Resilience of Single Mother Low Economic Levels Who Have Children Aged 6-12 with During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Tania Dwi Nugraheni 1, Natalia Ratna Yulianti 1* and Andri Kenti Gayatina 1.

1 Nurse Profession Study Program, STIKes St. Elisabeth Semarang; email: tania.tdn10@gmail.com
* Correspondence: natalia.r.yulianti@gmail.com; Tel.: (081904785943)

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact in various fields. Parents have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially single mothers. The challenge for single mothers who have children aged 6-12 years during the COVID-19 pandemic is accompanying children to study at home. Single mothers who are not used to accompanying children to study will cause a burden. The pressure experienced cannot be tolerated, because single mothers must rise in order to survive and adapt. Previous studies have shown a very good picture of the resilience of a single mother because it reaches a stage that corresponds to the aspect of resilience. Other studies have found that parents who accompany school children at home during the COVID-19 pandemic have low resilience. However, a study on single mothers with low economic levels who have children aged 6-12 years during the COVID-19 pandemic has never been done. The purpose of this study was to explore the resilience of single mothers with low economic levels who have children aged 6-12 years during the COVID-19 pandemic. Methods: This research is qualitative research with a phenomenological study approach. The research location is in a district in city of Salatiga, Indonesia. Participants were five single mothers who were selected using a purposive sampling technique with inclusion criteria having children aged 6-12 years with low economic levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data is collected by conducting in-depth interviews. The data were analyzed using the Colaizzi method. The results of the research resulted in six themes, namely 1) Mother received support from siblings and biological family; 2) Mother had to work hard to make a living; 3) Relieved in accepting the situation; 4) Mother’s independence to live life; 5) Mother’s patience to control anger; 6) Mother came, prayed and thanked God. Single mothers who have children with low economic levels aged 6-12 years had resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Children aged 6-12 years, Low economy, Pandemic COVID-19, Resilience, Single mother

Introduction

The high cases of Covid-19 in Indonesia have prompted the government to make physical distancing and social distancing policies. The impact of the policy is in the economic field, impacting the community’s economy (Kementerian Kesehatan Indonesia, n.d.; Susanto & Kramadibrata, 2020; Aeni, 2021). The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is a decrease in income in the community. The most affected communities are people with low socioeconomic status and daily workers (Kurniasih, 2020). Another impact is children are required to study at home. This obligation adds the responsibility of parents to assist children in learning, which was originally the teacher’s job. Meanwhile, parents still have other duties from the office and household duties.

The economic and social impact is a burden for parents, especially for female single parents who are the bread winner of the family. A Survey in the USA in 2021 showed that there were 23% single mothers (America Counts Staff, 2017). While in Malaysia, one of the Southeast Asian countries, based on data from the Malaysian Department of Statistics there were 161,227 single mothers in 2020 (Rahman, 2021). The Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) survey in 2015 revealed data that there were 9.82% single mothers due
to divorce and 2.52% single mothers due to divorce. Data on single mothers in Central Java province in 2021 showed there are 12.12% due to divorce and 2.45% divorce (BPS, 2022).

A preliminary study in Salatiga showed that in 2021 there were single mothers with divorce and death status around 11.06%, and single mothers caused by divorce around 3.72%. In one sub-district there were 19 single mothers who have children aged 6-12 years with low economic levels.

The pressure experienced by single mothers cannot be tolerated, because single mothers must rise money in order to survive and adapt. It will take time for a single mother to be able to rise and face the pressures that occur (Ewid & Vuspitasari, 2020). Therefore, it takes toughness from within to carry out the role as a single mother. Self-toughness or resilience is an individual’s ability to positively adapt to circumstances and rise from difficulties, trauma and failure by maintaining or restoring normal functions in carrying out life so that they can overcome the pressures of life (Babic et al., 2020).

Research in Semarang by (Sissilia & Falah, 2020), showed that single mothers’ resilience was very good because it reached a stage that corresponded to the aspect of resilience. Research by Yuhenita & Indiati (2021) showed that parents had a low level of resilience when accompanying school children at home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research on the resilience of single mothers during the Covid-19 pandemic has been carried out, but the resilience of single mothers with low economic levels who have elementary school-age children during the Covid-19 pandemic has never been done. Therefore, this study aims to explore the resilience of single mothers who have children aged 6-12 years with low economic levels in maintaining life and meeting the daily needs of their children during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Materials and Methods

The Materials This research is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. In this study, the phenomenon studied was single mothers who had children aged 6-12 years with low economic status during the COVID-19 pandemic, whether they could survive the problems well or not. The population in this study were all single mothers with a low economy who were in one of the sub-districts in the city of Salatiga. Participants in this study were 5 single mothers who were selected using purposive sampling technique. The inclusion criteria were single mothers who were willing to become participants from the beginning to the end of the study by signing an informed consent sheet, a single mother who had additional task at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, single mothers who had a low economy of less than IDR 1,900,000, a single mother who has at least 1 child with an age range of 6-12 years. While the exclusion criteria were single mothers who suddenly resigned during the study, single mothers with speech disorders, and single mothers who were sick.

This research was conducted in one of the districts in the city of Salatiga. The data collection process was using in-depth interview techniques. The question posed to the participants was “How was your experience in surviving the role of a single mother during the COVID-19 pandemic?”. This interview was conducted in person at the participant’s home. All interview activities were recorded using two cellphones to record sound and images and then were transcribed. The data collected was then analyzed using the Colaizzi method (Shosha, 2012). This research upholds the ethics of informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, respect for justice inclusiveness, and balancing harms and benefits.

Results

This section This research produced 6 themes, namely 1) Mother received support from siblings and biological family; 2) Mother had to work hard to make a living; 3)
Relieved in accepting the situation; 4) Mother’s independence to live life; 5) Mother’s patience to control anger; 6) Mother came, prayed and thanked God.

**Mother received support from siblings and biological family**

While carrying out the role as a single mother during the COVID-19 pandemic, the mother received support from her siblings and biological family. So that with the support received, mothers can survive in carrying out their roles during the COVID-19 pandemic by continuing to accompany their children to study at home. As in the following participant statement:

**Participant 1**

“On the other hand, I have to play a dual role, acting as a mother and as a father. However, it was all thanks to the support from the family”; “Especially this support from my friends is very useful for me, the support, especially the support of the advice, especially for me, is very useful, Miss.”; “My spirit is seeing my children, my children still really need me, when I see my children, it seems like they have power like that, right?”; “Yes, children are a source of strength for me”

**Participant 2**

"The children obeyed, I felt been supported"

**Participant 3**

"Indeed, I am without children, I can't maybe ah I already thought yesterday that it's a mess, sis. No matter how hard it is, my thoughts are a lot like, yes, I owe a lot but there is child support, I'm already proud, Sis”

**Participant 4**

“Z” (her child) isn’t fussy, it’s fun, tomorrow morning it’s fun to wake up, that's why I should be happy”

**Participant 5**

“Yes, my spirit ... I see my children; ‘It’s for you. You don't need to be in debt, here’s a little for you ... for shopping, the children who support you will be enthusiastic’; Thank God, Alhamdulilah, my brothers and sisters, my nephews can help my children, can help me to give money for... to hold on to, for my child.”

**Mother had to work hard to make a living**

Being a single mother requires mothers to work hard to earn a living to meet their daily needs and children's school fees. Mother’s efforts to work have enabled mothers to survive during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following are statements from participants:

**Participant 1**

“On the one hand we have to work hard to meet family needs, on the other hand we have to be able to supervise children, support children, and accompany children in learning”

**Participant 2**

“So I have to be passionate, I have to fight for my children ...” ; "You have to work hard like that... yes, work hard so that my child will become a successful person, I can pay for him to go to school, sis.. I have to want my child to be someone who can make his parents proud, that's all (smiles) I have to work it's okay to be hard, sis.. don't give up like that ... that's all sis, don't give up, I'm still optimistic, I have to fight for my child, so that my child can become the pride of his parents like that”; "You have to work hard, you have to work hard no matter how you do it"

**Participant 3**

"Then he knows how his parents make a living by toiling, sweating, wanting to work here and there, we have to do it well, sis, so that we can make a living for a bite of rice.”

**Participant 4**

"I'm excited. I have to be able to raise money for a child.; "Hahahah! Yeah, that’s my life, Sis. My days are like roller coaster, I’m looking for money, haha, if I only sit at
home, who will give me money. By praying only, no one comes. We have to work. Haha-haha"

Participant 5

“God willing, I can continue to be the breadwinner, to be a father and mother in my children, may I be given health, given abundant fortune, earning money by myself ... May I be strong,”; “I have to be enthusiastic about working all the time, when it’s a day off I feel like I want to work while my body is still healthy, strong, I feel like working and working so I can make money and for my children I have snacks and pay for school.”

Relieved in accepting the situation

Single mothers have sincere feelings, are strong and tough in accepting circumstances. The relief that a mother has can make her not dissolve in sadness and make her rise to face trials during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following are participant statements:

Participant 1

“Seeing my young children made me try hard to accept all the destiny that was given to me (sigh). However, over time we try to sincerely accept all of this and live it like water just flows like that”; “Don’t be afraid, don’t be insecure when I say that, this is our destiny, we have to live it sincerely”; “Be sure of that destiny, we have to instill that belief in our hearts that we are destined to be like this, that’s definitely the best way according to God for us, okay?”; “God gives us a trial, maybe God has other plans. For example, like me this might make me maybe have to be even stronger to be even more independent ...”; “Mentally, we try to be stronger and more resilient, just like that in facing all the trials”

Participant 2

“Life is like this, Sis, like it or not, I have to live it, Sis”; “There is a silver lining to being a single parent, Sis, because I can be that strong.”

Participant 4

“Well … I have to be strong sis...”; “So, I have to accept all this. This is indeed a mother’s situation”; “I can’t keep remembering the past because the past won’t be back like when their dad was still alive. Now I am all alone. I do everything by myself. But I can do that. I have to be able to do that alone.”

Participant 5

“I must be strong.”; “How I describe how strong I am? I have to ... I have to be able to take care of my children, I have to be able to accept my child’s situation and my situation, because I make a living for myself and everyone has to be alone, so I have to pay for anything myself. I accept, sincere, passionate and patient with educating children until my children grow up.”; “I have to be strong so that the child will grow up, until it’s finished”; “Patience and sincerity have to accept all the circumstances that ... I have been living since my husband died.”; “I have to be able to, I have to... I have to be strong, I have to be able to send my children to school”; “How can you stay tough, sis ... you have to ... I have to be enthusiastic, you have to be enthusiastic ... you have to be strong and you work, you have to be enthusiastic”; “I have to accept the situation a little bit”.

Mother's independence to live life

Carrying out the role as a single mother, the mother does not want herself and her child to become a burden to other people, so the mother must be independent in living life. Having independence can be resilience for mothers in carrying out their role as a single mother during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following are participant statements:

Participant 1

“We must try our best, lest we become a burden to other people”; “meaning the child should not become a burden. As much as possible the child can grow into an independent child, become a strong child.”; “I don’t like people feel pity for me.”
Participant 2
"I do not want to be a burden, Ma’am, and to make my neighbors busy for me. I keep it secret but how my neighbors know about my situation? I was really hesitant to ask for help."

Participant 4
"I will never let my child be neglected, never let her begging. I don’t want to beg for someone to do something."

Mother’s patience to control anger
Single mothers can control their emotions by not being angry with their children and being patient with their children when accompanying their children to study at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. So that with patience you can create resilience for single mothers by controlling emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following are participant statements:

Participant 2
"I work whole day. So, when they get angry, I have to control my emotion and be patient."

Participant 3
"But how angry I am to my children, I don’t resent them. I don’t want them to revenge themselves to someone who hurt them. So, I have to be patient facing my children with that character."

Participant 4
"Yeahh! We have to be patient (to our kid) ... kinda I calm myself down. But I’ve never been angry like I hit him. I ask God to grant me serenity and patience, Sis."

Participant 5
"I educate my children sincerely, enthusiastically, and patiently until my children grow up."

Mother came, prayed and thanked God
Single mothers come to God by praying and being grateful for the conditions they are experiencing right now. Single mothers can survive trials, because they still come to God to ask for strength. The following are participant statements:

Participant 1
"It’s okay we don’t have a father, it’s okay, but dad sees us, we must always pray. ; "Especially so, we draw closer to God. If we believe in God, God will definitely take care of us, take care of our children, so wherever we are, if we obey God, surely God will also love us, will not leave us like that."; "As single parents, we live it, meaning naturally, basically, every day we carry out activities as usual, we continue to do activities as before, we are grateful, we are still given health, we are still given strength, we are still given the opportunity to live, so we live it we use that time as well as possible like that”; "My heart prays, O Allah, give me long life, O Allah, my children are still small, they still need me, so my body gets healthy, relieves my fatigue, at least I just pray like that, Sis."

Participant 2
"That’s why it’s hard for me, Sis, but I’m grateful ...; "Yes, I have to pray frequently, Sis, asking God for guidance’; "What if I am sis, God has destined me to be like that, I have to be a single parent, so I’m just grateful... I’m grateful ...”; "Yes, what should I be grateful for, just like that... so there’s no need for anything, Sis... just be grateful if you don’t have to complain, that’s how life really is"

Participant 3
"Indeed. That’s Covid. Indeed, I am grateful to be able to eat every day, it is sufficient, I am very grateful as if my child was not abandoned, Sis ...

Participant 4
"I often pray at night to ask for guidance on how to deal with my children."
Participant 5
“Since my husband died, I have to be strong, I have to be grateful. I have to pray so that I stay healthy and also my children, I keep working hard, my work will be going well, I am given fortune which is for my children. I am grateful that I am still able to help my children and to work. I cheer myself up and keep praying so everything will be alright and I can accept whatever the situation.”

Discussion

Authors Mother received support from siblings and biological family
The support received by the mother from siblings and biological family can be a source of strength for the mother in carrying out her role as a single mother. According to Grotberg, there is a factor that forms resilience, namely I Have, which is a resilience factor related to the support obtained from the surrounding environment for individuals to deal with problems (Al-Faruq & Sukatin, 2021) This is in line with research conducted by Muarifah et al. (2019) showing that social support has proven to be very influential on the psychological well-being of single mothers.

Sources of support that single mothers receive are from their children, parents and siblings. Aprilia’s study in 2013 shows that the support needed by single mothers is the presence of the closest people such as family, friends, friends and neighbors such as helping to look after children, appreciation, positive acceptance from the surrounding environment, and giving advice to single mothers. Single mothers get support from environment makes mothers survive in carrying out their role as single mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The support received makes the mother not dissolve in sadness. This is supported by research conducted by Pitasari & Cahyono (2014) which revealed that positive support from the family can help mothers not to dissolve in sadness, encourage them to survive, so that family support can prevent stress.

Mother had to work hard to make a living
Single mothers carry out the role as the head of the family who has the obligation to meet their daily needs and play the role of a mother who educates her children as well as does household chores. This statement was expressed by all participants. This research is in line with a study which stated that a single mother must perform several roles in her family so that the family can continue well, including earning a living and taking care of the children (Primayuni, 2018).

Low income requires single mothers to continue working during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide for children who are currently studying. Learning at home for children during the COVID-19 pandemic increases expenses for parents such as the additional cost of buying quotas, cellphones and laptops so that mothers are required to work hard to make a living to meet their needs (Purwanto et al., 2020). Maulana, in 2021, revealed that from the aspect of a productive role, single mother continues to do productive things in the midst of a pandemic, doesn’t leave her routine, and works to earn income (Maulana et al., 2021).

The work that the single mother underwent during the COVID-19 pandemic was as a wholesale worker at a charcoal factory and working as a daily worker, namely helper. According to Reivich and Shatte, the resilience aspect is self-efficacy and optimism. Self-efficacy is an individual’s belief in solving problems experienced and getting success. The optimistic aspect is that mothers feel confident that things can change for the better in the future (Suiraoka, 2022). Participants have self-efficacy in having a way of being able to support their children by working hard and being optimistic by having hope for their children in the future.
Relieved in accepting the situation

Mothers have a sincere, strong, steadfast, strong sense, and accept circumstances while carrying out their role as a single mother. Participants have the belief that everything that has happened is a trial received from God, so that they can survive in carrying out their role as a single mother during the COVID-19 pandemic by having school-age children. So that with a relieved attitude, mothers can survive during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research by Hasanah in 2014 shows that someone who can live life steadfastly and strong after changing their minds to be more positive that everything is God’s destiny, everything will have a way and life must go on for the future of children (Hasanah & Widuri, 2014). This is in line with research by Wahyu in 2019 shows a sense of life satisfaction is accepting the situation as a single mother (Wahyu & Lestari, 2019).

Participants let go of every incident they experienced by trying to be better and accepting the situation of dealing with their children who had problems learning at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The process of forming sincerity grows together over time when a change is received that requires an adaptation process, the more often unpleasant conditions are forged, the greater the effort to let go of every incident (Zhang et al., 2020).

According to Reivich and Shatte, the aspect of resilience is reaching out, which is the individual’s ability to increase the positive aspects within oneself by getting out of the comfort zone, namely the mother can accept the situation. Child (Suiraoka, 2022). Single mothers also motivate themselves to remain strong and sincere in raising their children.

Mother’s independence to live life

Participants do not want to be a burden to other people, even though participants have a low economy during the COVID-19 pandemic, participants have a spirit of independence to keep trying to meet the needs of their families by working independently. The independence possessed by single mothers makes them survive with the circumstances they are experiencing. A research shows the independence that single mothers do to overcome challenges, especially financial obstacles and prioritize their children (Callaghan et al., 2021). However, this is not in line with research conducted by Sulistyaningsih in 2020 which states that the low economic conditions in single mother families have an impact on limited child education costs, which sometimes have to be in debt, because there are school education costs that must be paid by the mother (Sulistyaningsih & Women, 2020).

Participants also wanted their children to become independent people by not asking other people and doing assignments on their own, but mothers still provided assistance to children in doing schoolwork. The independence of a child is inseparable from the attachment of parents in educating children. Quality attachment is very important in preventing negative behavior in children and the relationship that exists between parents and children has a positive effect on independence in children (Andani & Yuni, 2020).

Although the participants in this study did not want to be a burden to others, they had empathy for their surroundings. Participants in this study have empathy to help children and neighbors around them. This is in accordance with the aspect of resilience according to Reivich and Shatte, namely having a sense of empathy, so as to be able to create good social and emotional relationships with their environment and provide comfort for the people around them (Suiraoka, 2022). Another factor include feelings, attitudes, and beliefs within the individual (Al-Faruq & Sukatin, 2021). This is evidenced by the participants being able to have a sense of empathy for other people.

Mother’s patience to control anger

Single mothers have patience in caring for children who are still in school. From the statements P2, P3, P4 and P5 they must be patient in dealing with children so they are able to understand their wishes and educate children. Research by Tayo, (2019) shows that single mothers must be able to work patiently in educating their children.
Patience that mothers have can make mothers able to identify problems and be able to control their emotions towards children. The results of interviews with participants, mothers can control emotions towards children by giving advice to children and not being angry with children. Research by Gina showed someone who has the ability to control high emotions will find it easier to manage emotions compared to someone who has the ability to control low emotions, so they are easily stressed, angry, irritable and easily lost direction (Gina & Fitriani, 2022).

Resilient aspects according to Reivich and Shatte are emotion regulation, impulse control, and identification of problems that require mothers to find solutions to existing problems (Suiraoka, 2022). Single mothers are faced with the problem of having to educate their children to study at home, but they try to be patient and control their anger by accompanying their children. study at home, if they don’t understand children’s lessons then they look for solutions so that children can still do every assignment given. So that mothers can survive when faced with problems while carrying out their role as a single mother during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mother came, prayed and thanked God
Mothers pray and give thanks for the problems they face during the COVID-19 pandemic, this was expressed by the five participants. In addition to the support from children and siblings, mothers also have strategies to deal with problems by thinking positively and praying. This is in line with a research which revealed that there are several ways to overcome negative problems, namely by praying, giving thanks or doing positive activities (Desi et al., 2018).

A study by Nursanti shows that someone who is close to God will make that person calm in facing every problem (Nursanti et al., 2012). When facing a problem in their life, they are able to accept it sincerely and believe that everything is the will of God. So that by coming to God the mother can survive the trials she experiences.

Conclusions
This Single mother who have children aged 6-12 years with low economic levels had resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Parenting children during a pandemic has various psychological pressures for single mothers, namely have to accompany their children to study at home and work to earn a living. This can lead to an increase in the stress burden for single mothers. Parents must have resilience in caring for, accompanying, accompanying children in learning and providing learning facilities that support children in online learning. Resilience must be possessed to adapt to the problems experienced by single mothers. What we need to pay attention to is the psychological health of single mothers and children and the need to pay attention to child development.


Funding: This research received no external funding

Institutional Review Board Statement: The institutional review board (IRB) of STIKes St. Elisabeth Semarang Committee reviewed and approved the study protocol and the protocol conformed to the provisions of the Declaration of Helsinki. We obtained informed written consent from each participant after providing them with both verbal and written information about the research.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. Written informed consent has been obtained from the students to publish this paper.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable
Acknowledgments: We thank the respondents and STIKes St. Elisabeth Semarang

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest

References


Al-Faruq, M. S. S., & Sukatini. (2021). Psikologi Perkembangan. Penerbit Deepublish. https://books.google.co.id/books?id=ki0yEAAAQBAJ&amp;pg=PA215&amp;dq=i+have+i+can+dan+i+am+resilienz&amp;hl=en&amp;new-bks=1&amp;newbks_redir=0&amp;source=gb_mobile_search&amp;ovdme=1&amp;ved=2ahUKEwiY0IYme-kj5AhW7rcaHTCRC8Q6Af6BAgGEAMFv=onepage&amp;q=i+have+i+can+dan+i+am+resilienz&amp;


