

The Effectiveness Of *The Improving Self-Compassion (Isc)* Program In Improving *Students'* Psychological Well-Being

Innaha Fahrish Safitri

Departemen Psikologi, Fakultas Psikologi, Universitas Negeri Malang

Ika Andrini Farida

Departemen Psikologi, Fakultas Psikologi, Universitas Negeri Malang

Helga Graciani Hidajat

Departemen Psikologi, Fakultas Psikologi, Universitas Negeri Malang

Moh. Saifudin

Departemen Keperawatan, Fakultas Ilmu Kesehatan, Universitas Muhammadiyah Lamongan

Email : innaha.fahrish.2508118@students.um.ac.id ika.andrini.fppsi@um.ac.id
helga.graciani.fpsi@um.ac.id moh.saifudin@umla.ac.id

Abstract

Psychological well-being is an important aspect in supporting the optimal psychological functioning of students. However, students' psychological well-being is vulnerable to decline due to various academic and daily life pressures, so structured and efficient interventions are needed to improve psychological well-being. This study aims to test the effectiveness of interventions in the form of an improving self-compassion (ISC) program which is carried out intensively for five days in improving psychological well-being. The research method used is quasi-experimental with a non-equivalent control group design. The research subjects consisted of 32 students consisting of two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. Each group consisted of 16 students. Data collection was carried out using the scale of psychological well-being (SPWB) before and after treatment. Data analysis was carried out using the independent sample t-test technique on the psychological well-being gain score. The results of the study showed a significant difference between the two groups. The experimental group had an average gain score of 5.94, while the control group had an average gain score of 1.00. The effect size value was moderate (Cohens'd = 0.732), which showed that the ISC program provided had a positive impact on improving psychological well-being. The findings of this study prove that the Improving Self-Compassion (ISC) program is effective in improving students' psychological well-being.

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Keywords: Psychological Well-Being; Self-Compassion; Student; Experimentation.

INTRODUCTION

Students are a group of individuals with high demands to be able to achieve independence and determine the direction of life in the future. In this phase, students are faced with various academic demands, such as achievement of achievements, completion of assignments, and preparation before entering the world of work which takes place simultaneously with various personal and social demands. The existence of these various demands can potentially be a source of psychological pressure for students, especially when required to adjust to increasingly complex changes in roles, environments and responsibilities. Studies by Hadi et al. (2025) It shows that psychological pressure on students is often triggered by task loads, time limitations, academic competition, family expectations, demands from lecturers, low social support, financial problems, language limitations and technological limitations. These various sources of psychological pressure make students a group of individuals who are vulnerable to experiencing problems with their psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being Or commonly referred to as psychological well-being, is an important aspect that must be possessed by every individual, especially students. *Psychological well-being* that is, the condition of the functioning of the individual positively and the ability to develop optimally as a human being (Ryff, 1989). *Psychological well-being* It not only means that it is free from psychological disorders, but it includes six main dimensions, namely self-acceptance (*self-acceptance*), autonomy (*Autonomy*), positive relationships with others (*positive relationship with others*), personal growth (*Personal Growth*), life goals (*Purpose in Life*) and environmental control (*Environmental Mastery*) (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Individuals with *psychological well-being* who is tall has a positive attitude towards themselves and their lives, has competence and meaningful goals, is able to establish positive relationships, has a high autonomy and sense of development and is able to actualize themselves optimally (Zabarovska & Kresan, 2021). This is in line with the findings of a study by Kumar (2024) which shows that *psychological well-being* plays an important role for students because it can increase academic success and personal development.

However, even though *psychological well-being* important for students to have in undergoing various academic demands and daily life, various studies show that the level of *psychological well-being* students are not always in optimal condition. A study on 208 students aged 19-25 years found that as many as 16.35% of the students studied had a *psychological well-*

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being below average or low (Anjum, 2021). In line with studies by Dodd et al. (2021) 787 students during the COVID-19 pandemic who found that as many as 33.8% of students had a *psychological well-being* low and 31.5% very low, only 34.7% of students have a *psychological well-being* adequate. Low level *psychological well-being* in this group it is related to female gender, low subjective social status, negative learning experiences, and the magnitude of the impact of COVID-19 on student studies. In addition, a study of 321 psychology students found that more than half of the students studied had a low level of psychological well-being of 51.6% along with high levels of depression, stress and anxiety. These findings showed that low levels of psychological well-being *psychological well-being* is a problem that is quite prominent among students, so it requires prevention strategies and appropriate interventions.

The ideal promotive and preventive strategy is not only oriented to psychological problems, but also to strengthening students' internal resources in order to be able to face various difficulties and maintain optimal positive psychological functions. One of the relevant internal psychological resources is *self compassion*, which is the ability to treat oneself with kindness when facing difficulties, realizing that these experiences are part of human life and the ability to respond to them in a balanced manner (K. D. Neff, 2003b). According to Neff (2003), self-compassion consists of three main components that are positive, namely self-kindness, *Common Humanity* and *mindfulness*. Each of these main components has a negative opposite, namely self-judgment, *Insulation* and *over-identification*. *Self-compassion* is a skill that can be developed, so that it has the potential to be an intervention in supporting improvement *psychological well-being* Students.

Self-compassion can help individuals in responding to difficult experiences adaptively, so that *psychological well-being* stay awake. *Self-kindness* helping individuals in self-acceptance and self-esteem, *Common Humanity* help individuals to realize that difficulties are part of the human experience in general so as to reduce feelings of isolation, while *mindfulness* can help individuals in dealing with negative experiences in a balanced, not excessive and not too dissolved in them (K. D. Neff, 2003a). The process is in harmony with the six dimensions *psychological well-being*. *Self-kindness* can encourage self-acceptance and personal growth, *Common Humanity* can encourage positive relationships with others and life goals and *mindfulness* can encourage environmental control and autonomy. So that *Self-compassion* can be an internal psychological resource owned by individuals in maintaining positive psychological function when facing various difficulties.

Various studies show that there is a positive relationship between *Self-compassion* and *psychological well-being*. A study of 484 college students aged 18-24 in Vietnam found that self-



compassion was positively and significantly correlated with *psychological well-being*, which means that the higher the level *Self-compassion* then the higher the level *psychological well-being* (Tran et al., 2022). A study of 153 college students in Malaysia also showed a positive and significant relationship between self-compassion and *psychological well-being* (Amri et al., 2024). In line with these findings, research on students in Indonesia also showed similar results. Study by Syafrina & Farida (2023) of 250 students from three universities in Malang City showed that *Self-compassion* Predict *psychological well-being* with a contribution of 54%. In addition, a study by Kotera et al. (2022) found that *Self-compassion* and *Academic Engagement* together explain 36% variation *Mental well-being* students in Indonesia, with *Self-compassion* as the strongest predictor.

Although previous findings have shown a link between self-compassion and *psychological well-being*, evidence of the effectiveness of efforts to develop *Self-compassion* in improving *psychological well-being* is still limited, especially in the context of students in Indonesia. These limitations show the need for research that tests the development of self-compassion through a structured intervention approach. One approach that can be used is the *Improving Self-Compassion* (ISC) designed based on the main components *Self-compassion*, namely self-kindness vs self-judgement, *Common Humanity* vs *Insulation* and *mindfulness* vs *Over-identification* (K. D. Neff, 2003a). The ISC program is structured based on psychoeducation and *experiential learning*, which consists of a variety of structured exercises, including: 1) *Loving-Kindness Meditation*; 2) *Self-Kindness Exercise*; 3) *Just Like Me Meditation*; 4) *Shared Humanity Journaling*; 5) *Mindfulness Practice*; 6) *Self-Compassionate Letter*. The ISC program aims to help students develop a more adaptive attitude towards themselves when experiencing difficulties, so that they can support *psychological well-being*.

This research aims to test the effectiveness of the program *Improving Self-Compassion* (ISC) in improving *psychological well-being* students. In contrast to previous research that examined the relationship between *Self-compassion* and *psychological well-being*, this study uses a treatment approach to test for changes *psychological well-being* students before and after participating in the ISC program. This research is expected to make an empirical contribution regarding the implementation of self-compassion-based programs as one of the promotive and preventive approaches in supporting *psychological well-being* students. Based on the theoretical foundation and empirical findings from previous studies, the hypothesis of this study is that students who participate in the ISC program show an increase in *psychological well-being* compared to students who did not attend the ISC program.



METHODS

Research Design

This study uses an experimental method with an approach *quasi-experimental*. The research design used is *Non-Equivalent Control Group Design*. *Non-equivalent control group design* is a research design in which the experimental group and the control group are not randomly selected (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This design was chosen because the formation of the experimental group and the control group was not carried out through a randomization process, but based on the willingness of students to participate in the entire series of programs *Improving Self-Compassion* (ISC) which was held for five days.

Research Subject

The participants in this study are students from a private university in the city of Lamongan. The sampling techniques used in this study are *Nonprobability Sampling*, with design *Convenience Sampling*. *Convenience sampling* is a sampling technique in which the selection of research subjects is carried out based on its ease of access and availability (Hossan et al., 2023). The selection of this technique was based on considerations of ease of accessibility, time efficiency and availability of participants. The sample criteria used in this study were active students aged 19-22 years and were willing to voluntarily participate in the entire research series from start to finish by filling in the *inform consent*. The research participants totaled 32 students, of which each group consisted of 16 students.

Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study are *scale of psychological well-being* (SPWB) developed by Ryff (1989) and has been adapted into Indonesian by Squirting (2025). The scale of this adaptation version consists of 22 items with six dimensions, namely *Autonomy* (3 items), *Environmental Mastery* (4 items), *Personal Growth* (4 items), *positive relationship with others* (3 items), *Purpose in Life* (4 items) and *self-acceptance* (4 items). This measuring tool has good internal consistency, with an AVE value of 0.88 and a CR of 0.99 so that it meets the reliability criteria and is suitable for use in the study (Komarudin, 2025). This scale is used to measure the level of *psychological well-being* participants before and after participating in the ISC program.

Research Implementation Procedure

This research is carried out through several stages, namely preparation, implementation *Pretest*, intervention provision (ISC Program), implementation *Posttest* and data analysis. At the

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preparation stage, the researcher recruits participants according to the criteria that have been set, provides an explanation of the research objectives and procedures, and obtains approval for participation (*Inform consent*). Next, all participants filled in the instruments *psychological well-being* as a preliminary measurement (*Pretest*), then participants were divided into experimental groups and control groups. The experimental group was given an intervention in the form of an ISC program which was carried out for five days by applying the *Hybrid*, which combines three face-to-face or offline meetings and two online meetings. The ISC program consists of a series of psychoeducation *Self-compassion* and structured training that includes *Loving-Kindness Meditation*, *Self-Kindness Exercise*, *Just Like Me Meditation*, *Shared Humanity Journaling*, *Mindfulness Practice* and *Self-Compassionate Letter*. Meanwhile, the control group was not given intervention during the study. After the ISC program was completed, the two groups again filled the instruments *psychological well-being* as a final measurement (*Posttest*) to know the change in conditions *psychological well-being* after the ISC program takes place. All data obtained from the stage *Pretest* and *Posttest* then analyzed to test the difference in changes *psychological well-being* between experimental groups and groups control. The flow of the research implementation procedure is presented in Figure 1.

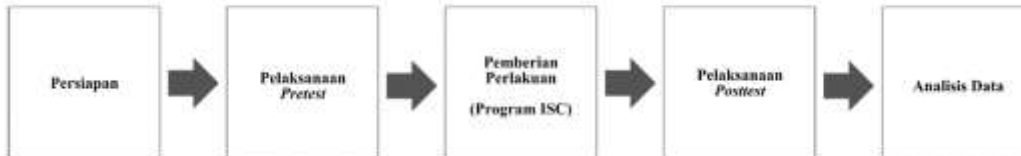


Figure 1. Research Implementation Procedure Flow

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The research participants totaled 32 students and consisted of two groups, namely the experimental group of 16 students and the control group of 16 students. The participants were 19-21 years old and were students at the S1 education level. The research was carried out for five consecutive days. All participants were given *Pretest* on the first day, before being given treatment to the experimental group. Then *Posttest* given to all participants on the fifth day after the treatment in the form of the ISC program was completed. Data obtained from the results *Pretest* and *Posttest* then analyzed to find out the changes *psychological well-being* participants before and after the treatment using *gain score psychological well-being* ($\text{Gain Score} = \text{Posttest} - \text{Pretest}$).

The data analysis process is carried out with the help of *Software JASP (Jeffreys's Amazing Statistic Program)* with the *Independent Sample T-test*. The data analysis carried out in this study includes: 1) normality test; 2) homogeneity test; 3) hypothetical test.

The normality test is used to assess whether the data comes from a normally distributed population, as one of the assumptions in statistical analysis such as *Independent Sample T-Test* (Tsagris & Pandis, 2021). The results of the normality test are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Normality Test Results

Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic (W)	Sig. (p)
<i>Gain score Psychological Well-being</i>	0.9494	0.138

Based on Table 1, the results of the normality test using the *Shapiro-Wilk* on the data *Gain score Psychological Well-being* obtained statistical values (W) of 0.9494 with a significance value $p = 0.138$. Because the significance value is greater than the significance level of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), then it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed and qualified for parametric statistical tests.

The homogeneity test is used to determine whether two or more groups have the same variance, which is an important assumption before applying parametric statistical methods (Yonar et al., 2023). The results of the homogeneity test are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Homogeneity Test Results

Lavene's Test				
	Statistic (F)	df1	df2	Sig. (p)
<i>Gain score Psychological Well-being</i>	0.126	1	30	0.725

Based on Table 2, the results of the homogeneity test using *Lavene's Test* on *Gain score Psychological Well-being* Obtained Scores $F (1,30) = 0.126$ with a significance value $p = 0.725$. Because the significance value is greater than the level of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), it can be concluded that



the variance of data between the experimental group and the control group is homogeneous or the same, so that the homogeneity test assumption requirements for parametric statistical tests have been met.

After confirming that the data is distributed normally and homogeneously, a hypothesis test is carried out to find out if there is an increase *psychological well-being* participants before and after the treatment in the form of the ISC program. The results of the hypothesis test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Results

<i>Independent Samples T-Test</i>					
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (1-tailed)</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>	<i>SE Cohen's d</i>
<i>Gain score Psychological Well-being</i>	2.070	30	0.024	0.732	0.377

Based on Table 3, the results of the hypothesis test using *Independent Samples T-Test* on *Gain score Psychological Well-being* Obtained Scores $t(30) = 2,070$ with significance value $p = 0.024$ ($p < 0.05$). Since the significance value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a difference in increase *psychological well-being* statistically significant between the experimental group and the control group. In addition, the *effect size* in the form of *Cohen's d* of 0.732 ($SE = 0.377$) indicates that the treatment given in the form of the ISC program has a moderate level of effectiveness ($d > 0.50$) in increasing *psychological well-being* participants.

Overview of score changes *psychological well-being* participants in the experimental group and the control group of *Pretest* up to *Posttest* presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Statistical Description of *Psychological Well-being Score*

Statistics	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	<i>Pretest</i>	<i>Posttest</i>	<i>Pretest</i>	<i>Posttest</i>
Number of participants (<i>N</i>)	16	16	16	16
Minimum Score	72	81	54	56
Maximum Value	114	120	114	113
Average (<i>Mean</i>)	95.13	101.10	94.13	95.13



Standard Deviation (SD)	14.49	12.36	16.69	15.50
Average Gain Score	5.94		1.00	

Based on Table 4, the experimental group experienced an increase in score *psychological well-being* from the average *Pretest* from 95.13 to 101.10 on *Posttest*, with an average increase in *Gain Score* by 5.94. In contrast, the control group was relatively stable with an average increase in *Pretest* from 94.13 to 95.13 on *Posttest*, which results in an average *Gain Score* by 1.00. This difference shows that the provision of treatment in the form of the ISC program is able to make a positive contribution to the improvement of *psychological well-being* participants.

DISCUSSION

This research aims to test the effectiveness of the program *Improving Self-Compassion* (ISC) in improving *psychological well-being* students. The results of statistical analysis showed that the research hypothesis was accepted, namely students who participated in the ISC program showed an increase in *psychological well-being* higher than students who did not participate in the ISC program. Evidence of findings is shown by the difference in improvement *Psychological well-being* significant differences between the experimental group and the control group i.e. $t(30) = 2,070$ and $p = 0.024$, with a moderate effect size of $d = 0.732$. These findings are in line with previous studies that also found that training *Self-compassion* can improve *psychological well-being* nursing students and potentially improve the quality of care they provide (Carmona-Gutiérrez et al., 2025). Study by Hoffman & Baker (2023) also found that the *Mindful Self-Compassion* (MSC) proven to provide benefits to *psychological well-being* people affected by breast cancer.

Improvement *psychological well-being* in the experimental group is inseparable from the program design *Improving Self-Compassion* (ISC) designed based on the main components *Self-compassion*, i.e. self-kindness, *Common Humanity* and *mindfulness* (K. D. Neff, 2023). Development *Self-Kindness* in the ISC program is carried out through *Loving-Kindness Maditation* or compassion meditation, which aims to cultivate an attitude of compassion and unconditional kindness, starting from oneself to encompassing all living beings. Not only that, the development of self-kindness is also carried out through *Self-Kindness Exercise*, It is the practice of pouring what is felt in the form of writing, which aims to recognize self-criticism and train a better and loving response to yourself. *Self-kindness* can help the individual to accept himself (*self-acceptance*) with



all the shortcomings and advantages that they have and can reduce the tendency to criticize themselves too harshly (K. D. Neff, 2003a). In addition, *Self-Kindness* also encourage self-autonomy (*Autonomy*) by helping individuals to treat themselves in a comprehensive way when facing difficulties, so that they are less dependent on external approval (K. D. Neff, 2003a).

Development *Common Humanity* in the ISC program is carried out through *Just Like Me Meditation* or "just like me" meditation, which aims to release feelings of isolation by realizing that everyone has challenges, weaknesses and suffering in life. This awareness helps individuals to feel more connected to others and foster empathy and a sense of shared humanity (K. D. Neff, 2003a). In addition, the development of *Common Humanity* is also carried out through *Shared Humanity Journaling* which aims to assist individuals in realizing that suffering and failure are universal human experiences. *Common humanity* can encourage the growth of empathy and compassion between individuals, where empathy and compassion play an important role in the skill of building positive relationships with others (*positive relationships with others*) because it can improve understanding, emotion regulation, self-awareness, interpersonal communication and more positive social interaction (Yang et al., 2026). In addition, *Common Humanity* It can also strengthen relationships in mental health support from peers because it helps individuals realize that others are also experiencing similar suffering, thus impacting positive relationships with others (Kotera et al., 2024).

Development *mindfulness* in the ISC program is carried out through *Mindfulness Practice* or practice *mindfulness*, which aims to help individuals in being objectively aware of emotions without being too dissolved in them so that they can respond to themselves more calmly and compassionately. *Mindfulness* It is important because individuals need to be aware and accept suffering before they can do themselves good, so that with the existence of *mindfulness* individuals can be helped in reducing excessive attachment to difficult thoughts and feelings (Neff & Dahm, 2015). Study by Crego et al. (2021) found that *mindfulness* relate to various aspects of eudaimonic well-being, including personal growth (*Personal Growth*) and life goals (*Purpose in Life*). *Mindfulness* can support personal growth through increased curiosity (*Inquisitiveness*), which encourages individuals to explore experiences, learn and grow. Relationships *mindfulness* with life goals related to self-control or *Self-control* that assist individuals in directing behavior toward meaningful goals (Crego et al., 2021). In addition, *mindfulness* It is also related to environmental mastery because of the more individual *Mindful* tend to have better awareness and attention to their environmental experiences, conditions, and demands so that individuals can understand the situation more clearly, and can manage responses to various demands and



use environmental resources more effectively (Calin & Ginara, 2023).

The findings of this study show that the development of *Self-compassion* through the ISC program can be one of the efforts to support the improvement of *psychological well-being* students. The ISC program actively stimulates the *psychological well-being* because *Self-compassion* involves openness to self-suffering, non-judgmental acceptance of pain and failure, and the desire to alleviate such suffering through self-kindness so that *psychological well-being* stay awake even though the individual is having difficulties (K. Neff & Germer, 2017). *Self-compassion* can also improve *psychological well-being* Because it encourages individuals to treat themselves with kindness, understanding and acceptance when facing difficulties, thus supporting emotional resilience (M&S, 2026). *Self-compassion* Not only does it play a role in reducing negative responses, but it can also support the formation of a more adaptive attitude towards oneself and the environment. In addition, *Self-compassion* Proven to encourage resilience, more adaptive coping, adaptability and hope, where these capacities can help individuals in facing difficulties as well as maintaining purpose and optimism (Liu et al., 2024; Maris & Fathiyah, 2024; Wang et al., 2026).

CONCLUSION

The *Improving Self-Compassion* (ISC) program has been proven to be effective in improving students' *psychological well-being*. The improvement in *psychological well-being* can be seen from the average *gain score* in the experimental group that participated in the ISC program of 5.94, which was significantly higher than the control group that did not participate in the ISC program with an average *gain score* of 1.00. This finding is evidenced by the results of a statistical test that showed a value of $t(30) = 2.070$ with a significance of $p = 0.024$ ($p < 0.05$), as well as the amount of treatment effect (*Cohen's d* = 0.732) which was moderate, so the research hypothesis was accepted. The ISC program can be considered as a form of preventive and promotive intervention in supporting the *psychological well-being* of students in the university environment. In the next study, the researcher suggested increasing the number of research samples to increase the generalization of results in a wider population and conducting periodic follow-up measurements to determine the sustainability of *changes in psychological well-being* in the long term.



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