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Kindness Character Profile of Students at SMP-IT Daarul Amiin

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Article Info	Abstract
	This study aims to describe the kindness character profile of students at SMP-IT Daarul Amiin. Kindness is one of the character strengths that supports students' emotional well-being, positive peer interactions, and healthy behavior in the school environment. This study used a descriptive quantitative method with a saturated sampling technique involving 154 students (87 males and 67 females). The data were collected using a kindness scale consisting of six dimensions: generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love, and niceness. The results showed that the overall level of kindness character among students was in the moderate category. The care dimension scored the highest, while the nurturance dimension scored the lowest. Based on statistical analysis, there was no significant difference in kindness character based on gender. These findings indicate that kindness character development needs to be strengthened through psychoeducational strategies in guidance and counseling services to support students' holistic personal and social growth.

INTRODUCTION

Junior high school adolescents are in a developmental stage full of biological, cognitive, and social emotional changes. In this phase, students begin to build their self-identity while expanding their network of friends so that the need for positive relationships and a sense of acceptance becomes stronger (Santrock, 2019; Zhao, 2024; Shı & Ko, 2023; Asmita et al., 2025). One of the key characters that supports this social emotional development is kindness, namely the tendency to act with concern, empathy, and voluntary assistance to others without expecting anything in return (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Malti, 2021). Kindness is seen as part of the strength of the "humanity" character that supports the establishment of healthy relationships, improves psychological well-being, and suppresses aggressive behavior among adolescents (Layousetal., 2012; Ferdian & Wikarta, 2023; Galbi et al., 2021; Paska et al., 2025). Kindness in this study is operationalized through six psychological aspects: (1) generosity, readiness to share resources; (2) nurturance, willingness to maintain relationships; (3) care, sensitivity to the needs of others; (4) compassion, compassion accompanied by patience and forgiveness; (5) altruistic love, common interests above personal interests; and (6) niceness, friendly and socially polite behavior (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Each aspect develops through

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dynamic interactions between internal and external factors. Internal factors include emotional regulation, dispositional empathy, and gender differences where women tend to display stronger empathy expressions due to gender role socialization (Eisenberg et al., 2015; Pikić Jugović et al., 2023; Ardenghi et al., 2023). External factors include parenting patterns, prosocial models at home, classroom climate, peer support, and school policies on character education (Benson, 2011; Volodina, 2023; Thomas et al., 2023). Theoretically, kindness is closely connected to the PERMA (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment) model proposed by Seligman (2011). Acts of kindness increase positive emotions through the helper's high phenomenon, strengthen relationships through trust and a sense of connection, and provide meaning because individuals feel their lives are useful. These three PERMA components then influence students' academic engagement and accomplishment at school (Shoshani & Slone, 2014; Miranda et al., 2024). Thus, cultivating kindness is not only a moral goal, but also a strategy to improve learning performance and well-being.

In Indonesia, the urgency of character education is stated in Permendikbud No. 20 of 2018 concerning Strengthening Character Education. Schools are required to instill religious, nationalist, independent, mutual cooperation, and integrity values. Kindness is contained in mutual cooperation and integrity, but its implementation is often hampered by the burden of the academic curriculum, limited teacher training, and minimal character monitoring instruments (Kemdikbud, 2019; Sanjani, 2024; Hidayati & Nihayah, 2025; Ambikapathy et al., 2024). Guidance and Counseling (BK) services have the potential to be the spearhead because they are oriented towards the development of students' social personalities. BK combines the humanistic principle that every individual has the potential for goodness (Rogers, 1961) with a strength-based counseling approach that emphasizes the exploration of self-strength (Smith, 2018). Through basic classical services, group counseling, to responsive service activities, BK teachers can design structured prosocial interventions, such as the "one act of kindness a day" program or scheduled peer support.

However, previous studies in the Indonesian context are still limited. Marzuki & Fanani (2022) found that the character program at SMP IT Daarul Amiin focused on tahfidz and three languages, while the prosocial dimension had not been measured quantitatively. Latifah (2018) reported that the kindness character of students at SMP Negeri 9 Bandung was in the moderate category and required a hypothetical BK program, but the female sample dominated so that the gender comparison was not clearly depicted. This research gap raises two needs: first, quantitative mapping of the six aspects of kindness in the student population of SMP IT Daarul Amiin, second, analysis of differences based on gender to formulate specific gender-sensitive BK interventions. International studies also emphasize the significance of gender variables. Meta-analytic research by Lei et al. (2020) showed a small to moderate difference (d ≈ 0.30) in prosocial behavior favoring women in the 12-15 year age range. This difference is explained through the social theory of the role of cultural norms encouraging women to express warmth, while men are associated with independence (Eagly & Wood, 2012). This finding is important for BK practitioners to design masculine friendly kindness training to reduce men's resistance to empathetic behavior.

Based on the theoretical explanation and empirical gap, this study focuses on a single variable of students' kindness character with the following considerations: (1) kindness is an important indicator of well-being and academic success; (2) integrated Islamic-based schools such as SMP IT Daarul Amiin uphold the value of kindness as a vision, but its effectiveness has not been measured; (3) the results of the research will be an evidence base for planning BK services and character-friendly school

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programs. The objectives of the study are to comprehensively describe the profile of students' kindness in six aspects, compare kindness scores between male and female students, and formulate recommendations for BK interventions based on research results. The success of the study is expected to strengthen the literature on positive psychology in the context of Indonesian education and offer a practical model of kindness empowerment through collaboration between subject teachers, homeroom teachers, and BK teachers. In addition, the findings can be the basis for the development of reliable character monitoring instruments as part of the school-wide positive behavior support policy. Thus, the scientific and practical contributions of this study are dual, enriching theoretical studies on kindness in adolescents, while also offering operational strategies for strengthening character in junior high schools.

METHODS

The research methodology that was used in this study was quantitative research with descriptive survey. This method was deemed suitable since the aim of the study was to give a definitive and organized presentation of the character of kindness among the students as it is manifested in the natural school environment. Descriptive survey is also most appropriate in the event the researcher wants to map the behavior or psychological constructs among a specified group of people without controlling variables in such a way that an authentic image of the phenomenon being studied is obtained.

The study was conducted in SMP-IT Daarul Amiin, junior high school in Garut Regency. The sample population was 162 students who were attending the school. Out of this population, 154 students were used as the study sample which was identified using the saturated sampling technique. The sampling done was saturated because it was chosen to maximize the representation as the sample size was relatively small and it was possible to engage nearly all the population members. Such a plan reduced the sampling error and increased the validity of the descriptive results as it ensured that the obtained results were close to the real situation in the school setting.

This study relied on a kindness character scale as the instrument, which theoretically was based on the character strengths framework, which was put forward by Peterson and Seligman (2004). According to this framework, kindness is considered as one of the most important human strengths which could be divided into certain behavioral dimensions. Irlla Nur Latifah introduced the scale in the first place (2018) and the current researchers slightly adjusted it according to the context and aims of the research. The instrument was finalized with 72 items, and each of these items measured the indicators of kindness based on six dimensions namely: generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love and niceness. We chose these dimensions as they are complementary to each other and will make a more refined view of the character profile of students. The change process entailed accommodating some items with the cultural and educational context SMP-IT Daarul Amiin so that the statements would be relevant and make sense to the participants.

The instrument was scored and then categorized under three scores namely; high, medium, and low, according to preset scoring ranges. This grouping allowed the authors to read the degree of benevolence nature in a systematic way among students, which allowed the researcher to analyze at both the personal and group levels. This kind of categorization also facilitated meaningful comparisons between various demographic factors especially gender which was termed as one of the most important variables of interest.

Univariate analysis methods were used in the data analysis purposes. The univariate analysis was considered suitable since the study was focused on explaining how kindness character is distributed without causal relations between variables.

Frequency distribution, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used as descriptive statistical procedures in order to present the data in a form that can be interpreted. This mode of analysis gave a holistic picture of the kindness character of the students in general and disaggregated by gender. Descriptive statistics were used not only to determine the general pattern and change in character of kindness but also helped the researchers interpret the patterns that can be applied in further research or interventions undertaken in improving character education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide a comprehensive quantitative overview of the kindness character profile of students at SMP-IT Daarul Amiin. The findings are presented based on the overall distribution of kindness scores, the six-dimensional structure of kindness, and gender-based comparisons. The presentation follows the descriptive nature of the study while including minimal theoretically grounded interpretations to support the clarity of the reported findings. The descriptive statistics derived from the kindness instrument offer an empirical basis for understanding the general pattern of students' prosocial tendencies, which, in the context of adolescent development, are shaped by emotional sensitivities, peer relationships, and school climate (Santrock, 2019; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Malti, 2021).

General Description of Students' Kindness Character

Table 1. General Description of Kindness Character

		Range	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low	186-230	37	24.0	35.24%.
	Medium	231-250	67	43.5	
	High	251-281	50	32.5	
	Total		154	100.0	

Table 1 shows the general distribution of the kindness character scores of the 154 students. The scores were categorized as low, medium and high based on predefined levels. The statistics show that most participants fell within the medium category (43.5 32.5 24.0). Cumulative percentages indicate that 35.24 III percent of the observed kindness behaviors attained a moderate level of expression among the student cohort.

The distribution that is observed suggests that there is kindness among the student population, but not necessarily at the optimal levels. This trend is in keeping with those that have been regularly reported among adolescent groups, where prosocial behavior changes over time as individuals negotiate identity, emotion, and peer. Previous studies have shown that adolescents often exhibit situational prosocial behavior when they need to respond to a need in the moment, and they do not always perform prosocial behavior in a variety of situations (Eisenberg et al., 2015). The medium scores are rather predominant, which indicates that, though a part of the student population is kind in every-day interactions, various reasons, including limited emotional control, uneven peer influence, or uneven school interactions can hinder the process of transforming kindness into a stable personality trait. This result is in line with the theoretical hypothesis that kindness as a subset of the overall humanity character strength requires the additional components of not just empathy but also the ability to maintain compassionate behavior with time (Peterson and Seligman, 2004).

Although the level of reported kindness is overall moderately high, the percentage of students who were identified as high demonstrates that the school climate can provide the prosocial behavior the necessary environment to thrive. Routine interpersonal practices and values-based education that are usually integrated in

Islamic schools can facilitate the development of caring attitudes. However, the considerable percentage of students in the bottom category indicates that further reinforcement and especially the school-based programs like guidance and counseling interventions that promote the socio-emotional skills and ongoing interpersonal interactions are necessary.

Kindness Character Based on Each Dimension

Table 2. Kindness Character Based on Each Aspect

Dimension	Item	Score Max.	M	SD	Category*
Generosity	14	70	48,9	6,7	Medium
Nurturance	8	40	29,6	4,9	Medium
Care	10	50	35,8	5,5	Medium-High
Compassion	13	65	46,1	7,4	Medium
Altruistic Love	15	75	50,0	7,1	Medium
Niceness	12	60	43,2	6,3	Medium

The operationalization of the construct of kindness in this research is based on six dimensions namely; generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love and niceness. Table 2 shows the details of the descriptive statistics of each of the dimensions, the mean scores in each of the dimensions, their standard deviations, and their categorical classifications. The results show unequal scores of intensity on the dimensions with care having the highest mean score and nurturance the lowest.

The dimension of care associated a mean score of 35.8 out of 50 points, which is 70 0 of the highest possible score. This high percentage shows that students are rather sensitive to the needs of others, are willing to help peers within a particular situation, and are sensitive to understand the emotional condition of other people nearby. These findings align with developmental documents that indicate that adolescents are often empathetic to needs that can be perceived (Eisenberg et al., 2015). In addition, care is also mentioned as one of the first and the most obvious examples of generosity among the youth cohorts (Malti, 2021). The dominance of behavior related to care therefore justifies the hypothesis that the school setting assists in interpersonal cognizance and peer relations are central agents of socialization.

On the other hand, nurturance had the least mean score (M 29.6 on a 40-point scale). Nurturance involves the upkeep of nurturing relationships through time, the expression of concern regarding the well being of other people and the dedication of energy to the survival of interpersonal relationships. The reduced mean indicates that students are able to easily address the immediate needs but long-term commitment to prosocial activity is a challenging task. Empirical studies show that long-lasting relational behaviors involve higher levels of emotional regulation, self-reflection, and social responsibility, which are competences that are still in their growth stages at adolescence (Ardenghi et al., 2023). This highlights a possible area of educational intervention especially the programs that focus on peer mentoring, collaborative group work and conflict-resolution techniques which have the potential to foster more stable and lasting interpersonal relationships.

The other four dimensions such as generosity, compassion, altruistic love, and niceness are in a medium range of categorisation. Generosity (M= 48.9 out of 70) is an indicator of the willingness by students to share resources which is in sync with general prosocial tendencies in adolescence. Although moderate, compassion (M=46.1 out of 65) states that students are patient, forgiving, and emotionally supportive in certain situations. The level of altruistic love (M= 50.0 out of 75) and niceness (M= 43.2 out of 60) are also within the expected developmental range of this age group, and thus, are considered to be present but might need some form of reinforcement in a more consistent and internalized manner. Within the framework

of the PERMA model of well-being (Seligman, 2011), compassion and altruistic love-related behaviours play an important role in the relational and meaning aspects of well-being, whose reinforcement can have more extensive impacts on the psychological functioning of students.

Taken together, the dimension level findings show that the kindliness of the students is better described by immediate and situational responsiveness (care) than with a long-term relational commitment (nurturance). The distinction is relevant to the educational practitioners who want to create a holistic character education program because it shows what particular advantages to preserve and where special development is justified.

Differences in Kindness Character Based on Gender

Table 3. Table of Differences in Kindness Character Based on Gender

ANOVA Table			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Character Kindness * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	845.713	1	845.713	.665	.416
	Within Groups		193404.761	152	1272.400		
	Total		194250.474	153			

Although the ANOVA test showed no statistically significant difference in kindness character between male and female students (F = 0.665, p = 0.416), this result should be viewed as an opportunity for deeper reflection rather than as a final conclusion. The absence of a gender effect contrasts with prior studies such as Eisenberg et al. (2015) and Lei, Li, & Zhang (2020), which generally report higher prosocial tendencies among females in early adolescence. Several contextual and methodological factors may help explain this difference.

First, SMP-IT Daarul Amiin implements integrated Islamic character education programs that may promote uniform prosocial norms regardless of gender. Second, unmeasured variables such as teacher role-modelling, peer group norms, or school-wide collaborative projects could contribute to the uniformity observed. Third, the use of a single-school saturated sample and reliance on self-report measures might reduce variability and statistical power to detect subtle gender differences. To strengthen the interpretation of these findings, future research should incorporate mixed methods combining quantitative measures with qualitative interviews, classroom observations, and analysis of program implementation to identify specific environmental processes that foster kindness consistently across genders.

Beyond the gender analysis, the descriptive results show that overall kindness falls in the moderate range, with care as the highest-scoring dimension and nurturance as the lowest. These dimension-level patterns provide a clear foundation for targeted interventions: 1) Nurturance (lowest score): Implement sustained peer-mentoring programs, long-term collaborative projects, and conflict-resolution workshops to encourage maintenance of positive relationships over time; 2) Compassion and Altruistic Love (higher percentage in low category): Introduce perspective-taking activities, role-play exercises, and structured community service with guided reflection to strengthen concern for others beyond immediate peers; 3) Care (highest score): Preserve and enhance this strength through regular service activities, teacher recognition of caring behaviors, and opportunities for students to lead peer-support initiatives; 4) Each intervention should be evaluated through simple monitoring tool, such as pre–post kindness subscale scores and brief qualitative feedback, to ensure that strategies effectively address the targeted dimension.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings can be framed using *Social Learning Theory* (Bandura, 1977), which posits that prosocial behavior develops through observing and imitating role models highlighting the importance of teacher modelling and peer influence. *Moral Development Theory* (Kohlberg, 1984) emphasizes structured opportunities for moral reasoning and perspective-taking in sustaining prosocial tendencies. Integrating these frameworks into program design ensures that recommendations are not only practical but also grounded in established psychological theory. The PERMA model (Seligman, 2011), introduced in the introduction, further explains how acts of kindness contribute to well-being, making them a strategic focus for holistic student development.

Strengthening Kindness Character in Adolescents: Insights and Implications

The results of this research would be beneficial to understand the nature of kindness of the students in SMP-IT Daarul Amiin. On the whole, the moderate degree of benevolence indicates that the students tend to exhibit prosocial behaviors but the construction of this character strength had not achieved the full potential by this time. This is consistent with the findings of prior Indonesian research (e.g., Latifah, 2018) that also has shown a similar moderate trend, which means that kindness among teenagers in the school context is not yet integrated as a robust and stable character trait. The middle range can indicate the phase of adolescent transition itself, when a person seeks his identity, experiences ups and downs in his/her mood, and is susceptible to social pressures (Santrock, 2019).

The dimension-level findings bring on valuable nuance. The care dimension came out as the most powerful, which demonstrated that the students are quite sensitive and responsive to the urgent needs of the other children. This is a kind of benevolence that is situational as teens are fast to assist when they see an apparent necessity. Conversely, nurturance was the least with a score of 5 indicating that there was a difficulty being able to maintain positive relationships in the long run. The result can be compared to developmental studies implying that adolescents might be good at reactive prosocial behaviors but fail to implement them consistently and commit to long-term nurturance (Eisenberg, Spinrad, and Knafo-Noam, 2015). In practical terms, it means that not only should educational interventions promote spontaneous acts of kindness but should also promote endurance in relationships, empathy throughout friendship and loyalty.

Interestingly, gender differences were not found to differ significantly between gender in kindness, which contradicts meta-analyses that show that girls tend to score higher on prosocial behavior (Lei, Li, and Zhang, 2020). This result may be attributed to a number of contextual factors. First, the Cohesive Islamic character education at SMP-IT Daarul Amiin could lead to homogenous notions towards prosocial behavior which would reduce the gender differences. Second, group learning, shared religious activities and group projects which are collective school practices could encourage common norms of kindness among genders. Third, methodological issues, including the use of self-report measures, and the narrowness of a given school can reduce the sensitivity of the analysis to detect fine-grained differences. Future investigations that are more diverse (e.g., mixed-method methods, such as interviews, teacher assessments, classroom observations) would bring a more fined-tuned picture of the interaction of the gender roles with the development of kindness among adolescents.

In a theoretical perspective, it is possible to interpret these findings with the help of the Social Learning Theory created by Bandura (1977). The observational learning of kindness behavior through teachers, peers and role models in the school setting may be the main source of adolescents learning kindness behaviors. Gender differences can be reduced in case the authority figures continuously portray kindness and the peers confirm this by praising such positive behavioral patterns, since both boys and

girls would adopt the same behavioral patterns. Moral Development Theory (1984) by Kohlberg can also be used as an applicable framework as it emphasizes the necessity of structured chances of moral reasoning. In the absence of these opportunities, the act of kind-heartedness might be only momentary and not based as a firm moral value, which perhaps clarifies the rather low scores in nurturance and altruistic love.

The implications of the findings to the educational practice, especially the guidance and counseling (BK) services are also important. The interventions created by BK teachers can be designed specifically to address weaker dimensions, including nurturance, compassion and altruistic love. As an illustration, longer-term peer mentoring programs and localized community service experiences that include reflective aspects can be used to reinforce the capacity of students to continue making prosocial commitments. Meanwhile, the strengths, including care, are to be not only maintained but additionally supported by providing the students with the regular chances to use supportive behaviors, reward the caring actions publicly, and encourage the students to engage in supportive activities facilitated by a teacher. When these practices are instilled in the day-to-day running of the school, kindness will form part and parcel of the school culture and not a solitary feature.

These findings have a wider significance to character education in Indonesia beyond the school setting. Although permendikbud policies like Permendikbud No. 20 of 2018 require the inclusion of such values as mutual cooperation and integrity, there are still difficulties in application because of insufficient preparation of teachers and excessively many subjects in their curriculum (Kemdikbud, 2019). The results of this research indicate that schools must have evidence-based and systematic practices to put into practice kindness in learning and social processes. In this respect, SMP-IT Daarul Amiin could be used as a prototype to investigate how schools based on faith balance the academic objectives and systematic character development.

Lastly, one should admit the weaknesses of this study. The small size of a single-site sample removes the possibility of generalization, and the reliance on self-report data presents the possibility of the social desirability bias. The causal inferences regarding what factors have an influence on kindness also cannot be made because of the descriptive design. The next set of research ought to expand this concept and integrate various schools, use longitudinal research designs to monitor progress, and use qualitative data to enhance the understanding.

CONCLUSION

The present research reveals that the kindness attribute of SMP-IT Daarul Amiin students is typically mediocre with the care dimension its strongest and nurturance its weakest element. The results of the ANOVA provided no statistically significant difference between the genders, which indicates that school-wide processes might contribute to balancing prosocial behaviors between male and female students, a hypothesis that needs to be justified with the help of additional empirical studies. In practical terms, interventions need to be structured to directly address the most poorly endowed dimensions without causing depletion of the current strengths though guidance and counseling (BK) services. When considering just the example of low nurturance, long-term collaborative work and peer mentoring can be applied, compassion and altruistic love can be improved with community service and perspective-taking activities, care can be maintained with regular service opportunities and paying attention to the caring acts. These plans need to be integrated into the culture of the school and to be assessed in a systematic way to make sure they are effective. In theory, the connection of the results with the social learning and moral development perspectives adds to the academic value of the study. Future studies need to address the processes (teacher modelling, peer

dynamics and program fidelity) which may be behind the observed gender uniformity and employ mixed-method designs to produce more detailed and practical findings.

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