

## The Role of Social Support in Adolescent Personality Development in the VUCA Era

**Muhammad Rofiuddin, Putri Andriani Setiawan, Dinda Tri Nopitalika, Olvia Amerta Mawaddah, Awalia Rahma Bazlina**

<sup>1-5</sup> Raden Fatah State Islamic University Palembang

Corresponding Email: [uddinrofi53@gmail.com](mailto:uddinrofi53@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

The VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity) era provides great challenges for adolescents in developing their personalities. Social support can be an important factor in helping adolescents overcome these challenges. This study aims to explore the role of social support in adolescent personality development in the VUCA era. The research was conducted through a literature study by collecting data from various sources such as journals, books and scientific articles related to this topic. In addition, the research was also conducted through in-depth interviews with 15 adolescent aged 14-18 years. The results showed that social support received by adolescents from parents, teachers, and peers has a significant role in the development of their more positive personalities. Social support can help adolescents reduce stress and improve psychological well-being. Adolescents who receive good social support also tend to be more adaptive to VUCA environments and better able to cope with uncertainty. However, inappropriate social support can have a negative impact on adolescents, such as dependency and the inability to cope with problems independently. Therefore, the role of social support in adolescent personality development in the VUCA era must be done appropriately and according to individual needs. In conclusion, social support can make an important contribution to adolescent personality development in the VUCA era. Therefore, there needs to be attention and support from various parties, including family, friends, teachers, and the surrounding environment to help adolescents build a more positive and adaptive personality. However, inappropriate social support also needs to be avoided so as not to have a negative impact on adolescent personality development.

**Keywords:** VUCA Era, Social Support, Adolescents

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### Introduction

The world is shifting into the VUCA era. VUCA itself stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity. The term VUCA was introduced around 1987 which is based on the leadership theory developed by Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus (Sinha and Sinha, 2020). In the VUCA era as it is now, it is characterized by very rapid, uncertain, ambiguous, and very complex changes that can provide challenges and pressures on adolescents in the process of developing their identity and personality. Adolescents are the nation's potential next generation. However, this phase is a phase that has risks to its future. Given that in this phase adolescents experience the process of choosing and determining their identity. So they tend to experience conflict in their efforts to achieve their goals.

The challenges faced by adolescents today include technological changes, increasingly complex social lives, and high demands for success. In this situation, social support plays a crucial role in helping adolescents face challenges and strengthen their personalities. Social support is the presence of certain people who personally provide advice, motivation, direction and show a way out when

individuals experience problems and when experiencing obstacles in carrying out activities in a directed manner to achieve goals (Bastaman, in Fatwa, 2014). Adolescents need social support from the surrounding environment (such as: parents, teachers, and friends) to be able to reduce the amount of stress and improve psychological well-being.

The importance of social support for adolescents has been recognized, but there is still the issue of limited understanding of the types of social support that are effective and relevant in this context. In addition, social media can also influence the dynamics of existing social support. In light of these issues, interviews and desk research will be conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of adolescents' experiences of receiving social support and find relevant solutions. The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of social support in adolescent development in the VUCA era, to find out the types of social support that are most effective in personality development, and the impact of social support on adolescent personality.

### **Social Support**

According to Santrock (2006) social support is information or responses from other parties who are loved and loved, who appreciate and respect, including a communication relationship and interdependent situations. Social support plays an important role in human development. For example, people who have good relationships with others have good mental and physical well-being, high subjective well-being, and low morbidity and mortality rates (David & Oscar, 2017). Social support is needed by anyone who needs it, especially people who experience depression, have weak social ties (David E., F. Hybels, Proeschold-Bell, 2018) who have relationships with others for their survival in the midst of society because humans are created as social beings. A person can obtain social support in various ways, including through receiving encouragement, support, appreciation, positive words, positive reinforcement, and various forms of physical and psychological assistance.

Social support is defined by House in Smet, (1994) as involving one or more of the following aspects:

- a. Emotional support (expressions of empathy, care and concern). For example, expressing condolences to individuals who have lost one of their families.
- b. Appreciative support (expressions of respect or positive appreciation, encouragement or agreement with individual ideas or feelings and positive comparisons with others), for example people who are less capable or worse off (increase self-esteem).
- c. Instrumental support, which includes direct assistance to facilitate behavior that directly helps individuals. For example, help with objects, work and time.
- d. Informative support. For example, providing input or advice and feedback.

Therefore, it can be said that social support refers to the informational or instrumental help a person receives from certain people in his or her social life that makes the recipient feel valued, cared for, and loved.

### **Adolescent Personality**

Each age phase has specific characteristics that distinguish it from other phases of growth. Similarly, the adolescent phase has distinct features and characteristics that are different from those of childhood, adulthood and old age. In addition, each phase has conditions and demands that are unique

to each individual. Therefore, the individual's ability to behave and act in dealing with a situation differs from one phase to another (Amita, 2018). Often adolescence is considered a period full of "storms or pressures" because many changes occur suddenly and quickly in adolescence both physically and mentally (Hurlock, 2002).

Adolescent personalities can vary greatly because adolescents are undergoing significant development and growth. As with all important periods, the adolescent life span has certain characteristics that distinguish it from the period before and after. This adolescence period is always a difficult time for both adolescents and their parents. According to Sidik Jatmika (2010) in Khamim (2017), the difficulty stems from the phenomenon of adolescents themselves with some special behaviors; namely:

1. Adolescents begin to assert their independence and right to free speech. This can inevitably lead to conflict and unhappiness and can alienate teens from their families.
2. Adolescents are more susceptible to peer pressure than when they were younger. Hence parental influence wanes. Teenagers act differently, like different things, and sometimes even do things that go against what the family does and enjoys. Fashion, hairstyles, and musical treats are common examples of things that need to be current.
3. Adolescents go through many physical developments and sexual transitions. Starting to feel sexual sensations may be scary, confusing, and cause embarrassment and anger.
4. Adolescents often become over confident and this along with their usually higher emotions, makes it difficult for them to accept parental guidance and advice.

### **VUCA Era**

VUCA or Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity is a situation where changes occur full of uncertainty (Aribowo and Wirapraja, 2018). The components of VUCA can be described in the following points;

- a. Volatility is defined as an unpredictable and changing state. It can be said that the rate of change in the present is uncertain. Since it is impossible to predict the frequency, magnitude, or timing, it is these shifts that cause instability.
- b. Uncertainty is uncertainty and scenarios are full of potential shocks. Uncertainty will always exist in the pursuit of goals at every stage. Information can help overcome uncertainty. Uncertainty is less likely if a lot of knowledge and insights have been gathered. However, even if a lot of data has been collected beforehand, there are still many unknown factors that can affect the outcome. These uncertain variables are generated by some boundaries that cannot be crossed.
- c. Complexity is a situation that is full of complexity. Complexity arises along with the developments that continue to occur. The more development that is carried out, the more layered the components that fill it, the more complex things are faced (Soraya, Salsa & Virgin, 2022).
- d. Ambiguity is a floating state that makes it difficult to understand direction. Finding a definitive choice that leads to one point in time is challenging. Everything has two sides, and always will. Unlike uncertainty, ambiguity focuses more on the message that the information received is

trying to express. There is uncertainty because the information received is not specifically intended for one purpose.

Examining how the elements of VUCA affect change, if associated with the personality of adolescents, this can be a challenge in how to respond to these changes. The challenges faced by adolescents today are in the form of technological changes, increasingly complex social life, and high demands in achieving success.

### **Method**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a type of literature research where researchers collect data from literature sources. Zed (2008) asserts that a literature review limits its operation to a collection of library items without requiring fieldwork. Jesson et al. (2011) argue that a literature review is a written document that examines a subject or published research findings without providing an explanation of scientific techniques. The data collection technique is carried out by collecting data from various sources such as books, journals and scientific papers that are relevant to the topic discussed. In addition, this research is also supported by conducting in-depth interviews with 15 adolescents aged 14-18 years.

### **Results**

According to Demaray and Malecki (2002), social support allows adolescents to adjust and fulfill social roles such as fostering friendships, gaining emotional independence from parents and other adults, and reducing emotional stress to improve subjective well-being. In addition, the availability of social support can influence adolescents' socio-emotional growth and help improve their subjective well-being (Cohen, Gottlieb, and Underwood, 2000). But there are many adolescents who do not get support from the people around them. Apollo & Cahyadi (2012) in Anastasia (2022) suggest factors that hinder the provision of social support, namely withdrawing from others, this is because individuals have low self-esteem, fear of criticism, have a prejudice that others do not help, curse themselves, keep quiet, stay away from the environment, do not want to ask anyone for help; against others, including being suspicious, insensitive, not reciprocal, and aggressive; and inappropriate social actions, including talking about themselves constantly, disturbing others, dressing inappropriately, and never feeling satisfied.

Based on the interviews that have been conducted, it was found that they quite often get social support, such as from family, peers, community organizations and people in the surrounding environment. They feel that social support is very important for personality development in this VUCA era. For example, when facing uncertain situations or feeling stressed about the demands of school or adolescence, parents are always there to listen and provide emotional support, so that teenagers become confident in themselves and make them feel safe to undergo changes and challenges. Peers also play an important role in supporting each other and encouraging each other during difficult times.

In addition, informative support helps adolescents deal with uncertainty in the VUCA era. When things are changing rapidly, it can be difficult to understand and deal with them. But with informative support from trusted adults, it helps teens to gain a better understanding of the situation. Parents can provide advice based on their experiences and help teens make better decisions. One

respondent's experience of social support was when she was confused about the direction of continuing education in accordance with her parents' expectations and her talent interests. She felt confused and anxious because there were many things to consider. But she received emotional and informative support from her seniors who had experienced similar things. This meant a lot to her because it gave her clarity and confidence in making the right decision for herself.

### **Discussion**

Social support is an interpersonal exchange where one person provides help to another (Weiss, in Taylor, 2003). The components of social support are instrumental support, which is direct or tangible assistance that can be in the form of physical or financial assistance and emotional support, which is an expression of sympathy and concern for individuals so that these individuals feel comfortable, loved and cared for. Social support received can make individuals feel valued, cared for, loved, and give rise to self-confidence in individuals (Kumalasari & Ahyani, 2012).

In the face of the VUCA era, the role of social support is crucial in adolescent personality development. This discussion highlights several important aspects of how social support plays a role in helping adolescents face challenges in this era of uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. First, social support acts as a source of psychological well-being for adolescents. Facing high pressure and unstable situations, adolescents need emotional support from parents, peers and other people around them. Emotional support helps adolescents overcome stress, anxiety and emotional difficulties that may arise in facing challenges in the VUCA era. In addition, instrumental support is also important such as advice, guidance. Second, social support also plays a role in the formation of adolescent identity. The VUCA era requires adolescents to explore and understand their identity. Positive and inclusive social support helps teens feel accepted and valued in their identity exploration. Such support plays an important role in providing identity validation and strengthening adolescents' self-confidence.

Third, social support also plays a protective role against negative risks and pressures that can affect adolescents' well-being. In the VUCA era, adolescents face external pressures such as high academic pressure, unstable social or environmental changes, or difficult family situations. Strong social support can help adolescents cope with these pressures by providing them with the necessary practical and emotional support. Finally, social support also plays a role in building healthy social skills and relationships for adolescents. The VUCA era requires adolescents to have effective communication skills and be able to build healthy relationships.

### **Conclusion**

Social support can help adolescents overcome personality problems by providing the help and emotional support needed by adolescents to develop themselves and improve their psychological well-being. Social support can come from various sources, such as family, friends, teachers and the surrounding community. Research shows that social support received by adolescents has a positive effect on self-concept, emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. Therefore, parents, families, teachers and communities need to provide adequate social support for adolescents to help them overcome personality problems and improve their psychological well-being. Lack of social



support can affect personality in adolescents, namely inhibiting the development of adolescent personality and affecting the way of personal and social adjustment. Adolescents who lack social support from parents or peers can experience problems related to emotional intelligence, such as difficulty controlling their emotions which results in them committing actions that harm themselves and others. In addition, a lack of social support can also affect the subjective well-being of adolescents in the family. Therefore, it is important for families, especially parents, to provide sufficient social support for adolescents so that they can establish social relationships with others and develop their identity well.

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