categories.

**Table 1. Profile of Psychological Flexibility of FKIP UNSRI Undergraduate Students**

<b>Categorization</b>	<b>Psychological Flexibility</b>
Very high	138 (26,9%)
High	324 (63,2%)
Low	50 (9,7%)
Very low	1 (0,2%)
<b>Total</b>	513 (100%)

The general description of the results of distributing the psychological flexibility questionnaire for UNSRI undergraduate students class of 2019 is that most of them are in the high category, namely 63.2%, which means students can change or survive in conditions of behavior by strongly held values, followed by a very high category of 26.9% which means that students are very able to change or survive in conditions of behavior by the values that are firmly held, the low category is 9.7% which means that students are less able to change or survive in conditions of behavior by the values that are firmly held, and very low, namely 0.2%, which means that students are very less able to change or survive in conditions of behavior by deeply held values.

The finding of 63.2% in the high category and 26.9% in the very high category when referring to the statement of Kashdan and Rottenberg (2010) shows that the majority of FKIP UNSRI students can adapt to various situations, are aware, open, and behave according to values that are believed, besides that students who are psychologically flexible will more easily adapt to their work environment later (Novaes, Ferreira, & Valentini, 2018). This shows that most students have good psychological flexibility so having good psychological flexibility will have an impact on life satisfaction and good mental health (Lucas and Moore, 2019). Psychological flexibility also has a role in increasing well-being and reducing psychological stress, when it is related to the research by Browne et al (2022) that psychological flexibility has an important role in reducing psychological stress and increasing well-being in the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

However, if you look at the findings in the low category of 9.7% and very low of 0.2%, it shows that there are still some students who need help to improve or develop psychological flexibility. Several studies have shown that someone who does not have psychological flexibility is prone to experiencing several problems and disorders (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010), including depression (Montiel et al. 2016), eating disorders (Masuda, Price, Anderson, & Wendell, 2010), emotional higher (Nevanpera et al, 2013), psychological stress (Wiggs and Drake, 2016), and anxiety (Arch, et al. 2012). These conditions need attention and become part of the responsibility of the educational community to help students develop psychological flexibility. The development of psychological flexibility when students' participation in Education and Learning has a good role in developing psychological flexibility. As found by Kirca and Eksi (2020) that psychoeducation-based interventions affect the psychological flexibility of students, it is hoped that the educational community can provide the best service in the form of psychological education in learning and educational activities.

The development of psychological flexibility when students are attending higher education have a role in their happiness when they are working later. Bi and Li's (2021) research shows that adjustment to college and subjective well-being differ significantly in the psychological flexibility profile, where individuals who have high psychological flexibility adjust to campus life and have the highest well-being, while individuals who have low psychological flexibility adjust themselves with the worst campus life and have the lowest well-being. In addition, individuals who have good psychological flexibility are basically better able to cope with demands at work (Novaes, Ferreira, & Valentini, 2018), emotional demands, and fatigue (Onwezen, van Veldhoven, & Biron, 2014). This means that psychological flexibility is one of the studies that can contribute to the science of Guidance and Counseling both in theory and practice. Psychological flexibility has six aspects, namely acceptance, contact with the present moment, self-context, defusion, values, and committed actions. These six aspects have a role in that BK science can be flexible towards the progress and development of science and technology by accepting, filtering according to believed values, and applying that knowledge.

As for students whose goal of teacher education is to become educators, psychological flexibility is an important attitude for educators to have. Psychologically flexible educators can accept their conditions, co-workers, leaders, and students. In addition, educators can capture values according to beliefs, norms, and regulations so that in the process of implementing science, it can be carried out properly and have benefits for the surrounding environment.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Results of distributing the psychological flexibility questionnaire to FKIP UNSRI undergraduate students class of 2019 shows that it is more dominant in the high category. This shows that FKIP UNSRI students have good psychological health in the pandemic era. However, there are still students who are in the low and very low categories, so it is important to increase psychological flexibility in students who are in the low and very low categories.

The research recommendations are aimed at several UNSRI parties, such as academic supervisors who can better understand the importance of students' psychological health. Academic supervisors utilize academic guidance not only related to student learning development but also discussing students' psychological issues. Apart from that, we continue to upgrade ourselves following the trend of improving students' learning, personal, social and academic fields so that it is hoped that positive values will be given to students.

Counseling institutions on campus, both the Guidance and Counseling Study Program and the Career Development Center, continue to provide soft skill improvement programs to students, especially students at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University. With the improvement of soft skills that are often provided by the UNSRI Career Development Center, it is hoped that students can be put to good use in order to maintain stable psychological health, especially students' psychological flexibility.

Future researchers can examine psychological flexibility in more depth. Factors that influence psychological flexibility need to be researched so that it will be more comprehensive after understanding what factors influence psychological flexibility. Psychological interventions also need to be researched further to see what interventions are appropriate for increasing psychological flexibility. Apart from that, for deeper studies, future researchers can examine psychological flexibility at the Primary and Secondary Education levels so that it is not only limited to Higher Education.

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