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## Self-compassion training to improve spiritual well-being for teachers at a Catholic elementary school in Surabaya City

Stefany Livia Prajogo<sup>1</sup>, Putu Nitya Sarahdevina

Master of Professional Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Surabaya, Jl. Raya Kalirungkut, Kali Rungkut, Rungkut, Surabaya, East Java 60293, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>E-mail: [stefanylivia7@gmail.com](mailto:stefanylivia7@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

Training activities were carried out for teachers at one of the Catholic elementary schools in Surabaya. Based on the results of the needs analysis that was carried out, it was found that teachers had problems at the level of spiritual well-being. Spiritual well-being is essential for each individual personally. Moreover, as teachers in Catholic schools, they emphasize character education for their students. Therefore, teachers are given an intervention through self-compassion training to improve their spiritual well-being. The results of this training show an increase in the level of spiritual well-being, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

### ABSTRAK

Kegiatan pelatihan dilakukan kepada para guru di salah satu SD Katolik di Kota Surabaya. Berdasarkan hasil analisis kebutuhan yang telah dilakukan, didapatkan hasil bahwa para guru memiliki masalah pada tingkat kesejahteraan spiritual. Padahal, kesejahteraan spiritual sangat penting dimiliki oleh tiap individu secara personal. Terlebih lagi, dalam profesi mereka sebagai guru di Sekolah Katolik yang menekankan pada pendidikan karakter untuk peserta didiknya. Oleh karena itu, para guru diberikan sebuah intervensi berupa pelatihan self-compassion untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan spiritualnya. Hasil dari pelatihan ini menunjukkan adanya peningkatan pada tingkat kesejahteraan spiritual, baik secara kualitatif maupun kuantitatif.

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## 1. Introduction

One job that has a career path and is quite popular in Indonesia is an elementary school (SD) teacher. According to statistical data at [statis.data.kemdikbud.go.id](http://statis.data.kemdikbud.go.id), private elementary school teachers in East Java numbered 21,586 as of 2018/2019 and is the region with the second highest number of private elementary school teachers in Indonesia [1]. Elementary teachers have an important role in building a child's essential character. A child's character education starts in elementary school [2].

Based on Presidential Decree Number 68 of 1995 concerning Working Days for Government Institutions, elementary school teachers have a working time of 8 hours 5 days. The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture [2] also explains that the responsibilities that teachers must carry out apart from teaching are monitoring children's daily lives and evaluating the planning and results of learning activities. Teachers also act as instructors (delivering lesson material), gatekeepers (filtering out negative influences from the environment), catalysts (exploring and optimizing children's potential), facilitators (helping the learning and discussion process), and liaisons (assisting children in obtaining sources of information diverse from various parties) [2].

The material taught by teachers is not only about hard skills but also soft skills, which can consist of collaborating, expressing opinions, leadership, character education, etc. According to the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture (Mendikbud), Catholic schools have been implementing character education for a long time, and its implementation can potentially build progress in character education in Indonesia [3]. In Catholic schools, character education is given priority and is usually aligned with the cultivation of religious values, as stated in the school's vision and mission. In this way, teachers are expected to be able to teach and become role models in applying the values of life between people and relationships with God in everyday life [4].

Based on interviews conducted with several teachers at the school, it turned out that several complaints were found regarding the explanation above. The first complaint came from the school principal, who stated that teachers could still not become role models for implementing Vincentian values based on the school's vision and mission. Vincentian values themselves consist of the following:



- a. The value of simplicity includes an honest attitude in saying and acting, respecting differences, and being sincere.
- b. The value of humility includes an attitude of dependence on God, recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of oneself and others, admitting mistakes and correcting them, cooperation, and serving.
- c. The value of love, which includes tolerance, mutual respect, love of peace, hard work, discipline, responsibility, forgiveness, courtesy, firmness and fairness
- d. The value of mortification, which includes self-control, courage to make sacrifices, giving time to pray, obeying rules, and respecting others
- e. The value of saving souls includes praying diligently, loving the Word of God and carrying it out, believing that God is present in oneself and others, loving peace-forgiving each other, being full of love, faithful in serving, repenting, respecting and respecting each other.

One clear example of behaviour that needs attention is that almost all teachers are often caught doing other activities while praying the Angel of God (a collective prayer held every 12.00 and usually led by the central office). Several teachers left their classes. Plus, there was an honorary teacher who had just been caught drinking alcohol with a security guard (on duty) inside the school shortly after extracurricular hours had finished. Apart from that, researchers also found problems related to relationships between teachers at the school, which could have been more harmonious.

Some teachers still often compare each other's workload. Some of them feel that there is a significant difference in workload. For homeroom teachers, including additional material related to character and religion is the same as adding to their workload because they also have to deal with some parents who feel they are giving too much of the 'responsibility' for education to the teacher entirely. According to them, it would be better if these two materials were emphasized only for the teaching portion of teachers in the field of study concerned. Meanwhile, according to teachers who teach religious and moral subjects, applying and adding material to other subjects is needed to form students with Vincentian character per the school's vision and mission.

Several teachers also said the school had groups of senior and junior teachers. The condition is a problem because they feel like there is a gap when they want to communicate with each other. Junior teachers complain that suggestions regarding 'new' teaching methods tend to be rejected by senior teachers. Regarding this, the principal admitted that the school also did not hold enough gathering activities to increase closeness and feelings of mutual respect between teachers. Apart from that, complaints of lack of confidence and activeness in carrying out school events also need to be highlighted. Coordinators appointed directly by the school principal often feel they need more confidence in mobilizing their fellow teachers to carry out their duties in the committee, so every decision from the event carried out will be decided again by the school principal.

Based on the description of the problem above, it is known that the issues faced by the school are related to the spiritual welfare of teachers in carrying out their profession. Spiritual well-being itself is an affirmation of life about God (transcendental), oneself, the community (communal), and the environment as a whole [5]. This relationship can be developed into four interconnected domains of human existence regarding spiritual health [5]. This spiritual welfare is also stated in the Vincentian values, the school's vision. The vision is supported by Fisher, Francis, & Johnson [6], who found that most Catholic schools also focus on cultivating religious-based character, which involves connection with oneself, others, the environment and God. In other words, the implementation of spiritual well-being is prioritized.

Several previous studies stated that self-compassion is one way that can be used to improve spiritual well-being [7-9]. The concept means that the higher a person's self-compassion, the higher their spiritual well-being. Mathad, Rahesh, & Pradhan [7] also emphasized that self-compassion is correlated with every aspect of spiritual well-being, namely personal, communal, environmental and metaphysical elements. Self-compassion is a theory from Buddhist teachings, which teaches a person to accept and face a situation as a 'part of life' without blaming themselves or others [10]. Self-compassion comprises six aspects: self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and overidentification [10]. The "Self-Compassion is A New Normal" training lasted for 3 days for 180 minutes. This training was conducted online via Zoom Meeting media because it considered the COVID-19 conditions. The material delivery methods used during training are lectures, audiovisuals, games, group discussions, writing tasks, role-play simulations, presentations, case studies, and affirmations.

Theoretically, self-compassion encourages teachers to be more compassionate towards themselves so that later, they will also be able to be empathetic towards others [11]. Remembering, they still often compare their workload with their colleagues. Apart from that, the common humanity aspect is also in line with the metaphysical and communal aspects of spiritual well-being because it emphasizes the process of interconnectedness between humans and the relationship with the creator [11]. Meanwhile, mindfulness is more related to the environmental aspect because it emphasizes awareness of the surrounding environment. Self-compassion will help teachers better understand their profession [12]. Issues related to spiritual well-being and its relationship to self-compassion are still quite minimally researched, especially within the scope of Catholic schools. Therefore, researchers are interested in knowing the effect of self-compassion on the spiritual well-being of teachers at Catholic Elementary School.

## 2. Method

The "Self-Compassion is A New Normal" training lasted for 3 days and lasted 180 minutes. This training was conducted online via Zoom Meeting media because it considered the COVID-19 conditions. The material delivery methods used during training are lectures, audiovisuals, games, group discussions, writing tasks, role-play simulations, presentations, case studies, and affirmations.

**Table 1. Training schedule.**

Day	Session	Objective
First day	Session 1 (You're Feeling Isn't Real)	Teachers can take responsibility for the tasks given and act based on the Vincentian values they uphold.
	Session 2 (Let's Do Here and Now)	
Second day	Session 3 (Life Full of Chaos)	Teachers can improve relationships with colleagues so that later, they can create a work environment that is full of family (warmth, cooperation and mutual respect).
	Session 4 (We're All in This Together)	
Third	Session 5 (Butterflies Can't See Their Wings)	Teachers understand the assessment of themselves, their colleagues and the surrounding environment. Later, it is hoped that participants will be able to face personal and work problems as teachers.
	Session 6 (Understanding, Not Punish)	

This training uses an experimental approach with one group pre-test and post-test, and evaluation is carried out at 2 levels, namely reaction evaluation and learning [13]. Therefore, at the initial stage of training, participants were invited to fill out a pre-test questionnaire, which consisted of Fisher's Spiritual Health and Life-Orientation Measure (SHALOM) translation questionnaire [5] to measure the level of spiritual well-being and the Self Compassion Scale translation questionnaire. Neff's (SCS) [10] to measure the level of self-compassion. SHALOM consists of 20 items and four aspects: personal, communal, environmental and transcendental. Meanwhile, SCS consists of 26 items and comprises six aspects: self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification.

The next stage is implementing self-compassion training to improve the spiritual well-being of SDK AL teachers. This training entitled "Self-Compassion is A New Normal" has 6 sessions, shown in Table 1. At the end of the training, participants were invited to fill out a post-test questionnaire consisting of SHALOM and SCS. Then, 2 weeks after the training, monitoring & follow-up were carried out by conducting interviews with the school principal. All questionnaire data obtained from the pre-test, post-test and follow-up were analyzed quantitatively using the Wilcoxon Signed Test.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Self-Compassion Training Activities are A New Normal

The "Self-Compassion is A New Normal" training was given to 17 permanent teachers at the school, consisting of five male teachers and 12 female teachers aged 28 - 58 years. On the first day, the training presented material related to mindfulness and overidentification. Then, on the second day, the training focused on the concepts of shared humanity and isolation, so it involved a lot of group activities. Meanwhile, participants will be invited on the last day to reduce self-judgment and learn to give self-kindness.



Figure 1. First day activities – Mindfulness game.

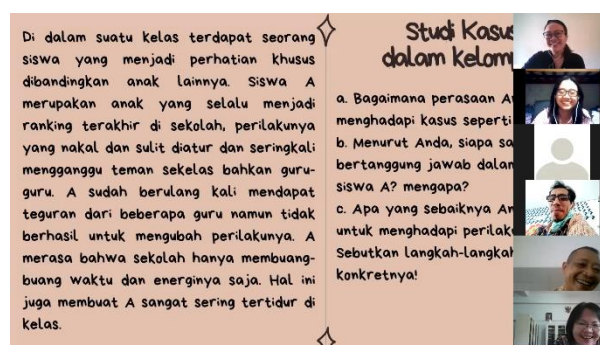


Figure 2. Second-day activities – Case study.



Figure 3. Third-day activities – Practicing self-compassion.

#### 3.2. Training Evaluation Results

The first data analyzed was the results of evaluating the reactions given by participants to the training process. A score of 1 indicates that the training was inferior, and a score of 5 indicates a perfect score. 17 participants attended this training, but on the third day, there was one participant who could not take part in the training due to illness. Therefore, in processing the training evaluation results, these participants were dropped, so the total number of participants was 16 people. The reaction evaluation results are shown in Figure 4.

From the graph above, it can be concluded that most of the assessments regarding Self Compassion and A New Normal training were dominated by the answer "Very Good". Of the participants whose data could be used, namely 16 people, 10 agreed that the Self Compassion is A New Normal training generally went very well. 5 participants said the Self Compassion is A New Normal training was good, and 1 participant said the Self Compassion is A New Normal training went quite well. The second data analyzed is the results of the learning evaluation. Like the reaction evaluation, the scores analyzed came from 16 participants participating in the training series. The score of 1 participant (M) was discarded because he did not attend the session on the 3rd day. The results of the learning evaluation from participants after participating in the training that has been carried out are shown in Table 2.

Based on the table above, the results of the difference test using Wilcoxon show a significance result of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). The result means there are significant differences in attitudes between participants before and after the training. Apart from that, there has been an increase in grades on the measuring scale score. An increase in the grade on spiritual well-being indicates an increase in the level of spiritual well-being of training participants, which means that participants become able to have a positive attitude towards themselves, their co-workers, the surrounding environment and God. Meanwhile, increasing the grade on self-compassion indicates that participants can begin to accept themselves as they are, accept failures and mistakes as part of life, and realize that everything in this world is interconnected.

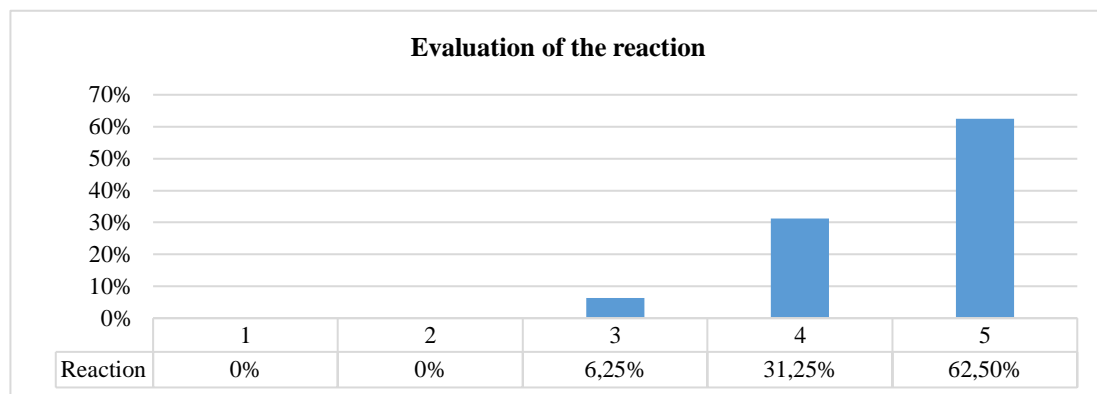


Figure 4. Evaluation of participant reactions.

Tabel 2. Test for spiritual well-being and self-compassion.

Category	N	Normality	Paired test	Percentage of grade increase on the measuring instrument
<i>Pre-test of spiritual well-being</i>	16	78.81	0.000	43.75% of teachers experienced an increase of 1 grade
<i>Post-test of spiritual well-being</i>	16	87.63		
<i>Pre-test of self-compassion</i>	16	0.882	0.000	62.5% of teachers experienced an increase of 1 grade
<i>Post-test of self-compassion</i>	16	0.248		

### 3.3. Training Follow-Up Results

Follow up approximately 2 weeks after training activities. Follow-up is conducted by interviewing the school principal, the highest authority holder. Based on the interviews, it was found that some participants experienced significant changes in attitude, namely becoming more open, patient, more accessible to control their emotions, and organized in carrying out their daily tasks. Training participants to better understand their conditions and the surrounding environment. However, several other participants still looked the same as usual, and no change in attitude occurred. Additionally, several supporting and inhibiting factors were found when applying the training material in everyday life.

#### 3.3.1. Supporting Factors

During the pandemic, teachers experienced confusion and stress due to work pressure. In addition, some of them need more adequate facilities and have unsupportive housing situations. As a result, they tend to be psychologically tired and blame themselves for the problem. Therefore, training on self-compassion is very much needed. The training received direct support from the foundation and school, making the training process more accessible. The school is a Catholic school that upholds Vincentian values. These Vincentian values are based on spiritual well-being and self-compassion, making it easier for teachers to accept and apply the material taught. The participants consider This training a place for rest and self-reflection.

#### 3.3.2. Obstacle Factors

The training was carried out online. It coincided with the mid-term exam period (UTS), so some teachers seemed 'forced' and often lost focus because they had to do other work, such as answering questions from student parents and correcting grades. There are significant differences in teacher age ranges and personal problems outside of problems that occur at work, so not all teachers can apply the material taught.

## 4. Conclusion

The "Self-Compassion is A New Normal" training given to AL Catholic Elementary School teachers increased abilities and knowledge regarding spiritual well-being and self-compassion. This training also helps participants to raise awareness of themselves, each other, the environment and God in dealing with various problems faced in work and personal life.

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