Resilience among COVID-19 Survivors:
The Role of Optimism and Social Support

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ABSTRACT

Resilience is an essential psychological construct for dealing with adversity. This study aimed to explore the role of optimism and social support in resilience among COVID-19 survivors in the Bantul district. Cluster random sampling was applied to select the sample. 150 COVID-19 survivors in the Bantul district participated in this study. Three scales, the optimism scale, social support scale, and resilience scale, were used to collect the data. Quantitative data analysis with multiple linear regression was conducted with the SPSS 16.00 for Windows. The result shows optimism and social support significantly impact resilience among COVID-19 survivors. Optimism has a significant positive relation with resilience by controlling social support. Social support also has a significant positive relation with resilience by controlling optimism. Optimism and social support have an effective contribution of 21.292% to resilience. Therefore, optimism and social support are needed to enhance resilience, especially in adversity, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: optimism, resilience, social support.

Introduction

People face adversity conditions in their life. People worldwide faced the COVID-19 pandemic in the last three years, threatening health and life. Fortunately, individuals can positively adapt to adversity conditions (Adler & Saboe, 2017). Individual capacity to get through and pass stressful adversity conditions may emerge with resilience (Hou et al., 2019). Resilience is a positive dynamic process of adapting to adverse conditions. Resilience is an individual capacity to bounce back from difficulty, confusion, conflict, and failure and the ability to make positive outcomes (Gatt et al., 2020). Individuals with high resilience show better performance and are more adaptable to life changes, while individuals with low resilience blame themselves more efficiently, resulting in depression and anxiety (Walpita & Arambepola, 2020).

Five COVID-19 survivors were interviewed with a guided interview based on five resilience dimensions (Connor & Davidson, 2003). In the first dimension, personal competence, all the survivors experienced doubt about recovering from COVID-19, as they had difficulty breathing, inability to smell, lethargy, and headache. The survivors then gradually accept their physical condition and revive. While in the second dimension, tolerance of negative affect and the strengthening effects of stress, the survivors selected information on COVID-19 to deal with calmly. Concerning the third dimension, positive acceptance of change, the survivors accept their condition positively and believe that they will recover and will be accepted by their community as COVID-19 survivors. In the fourth dimension, a sense of self-control, the survivors accept the condition positively by controlling their emotions, especially facing the stigma from society as COVID-19 survivors. They sought social support to enhance their confidence in the recovery phase.

In the last dimension, spiritual influence, after being confirmed with COVID-19, the survivors believe more in God, that every problem has been a destiny from God, therefore, needs to be through positively. During the self-isolation period, the survivors increase worship by praying, remembering God, and reciting the Qur'an, enhancing their spirituality.

Optimism is one-factor influencing resilience (Reivich & Shatte, 2002). Optimism is an individual condition in which they are hopeful and confident about the future and successful outcome of future conditions. Optimism will enhance the ability to create positive thinking among COVID-19 survivors to live better lives.

Another factor that can affect resilience is social support. Social support will enhance the resilience of COVID-19 survivors by experiencing positive emotions (Karadag et al., 2019). Social support is a protective factor when individuals face stress and turn to resilience (Ruisoto et al., 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, social support is vital for individual well-being and resilience when going through the problem (Wu et al., 2020). The presence of others helps individuals face difficulties in life (Zaki & Williams, 2013).

Resilience is important for individuals, especially in adversity, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the role of optimism and social support on resilience among COVID-19 survivors. Previous studies on resilience have been conducted in non-pandemic situation. Hence this study contributes to the understanding factors influencing on resilience in the pandemic.

Method

Research design

A quantitative method with a cross sectional was applied in this study. In this study, correlational design was conducted to explore the role of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Participants

The population of this study was the COVID-19 survivors living in the Bantul district, Special Region of Yogyakarta. 150 COVID-19 survivors were chosen as the sample in this study with cluster random sampling.

Measurement

Data collection was conducted with three scales. The Indonesian version of the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (Connor & Davidson, 2003) was used to collect data on resilience. While the Indonesian version of the Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R) (Scheier et al., 1994) was applied to collect data on optimism. Whereas social support has been measured with the Indonesian version of Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Zimet et al., 1988).

Data Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was applied to analyze the data with SPSS 16.0 for Windows. Based on the multiple regression results, the role of each independent variable on the dependent variable will be known.

Results

The results from multiple regression analysis in the Table 1 show that optimism and social support have a significant role in resilience among the COVID-19 survivors living in the Bantul district, Special Region of Yogyakarta (F= 17,230; p < 0,01).

Table 1.
Multiple Regression Results

Variable	R	F	p
Optimism and social support on resilience	0,436	17,230	0,000

Table 2 shows the results of the partial correlation between each independent variables on resilience. By controlling social support, there is a significant positive correlation between optimism and resilience among COVID-19 survivors (r=0,322; p=0,000). At the same time, by controlling optimism, there is a positive significant relationship between social support with resilience among the COVID-19 survivors (r=0,373; p=0,000).

Table 2.
Partial Correlation Results

Variable	Partial correlation (r)	p
Optimism on resilience by controlling social support	0,322	0,000
Social support on resilience by controlling optimism	0,373	0,000

Discussion

Becoming a COVID-19 survivor is challenging for individuals; therefore, resilience is needed to live better life. COVID-19 survivors faced problems coming both internally and externally. In this condition, optimism plays a significant role in enhancing resilience among COVID-19 survivors. Individuals with optimism believe they can overcome problems with positive outcomes. At the same time, social support also plays an important role in resilience. The presence of others helps COVID-19 survivors face many challenges transitioning from patient to survivor. Social support provides a positive effect for COVID-19 survivors. This study's results align with the previous study that optimism and social support have a significant role in resilience, with the contribution of social support on resilience slightly higher than that of optimism (Dawson & Pooley, 2013).

Specifically, by controlling social support, there is a significant positive correlation between optimism and resilience among COVID-19 survivors. The higher optimism, the higher resilience will be, and vice versa. The COVID-19 survivors with high optimism tend to be calm in making decisions, positively accept adversity, and are stronger in living life. Optimism enforces resilience by using individual past conditions as the source of resilience to face adversity (Yoga, Sofiah, dan Prasetyo, 2022).

At the same time, by controlling optimism, there is a positive significant relationship between social support with resilience among the COVID-19 survivors. The higher social support they get, the higher their resilience will be, and vice versa. A previous study found in an adversity condition, the presence of others, such as family and friend, is needed; therefore, individuals tend to reconnect with them (Peck et al., 2002). Social support, including from family members, enhances an individual's coping with problems. Therefore, social support as an external factor as well as optimism as an internal factor, strengthens resilience.

This study's results align with the theory that resilience can be achieved when individuals positively accept changes and establish secure relationships with others (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Optimistic individuals face adversity through a positive lens, as a process of self-development that will result in positive overcome in the future and as an experience worth getting. Optimism is a belief to get a positive outcome in the future (Scheier & Carver, 2002). Even though optimism and social support have a positive role on resilience, this study results show the contribution of social support on resilience among COVID-19 survivors is higher than optimism. Social support directly and indirectly affects resilience (Sarafino & Smith, 2011).

This study has limitations in data collection. The respondents of this study prefer to fill out printed questionnaires than the online form. Therefore, during the pandemic COVID-19, the data collection was conducted through an individual face-to-face meeting. This condition needs a longer time to collect the data.

Conclusion

The resilience, which is needed in facing an adversity condition, has been influenced by optimism and social support. Among the COVID-19 survivors living in the Bantul district, Special Region of Yogyakarta, the contribution of social support to resilience is higher than that of optimism. Therefore, to enhance resilience, individuals need to be optimistic and build a social network as a source of support.

Acknowledgement

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