The Importance of Family Resilience in the Middle of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT
During the Covid-19 pandemic, studies on Family Resilience are significant because every family has its own challenges in dealing with the pandemic and is required to be able to adapt, overcome, and rise from the various difficulties and challenges. Especially in families with early- age children, family resilience is needed to prevent children from growing up in traumatic situations that can cause hardships in their developmental process. The purpose of this literature- based study is to investigate the literature on Family Resilience in families with early- age children. The data collection and analysis were carried out qualitatively by reading, reviewing, and quoting relevant ideas from relevant journals. The results of the study showed that giving meaning to the difficulties that occur, positive thinking, and spiritualization are three essential areas in building family resilience and can be involved in the family's responses to the Covid-19 pandemic by considering the development of children.

Keywords: Family Resilience, the Covid-19 Pandemic, Early-Age Children

1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic, which has become the center of world's attention, has started to spread in Indonesian since March 2020. President Joko Widodo on March 2, 2020 officially announced that there was the first Covid-19 case in Indonesia. In a short time, the virus that spreads through droplets infects millions of people around the world. In addition to having impacts on health, for certain families, this pandemic situation also has impacts on anxiety level, education, and financial condition. Each family has its own challenges in facing the COVID-19 pandemic and is required to be able to adapt, overcome, and rise from the various challenges and difficulties.

Along with the adaptation process that must be carried out by families in the face of the pandemic, the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Nadiem Makarim, has implemented Learning from Home (LFM) System at all levels of education, including early childhood education [1]. Children who are used to learning in class and face to face with their teachers now have to quarantine and study from home. In this situation, the children experience an adaptation process that can affect their psychological condition. [2] in their research stated that 30% of children show high psychological pressure during the quarantine period. The adaptation of children to a new learning process certainly requires support and collaboration from adults, especially parents as adults who are closest to them because early-age children are not ready to learn independently, especially in new learning situations. However, during this quarantine and LFM period, many parents have to divide their schedules between work and children's learning tasks [3].

Frequently, the conditions of parents who have to split the attention and time of their work, children's learning tasks, and household tasks makes parents tired which can impact their emotional stability. The lack of parental ability to manage negative emotions, which is one of the effects of fatigue, will affect the psychological condition and well-being of children [4]. To avoid the occurrence of emotional instability in parents which will affect the psychological condition and children' welfare, the adaptation process in the pandemic condition cannot be carried out by one individual, but it must be done together by all family members. The ability to adapt and rise is a part of the resilience abilities that every family needs to possess, especially in facing the pandemic situation [5].

Family resilience is the ability of families to go through, cope, and adapt in difficult situations [6]. In his other research, [5] also defined resilience as the ability to survive and recover from serious life challenges. Family

resilience is a standard of the families' ability to meet basic needs and their ability to return to productive activities. Family resilience can run well if it is supported by good physical and non-physical resources, good problem solving, and abilities to meet social needs that will help the family to rise again. All family members have an important role in succeeding family resilience, including early-age children. Resilience involves many processes over time, starting from how families deal with crises to how families adapt afterwards [7].

In Indonesia, family resilience is a considerable matter to the country as stated in Act No. 52 of 2009 concerning Population Progress and Family Development stating that efforts to increase family resilience and welfare need to be considered to actualized balanced-population growth and quality families. Efforts to increase family resilience are also stated in the Eight Pillars of the Prosperous Family Movement [8] consisting of eight points of efforts to increase family resilience and there are specific points to increase family resilience at point six "providing education and fostering socialization for family's members, especially for growing and developing children with the awareness of fostering them into helpful human resources for development."

Given the importance of family resilience, several studies on resilience have been conducted in Indonesia. Among those studies is a study conducted by [9] discussing the resilience of teenagers with divorced parents. The results of the study revealed that the teenagers with divorced parents experience greater stress burdens than teenagers with complete family members. Later, [10] investigated the resilience of families living close to Dupak red-light district. The results of the study indicated that protective factors in the families can help them reach resilience behaviours, helping them show positive adaptive behaviours to overcome all the negative effects from the prostitution area. A study conducted by [11]] with the topic of family resilience with visually impaired children showed that the level of family resilience is in the high category and there is no difference in the level of family resilience when viewed from family income, parents' education, and length of diagnosis of children.

From the reports of the previous research, the researchers have not found any research on family resilience focusing on families with early-age children, especially in Indonesia. Therefore, the focus of this study is to provide details of Family Resilience that can be adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic condition while considering the development of early-age children.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative study method of literature reviews by looking for references relevant to the topic. Literature reviews are written summaries of journals, books, and other documents that describe theory and information and are organized into topics and required documents [12].

This study reviewed 10 journals and 3 books related to family resilience and child development. The data analysis utilized a descriptive analysis method by identifying similarities (comparing), giving views (criticizing), synthesizing, and summarizing. The descriptive analysis was completed by describing the facts which were then compiled analytically, not only describing but also providing adequate explanation. This article highlighted cases of family resilience in families with early-age children.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Pandemic has become a global crisis that impacts not only the stability of health and economy but also the welfare of families. The impacts can influence all family members including children [13]. However, the impacts can be different from one family to another depending on the factors related to the family's matters. [14], the factors of these differences may include differences in economic, health, and social conditions.

[15], pointed out three important areas of family resilience called the Family Belief System and it can be involved in the family resilience response to the Covid-19 pandemic: (a) meaning of adversity, (b) fostering a positive outlook, and (c) transcendence and spirituality.

The following is a discussion of three areas of family resilience that will be associated with child adaptation during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.1. *Meaning of Adversity*

Adaptation is a crucial process in building family resilience. Adaptation refers to the condition when families start to accept the occurring difficult conditions, and realize that they need to make changes /to readjust their lives to the difficult conditions [16]. The highest adaptation process is when family members reach a point where they can understand the difficulties they face [17]. The mentioned understanding is when families are able to incorporate the existing difficulties into their lives, even they are able to live side by side with these difficulties, or they change their perspective by placing more importance on health and sense of togetherness among family members.

[18] in their research elaborated several points that can help families in the adaptation process, so they can interpret the difficulties that exist and have been identified in children by highlighting the social role of parents in family beliefs [15]. The mentioned points are as follows ; (1) seeing themselves as 'one part', it can be interpreted as 'living hardship together' meaning that the impact of the pandemic is experienced not only by one individual but also by the whole family including children, even millions of other families. (2) thinking that the difficulties being faced are not anyone's fault, manageable and will be over in the future, blaming oneself or other individuals will only lead to

disappointment, anger, and other negative emotions which if not managed properly, these negative emotions can affect other family members. Families must also believe that the difficulties they experience will not last forever. Particularly, parents who have early-age children have to possess positive thoughts about the problems because it can affect the parenting process. Research on the relation between parenting styles in children shows that the warmth of parental care is important for children's development and can develop children's social and emotional development [19]. Parenting that is full of warmth will only be obtained from parents who always think positively. (3) not predicting bad scenarios repeatedly and (4) thinking about terrible events, similar to the previous point, predicting too many bad scenarios and thinking too much about terrible events can lead to negative emotions that are not good for parenting.

3.2. Fostering a Positive Outlook

Building a narrative related to the Covid-19 and involving parents, transparent communication is needed while still considering children's development [20]. The mentioned communication is needed to be able to foster positive views among family members. It includes conducting discussions that focus on changing emotions in the family and surrounding community and normalizing difficult feelings also accompanied by reassurance, calming family members by providing assurance that the difficulties faced will soon pass. In addition, sharing experiences among other families about overcoming problems in life can also provide motivation and provide positive outlooks [21]. The mentioned propositions can help family members join hands to face the occurring difficulties.

The importance of transparent communication taking into account children's development in order to foster a positive outlook is supported by the writing of [22] mentioning that parents who are used to building communication with children by convincing children with soothing words, teaching empathy, and understanding with whatever conditions are being experienced are parents who actually teach social regulations to their children. Social arrangements that have been formed will positively affect self-regulation and social and emotional competence in children. Therefore, when transparent communication is carried out properly, children will learn to accept and understand whatever circumstances the family is experiencing. Building transparent communication by involving children is also one of the caring forms. Parenting that cares and supports children can build more connections in the children's brains that are useful for helping children understand socially and emotionally [19].

3.3. Transcendence and Spirituality

Transcendence and spirituality involving moral, religious and non-religious values, prayer, meditation, relating to

nature, art and others have important roles in providing convenience of facilitating children and family resilience. [7] it has been proven by a study conducted by [23] on 5000 African American and Black Caribbean subjects living in the United States. The results showed that the involvement of spirituality can protect childhood from bad consequences such as difficulty in mastering self-confidence/self-respect.

The impacts of the Covid-19 from health, economic difficulties, to the loss of close family members can make some people depressed which can result in extreme anger, drug abuse, and attempts to commit suicide. At that depressive moment, some people claimed to get power and encouragement from their spirituality [16]. Prayer and belief in God have proven to be one of ways to divert negative thoughts. Moreover, relationships and social support from friends, family, and people around are also equally crucial to be able to rebuild positive energy.

4. CONCLUSION

Positive attitude and positive thinking are important things in the process of building family resilience. Furthermore, the positive attitudes and positive thoughts include several points such as being able to accept and interpret difficulties, not blaming anyone for the difficulties, not thinking and predicting bad scenarios repeatedly, communicating transparently to all family members including children, and involving spirituality in facing crises. In building family resilience that considers the development of children, building positive thoughts is very important because it will affect the parenting styles. Thinking positively will lead to warm parenting styles. Since, the warmth in parenting is important for children's social and emotional development. Not only is it significant for emotional development, it can also help children to rise above adversities and thrive together with other family members.

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