Social Competences, Perceived Social Support on Boarding School Students's Psychological Well-being Mediated by Adaptability

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Abstract. Adolescents in an excellent boarding school are facing high challenges and demands. The fulfillment of adolescents' psychological well-being (PWB) enables the development of various competencies, supports the achievement of satisfactory outcomes, and contributes to healthier functioning in adulthood. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the role of students' ability to manage challenges and demands (adaptability) in mediating the relationship between social competence (SC, social and emotional skills including cognitive reappraisal, prosocial behavior, social efficacy, normative and social adjustment), perceived social support (PSS), and PWB. A quantitative method with a cross-sectional design was adopted with adopted. The participants were 402 students in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Serpong and Pekalongan, and a path analysis method was conducted with Smart-PLS. The result showed that adaptability mediated the influence of SC and PSS on the PWB. Furthermore, the study recommended that school need to provide programs to facilitate students' adaptability through the development of positive PSS and improvement of SC.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, Adaptability, Social competence, Perceived social support, Boarding school

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Introduction

Psychological well-being (PWB) is a long-standing issue for adolescents, particularly those in boarding school (Chaudhry et al., 2024; Martin, 2014; Skorodzien, 2020). These adolescents often face challenges related to low self-acceptance, limited autonomy, difficulty building interpersonal relationships, adjustment issues, emotional problems, and behavioral issues that pose risks to the PWB (Erskine et al., 2023).

Adolescents who attend boarding school and live in dormitories face greater challenges than non-boarding students. These challenges are related to patterns of interaction with family, school environment, friendships, rules, and rhythms of dormitory life, as well as psychological changes as a result of separation from parents. Others include demands in academics, time management, and responsibilities that demand independence during the transition period in boarding school (Handono & Bashori, 2013). According to Martin et al. (2021), the characteristics of boarding school, such as rules and conditions that are different from home, as well as the demands of adjusting to a new environment, create pressures that are a risk to PWB.

The adolescents may experience psychological distress, such as poor sleep quality, loneliness, anxiety, depression, and social-emotional issues that impact the general well-being (Chen et al., 2021; Xing et al., 2021). According to previous studies, life in a boarding school could have positive effects on adolescents' well-being. These effects include higher scores in the aspect of purpose in life, greater participation in decision-making processes, receiving good peer support, improved cognitive abilities, greater independence, and better adaptation to various demands (Chang et al., 2023; Manindjo et al., 2023; Martin et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2023). The condition becomes particularly salient in *Madrasah Aliyah Negeri* (MAN) Insan Cendekia Serpong and Pekalongan, two of Indonesia's top-ranked boarding school, characterized by highly selective academic admissions, rigorous performance standards, structured daily routines, and strong expectations for students' autonomy. The competitive learning environment, intensive daily schedules, and high demands for discipline cause students' experience that differs significantly from typical boarding school.

Entering these institutions is a major transition, requiring students to adapt to rigorous academics, communal rules, limited family support, and new peer dynamics in a competitive setting School-based observations, reported by counseling teachers and dormitory supervisors, show several adaptation-related challenges. These challenges generate considerable variation in several factors that collectively shape the general PWB of students throughout the boarding school years. The factors include the ability to regulate emotions, manage social interactions, adjust to changing demands, and perceive available social support.

PWB focuses on the importance of living a purposeful life and contributing to a deeper and more meaningful sense of happiness and satisfaction to achieve positive and fully functioning individuals (Ryff et al., 2021) with interrelated dimensions. These dimensions include self-acceptance, the ability to recognize multiple aspects of self, such as good and bad qualities, and show positive attitudes. Positive relations with others is also a dimension, defined as establishing satisfying, close, and trusting relationships, characterized by empathy, affection, and intimacy. Other dimensions include personal growth, which refers to the feeling of being in a state of continuous development, perceiving individual growth and expansion, and being open to new experiences. Purpose in life or setting goals that give life meaning and direction. Environmental mastery refers to the capacity to manage the environment efficiently and make effective use of available opportunities. Autonomy reflects self-regulated behavior, resistance to social pressure, and self-evaluation based on personal standards. (Ryff, 2014).

Adolescents' PWB correlates with the quality of life (QoL) as students. Students with good PWB show several characteristics, such as having attachment to school, high academic achievement, and being physically and mentally healthier (Amholt et al., 2020; Kaya & Erdem, 2021). Other characteristics include having satisfaction with school and better quality of social relationships (Umberson & Karas Montez, 2010), where the PWB of adolescents during high school is directly correlated to University education (Chaudhry et al., 2024; Coninck et al., 2019).

PWB is not just the absence of stress, but a state defined by an individual's accumulation, protection, and investment of valuable resources. Well-being is achieved and maintained through the effective management of these resources, while distress occurs when resources are threatened or lost. Resources under the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory are regarded as protective factors shielding individuals from stress and strain, which also influence the management of future stressful situations (Hobfoll, 2001). This concept was typically classified into "personal" (internal) and "conditional resources" (environmental). A previous study argued that both classes are important for coping with stressful situations and promoting a sense of positive PWB (Holliman et al., 2021).

Study results suggested that trust and support from peers contributed to greater psychological well-being in adolescents. Other studies showed the importance of building secure bonds with peers, which was associated with higher self-esteem, self-concept, and greater stress coping skills. The capacity to effectively establish social connections and interpersonal relationships with peers, adults, and others promotes social acceptance and inclusion and is also associated with adolescents' well-being (Aneesh & Kumar, 2023; Holopainen et al., 2011; Newhart, 2023).

Adolescents start shifting attachment from parents to peers, and those with strong social skills and effective interactions tend to integrate more easily into the social surroundings, function more effectively, and experience greater PWB (Gómez-López et al., 2022). The quality of social interactions in adolescents' period is related to QoL (Ryff & Singer, 2008). These results support the need to examine the capacity to build satisfying interpersonal relationships, as social competence functions as a personal resource that contributes positively to PWB (Gómez-López et al., 2022).

In recent years, the concept of social competences has developed from simple views focusing mainly on personal traits or actions to more comprehensive and inclusive perspectives that recognize several key dimensions (Gómez-Ortiz et al., 2017). The dimensions include prosocial behavior, cognitive reappraisal, normative adjustment, and social adjustment, covering helping actions, emotion regulation, adherence to norms, and feelings of support and belonging. Social efficacy involves evaluating the success or failure of one's social actions. When considered together, these elements are crucial for understanding the complex and multifaceted nature of social competence (Gómez-Ortiz et al., 2019).

Several studies have shown that social support benefits psychological outcomes among adolescents. Consistent with COR theory, Pössel et al. (2018) found that social support protected adolescents from psychological distress and operated as a buffer against stressful circumstances. Adolescents who perceive a higher level of support have a greater school engagement, higher academic achievement, increased self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and PWB (Poudel et al., 2020). These resources (social competences and PSS) are also important for the successful navigation of changing, novel, and uncertain situations (adaptability).

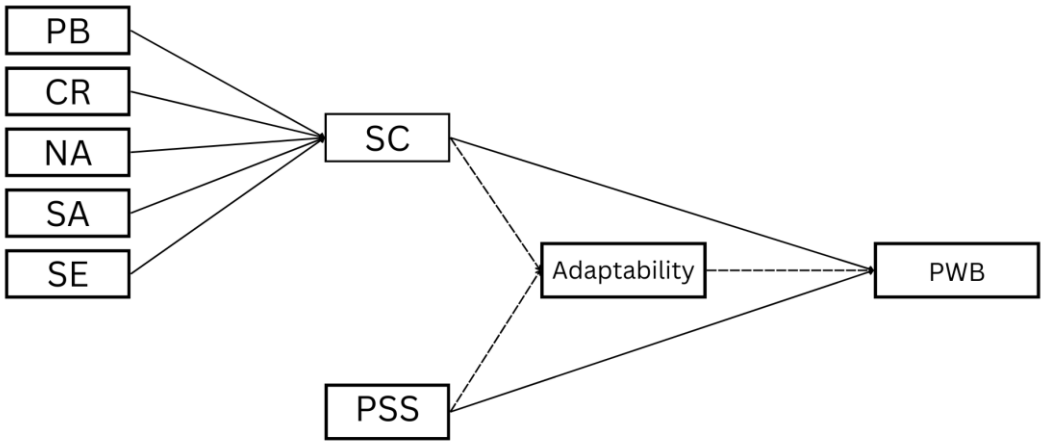

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Across cultures, PSS and adaptability reliably predict students' PWB. Higher perceived support from family, peers, and teachers is associated with better adaptability and well-being, including among students in China and Jakarta (Chang et al., 2023; Adhi et al., 2023), Nepalese secondary students (Poudel et al., 2020), UK university students (Holliman et al., 2021), Chinese international students studying in the UK (Holliman et al., 2022), non-UK countries, such as China (Zhou & Lin, 2016), Chinese secondary school students (Yu et al., 2024), and Chinese vocational students (Xu et al., 2024). Perceived support from key social agents, such as parents, teachers, and friends, not only predicts better school adjustment and well-being (Tomás et al., 2020) but also contributes to the development of adaptability through the enhancement of psychological resources (Xu et al., 2024).

Empirical evidence showed a positive correlation between adaptability and social competence. Adolescents who are more adaptable tend to exhibit stronger interpersonal skills, greater empathy, and higher peer acceptance (Martin et al., 2013; Pulkkinen, 2004; Zhou & Eisenberg, 2012). Recent studies further confirmed that emotional adaptability was associated with higher friendship quality and social integration (Wang et al., 2023). Prosocial behavior, a construct of social competence, was positively related to adaptive behavior (Zhou & Lin, 2016). These results suggested that adaptability served as a key developmental mechanism that enabled adolescents to cope with stress, adjust to diverse social settings, and establish supportive peer relationships.

Exploring the interplay between adaptability and social competence is essential to understanding how adolescents develop healthy social functioning and PWB. However, studies on adaptability during adolescence remain limited, particularly in boarding school settings. More investigation is needed to understand how adaptability influences the psychological functioning of boarding school students. For instance, adaptability may be shaped by social competence, as prosocial behavior relates positively to adaptive behavior (Zhou & Lin, 2016). Social support has also been shown to influence students' PWB in both boarding school and university contexts (Holliman et al., 2021, 2022). These characteristics tend to predict PWB both directly and indirectly through adaptability.

Despite previous studies on adolescents' social competence and well-being, limited evidence exists that considers social competence as a multidimensional construct (Gómez-López et al., 2022). There are also no comparable studies that have been conducted in a boarding school. Moreover, the distinct interpersonal dynamics among boarding school students develop developmental experiences and opportunities (Martin et al., 2021).

To address these gaps, this study jointly examined social competence, PSS, adaptability, and PWB among students at MAN Insan Cendekia Serpong and Pekalongan. It tested the direct effects of social competence and PSS on PWB, and whether adaptability contributes to and mediates these relationships, offering broader insight into adolescent well-being.

Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized model, showing results that may deepen understanding of students' transition to boarding school and inform interventions supporting psychological functioning.

Methods

Study Design

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey methodology was adopted to evaluate the impact of social competence and PSS on students' PWB, with adaptability serving as a mediating variable. This design allowed efficient, single-time data collection from a large sample and was appropriate for examining correlations.

Population and Sample

The stratified random sampling method was used to ensure that the size of the sample from each stratum reflected its proportion of the general population. In this case, the minimum sample size for each stratum was 30 (Sugiyono, 2017). According to Hair et al. (2014), the minimum sample size for structural equation modeling analysis was calculated in a formula = (number of indicators+number of latent variables) x (estimated parameter). The minimum sample size for this study was 120 students, and recommendations advised selecting two or three times that number. The questionnaires were distributed directly to 402 participants at MAN Insan Cendikia Serpong and Pekalongan, with the school's permission and students' voluntary participation.

This study obtained eligibility from the Commission Ethics, Faculty of Public Health, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta. The sample was stratified by age, gender, grade, and previous school to allow for detailed analysis, further enhancing the comprehensiveness and objectivity, as shown in Table 1. This sampling method guaranteed an unbiased and proportionate representation across the school, with participants being randomly selected from each grade.

Table 1 shows that the 402 participants comprised 45% males and 55% females, with 45.8% in grade X. A total of 40.5% were 16 years old, 35.6% were 17 years old, and 44% of the students came from a public junior secondary school.

Instrument

Adaptability was measured using a modified Adaptability scale developed by Martin et al. (2013) and trialled on to sample by Holliman et al. (2022). This sample consisted of 9 items reflecting three aspects of adaptability, namely cognitive, behavioral, and affective. A modified 4-point Likert scale was used, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree), with higher index scores suggesting higher levels of adaptability. An example item was "I am able to reduce feelings of frustration, upset when facing new situations, and cope well with them". The construct convergent and discriminant validity were AVE .560, CR .880, rho_A .852.

Table 1

Overview of study subjects

		Frequency	%
Ages	15-16 years	240	
	17 -19 years	162	
Sex	Male	181	45
	Female	221	55
Grade	X	184	45.8
	XI	179	44.5
	XII	39	9.7
Junior Secondary Origin	Public School	177	44
	Private School	91	22.6
	Boarding School	134	33.3

PWB was measured using the Brief Scale of Psychological Well-Being for Adolescents (BSPWB-A), which was a modification of Ryff's psychological well-being scale for participants developed by Viejo et al. (2018). The BSPWB-A consisted of 20 items that measured the level of agreement or disagreement with 4 aspects, namely self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, and life development. An example item was "I am proud of myself and my life". The construct convergent and discriminant validity were AVE .725, CR .833, rho_A .794.

Social Competence measured using the Adolescents Multidimensional Social Competences-Quesionaire (AMSC-Q), consisted of 26 statement items measuring five dimensions in social competence. These dimensions included prosocial behavior, cognitive reappraisal, normative adjustment, social adjustment, and social efficacy, developed by Gómez-Ortiz et al. (2017). A 4-point Likert scale was used, with options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). An example item was "When faced with stressful situations, I try to think in ways that help me to stay calm". The construct convergent and discriminant validity for cognitive reappraisal were AVE .533, CR .802, rho_A .705. Normative adjustment had AVE .771, CR .815, rho_A .749. Prosocial behavior had AVE .644, CR .794, rho_A .722. Social adjustment had AVE .791, CR .815, rho_A .769 and Social efficacy had AVE .791, CR .812, rho_A .730.

PSS, measured using The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) developed by Zimet et al (1998), consisted of 12 items that described support from parents/family, peers, and significant others. This instrument used a 4-point Likert scale with options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). A sample item was "I get the help and emotional support I need from my family". The construct convergent and discriminant validity were AVE .682, CR .880, rho_A .852.

Data Analysis

A widely used statistical method called partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)

facilitated the exploration of the complex relationship between latent and observable variables. This regression model combined the confirmed factor analysis (CFA) with linear regression, allowing the simultaneous use of structural and measurement models (Sarstedt et al., 2022). The Smart-PLS-4 software was used to evaluate the provided hypothesis. According to Hair et al. (2014), the SEM modeling procedure consisted of two key stages. The first stage focused on the measurement model's psychometric features, verifying that the constructs used in the study satisfied the required validity and reliability standards. The second stage included evaluating the structural model to test the hypothesized correlations between the variables, specifically the mediating role variable.

Table 2
Construct Validty and Reliability

Construct	Item	FL	VIF	α	CR	AVE
Adaptability	A1	.789	1.786	.846	.880	.560
	A2	.807	1.907			
	A3	.770	1.741			
	A4	.714	1.399			
	A5	.705	1.850			
	A6	.714	1.832			
	A7	.789	1.913			
Psychological Well-being	PWB1	.702	1.687	.794	.833	.725
	PWB18	.789	1.826			
	PWB19	.811	1.712			
	PWB20	.701	1.443			
Perceived Social Support	PSS3	.745	1.838	.852	.880	.682
	PSS4	.804	2.410			
	PSS5	.766	1.547			
	PSS6	.766	1.525			
	PSS11	.772	1.524			
Cognitive Reappraisal	CR1	.764	1.233	.705	.820	.533
	CR2	.741	1.385			
	CR3	.802	1.555			
	CR4	.706	1.380			
Normative Adjustment	NA23	.720	1.356	.722	.815	.771
	NA25	.839	1.470			
	NA26	.751	1.424			
Prosocial Behavior	SC14	.749	1.312	.788	.794	.644
	SC15	.702	1.380			
	SC16	.756	1.368			
	SC17	.749	1.258			
Social Adjustment	SC6	.736	1.244	.769	.843	.519
	SC7	.732	1.459			
	SC8	.778	1.720			
	SC9	.790	1.324			
Social Efficacy	SC18	.731	1.527	.730	.812	.791
	SC19	.802	1.591			
	SC20	.727	1.368			
	SC21	.728	1.360			

Note: factor loading (FL), variance Inflation Factor (VIF), Cronbach's alpha (α), Ccomposite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Measurement Model

Convergent and discriminant validity were examined to confirm the quality of the measurement model. The Average variance extracted (AVE) from each construct and the average of the item's outer loading of the variable (Fassott, 2010) were used to measure Convergent validity. Table 2 shows values for factor loading (FL) higher than .700, suggesting strong connections with the respective constructions and each item reliably assessing its intended construct (Hair et al., 2018). By examining the acceptance of FL, this study investigated the tendency of the variance inflation factor (VIF). The measurements were believed to be accurate because of the low threshold number. VIF must have a threshold value of less than 5 (Sarstedt et al., 2022). VIF showed that the multicollinearity of the dataset was significant, the items were acceptable for assessing the constructs, and the entire model is robust (Table 2).

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values less than .90 were acceptable for confirming the discriminant validity of the construct (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 3 shows HTMT values below .90, suggesting clear construct distinction and preventing complications in analyzing interrelationships.

Table 3
HTMT Analysis

	PWB	PB	CR	NA	SA	SE	PSS	AD
PWB	.474		.432					.529
PB	.353	.666	.199	.407			.433	.327
CR				.730				.483
NA	.450		.377	.687				.439
SA	.503	.419	.284	.351	.721		.476	.393
SE	.517	.552	.378	.467	.652	.625	.571	.474
PSS	.523		.338	.440		.618		.430
AD								.671

Note: Psychological well-being (PWB), Prosocial Behavior (PB), Cognitive Reappraisal (CR), Normative Adjustment (NA), Social Adjustment (SA), Social Efficacy (SE), Perceived Social Support (PSS), Adaptability (AD).

Table 4
Direct effect

	B	S.E.	t-values	p-values
CR → PWB	.239	.055	4.356	.000
NA → PWB	.119	.055	2.163	.016
PSS → PWB	.237	.051	4.638	.000
PB → PWB	.111	.055	1.998	.023
SA → PWB	.015	.054	.275	.392
SE → PWB	.073	.056	1.299	.097

Table 5
Indirect effect

	β	S.E.	t-values	p-values
CR → AD → PWB	.064	.022	2.879	.002
NA → AD → PWB	.036	.014	2.730	.003
PSS → AD → PWB	.027	.013	1.877	.031
PB → AD → PWB	.008	.012	1.478	.070
SA → AD → PWB	.019	.011	1.247	.107
SE → Ad → PWB	.030	.012	.235	.407

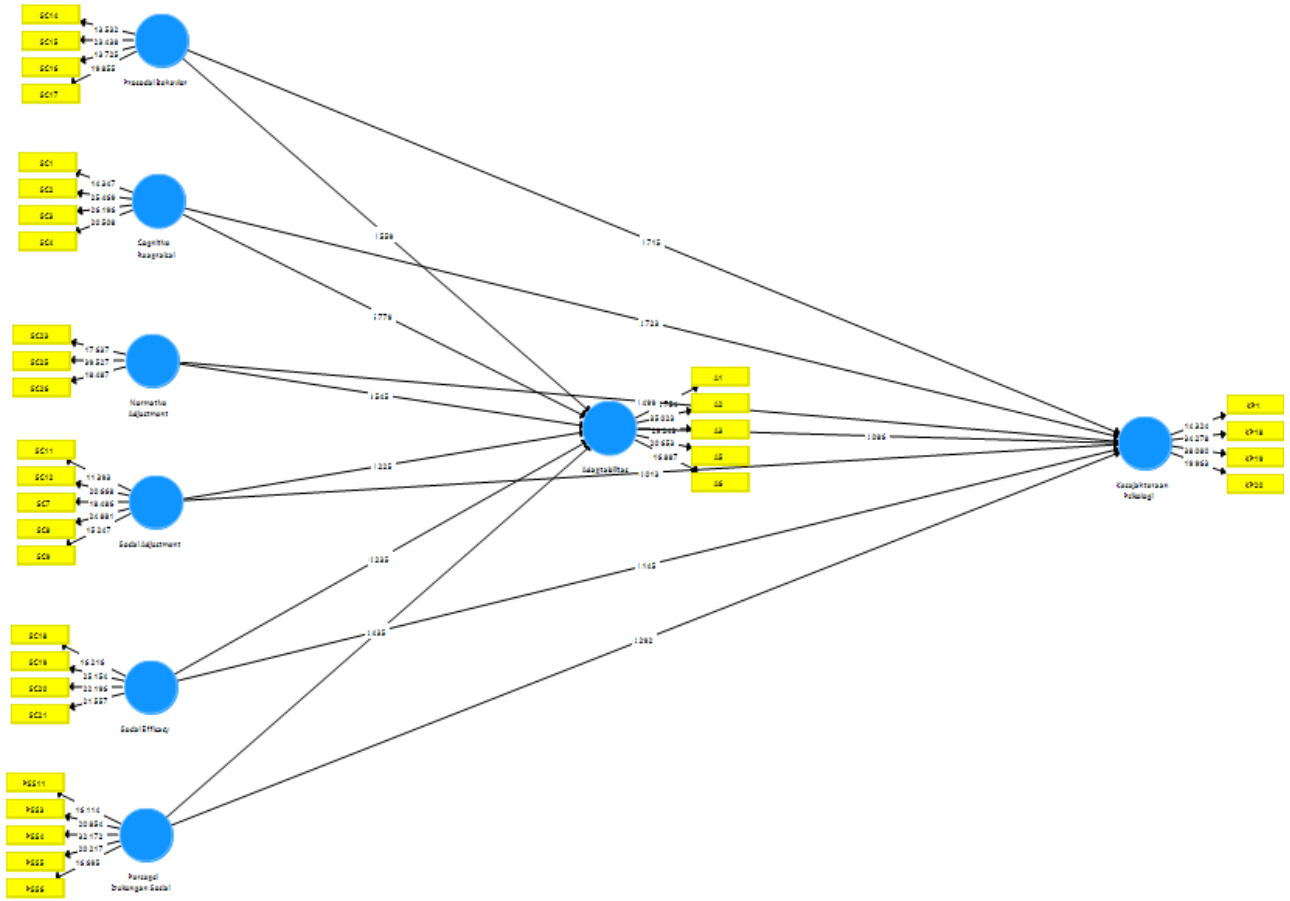

Figure 2. Structural Model

Structural Model

PLS-SEM structural testing used path coefficients, t-statistics, standard errors, and R^2 to assess relationship strength and significance (Figure 2). T-statistics and standard errors showed effect size, whereas R^2 indicated explanatory power.

The R^2 value showed how much variance was explained. In this study, the R^2 value showed that 45% of PWB variables could be explained by social competence and PSS. The remaining 55% was explained by other variables outside the study. Meanwhile, 37% of PWB variables were explained by the adaptability variable. The effect value of social competence, PSS, and adaptability on PWB was in the moderate category according to Hair et al. (2022), which was close to .50 with an R^2 value = .455 and .370. The hypothesis was supported at the .05 significance level when the t-statistic exceeded the critical value.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was used to determine the relationship, as well as the direct and indirect effects between constructs, namely PWB, social competencies, perceived social support, and adaptability. The current study had twelve basic hypotheses, as shown in Tables 4 and 5. The structural model analysis was conducted to test all the proposed hypotheses. The statistical test results showed that the theoretical model (structural model) had a good fit with the empirical data (measurement model), as evidenced by SRMR = .075 (< .10) and RMS Theta = .092 (< .10), which met the recommended threshold values (Hair et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2022).

Results and Discussion

Results

Cognitive reappraisal (CR) showed a significant positive effect on psychological well-being (PWB), β = .239, t = 4.356, p = .000. This result was consistent with the report of a previous study that CR enhanced students' PWB (Gómez-López et al.,2022). Students with effective emotional management and regulation showed meaningful life direction, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and autonomy.

Normative adjustment, which included adherence to norms, conventions, and values of the social environment, had a strong positive and significant relationship with students' PWB. In this case, the beta coefficient was .119, showing a significant impact with

a t-value and p-value of 2.163 and 0.016, respectively. This result was consistent with the result of a previous study (Gómez-López et al., 2022) that normative adjustment was positively correlated with adolescents' PWB, showing its significance for social functioning and emotional stability. Similarly, Romera et al. (2016) found that greater normative adjustment predicted a decrease in bullying and other maladaptive behaviors, promoting a more positive school climate. Normative adjustment also improved social self-perception and peer relationships, two important aspects of students' psychosocial well-being (Herrera-López et al., 2022).

Prosocial behavior had a strong positive and significant relationship with students' PWB, as evidenced by a beta coefficient, t-value, and p-value of .111, 1.998, and .023, respectively. A growing body of knowledge consistently showed that prosocial behavior, including voluntary actions intended to benefit others, played a significant role in enhancing students' PWB. Studies among Chinese and Spain students found that prosocial behavior tendencies significantly predicted PWB (Fu et al. 2021; Gómez-López et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2010). Other results suggested that engaging in helping or cooperative actions enhanced adolescents' well-being and served as a driving force of psychological functioning (Affuso et al., 2024; Demirci, 2020; Hui et al., 2020). This behavior improved social connectedness and also strengthened self-esteem and emotional regulation, leading to higher levels of PWB.

The relationship between social adjustment (t = .275, p = .395), social efficacy (t = 1.299, p = .097), and students' PWB did not reach statistical significance. This result was different from the report of a previous study that showed a significant relationship between social adjustment, social efficacy, and PWB (Gómez-López et al., 2022). Perceived social support (PSS) had a strong positive and significant relationship with students' PWB, as evidenced by a beta coefficient, t-value, and p-value of .237, 4.638, and .000, respectively.

Table 5 showed the results of examining an indirect or mediated effect of adaptability on the relationship between five aspects of social competence (PB, CR, NA, SA, SE), PSS, and PWB. The mediating effect of adaptability on the relationship between cognitive reappraisal (CR) and students' PWB was statistically significant, with a relatively low impact strength. A weaker but significant effect was found (β = .064, t = 2.879, p = .002). Adaptability also significantly mediated the NA–PWB relationship with a small effect (β = .036, t = 2.730, p = .003). These results suggested that adaptability partially mediated the influence of both CR and NA on students' PWB (Hair et al., 2018; Zhao et al., 2010).

The analysis of the mediating effect of adaptability on the relationship between PSS (from parents/family, peers/classmates, relatives, and teachers) and students' PWB showed a positive mediated pathway. However, the effect was weaker compared to the direct effects. The standardized coefficient (β = .027, t = 1.877, p = .031) showed that the mediating effect was statistically significant but of lower magnitude. These results suggested that adaptability partially mediated the influence of PSS on students' PWB (Hair et al., 2018; Zhao et al., 2010).

The mediating effect of adaptability on the relationship between PB, SA, SE, and students' PWB was not statistically significant. The beta coefficients were .008, .019, and .030, with p-values of .070, .107, and .407. The recent result of the mediating effect of adaptability on the relationship between the five aspects of social competence (CR, NA, PB, SA, and SE) and the PWB of boarding school students can be used for further studies.

Discussion

Adolescence is a critical developmental period during which PWB is often challenged and is not successfully achieved in many cases. A range of difficulties, including low self-esteem, limited autonomy, difficulties in establishing interpersonal relationships, adjustment problems, emotional instability, and behavioral issues, commonly undermine adolescents' PWB (Erskine et al., 2023). Dormitory-residing adolescents face added strain as they navigate family, school, peers, and rigid living structures. Stressors like parental separation, strict rules, and adapting to unfamiliar environments can heighten risks to psychological well-being (Handono & Bashori, 2013). These conditions increase susceptibility to psychological distress, including poor sleep quality, loneliness, anxiety, depressive symptoms, and social-emotional difficulties (Chen et al., 2021; Xing et al., 2021). Within this context, PWB is defined not merely as the absence of mental illness but as a dynamic state comprising personal growth, self-actualization, and the pursuit of meaning (Ryff et al., 2021). Adolescents with high levels of PWB tend to experience a greater sense of school attachment, enhanced academic performance, better physical and mental health outcomes, and more satisfying social relationships (Amholt et al., 2020; Kaya & Erdem, 2021; Umberson & Karas Montez, 2010). Promoting PWB during adolescence is essential for supporting students' holistic development and facilitating the attainment of full potential (Visani et al., 2014). Moreover, it plays a foundational role in shaping the future well-being and resilience in adulthood (Piko, 2023).

The study assessed adaptability, social competence dimensions, and PSS in relation to PWB

among MAN Insan Cendekia students. Prosocial behavior, normative adjustment, cognitive reappraisal, and PSS showed significant associations with PWB, indicating that emotional regulation, socially appropriate behavior, helping actions, and perceived support contribute to positive psychological functioning, This result is consistent with the report of previous studies, showing the protective role of social and emotional skills and supportive environments in enhancing PWB during adolescence (Ryff et al., 2021; Kaya & Erdem, 2021).

Normative adjustment, the adherence to the norms, conventions, and values of the social environment, has a strong positive and significant relationship with students' PWB. This result is consistent with the report of a previous study (Gómez-López et al., 2022) that normative adjustment was positively correlated with adolescents' PWB, showing its significance for social functioning and emotional stability. Similarly, Romera et al. (2016) found that greater normative adjustment predicted a decrease in bullying and other maladaptive behaviors, promoting a more positive school climate. Normative adjustment also improves social self-perception and peer relationships, two important aspects of students' PWB (Herrera-López et al., 2022).

A growing body of knowledge consistently shows that prosocial behavior, voluntary actions intended to benefit others, plays a vital role in enhancing students' PWB. Studies among Chinese and Spain students found that prosocial behavior significantly predicted PWB (Fu et al., 2021; Gómez-López et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2010). Other results showed that engaging in helping or cooperative actions enhances adolescents' well-being and serves as a driving force of psychological functioning (Demirci, 2020; Hui et al., 2020). Prosocial behavior improves social connectedness and also strengthens self-esteem and emotional regulation, leading to higher levels of PWB.

The result of this study showed that social adjustment and social efficacy had no significant relationship with PWB. This result contradicts previous reports, which often showed the importance of interpersonal competence in promoting mental health (Gómez-Lopez et al., 2022; Umberson & Montez, 2010). The possible explanation was that the impact of social efficacy on well-being could be moderated by individual internal factors, such as personality traits. For instance, individuals high in neuroticism could be more vulnerable to emotional instability and psychological distress, regardless of the perceived ability to function in social contexts (Meyer et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023). Therefore, even when students were rated as socially competent, those with higher neurotic tendencies tended to report lower well-being due to more intense negative emotional experiences (Erzen & Odabaci, 2023; Wang et al., 2023).

Social efficacy showed subjective self-assessments of an individual's capacity to initiate and maintain effective interpersonal relationships. These self-perceptions varied greatly between individuals and did not correspond to actual social competence. Variability in personal interpretation and self-awareness could influence students' responses to measures of social efficacy, thereby affecting the statistical relationship with PWB.

Students with good social adjustment skills through positive relationships, mutual support, and acceptance in the environment were at risk of having low PWB due to self-esteem problems (De la Barera et al., 2019). Self-esteem in adolescence correlated with the ability to identify, accept, and be positive about the strengths and weaknesses, which was an aspect of self-acceptance in PWB. Therefore, self-esteem in adolescents influenced self-acceptance and PWB. Self-esteem was also found to mediate the relationship between social competence and well-being in adolescence (Caqueo-Urízar et al., 2022; Hernández-López & López, 2022).

The empirical results often showed non-significant or even negative relationships between social adjustment and psychological well-being (Carapeto et al., 2025; Fang et al., 2024; Martinez et al., 2023, 2024). This result showed the difference in the measurement of each construct, external conformity versus internal fulfillment, and suggested that individual factors such as personality traits and emotional regulation may influence whether social adjustment contributes to psychological well-being (Dambi et al., 2022). The result also showed a significant direct effect of Perceived Social Support (PSS) on PWB. Students who perceived positive social support from peers, family, and significant others, such as teachers, felt valued and accepted in the social environment. This sense of support strengthened independence and improved the capacity to manage situations, pressures, and problems, which facilitated the development of positive interpersonal relationships and improved QoL (Chaudhry et al., 2024). Therefore, students who got social support from friends, parents, and teachers while in boarding school would experience good PWB (Poudel et al., 2020).

The mediating effect of adaptability between three social competence aspects, namely prosocial behavior, social adjustment, and social efficacy, was not significant. These results contradict previous evidence (Oliveira et al., 2023), where adaptability did not function as a mediator in the relationship between prosocial behavior, social adjustment, social efficacy, and the PWB of boarding school students.

Adaptability referred to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral capacity of students to handle changes and uncertain situations, including the ability to understand, use, and regulate emotions (emotional adaptability). This ability could influence students' willingness to engage in prosocial behavior, the sense of acceptance and positive relationships within the social environment (social adjustment), and the perception that social actions were successful (social efficacy). Therefore, students who did not make use of emotional adaptability experienced difficulty adjusting, considering alternative actions, and modifying behavior to meet others' needs. These challenges hindered the formation of positive and meaningful interpersonal relationships, leading to low PWB (Martinez et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2022).

Adaptability weakly but positively mediated the effects of cognitive reappraisal and normative adjustment on PWB. Emotional regulation through cognitive reappraisal strengthens adaptability, which in turn contributes to higher PWB (Dawel et al., 2023).

Previous studies consistently showed that adaptability functioned as an important personal resource that enabled effective adjustment to normative-related life changes, pressure, and challenges, thereby enhancing PWB (Holliman et al., 2021; Martin et al., 2013; Tan et al., 2023; Zhou & Lin, 2016). In this study, the relationship and effect between normative adjustment and the PWB of MAN Insan Cendekia students were mediated by adaptability. This result showed that the better the students' ability to adapt in the boarding school environment, the better the capacity to adjust to the prevailing values and behaviors.

The role of adaptability in mediating the indirect effect of PSS on PWB showed a positive but weak mediated pathway. Students with a high level of adaptability were able to use social support available in the environment, thereby enhancing the PWB. This result was consistent with the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001) that individuals strived to acquire, maintain, and protect valuable resources, such as social support and adaptive coping strategies, to preserve the well-being. Adaptable students tended to perceive social resources more positively and were mobilized effectively when facing the academic and social demands of a boarding school environment. Similarly, students who perceive strong social support tended to develop and maintain adaptive cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses, which facilitated adjustment and promoted higher PWB (Holliman et al., 2021; Zhou & Lin, 2016). Conversely, students who were unable to regulate the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors effectively when encountering challenges, pressures, or transitions failed to recognize or use the available social support. Within the context of MAN Insan Cendekia boarding school students, this result implied that adaptability functioned as a mediator that determined whether social support was perceived and used effectively. Therefore, fostering adaptability skills could enhance students' capacity to benefit from social support systems and maintain optimal levels of PWB.

The study's generalizability is limited because it focused solely on two MAN Insan Cendekia campuses with distinctive academic contexts. Future research should examine more varied boarding schools to improve external validity. Additionally, self-report instruments may have produced response bias in assessing competencies and well-being. To mitigate this limitation, future investigations should use multiple data collection methods, such as interviews, observations, or teacher/peer assessments, to enhance data triangulation and validity. The cross-sectional design prevented causal inference. Longitudinal studies are needed to track changes in PWB, social competence, and support across the school year.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study shows that social competences, PSS, and adaptability play a central role in predicting PWB among students in boarding school environments, particularly within MAN Insan Cendekia school. Consistent with previous studies on adolescents' development in residential educational settings, students who are able to respond constructively to challenges, internalize shared norms, engage in prosocial behavior, and perceive high levels of support from peers, parents, and teachers tend to report greater PWB. These results support the broader theoretical view that well-being in adolescence is shaped by environmental demands and students' capacity to mobilize social resources effectively. Adaptability helps students regulate emotions, meet social expectations, and use support, strongly contributing to well-being in residential schools. Meanwhile, social adjustment and social efficacy relate to well-being only when paired with strong self-esteem. Students with low self-esteem or limited perceived social competence are more vulnerable to reduced well-being.

The results show that supporting well-being in boarding schools requires a holistic developmental approach. Strengthening students' adaptability, emotional regulation, and respectful relationships, supported by both schools and parents, enhances adjustment and resilience. Interventions that build social confidence, personal strengths, and flexible coping further promote well-being. Prioritizing adaptability enables schools to support academic achievement alongside long-term resilience and PWB.

Declaration

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Author Contributions

Conceptualization: F.H.S. and N.I.; Methodology: F.H.S. and N.I.; Data collection and investigation: F.H.S.; Data analysis: F.H.S.; Writing—Original Draft Preparation: F.H.S.; Writing—Review & Editing: F.H.S.; Supervision: N.I.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

The authors declare that ChatGPT was used solely to assist in searching for and verifying some of the references used in this manuscript. The use of this tool was limited to reference checking, and did not influence the study design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation of results.

Ethical Clearance

This study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Commission of the Faculty of Public Health, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta (Approval No. Un.01/F.10/KP.01.1/KE.SP/05.08.017/2024). All participants provided informed consent prior to their participation in the study

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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