



EXPLORING THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF *MINDFULNESS* AS THE BASIS FOR STRENGTHENING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

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Abstract

This research aims to find out how the concept of mindfulness is applied at SDN Tandonsentul I, what is meant by the concept of social and emotional competence at SDN Tandonsentul I, and what is the influence of applying the concept of mindfulness in forming social emotional knowledge? This research is a qualitative research. Qualitative research is designed loosely, not strictly, so that in carrying out research there is the possibility of experiencing changes from what was planned. The data collection technique is primary data by means of interviews and direct observation of school principals, teachers and students from SDN Tandonsentul I, SDN Tandonsentul II and SDN Lumbang II. Meanwhile, the secondary data source in this research is written data from SDN Tandonsentul I, SDN Tandonsentul II, and SDN Lumbang II. The results obtained in this research include; Mindfulness is implemented at SDN Tandonsentul I by using direct, simple and short language which is one of the characteristics of children when asked, this shows that simplicity and not beating around the bush is part of their character. Research subjects understand and can describe their identity and background well. The influence of applying the concept of full awareness in the formation of social emotional knowledge will produce students at SDN Tandonsentul I who have personalities who have full awareness and will have strong social emotional competence, social and emotional skills educate and prepare the nation's golden generation who are ready to face this very competitive development.

Keywords: *Mindfulness, Strengthening Social Competence, Strengthening Emotional Competence*

INTRODUCTION

Today's education and character development no longer only focus on academic achievement, but also on the development of social and emotional competence. Social and emotional competence, which includes the ability to manage emotions, empathize with others, and build healthy relationships, is essential in the lives of individuals and society. However, in the realities of daily life, many individuals, especially children and adolescents, face challenges in developing these competencies. High academic pressure, great social expectations, and intense exposure to social media have created conditions that affect the emotional well-being of many people. Many children and adolescents experience anxiety, stress, and other emotional problems that can

hinder their ability to thrive socially and emotionally. In this context, traditional approaches in education may not be enough to address the problem (Goldberg et al., 2021).

One of the approaches that is increasingly being talked about in the world of education and psychology is mindfulness or mindfulness. In simple terms, mindfulness can be defined as the ability to bring your full attention to the present moment in a non-judgmental way. Research shows that mindfulness has great potential in helping individuals manage their stress and emotions, as well as in improving social competence. The practice of mindfulness helps individuals to become more aware of their feelings and thoughts, which in turn

allows them to respond to social situations in a more adaptive way. Mindfulness can also help in the development of empathy, which is a key element of social competence (Arifin & Yulianti, 2018).

However, despite the overwhelming evidence showing the benefits of mindfulness, its application in various contexts, including in schools, is still uneven. In many countries, mindfulness is still considered something new and has not been widely incorporated into the formal education curriculum. In fact, mindfulness can be an effective tool to strengthen students' social and emotional competence. The main challenge in the application of mindfulness in schools is the lack of a deep understanding of this concept among teachers and educators. Many teachers feel that they do not have enough knowledge or training to teach mindfulness to students. In addition, there are still concerns about how mindfulness, which derives from spiritual traditions, can be adapted in the context of secular education without losing its essence (Wulandari & Santoso, 2021).

On the other hand, there are also challenges in terms of structural and policy support. The implementation of mindfulness programs in schools requires support from various parties, including school management, parents, and policymakers. Without strong support from all parties, mindfulness programs may not be implemented effectively. However, there are several successful examples of the implementation of mindfulness in schools in various countries. Programs such as Mindful Schools in the United States, MindUP in Canada, and .b (dot-be) in the United Kingdom have shown that mindfulness can be integrated into school curricula and provide tangible benefits for students. These programs have been adopted by hundreds of schools and have assisted thousands of students in improving their well-being (Crane et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, the implementation of mindfulness is still in its early stages. Several schools and educational institutions have begun to explore the benefits of mindfulness, but there is no systematic and structured approach to

integrating it into the educational curriculum. Therefore, it is important to further examine how mindfulness can be applied effectively in schools in Indonesia. Strengthening social and emotional competence through mindfulness is not only beneficial for students, but also for teachers and educators. Teachers who are trained in mindfulness tend to have lower stress levels and are better able to manage the classroom in a positive way. This in turn creates a better learning environment for students (Gu et al., 2020).

In addition, the application of mindfulness can also help in overcoming bigger problems such as bullying at school. By improving students' empathy and social skills, mindfulness can help reduce incidents of bullying and create a more inclusive and supportive school culture. In the long term, the development of social and emotional competence through mindfulness can make a significant contribution to the welfare of society. Individuals who have good social and emotional abilities tend to be mentally and physically healthier, more productive, and better able to contribute positively in their communities (Kabat-Zinn & Santorelli, 2018).

Therefore, it is important for educators, psychologists, and policymakers to understand the potential of mindfulness as a tool for strengthening social and emotional competence. Further research is needed to explore the best ways to integrate mindfulness into the education system, as well as how to support teachers and students in implementing this practice in daily life. In this context, the development of mindfulness training programs for teachers and students is one of the strategic steps that can be taken. This training program will not only help in understanding the concept of mindfulness, but also in developing the practical skills necessary to apply it in and out of the classroom. Thus, mindfulness has great potential to contribute to the strengthening of social and emotional competence, both at the individual and societal levels. Through proper understanding and application, mindfulness can be one of the effective tools to build a generation that is more emotionally balanced, more empathetic, and better able to face life's challenges in the future.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research method uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore in depth how mindfulness can contribute to strengthening students' social and emotional competence. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the experiences, perceptions, and views of students and teachers regarding mindfulness practices and their impact on social interaction and emotional management (Creswell & Lindsay, 2020).

The research locations are SDN Tandonsentul I, SDN Tandonsentul II, and SDN Lumbang II, all three of which are located in Lumbang District, Probolinggo Regency. The subject of this study was determined using *the accidental sampling* technique. *Accidental sampling* is a subject that represents the group selected voluntarily based on their comfort and willingness.

In this study, primary data sources came from school principals, teachers, and students from SDN Tandonsentul I, SDN Tandonsentul II, and SDN Lumbang II. While the secondary source is a data source that does not directly provide data to the data collector, the secondary data source in this study is written data from SDN Tandonsentul I, SDN Tandonsentul II, and SDN Lumbang II.

In carrying out research activities, the author uses several data collection techniques, including:

Interview

In this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted by providing open-ended questions, noting the key points in the questions, recording the interview process, and transcribing the interview results (Creswell, 2014). Questions will be given departing from the basic guidelines that have been prepared previously. This basic guideline is designed following the theme raised accompanied by some spontaneous additional questions to the subject.

Observation

Qualitative observation is a data collection technique where researchers make notes related to field conditions regarding the behavior and activities of subjects at the research site. Observations in this study will be made when interacting with the subject and when the subject interacts with his environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The Data-Aware Concept of Understanding Background Identity

To obtain data on understanding the concept of mindfulness, at the first interview stage with the subjects, the researcher asked about the identity of the subjects and the background of the research subjects. The answer from one of the interviewed subjects about understanding identity and background, is as follows:



Figure 01. Interview with Mrs. Erna Dewi, S.Pd. KS Tandonsentul I

"My name is Erna Dewi, I was born in Malang on February 15, 1975, currently I live in Lumbang with my husband and 2 children. As you know, I am a teacher who got an additional assignment to be the principal at SDN Tandonsentul Pendidikan in my last time, I took it at the Open University of Malang".

From the data, it illustrates that the language used by the research subjects shows that they understand their identity and understand their background and tell it straightforwardly and well. The 2nd subject is the principal and teacher of SDN Tandonsentul II and SDN Lumbang II. And the following data is obtained:



Figure 02. Interview with Mr. Tiram, S. Pd, M.Pd. as KS Tandongsentul II

"My name is Tiram Bu, my current age is 57 if based on the date written on the diploma, I was born in Probolinggo. My wife has been dead for a long time and Alhamdulillah, we are blessed with 2 children. All of them have finished college. We have lived in Lumbang since 1980 if my education, starting from elementary school, junior high school, spg for 6 years, then a bachelor graduated from the Open University of Malang and finally I took a master's program from Budi Utomo University in 2009".

According to a guardian of a student at SDN Lumbang II by the name of Siti Holila, revealed that different things with the same intention to tell identity and background. But it is different if the person we are interviewing is a student, for example as follows:



Figure 03. Interview with students of SDN Tandongsentul I

"My full name is Nuril Lailani Fitria, called Fitri, a grade VI student of SDN Tandongsentul I. Born in Probolinggo in 2011, I am the second child of three siblings. My younger brother is now in grade II also at SDN Tandongsentul I. I like to paint. My father and mother used to sell fruit ice and meatballs in front of my house".

The use of straightforward, simple and short language is indeed one of the children's characters when asked, this shows that simplicity and not long-winded are part of their character.

From some of the results of the interviews above, it shows that the research subjects have full awareness (*mindfulness*) which is shown by

awareness of who they are, what their role is, and where they are

Awareness of Experiences that have already occurred

A person's awareness like this is one of the signs that a person will go to mindfulness. Erna Dewi, S.Pd., Principal of SDN Tandongsentul I when interviewed related to her life experiences, she told the following:



Figure 04. Interview with Mrs. Erna Dewi, S. Pd KS Tandongsentul I

"I was born into a farming family, my father and mother were farmers, I went to elementary school, continued junior high school, high school, then D2 and continued S-1 education. If I have been a teacher since 1999 And thank God my husband is also a teacher. There is a lot of grief and love to be a teacher. Starting from a mediocre salary, sometimes even negative finances, until now it is enough and God willing, there is more because of the teacher's professional allowance. Being a teacher for 26 years, taught me a lot of things because I had to deal with many children, many people with different backgrounds."

Meanwhile, Naning Susanti, S.Pd., a teacher at SDN Tandongsentul I about her experience as a teacher said:



Figure 05. Interview with Mrs. Naning Susanti, S.Pd Teacher of SDN Tandongsentul I

"I entered this elementary school initially as a sukwan teacher. Sukwan teachers in the early years did not receive incentives from the government. It is only the fourth year that I have received an incentive from the government of Rp. 600,000 per month. Becoming a teacher for me is a soul calling. Because I love children and I love sharing with them. The challenge of being a teacher is if there are children who are stubborn, naughty and their parents do not want to understand".

As for Hilyatul Auliya, a Grade VI student of SDN Tandonsentul I, told the researcher about his experience as follows:



Figure 06. Interview with students of SDN Tandonsentul I

"My brother used to go to school here. My brother is in grade IV, I am in grade I. Every day I go to school with my brother. Now I leave to be escorted by my father, then my father takes my brother to Lumbang Junior High School".

From some of the descriptions above, it can be understood that teachers and students have an awareness of the experiences that have occurred. Every individual must go through a period in his or her life. And every individual must have an awareness of something that has happened in the past, and make it a lesson that may happen in the future and take an anticipatory attitude to avoid bad consequences, even the worst.

Factors Affecting Mindfulness

The first factor that affects mindfulness is intention. Our intention in achieving a goal, arises when something is in our hearts and minds, therefore we will try to do something new. According to Dina Fitriyah, a teacher at SDN Tandonsentul I, told the researcher about her intention to become a teacher as follows:

"Teachers are a noble profession. That's what Mrs. Erna always echoes. Our intention to go to school must be the same, always learning and trying to learn students. A noble profession must be accompanied by a noble intention. By becoming a teacher, I can play a more role, especially for students and the surrounding community".

In addition to intention, full awareness is also influenced by the attention factor. In attention, there are several activities of the soul that involve the brain and senses. Attention arises because of a person's activity that comes from what he sees. Regarding this, Sujak, S. Pd, M.Pd., the principal of SDN Lumbang II said as follows:

"Regarding the policies at school, I can't just decide. I have to pay attention to the condition of the teacher, the parents of the students and the students themselves. I had to accommodate their aspirations and then decide them together according to the needs, abilities and circumstances of the school. This is so that all principals, teachers and parents have the same vision and views with school policies".

Another factor that is no less important that affects mindfulness is attitude. Some of the attitudes shown by school residents at SDN Tandonsentul I, SDN Tandonsentul II, and SDN Lumbang II based on some of the interview results above, include the attitude of accepting joint decisions, trying to implement joint decisions and trying to succeed programs that have been mutually agreed.

Understanding the Concept of Social and Emotional Competence

Cognitive ability, intelligence, or intelligence in thinking are not the only aspects that affect a child's behavior towards himself, others, and the surrounding environment. There is another aspect that also plays an important role in the child's learning process, namely social-emotional development. In implementing social-emotional learning, good cooperation is needed from the entire school community so that the goals of this learning are achieved.

Mindfulness Understanding

One of the guardians of SDN Lumbang II students named Siti Holila when asked about

the understanding of self-awareness, she said the following:

"In my opinion, self-awareness is knowing who they are, knowing their feelings, knowing what they are going to do, and knowing how to do it. Everything is of course based on their respective abilities and wills".

Based on the opinion of the research subjects above, it can be concluded that the understanding of full consciousness is closely related to a person's ability to recognize one's own feelings and behaviors, recognize one's own strengths and weaknesses, and have an independent attitude to do something based on one's ability.

Discussion

This discussion will explore the findings from research on the application of mindfulness in improving students' social and emotional competence, which is collected through a qualitative approach. First of all, it is important to understand how students define and interpret mindfulness. Based on interviews, most students associate mindfulness with the ability to focus on the present moment and control their thoughts, especially when they are feeling anxious or depressed. Students also showed that they understood mindfulness as a way to relieve stress and improve concentration during learning activities (Rahmawati & Prasetyo, 2020).

Some students report that before participating in mindfulness programs, they often found it difficult to control their emotions, especially when faced with stressful situations, such as exams or conflicts with friends. After participating in the mindfulness program, they felt more able to deal with these situations calmly. They described that breathing exercises and meditation helped them to stay calm and reduce anxiety, which in turn helped them to respond situation in a more controlled and positive way (Holzel et al., 2024).

In addition, students also reported improvements in their ability to understand and manage emotions. They become more aware of their own feelings and how they can affect their actions. Mindfulness helps them not to react impulsively, but rather to take a moment to reflect before acting. This is especially important in the context of social interaction,

where the ability to effectively manage emotions can reduce conflict and improve interpersonal relationships (Setiawan & Nurhidayah, 2019).

From the observations made during mindfulness sessions, it can be seen that students show an improvement in their ability to focus and calm down during the learning process. Before the program began, many students seemed restless and easily distracted, but as time went on, they became more able to maintain concentration and remain mentally present during lessons. This suggests that mindfulness not only affects their emotional well-being, but also has a positive impact on their cognitive abilities in an academic context.

The teachers involved in the study also provided valuable insights into how mindfulness affects overall classroom dynamics. Teachers reported that students who participated in mindfulness programs showed improvements in self-discipline and the ability to cooperate with classmates. They are more responsive to instructions, exhibit less disruptive behavior, and are better able to work collaboratively in groups. Teachers also noted that the classroom atmosphere became calmer and conducive to learning (Purwanti & Hidayat, 2022).

In the context of empathy, some students report that they feel more able to understand the feelings and perspectives of others after participating in a mindfulness program. They stated that mindfulness exercises helped them to pause and consider how their actions might affect others before making a decision. This suggests that mindfulness can contribute significantly to the development of empathy, which is a key element of social competence. One of the interesting findings of this study is that mindfulness is not only beneficial for students facing stress or emotional problems, but also for those who already have good social and emotional competence. Students who initially felt they were able to manage their emotions well reported that mindfulness helped them to deepen their self-awareness and improve the quality of their relationships with others. They become more reflective and more sensitive to the feelings of others, which in turn strengthens their ability to interact effectively (Lestari & Supriyadi, 2023).

On the other hand, this study also identifies several challenges in the implementation of mindfulness in schools. Some students initially find it difficult to adapt to mindfulness exercises, especially because they are not used to activities that require them to sit still and focus on their breathing. Some students also reported that they felt awkward or uncomfortable when they first performed this exercise in front of their classmates. This suggests that it takes time and habituation for students to feel comfortable and fully engage in mindfulness practices (Baer & Lykins, 2021).

Teachers also face challenges in implementing mindfulness in the classroom. Although they see the benefits of this program, some teachers feel that they do not have adequate training to teach mindfulness in an effective way. They stated that they need more support and resources to be able to better integrate mindfulness into teaching and learning activities. This suggests that to achieve optimal results, it is important to provide comprehensive training for teachers (Fitriana & Mahendra, 2024).

In addition, there are also issues related to the sustainability of mindfulness programs in schools. Some teachers and students expressed concern that the benefits of the program may not last long if there is no ongoing support. They feel that there needs to be a consistent effort to ensure that mindfulness becomes part of the daily routine at school, not just as a temporary program. It emphasizes the importance of structural and policy support from the school to maintain the sustainability of mindfulness programs.

From the analysis of documents such as student reflection journals, it can be seen that mindfulness not only has an impact on social and emotional competence, but also on the overall well-being of students. Many students note in their journals that they feel happier, more fulfilled, and better able to face life's challenges after participating in a mindfulness program. They feel that mindfulness helps them to appreciate the small moments in life more and reduce the pressure they feel.

Teachers also recorded positive changes in students' attitudes and behaviors after participating in the mindfulness program. They reported that students became calmer, more focused, and more engaged in learning

activities. This suggests that mindfulness can contribute to the creation of a more positive and supportive learning environment, which in turn can improve students' academic achievement.

However, it is important to remember that the results of this study are contextual and may not be fully generalizable to all schools or groups of students. Factors such as a student's socio-economic background, culture, and individual characteristics can influence how mindfulness is applied and accepted. Therefore, it is important to consider the specific context of each school when developing and implementing mindfulness programs.

In addition, this study also shows that the success of mindfulness programs is highly dependent on the commitment and involvement of all parties, including students, teachers, and school management. Without strong support from all parties, mindfulness programs may not be successful or provide maximum benefits. It emphasizes the importance of effective cooperation and communication between all parties involved in the implementation of the program.

The suggestion of this study is that mindfulness programs should be integrated holistically into school curricula, with adequate training support for teachers and ongoing efforts to maintain the sustainability of the program. In addition, it is also important to involve parents in this process, so that they can support mindfulness practices at home and help reinforce the benefits that students gain in school.

In the long term, mindfulness has the potential to have a significant positive impact on students' emotional and social well-being, as well as the overall school environment. With the right approach, mindfulness can be an effective tool in building strong social and emotional competence, which in turn will help students to thrive not only academically, but also in their personal and social lives.

The study also opens up opportunities for further research on how mindfulness can be applied in a variety of other educational contexts, including at higher education levels or in non-formal education programs. As such, these findings can serve as a basis for the development of broader policies and programs in an effort to improve social and emotional

well-being among students (Brown & Ryan, 2019).

Finally, the results of this study underscore the importance of a holistic approach in education, which focuses not only on academic achievement, but also on the development of social and emotional competencies that are essential for students' long-term well-being and success. Mindfulness can be one of the important components of this approach, as long as it is implemented properly and supported by the entire education ecosystem.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

Mindfulness or full awareness has great potential in strengthening social and emotional competence. Mindfulness helps individuals to be more aware of their emotions, thoughts, and reactions to social situations, thus allowing for more adaptive responses and deeper empathy for others. The application of mindfulness in the school environment, both for students and teachers, can have a significant positive impact in creating a healthier and supportive learning environment. Although the implementation of mindfulness is still uneven and faces several challenges, both in terms of conceptual understanding and structural support, evidence from research shows that the integration of mindfulness into the education system can help address a wide range of emotional and social issues faced by students.

Suggestion

It is recommended that schools and educational institutions develop mindfulness training programs for teachers and students and consider integrating mindfulness into formal educational curricula. Policy and structural support from policymakers in the field of education is essential, including the provision of resources and training for educators. In addition, further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of mindfulness in various educational contexts in Indonesia, as well as socialization and education to parents about the benefits of mindfulness so that they can support this program at home. The application of mindfulness should also not only focus on students, but also on teachers to help them manage stress and create a more positive and productive learning environment. With these

steps, it is hoped that mindfulness can be applied more widely and effectively, making a real contribution in improving the social and emotional competence of future generations.

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