

The Impact of Covid-19 on the Mental Health of Housewives and the Adaptation Process from a Cultural Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Background: The existence of lockdown regulation during the COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on the psychological pressure of housewives, their role increases to become a teacher for the children and to get over the economic problems. Housewives are required to adapt by using appropriate coping strategies so that they do not undergo stress problem and remain mentally healthy. This study aims to describe the mental health and coping strategies of housewives in Sungai Bawang Culture village and analyze the adaptation process from the cultural perspective of the Dayak Kenyah tribe. **Methods:** This study was a descriptive study using standard instruments such as the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scales (DASS-21) questionnaire to measure stress levels and the Ways of Coping Questionnaire to describe the coping strategies used. Structured interviews were conducted by researchers to find cultural perspectives that affect the adaptation process. **Results:** The results showed that the majority of housewives in Sungai Bawang culture village used problem focus coping strategies and the majority did not experience stress. Researchers also obtained data on the existence of cultural links that support the use of these coping strategies. **Conclusion:** Although the strategy used was focused on the problems. Further studies are necessary to find solutions to overcome these problems or find solutions to reduce the impact of the problems.

Keywords: COVID-19; Coping; Mental Health; Culture

INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 Pandemic

Coronavirus disease 2019 which is also known as COVID-19 has been designated by WHO as a pandemic in most countries in the world (Vibriyanti, 2020). This pandemic has inflicted many changes that have a negative impact not only on physical health but also on individual psychological well-being and even changes society as generally (Baneerje, 2020; Brooks *et al.*, 2020; Zhang, 2020). Anxiety, frustration, confusion, fear, insomnia post-traumatic stress disorder, and feelings of helplessness are the impact of this pandemic on psychological aspect. About 66% of married female respondents experienced psychological disorders. The uncertainty of this pandemic requires individuals to be able to adjust or adapt to the current circumstances (Brooks *et al.*, 2020).

Even before the pandemic, mothers in Indonesia were responsible for childcare, school activities,

household chores, and caring for all family members (Syakriah, 2020). Di Giorgio *et al.*, (2020) in his study in Italy found that mother especially working mothers have experienced changes in sleep time and quality, emotional symptoms, and feelings about the flow of time during the lockdown owing to their efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their family.

Adaptation Process

The process of adjusting to the existing stressors from the psychological side is called psychological adaptation. Psychological adaptation is done by providing self-defense strategies (coping) in the hope of surviving in an unpleasant situation. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) wrote that there are two types of coping, namely problem focus coping (PFC) and emotion focus coping (EFC) Generally sociodemographic factors cause decline in memory, emotion regulation, coping and there is the influence of the culture. (Manullang *et al.*, 2020).

Mental Health

The condition of an individual’s mental, emotional and spiritual health is called mentally healthy (Adliyani, 2015). Tarehy *et al.*, (2019) has written that members of the family, age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, income, economic status, occupation, employment status and religion were some of the factors that affect an individual's mental health from sociodemographic conditions. Mental health is closely related to a person's coping strategies, which is an individual’s psychological ability to adjust to stress or emotional pressure (Rahmatika, 2014). The issue of stress and coping strategies according to Dumatubun (2002) is related to cultural factors because health behavior is related to knowledge, beliefs, values and norms based on culture.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This research was a descriptive study using mix methods, namely qualitative methods in analyzing the adaptation process of housewives from a cultural perspective using structured interview techniques, then quantitative methods using questionnaires to find descriptions of mental health and the level of coping of the respondents.

Research Sites

Sungai Bawang village is one of the villages located in Kutai Kertanegara district, East Kalimantan province, which since 2008 has been officially made one of the cultural villages with the majority of the population is the ethnic of Dayak Kenyah.

Population and Sampling

The population of this research is housewives of Dayak tribe, can read and write, have children of elementary school age, physically and mentally healthy and willing to be household respondents from 5 RT (Neighborhood Association) areas in Sungai Bawang Cultural Village. Simple random sampling was used in selecting 50 respondents to be involved in filling out the questionnaire, while interviews were conducted with 10 respondents

Research Instruments

Measurement of the mental health of housewives using the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scales

(DASS-21) and Ways of Coping questionnaires. The researchers used structured interviews to study the cultural perspective and the adaptation process carried out by the housewives in Sungai Bawang Culture village.

RESULTS

The number of respondents who were willing to participate in this study was 50 people.

Table 1: Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	(n=50)	f %
Age		
<30	15	30
31-39	19	38
>40	16	32
Last Education		
Elementary School	11	22
Junior High School	18	36
Senior High School	18	36
University	3	6
Coping Strategy		
PFC	38	76
EFC	12	24
Stress Level:		
No Stress	37	74
Stress	13	26

Based on table 1, the characteristics of the respondents in this study were:

The majority of respondents were aged 31-39 years were 19 people (38%), majority highest education was junior high school with 18 people (36%) and senior high school (36%). The majority of housewives in the Sungai Bawang Culture village had problem-focus solving coping as many as 38 people (76%) and the majority of them had no stress, which was 37 people (74%).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, older and more experienced mothers could manage psychological stress better than younger mothers (Qodariah *et al.*,

2020). Several studies supported this that showed age is correlated with stress and more mature self-defense strategies (Whitty 2003; Fornés-Vives *et al.*, 2016).

Table 2: Coping Strategies and Mental Health

Coping Strategies	Stress level				Total		p value
	Normal		Stress				
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
PFC	34	89.5	4	10.5	38	76	0.00
EFC	3	25	9	75	12	24	
Total	37	74	13	26	50	100	

The results of data analysis in table 2 using the fisher exact test obtained p value of 0.00 ($\alpha < 0.05$), so there was a relationship between coping strategies and stress levels in housewives in the Sungai Bawang culture village.

DISCUSSION

Impact of COVID-19

The results of researchers interview with respondents regarding the changes have been experienced during the pandemic include:

"Changes occurred during the Covid-19 period in my family, my husband is no longer working because there was a reduction in workers" (R1)

"Many times, I cannot visit family who lives outside the city, cannot do outside activities, and income becomes uncertain. Moreover, the children must be accompanied with their study, and their studies are very difficult" (R2)

"Change is that we can't go anywhere, economic conditions become difficult and I get additional assignments as an educator even though I'm not good at teaching" (R3)

"There are no significant change, husband's work and children's education continue" (R4)

"The change is often at home because they have to teach and accompany children to study at home" (R5)

"The change is teaching children at home so they can rarely go out and of course our income decreases" (R6)

"The change that is most is in economic needs, we feel this is true for my family, especially me. I used to be a renter of Dayak traditional clothes, because of this COVID, people have never rented Dayak clothes, the

problem is probably because changing clothes can cause the spread of the virus, so that's one of the obstacles and I'm dealing with COVID-19 like a child who goes to school for education indeed. For me, housewives are not teachers, they are impatient in educating children, unlike teachers who are at school, sometimes their lose temper fast when teaching children, that is also an obstacle for me during this Covid with regard to education" (R7)

"During COVID the most remarkable change is that children cannot go to school for face-to-face classes, the task increases as an educator at home" (R8)

"During this pandemic, it has changed a lot because there is no business, hampering our economic income, it is difficult for us to manage this economic uncertainty. Before the pandemic, we sold our garden produce in the market, now when we want to go to the market, we are afraid to meet people there, so we are temporarily closed" (R9)

"The change is that it is clear that income decreases and then gets an additional task as a teacher for children at home" (R10)

The results of researchers interviews with respondents showed that the impact that are mostly encountered by housewives in Sungai Bawang village is the family's economic problem, partly because the spouse is no longer working and the restrictions on going out of the house and outside the area, this will automatically reduce income. Another impact encountered is that the addition of the role of being a "teacher" for their children.

Adaptation Process and Cultural Perspective

Adaptation is the process by which a person adjusts to changes around. In this study specifically psychological changes are taken into account. An individual's efforts to overcome psychological changes/pressures (stress) are called coping strategies (Potter & Perry, 2010; Lau *et al.*, 2019). There are two types of coping strategies that can be used, namely problem focus coping and emotional focus coping.

The coping strategy of housewives in Sungai Bawang village against the impact of Covid-19 is that the majority used problem focuses coping (PFC) strategies as many as 38 people (76%), which evident from the following statement:

"When my husband didn't work, I happened to be the one who got the job, so I helped my husband, some were sorted by my husband doing odd jobs, there were no noticeable changes either. So, mother can accept, because I have got a job, before I did not work" (R1)

"Experiencing change in the family, but the way we have changed, last time, we spent family time outside since the pandemic, we stayed at home, on our own to make us peaceful in facing the pandemic, such as making beaded clothes or special hats. Dayak" (R2)

"To deal with it, look for other activities, to reduce expenses, go to the garden to grow vegetable so that we don't buy things from outside" (R3)

"Continue to learn to be patient with children, even in this adverse economy, we are always looking for ways to survive in various ways, such as in the yard planting vegetables and family medicinal plants so we don't have to spend money to buy" (R6)

"I often ask for advice from my child's schoolteacher about my child's studies, and exchange stories and thoughts with other housewives about daily activities" (R7)

"Yes, because of the change, because I can't sell my garden products in the market, then I only sell in the village to the neighbors around me" (R8)

"We followed the government's advice not to leave the house too much, so I taught my children to cook, make handicrafts that can be sold to help our economy" (R10)

Another 12 (24%) respondents used Emotional focus coping, as listed below:

"I don't really feel that there is a change, just be smart about time so that everything can run smoothly, I pray that this situation will pass quickly" (R4)

"Maybe we are patient, trying what we can do to cover it, basically we just do positive things" (R5)

"Yeah, I'm just trying to look on the bright side now I have more time with the kids and more time for making crafts" (R9)

An effective and appropriate coping strategy to deal with problems directly is to use PFC (Bakhtiar & Asriani 2015; Manullang *et al.*, 2020). Problem focus coping is also a coping strategy that is mostly used by women (Manullang *et al.*, 2020).

Farming is the main livelihood for the Dayak Kenyah people who live in Sungai Bawang Cultural Village, so they are not too worried about meeting basic needs such as rice or vegetables. The Dayak Kenyah community has a view of life, namely "Pemung Tawai" which means "one heart, one mind and one goal" which describes the spirit of togetherness, harmony and mutual cooperation in life. This view of life is applied in everyday life such as planting and harvesting agricultural products together, helping each other when someone is holding an event either at the church or at the Lamin (Dayak traditional house). They also make decisions by holding joint deliberation (Harsanto, 2018).

The role of women in Indonesia is sometimes marginalized (Rodiyah, 2018), but the role of the Dayak Kenyah women in Sungai Bawang village does not experience this. The women even able help the family's livelihood by making handicrafts that can be sold such as Dayak clothes, Dayak hats, Dayak jewelry, Dayak food, garden vegetables (Satrio *et al.*, 2020). In general, Dayak women have special skills in making handicrafts, this is one of the FBC coping strategies implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic, as shown in the results of the interview.

The use of positive coping strategies in one's actions helps to overcome pressure. This is in accordance with the results of research by Mesuri *et al.*, (2014) that someone who has a positive coping strategy will try to overcome the problem by asking people who have more control over the problem and focus on solving the problem. Maladaptive coping strategies will increase stress and cause emotional weakness, which, if they arise in excess, will affect an individual's readiness to face the repair phase (Nadati & Mulayyindah, 2019).

CONCLUSION

An individual's response to psychological pressure (stress) is strongly influenced by the coping strategy chosen, negative coping strategies lead to a heavier level of stress, on the other hand positive coping strategies will encourage a person to do positive and good things, so as not to experience stress. In this study, the majority of housewives used problem focus coping strategies by seeking help from experts (teachers), exchanging stories with other people and doing things to help overcome problems (farming crops, making handwork), so the problem will be automatically solved.

Even though the strategy used was focused on the problem, it does not mean that individuals should give away on the problem. But instead one must try to find solutions to overcome the problem or find solutions to reduce the impact of the problem.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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