MINDFULNESS, FAMILY RESILIENCE, AND PARENTING STRESS IN PARENTS WITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacts on life, especially for parents of school-age children. One of the phenomena that occur is parenting stress, which impacts parenting. Parenting stress requires the role of mindfulness and family resilience in order to be able to deal with stressful conditions of parenting during a pandemic. This study aimed to determine the relationship between mindfulness, family resilience, and parenting stress of parents who had school-age children. This quantitative study used a purposive sampling technique involving 60 parents with children of primary school age (93.3% female, \( M_{age} = 38; SD = 7.4 \)). The instruments used in this research were the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) with (\( \alpha = .911 \)), Family Resilience Assessment Scale (\( \alpha = .964 \)), and The Parenting Stress Index (\( \alpha = .994 \)). The method of data analysis was multiple linear regression analysis. The result shows that mindfulness and family resilience are simultaneously statistically significant in predicting parenting stress, Adj \( R^2 = .936 \), \( F(2, 58) = 428.89 \), \( p < .001 \). In addition, it found that mindfulness does not contribute to the model, \( b = -.025; t(58) = -.686, p = .495 \), while family resilience does, \( b = .957; t(58) = 26.158, p < .001 \). The effective contribution of mindfulness and family resilience to parenting stress is 93.6%. Based on the research results obtained, parents can develop mindfulness and family resilience to cope with the perceived stress of parenting.

Keywords: Covid-19; elementary school-age children; mindfulness; parenting stress

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought various changes to the life of every human being. As of June 21, 2021, the global number of individuals who have confirmed Covid-19 is 178,118,597, including 3,864,180 deaths (World Health Organization, 2021). In Indonesia, individual cases confirmed positive for Covid-19 have also increased. Shalihah (2021) stated that the increase in the number of cases in Indonesia became the fifth-largest increase worldwide, where the increase on June 24, 2021, reached 20,574 new cases. During this pandemic, there have also been changes, such as a change in routine that requires every individual to adapt to the new health risks, work, and family demands (Daks et al., 2020). The existence of the Covid-19 pandemic has also forced every individual to stay at home, and it turns out that the quarantine policy at home has consequences, namely the emergence of domestic violence (Radhitya et al., 2020), symptoms of anxiety and depression (Tee et al., 2020). In line with the above research, various psychological problems have also emerged during the pandemic, such as stress, anxiety, and increased depression (Huang & Zhao, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

Fear and anxiety about this possible bad future pandemic can weigh heavily and cause weak emotions in both adults and children. Changes in the teaching-learning system force parents to act as teachers at home. Economic problems that suppress parents’ minds also exacerbate the stress that arises. Time care of children more and more, while less support and rest time fewer and fewer. Children’s learning process while at home has resulted in a shift in the role of parents to teachers in assisting and teaching academic abilities to children (Cahyati & Kusumah, 2020;
Karnawati & Mardiharto, 2020). While accompanying children to learn, parents become facilitators to build motivation, interest, and enthusiasm for children’s learning so that children continue to get an education like at school (Lilawati, 2020).

Emerging research has shown that the impact is not only felt by society in general but also at the smallest scope, namely on the family, particularly the parents—increased stress in parenting and increased risk of child-friendly parenting (Chung et al., 2020). Parenting stress occurs due to various changes during the Covid-19 pandemic. Wardani and Ayriza (2020) confirmed that the parents of men who work from home would encounter many obstacles. The obstacles include splitting time with work, difficulties operating the gadget, parents’ difficulties understanding the children’s lesson, impatiently accompanying children, and minimal internet service coverage. Symptoms such as high anxiety and depressive symptoms were associated with parents’ stress (Brown et al., 2020). The stress experienced by parents could make parents view their children negatively, which has the potential to lead to violence against children (Miragoli et al., 2018).

The Philippines reported that the parents were impaired with moderate to severe levels due to this pandemic (Tee et al., 2020), while Bangladesh reported that parents experienced some suffering due to this pandemic in the form of depression, anxiety, and sleep disorders (Yeasmin et al., 2020). Casagrande et al. (2020) stated that poor sleep quality, distress, and anxiety were believed to be related to the Covid-19 pandemic. In several countries, such as China, Spain, Italy, Iran, America, Turkey, Nepal, and Denmark, it was reported that the pandemic caused anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, psychological stress, and relatively high stress (Xiong et al., 2020). Most children had difficulty completing tasks during online learning. The main difficulties were the lack of interest in children’s learning, limitations related to the home environment, and most children being unable to complete tasks independently (Lau & Lee, 2021).

In school-age children, parents are also vulnerable to stress. The stage of development of elementary school age (middle childhood) is one of the crucial developmental stages that is sometimes overlooked in the stages of human development (Del Giudice, 2014). There are differences in the stress level of parents. The parents’ stress level with school-age children is higher than the parent’s stress level with pre-school-age children. (Kumalasari & Gani, 2020). Lau and Lee (2021) explained that if the length of learning and the number of tasks given during online learning are related to the satisfaction of the parents themselves, there will be a positive correlation when the child has good competence, but if the child is considered less competent, the opposite will happen. Stress that occurs in parents can lead to the wrong treatment of children. The wrong treatment of parents toward children will cause developmental problems and the growth of a child (Lowenthal as cited in Choiriyah & Surjaningrum, 2020). Bruce et al. (2012) explained that if a child experiences psychological abuse, it will decrease the quality-of-life child. Another impact of parental mistreatment is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder-PTSD (Gibb as cited in Choiriyah & Surjiningrum, 2020) to psychotic disorders later in life.

The emergence of the negative phenomenon of parenting stress, especially among parents with school-age children, and the various impacts caused require awareness by parents. One of the essential parenting skills is mindful parenting (Steinberg in Febriani et al., 2019). Mindfulness is the main human ability and refers to attention and knowledge about every condition (Brantley & Millstine in Oktavia, 2018). Mindfulness is a quality of self-awareness, which includes states of awareness and attention and must be distinguished from mental processes such as cognition (planning-monitoring), motivation, and emotional states (Brown & Ryan in Cassidy, 2017).
Mindfulness is closely related to awareness, helping individuals deal with stress, pain, and suffering (Stahl & Goldstein in Putri & Bintari, 2017). Duncan et al. (in Gani and Kumalasari, 2019) mentioned that parents who have mindfulness would be able to produce reduced reactivity, increased patience, responsiveness, consistency, and parenting by the goals and positive values of parents. Moreover, Gani and Kumalasari (2019) also found that mindfulness has a negative relationship with parenting stress in parents who have elementary school-aged children in Jakarta, where the higher the mindfulness, the lower the parenting stress. The literature review results on Hidayati (2020) also concluded that mindfulness has a relationship with lower parenting stress by parents. Mindful parenting can help parents be more adaptive in dealing with stressful situations to avoid the negative effects of parenting stress they experience.

Several previous studies have found factors that affect mindful parenting. Research conducted by Lo et al. (2018) with a sample of parents in Hong Kong found that parental age plays a role in mindful parenting. Education level was also found to be associated with mindful parenting. Parents with higher levels of education are associated with better opportunities to acquire in-depth knowledge and skills related to parenting and parent-child relationships (Gouveia et al., 2016).

In addition to mindfulness, family resilience is also a popular research topic for reducing stress in parenting (Harker et al., 2016; Rushton et al., 2015). Connor and Davidson (as cited in Hasan et al., 2022) asserted that family resilience could be used to reduce anxiety, depression, and stress. Family resilience has a positive role in parenting stress, coping, and adaptation processes in a family as a functional unit, adapting to stress, bouncing back from adversity, and using these difficulties to develop themselves (Walsh, 2012). In addition, resilience is also interpreted as a family’s ability to adapt and remain firm in difficult situations (Bluth et al., 2016). Resilient families have positive behavioral patterns and functional abilities to recover by maintaining integrity and well-being as a family as a whole (McCubbin et al., as cited in Toledano-Toledano et al., 2021). Jones’s (2020) study on parenting stress found that family resilience interventions decrease perceived parenting stress. Nurussyifa et al.’s (2020) research also strengthened the relationship between family resilience and parenting stress, which stated a significant negative relationship. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that parents who have high family resilience will have low parenting stress, so the family resilience variable needs to be included in this study.

Research related to mindfulness, family resilience, and parenting stress on parents of school-age children has not been widely carried out during the pandemic. Also, online learning is still ongoing today. The importance of this research is for parents to be able to manage parenting stress well due to work demands and home demands during the pandemic. The hypothesis is that mindfulness and family resilience play a role in parenting stress during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, this study’s objective is regarding the relationship between mindfulness and family resilience to parenting stress in parents who have school-age children during the pandemic.

**METHOD**

To answer the research questions, we used a quantitative approach. Participants in this study were 60 respondents selected using a purposive sampling technique. According to Sugiyono (2016), purposive sampling is a sampling technique for data sources with specific considerations. The reason for using the purposive sampling technique is that not all samples have criteria that match the phenomenon under study. The sampling technique was carried out using the inclusion criteria of the participants, namely (1) husband or wife involved in childcare.
According to Lundberg (in Mikolajczak et al., 2018), having several children increases the additional need for the family. (2) having children of primary school age with an age range of 6-11 years, which is concluded from several studies that the first experience of school in children is a critical point to determine success or failure in the future (Papalia & Feldman, 2014). (3) Willing to be involved and become research participants marked by informed consent.

This study used three instruments, namely the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) to measure the condition of mindfulness in individuals, and the Family Resilience Assessment Scale (FRAS) by Sixbey (as cited in Gardiner et al., 2019) to measure family resilience in parents. The Parenting Stress Index (Abidin in Dadas & Ahmad, 2013) measured the condition of parenting stress in parents. For the scale adaptation process, the researchers used the scales that have been adapted in Indonesian from previous studies, with proven validity and reliability.

The Mindfulness scale adapted from MAAS (Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale) reveals the state of mindfulness, which comes from aspects of the state of being aware of wakefulness and attention. The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) consists of 15 items (e.g., “I can experience certain emotions and ignore them for a while”). Filling the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) using a Likert scale from 1 (almost always) to 5 (rarely) while the sum of the scores obtained from questions 1-15 shows the individual’s mindfulness number. The higher the score obtained, the higher the level of mindfulness. The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) reliability coefficient in this study is .911 Cronbach’s alpha. Several researchers have also used this measuring tool, including Yuana et al. (2020), with alpha Cronbach .851.

The Family Resilience Scale uses the Family Resilience Assessment Scale (FRAS) developed by Sixbey (as cited in Gardiner et al., 2019) based on the family resilience dimensions proposed by Walsh (in Ho et al., 2022). The dimensions are Making Meaning of Adversity, Positive Outlook, Transcendence Spiritually, Flexibility, Connectedness, Social and Economic Resources, Clarity, Emotional Expression, Collaborative, and Problem Solving. FRAS consists of 54 items (item example: We were able to solve severe problems that befell our family) by filling out the Family Resilience Assessment Scale (FRAS) using a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) - 4 (strongly agree). The sum of the scores obtained from statements 1-54 shows the number of family resilience in parents. The higher the score obtained, the higher the family’s resilience to parents. The Family Resilience Assessment Scale (FRAS) reliability coefficient in this study is Cronbach’s alpha .964. This scale has been used by other researchers, namely, in Larasati’s research (2018), Cronbach’s alpha on this scale was .95 (Nadrowska et al., 2017)

Parenting Stress was adapted from The Parenting Stress Index (Abidin as cited in Dadas & Ahmad, 2013), consisting of 36 items (example item: I feel burdened by my responsibilities as a parent), which consists of three sub-scales, namely parental distress, the difficult child, and the parent-child dysfunctional interaction. Filling in The Parenting Stress Index scale uses a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) - 4 (strongly agree), while the sum of the scores obtained from statements 1-29 shows the number of stresses on parents. The higher the score, the higher the stress level of the parents. This study’s reliability coefficient of The Parenting Stress Index (PSI) is .944. This scale has been used by other researchers, namely Rahmawati’s research (2018), with the item-total correlation coefficient moving between .282 to .730 (α = .910).

This research took place for fourteen days with full communication and data retrieval. The online scale used the Google form platform, which contained informed consent, personal data, and the scale of each variable.
This research was started by contacting the Principal of the Islamic Private Elementary School X to carry out permits and assisted by the Deputy Head of Student Affairs to assist researchers in reaching respondents. The first thing the researcher did was to ask the total number of students to determine the number of parents who would be involved in the study. Then the researcher asked about respondents who met the criteria, were involved, and became research participants marked by informed consent. The researcher asked student representatives and all homeroom teachers to help spread the research-scale link to parents of students who met the inclusion criteria through the class WhatsApp group.

This study used IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) for Windows version 22.0 software for statistical calculation. Analysis of the data in this study used the Multiple Linear Regression Test Analysis to see whether there was an influence of mindfulness and family resilience on parenting stress and which independent variables had the most effect on reducing parenting stress for parents with school-age children during the Covid-19 pandemic. Researchers tested normality, linearity, and multicollinearity before conducting regression analysis. The normality test was carried out using a p-p plot and obtained that the data is normally distributed. The linearity test was carried out to determine the linear relationship between mindfulness, family resilience, and parenting stress. The multicollinearity test was carried out to determine whether or not the correlation between independent variables and dependent variables, mindfulness, family resilience and parenting stress. There was no multicollinearity in each variable, so the data can be analyzed using regression analysis.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The participants in this study were 60 parents who had school-age children at Private Islamic Elementary School X in Pontianak City, with an age range of 23 years to 50 years ($M_{age} = 38; SD = 7.4$). Table 1 shows the demographic of participants. The number of dominant participants was female with housewife jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Employees</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Servant</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seller</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mindfulness was not significantly decreasing parenting stress, $b = -.025, t(58) = -.686, p = .495$. The results of this study are not in line with previous research in which Conner and White (2014) showed that mindfulness has a relationship with parenting stress; this relationship explains that parents will feel the higher the parental mindfulness, the less parental stress. Gani and Kumalasari (2019) found that mindfulness plays a role in parenting stress in mothers who have elementary school-aged children. The results of this study are also not in line with research conducted by Medeiros et al. (2016), which
showed that mindfulness has a role in more parenting stress.

The results of this study are in line with the research of Tumthammarong et al. (2022) which states in the literature review that mindfulness was not found to have an effect on reducing parenting stress in parents. Same result was found by Retnoningtias and Hardika (2021) who stated that mindfulness has no effect on reducing stress. This can happen because the research subjects do not have or show mindfulness behavior. In addition, the absence of a relationship between the two occurs because the research subjects are still not in the acceptance phase (Retnoningtias & Hardika, 2021). In the context of parenting during a pandemic, the intended acceptance is related to accepting changes in circumstances or situations during the Covid-19 pandemic, which if parents cannot accept the changes that occur, the parents are not yet in the acceptance phase, so they do not have mindfulness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE b</th>
<th>b*</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>-.686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family resilience</td>
<td>.573</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.957</td>
<td>26.158***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.938</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. $R^2$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.936</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>$F$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>428.890***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *** $p < .001$

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Then, in this study it was found that family resilience has a relationship with parenting stress, family resilience was significantly predict parenting stress, $b = .957; t(58) = 26.158, p < .001$. This is in line with the research of Nurussyifa et al (2020) who found that family resilience has a relationship with parental stress. This can happen because families who have good resilience will tend to increase the positive effect on individuals (Simpson & Jones in Nurussyifa et al, 2020). In addition, a family that has resilience means that the family will be able to view distress as a challenge for the family, not a destructive thing, and see the family’s potential to grow.
and make improvements (Lestari in Nurussyifa et al, 2020).

The limitations of this study are the limited number of subjects and the lack of variation in the demographic data extracted. Future researchers can enrich the subject and demographic data to know more broadly about the demographic factors that may contribute to or influence the study. Furthermore, future researchers can conduct similar studies with a broader population and relate them to other additional variables to find out 7% of other factors influencing parenting stress that have not been found in this study. This study gives practical implications for psychologists to consider mindfulness and family resilience in dealing with parenting stress in parents with elementary children. Parents with elementary children are encouraged to develop family resilience to increase psychological well-being during parenting. School managers can provide psychoeducation about family resilience so that parents have good resilience and can minimize parenting stress.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the research hypothesis is accepted because there is a simultaneous relationship between the variables of mindfulness and family resilience to parenting stress. Another result obtained is that there is a significant relationship between family resilience and parenting stress, but there is no significant relationship between mindfulness and parenting stress. The magnitude of the influence of mindfulness and family resilience on parenting stress is 93,6%, which means the other 7% are influenced by other variables. Based on the research results obtained, parents can develop mindfulness and family resilience to cope with the stress that parents feel. The next researcher can look for other factors that can affect parenting stress because there are 7% unknown factors in this study.

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