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## STRESS AND RESILIENCE FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

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### ABSTRACT

Resilience is the toughness and power that is contained in a person who is characterized by the ability to try and rise from stressful conditions. Parents who have children with special needs or disabilities are considered to have greater obstacles both physiologically and psychologically in dealing with the children and environment than the parents who have normal children. This study aims to analyze the correlation of stress and resilience of parents who have children with special needs in Jambi City, Province of Jambi, Indonesia. Participants of the study were 93 parents who have children with special needs at Prof. Dr. Sri Soedewi Mascjahun Sofwan Special School Jambi, Indonesia (SLB Prof. Dr. Sri Soedewi Mascjahun Sofwan Jambi). The study was conducted with a quantitative approach with correlational. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was completed by each participant to measure stress and Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) was completed by each participant to measure resilience. The data analysis showed that correlation value of  $r = -0.28$  with significance of  $p = 0.00$ ,  $p < 0,05$ . The results were consistent with the study hypotheses, which showed that there is a negative relationship between stress and resilience of parents who have children with special needs or disabilities. Based on the result, it concluded that the lower the stress level of parents who have children with special needs, the higher the resilience of them.

*Keywords:* stress, resilience, parents, children with special needs

### Introduction

The presence of children in a family is a blessing to every parent. However, the parents who have special needs children are considered to have high stress levels. This statement is relevant with the research that was conducted by Neece (2013), it states that the parents whose children suffer from intellectual and developmental disorders are reported to have high stress levels. The research shows that there is a relationship between stress level of parenting with behavioral problems in special needs children. The birth of a child gives a very influential impact on the family dynamics, but the parents who find out that their children are having special needs, will be in more severe and complex adjustments, especially being society acceptable and experiencing difficulty in doing daily activities (Hidayati, 2011). The parents who have children special needs must be more struggling than parents who does not. The level of resilience and stress of parents who have special needs children greatly affect the development of them. According to Edi Sujito (2017) when parents are dealing with an unexpected and very disappointing reality, they must build a good emotional construction in taking care of their special needs children.

The stages acceptance of parents in accepting their special needs children according to Ross (2003) in his book "On Death and Dying" are started with denial

(rejection). The first stage is started from the lack of trust when the parents receive a diagnosis from an expert, their feeling will be confused and shameful regarding their children's condition and also it is hard for them to embrace that it can happen in their family. There must be early treatment for special needs children in socializing to get the educational services that meet their needs, Sigit (2014). The parents who have special needs children are considered to have greater challenges both physiologically and psychologically in dealing with children and their social surroundi. This statement is relevance with Budiarti's statement (Amelasasih, 2016), that states the parents who have special needs children have more potential being stress than parents who does not.

This research aims to find out the relationship between stress and resilience level of parents with special needs children. Parents have an active role to support a better life for their special needs children. According to Astuti (2007) A warm and harmonious relationship between the parents with their special needs children will be acknowledged that those kids are well-accepted by family, and in contrary, they will be isolating themselves in social term, this is a backward step for the development process and causing they cannot develop their potential. Neece (2013) states that the stress level on parenting with special needs children will make the worst problem in their behavior from time to time.

### **Methodology**

The subjects in this research were 93 parents who have special needs children at Prof. Dr. Sri Soedewi Mascjuhun Sofwan Jambi Special Needs School. This research was conducted with quantitative methods to determine the relationship between stress and resilience in parents who have special needs children. The data collecting methods in this research use the Perceived Stress Scale by Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of these scales are 0.70 with the number of items are 10 and use the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) by Dr.'s Campbell-Sills. Also Stein (2007), the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of this scale is 0.85 with the number of items are 10 items. This research uses the Pearson Product Moment Correlation test to test the relationship between stress and resilience variables.

### **Literature Review**

Stress is an inevitable condition in human life. Stress is defined as a response to a situation or surrounding that is considered threatening the well-being of an individual's life (Al-Oran, 2016). Stress is also interpreted as an unpleasant situation for individual because there is a pressure from the surrounding that out of that individual's capabilities (Mawardah, 2012). According to (Gaol, 2016) stress is a response or reaction when the source of stress (stressor) begins to emerge. In general, people assume that stress always has a negative impact on their lives. However, (Kupriyanov R., 2014) revealed that basically stress is divided into 2 parts, such as stress that has a positive impact (eustress) and stress that has a negative impact (distress). Le Fevre, (in Kupriyanov R., 2014) believes that the factors which cause stress have both positive and negative effects depending on how perceptions and interpretations of each individual's situation. Not only in the form of perception, but also depends on how often the intensity of the emergence of the stressor, the source of the stressor, how long the stressor lasts, also the control of the individual itself.

Resilience according to Siebert (2010) refers to a person's ability to cope with a change, the ability to maintain positive energy in under pressure situation, the ability to bounce back quickly in dealing with a problem. In addition, the ability to overcome the difficulties and to make changes in working strategies for inappropriate situation without

involving negative or disruptive ways is also definitions of resilience. Grotberg (1999) revealed that resilience is the ability of humans to overcome, deal, and be strong over the difficulties and problems are the forms of resilience.

There are five aspects of resilience according to Connor and Davidson (2003) First Personal competence, high standards and tenacity, which means that individuals feel able to achieve their goals in situations of setback or failure. Second aspect is Confidence in oneself, which tolerates negative effects, and is strong in dealing with stress, the third aspect The ability to adapt to the changes it faces, namely the ability to accept changes in a positive way and be able to establish a safe relationship with others, the fourth aspect of self-control, in achieving goals and how to ask for help from others, and finally the aspect of spiritual influence, is to believe in God and fate.

## Findings

Tabel 1

*Correlation*

Variabel	N	r	Sig
Stress			
Resilience	93	-0,28	0,00

Based on the results of data analysis, Pearson product moment shows a positive relationship between stress and resilience in parent who have special needs children. With  $r = -0.28$  and  $p = 0.00$  or  $p < 0.05$

## Discussion

The hypothesis of this research states that there is a negative correlation between stress and resilience in parents who have special needs children. It means that the higher the stress level for parents who have special needs children the lower the resilience of the parent. Campbell-Sills, L., & Stein, M. B. (2007).suggested that resilience is also seen as a measure of success stress coping ability. According to Lovallo (in Kupriyanov R., 2014) the stress that is emerging up depends on how individuals interpret the situation, so that it will affect their psychology and they will respond to stressors that appear with negative or positive feelings. The overstress will be dangerous for people who experience it. This is because stress does not only appear as a dynamic in the individual, but will affect their surroundings, such as the friendship, working, even family. According to James. P Coyle (2011: 4) in the journal "Resilient Families Make Help Resilient Children" explains that family resilience can shape the resilience of a child as well. In the family ssurrounding, resilience is a pattern of positive behavior and functional competence in family units dealing the stressful situations, later it will then determine the ability of a family to maintain its integrity as a unit also ensuring and improving the well-being of the whole family member (McCubin, 1996). The factors that influence resilience based on studies conducted by Abraham and Van der Walt (2010) show that significant factors on resilience are higher socioeconomic status, social support, open communication patterns, surrounding support which includes commitment and flexibility , family resilience, internal and external coping strategies, and a positive insight, and family trust system.

This research has limitations on the number of subjects and data analysis that is using only the correlation test on variables. For the further studies, it is recommended to conduct similar studies with a greater number of subjects and can apply more than one data analysis that can find more facts that happen in parents who have special needs children.

### Conclusion

Based on the results of statistical analysis and discussions that have been done, it can be concluded that the level of stress in parents who have special needs children is negatively related to the level of their resilience.

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