

THE ROLE OF ADAPTIVE EMOTION REGULATION IN MEDIATING THE CORRELATION BETWEEN FORGIVENESS AND STUDENTS' LEVELS OF DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS

Nawang Purbo Aji¹, Sunawan Sunawan²

^{1,2}Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang

Corresponding Email: sunawan@mail.unnes.ac.id

Article Information

Received : May 28, 2025

Revised : June 2, 2025

Accepted : June 5, 2025

Abstract

Adolescents have a higher risk of experiencing depressive disorders due to fluctuating emotional changes in adolescence. Therefore, further studies exploring predictors that can help reduce symptoms of depressive disorders in adolescents are essential. This study examines the relationship between forgiveness and depression through the mediating role of adaptive emotion regulation strategies (mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving). This study used a correlational design involving 358 Senior High School adolescents from Boyolali Regency. Multiple mediation analysis was conducted using a bias-corrected (N=5000) bootstrapping technique [CI 95%] using PROCESS model 4 syntax to explain the role of adaptive emotion regulation strategies as mediators. Based on the results of the analysis, a significant negative relationship was found between forgiveness and depression, as well as between the three adaptive emotion regulation strategies and depression. However, forgiveness was positively correlated with all three adaptive emotion regulation strategies. The mediation analysis showed that the three adaptive emotion regulation strategies negatively affected the relationship between forgiveness and depression ($\beta = -0.68$, $p < 0.01$). The results of this study confirmed the mediating role of adaptive emotion regulation strategies in the relationship between forgiveness and depression. Thus, to help adolescents reduce depression levels, counselors are recommended to strengthen adaptive emotion regulation strategies as a complement to forgiveness skills.

Keywords: *adaptive emotion regulation strategies, adolescents, depression, forgiveness, multiple mediation analysis*

Introduction

Adolescents who are in the transition period from childhood to adult development are faced with changes and dynamics in physical, social, hormonal, and psychological aspects. As a result, they are more sensitive to traumatic experiences that have an impact on emotional and psychological development disorders (Sisk & Gee, 2022). Therefore, adolescents must be able to adjust to emotional changes because they fail to adjust, resulting in inability, helplessness, and pessimism in problem solving. Low self-adjustment conditions can encourage negative thinking and trigger depression (Kretzer et al., 2024; Putri et al., 2022; YU et al., 2022). Actually, depressive disorders in adolescents arise as a result of rapid changes in cognitive, social, physical, emotional, psychological aspects, interpersonal relationships, and social interests (Axelta & Abidin, 2022).

Ideally, adolescents are expected to be able to adapt and control negative and positive emotions (Lee & Yang, 2022). They have good mental health, self-awareness, capability to manage stress, productive, and proactive in social interaction (Supini et al., 2024). Stressors are expected to be used as opportunities for adolescents' self-development (Hinze et al., 2024). Adolescents can view obstacles as a way to develop

themselves to be more positive and enrich experiences as a learning process throughout life by the dimensions of emotional maturity from the Standar Kompetensi Kemandirian Peserta Didik (SKKPD; Depdiknas, 2007) and the realm of social/emotional development from Mindset and Behavior for Student Success (American School Counselor Association, 2021)

However, various surveys indicate the phenomenon of depressive disorders in adolescents. The results of a study in China showed that there were mental health problems in high school students, the highest was 28% depressive disorders, followed by other mental health problems such as anxiety, and sleep disorders (YU et al., 2022). Mokodenseho et al (2023) found that 35%-45% of high school students in Sukabumi experienced mental crises such as anxiety and depression symptoms. The highest prevalence was found in adolescents experiencing depressive disorders in Indonesia in the 2018 Basic Health Research (Riskedas), as much as 6.2% of the population aged 15-24 years experienced depression, with 61% of them thinking about ending their lives. Furthermore, adolescents in Indonesia generally lack the initiative to seek psychological help when experiencing stress and depression (Pham et al., 2024), with only 10.4% of adolescents aged 15-24 years seeking help in reducing depression. Depressive disorders in adolescents are the highest cases based on the survey (Kemenkes, 2023). Based on this phenomenon, it is important to research protective factors that can help reduce adolescent depression (Axelta & Abidin, 2022; Nelemans et al., 2021). Following up on the study from Zhang et al. (2020), this study is intended to explore the role of adaptive emotion regulation strategies in mediating the impact of forgiveness on reducing depression.

Previous studies (Joormann & Stanton, 2016; Kökönyei et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2020) tend to explore emotion regulation strategies based on the theory of Gross dan John (2003) by emphasizing two strategies, namely cognitive reappraisal as an adaptive emotion regulation strategy and expressive suppression as a maladaptive emotion regulation strategy. Whereas in different theories, emotion regulation strategies are classified more diversely, such as (Naragon-gainey et al., 2017), which divides various types of emotion regulation strategies into mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving as adaptive strategies, while rumination, behavioral avoidance, and experiential avoidance are classified as maladaptive strategies. Following up on the identification of protective factors for depression, this study focuses on three adaptive emotion regulation strategies of mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving. To reduce depression, these findings are expected to recommend alternative adaptive emotion regulation strategies that are appropriate after building forgiveness in individuals.

Depression can be interpreted as the occurrence of mood turmoil with the direction of negative emotions (sadness, loneliness, apathy), negative self-concept, the desire to punish oneself, the experience of behavioral changes in physical function and activity levels, both increasing and decreasing abnormally (Beck & Alford, 2009). Depressive disorders that arise can be observed from the presence of irritable feelings, feeling depressed, fear, lack of enthusiasm, and protracted sadness. If not appropriately addressed, depression can have a prolonged impact, such as difficulty concentrating, focusing on problems, limited social interaction, and tending to think negatively (Riziana & Darmawan, 2023). The prolonged effects of depressive disorders can potentially be an obstacle to the development of adolescents in adjusting to their developmental tasks. Prolonged depression with high levels can encourage and be one of the drivers of suicidal ideation (Khatab, K & Mursyida, 2021; Xu et al., 2025). Since depression tends to be a mood disorder in the DSM-5-TR (American Psychiatric Association, 2022), adaptive emotion regulation strategies play an important role in reducing depression.

Adaptive emotion regulation strategies are emotion regulation strategies that support strengthening psychological well-being (Naragon-gainey et al., 2017), reducing

depression (Kököneyi et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2020), and become a protective factor for depression (Atta et al., 2024). Emotion regulation is defined as an attempt to control the valence of negative and positive emotions influenced by intensity, duration, and quality to fit the situation and goals (Naragon-gainey et al., 2017). The mindfulness adaptive strategy is a concept raised in the Buddhist tradition, where attention and awareness are jointly cultivated and interrelated to make individuals fully present in their experiences and events (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Adaptive reappraisal strategies are implemented by creating cognitive changes in interpreting situations that have the potential to stimulate negative emotions so that the emotional impact changes to produce more adaptive and controllable emotions (Gross & John, 2003). Adaptive problem solving strategies are implemented by taking steps that must be taken to overcome adverse events, also known as refocusing on planning (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2007). Based on these reviews, this study hypothesizes that mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving are negatively related to depression (H1).

Previous research results confirm a negative relationship between forgiveness and depression (Chung, 2016; Dangel & Webb, 2018; Mehta & Natraj, 2020; Toussaint et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2020). However, another study from Sundari et al. (2024) indicated different findings on the impact of forgiveness on depression, where forgiveness predicted increased depression. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to provide clarification on the impact of forgiveness on depression. According to Thompson et al., (2005), forgiveness is defined as an attitude of repair or offense framing in response to things that hurt, towards the perpetrator, the offense, and the consequences of the offense for the offender, releasing painful circumstances from negative to neutral to positive. Painful things can originate from oneself, others, and situations beyond anyone's control. Thus, forgiveness strengthens an individual's ability to make social adjustments and more stable emotional control (Lau et al., 2021; Mccullough, 2001). Therefore, in this study, a negative relationship between forgiveness and depression is predicted (H2).

Previous studies confirm the positive relationship between forgiveness and emotion regulation (Chaudhary, 2025; Ferawati & Rahmandani, 2020; Rey & Extremera, 2016). However, different results were found by Parveen & Pal (2024), who found that forgiveness had no impact on emotion regulation. Therefore, it is important to clarify the impact of forgiveness on emotion regulation. Thus, it can be hypothesized that forgiveness strengthens emotion regulation, especially mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving (H3). Furthermore, the three adaptive emotion regulation strategies mediate the impact of forgiveness on depression reduction (H4).

Based on this statement, this research has four objectives: a) to determine the relationship between adaptive emotion regulation strategies and depression among adolescents. b) to determine the relationship between forgiveness and depression among adolescents; c) to determine the relationship between forgiveness and adaptive emotion regulation strategies among adolescents; d) to determine the mediating role of adaptive emotion regulation strategies in the relationship between forgiveness and depression among adolescents. This study involves forgiveness and adaptive emotion regulation strategies (mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving) to predict depression by involving the adolescent population from Senior High School in Boyolali Regency, because based on the results of the national health survey, adolescence experiences depressive disorder problems higher than other developmental spans. This study applied a correlational research design to explore the mediating role of adaptive emotion regulation strategies (mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving) in the relationship between forgiveness and depression, which has not received attention from previous research.

Method

The population of this study was 1140 students in grades X and XI from 2 Senior High Schools (SHS) in Boyolali district in the 2024/2025 academic year (Kemendikdasmen, 2025). The selection of these two schools is based on geographical characteristics, which are located in the eastern part of Boyolali, or the former Kawedanan Simo area, out of 15 Senior High Schools in Boyolali Regency. The number of participating samples was 358 students in grades X and XI spread across the two schools, determined through a multistage sampling technique. This sampling method was chosen to accommodate the diverse and broad characteristics of the sample in the school environment. It was effective in reducing potential bias during the process of finding participants (Fowler, 2014). Table 1 shows that female respondents dominate 247 students (69%) compared to male (111 students), or 31% of the total 358 research subjects. Based on the data in Table 1, it can be seen that the age distribution of respondents is between 14 and 17 years. Domination at the age of 16 years, 177 students or 49.4%, followed by the age of 17 years, 100 students or 27.9%, the age of 15 years, 79 students or 22.1%, and lastly, the age of 14 years, two students or 6%.

Table 1. *Percentage and Frequency Distribution of Research Respondents Based on Gender and Age*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	247	69
Male	111	31
Total	358	100
Age		
14 Years	2	6
15 Years	79	22.1
16 Years	177	49.4
17 Years	100	27.9
Total	358	100

This study used 5 Likert psychological scales. Depression was measured using the Beck Depression Inventory II adapted Beck et al., (1996) Indonesian version (21 items, scale 0-3, $\alpha=0.91$, validity 0.40-0.76), with a score of 0 signifying no symptoms (mild) to 3 signifying very severe symptoms (Ginting et al., 2013), Forgiveness was measured using the Heartland Forgiveness Scale (18 items, scale 1-5, $\alpha=0.80$, validity 0.40-0.60) adapted with a range of responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) (Thompson et al., 2005), Adaptive emotion regulation strategies were measured using three factors mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving. Mindfulness was measured using the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (15 items, scale 1-5, $\alpha=0.83$, validity 0.40-0.56) adapted with a range of responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) (Brown & Ryan, 2003), reappraisal was measured using the ERQ-reappraisal subscale (6 items, scale 1-5, $\alpha=0.75$, validity 0.62-0.71) was adapted with a response range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) (Gross & John, 2003), problem solving was measured using the CERQ-refocus on planning/problem solving subscale (4 items, scale 1-5, $\alpha=0.74$, validity 0.73-0.76) was adapted with a response range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2007). All instruments have been translated through scientific procedures and curated by linguists, guidance, and counseling experts. The Pearson correlation product-moment validity test results and Cronbach's alpha reliability show that all items on each variable are valid and reliable for use in this study. This study used quantitative research methods with a correlational design (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2023). Data were collected using a research questionnaire taken conventionally from March 17, 2025, to April 18, 2025. The process of collecting

research data was carried out by randomly selecting each class, using an estimated 20-30 minutes in each class during guidance and counseling hours, after being permitted by the counseling teacher. Respondents understood that giving answers meant they agreed to fill in the research data. The research data collected will pass the classical assumption test requirements using the normality test, linearity test, multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity test. The data analysis technique uses the help of SPSS software version 27. The correlation test is tested using the Pearson correlation product-moment. Path analysis technique using PROCESS 5.0 Hayes model 4 parallel multiple mediation models syntax in SPSS version 27 was used to test the hypothesis of the mediation role. The results of correlational analysis and parallel multiple mediation analysis can be seen in the results and discussion section.

Result and Discussion

Before going through the data analysis process, the research data passed the classical assumption test or data analysis prerequisite test to test the research hypothesis, including a normality test, a linearity test, a multicollinearity test, and a heteroscedasticity test. Based on the prerequisite analysis test results, the research data is declared eligible and can be tested for data analysis. Based on the results of descriptive statistical analysis on research data from 358 respondents in Table 2, using SPSS version 27. The results of descriptive analysis of depression, adaptive emotion regulation strategies (mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving), and forgiveness in high school adolescents respectively are the level of depression in the moderate category ($M = 19.10$ and $SD = 10.14$), the level of mindfulness in the moderate category ($M = 45.38$ and $SD = 8.62$), the level of reappraisal in the high category ($M = 20.80$ and $SD = 5.70$), the level of problem solving in the high category ($M = 13.41$ and $SD = 3.68$), the level of forgiveness in the moderate category ($M = 59.16$ and $SD = 7.47$). Based on the results of the Pearson product-moment correlation test between variables conducted before mediation analysis, it indicates that the variables studied have a significant correlation. All variables predict depression and are negatively correlated. While beyond prediction, all variables were positively correlated (for more details, see Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistical Test Results and Correlation Between Variables

Variables	Mean (SD)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Depression	19.10 (10.14)	0.91				
2. Mindfulness	45.38 (8.62)	-0.68**	0.83			
3. Reappraisal	20.80 (5.70)	-0.69**	0.56**	0.75		
4. Problem Solving	13.41 (3.69)	-0.69**	0.54**	0.68**	0.74	
5. Forgiveness	59.16 (7.47)	-0.65**	0.57**	0.63**	0.65**	0.80

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Note: Depression as the dependent variable (Y); Mindfulness as the first mediating variable (M1); Reappraisal as the second mediating variable (M2); Problem Solving as the third mediating variable (M3); Forgiveness as the independent variable (X).

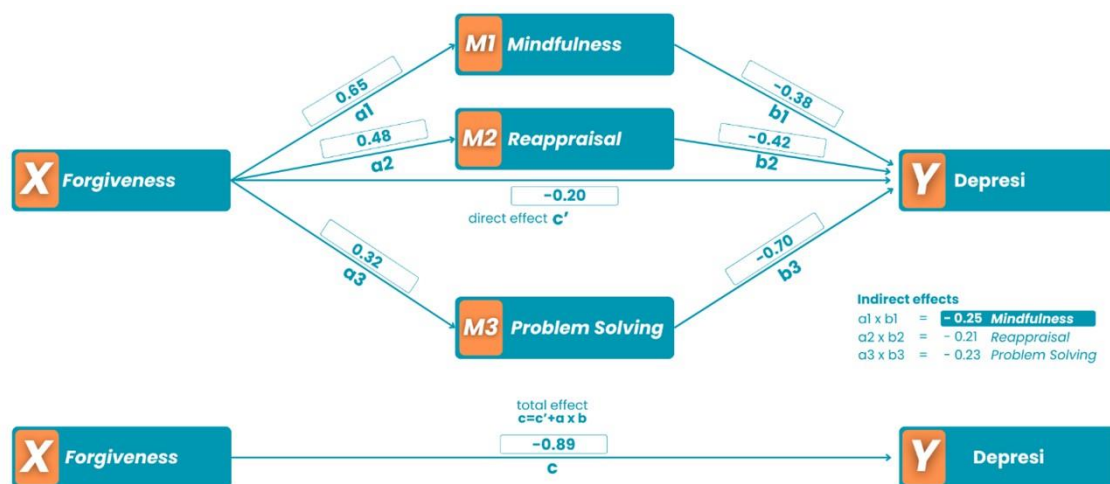
Based on Table 3, the results of analyzing the effect of forgiveness on adaptive emotion regulation strategies using path analysis PROCESS 5.0, Hayes model 4 parallel multiple mediators model shows that forgiveness predicts adaptive emotion regulation strategies. This model explains that, forgiveness successively explains 32% of the variance of mindfulness ($R^2 = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$), 40% of the variance of reappraisal ($R^2 = 0.40$, $p < 0.01$), and 43% of the variance of problem solving ($R^2 = 0.43$, $p < 0.01$). Based on the analysis, forgiveness significantly predicted all adaptive emotion regulation strategies. Thus, these findings confirm that hypothesis three (H3) is accepted.

Table 3. *Test Results of Parallel Analysis of Multiple Mediation Models 4 PROCESS 5.0 Hayes*

Predictor	β	T	P	R	R ²	F	p
Criterion: Mindfulness Forgiveness	0.65	12,97	< 0.01	0.57	0.32	168	< 0.01
Criterion: Reappraisal Forgiveness	0.48	15,43	< 0.01	0.63	0.40	238	< 0.01
Criterion: Problem Solving Forgiveness	0.32	16,33	< 0.01	0.65	0.43	266	< 0.01
Criterion: Depression Forgiveness	-0.20	-3,34	< 0.01	0.81	0.66	172	< 0.01
Mindfulness	-0.38	-8,11	< 0.01				
Reappraisal	-0.42	-5,21	< 0.01				
Problem Solving	-0.70	-5,44	< 0.01				
Indirect Effect	Coefficient	SE	BC [CI 95%]				
			LL	UL			
Forgiveness – Mindfulness – Depresi	-0.25	0.04	- 0.33	- 0.17			
Forgiveness – Reappraisal – Depresi	-0.21	0.05	- 0.30	- 0.12			
Forgiveness – Problem Solving – Depresi	-0.23	0.05	- 0.32	- 0.13			
Total Indirect Effect	-0.68	0.06	- 0.81	- 0.56			
Total Effect	-0.89 ($p<0.01$)	0.05	- 0.99	- 0.78			

The regression analysis results also showed a negative direct relationship between forgiveness ($\beta=-0.20$, $p<0.01$), mindfulness ($\beta=-0.38$, $p<0.01$), reappraisal ($\beta=-0.42$, $p<0.01$), and problem solving ($\beta=-0.70$, $p<0.01$) with depression. Thus, these findings confirm that hypotheses one (H1) and two (H2) are accepted. Together, the predictors explained 66% of the variance in depression ($R^2=0.66$).

The indirect effects of forgiveness on depression through the three mediators of adaptive emotion regulation strategies were tested using bias-corrected bootstrapping ($N=5000$ [95% CI]). The results of the mediator effect analysis indicated a significant indirect effect on adaptive emotion regulation strategies through forgiveness – mindfulness – depression ($\beta=-0.25$, [CI 95%] LL = -0.33, UL = -0.17), forgiveness – reappraisal – depression ($\beta=-0.21$, [CI 95%] LL = -0.30, UL = -0.12), forgiveness – problem solving – depression ($\beta=-0.23$, [CI 95%] LL = -0.32, UL = -0.13), see Table 3. total indirect effect of forgiveness on depression through adaptive emotion regulation strategies mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving ($\beta=-0.68$ [CI 95%] LL = -0.81, UL = -0.56). This means there is a higher amplification of the indirect effect when adaptive emotion regulation strategies are applied together to help reduce depression. This study's results align with the predictions in hypothesis four (H4). Furthermore, the total effect of forgiveness on depression, both directly and indirectly through the three adaptive emotion regulation strategies, was -0.89 ($p<0.01$). Thus, as visualized in Figure 1, the three adaptive emotion regulation strategies partially mediate between forgiveness and depression.

Figure 1. Mediation Analysis of Adaptive Emotion Regulation Strategies

Note: All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Relationship between Forgiveness, Adaptive Emotion Regulation Strategies, and Depression

The relationships of forgiveness, adaptive emotion regulation strategies (mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving), and depression were observed. The findings of this study confirmed that forgiveness correlated with reduced levels of depression. The findings of this study are consistent with the results of previous research that forgiveness predicts less depression (Chung, 2016; Dangel & Webb, 2018; Mehta & Natraj, 2020; Toussaint et al., 2023; & Zhang et al., 2020) while contradicting the results of research (Sundari et al., 2024). This happens because individuals with forgiveness can feel positive emotions, reduce negative affect, and have better psychological well-being, especially when individuals are faced with injustice, feelings of guilt, and feelings of loss (Tacasily, 2021). According to Quintana-Orts & Rey (2018), forgiveness is an effective emotional coping strategy. Individuals are better able to deal with difficult emotional situations, such as injustice or loss, without getting caught up in negative affect that can exacerbate depression. Therefore, individuals with higher forgiveness skills tend to experience lower depression (Toussaint et al, 2023).

Based on the results, mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving adaptive emotion regulation strategies jointly predicted depression reduction. This finding confirms the claim of protective factors for depression through emotion regulation strategies (Kököneyi et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2020). Furthermore, these findings extend the results of previous studies that focused on the popular emotion regulation strategies of cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression in predicting depression. These results align with the emotion regulation concept proposed by Naragon-gainey et al., (2017), which emphasizes that an individual's ability to regulate emotions plays an important role in better mental health. Emotion regulation strategies of mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving are consistently associated with adaptive mental health (Naragon-gainey et al., 2017).

Forgiveness positively predicts the three adaptive emotion regulation strategies of mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving. This result confirms previous research findings regarding the positive impact of forgiveness on emotion regulation (Chaudhary, 2025; Ferawati & Rahmandani, 2020; Rey & Extremera, 2016), while clarifying Parveen & Pal (2024) findings that there is no impact of forgiveness on emotion regulation.

Through forgiveness, individuals can actively control negative emotions by releasing the bad feelings generated by the violation (Chaudhary, 2025). This process reduces internal conflict and negative thoughts, resulting in better emotional well-being (Ho et al., 2020).

Mediating Role of Adaptive Emotion Regulation Strategies

The findings of this study confirm that the adaptive emotion regulation strategies of mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving are jointly shown to mediate the role of forgiveness in depression reduction. Previous research has examined the mediating effects of popular emotion regulation strategies, cognitive reappraisal, and expressive suppression (Zhang et al., 2020). However, the two emotion regulation strategies have different mechanisms. The adaptive strategy of cognitive reappraisal predicts a decrease in depression, while the maladaptive strategy of expressive suppression predicts an increase in depression. The results of this study extend the previously examined mediator effects of popular emotion regulation strategies in the relationship between forgiveness and depression reduction. The findings confirm that individuals who integrate forgiveness and adaptive emotion regulation strategies can alleviate the impact of negative emotions on traumatic experiences (Zhang et al., 2020).

Naragon-gainey et al., (2017) meta-analysis confirmed the research findings that mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving are adaptive emotion regulation strategies that can reduce the impact of depression. Furthermore, the consecutive impacts of mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving were found in previous research. Brown & Ryan (2003) asserted that high levels of mindfulness correlate with psychological well-being and decreased depressive symptoms. Individuals who consistently use reappraisal strategies have better emotional well-being and lower levels of depression (Gross & John, 2003), and reduce the negative impact of depressive symptoms through cognitive reactivity (Shapiro et al, 2019). Garnefski et al., (2001), through problem solving strategies or refocusing on planning, individuals can focus more on positive actions rather than getting caught up in negative thoughts about traumatic experiences. Thus, when mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving adaptive emotion regulation strategies are used together, strengthening forgiveness will increase the impact on reducing depression. Previous research on mediator effects focused on popular emotion regulation of reappraisal and expressive suppression. Reappraisal is a protective factor in reducing depression, but expressive suppression is a predictor of increased depression (Zhang et al., 2020). In contrast to the findings of this study, the mediating effects of adaptive emotion regulation strategies of mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving become a protective factor in reducing depression. The results of this study expand the mediating role of emotion regulation strategies in the relationship between forgiveness and depression reduction. Based on the results of previous research, forgiveness predicts a decrease in depression in college students and elderly subjects (Chung, 2016). This study expands the scope of research subjects with an age range of 14-17 years in the relationship between forgiveness and depression. Previous research shows that forgiving individuals use more reappraisal (Rey & Extremera, 2016; Zhang et al., 2020). However, differences were found in this study, such as that individuals with forgiveness tend to use more mindfulness adaptive emotion regulation strategies compared to reappraisal in individuals with lower forgiveness. This happens because mindfulness emphasizes full attention and awareness of forgiveness, thus reducing negative emotions (Shi et al., 2023).

The results of this study have practical implications in the context of guidance and counseling, especially for school counselors or counseling teachers in high schools. The rapid and unpredictable development of the times poses significant psychological challenges, including increased individual vulnerability to depressive disorders. Individuals with low levels of forgiveness are advised to use adaptive emotion regulation

strategies, such as mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving, to manage negative emotions more effectively. Findings showed that mindfulness strategies had a higher depressive symptom reduction effect, followed by problem solving and reappraisal. The use of these three strategies proved more effective than expressive suppression, which is a maladaptive emotion regulation strategy and is known to be associated with increased depressive symptoms and decreased mental health (Zhang et al., 2020). Adaptive emotion regulation-based interventions can be an alternative strategy to reduce depressive symptoms, especially in individuals with low levels of forgiveness. Based on these findings, school counselors should design guidance and counseling service programs relevant to adolescents' emotional development needs. In particular, interventions in the aspect of emotional maturity can be focused on developing adaptive emotion regulation strategies related to forgiveness, in order to reduce the risk of depressive symptoms among adolescent students.

Limitations in this study did not specifically distinguish certain genders to see how different mechanisms of mediation of adaptive emotion regulation strategies in the relationship between forgiveness and depression reduction. Further research needs to differentiate by gender to see the mechanisms of adaptive emotion regulation strategies that may be most relevant based on gender. The subjects of this study were not balanced in gender; further research is needed to determine the proportion of each gender that is the target of the research. This study focused on a narrow research area. Further research is recommended to expand the scope of research subjects with the characteristics of research subjects in other areas by paying attention to the proportion of target research subjects. The subject of this study is general; further research needs to map the characteristics of subjects with more specific circumstances. The results of this study observed a partial mediating role of adaptive emotion regulation strategies; there may be other adaptive emotion regulation strategies that may be effective and can explain the complete mediating mechanism in the relationship between forgiveness and depression reduction.

Conclusion

This study found that forgiveness predicts depression reduction, and adaptive emotion regulation strategies of mindfulness, reappraisal, and problem solving proved to be able to mediate the relationship partially. This means that the use of adaptive emotion regulation strategies can help strengthen the impact of forgiveness in reducing depression. This study extends previous findings by exploring the mediating mechanism of adaptive strategies, as opposed to commonly researched strategies such as expressive suppression, which are maladaptive. Mindfulness became a higher impact emotion regulation strategy than the observed reappraisal and problem solving.

This research is important in the field of Guidance and Counseling studies, especially for counseling teachers in designing effective interventions for adolescents with depressive symptoms. An adaptive emotion regulation-based approach can be used as a basis for developing guidance and counseling service programs that support students' emotional maturity, following the Standar Kompetensi Kemandirian Peserta Didik (SKKPD) and social/emotional development from Mindset and Behaviour for Student Success. Adaptive emotion regulation strategies of mindfulness, problem solving, and reappraisal are jointly used with forgiveness; the effectiveness of the service can strengthen the impact in reducing depression.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to the Cabang Dinas Pendidikan Provinsi Jawa Tengah Wilayah V for allowing me to conduct research activities at the Boyolali Regency State Senior High School and other parties who have helped the research run smoothly.

Author Contributions Statement

Authors have contributed: NPA contributed to the preparation of the study and data analysis, SS developed the research idea, and reviewed the quality of the study.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic And Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Fifth Edition-Text Revision* (5th ed.). American Psychiatric Association. www.psychiatry.org
- American School Counselor Association. (2021). ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success. *Alexandria*.
- Atta, M. H. R., El-Gueneidy, M. M., & Lachine, O. A. R. (2024). The influence of an emotion regulation intervention on challenges in emotion regulation and cognitive strategies in patients with depression. *BMC Psychology*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-01949-6>
- Axelta, A., & Abidin, F. A. (2022). Depresi Pada Remaja: Perbedaan Berdasarkan Faktor Biomedis Dan Psikososial. *Jurnal Kesmas (Kesehatan Masyarakat) Khatulistiwa*, 9(1), 34. <https://doi.org/10.29406/jkmk.v9i1.3207>
- Beck, A. T., & Alford, B. A. (2009). *Depression: Causes and Treatment* (2nd ed.). University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Beck, A. T., Steer, R. A., & Brown, G. (1996). Beck depression inventory II. *Psychological Assessment*. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2F00742-000>
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The Benefits of Being Present: Mindfulness and Its Role in Psychological Well-Being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 822–848. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822>
- Chaudhary, N. (2025). *Forgiveness and Emotional Regulation as Predictors of Psychological Well-Being Among Adolescents*. 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.25215/1301.262>
- Chung, M. S. (2016). Relation Between Lack of Forgiveness and Depression: The Moderating Effect of Self-Compassion. *Psychological Reports*, 119(3), 573–585. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294116663520>
- Cresswell, J. W., & Cresswell, J. D. (2023). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. In *Sage Publications, Inc* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dangel, T., & Webb, J. R. (2018). Forgiveness and substance use problems among college students: Psychache, depressive symptoms, and hopelessness as mediators. *Journal of Substance Use*, 23(6), 618–625. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14659891.2018.1489003>
- Depdiknas. (2007). *Rambu-rambu penyelenggaraan bimbingan dan konseling dalam jalur pendidikan formal*. Direktorat Jenderal Peningkatan Mutu Tenaga Pendidikan.
- Ferawati, F., & Rahmandani, A. (2020). Hubungan Antara Pemaafan Diri Dengan Regulasi Emosi Pada Anak Didik Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak (Lpka) Kelas I Kutoarjo Dan Kelas Ii Yogyakarta. *Jurnal EMPATI*, 8(3), 572–578. <https://doi.org/10.14710/empati.2019.26498>
- Fowler, F. J. (2014). Survey research methods (5th edition). In *Sage Publications, Inc*. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3250956?origin=crossref>
- Garnefski, N., & Kraaij, V. (2007). The cognitive emotion regulation questionnaire: Psychometric features and prospective relationships with depression and anxiety in adults. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 23(3), 141–149. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759.23.3.141>

- Garnefski, N., Kraaij, V., & Spinhoven, P. (2001). Negative life events, cognitive emotion regulation and emotional problems N. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 39, 1311–1327. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003356100012952>
- Ginting, H., Näring, G., Van Der Veld, W. M., Srisayekti, W., & Becker, E. S. (2013). Validating the Beck Depression Inventory-II in Indonesia's general population and coronary heart disease patients. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 13(3), 235–242. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1697-2600\(13\)70028-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1697-2600(13)70028-0)
- Gross, J. J., & John, O. P. (2003). Individual Differences in Two Emotion Regulation Processes: Implications for Affect, Relationships, and Well-Being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(2), 348–362. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.2.348>
- Hinze, V., Montero-Marin, J., Blakemore, S. J., Byford, S., Dalgleish, T., Degli Esposti, M., Greenberg, M. T., Jones, B. G., Slaghekke, Y., Ukoumunne, O. C., Viner, R. M., Williams, J. M. G., Ford, T. J., & Kuyken, W. (2024). Student- and School-Level Factors Associated With Mental Health and Well-Being in Early Adolescence. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 63(2), 266–282. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2023.10.004>
- Ho, M. Y., Van Tongeren, D. R., & You, J. (2020). The Role of Self-Regulation in Forgiveness: A Regulatory Model of Forgiveness. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01084>
- Joormann, J., & Stanton, C. H. (2016). Examining emotion regulation in depression: A review and future directions. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 86, 35–49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2016.07.007>
- Kemendikdasmen. (2025). *Data Pokok Siswa Kementrian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah*. <https://dapo.dikdasmen.go.id/pencarian>
- Kemenkes. (2023). Survei Kesehatan Indonesia 2023 dalam angka. In *Kemenkes*.
- Khatab, K & Mursyida, M. (2021). Gambaran Tingkat Gejala Depresi Pada Remaja Yang Tinggal Di Panti Asuhan Yayasan Penyantun Islam Aceh Seutui Banda Aceh. *Jurnal Sains Riset* |, 11(2), 219. <https://doi.org/10.47647/jsr.v10i12>
- Kököneyi, G., Kovács, L. N., Szabó, J., & Urbán, R. (2024). Emotion Regulation Predicts Depressive Symptoms in Adolescents: A Prospective Study. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 53(1), 142–158. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-023-01894-4>
- Kretzer, S., Lawrence, A. J., Pollard, R., Ma, X., Chen, P. J., Amasi-Hartoonian, N., Pariante, C., Vallée, C., Meaney, M., & Dazzan, P. (2024). The Dynamic Interplay Between Puberty and Structural Brain Development as a Predictor of Mental Health Difficulties in Adolescence: A Systematic Review. *Biological Psychiatry*, 96(7), 585–603. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsych.2024.06.012>
- Lau, E. Y. Y., Hui, C. H., Lam, J., Cheung, S. F., & Cheung, S. H. (2021). Temporal relationships of forgivingness with personality and moods: A three-wave panel study. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 178(November 2020), 110858. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2021.110858>
- Lee, K. S., & Yang, Y. (2022). Educational attainment and emotional well-being in adolescence and adulthood. *SSM - Mental Health*, 2(July), 100138. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmmh.2022.100138>
- Mccullough, M. E. (2001). *Forgiveness : Who Does It and How Do They Do It ?* 10(6), 194–197.
- Mehta, B., & Natraj, H. (2020). *Impact of forgiveness on depression in young adults*. 8(4). <https://doi.org/10.25215/0804.037>
- Mokodenseho, S., Hafiz Munandar Maku, F., Pobela, S., & Panu, F. (2023). Menangani Krisis Mental di Kalangan Pelajar: Upaya Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan

- Emosional dalam Sistem Pendidikan. *Jurnal Pendidikan West Science*, 01(06), 335–342.
- Naragon-gainey, K., McMahon, T. P., & Chacko, T. P. (2017). *The Structure of Common Emotion Regulation Strategies : A Meta-Analytic Examination*. 143(4), 384–427.
- Nelemans, S. A., Boks, M., Lin, B., Oldehinkel, T., van Lier, P., Branje, S., & Meeus, W. (2021). Polygenic Risk for Major Depression Interacts with Parental Criticism in Predicting Adolescent Depressive Symptom Development. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 50(1), 159–176. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-020-01353-4>
- Parveen, U., & Pal, R. (2024). The Impact of Forgiveness in Emotional Regulation and Resilience in The Face of Adversity Among Young Adults. *International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research*, 6(2), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2024.v06i02.19263>
- Pham, M. D., Wulan, N. R., Sawyer, S. M., Agius, P. A., Fisher, J., Tran, T., Medise, B. E., Devaera, Y., Riyanti, A., Ansariadi, A., Cini, K., Kennedy, E., Wiweko, B., Luchters, S., Kaligis, F., Wiguna, T., & Azzopardi, P. S. (2024). Mental Health Problems Among Indonesian Adolescents: Findings of a Cross-Sectional Study Utilising Validated Scales and Innovative Sampling Methods. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 75(6), 929–938. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2024.07.016>
- Putri, F. S., Nazihah, Z., Ariningrum, D. P., Celesta, S., & Kharin Herbawani, C. (2022). Depresi Remaja di Indonesia: Penyebab dan Dampaknya Adolescent Depression in Indonesia: Causes and Effects. *Jurnalkesehatanpoltekkeskemenkesripangkalpinang*, 10(2)(2), 99–108.
- Quintana-Orts, C., & Rey, L. (2018). Forgiveness, Depression, and Suicidal Behavior in Adolescents: Gender Differences in this Relationship. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 179(2), 85–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221325.2018.1434478>
- Rey, L., & Extremera, N. (2016). Forgiveness and health-related quality of life in older people: Adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies as mediators. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 21(12), 2944–2954. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105315589393>
- Riziana, K., & Darmawan, A. (2023). Hubungan Tingkat Gejala Depresi Dengan Ide Bunuh Diri Pada Remaja Sekolah Menengah Atas. *Joms*, 3(1), 39–47.
- Shapero, B. G., Stange, J. P., McArthur, B. A., Abramson, L. Y., & Alloy, L. B. (2019). Cognitive reappraisal attenuates the association between depressive symptoms and emotional response to stress during adolescence. *Cognition and Emotion*, 33(3), 524–535. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2018.1462148>
- Shi, K., Feng, G., Huang, Q., Ye, M., & Cui, H. (2023). Mindfulness and negative emotions among Chinese college students: chain mediation effect of rumination and resilience. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14(December), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1280663>
- Sisk, L. M., & Gee, D. G. (2022). Stress and adolescence: vulnerability and opportunity during a sensitive window of development. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 44, 286–292. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2021.10.005>
- Sundari, A. R., Susilarini, T., Herdajani, F., Wibawanti, I., Tatiyani, T., & Bayani, I. (2024). Hardiness as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Revenge Motivation of Forgiveness and Depression Among Emerging Adults. *Proceeding of the International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research for Sustainable Innovation*, 1(1), 514–521. <https://doi.org/10.31098/icmrsi.v1i.839>
- Supini, P., Gandakusumah, A. R. P., Asyifa, N., Auliya, Z. N., & Ismail, D. R. (2024). Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Kesehatan Mental pada Remaja. *JERUMI:*

- Journal of Education Religion Humanities and Multidiciplinary*, 2(1), 166–172.
<https://doi.org/10.57235/jerumi.v2i1.1760>
- Tacasily, Y. O. M. (2021). Hubungan Forgiveness dan Psychological Well-Being pada Mahasiswa yang Pernah Mengalami Putus Cinta. *Jurnal Ilmiah Bimbingan Konseling Undiksha*, 12(2), 259–267. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jibk.v12i2.34199>
- Thompson, L. Y., Snyder, C. R., Hoffman, L., Michael, S. T., Rasmussen, H. N., Billings, L. S., Heinze, L., Neufeld, J. E., Shorey, H. S., Roberts, J. C., & Roberts, D. E. (2005). Dispositionol forgiveness of self, others, and situations. *Journal of Personality*, 73(2), 313–360. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2005.00311.x>
- Toussaint, L., Lee, J. A., Hyun, M. H., Shields, G. S., & Slavich, G. M. (2023). Forgiveness, rumination, and depression in the United States and Korea: A cross-cultural mediation study. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 79(1), 143–157. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.23376>
- Xu, H., Chen, Z. hong, Ji, J. jie, Qian, H. ying, She, J., Hou, C. ting, & Zhang, Y. hong. (2025). Behavioral and psychosocial factors associated with suicidal ideation in adolescents with depression: An ecological model of health behavior. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, 181(February 2024), 411–416. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2024.12.014>
- YU, X., ZHANG, Y., & YU, G. (2022). Prevalence of mental health problems among senior high school students in mainland of China from 2010 to 2020: a meta-analysis. *Advances in Psychological Science*, 30(5), 978–990. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3724/SP.J.1042.2022.00978>
- Zhang, L., Lu, J., Li, B., Wang, X., & Shangguan, C. (2020). Gender differences in the mediating effects of emotion-regulation strategies: Forgiveness and depression among adolescents. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 163(April), 110094. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110094>

Copyright Holder

© Aji, N. P., Sunawan, S.

First Publication Right

COUNSENEsia: Indonesia Journal of Guidance and Counseling

This Article is Licensed Under

