

## The Relationship Between Social Support And Independence Among Adolescents At The Bandung Salvation Army Orphanage

Veronica Ishabela Romaulytua Rajagukguk<sup>1</sup>, Dewi Dolifah<sup>1</sup>, Amanda Puspanditaning Sejati<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Sumedang, Indonesia.

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#### Corresponding Author :

Dewi Dolifah

E-mail : [dewidolifah@upi.edu](mailto:dewidolifah@upi.edu)

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### ABSTRACT

**Background & Objective:** This study was motivated by the importance of social support as a key predictor of adolescent independence, particularly in orphanages. The aim was to empirically test the relationship between perceived social support and the level of independence among adolescents at the Bandung Salvation Army Orphanage. **Method:** The research employed a quantitative correlational design with a cross-sectional approach. The population included all adolescent residents, and the total sampling technique was used, yielding a sample size of 33 respondents. Data collection utilized Likert scale questionnaires, consisting of 38 items for social support and 15 items for adolescent independence. Data analysis included Univariate analysis for descriptive statistics and Bivariate analysis using the Spearman's rho correlation test to examine the hypothesis. **Result:** Univariate results indicated that the majority of adolescents reported experiencing insufficient social support (Not Supporting category), with the most pronounced deficit in appraisal support. Correspondingly, the overall level of adolescent independence skewed toward the Not Independent category. The bivariate analysis confirmed a highly significant positive relationship between social support and adolescent independence, evidenced by a significance value of  $p < 0.001$ . **Conclusion:** that social support is statistically and significantly correlated with adolescent independence in the orphanage setting. Therefore, improving the quality of social support, especially appraisal support, is essential for optimizing the development of adolescent autonomy and self-reliance.

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## **Introduction**

Adolescence is a critical period in the human life cycle marked by significant changes, both physically, cognitively, and psychosocially. The transition from childhood to adulthood requires the achievement of fundamental developmental tasks, one of which is the formation of independence and self-autonomy. However, the challenges faced by adolescents are multiplied, especially for those living in collective care environments, such as orphanages. In this context, adolescents often experience higher psychological vulnerability due to limited interaction with their immediate family and pressure to adapt to the institutional system. Therefore, the urgency of research lies in a deep understanding of the crucial supporting factors that can mitigate this vulnerability and ensure optimal psychosocial development, namely social support from the care environment.

Adolescent independence is defined as an individual's capacity to make decisions, manage themselves, solve problems, and take responsibility for their own actions without being overly dependent on others. According to Sukaesih (2023), independence consists of three essential dimensions: attitudinal independence (cognitive autonomy), emotional independence (self-confidence), and functional independence (practical life skills). Meanwhile, the concept of social support refers to the availability and quality of assistance received by individuals through their social networks, which includes emotional, instrumental, informational, and evaluative support (Sarafino & Smith, 2011). In the orphanage environment, social support largely comes from caregivers, staff, and peers, who act as substitutes for the absent nuclear family support system (Singstad et al., 2021). The balance between adequate support and opportunities to develop autonomy is key to a successful transition to adulthood (Kurniawan et al., 2022).

The topic of social support and adolescent independence in orphanages is highly relevant, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study enriches our understanding of the ecological model of adolescent development, particularly how non-familial environmental factors influence the achievement of universal psychosocial developmental tasks. Practically, orphanages have a mandate to prepare adolescents to be released into society as independent individuals (Hamdanah & Surawan, 2022). Empirical data from previous studies show that although orphanages provide instrumental support (facilities and physical needs), there is often a deficit in intensive emotional support, resulting in adolescent independence levels that tend to be less than optimal (Oktaviana, 2024). Therefore, mapping the relationship between these two variables is important as a basis for developing care intervention programs that focus on strengthening psychosocial aspects.

Research over the past five years has consistently emphasized the crucial role of social support in the developmental phase toward adulthood, especially for adolescents raised outside the nuclear family (Piotrowski et al., 2020). Research trends indicate that strong social support is an important predictor of improved psychological well-being, self-exploration, self-control, and independence among adolescents (Taylor, 2020; Santre, 2022). In fact, in the context of orphanages, this support has proven vital for overcoming psychological development barriers and building resilience (Oktaviana, 2024; Izaguirre et al., 2022). However, there is a significant research gap, particularly in Indonesia, where a deep understanding of the types, intensity, and mechanisms of social support that are most effective in shaping the independence of adolescents in orphanages is still limited (Oda & Yoshioka, 2021).

This gap is exacerbated by the findings of preliminary studies at the research site, which indicate that communication barriers cause adolescents to feel a lack of social support, directly impacting their level of independence (Hapsari et al., 2022). Therefore, the general objective of this study is to empirically examine the relationship between social support and adolescent independence at the Bandung Salvation Army Orphanage. The strengths (contributions) of this study are that it provides a better understanding of the mechanisms of social support in orphanages (theoretically) and presents practical references for nurses, health workers, and caregivers in designing interventions that focus on strengthening social support systems to improve adolescent independence holistically (practically).

As a direction for future research, it is recommended to apply a longitudinal design to monitor the development of adolescent independence over time. In addition, further research needs to add mediator or moderator variables, such as adolescent self-efficacy, parenting styles, or learning environments, and expand the research location so that the results can be generalized more broadly.

### Objective

To investigate the correlation between perceived social support and the level of independence among adolescents residing at the Bala Keselamatan Bandung Orphanage Foundation.

### Method

This study used a quantitative method with a cross-sectional correlational design. This design was chosen to empirically test the relationship between the variables of Social Support and Adolescent Independence at a certain point in time, without any intervention or manipulation of variables. The study was conducted at the Bandung Salvation Army Orphanage. The study population consisted of all adolescents living in the orphanage. The sampling technique used was Total Sampling, so that the sample size was equal to the total population, namely 33 respondents aged 10 to 21 years who had lived in the orphanage for at least one month. The research instrument was a Likert Scale questionnaire consisting of two parts: 38 items to measure social support and 15 items to measure adolescent independence. The collected data were processed through the stages of editing, coding, data entry, and cleaning. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using univariate analysis to present the characteristics of the respondents in the form of frequency distribution and percentages, as well as bivariate analysis to test the hypothesis of the relationship using Spearman's rho correlation test. The entire data analysis process was carried out with the help of JASP software by setting a significance limit of  $p < 0.001$ .

### Results

#### Respondent Characteristics

**TABLE 1.** Frequent Distribution Based on Demographics

Variable	N	%
<i>Level of Education</i>		
SMA	20	60.0
SMP	13	40.0
<i>Age</i>		
12 years old	1	3.0
13 years old	3	9.1
14 years old	4	12.1

Variable	N	%
15 years old	3	9.0
16 years old	10	30.4
17 years old	10	30.4
18 years old	2	6.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	19	57.6
Female	14	42.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Overview of Social Support and Independence for Adolescents

**TABLE 2.** Frequency Distribution of Social Support for Adolescents in Orphanages Bandung Salvation Army Foundation

Social Support	Supporting	%	Not Supporting	%
Emotional Support	14	42.4	19	57.6
Appreciation Support	12	36.4	21	63.6
Instrumental support	13	39.4	20	60.6
Information support	16	48.5	17	51.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

**TABLE 3.** Frequency Distribution of Independence Among Adolescents in Orphanages Bandung Salvation Army Foundation

Independence	Self-reliant	%	Not self-reliant	%
Independence of Attitude	13	39.4	20	60.6
Emotional Independence	16	48.5	21	51.5
Functional Independence	11	33.3	22	66.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

**TABLE 4.** The Relationship between Social Support and Independence among Adolescents in Orphanages Bandung Salvation Army Foundation

Independence	Social Support								p-value	
	Emotional Support		Appreciation Support		Instrumental support		Information Support			
<b>Independence of Attitude</b>	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS	<b>Total</b>	
Self-reliant	7	6	3	10	5	8	6	7	13	
Not Self-reliant	7	13	9	11	8	12	10	10	20	
<b>Emotional Independence</b>										<
Self-reliant	6	10	3	13	5	11	11	5	11	0.001
Not Self-reliant	8	9	9	8	8	9	5	12	22	
<b>Functional Independence</b>										
Self-reliant	4	7	4	7	6	7	6	5	11	
Not Self-reliant	10	12	8	14	10	13	10	12	22	
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>33</b>	

## Discussion

Social Support is fundamentally defined as the availability of resources and aid categorized as emotional, instrumental, and appraisal support from a dependable social network. For adolescents in institutional settings like the orphanage, this network primarily consists of caregivers, staff, and peers. This support acts as a critical

psychological buffer against stress and a vital catalyst for healthy psychosocial development. The univariate analysis was striking: the majority of adolescents consistently reported a low perception of social support (Not Supporting category) across all sub-dimensions. The most pronounced deficit was found in appraisal support (63.6% not supporting), suggesting that adolescents feel a significant lack of validation, appreciation, and recognition of their personal abilities and worth from their environment.

Adolescent Independence, or autonomy, is the core developmental milestone during this life stage. It is conceptualized here across three dimensions: the capacity for self-governance and decision-making (Functional Independence), the ability to manage and regulate emotions (Emotional Independence), and the development of self-confidence and personal conviction (Attitudinal Independence). The findings indicated that the general level of adolescent independence skewed towards the Not Independent category. This low level of autonomy logically aligns with the perceived lack of support, as the development of self-efficacy (Attitudinal Independence) and effective problem-solving skills (Functional Independence) requires an environment that encourages healthy exploration, experimentation, and supportive risk-taking, which appears to be absent or insufficient based on the self-reports.

The cornerstone of this study lies in the bivariate analysis, which revealed a highly significant relationship between social support and adolescent independence ( $p < 0.001$ ). This statistical confirmation robustly supports the alternative hypothesis (H1), leading to the substantive conclusion that a higher perception of social support is statistically associated with a higher level of adolescent independence. This finding strongly validates and confirms the overarching research trend established in the literature. Firstly, it aligns with global studies by scholars like Taylor (2020) and Santre (2022), which consistently position social support as a potent predictor for positive psychological outcomes, including the crucial element of independence. Secondly, and more critically, in the specific context of institutional care, the results corroborate the work of Oktaviana (2024) and Izaguirre et al. (2022). These studies underscore that robust social support is an absolutely vital ingredient for building resilience, mitigating developmental risks, and fostering adaptive behaviors in environments that inherently lack the stabilizing structure of a traditional family. The empirical data concerning the low level of perceived support directly addresses and confirms the research gap identified earlier (Oda & Yoshioka, 2021).

The preliminary study's observation of communication challenges and insufficient caregiver understanding (Hapsari et al., 2022) is reflected in the outcome variables. The deficit in appraisal support is particularly concerning and consequential; it suggests a breakdown in the process by which caregivers should be affirming the adolescents' self-worth. Without this external validation, the crucial foundation for attitudinal independence the internal belief in one's capacity for self-governance is compromised, there by hindering overall autonomy development. This study therefore suggests that improving the quality of interactions, particularly with a focus on active listening and positive reinforcement (appraisal support), is likely to be the most critical point of intervention for caregivers seeking to increase the level of independence of the adolescents under their care.

This study possesses distinct methodological strengths. The use of a Total Sampling technique is a significant advantage, allowing the researcher to conduct a full census of the target population (N=33). This approach eliminates potential

sampling error and ensures that the findings provide a completely accurate and exhaustive representation of the specific population within the Bandung Salvation Army Foundation Orphanage context. Furthermore, the research focuses on a highly specific and often underserved population in Indonesia, generating valuable primary data to inform future psychosocial interventions and policy within institutional care. The instruments used were also validated and adapted for the specific cultural context, enhancing the internal validity of the measurements. Despite these strengths, three primary limitations must be acknowledged. First, the employed cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish causality and one weakness encountered during the research was the difficulty in accessing communication with one of the orphanages due to very limited access.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the data analysis results, this study concludes that there is a highly significant relationship between social support and adolescent independence at the Bandung Salvation Army Foundation Orphanage ( $p < 0.001$ ). Generally, the majority of adolescents in the orphanage perceived a lack of social support (not supporting category), particularly in the aspect of appraisal support. Consistent with this finding, the overall level of adolescent independence also tended to be in the not independent category. This finding confirms that social support plays a crucial role and is statistically proven to be positively correlated with the development of adolescent independence. Practically, the lack of perceived social support, especially in the form of validation and appreciation, likely contributes to the obstacles faced by adolescents in developing optimal self-autonomy, decision-making skills, and self-confidence.

Recomendation:

### 1. For the Orphanage

The Bandung Salvation Army Foundation Orphanage needs to enhance the quality of interactions with adolescents, focusing specifically on Appraisal Support and Emotional Support. The proposed interventions include assertive communication training for caregivers, as well as setting aside time for one-on-one interactions between caregivers and adolescents to encourage them to be more open about their personal problems.

### 2. For Future Research

Subsequent research should utilize a mixed-methods approach (quantitative and qualitative) to gain a deeper understanding of adolescents' perceptions and experiences regarding the social support they need and receive.

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