



## AN OVERVIEW OF STUDENT'S ANXIETY IN ASSALAFIYAH II MLANGI BOARDING SCHOOL YOGYAKARTA BASED ON AGE AND GENDER

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Anxiety is a feeling of fear that is unclear and not supported by the situation. When anxious, the individual feels discomfort or fear with no identifiable object. Anxiety disorders are one of the most common psychological disorders in adolescent patients. Every individual is inseparable from anxiety. The anxiety can be mild, moderate, or severe. At school, students also experience anxiety for various reasons, such as anxiety about subjects, anxiety about failing in learning, and others.

**Method:** This quantitative descriptive study was conducted at the Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School in July-September 2022. The target population in this study included 840 students using a total sampling technique. Data was collected online with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) questionnaires.

**Results:** The results showed significant differences in the level of anxiety based on aged in Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School (p-value 0.026) and significant results at the level of anxiety based on gender (p-value 0.000).

**Conclusion:** Female students need more anxiety counseling than male students. Besides that, there was no relationship between age and anxiety. This study assists in developing a strategic plan to reduce anxiety among boarding school students by developing Counseling Guidance Teachers or Psychologists.

**Keywords:** mental health; anxiety; islamic boarding school; students

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### INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools are the oldest Islamic educational institutions in the archipelago which have several basic elements such as huts, mosques,

students, clerics, and teaching of classic books. In Indonesia, 27,630 Islamic boarding schools spread from Sabang to Merauke, with the number of students as of 2021 reaching 4,089,955. In the Special Region of Yogyakarta itself, there are currently 319 Islamic

boarding schools, with a total of 35,211 students are stay and 14,281 students not staying (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). The life of students/santri while studying at Islamic boarding schools is full of difficulties or what is commonly called in bahasa is tirakat. Starting from academic, financial, sociocultural, environmental, and so on, these difficulties will be felt more for students/students who are far from their families or outside the city. This creates a new problem for the students, namely anxiety. Anxiety is a feeling of fear that is unclear and not supported by the situation. When anxious, the individual feels discomfort or fear with no identifiable object. (Videbeck, 2008) Anxiety is the most common emotional disorder. According to data from the National Institute of Mental Health (2019), in the United States, there are 40 million people experiencing anxiety disorders from the age of 18 to old age. Anxiety or anxiety is a worry or fear that is unclear why. It is estimated that 20% of the world's population suffers from anxiety, and as many as 47.7% of adolescents often feel anxious (Ministry of Health, 2020).

Anxiety disorders are one of the most common psychological disorders in adolescent patients. Separation anxiety is the only disorder experienced in infants, children, or adolescents. Different epidemiological studies show the prevalence of SAD in 4 to 5% are children and adolescents. A Canadian epidemiological study (2019) found that the prevalence of SAD was 4.9% in children aged 6 to 8 years and 1.3% in adolescents aged 12 to 14 years. Anxiety can cause uncomfortable cognitive, psychomotor, and physiological responses, such as difficulty thinking logically, difficulty concentrating on learning, increased agitation in motor activity, and increased vital signs. Individuals try to take new adaptive actions as a defense mechanism to reduce discomfort. These adaptive behaviors can be positive and help individuals adapt and learn, for example, by using imagination techniques to refocus attention (Videbeck, 2008). Every individual is inseparable from anxiety. The anxiety can be mild, moderate, or severe. At school, students also experience anxiety for various reasons, such as anxiety about subjects, anxiety about failing in learning, and others. Anxiety can increase motivation and performance at certain stages, but if the anxiety exceeds the limit or an individual ability to manage it, it weakens motivation and decreases. Anxiety is a factor that influences motivation because individuals who experience anxiety will experience obstacles in completing tasks or achieving the goals they have set. Anxiety experienced by individuals can be identified from the

behavior they display, such as difficulty making decisions, being depressed, and going awry. These things become an obstacle to carrying out activities with high motivation. Students experiencing high anxiety show low learning outcomes compared to students who experience low anxiety.

The inadequate response to this problem has caused adolescents to suffer, face disability and even death, and interfere with their education and ability to reach their full potential (Dapari et al., 2022). To make it worse, the recent COVID-19 pandemic may worsen depression, stress, and anxiety conditions among adolescents. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the pattern of interaction of people's activities. This pandemic has caused various social, economic, and health problems in the community, including mental health. The Association of Indonesian Mental Health Specialists (PDSKJI) conducted a mental health survey related to COVID-19. They examined three psychological problems: anxiety, depression, and psychological trauma. As a result, as many as 68% of respondents claimed to be anxious, 67% depressed, and 77% experienced psychological trauma (Nasrullah & Sulaiman, 2021).

Mental illness, such as personality and emotional disorders, begins now. Unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, drinking, and using illicit drugs often begin in adolescence. They are closely associated with increased problems leading to death, a major health challenge. In addition, gender or gender also affects a person's mental health. Quoted from the Association of Indonesian Mental Medicine Specialists, based on data from March 2020 - March 2022, a survey conducted on 14,988 people found that 75% had mental health disorders and about 75.8% were experienced by women. At the same time, about 24.2% are experienced by men (Aloysius & Salvia, 2021).

Respondents' main symptoms of anxiety were feeling that something bad would happen, excessive worry, irritability or irritation, and difficulty relaxing. At the same time, the main symptoms of depression are sleep disturbances, lack of confidence, tiredness, lack of energy, and loss of interest (Ayuningtyas & Rayhani, 2018).

This research is important because by conducting this research, we can get an overview of anxiety levels, differences between anxiety levels based on gender, and differences between anxiety levels based on age. According to the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, in 2022, the number of active boarding school students will be 3.4 million. This needs to be consent for public health and mental

health workers to take an intervention that can be carried out immediately to overcome the problem.

**METHOD**

This quantitative descriptive study was conducted at the Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School in July-September 2022. It has received approval from the Ethical Committee of Faculty Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing, Universitas Gadjah Mada, with approval number KE/1012/08/2022. The target population in this study included 840 students using a total sampling technique. Sampling was done using a non-probability sampling method, namely the total sampling technique. Total sampling is a sampling technique where the number of samples is the same as the population (Notoatmodjo, 2012). Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires developed on Google forms and accompanied by mentoring the students in answering the questionnaire questions.

Questions related to mental health, where the questionnaire questions come from the Generalized

Table 1. Characteristics of Subjects

Anxiety Disorder Assessment VII. The data obtained were then coded for further analysis using SPSS.

**RESULTS**

This research was conducted at Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School with 840 students as subjects. The gender distribution of students shows similar percentages between males and females (49.8 vs. 50.2). Meanwhile, the aged distribution shows that students aged 11-15 y.o are much higher than students aged 16-19 y.o (72.5 vs. 27.5). Among all students who lived in Assalafiyah II Mlangi IBS, 43.6% of them had mild anxiety (See detail in Table 1).

Karakteristik	n (total = 840)	%
Age		
11-15 y.o	609	72.5
16-19 y.o	231	27.5
Gender		
Women	418	49.8
Men	422	50.2
Level of Anxiety		
Minimal Anxiety	320	38.1
Mild Anxiety	366	43.6
Moderate Anxiety	116	13.8
Severe Anxiety	38	4.5

Table 1 shows the difference in the anxiety levels of respondents based on age at Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School with p-value = 0.026 (<0.05), which shows that there is a significant difference between anxiety levels based on age among students living at Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School.

Table 2. Level of Anxiety based on aged in Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School

Level of Anxiety	Age		Total (n = 840)	p-value
	11-15 y.o (n = 609)	16-19 y.o (n = 231)		
Minimal Anxiety	250 (78.1)	70 (21.9)	320 (38.1)	0.026
Mild Anxiety	248 (67.8)	118 (32.2)	366 (43.6)	
Moderate Anxiety	84 (72.4)	32 (27.6)	116 (13.8)	
Severe Anxiety	27 (71.1)	11 (28.9)	38 (4.5)	

Table 3 shows the differences in the anxiety levels of respondents based on gender in Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School with p-value = 0.000 (p-value <0.05), which indicates that there is a significant difference between anxiety levels based on sex in students living in Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School

Table 3. Level of Anxiety based on Gender in Assalafiyah II Mlangi IBS

Level of Anxiety	Gender		Total (n = 840)	p-value
	Women (n = 418)	Men (n = 422)		
Minimal Anxiety	124 (38.8)	196 (61.3)	320 (38.1)	0.000
Mild Anxiety	189 (51.6)	177 (48.8)	366 (43.6)	
Moderate Anxiety	76 (65.5)	40 (34.5)	116 (13.8)	
Severe Anxiety	29 (76.3)	9 (23.7)	38 (4.5)	

**DISCUSSION**

This research was conducted on adolescents aged 11 to 19 years and students of the Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School. Living in a boarding school causes the students to have less time to gather with their family and home environment. Fear and worry are felt by all students who have just entered the Islamic Boarding School environment. Students who usually receive more attention at home from their parents in the Islamic Boarding School environment must live independently (Triwibowo & Khoirunnisyak, 2017). This is often one of the main factors for students experiencing problems in mental health, such as sadness and feeling alone (Samranah, 2017). In addition, the rules made by Islamic boarding schools can cause anxiety for students who cannot adapt to the rules and conditions in the dormitory environment. However, not all students can accept it, especially those entering their teens (Cahyady, 2021). Based on table 1, it can be shown that the one with the highest level of positional anxiety is mild anxiety (43.6%). Anxiety is a form of feeling worried, restless, and other unpleasant feelings (Triwibowo & Khoirunnisyak, 2017). Anxiety can hinder student learning processes, such as difficulties concentrating, remembering lessons, and forming problem-solving concepts with peers or seniors (Cahyady, 2021). According to Hidayat (2018), the problems that most students often feel are due to adjustment barriers, difficulty communicating with friends, and the environment where they live.

The anxiety of students in Islamic boarding schools is influenced by age (Triwibowo & Khoirunnisyak, 2017). Changes in growth and

development patterns are experienced by adolescents aged 12-18 years when their relationship with their parents begins to change. These changes are caused by how they interpret the boundaries of independence and dependence. They still have a strong desire to remain dependent on their parents, but on the other hand, they are also starting to try to separate from their parents (Rahmatika, 2014). Table 2 shows a significant difference in the level of anxiety based on age among students living at PP Assalafiyah 2 Mlangi, with a p-value < 0.05. The mental health of students included in the moderately prosperous category is felt more by those in the age range of 19-21 years compared to students who are still in the age range of 13-15 years. This is assumed because the age of 19-21 years is included in the early adult phase, which is considered to be able to think carefully about all the problems faced so that their mental health is more stable (Priasmoro, 2020). In addition, the older a person is, the more mature in thinking rationally about and more adaptable to the environment (Triwibowo & Khoirunnisyak, 2017). Age measures someone's maturity level (Purwanto, 2013).

Table 3 shows differences in respondents' anxiety level based on gender in PP Assalafiyah 2 Mlangi with a p-value <0.05. Women are more prone to experiencing anxiety events than men, which happens because more women are sensitive to emotions, including feelings of anxiety (Anissa et al., 2018). According to the theory presented by Sunaryo (2004), in general, an adult male has a strong mentality towards something considered a threat to him compared to women. Women are more easily influenced by the pressures that exist in the

environment (Smith, 1968), whereas men are more active and explorative (Myers, 1983).

Then, from the results of Priasmoro's research (2020), it is known that there is a relationship between social support and students' mental health. This social support can be obtained from various parties, such as friends, family, and closest people (Siska et al., 2018). Students need social help to eliminate fear or anxiety, and problems that arise during their stay at the Islamic Boarding School (Priasmoro, 2020). The importance of organizing counseling for students is related to one of the alternatives and solutions to overcome the problems experienced by the students. The phenomenon that has occurred so far is that if students have problems, they are directly directed to the ustadz or kyai. From the surveys conducted, the direction the cleric or cleric gives is still instructive advice and based on religious doctrine. Based on the results of the interviews, the students wanted someone who understood the position and problems they faced from their point of view as teenagers (Hotifah et al., 2014). However, the reality is that there are no BK teachers or psychologists at the Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School. In fact, according to research conducted at the Nurul Jannah Islamic Boarding School, ustadz/ustadzah/teachers have a role in monitoring and assisting students to deal with psychological problems such as boredom and mild to moderate stress. Even though in their mentoring, the teachers are still advising with the intention of da'wah, which method has not touched the psychological and affective sides of the students. From the results of interviews in the study, the students needed a figure whose age range was not too far away and could be a place to confide in who could simultaneously calm them down (Khilman Rofi' Azmi & Dwi Ima Herminingsih, 2021).

Peer counseling is a way to help pay attention to students' mental health intensively. One of the Healthy Student Cadres programs is to form student cadres who also can become peer counselors, where the student cadres have been given training on peer counseling. Peer counseling is considered effective because having the same or almost the same age, class, and social motivation (peer group) can help a good adjustment process. In practice, peer counseling has a spontaneous and active model, but confidentiality is maintained (Huwaida & Amrullah, 2022). The training provided to the student cadres at the Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School includes basic skills as a peer counselor, including providing first aid for psychological problems, building good

interpersonal communication, attending, questioning skills, and the ability to summarize conversations.

## CONCLUSION

Female students have a twice greater chance of experiencing anxiety or anxiety than male students. Therefore, female students need more counseling about their anxiety than male students. Then, from the two aspects examined, namely the relationship between mental health with age and gender, the result is that there is a relationship between gender and the need for counseling but no relationship with age.

In addition, the thing that needs attention at the Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School itself at this time is that there are no Counseling Guidance Teachers or Psychologists who can become counselors for students who want to consult on the problems they are experiencing both within the Islamic boarding school environment and outside the environment. Islamic boarding school. In fact, from the research, counseling is needed by the students. Therefore, Advocacy related to the procurement of Guidance Counseling Teachers or peer counselor programs to the Assalafiyah II Mlangi Islamic Boarding School foundation is necessary to fulfill students' mental health. Healthy Student Cadres is expected to be a solution as a peer counselor with the training provided.

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