

Loneliness and psychological well-being among adolescents K-Pop fans

Luthfiana Nur Fauziyah, Herlina Siwi Widiana*, Arini Widyowati

Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Ahmad Dahlan University Yogyakarta, Indonesia

*corresponding author email: herlina.widiana@psy.uad.ac.id

Article History:	Submission	Revised:	Accepted	Published
	2023-05-03	2023-12-28	2024-01-03	2024-01-13

ABSTRACT

Psychological well-being is important for adolescent, especially on their mental health. This study aimed to examine the relationship between loneliness and psychological well-being in adolescent K-pop fans. The population in this study were adolescents aged 13-18 years who were K-pop fans, with a research sample obtained from quota sampling with a total of 100 people. This research applied the quantitative method, while the data collection tools included the psychological well-being and loneliness scales. The data are then analyzed using the product moment technique. The study results show a significant negative relationship between loneliness and psychological well-being among adolescent K-pop fans. The level of psychological well-being and loneliness adolescent K-pop fans are in the moderate category. Based on the study results, the lower the level of loneliness among adolescents, the higher the psychological well-being will be and vice versa. The higher the level of loneliness, the lower the psychological well-being.

Keywords: Adolescents, K-pop fans, Loneliness, Psychological well-being.

ABSTRAK

Kesepian dan Psychological Well-being pada Remaja Penggemar K-Pop

Psychological well-being sangat penting bagi remaja dalam kaitannya dengan kesehatan mental. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji hubungan antara kesepian dengan psychological well-being pada remaja penggemar K-pop. Populasi pada penelitian ini adalah remaja berumur 13-18 tahun yang menjadi penggemar K-pop dengan sampel penelitian yang diperoleh dari quota sampling dengan jumlah 100 orang. Metode penelitian yang digunakan berupa metode kuantitatif dengan alat pengumpulan data berupa skala psychological well-being dan skala kesepian. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah product moment. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat hubungan negatif yang sangat signifikan antara kesepian dengan psychological well-being pada remaja penggemar K-pop. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian semakin rendah tingkat kesepian yang dirasakan remaja maka akan semakin tinggi psychological well-being yang dirasakan remaja tersebut, begitu pula sebaliknya, semakin tinggi tingkat kesepian maka akan semakin rendah psychological well-being yang dirasakannya.

Kata kunci: kesepian, penggemar K-pop, psychological well-being, remaja.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



Article citation:

Fauziyah, L. N., Widiana, H. S., & Widyowati, A. (2023). Loneliness and Psychological Well-being among Adolescents K-Pop Fans. *Empathy: Jurnal Fakultas Psikologi*, 6(2), 159-170. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12928/empathy.v6i2.26151>

INTRODUCTION

The adolescent developmental period is a crucial phase that determines success in adulthood. Adolescence is a transitional period in the human lifespan that bridges childhood and adulthood [1]. Adolescence spans from the age of 13 to 16 or 17, and the end of adolescence begins at the age of 16 to 18, which is considered legally mature [2].

Currently, adolescents are increasingly dependent on the internet. The social environment for adolescents on the internet includes chat rooms, email, instant messaging, blogs, and popular websites. The use of the internet is closely tied to the influences of globalization and technological advancements. These factors facilitate cross-country interactions, especially in the realm of South Korean popular culture. Adolescents in Indonesia are increasingly fond of K-pop idols [3].

K-pop or Korean Pop, is a genre of popular music originating from South Korea. Many Korean pop artists and music groups have transcended national borders and gained popularity in various countries. The widespread development of K-pop culture has certainly had its own impact on Indonesian society, especially among K-pop enthusiasts. The phenomenon of idolizing celebrities or famous figures has become prevalent, particularly during adolescence, with many Indonesian teenagers claiming to be fans of celebrities from South Korea [4]. Seventy-four percent of teenage girls express a high interest in Korean culture, while only 13 percent of boys do so [5]. This is due to Korean broadcasts being more focused on female-oriented content, such as Korean movies or dramas that depict stories of love, affection, and sadness—elements that are more commonly associated with females than males [6]. Teenagers are motivated by dreams and aspirations cultivated through their love for K-pop [7]. The fervor displayed in the loyalty, dedication, and love for Korean idols is influenced by the media [8].

K-Pop, as a reference group and idol figure, influences the formation of teenagers' self-identity [9]. Previous research has shown that subjects perceive K-pop idols as mood boosters, a support system, and also mood enhancers when feeling sad [10]. The results of this research indicate a connection between idolizing K-pop and the psychological well-

being of the subjects. Psychological well-being is a term used to describe an individual's psychological health based on the fulfillment of positive psychological function criteria.

Psychological well-being is a term used to describe an individual's psychological health based on the fulfillment of positive psychological function criteria [11]. Psychological well-being is the ability of an individual to accept oneself as they are, form warm relationships with others, maintain independence in facing the social environment, control the external environment, establish life goals, and continuously realize their potential [11]. Psychological well-being represents the full achievement of an individual's psychological potential and a state where the person can accept their strengths and weaknesses, have life goals, develop positive relationships with others, become independent, control the environment, and continue to grow personally [11]. Based on the previous exposition, it can be concluded that psychological well-being is the full realization of an individual's psychological potential and a state where the person can accept their strengths and weaknesses, have life goals, develop positive relationships with others, become independent, control the environment, and continue to grow personally.

There are six aspects of psychological well-being, consisting of: a) self-acceptance; b) positive relationship with others; c) autonomy; d) environmental mastery; e) purpose in life; and f) personal growth [11]. Meanwhile, factors influencing an individual's psychological well-being include: a) demographic factors; b) social support; and c) evaluation of life experiences [12].

The interview conducted on May 19, 2022, with five teenage subjects yielded results. In the dimension of self-acceptance, the subjects expressed satisfaction with themselves at present. The second dimension, positive relationship with others, revealed that the subjects sometimes find it challenging to mingle with new people and have difficulty fitting in with groups where there is no compatibility. The third dimension, autonomy, indicates that the subjects take a moment to think clearly to enhance their personal quality. The fourth dimension, environmental mastery, suggests that the subjects find it difficult to socialize with others who do not share compatibility. The fifth dimension, purpose in life, highlights that the subjects choose to be more realistic by striving for a safe and happy life. The final dimension, personal growth, indicates that the subjects try to be more grateful for their current lives.

Based on the insights obtained from the interviews with the five subjects, it is evident that they find it challenging to socialize with individuals who lack compatibility with them. This difficulty may result in a lack of environmental mastery, and a deficiency in environmental mastery can impact their psychological well-being.

Loneliness is commonly experienced by teenagers [13]. Loneliness is a factor that can affect psychological well-being [14]. Individuals experiencing loneliness tend to be unresponsive and socially insensitive. They also tend to be slow in building intimacy in their relationships with others. Loneliness is defined as the difference between one's desires and the reality present in social relationships [15]. Moreover, loneliness is a subjective experience, not just a condition of physical isolation [16]. It is further defined as a situation in which an individual experiences an unpleasant or unacceptable quality of relationships [17]. Based on the previous exposition, it can be concluded that loneliness is an emotionally distressing condition that arises when individuals feel rejected, alienated, or misunderstood by others, and when they lack friends for social activities and emotional closeness.

Aspects of loneliness include personality, social desirability, and depression [18]. In terms of personality, loneliness refers to various personality forms and moods that determine an individual's behavioral characteristics and ways of thinking. For instance, individuals with introverted personalities may exhibit characteristics of socialization difficulties or limited interaction with many people, making them more prone to loneliness. Social desirability is loneliness resulting from the inability to attain the desired social life in one's environment. This occurs because individuals aspire to build a socially respected life. The depression aspect is a state that arises due to internal pressures marked by feelings of worthlessness, lack of enthusiasm, melancholy, sadness, and a fear of failure.

In Indonesia, research on K-pop fans has seen an increase in recent years. A study on vocational high school students revealed the need for increased self-control among teenagers to help them manage their behavior [19]. Self-control in teenage K-pop fans is negatively related to idol worship, also known as celebrity worship. The higher the level of self-control, the lower the idol worship, and vice versa [20]. The elevated celebrity worship, particularly in the aspect of intense personal feelings among K-pop fans, is also influenced by lower psychological well-being [21].

The significance of psychological well-being among teenage K-pop fans has prompted researchers to investigate the relationship between loneliness and psychological well-being in this group. Based on this objective, the hypothesis proposed in this study is that there is a negative relationship between loneliness and psychological well-being among teenage K-pop fans. The lower the level of loneliness among teenage K-pop fans, the higher their psychological well-being is expected to be. Conversely, the higher the level of loneliness among teenage K-pop fans, the lower their psychological well-being is anticipated to be.

METHOD

This research was conducted using a quantitative correlational method employing two scales. The population consisted of teenagers aged 13-18 who were fans of K-pop. The study employed a quota sampling technique, with a sample size of 100 respondents.

The research was carried out in January 2023 online using Google Forms. The Google Forms link was distributed through K-pop groups on Telegram. Respondents who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and remained anonymous first filled out an informed consent form before completing the identity questionnaire and the research scale.

The scales utilized in the study included the Psychological Well-being Scale and the Loneliness Scale. The Psychological Well-being Scale used was a modified version of the Psychological Well-being Scale (PWBS) [11]. The PWBS was developed based on aspects such as self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. An example item is "I make the most of every opportunity provided by the environment." The Psychological Well-being Scale comprises 24 items, with four response options: SS (Strongly Agree), S (Agree), TS (Disagree), and STS (Strongly Disagree). In this study, the reliability coefficient was 0.854, with item difficulty indices (rit) ranging from 0.320 to 0.593.

The loneliness scale used in this study is the UCLA Loneliness Scale, which has been translated into Bahasa Indonesia. The UCLA Loneliness Scale is developed based on aspects of personality, social desirability, and depression [18]. The Indonesian version of the UCLA Loneliness Scale consists of 15 items, with four response options: S (Often), KK (Sometimes), J (Rarely), and TP (Never). An example item is "feeling like a failure in making friendships." In this study, the reliability coefficient was 0.856, with item difficulty indices (rit) ranging from 0.313 to 0.655.

Data analysis in this study was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for Windows version 16.0. The data analysis technique employed was the product-moment correlation test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the conducted research indicate a highly significant negative relationship between loneliness and psychological well-being among adolescent K-pop fans, with a correlation coefficient (r_{xy}) of -0.395 and a significance level (p) of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$). This implies that the higher the level of loneliness, the lower the psychological well-being. Conversely, the lower the level of loneliness, the higher the psychological well-being. Based on this explanation, the proposed hypothesis is accepted.

This study also examines the categorization results of the psychological well-being variable, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Categorization of Psychological Well-being Variable

Variable	Interval	Frequency	Percentage	Categorization
<i>Psychological well-being</i>	$36 \leq X$	28	28%	High
	$24 \leq X < 36$	68	68%	Moderate
	$X < 24$	4	4%	Low

Based on the categorization results of the psychological well-being variable shown in Table 1 above, it was found that four K-pop fan adolescents have low psychological well-being, 68 K-pop fan adolescents have moderate psychological well-being, and 28 K-pop fan adolescents have high psychological well-being. It can be concluded that the majority of K-pop fan adolescents have psychological well-being in the moderate category. The categorization results of the loneliness variable can be seen in the following Table 2.

Table 2 Categorization of Loneliness Variable

Variable	Interval	Frequency	Percentage	Categorization
Loneliness	$45 \leq X$	27	27%	High
	$30 \leq X < 45$	62	62%	Moderate
	$X < 30$	11	11%	Low

The results of the categorization of the loneliness variable are shown in Table 2, indicating that 11 K-pop fan teenagers have a low level of loneliness, 62 K-pop fan teenagers have a moderate level of loneliness, and 27 K-pop fan teenagers have a high level of

loneliness. It can be concluded that the majority of K-pop fan teenagers have a moderate level of loneliness.

This study aimed to examine the relationship between loneliness and psychological well-being among K-pop fan teenagers. The results indicate a highly significant negative relationship between loneliness and psychological well-being. This suggests that teenagers who emotionally experience loneliness due to feelings of rejection, alienation, or misunderstanding by others, and lack friends for social activities, tend to have a lower sense of purpose in life and are less capable of controlling their environment and personal growth. These findings are consistent with previous research that found a negative relationship between loneliness and psychological well-being [22]. Loneliness is an indicator of individual psychological distress, meaning that individuals experiencing loneliness are likely to reduce their level of well-being or happiness in life, while those not experiencing loneliness tend to be more prosperous or happy in life [23].

One aspect of loneliness is personality. K-pop fans with unfavorable personalities are likely to have lower psychological well-being. The poor personality of K-pop fans will affect positive relations with others. K-pop fans with positive relationships with others are likely to have higher psychological well-being.

Furthermore, in terms of social desirability within loneliness, it occurs because individuals are less capable of living the desired social life. K-pop fans who lack social satisfaction will impact their environmental mastery. When K-pop fans have good environmental mastery, their psychological well-being is also good. Previous research has shown that individuals who experience loneliness in their social life tend to have lower psychological well-being [24].

Finally, there is the aspect of depression in loneliness. Depression is a condition that occurs due to internal pressure in individuals, marked by feelings of worthlessness, lack of enthusiasm, sadness, and fear of failure. A K-pop fan experiencing depression will affect their purpose in life. When a K-pop fan lacks a good purpose in life, their psychological well-being will also be compromised.

The effective contribution of loneliness to psychological well-being is 15.6%. This means that loneliness contributes to 15.6% of the factors influencing psychological well-being among teenage K-pop fans. The remaining 84.4% is influenced by other factors

beyond loneliness. Other factors influencing psychological well-being include age, gender, social and economic status, and cultural background [25].

The results of this study are beneficial for teachers or counselors in assisting adolescents facing issues and enhancing psychological well-being by managing stress, fostering positive self-perception, and developing gratitude. Teachers and counselors can also contribute to improving the psychological well-being of adolescents by preventing loneliness. This can be achieved by encouraging them to be more open in social relationships, strengthening interpersonal connections with those around them, and actively engaging in positive activities both at school and in their living environment. The research findings are also valuable for parents to be more attuned to the social and emotional development of their children, enabling them to be the closest source of emotional support. When children experience psychological issues and loneliness, providing emotional support and facilities that allow them to participate in positive activities involving a wider community provides opportunities for interaction and collaboration with others.

This study has limitations, including difficulties in obtaining data on the number of K-pop fans based on age groups. The non-random sampling using quota sampling with a limited number of samples may introduce potential bias and restrict the generalization of research findings. Future research could increase the sample size and employ other sampling techniques, such as random sampling. Additionally, this research follows a cross-sectional design, preventing the exploration of cause-and-effect relationships between variables. Subsequent studies may adopt longitudinal or cross-time models to test the reciprocal relationships between variables, investigating how psychological well-being affects loneliness. Further research can also explore variables as mediators or moderators in the relationship between loneliness and psychological well-being, such as human agency. Human agency (self-efficacy) allows individuals to influence self-function and the environment through actions [26].

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that adolescents who are fans of K-Pop, the respondents of this research, experience loneliness and fall within the moderate category of psychological well-being. Furthermore, the research findings demonstrate that higher levels

of loneliness are associated with lower psychological well-being, especially among adolescents who are K-Pop enthusiasts. Adolescents experiencing emotional loneliness tend to have lower psychological well-being, which manifests as a lack of self-acceptance, difficulty setting life goals, and challenges in building positive relationships with others. The outcomes of this study can serve as a reference for counselors, teachers, and parents in assisting adolescents in overcoming loneliness and maintaining psychological well-being. Subsequent researchers may consider age grouping, given the wide age range of adolescents, to obtain more specific results based on age groups.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our gratitude to all the research respondents who willingly participated in this study.

DECLARATION

Author contributions: LNF was responsible for data collection and analysis. HSW participated in the selection of research scales and the publication of research results. AW contributed to the writing of the publication article. All three authors approved the final manuscript.

Funding Statement

This research was conducted with self-funding.

Conflict of Interest

Both authors declare no conflicts of interest in the research and publication of the research results.

Ethical Approval

This research obtained informed consent from the research respondents.

Additional Information:

No additional information is available for this publication.

REFERENCES

- [1] Santrock, J. W. (2012). *Life-span development*. Erlangga.

- [2] Hurlock, E.B. (1990). *Perkembangan anak, suatu pendekatan sepanjang rentang usia*. Erlangga.
- [3] Hardiantoro, A. (2022). *Mengapa remaja Indonesia kian menggemari idol K-pop?*. Kompas.com. <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2022/05/22/123000665/mengapa-remaja-indonesia-kian-menggemari-idol-kpop->. 28 Mei 2022, 11.36.
- [4] Kaparang, O.M. (2013). Analisa gaya hidup remaja dalam mengimitasi budaya pop Korea melalui televisi (Studi pada siswa SMA Negeri 9 Manado). *Jurnal Acta Diurna*, 2(2), 1-15.
- [5] Syam, H. M. (2015). Globalisasi media dan penyerapan budaya asing analisis pada pengaruh budaya populer Korea di kalangan remaja Kota Banda Aceh. *Avant Garde*, 3(1).
- [6] Fatimah, N., Noviekayati, I. G. A. A., & Rina, A. P. (2021). Perilaku *celebrity worship* pada remaja komunitas Nctzens di Indonesia ditinjau dari *loneliness*. *SUKMA: Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi*, 2(2), 122-135.
- [7] Purnomosidi, F. & Azzahra, P. N. (2023). Konsep diri remaja penggemar K-pop. *Bureaucracy Journal: Indonesia Journal of Law and Social-Political Governance*, 3 (1), 944-956. <https://doi.org/10.53363/bureau.v3i1.226>
- [8] Fachrosi, E., Fani, D. T., Lubis, R. F., Aritonang, N. B., Azizah, N., Saragih, D. R., & Malik, F. (2020). Dinamika fanatisme penggemar K-Pop pada komunitas BTS-Army Medan. *Jurnal Diversita*, 6(2), 194-201. <https://doi.org/10.31289/diversita.v6i2.3782>
- [9] Hakim, A. R., Mardhiyah, A., Novtadijanto, D. M. I., Nurkholifah, N., Ramdani, Z., & Amri, A. (2021). Pembentukan identitas diri pada Kpopers. *Motiva: Jurnal Psikologi*, 4(1), 18-31. <https://doi.org/10.31293/mv.v4i1.5188>
- [10] Gumelar, S. A., Almaida, E., & Laksmiwati, A. A. (2021). Dinamika psikologis *fangirl* K-Pop. *Cognicia*, 9(1), 17-24. <https://doi.org/10.22219/cognicia.v9i1.15059>
- [11] Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being *Journal American Psychological Association* 57, (6), 1069-1081. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069>

- [12] Ryff, C.D. & Keyes, C.L.M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(69), 719-727. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-3514.69.4.719>
- [13] Qualter, P., Vanhalst, J., Harris, R., Van Roekel, E., Lodder, G., Bangee, M., Maes, M., & Verhagen, M. (2015). Loneliness across the life span. *Perspectives on psychological science : a journal of the Association for Psychological Science*, 10(2), 250–264. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691615568999>
- [14] Li, J., Zhou, L., Van Der Heijden, B., Li, S., Tao, H., & Guo, Z. (2021). Social isolation, loneliness and well-being: The impact of WeChat use intensity during the COVID-19 pandemic in China. *Front. Psychol.* 12 (707667). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.707667>
- [15] Russel, D., Peplau, L. A., & Cutrona, C. E.. (1980). The revised UCLA loneliness scale: Concurrent and discriminant validity evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39, 472-480. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-3514.39.3.472>
- [16] Kovacs, B., Caplan, N., Grob, S., King, M. (2021). Social networks and loneliness during the covid-19 pandemic. *Socius*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023120985254>
- [17] Gierveld, D. J., Tilburg, T.V., & Dykstra, P.A. (2006). Loneliness and social isolation: In A. Vangelisti & D. Perlman (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Personal Relationships* (Cambridge Handbooks in Psychology, pp. 485-500. Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511606632.027>
- [18] Russell, D. W. (1996). UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3): Reliability, validity and factor structure. *Journal of Personality Assesment*, 66(1), 20-40. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa6601_2
- [19] Roem, S. A., Zen, E. F., & Multisari, W. (2022). Kontrol diri remaja penggemar K-Pop (Studi fenomenologi pada siswa penggemar K-Pop di SMK). *Jurnal Pembelajaran, Bimbingan, dan Pengelolaan Pendidikan*, 2(5), 479–490.
- [20] Fitriana, M. (2019). Hubungan kontrol diri dengan pemujaan terhadap idola pada remaja penggemar K-pop. *Psikoborneo: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 7(3), 450-456. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30872/psikoborneo.v7i3.4804>
- [21] Humaidah, A., Teteng, B., & Akmal, N. (2023). Psychological well-being as predictor of celebrity worship among college students in Makasar. *Indonesian*

- Journal of Educational Studies*, 26(1), 55-64.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.26858/ijes.v26i1.47515>
- [22] Aryono, M. M., & Dani, R. A. (2019). Kesepian dan kesejahteraan psikologis pada lansia yang memilih melajang. *Proyeksi*, 14(2), 162-171.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/jp.14.2.162-171>
- [23] Diener, E. (2005). *Guidelines for national indicators of subjective well being and ill being*. University of Illinois.
- [24] Gross, E. F., Juvonen, J., & Gable, S. L. (2002). Internet use and well-being in adolescence. *Journal of Social Issues*, 58(1), 75–90.
<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1111/1540-4560.00249>
- [25] Ryff, C. D. (1995). Psychological well-being in adult life. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 4(4), 99–104. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20182342>
- [26] Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American Psychologist*, 44(9), 1175–1184. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.9.1175>