

Exploration of The Meaning of Social Support on Psychological Well-Being Based on a Qualitative Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

Psychological well-being is an important aspect of human life related to individuals' ability to accept themselves, build positive relationships, establish life purposes, and cope adaptively with various challenges. In social life, psychological well-being is influenced by several factors, one of which is social support obtained from family, friends, and the surrounding environment. Social support functions as a source of emotional strength that helps individuals reduce stress, enhance self-confidence, and foster feelings of safety and appreciation. However, the meaning of social support may vary among individuals depending on their life experiences. This study aims to explore the meaning of social support on psychological well-being based on individuals' subjective experiences. This research employed a qualitative approach using a phenomenological method to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with purposively selected participants based on their experiences in receiving social support. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, focusing on emerging experiential themes. The findings indicate that social support is interpreted as emotional care, tangible assistance, motivation, and the presence of others who provide comfort and security. Social support contributes to psychological well-being by fostering feelings of appreciation, increasing self-confidence, reducing psychological distress, and strengthening individuals' capacity to cope with life challenges.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Psychological well-being is one of the essential aspects of human life, which relates to an individual's ability to accept oneself, establish positive relationships with others, have a sense of purpose in life, and cope adaptively with various life challenges. In the

context of modern life, which is characterized by increasing social, academic, and occupational demands, psychological well-being becomes a crucial aspect to be considered. Individuals with good psychological well-being tend to be capable of managing stress, maintaining healthy social

relationships, and demonstrating an optimistic attitude in life. Conversely, low psychological well-being is often characterized by anxiety, stress, feelings of isolation, and life dissatisfaction [1].

One important factor that plays a role in enhancing psychological well-being is social support. Social support refers to assistance provided by others in emotional, informational, and instrumental forms, aimed at helping individuals cope with life problems. Social support can be obtained from family, friends, as well as the broader community. The presence of social support can provide a sense of security, increase self-confidence, and help individuals cope with life pressures. Research indicates that individuals who receive adequate social support tend to have higher levels of psychological well-being compared to those who receive less support [2].

Situational analysis shows that in today's society, many individuals experience psychological pressures due to increasingly complex life demands. Rapid social changes, heightened competition, and reduced face-to-face social interactions due to technological advancements are factors that may influence individuals' psychological well-being. These conditions often lead individuals to feel lonely, receive less attention, and lack a space to share their feelings or problems. Therefore, social support becomes highly important as a protective factor that can help individuals maintain their psychological well-being [3].

The target population in this study consists of individuals who have experienced receiving social support in their daily lives, whether from family, peers, or other social environments. Participants were selected based on their experiences in receiving social support, so that they are expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the meaning of social support in relation to psychological well-being. This selection is based on the consideration that each individual has unique experiences in receiving social support; therefore, a phenomenological approach is necessary to explore these experiences more deeply.

From an Islamic perspective, the importance of social support is emphasized through the values of togetherness, care, and mutual assistance among individuals. Allah SWT states:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ
وَالْعَدْوَانِ

“And help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and enmity.” (Q.S. Al-Ma'idah: 2)

This verse emphasizes that human beings are encouraged to help one another in acts of goodness, including providing support to those in need. Social support, in the form of care and assistance to others, constitutes an important aspect of piety that can strengthen social relationships within society. Furthermore, Allah also states:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

“Indeed, the believers are brothers; therefore, make peace between your brothers and fear Allah so that you may receive mercy.” (Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 10)

This verse indicates that brotherhood in Islam embodies the meaning of mutual support and care among individuals. Social support provided between individuals can create a sense of togetherness and inner peace that contributes to psychological well-being. Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also emphasized the importance of social support in social life through his saying:

مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادِهِمْ، وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ، وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ مَثَلُ
الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عَضْوٌ تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ
بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحُمَّى

“The example of the believers in their mutual love, mercy, and compassion is like that of a single body. When one part of the body suffers, the rest of the body responds with sleeplessness and fever.” (HR. Muslim)

The hadith illustrates that social relationships grounded in compassion and care can provide emotional strength for individuals. Social support delivered with empathy can help individuals cope with various life difficulties, thereby maintaining their psychological well-being.

Previous literature reviews indicate that social support plays a significant role in individuals' psychological well-being. Research conducted by [4] shows that social support is positively correlated with psychological well-being and contributes to reducing individuals' stress levels. Another study by [5] demonstrates that social support has a strong relationship with life satisfaction and mental health. Furthermore, research by [2] explains that social support helps individuals cope with life pressures by enhancing self-confidence and coping abilities.

Research conducted by [6] also shows that individuals with strong social networks tend to have higher levels of psychological well-being compared to those with limited social networks. Meanwhile, a study by [7] explains that emotional social support helps individuals feel valued and accepted within their social environment. Social support also plays a role in increasing individual resilience in facing various life challenges [8].

Although numerous studies have examined the relationship between social support and psychological well-being, most of these studies have employed quantitative approaches that focus on statistical relationships between variables. Such approaches have not fully captured how individuals interpret social support based on their lived experiences. In fact, each individual has unique experiences in receiving social support, which leads to differences in how social support is perceived and understood.

Based on these conditions, this study offers scientific novelty by employing a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the meaning of social support in relation to psychological well-being based on individuals' subjective experiences. This research not only examines the relationship

between social support and psychological well-being but also seeks to understand how individuals interpret social support in their lives and how it contributes to their perceived psychological well-being.

Referring to the situational analysis, the following research problems can be identified:

1. There are still individuals who experience low psychological well-being due to a lack of social support.
2. The social support received by individuals is not necessarily interpreted in the same way by each individual.
3. Research on social support and psychological well-being is still predominantly dominated by quantitative approaches.
4. Phenomenological research examining the meaning of social support based on individuals' subjective experiences remains limited.

Based on the identified problems, the research problem of this study is how social support is interpreted in relation to psychological well-being based on individuals' subjective experiences.

The aim of this study is to explore and understand the meaning of social support in relation to psychological well-being based on individuals' lived experiences through a qualitative phenomenological approach. This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of psychological studies, particularly those related to social support and psychological well-being, as well as practical benefits for society in understanding the importance of social support in enhancing psychological well-being.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a phenomenological method aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the meaning of social support in relation to

psychological well-being based on individuals' subjective experiences. The phenomenological approach was chosen because this study focuses on participants' lived experiences in receiving and interpreting social support in their daily lives. This method allows researchers to explore deeply individuals' perceptions and experiences regarding social support and its relationship with psychological well-being [9].

The study was conducted in Sukabumi Regency, West Java. The selection of the research site was based on considerations of accessibility to participants and the suitability of participants' characteristics with the research objectives. The participants in this study consisted of six individuals selected using purposive sampling, a technique in which participants are chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The criteria included individuals who had experience receiving social support from family, friends, or the community and were willing to share their experiences openly.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and documentation. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner using an interview guide as the primary research instrument. The interview guide was developed based on aspects of social support and psychological well-being, including emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support. All interview sessions were recorded using a digital voice recorder to ensure data accuracy. In addition, the researcher used field notes to document important observations during the interview process.

Data analysis was carried out using phenomenological analysis techniques, referring to the qualitative data analysis procedures proposed by [10], which include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was performed by selecting and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives. Data display was presented in the form of descriptive narratives containing the main themes derived from the

interviews. Conclusions were drawn by interpreting the meaning of social support based on participants' subjective experiences.

The validity of the data was ensured through source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from different participants, while technique triangulation involved comparing interview data with field notes and documentation. Additionally, member checking was conducted by reconfirming interview results with participants to ensure consistency between the collected data and their actual experiences.

The benchmark in this study is the meaning of social support in relation to psychological well-being, as reflected in participants' experiences of receiving emotional support, tangible assistance, attention, and motivation from their social environment. Psychological well-being was identified based on indicators such as feelings of calmness, self-confidence, problem-solving ability, and a sense of being valued and accepted within the social environment.

The research procedure began with a preparation stage, which included developing the interview instrument and selecting research participants. The next stage involved conducting the research through in-depth interviews with participants. The collected data were then transcribed into written text to facilitate analysis. The final stage involved analyzing the data, interpreting the findings, and compiling the research report in the form of a scientific article.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the meaning of social support in relation to psychological well-being based on individuals' subjective experiences. Based on in-depth interviews with six participants, several main themes emerged that describe the meaning of social support in participants' lives, namely: (1) emotional support as a source of calmness, (2) instrumental support as tangible assistance, (3) appraisal support as a reinforcement of self-confidence, and (4)

companionship support as a source of security.

The first finding shows that emotional support is interpreted as a form of attention, care, and empathy provided by close individuals. Participants expressed that attention from family and friends made them feel calmer and better able to cope with problems. This emotional support provided a sense of being accepted and valued, thereby helping to reduce perceived psychological distress.

The second finding indicates that instrumental support is understood as tangible assistance provided by others in the form of time, energy, or material help. Such assistance was perceived as very helpful for participants in solving the problems they faced, particularly during difficult situations.

The third finding shows that appraisal support is interpreted as a form of recognition and motivation provided by the social environment. Participants stated that praise and encouragement increased their self-confidence and strengthened their motivation to face life challenges.

The fourth finding reveals that companionship support is understood as the presence of others that provides a sense of safety and comfort. Participants felt that the presence of close individuals made them feel less alone when dealing with life problems.

Based on the findings, indicators of the effectiveness of social support on psychological well-being are reflected in several aspects, namely:

1. Increased participants' self-confidence.
2. Reduced levels of stress and anxiety.
3. Improved ability to cope with problems.
4. Emergence of feelings of being valued and accepted in the social environment.
5. Increased sense of safety and comfort in daily life.

These indicators were derived from the analysis of interview data, which showed positive changes in participants' psychological conditions after receiving social support from their surrounding environment.

This study found that social support contributes to psychological well-being through four main forms: emotional support, instrumental support, appraisal support, and companionship support. These forms of support influence participants' psychological conditions, such as feelings of calmness, self-confidence, and problem-solving ability.

Table 1. Themes of Social Support and Their Meaning for Psychological Well-Being

No	Social Support Theme	Type of Support	Meaning for Participants	Impact on Psychological Well-Being
1	Emotional Support	Attention, empathy, listening	Feeling cared for	Reduces stress and anxiety
2	Instrumental Support	Practical and material assistance	Helps solve problems	Reduces psychological burden
3	Appraisal Support	Praise and motivation	Feeling valued	Increases self-confidence
4	Companionship Support	Presence of close individuals	Not feeling alone	Increases sense of safety

Table 1 shows that emotional support is the most frequently emerging form of support in participants' experiences. Most participants stated that attention and care from close individuals had a significant impact on their inner calm and emotional stability.

The effectiveness of social support in enhancing psychological well-being was measured based on changes in participants' psychological conditions after receiving social support.

Table 2. Participants' Psychological Well-Being Indicators

No	Indicator	Before Receiving Support	After Receiving Support
1	Stress Level	High	Decreased
2	Self-Confidence	Low	Increased
3	Problem-Solving Ability	Poor	Improved
4	Sense of Security	Low	Increased
5	Feeling of Being Valued	Low	Increased

Based on Table 2, it can be observed that social support brings positive changes to participants' psychological well-being. This is indicated by a decrease in stress levels and an increase in self-confidence.

The findings show that social support acts as a protective factor that helps individuals maintain their psychological well-being. Social support provides a sense of security and assists individuals in coping with life pressures more adaptively.

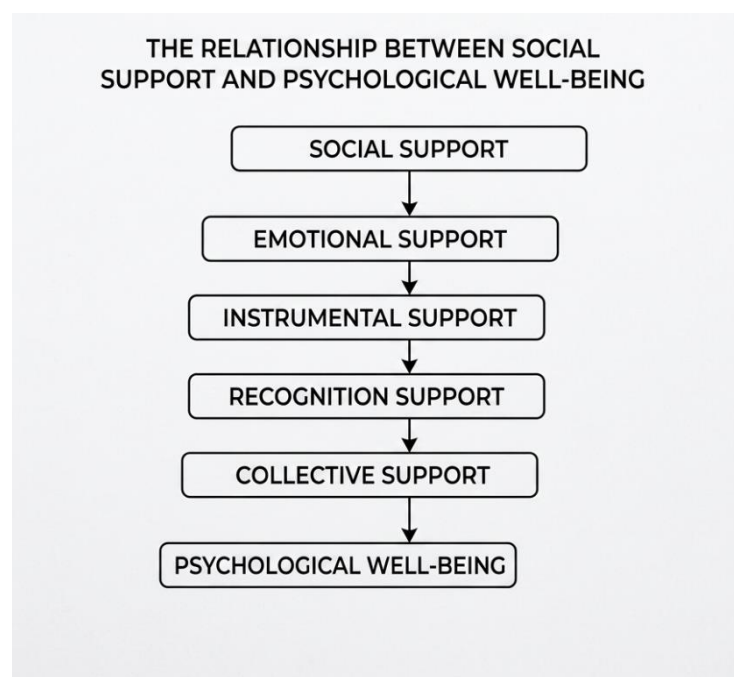


Figure 1. The Relationship between Social Support and Psychological Well-Being

Figure 1 shows that social support contributes to psychological well-being through various interrelated forms of support.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that social support holds significant meaning in enhancing individuals' psychological well-being. The results show that social support is not only understood as physical or material assistance, but also as emotional care and companionship that provide individuals with a sense of safety.

These findings suggest that psychological well-being is influenced by the quality of social relationships. This occurs because humans are social beings who require interaction and relationships with others. Social support fosters a sense of belonging, which helps individuals reduce stress and psychological pressure. When individuals feel supported by their social environment, they tend to become more confident and better able to cope with various life challenges.

From a scientific perspective, this phenomenon can be explained through the theory of basic human needs, which states that the need for belongingness and affection

is one of the fundamental human needs. When these needs are fulfilled through social support, individuals experience higher psychological well-being. Conversely, a lack of social support may lead to feelings of loneliness and psychological distress.

The findings also reveal that emotional support is the most meaningful form of support for participants. This is because emotional support is directly related to individuals' emotional states. Attention and empathy from others help individuals feel valued and accepted within their social environment. This condition enhances self-confidence and helps individuals manage stress more effectively.

The results confirm that social support plays an essential role in improving psychological well-being, addressing the identified problem that psychological well-being is influenced by the social support individuals receive from their environment.

Socially and psychologically, this occurs because humans have a fundamental need to feel accepted and valued within their social environment. Social support provides a sense of connectedness that helps reduce psychological pressure. When individuals feel supported, their psychological system becomes more stable, enabling them to face life challenges more effectively.

Emotional support is the most dominant form of support because it is closely related to individuals' emotional conditions. Empathy and care from others help individuals feel valued, thereby enhancing psychological well-being. This indicates that psychological well-being is influenced not only by internal factors but also by external social factors.

These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that social support is positively associated with psychological well-being. Social support helps individuals reduce stress and improve coping abilities in dealing with life pressures. Moreover, individuals with strong social relationships tend to have higher levels of psychological well-being.

The study also found that the meaning of social support varies among

individuals. These differences are influenced by personal experiences and social conditions. This suggests that social support is subjective and shaped by how individuals interpret it.

The scientific findings of this study indicate that:

1. Emotional support is the most influential form of support on psychological well-being.
2. Social support functions as a protective factor against stress.
3. The meaning of social support is subjective.
4. Social support enhances individuals' ability to cope with problems.

In addition, instrumental support also plays an important role in improving psychological well-being. Tangible assistance from others helps individuals solve problems, thereby reducing perceived burdens. Instrumental support also reflects care from the social environment, which strengthens interpersonal relationships.

The findings of this study are consistent with [5], who found that social support has a strong relationship with psychological well-being and life satisfaction. This study is also in line with [2], who stated that social support helps individuals reduce stress and improve coping abilities.

Furthermore, this study supports the findings of [6], which indicate that individuals with strong social relationships tend to have higher psychological well-being. Social support provides a sense of security and helps individuals feel accepted within their social environment, thereby enhancing psychological well-being.

However, this study also found that the meaning of social support varies across individuals. These differences are influenced by life experiences and individual social contexts. This indicates that social support is not only determined by the amount of support received, but also by how it is interpreted by individuals.

The findings suggest that social support functions as a protective factor that helps individuals maintain psychological

well-being. Social support provides emotional strength that enables individuals to face various life pressures. This reinforces the view that psychological well-being is influenced not only by internal factors but also by external social support.

Based on the findings, issues related to low psychological well-being can be addressed by strengthening social support within individuals' environments. Consistent social support helps individuals feel valued and secure in their lives.

Low psychological well-being can be improved through enhanced social support, which helps individuals feel valued and secure, thereby improving their overall psychological well-being.

Possible efforts include:

1. Improving communication within families
2. Strengthening social relationships
3. Providing emotional support
4. Creating a supportive environment

Research Recommendations

In light of the research findings, the following recommendations are presented:

1. Future research is recommended to involve a larger number of participants in order to obtain a broader understanding of the meaning of social support in relation to psychological well-being.
2. Future studies may adopt a mixed-methods approach to combine qualitative and quantitative data, thereby producing more comprehensive research findings.
3. Future research may examine social support among specific age groups, such as adolescents or young adults, to explore differences in the meaning of social support across developmental stages.
4. Future research may investigate the relationship between social

support and other variables, such as resilience or mental health.

The findings of this study indicate that social support plays an important role in enhancing individuals' psychological well-being. Therefore, efforts from various parties are needed to create a supportive social environment so that individuals' psychological well-being can be properly maintained.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the meaning of social support in relation to psychological well-being based on individuals' subjective experiences through a qualitative phenomenological approach. Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that social support plays an important role in enhancing individuals' psychological well-being. Social support was interpreted by participants as emotional care, tangible assistance, appreciation, and companionship that provide a sense of safety and comfort in daily life.

The findings indicate that emotional support is the most dominant form of support influencing psychological well-being, as it is directly related to individuals' need to feel accepted and valued. In addition, social support functions as a protective factor that helps individuals reduce stress, increase self-confidence, and strengthen their ability to cope with various life challenges.

Thus, the results of this study answer the research objective that the meaning of social support in relation to psychological well-being lies in its ability to provide inner calm, a sense of being valued, and psychological strength for individuals. The scientific findings of this study show that psychological well-being is influenced not only by internal factors but also significantly by the quality of social relationships. Social support that is positively interpreted by individuals contributes to improved psychological well-being as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed as follows:

1. Practical Recommendations

Individuals are encouraged to build and maintain positive social relationships with family, friends, and their surrounding environment as sources of social support that can enhance psychological well-being. In addition, families and the social environment are expected to provide more intensive emotional support, as it has been shown to have a significant influence on individuals' psychological conditions.

2. Recommendations for Activity Development

Educational institutions and communities are encouraged to develop social and collaborative activities such as group activities, peer counseling, or

community-based programs that can strengthen interpersonal social support. Such activities can serve as a means to increase social awareness and strengthen interpersonal relationships.

3. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research is recommended to involve a larger number of participants and more diverse backgrounds in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning of social support in relation to psychological well-being. In addition, future studies may examine the relationship between social support and other variables such as resilience, mental health, or quality of life.

As a follow-up to this study, future research may also develop a conceptual model of effective social support in enhancing psychological well-being across different age groups, thereby contributing more broadly to the fields of psychology and education.

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