

## Psychological well-being in caregivers of the Surakarta Orphanage (PAKYM)

### *Psychological well-being* pada pengasuh Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim (PAKYM) Surakarta

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#### ARTICLE INFO:

Received: 2025-04-10

Revised: 2025-05-01

Accepted: 2025-05-05

#### Keywords:

Psychological well-being, caregivers, orphanages

#### Kata Kunci:

Kesejahteraan psikologis, pengasuh, panti asuhan

#### ABSTRACT

Research on psychological well-being of orphanage caregivers has not been widely studied, even though a caregiver needs good psychological well-being to face the challenges of caring for children. This creates a population gap, where research on psychological well-being in caregivers has not been widely studied. So this study aims to determine the description of psychological well-being in caregivers of the Muhammadiyah Family Orphanage (PAKYM) Surakarta. This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach involving three orphanage caregivers who have been caring for children for more than a year, are mothers, and do not have other jobs besides being caregivers. The research data collection technique used semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation. The data analysis used is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The results of the study showed that 2 out of 3 caregivers experienced psychological problems. While 1 other caregiver was able to enjoy her role as a caregiver. New findings in this study are the mastery of personal emotional conditions and religiosity of orphanage caregivers.

#### ABSTRACT

Penelitian *psychological well-being* tentang pengasuh panti asuhan belum banyak diteliti, padahal seorang pengasuh membutuhkan kesejahteraan psikologis yang baik untuk menghadapi tantangan dalam mengasuh. Hal ini memunculkan *population gap*, dimana penelitian tentang kesejahteraan psikologis pada pengasuh belum banyak diteliti. Sehingga penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui gambaran kesejahteraan psikologis pada pengasuh Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM) Surakarta. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi yang melibatkan tiga pengasuh panti asuhan yang sudah mengasuh lebih dari satu tahun, merupakan seorang ibu, dan tidak memiliki pekerjaan lain selain menjadi pengasuh. Teknik pengambilan data penelitian menggunakan wawancara semi terstruktur, observasi non partisipan, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data yang digunakan adalah *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 2 dari 3 pengasuh mengalami permasalahan psikologis. Sedangkan 1 pengasuh lainnya mampu menikmati perannya sebagai pengasuh. Temuan baru dalam penelitian ini adalah penguasaan kondisi emosi pribadi dan religiositas pengasuh panti asuhan.

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**How to cite:** Mahadiva, R., & Hardew, A. K. (2025). Psychological well-being in caregivers of the Surakarta Orphanage (PAKYM). *Jurnal Psikologi Tabularasa*, 20(1), 43-60. doi: <http://doi.org/10.26905/jpt.v20.i1.15453>

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Individuals who are capable of being independent, managing their environment, realizing their potential, forming positive relationships, setting clear life goals, and accepting both their strengths and weaknesses are considered to have high psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989). Ryff explained that psychological well-being consists of six main aspects. When these aspects are fulfilled, individuals are likely to experience a high level of psychological well-being (Ifdil et al., 2020). According to (Ryff, 1989), the six aspects include: (1) Self-Acceptance, which involves recognizing and accepting oneself and one's past, having a positive view of oneself, and acknowledging both strengths and weaknesses; (2) Positive Relations with Others, which refers to the ability to form close, empathetic, and affectionate relationships, as well as to support and guide others; (3) Autonomy, where a person is able to act independently, regulate their behavior, and make judgments based on personal standards rather than external approval; (4) Environmental Mastery, defined as the ability to shape or adapt the environment to suit one's psychological needs, participate actively in life, and use opportunities effectively; (5) Purpose in Life, which means having clear goals and a sense of direction, being focused, and understanding the meaning of one's life; and (6) Personal Growth, which involves recognizing one's potential, continuing to grow, striving for development, and being prepared to face life's challenges over time. Psychological well-being refers to the mental state in which individuals maintain a positive perception of themselves and others, make independent decisions, effectively manage their environment, live with purpose, and are committed to ongoing self-development (Ryff, 1989).

The initial stage of the study was carried out at the Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM) in Surakarta through interviews with three active caregivers. PAKYM was selected as the research site due to its unique approach compared to typical orphanages. PAKYM implements a family-based system, which create closer interactions between caregivers and foster children. This system also requires caregivers to manage children of varying ages and behavioral traits. According to informant S, the high number of foster children posed challenges in supervision, and she often felt emotionally hurt when children responded rudely to her guidance. She also noted that some children had behavioral issues at school, leading to frequent calls from school authorities, particularly for cases like truancy, which left her feeling disheartened and disappointed. Informant AKD shared that she had sought help from a psychologist, feeling overwhelmed and emotionally burdened by her circumstances. She described her emotional state as difficult to articulate, which she believed significantly impacted her psychological well-being. One contributing factor was the strain of balancing her responsibilities at the orphanage with personal family issues. These experiences reflect a contrast to the psychological well-being aspect of environmental mastery, which refers to an individual's ability to shape their surroundings to meet their psychological needs. On the other hand, informant SN showed greater acceptance of her role, despite having experienced emotional distress due to interactions with foster children. She expressed a general sense of

comfort and satisfaction with her work, viewing challenges such as school-related issues as part of her routine. Her perspective aligns with the self-acceptance aspect of psychological well-being, which involves maintaining a positive attitude toward oneself.

From the preliminary findings, the researcher identified that informants S and AKD were experiencing relatively low levels of psychological well-being. This condition appeared to be influenced by the challenges they faced in their roles as caregivers, compounded by personal family issues. In contrast, informant SN reported feeling content and comfortable with her current life and expressed satisfaction in her role as a caregiver at the orphanage. This contrast in experiences highlights a noticeable gap where two out of the three caregivers showed signs of psychological strain related to their caregiving duties and family-related stressors. Research specifically examining the psychological well-being of orphanage caregivers remains limited, even though caregivers require stable mental health to effectively handle the demands of their role. Therefore, studying the psychological well-being of caregivers in orphanages is both relevant and necessary.

This research is important because children in orphanages often lack parental involvement. Therefore, the caregivers assume the parental role in these children's lives. It is essential to examine the psychological well-being of orphanage caregivers, as their sense of comfort and well-being directly influences the quality of care they provide. When caregivers feel mentally and emotionally supported, they are more likely to deliver quality care, which is foundational for the children's development and growth (Ngewa, 2021). Without this research, the psychological well-being of caregivers remains unclear. Stress experienced by caregivers can have detrimental effects on the care they provide—greater stress leads to lower levels of supportive care (Amalia et al., 2022). From a theoretical perspective, this study can offer valuable insights into the psychological well-being of orphanage caregivers, which can inform interventions aimed at improving their mental health. On a practical level, the findings may assist orphanage managers in addressing issues related to the caregivers' psychological well-being.

According to research by Harjanti (2021), orphanages often face an imbalance between the number of caregivers and the number of foster children. This disparity contributes to behavioral problems among the children, particularly in their interactions with teachers and peers. The study also highlighted that caregivers in orphanages experience social conditions that feel unsafe and lack privacy, which can lead to psychological challenges affecting their well-being. Additionally, the psychological well-being of caregivers directly impacts the psychological health of the foster children. When caregivers maintain good psychological well-being, it can positively influence the children, fostering support and aiding their development (A. M. Saputra et al., 2023). The caregiver-to-child ratio also influences the effectiveness of care, and a poor balance can result in the unmet social and psychological needs of the children (Damayanti & Rihhandini, 2021). While several studies have focused on the psychological conditions of foster children in orphanages, researchers argue that attention

to the psychological well-being of caregivers is equally crucial to prevent negative impacts on caregiving. Therefore, examining the psychological well-being of orphanage caregivers is of significant importance.

The novelty of this study lies in the choice of informants. While previous studies have focused on foster children in orphanages as research subjects, this study instead examines the psychological well-being of orphanage caregivers. For example, research by Hidayat & Agung (2021) explored the psychological well-being of adolescent children living in orphanages. Similarly, studies by Ningsih & Hazim (2024) that focused on adolescents aged 11-18 years, Elvinawanty et al. (2021) that focused on adolescents aged 12-18, and Lestari et al. (2024) who also used adolescents as informants. This highlights a gap in the existing research, as the psychological well-being of caregivers has not been extensively studied.

This study aims to explore the psychological well-being of caregivers. Consequently, the research question posed is, “What is the description of psychological well-being among caregivers at Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM) in Surakarta?” The objective of this study is to provide a detailed description of the psychological well-being of the caregivers at Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM) Surakarta.

## **2. METHOD**

The research employed a qualitative method utilizing a phenomenological approach. This approach is a type of qualitative research that emphasizes understanding, exploring, and interpreting the meaning behind experiences or events as they are lived by individuals in specific contexts, while minimizing researcher bias (Harahap, 2020). Informants for this study were selected based on these criteria: they had to be actively working as caregivers, reside at Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM) Surakarta, have at least one year of caregiving experience, be a mother, and have no other occupation besides caregiving. Mothers who are also employed may face challenges in fulfilling their maternal roles due to overlapping responsibilities, which can negatively affect their psychological well-being (Hartati, 2024). Furthermore, women often experience a heavier psychological burden than men, particularly when they are not engaged in paid employment (Alim et al., 2023).

The data in this study were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The interview method employed was semi-structured interviews, which involve guiding conversations using a set of open-ended questions that allow for the spontaneous emergence of new questions or ideas, while remaining focused on the main topic (Harahap, 2020). Additional spontaneous questions were also asked when necessary. The interview guide was developed based on Ryff’s theory of psychological well-being. For the observational method, non-participant observation was used—this approach involves the researcher observing the informants without directly engaging in their daily activities (Hasanah, 2016). The observation was recorded using a narrative description technique, which involves detailing behaviors in their actual context to capture specific actions more

clearly (Ardiantama et al., 2017). Documentation in this research included WhatsApp story screenshots and photographs taken during the study. Supporting a study's findings with documentation enhances its credibility and trustworthiness (Ratnaningtyas et al., 2021).

This research utilizes Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as its analytical method. IPA is a qualitative approach designed to investigate how individuals make sense of their personal life experiences. It is grounded in phenomenology, as it centers on exploring lived experiences in depth (Smith et al., 2009). The analysis process following the IPA approach involves several stages: (1) repeatedly reading the interview transcripts, (2) making initial exploratory notes, (3) identifying emergent themes, (4) formulating superordinate themes, (5) examining connections between themes, (6) moving on to analyze the next participant, and (7) identifying patterns across all participants (Saragih & Alfaruqy, 2023). To ensure the validity of the findings, the researcher applied both data triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted through interviews with both the informants and a key figure which is the head of the orphanage. Meanwhile, method triangulation involved combining interviews, observations, and documentation.

### 3. RESULTS

The informants in this study are mothers who are currently active in their roles as caregivers and have been providing care for over a year. All three informants reside at Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM) Surakarta and do not engage in any employment outside of their caregiving duties. Below is the data on the informants involved in the research on psychological well-being among caregivers at Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM) Surakarta.

**Table.1** Data of Caregivers as the Informant in Psychological Well-Being Research at Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM) Surakarta

| Name | Age | Education         | Parenting Duration | Gender | Frequency Number of Interviews |
|------|-----|-------------------|--------------------|--------|--------------------------------|
| S    | 49  | Middle school     | 27 years           | Female | 2 times                        |
| SN   | 35  | Bachelor's degree | 5 years            | Female | 2 times                        |
| AKD  | 26  | Bachelor's degree | 3 years            | Female | 2 times                        |

The informants were three females with different educational backgrounds and ages. Informant S was 49 years old with a junior high school education, informant SN was 35 years old with a bachelor's degree in mathematics, and informant AKD was 26 years old with a bachelor's degree in informatics.

**Table.2** Main Theme and Superordinate Theme

| NO | MAIN THEME                           | SUPERORDINATE THEME  |
|----|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1  | Self-acceptance                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive feelings of being a caregiver</li> <li>- Acceptance of past life</li> </ul>  |
| 2  | Positive relationships with others   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trust with others</li> <li>- Closeness with other caregivers</li> <li>- Feeling supported and accepted</li> <li>- Empathy toward foster children</li> </ul> |
| 3  | Autonomy                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decision making</li> <li>- Self-evaluation</li> </ul>   |
| 4  | Environmental mastery                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Life management</li> <li>- Environmental conditions</li> </ul>  |
| 5  | Purpose in life                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Goals and direction of life</li> </ul>  |
| 6  | Personal growth                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-development efforts</li> <li>- Challenges in life</li> </ul>   |
| 7  | Mastery of personal emotional states | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Problems in parenting</li> <li>- Emotional</li> </ul>   |
| 8  | Religiosity                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remembering God</li> </ul>  |

Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM) Surakarta operates a system that differs somewhat from typical orphanages. True to its name, this orphanage adopts a family-based model. It is staffed by three caregivers who each lead a family unit. Each unit includes a husband and wife, their biological children, and a group of foster children (approximately 11) in each group. The foster children in each group vary in age, ranging from elementary school students to those in college. This orphanage specifically serves boys who are either orphans or come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In this caregiving structure, the wife takes on the role of the primary caregiver, similar to a housewife, while the husband is employed outside the orphanage. Such a living arrangement influences the psychological well-being of the caregivers. Various aspects can be used to assess the psychological well-being of these orphanage caregivers.

### Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance is the ability of an individual to accept everything about themselves, both advantages and disadvantages (Nihaya et al., 2022). Self-acceptance can be described as a positive feeling of being a caregiver and accepting past life. As expressed by the informant:

*"...Ya harus diterima karena ini pilihanku hehehe kek begitu kan. Kalau pilihanku yang yo sekarang prinsipku kayak ya udah lah, jalanin aja lah mbak. Karena menyesali masa lalu itu kayak hanya membuat penyesalan banyak ngono loh... ..Sekarang udah kayak bisa menerima semuanya. Sekarang udah bisa kayak legowo, sudah bisa menempatkan sendiri..."* (AKD:62,231)

*"...Yes, I have to accept it because this is my choice, hehehe, like that. If it's my choice now, my principle is like, okay, just go with it, sis. Because regretting the past only creates a lot of regrets, you know... ...Now I can accept everything. Now I can be like, I can accept it, I can put it in my own place..." (AKD: 62,231)*

*"...Sekarang saya melihat mereka puas dan senang. Dia merasa tanggung jawabnya enjoy..." (SO)*

*"...Now I see them satisfied and happy. He feels his responsibility is enjoyable..." (SO)*

Positive emotions are reflected in the informants' enjoyment of their roles as caregivers at the orphanage. The head of the orphanage, as a significant other, mentioned that he observed the caregivers feeling content, happy, and fulfilling their duties with enthusiasm. In terms of accepting their past, the female informants demonstrated a mindset grounded in acceptance and resilience. They expressed that embracing their current lives is more meaningful than dwelling on past regrets. The informants also showed self-awareness and acceptance of their personal limitations. For instance, informant S acknowledged her challenges in parenting, noting that for the past six years she has raised the foster children without a husband. As a result, she feels the need to take on both maternal and paternal roles for the children in her care.

### Positive Relationships with Others

Positive relationships with others such as trust, warmth, and familiarity can affect a person's psychological well-being (Deviana et al., 2023). Positive relationships with others can be indicated by trust, closeness to others, feelings of support and acceptance, and empathy for foster children. According what the informant said:

*"...Pernah, biasanya anak itu menyendiri. Kelihatan sedih itu menyendiri. Ibu tanya, kamu ngapain? Kok sendiri nggak sama teman-teman? Ada apa? Coba cerita ke ibu. Kadang ya mau cerita, kadang nggak..." (S:211)*

*"...Yes, usually the child is alone. He looks sad when he is alone. Mother asks, what are you doing? Why are you alone and not with your friends? What's wrong? Tell me. Sometimes he wants to tell me, sometimes he doesn't..." (S:211)*

The informants share a close bond with fellow caregivers, marked by frequent interactions and open communication, such as regularly exchanging stories. This closeness becomes especially evident when a foster child faces difficulties, as the caregivers work together to find solutions. According to the head of the orphanage, who serves as a significant other, the caregivers maintain strong relationships with one another, supported by a shared sense of solidarity and team spirit. The informants also display deep empathy and affection toward the foster children, shown by their attentive responses when a child appears upset.

They provide guidance by offering advice when mistakes are made and enforcing appropriate consequences when rules are broken, reflecting their ability to mentor and lead others. However, all the informants admitted to struggling with trust toward the foster children, often due to experiences of dishonesty. They also frequently receive reports of behavioral issues at school, which leads to feelings of stress and a sense of failure in their role as educators.

### **Autonomy**

Autonomy in a person can be characterized by being able to regulate behavior, be independent, have self-principles and have the ability to evaluate oneself (Deviana et al., 2023). A person can regulate their behavior, be independent or independent, and can evaluate themselves based on their personal standards without seeking approval from others. Different from what the informant expressed:

*"...Oh iya, masih. Masih dengan teman-teman yang lain. Kayak ibu punya masalah apa itu tetap kami bicarakan..." (S:285)*

*"...Oh yeah, still, with other friends. Like, if I have any problem, we still talk about it..." (S:285)*

The three informants still seek approval from others in making decisions. Two of the three caregivers are very dependent on their husband's decisions, while the other caregiver relies on her friend's decisions. Means that all informants still need approval from others when making decisions. Regardless, the three informants are able to evaluate themselves by regretting certain behaviors they have done.

### **Environmental Mastery**

Environmental mastery is indicated by an individual's ability to determine, create, or organize an environment that suits their needs (Aryatiningrum & Satiningsih, 2023). Feeling comfortable with environmental conditions and being able to control foster children are things that influence a person's mastery of the environment. As stated by the informant:

*"...Kalau masih di area panti kan masih bisa. Tapi kalau di luar kan udah bukan jangkauan kita..." (AKD:299)*

*"...If it's still in the orphanage area, it's still possible. But out from it, it's no longer within our reach..." (AKD:299)*

The informants' sense of environmental mastery is shaped by how they manage their daily lives and respond to their surroundings. Each caregiver demonstrates a different level of control in this area. Informant AKD expressed that she is able to manage and guide her foster children effectively within the orphanage but feels limited when it comes to influencing their

behavior outside, due to her restricted involvement beyond the orphanage environment. A limitation influenced by her demographic circumstances. In contrast, informant S reported feeling distressed when conflicts arise with foster children. She often experiences emotional pain, sadness, and ongoing worry when foster children encounter problems. Meanwhile, informant SN continues to offer guidance and advice to her foster children, even when they repeatedly make the same mistakes.

### Purpose in Life

Purpose in life, having a feeling that there is a purpose and meaning in life is marked by understanding the purpose of life, being directed, and being sure of the purpose of life (Ryff, 1989). As expressed by the informant:

*"...Ya, mengalir saja gitu lho mbak. Dinikmati, sudah nikah, fokusnya jadi ibu rumah tangga... ..intinya berusaha bersyukur. Menjalani apa yang ada. Berusaha dinikmati..." (SN:244,252)*

*"...Yes, just flow like that, sis. Enjoying it, being married, focus on being a housewife... ..The point is trying to be grateful. Living with what is there. Trying to enjoy it..." (SN:244,252)*

Based on the research results, informants showed that they did not have a clear purpose in life, were not directed, and were not sure about their purpose in life. Informants held the principle of going through what happened with the flow. Apart from worldly things, they worked as caregivers with the intention and purpose of worshiping God (Allah).

### Personal Growth

Personal growth refers to the awareness of one's potential, the ability to keep evolving, maintain continuous development, and adapt to challenges across various life stages (Ryff, 1989). This growth can manifest through efforts toward self-improvement, such as learning new skills or navigating life's difficulties. As expressed by the informant:

*"...Paling berkembangnya sebatas ilmu aja. Kalau berkembang sebatas skill, life skill gitu kayaknya belum deh..." (AKD:319)*

*"...The development is limited to knowledge only. If it is limited to skills, life skills for example, I don't think so..." (AKD:319)*

*"...tantangannya dalam mengatasi anak yang dalam tanda kutip berkelainan nakal, tantangannya itu, tantangan yang terberatnya..." (SO)*

*"...the challenge in dealing with children who, in quotation marks, have a naughty disorder, that challenge is the hardest challenge..." (SO)*

The personal growth of the orphanage caregivers primarily revolves around gaining knowledge related to child care and education. Beyond that, the informants have demonstrated the ability to navigate challenges throughout different phases of their lives. One of the most difficult obstacles, as noted by the head of the orphanage (a significant other), is managing the behavioral issues of foster children. Despite this, the informants approach these challenges with patience, sincerity, and a willingness to go with the flow. They handle a range of issues, including resolving conflicts between foster children at school and in the community, addressing disputes among roommates, adhering to the rules of the orphanage, and adjusting during the early stages of their caregiving roles. Although they may struggle with low self-confidence, the informants have shown resilience in confronting life's challenges.

### **Mastery of Personal Emotional States**

One of the new findings in this study is that the psychological well-being of orphanage caregivers can be seen from the aspect of their personal emotional control. Foster children often experience emotional challenges caused by the loss of parental figures (Ardli & Luayyin, 2024). However, it turns out that a caregiver also experiences emotional control challenges in his life, as expressed by the informant:

*"...Nek dikatakan stres saya yakin pengasuh itu juga banyak tertekan. Karena menghadapi anak seperti itu hampir 24 jam dan hampir tidak istirahat. Dan anak kadang-kadang masalahnya saling bergantian. Saya yakin kalau tidak ada stres tidak mungkin..." (SO)*

*"...If it's about stress, I'm sure the nanny is also under a lot of stress. Because she deals with a child like that almost 24 hours a day and almost no rest. And sometimes the child's problems take turns. I'm sure if there was no stress, it would be impossible..." (SO)*

The emotions felt by the informants are largely influenced by the daily challenges they encounter with their foster children. For example, informant S shared that she felt hurt and uncomfortable when her foster child became difficult to manage. Similarly, informant AKD recounted a particularly painful experience when a foster child acted disrespectfully toward her. According to the head of the orphanage, who serves as a significant other, conflicts between caregivers and foster children are common, especially when foster children repeatedly break the rules despite prior warnings. He noted that caregivers often experience stress due to their constant, nearly 24-hour interaction with the children and the continuous cycle of issues they must address.

*"...Sekali-kali di sekolah itu bikin masalah, ibu tidak senang kalau anak-anak bikin masalah dan dipanggil ke BP. Ibu mau dipanggil, tapi kalau anak-anak ada prestasi..." (S:291)*

*"...Once they cause trouble in school, I'm not happy if the children cause trouble and are called to the BP. I'm willing to be called, but if the children have achievements..." (S:291)*

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Based on the informants' statements, it can be concluded that the caregivers encountered various social challenges during their caregiving roles. Informant S mentioned that she was frequently called to the school due to issues caused by foster children. Additionally, the head of the orphanage noted that the orphanage management was often directly involved in addressing and resolving these problems.

*"...sekarang kan adalah beberapa orang tua yang kalau ada masalah, langsung, ah ngomongannya kadang nggak enak..." (SN:306)*

*"...nowadays, there are some parents who, if there is a problem, immediately, ah, sometimes their words are not nice..." (SN:306)*

According to informant SN, challenges in caregiving also involve the parents or relatives of the foster children. Some of these children still have family members who, due to financial hardship, have entrusted them to the orphanage. However, when caregivers attempt to discipline or guide the children, the children sometimes complain to their parents or relatives. This often leads to parental interference in matters between the caregiver and the foster child. Informant SN explained that the actions taken by caregivers are intended solely for the child's education and well-being, but some parents respond negatively and express their disagreement through harsh or unpleasant words.

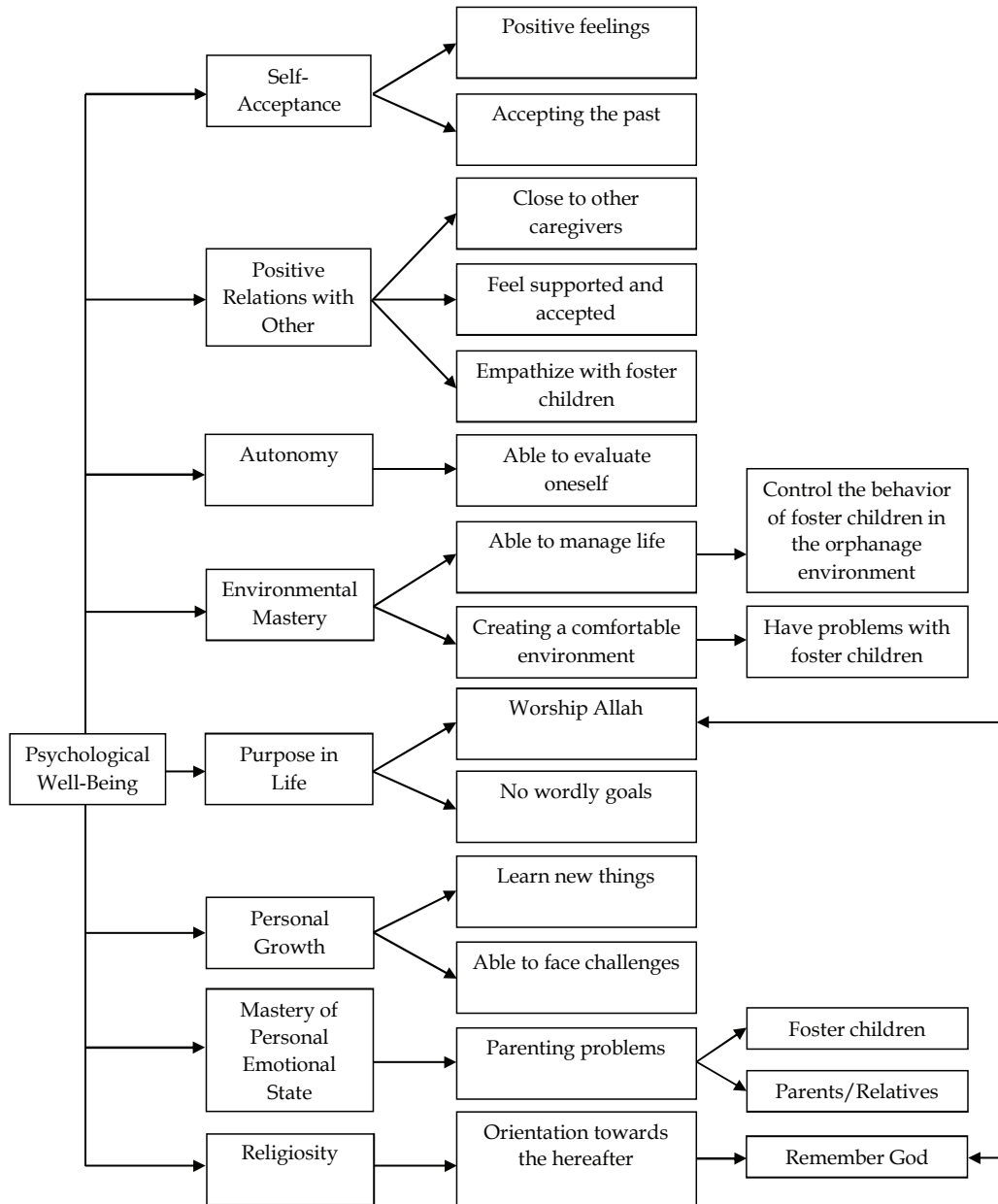
### Religiosity

This study also revealed the aspect of religiosity is a new finding that can be used to see the psychological well-being of orphanage caregivers. Based on research conducted by Munir et al. (2022), religiosity plays a role in shaping worker performance. High religiosity can affect the comfort of caregivers and enjoy their work, as expressed by the informant:

*"...beribadah dekat dengan masjid. Kegiatan keagamaan kan juga ibaratnya banyak gitu loh mbak. Jadi emang kita enggak jauh-jauh dari kegiatan itu. Jadi itu yang membuat saya nyaman..." (AKD:48)*

*"...worshipping close to the mosque. There are also many religious activities, like so many, sis. So, we are not far from those activities. That's what makes me comfortable..." (AKD:48)*

According to informant AKD, the abundance of religious activities and the convenience of performing worship made her feel at ease in her role as a caregiver at the orphanage. Meanwhile, informant SN described her experience as a caregiver as a blessing from God, which encouraged her to keep learning to appreciate and find contentment in her life.



Psychological Well-Being Dynamics Chart in Caregivers at  
 Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM) Surakarta

#### 4. DISCUSSION

This study aims to explore and describe the psychological well-being of female caregivers at Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM) Surakarta. The findings indicate that psychological well-being among the caregivers can be understood through several key aspects. One such aspect is self-acceptance, which is reflected in their positive attitudes

toward their caregiving roles and their ability to accept their past experiences. Individuals with strong self-acceptance tend to acknowledge and embrace themselves across various life dimensions (Sayyidah et al., 2022).. For these caregivers, self-acceptance is also shaped by the presence of social support, particularly from their partners. This is consistent with the study by Satra & Muarifah (2024), which found that family and peer support play a significant role in enhancing psychological well-being. Another important component is the ability to form positive relationships with others. This is evident in the caregivers' close bonds with their peers, mutual trust, shared emotional support, and empathy toward foster children. These close relationships are a source of social support that contributes to emotional resilience and well-being, as supported by Leuwol et al. (2023), who emphasized the importance of social support in improving mental health. One of the caregiver's primary responsibilities is to ensure that the foster children do not feel neglected or isolated, which can be achieved by offering guidance and attentiveness (Zain et al., 2022). Expressing empathy is an essential way for caregivers to show care and affection. This also includes the ability to manage and guide foster children, including the implementation of appropriate consequences when rules are broken. Applying consequences or discipline is seen as an important strategy to help foster children learn from their mistakes and discourage repeat behavior (Ramadita et al., 2023).

In aspect of autonomy, the study found that while the caregivers were capable of self-evaluation, they often refrained from making independent decisions. This tendency stemmed from their strong interpersonal connections, leading them to frequently involve others in the decision-making process. As for environmental mastery, the caregivers' ability to manage their surroundings was shaped by how well they handled daily life and adapted to their environment. Effective environmental mastery begins with self-adjustment, which is a dynamic process aimed at aligning personal behavior with environmental demands (Hasanuddin & Khairuddin, 2021). The caregivers' primary life goal is rooted in spiritual devotion, which means their motivations are not driven by material desires. This spiritual orientation encourages them to perform their caregiving duties with enthusiasm and sincerity. This aligns with the findings of Shabrina & Hartini (2021), who noted that individuals with a strong sense of spirituality tend to interpret life more meaningfully and, as a result, exhibit higher psychological well-being. In terms of personal growth, the development of the caregivers is influenced by their willingness to grow and their ability to face life's challenges. Those who actively pursue self-improvement and embrace new experiences demonstrate personal growth. According to Alawiyah et al. (2022), individuals who recognize themselves as continually evolving and open to learning are considered to have good personal development. Moreover, self-confidence is reflected in the capacity to confront difficulties and find effective solutions (Zain et al., 2022).

This study discovers new insights, highlighting that the psychological well-being of orphanage caregivers is not only shaped by established aspects like self-acceptance and positive relationships, but also significantly influenced by emotional regulation and religiosity. Caregivers' emotional states are heavily affected by the daily challenges they face

with foster children. Difficult behavior and the struggle to manage these children often lead to caregiver stress. Research by (Gina & Fitriani, 2020) shows that maternal stress can negatively impact parenting quality. Therefore, it is essential for caregivers to possess effective emotional regulation skills. As noted by (Marliani et al., 2020), strong emotional regulation helps to reduce stress and enhances overall psychological well-being. Children in orphanages often lack parental attention and affection, which can lead to delinquent behavior (Karlina, 2020). Such behavior not only affects the children themselves but also impacts the caregivers, who may experience feelings of shame and disappointment. This is consistent with findings from Mahesha et al. (2024), which indicate that family members often feel embarrassed or let down by problematic behavior exhibited by adolescents. In addition to internal stressors, caregivers may also face social challenges, particularly when parents or relatives of foster children do not support the caregivers' efforts. In such situations, support from the broader community is crucial. Social support can play a valuable role, especially in providing informational assistance when individuals struggle to resolve problems on their own (Hasanuddin & Khairuddin, 2021). Religiosity also emerged as a key factor in supporting the psychological well-being of caregivers. The practice of remembering and connecting with God provides a sense of peace and fulfillment in their work. As supported by Fahira et al. (2024), individuals with strong religiosity are more capable of interpreting life events in a meaningful way, which in turn enhances their well-being. Additionally, Munir et al. (2022) emphasized that religiosity positively influences behavior by motivating individuals to perform their responsibilities well and equipping them with resilience in the face of difficulties.

The findings of this study differ from those of previous research, as this study specifically explores the psychological well-being of orphanage caregivers, a topic that has received limited attention. While earlier studies have primarily focused on the psychological well-being of foster children within orphanages, this research highlights the importance of also addressing the mental and emotional health of the caregivers themselves. The results demonstrate that caregivers' psychological well-being is a critical aspect that should not be overlooked and deserves focused support, particularly from orphanage administrators and management.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the research findings, the psychological well-being of caregivers at Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM) Surakarta can be described through eight key aspects. Notably, two aspects stand out: first, the caregivers' lack of worldly ambitions, as their primary goal is to worship Allah, and second, the mastery over their personal emotional conditions, which is influenced by the challenges they face while caring for the children and managing their own emotions. Additionally, religiosity plays a significant role, with caregivers demonstrating a strong orientation towards the afterlife through practices such as remembering God. This study shows that the caregivers' sense of purpose in life and their religiosity is deeply interconnected. In conclusion, the psychological well-being of caregivers

at Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM) Surakarta is primarily shaped by their religiosity and their ability to manage their personal emotional states.

## SUGGESTIONS

Limitation of this study is the relatively small number of references to prior research, mainly due to the limited existing studies focusing on the psychological well-being of orphanage caregivers. Despite this, the findings of this study have important implications for enhancing the support and services provided to orphanage caregivers. It is crucial to pay attention to the psychological well-being of caregivers, as their mental health can significantly influence their performance in caring for children. One potential solution is to offer counseling services within orphanages, allowing caregivers to easily seek psychological support. Furthermore, it is essential for caregivers to establish clear life goals, as having a sense of purpose can serve as a motivating factor, helping to alleviate the challenges and responsibilities they face in their caregiving roles.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher would like to express gratitude to both parents and all individuals who have provided unwavering support and assistance throughout the course of this research. Special thanks are extended to the caregivers of Panti Asuhan Keluarga Yatim Muhammadiyah (PAKYM), who generously agreed to participate as research informants, as well as to the management of the Surakarta Orphanage (PAKYM) for granting permission to carry out this study. The researcher is also deeply thankful to the supervising lecturer for their invaluable guidance and support throughout the research process, ensuring its completion.

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