

## Family's Social Support and Psychological Well-Being of the Elderly in Tembalang

Dinie Ratri Desiningrum

Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Diponegoro

Happiness and success in old age through psychological well-being, is the desire of each individual who enters late adulthood. The strength of social support from family is important. The purpose of this study was to find the relationship between social support from families and psychological well-being of the elderly. Population of the study was the elderly in Tembalang, Semarang Selatan. A purposive random sampling technique was conducted ( $N = 80$ ). Methods of data collection were the Self-Administered Questionnaire was used as data collection method. Correlation in this research was calculated through product moment technique and the contributions with regression analysis technique. Results show that respondents have a good psychological well-being and feel high social support from their families. Social support from family has a high contribution to psychological well-being, with emotional support and appreciation provide a higher contribution than the other two dimensions of social support.

*Keywords:* social support from family, psychological well-being, elderly.

Kebahagiaan serta kesuksesan di masa tua melalui kesejahteraan psikologis, merupakan dambaan setiap individu yang memasuki masa dewasa akhir. Kekuatan dukungan sosial dari keluarga merupakan hal yang penting. Penelitian ini bertujuan melihat hubungan antara dukungan sosial keluarga dan kesejahteraan psikologis pada para lanjut usia (lansia). Populasi penelitian adalah sejumlah lansia di Tembalang, Semarang Selatan. Sampel ( $N = 80$ ) diperoleh dengan *purposive random sampling*. Metode pengumpulan data adalah *Self-Administered Questionnaire*. Korelasi dihitung dengan *product moment* dan kontribusi dengan teknik analisis regresi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa responden merasakan dukungan sosial yang tinggi dari keluarganya dengan kesejahteraan psikologis yang cukup tinggi. Dukungan sosial dari keluarga memberikan kontribusi yang tinggi terhadap kesejahteraan psikologis lansia, lalu dukungan emosional dan dukungan penghargaan memberikan kontribusi yang lebih tinggi dibandingkan kedua dimensi dukungan sosial lainnya.

*Kata kunci:* dukungan sosial keluarga, kesejahteraan psikologis, lansia.

The elderly population is getting larger in number along with increased life expectation. In 1980, the elderly population was only 7.7 million or 5.2% of the whole population, while in 1990 the elderly population became 11.3 million or 8.9% of the whole population. In 2000 it became 7.2% or 15.1 million, and in 2020 it is estimated that the number would become 29 million or 11.4%. These increasing numbers of elderly people is going along with increased life expectation. According to Biro Pusat Statistik, the expectation in 1968 was 45.7 years, in 1980: 55.3 years, in 1985: 58,19 years, in 1990: 61.12 years, and in 1995: 60.05 years while in 2000: 64.05 years of age (2000).

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Dinie Ratri Desiningrum, S.Psi, M.Si., Faculty of Psychology Kampus Terintegrasi Universitas Diponegoro Tembalang Jalan Prof. Sudharto, S.H., Semarang E-mail: [dn\\_psiundip@yahoo.co.id](mailto:dn_psiundip@yahoo.co.id)

Happiness and success in old age is what everybody is looking for. Happiness and success in the elderly could be achieved with psychological well-being (Poulin & Silver, 2007).

According to Ryff (cited in Cavanaugh & Blanchard, 2006) human beings that have positive attitude towards themselves and other human beings are those who can accept every aspects in themselves, good or bad and have self-acceptance and positive relations with others, able to perform and direct behavior by themselves, able to do something for other human beings, to always develop themselves up to their own abilities, and to take active role to meet the needs of the environment.

In a crossculture study (Norwegian, Afro-Americans, Chinese-Americans, European-Americans), it was revealed that late adult individuals were able to control

emotions and less experienced negative emotions than younger individuals (Carstensen & Turk-Charles, 2002), a study in the U.S. using 2,727 people 25–74 years of age showed the same results. A social being, the elderly people need others to interact. Social support also influences elderly psychological well-beings. The strength of social support comes from close relatives, and it could maintain healthy behavior (Febriasari, 2007). Family is a very important source of support because in a family the relationship is built on trust on each other and empathy.

Semarang is one of Indonesian big cities, its population is still growing, and the health condition of the elderly is reckoned to be good (Persiapan Menyambut Hari, 2010). Semarang is a developing city and has quite a number of elderly people that need attention. Several foster homes take care of the elderly, but more is taken care in family homes as in Jakarta, Bandung, and Surabaya (Nugroho, 2006).

Previous interview on August 26, 2010 on 10 old people who lived with their families in Tembalang, Southern Semarang, three people tended to be lonely even though in the middle of their families and felt disappointed because they were not given much attention, five more felt happy because family support, attention and living cost. They felt happy to see sons, daughters, and grandchildren. Two people felt happy enough but worried because they should take responsibility of taking care of grandchildren. Attention and support from families were considered as social support.

Social support is the existence of other individuals that an individual could count on for asking help, support, and acceptance if the individual have troubles. Social support consists of informational and emotional support, judgment and instrumental assistance. Availability of social support makes individuals feel loved, appreciated, and become one of the groups.

Social support from families is very important to the elderly as far as they could still understand the meaning of social support as his life support. Unfortunately not many old people understand that, even if supported, the elderly still expresses his disappointment by being angry, frustrated, and complaining. Families' understanding of the existence, the meaning, and the properness of the social support from the elderly's view point, so that they could feel appreciated and respected. In Tembalang, even though many old people live with their families, some of them felt very lonely and disappointed with their families' care (interview August, 26, 2010). Disappointment in Tembalang elderly reflected stress and their coping skill in forming psychological well-being.

Starting from this problem, correlation between family social support and psychological well-being in

the elderly in Tembalang was examined. Is social support correlated with psychological well-being? How big is the contribution of social support to psychological well-being?

The purpose of this study was to understand the correlation between family social support and psychological well-being in Tembalang, Southern Semarang, and to see the contribution of family support to psychological well-being.

## Psychological Well-Being

A concept of psychological well-being was introduced by Bernice Neugarten in 1961, meaning the psychological condition achieved by somebody when he/she is at old age (Haditono, as cited in Danudirja, 2009), with theory of life satisfaction. Anybody who achieves psychological well-being could be measured by life satisfaction.

According to Ryff and Keyes (1995) achieving psychological well-being is positive psychological functioning. Individual components that have positive psychological functioning, namely: (a) self-acceptance, trying to be self comfortable; (b) positive relations with others, to have a warm and satisfied relation, to be attentive to others' well-being, to have a strong affect, closeness, and understand that relation is to give and to take; (c) autonomy, able to direct behavior by himself with certainty. This autonomy reflects self-determination and personal authority in the society. Able to withstand social pressure so that able to think, to act, guide, and evaluate behavior based upon internalized standard and values; (d) purpose in life, a good mental health is convinced by helping other people so that he would have a life passion and a meaningful life, and have faith to understand the purpose of life also means that past life and now have purpose to make guidance of life; (e) personal growth, always developing self potentials in accordance with self capacity. The capacity to be open to new experiences, marked by feeling of continuous growth; (f) environmental mastery, able to direct daily life, control external activities or create conditions in accord with personal needs. The impression of mastery comes up when the individual recognizes personal needs and takes part in fulfilling his and environment's needs.

## Factors Influencing Psychological Well-Being

Factors influencing the psychological well-being, summarized from the literature, namely: a) social economic status, including family income, education

level, work success, material possession, and social status in the community (Pinquart & Sörenson, 2000); b) social relation and social network; c) social relation in connection with individual relation with people in the neighborhood and family. Social network explained social activities followed by individuals such as active in social meeting, organization, including quantity and quality of the meeting, and with whom they were associating with (Pinquart & Sörenson, 2000); d) personal competence, the ability and skill to be used daily including cognitive skill; e) Religiousness, related to transcendent relation to God. Religious persons are able to give positive meaning to their lives (Bastaman, 2000), to keep away from stress and depression (Hadjam, 1999); e) personality, individuals who had a lot of personal and social competence like self acceptance, able to make a harmonious relation with the environment, and had an effective coping skill, tended to stay away from conflict and stress (Santrock, 2005; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). f) Gender, females tended to have psychological well-being more than males. It was related to thinking pattern affecting the coping strategy and social activities being done. Females were able to express their emotion to somebody else, and females like to make social relation more than males.

### Social Support from Families

According to Cobb (cited in Vaux, 1988, p.7), social support was giving verbal and non-verbal information, behavioral and material assistance brought about from close social relation or concluded from their existence that made individual given more attention, valuable and loved so that it would be beneficial for well-being of individual who took it.

Sarason (cited in Kuntjoro, 2002) said that social support was condition, availability, care from people that could be counted on who appreciated and loved us. Sarason claimed that support included two things: a) number of social support available as perceived by individual to a number of people he could count on when he needed help (quantitative approach); b) satisfaction level about social support taken perceived from individual's perception that his needs had been met (qualitative approach).

House (cited in Vaux, 1988, h.18) defined social support as interpersonal relationship in taking information, emotional attention, evaluation, and instrumental assistance through interaction with environment. This relationship had emotional benefit or behavioral effect on the taker, to help him to over-come his problems. This definition was used in this study.

### Kinds of Social Support

House (cited in Vaux, 1988, p.18) differentiated social support into four kinds, namely:

**Emotional support.** Including empathy, care, and attention to individuals so that individuals felt comfortable, being attended, and loved.

**Appreciative support.** Through showing respect to the individual.

**Instrumental support.** Through direct help or assistance to the individuals by giving loan or job needed.

**Informative support.** Including advice, suggestion, feedback or a way out of individual's problems

Social support given to individuals would give them spirit and motivation to go on living because they felt being attended, supported, and appreciated. Caplan (cited in Vaux; 1988, p.5) said that social support came from spouse, family, friend, or social organization the individual follows. According to Rodin and Salovey (cited in Smet, 1994, p.33), the most important social support came from family. Gore (cited in Gottlieb, 1983, p.19) said that social support mostly came from close relation, namely family and close friends. Close relation could help maintain healthy behavior. Based upon these analysis, this study emphasized on social support that came from family.

### Old Age

Based upon *life-span*, human development was divided into two phases, namely early phase (children and adolescence) and late phase (young, middle age, and old age)

### Characteristics and Change in Old Age

Papalia & Olds (1992) explained that characteristics of late adult (65 years of age) as follows: mostly they were active and healthy although there was a decrease in physical, health, mental awareness, and memory. Reaction time was also decreasing. They were motivated to overcome loss in many areas; ability loss or do something, loss of beloved ones. Retirement made them have a lot of spare time but with less stability in economic condition. Motivation to find the purpose of life emerged to face coming death.

### Obstacles and Problems of Old Age

Concern in old age involves: a) Post power syndrome: if the identity is determined by job, individuals would find it difficult to adapt in retirement years; b) Empty

nest: children exit because of study or marriage could give imbalance and crisis; c) Death: loss of spouse, close friends and afraid of death could become a source of sadness and depression in old age.

## Method

Population of this study were the elderly who lived in Temalang, Southern Semarang who lived together with their families. Several of them belonged to Salsabila organization as big as 36 people, Bina Lansia organization, Semarang 40 people and at family homes 84 people. Proportional random sampling technique was used because the numbers of subjects were different in several locations. Sample was chosen randomly about 50% of the population, using Slovin's formula. From Salsabila, it was chosen 18 people, Bina Lansia 20 people, and 42 people from family homes at Temalang 42 people, 80 people altogether.

Data was taken using questionnaire for social support from family scale. The instrument was developed based upon four social support dimension, consisted of 32 question items, 19 positive statements, 13 negative statements. Another instrument was psychological well-being, consisted of 33 questions, 21 positive statements, and 12 negative statements. Psychological well-being was the ability to function positively from psychological point of view, so the items were developed from indicators of psychological well-being (Ryff, as cited in Keyes & Magyar-Moe, 2003). The type of questionnaire was Self-Administered Questionnaire.

Instruments trial was done on 30 subjects. Corrected Item-total correlation was used to select items with qualitative consideration to minimize errors that could happen. Reliability was calculated through Alpha Cronbach. Pearson correlation was also used. Correlation between social support and psychological well-being was analyzed using Pearson product moment, whereas contribution between dimensions of social support upon psychological well-being was analyzed using regression analysis through SPSS 17 program for window.

## Results

Table 1 reveals the respondents' answers to the two instruments. Results of validity and reliability test of research instruments could be seen in Table 2, and results of validity and reliability instrument of social support and psychological well-being could be seen in Table 3. Normality test can be seen in Figure 1 and 2.

Frequency distribution of social support from family can be seen in Table 4, and psychological well-being in Table 5. Based on Table 4, it can be concluded that generally old people in Semarang felt high social support from family. Table 5 shows that in general the psychological well-being of old people in Semarang was moderate in category.

Product moment correlation coefficient of social support and psychological well-being is .739 with

Table 1

### *Respondents' Answers to Two Instruments*

Positive Items (+)		Negative Items (-)	
Score	Answer	Score	Answer
5	SS	1	SS
4	S	2	S
3	TAP	3	TAP
2	TS	4	TS
1	STS	5	STS

Table 2

### *Analysis of Instrument of Social Support and Psychological Well-being*

Variable	Sum Item Early	Span Validity	Sum Item Revised	Span Validity	Information
Social support	44	.00 - .90	32	.36 - .95	32 items valid
Psychological WB	36	.00 - .84	33	.22 - .74	33 items valid

Table 3

### *Results of Reliability Test of Instrument of Social Support and Psychological Well-Being*

Variable	Number of items	Reliability	Information
Dukungan Sosial	32	.97	Highly reliable
Psychological Well-being	33	.92	Highly reliable

Table 4

### *Frequency Distribution of Social Support from Family*

Category	F	%
High	45	56.25
Moderate	20	25
Low	15	18.75
Total	80	100

Table 5

### *Frequency Distribution of Psychological Well-Being*

Category	F	%
High	23	28.75
Moderate	40	50
Low	17	21.25
Total	80	100

significance of .000. This means there is a strong positive and significant correlation between social support and psychological well-being in old people in Southern Semarang. R-Square is .546, meaning that social support from family gives contribution to psychological well-being as big as 54.6%.

Correlation and contribution of each aspect of social support from family to psychological well-being can be seen in Table 6. Results of regression analysis of between dimensions of social support from family upon senior citizen psychological well-being in Southern Semarang can be seen in Table 7. ANOVA test shows that dimensions of social support from family altogether contribute upon psychological well-being.

## Discussion

For those senior citizens who lived with their families, support from spouse, children and grandchildren is very important to get psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is a picture of how far an individual has a purpose in life, to realize his potentials, quality of relationship with others, and responsibility of his own life based upon his evaluation and judgment towards himself and his life experiences. According to Ryff (2002) well-being was very important for senior citizen, because by having it, they would be happier and more satisfied with their lives and would not have any depression.

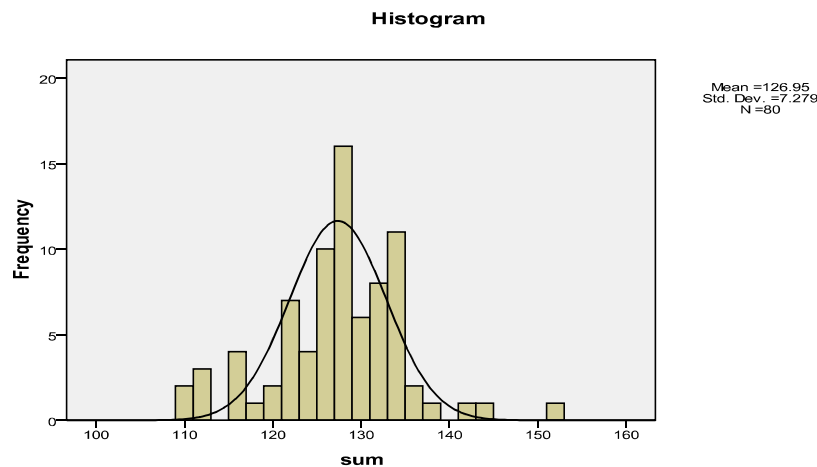


Figure 1. Graphics of data spread of social support from family in Semarang

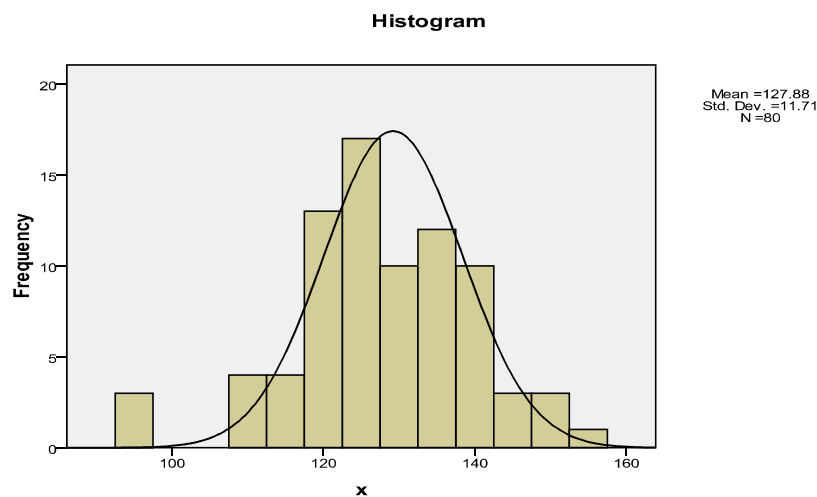


Figure 2. Graphics of data spread of psychological well-being old people in Semarang

Table 6

*Recapitulation of Correlation and Contribution of Each Aspect of Family to Psychological Well-Being in Old Population in Southern Semarang*

Variable	Correlation	Contribution	Correlation interpretation
Social support from family and psychological well-being	.739	54.6 %	Strong
Emotional support and psychological well-being	.761	57.9 %	Strong
Appreciative support and psychological well-being	.741	54. %	Strong
Instrumental support and psychological well-being	.481	23.1 %	Moderate
Informative support and psychological well-being	.564	31.9 %	Moderate

Table 7

*Recapitulation of Contribution of Regression Analysis of Between Dimensions of Senior Citizen Psychological Well-Being in Southern Semarang.*

Variable	Contribution
Emotional and appreciative support upon psychological well-being	69.3 %
Emotional and instrumental support on psychological well-being	64.1 %
Emotional and informative support upon psychological well-being	58.1 %
Appreciative and instrumental support upon psychological well-being	56.5 %
Appreciative and informative support on psychological well-being	56.4 %
Instrumental and informative support on psychological well-being	35.3 %

Results indicate that psychological well-being of senior citizens in Southern Semarang as many as 80 people, 28.75% or 23 people have high category, 50% or 40 people have moderate category and 21.25% or 17 people have low category. Generally, those who have high psychological well-being are able to take active role in fulfilling their needs, to be self sufficient, able to withstand social pressure, and to show positive attitude toward themselves. Those who have moderate category also have positive mastery on environment including family, able to get self acceptance, to be self sufficient, have a positive relation with family. Personal development and their purpose of life are good enough.

Seventeen people have low category of psychological well-being. These senior citizens have difficulty in increasing and developing themselves, in developing a good behavior and attitude, and have the feeling that their lives are not meaningful. Based on observation, these people can communicate with other people, but they feel lacking in physical ability that influences their daily lives so that they cannot reach good psychological well-being.

To obtain psychological well-being, the elderly need social support from their families, from spouse, and children who live in the same house. This is in accordance with Winnubust (cited in Smet, 1994) who wrote that social support was closely related to harmonious relation with other people so that from that relation the person knew that other people cared, appreciated, and loved him.

Social support is a dominant factor that influences the elderly psychological well-being. The elderly would feel

that they were cared for and loved, and this would benefit the elderly's well-being. Social support from family contributes 54.6% upon elderly' psychological well-being in Southern Semarang. They felt the support from spouse, and children, and it depends on the elderly to perceive and use that social support to help them increase their psychological well being, self esteem and self identity.

As many as 45.4% psychological well-being of the elderly was not contributed by social support. Other things that influence psychological well-being are social network, personal competence, religion, personality, gender, and economic status (Pinquart & Sörenson, 2000). It was found that the elderly also have elderly organization, a place where the elderly can share and help each other. From the interview, it was found that the elderly believe that in old age, the most important thing is to get close to God, so mostly they were very religious in quality as well as in quantity.

The dominant social support felt by the elderly in Southern Semarang is emotional support, as high as 69.4%. Emotional support contributes 57.9% to psychological well-being. According to Sarafino and Cohen (cited in Suhita, 1995, p. 40) emotional support made senior citizens feel being loved, and have comfortable feeling so that they could face problems better, able to handle uncontrollable situation, and influence well-being.

Appreciative support from family gives contribution as high as 54.8% to psychological well-being. Positive appreciation, spirit building, agreement to the elderly could help them develop self esteem.

According to House (*Social Support*, Alan Vaux, 1988, p.18) instrumental support from family like living cost, food, and facilities in the house could reduce stress, but in this study, instrumental support only gives little contribution, as low as 23.1%. Even though there is instrumental support from family, but the elderly do not have enough motivation to increase life satisfaction. According to Ryff and Keyes (1995), psychological well-being was also influenced by personality factor like personal and social competence, stay away from conflict and stress. Informative support from family gives contribution of 31.9% to psychological well-being. The elderly liked to discuss anything with their spouses and children, exchanging information, giving input so that they could understand and solve problems easier. (House, as cited in Suhita, 2005).

Regression analysis was done related to dimensions of social support from family and psychological well-being. Results of regression analysis show that emotional and appreciative support together gives significant contribution to psychological well-being.

Appreciative support is done through respect, motivating their ideas, and praise what they have done. If this is accompanied with emotional support like empathy, care, and attention from their offspring, it will help them to see the positive side in them and increase self respect, self- confidence in facing problems in their lives (House, as cited in Vaux, 1988, p.18).

Emotional and instrumental support together can give a high contribution to psychological well-being in the elderly in Southern Semarang. It means that direct assistance in living cost and facility will be more appreciated by the elderly if it is given with care, attention and empathy from their families (House, as cited in Vaux, 1988, h.18).

Emotional and instrumental support give as much as 58.1% to psychological well-being, but informative support gives insignificant contribution. According to Persma (cited in Kuntjoro, 2009), mostly the elderly had a stiff thinking pattern and difficult to accept new ideas. It was difficult for them to accept suggestion from younger people. But informative support accompanied by a good emotional support will increase psychological well-being. Gottlieb (cited in Vaux, 1988, p.6) stated that emotionally supported individuals would feel relieved being given attention or suggestion to make a way out of their problems.

Appreciative and informative support, and appreciative and instrumental support both give high contribution to psychological well-being of the elderly in Southern Semarang, but instrumental and informative support does not give significant contribution. It means that

instrumental and informative support does not have any meaning as far as they do not feel highly appreciated. Ritter (cited in Smet, 1994, p.134) stated that appreciative support can act as motivator to strive forward, do not regret present circumstances, and still develop self respect. Instrumental and informative support give contribution as much as 35.3%, but instrumental support does not give significant contribution to psychological well-being. It means that even though family gives good instrumental support, but if the elderly feel that informative support is less than expected, it does not help them to increase psychological well-being. Based upon those explanations, it seems that emotional and appreciative support give higher contribution than instrumental and informative support. Even though the elderly receive informative and instrumental support, they appreciate more the emotional and appreciative support to increase the psychological well-being.

## Conclusion and Suggestion

The elderly in Southern Semarang feel high social support from family. In general, the psychological well-being of the elderly in Southern Semarang is relatively high. The elderly who have high psychological well-being master the environment more. They are more sufficient, and have a positive relation with other people. The elderly who have low psychological well-being feel that their lives are not meaningful, difficult to accept themselves, and the personal development is low. Based upon four dimensions of social support from family, emotional support and appreciative support give higher contribution than instrumental and informative support.

Suggestion for spouse and children, informative support like suggestion, feedback, or instruction, better be done with empathy and attention. By doing this, the elderly would feel comfortable, attended and loved. Positive expression on their ideas, feeling, and performance would make them able to see positive side of themselves.

Instrumental support like medication, living cost, food and facilities should be given attentively and being ready to listen to what they need and health. Willing to listen to their complain would give positive effect as to reduce emotional stress. Instrumental support done with respect would increase self-competence and being able to solve their problems easier. The next research is suggested to study other variables that influence psychological well-being like socioeconomic status, social network, personal competence, religion, personality, and gender.

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