

The Psychological Well-Being of Non-ASN Contract Workers in Padang City

Rahmat Hidayat

Kementerian Komunikasi Digital

onlyrahmat272@loloedu.my.id

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran kekuatan karakter dan dukungan sosial dalam memprediksi kesejahteraan psikologis pada tenaga kontrak Non-ASN yang bekerja di lingkungan Pemerintah Kota Padang. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan desain korelasional prediktif terhadap sampel tenaga kontrak Non-ASN yang dipilih melalui teknik *purposive sampling*. Pengumpulan data dilakukan menggunakan instrumen *Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (RPWBS)*, *Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS)*, dan *Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)*, yang kemudian dianalisis menggunakan regresi linier berganda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kekuatan karakter dan dukungan sosial secara signifikan berpengaruh terhadap kesejahteraan psikologis, di mana kedua variabel prediktor tersebut secara simultan mampu menjelaskan variasi kesejahteraan psikologis pada tenaga kontrak Non-ASN. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa kombinasi antara sumber daya psikologis internal dan dukungan sosial eksternal memiliki peran penting dalam menjaga stabilitas mental pekerja di sektor publik. Secara praktis, hasil ini memberikan implikasi bagi pemerintah daerah dalam merancang kebijakan pengembangan sumber daya manusia yang lebih berorientasi pada kesehatan mental.

Kata Kunci: Character strengths, Non-ASN contract workers, Psychological well-being, Social support

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of character strengths and social support in predicting psychological well-being among non-civil servant contract workers working in the Padang City Government. The approach used was quantitative with a predictive correlational design on a sample of non-civil servant contract workers selected through a purposive sampling technique. Data collection was carried out using the Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (RPWBS), Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS), and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), which were then analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results showed that character strengths and social support significantly influenced psychological well-being, where both predictor variables were simultaneously able to explain variations in psychological well-being among non-civil servant contract workers. This finding confirms that the combination of internal psychological resources and external social support plays an important role in maintaining the mental stability of workers in the public sector. Practically, these results provide implications for local governments in designing human resource development policies that are more oriented towards mental health.

Keyword: Psychological well-being, character strengths, social support, Non-ASN contract workers



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INTRODUCTION

Non-ASN (State Civil Apparatus) contract employees play a vital role in supporting government and public services in Padang City. Amid limited PNS and PPPK (National Civil Service) recruitment quotas, contract workers often serve as the administrative and technical backbone of various agencies (Putri & Zola, 2020). However, the complexity of responsibilities, coupled with the uncertainty of employment status, demands a high level of psychological resilience to enable them to carry out their duties without sacrificing personal well-being.

According to Ryff (2013), psychological well-being is the full achievement of one's psychological potential, encompassing six dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. For non-ASN employees, challenges to these dimensions are particularly significant. Research by Kurniawan and Chusairi (2021) shows that uncertainty about future employment and wages that are often below minimum standards are key factors in the low psychological well-being of contract workers.

In Padang City, the phenomenon of high workloads with limited compensation creates a wide gap in well-being compared to their ASN colleagues. An empirical study by Sari et al. (2022) reported that the majority of contract workers in regional agencies fall into the moderate to low psychological well-being category due to work stress and a lack of institutional appreciation. According to Izzati and Mulyana (2021), this low well-being can trigger emotional exhaustion and diminish the professionalism of public services. This condition will indirectly impact organizational performance, given that self-capacity development and sound career management are key drivers in optimizing employee performance (Hidayat, 2026).

This state-of-the-art research focuses on the integration of internal factors in the form of character strengths and external factors in the form of social support. Character strengths (such as persistence and optimism) are necessary for resilience in the face of career uncertainty (Niemiec & Pearce, 2021). Meanwhile, social support from family and colleagues acts as a buffer against work stress (Saputra & Palupi, 2020). The novelty of this research lies in the simultaneous analysis of these two factors in the non-civil servant (ASN) population in Padang City, which has received little in-depth research to date. This study employed a quantitative correlational design. The study population included all non-ASN contract employees working within the Padang City Government. The sample was selected using a simple random sampling technique, with the number of respondents determined based on a 5% error rate.

Data collection was conducted using three psychological instruments: the Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (RPWBS) to measure psychological well-being, the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) to measure character strengths, and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) to measure perceived social support. Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression to test the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable, both partially and simultaneously. Theoretically, the discussion will highlight how social support can mediate economic stress experienced by non-civil servant employees. The findings are expected to confirm that, despite their precarious employment status, employees who possess character strengths such as hope and gratitude tend to have more stable psychological well-being (Khosravi et al., 2022). Furthermore, the implications of this study emphasize that local government policies should focus not only on wages but also on creating an emotionally supportive work environment. This study concludes that the psychological well-being of non-civil servant employees in Padang City is significantly influenced by individual internal strengths and social support. The Padang City Government is recommended to begin addressing the mental health of contract workers through counseling programs or self-development training to maintain productivity and the quality of public services.

Based on a literature review, most research on psychological well-being still focuses on permanent employees, lecturers, or professionals with relatively stable employment status. Research specifically examining the psychological well-being of non-civil servant contract workers in local government is still limited, particularly those that simultaneously integrate internal factors such as character strengths and external factors such as social support. Therefore, this study offers empirical novelty by focusing its analysis on the population of non-civil servant contract

workers in the Padang City Government and examining the predictive contribution of character strengths and social support to psychological well-being.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with a predictive correlational design to explore the causal relationships between the variables studied. The main focus of this study is to examine and analyze the contribution of character strengths and social support in predicting the level of psychological well-being of non-civil servant contract workers. Through this method, researchers attempt to map the determinants that influence employee psychological well-being, considering the significant challenges and job uncertainties often faced by contract workers in government agencies.

Participants

The research participants were 114 non-ASN contract workers working in the Padang City Government. Sample selection was carried out using a purposive sampling technique with the following criteria: (1) having the status of a non-ASN contract worker, (2) having been actively working for at least one year, and (3) being willing to be a research respondent.

Research Instruments

This study used three primary measurement instruments adapted to capture the psychological dynamics of non-civil servant contract workers in Padang City. First, Psychological Well-Being was measured using a scale developed from Ryff's (2013) theory, encompassing six fundamental dimensions: personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, positive relationships with others, and self-acceptance through 36 statements. Second, participants' personal strengths were measured using the Character Strength scale based on Peterson and Seligman's (2004) theory, which consists of 30 items, covering aspects of transcendence, simplicity, justice, humanity and compassion, perseverance, and wisdom and knowledge. Finally, to examine the contribution of the external environment, the Social Support scale, derived from Sarafino and Smith's (2021) concept, was used, consisting of 24 items to measure the esteem, informational, instrumental, and emotional support received by participants from both their work and family environments.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis required by the researcher here includes a normality test to ensure data distribution using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, a linearity test to determine the linear relationship between the two variables ($p < 0.05$ is considered linear), multiple linear regression to test the hypothesis (accepted if the significance value is < 0.05), and a coefficient of determination to determine the contribution of the independent variables. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26 for Windows (64-bit).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following is a recap of participant data, namely government agency contract employees in Padang City:

Table 1. Description of Research Participant Data

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	48	42.1
	Female	66	57.9

Age	25–30 years old	28	24.6
	31–40 years old	74	64.9
	41–50 years old	12	10.5
Marital Status	Single / Unmarried	38	33.3
	Married	76	66.7
Number of Children	None	41	36.0
	1–2 children	52	45.6
	≥3 children	21	18.4
Years of Service	<5 years	27	23.7
	5–10 years	66	57.9
	>10 years	21	18.4
Academic Rank	Staff	97	85.1
	Supervisor	17	14.9

The questionnaires distributed in this study involved 114 uncertified Government Non ASNs in Padang City. These 114 Non ASNs consisted of 66 women and 48 men, 12 of whom were aged 41-50, 74 between 31-40, and 28 between 25-30. Seventy-six were married, 38 were single. 21 of them had three (or more) children, 52 had one or two children, and 41 were childless. Twenty-one of them had worked for more than 10 years, 66 for five to ten years, and 27 for less than five years. Ninety-seven (85.1%) were staff, and 17 (14.9%) were supervisors.

Prior to hypothesis testing, a series of prerequisite analysis tests were conducted to ensure the feasibility of the regression model. The results of the normality test indicated that the data were normally distributed, as the significance value was above the 0.05 threshold. Furthermore, the linearity test confirmed a linear relationship between character strengths and psychological well-being, as well as between social support and psychological well-being. By meeting the assumptions of normality and linearity, the data were deemed suitable for further analysis using multiple linear regression techniques.

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing

Variable	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p)
Constant	47.233	5.793	—	8.153	< .001
Character Strength	.467	.047	.669	9.885	< .001
Social Support	.395	.098	.274	4.045	< .001

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Well-Being

Table 2 demonstrates that both independent variables, character strength and social support, significantly influence the psychological well-being of Non-ASN Contract Workers in Padang City. The significance value for each variable is $p < .001$, indicating that character strength and social support significantly contribute to improving psychological well-being. Based on the results of the multiple linear regression analysis, the following regression equation was obtained:

$$Y = 47.233 + 0.467X_1 + 0.395X_2,$$

Where Y represents psychological well-being, X_1 is character strength, and X_2 is social support. This equation indicates that every increase in character strength or social support will be followed by an increase in psychological well-being. In other words, the higher the character strength and social support of Non-ASN contract workers, the better their perceived level of psychological well-being.

Table 3. Determination Coefficient Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.901	.813	.809	2.845

Table 3 above shows an R Square value of 0.813, indicating that character strengths and social support contribute 81.3% to the variation in the dependent variable. This implies that the combined influence of these two factors is very strong in determining the level of psychological well-being among non-certified Government university Non ASNs in Padang. The remaining 18.7% is influenced by other factors not addressed in this model. The regression analysis further reveals that character strengths and social support significantly affect psychological well-being (). These findings confirm that the stronger a Non ASN's character strengths and social support, the higher their level of psychological well-being. Character strengths and social support play a vital role in fostering positive emotions, enhancing self-competence, and helping individuals adapt to the academic work environment's pressures.

This research aligns with findings by Yan et al. (2020), who explained that character strengths are closely linked to psychological well-being as both are rooted in positive psychology. Character strengths can improve temperament, motivation, performance, emotional regulation, and the quality of social relationships. These strengths encompass cognitive dimensions, such as perseverance and critical thinking, as well as affective dimensions, such as humor and compassion. Taheri et al. (2020) also reinforce these results, demonstrating a significant positive relationship between psychological well-being and respondents' character strengths; well-being was proven to be higher when character strengths were high. Similarly, Entezari & Khademi (2018) emphasized that psychological well-being is effectively meaningless without the development of character strength elements.

In public sector employment, non-civil servant contract workers face psychological stress in the form of uncertain employment status, limited career security, and high administrative demands. Character strengths such as perseverance, optimism, and emotional regulation serve as internal psychological resources that help individuals adapt to these working conditions. Meanwhile, social support from coworkers, superiors, and family serves as a stress buffer that strengthens psychological well-being. In the context of this study, non-certified Government Non ASNs often face psychological pressure and professional uncertainty. Therefore, strengthening character strengths becomes a critical factor in maintaining their mental health. Values such as perseverance, optimism, humor, and emotional regulation help Non ASNs adapt to job demands and maintain a healthy psychological balance.

Furthermore, social support is also proven to play a significant role in psychological well-being (Normadhoni & Antika, 2023). Support from colleagues, superiors, and family can reduce feelings of loneliness, increase adaptive capacity, and strengthen emotional resilience (Kurniati et al., 2023). Non-certified Non ASNs require a supportive environment to help them navigate pressures stemming from workload and career instability. Adequate social support fosters a sense of being valued and increases motivation, contributing to more stable psychological well-being.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on non-certified Government university Non ASNs, highlighting how character strengths and social support simultaneously influence psychological well-being. Non ASNs with positive character strengths and adequate social support tend to maintain better well-being despite challenging professional circumstances. Conversely, weak character and low social support increase the risk of stress. Overall, these results underscore the importance of interventions focused on character building and social support as strategies to bolster the psychological well-being of non-certified Non ASNs in Padang. This study contributes positively to the fields of organizational and educational psychology and serves as a reference for

future researchers to expand the scope by including variables such as workload, self-efficacy, and the institutional environment.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that character strength and social support play a crucial role in improving the psychological well-being of non-civil servant contract workers in the Padang City Government. These findings confirm that the combination of internal assets in the form of character strengths and external support systems is a key determinant of the mental health of contract workers who frequently face job uncertainty. Strong character serves as a vital coping mechanism in the face of ambiguity surrounding contract extensions and career paths, while a supportive environment from coworkers, superiors, and family can mitigate the risk of work stress and increase emotional resilience. As a practical implication, government agencies need to develop mentoring and training programs that focus on character development and social cohesion in the workplace. These efforts are crucial for stabilizing the psychological well-being of contract workers by strengthening emotional regulation and building supportive networks. Future research is recommended to expand the scope of variables to include other factors such as self-efficacy, job satisfaction, workload, and organizational justice to provide a more comprehensive picture of contract worker well-being in various public service contexts.

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