

MENTAL HEALTH RESILIENCE OF MOTHERS CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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Abstract

Families with children who have special needs encounter intricate difficulties in providing care and assistance to their children. The psychological well-being of mothers who provide care for children with special needs is a significant area of concern, given the pivotal role they play in the child's care and overall growth. The objective of this study is to comprehend the psychological fortitude of moms who breastfeed infants with special needs in Indonesia. In this study, a qualitative research methodology is employed, utilizing in-depth interview approaches to gather data from mothers who have children with special needs. The empirical evidence indicates that the resilience levels of these mothers exhibit considerable variation. Resilience is influenced by various elements, such as social support, awareness of the child's illness, and the capacity to cope with stress. These mothers exhibit resilience and the capacity to recover from daily demands and hardships. They depend on familial support, religious faith, companionship, and community, and cultivate efficient mechanisms for managing challenges. Despite experiencing significant levels of stress, these mothers demonstrate unwavering dedication to ensuring optimal care for their children.

Keywords: Caregiver, Health Communication, Mental Health

Introduction

Children with special needs are a distinct group of children that exhibit unique characteristics that set them apart from the general population (Nida, 2021). Children with special needs, who require specialized schooling and care, exhibit comparatively worse cognitive functioning in the brain when compared to typically developing children. The brain development process in children with special needs occurs in distinct manners, characterized by a limited number of brain cells at the age of 6, a subsequent increase at the age of 14, and a concentration on a single focal point (Putri et al., 2021). The parenting challenges faced by parents with children with special needs arise from the complexities of adapting to various aspects of their child's aberrant development, as well as their lack of knowledge regarding strategies to enhance their child's development (Ali & Ariana, 2022).

Children who have special needs encounter a range of physical, mental, intellectual, and emotional issues, necessitating tailored support to address their unique requirements in their daily activities (Gazadinda et al., 2020). The constraints associated with children with special needs relate to the responsibilities and commitments of parents, particularly mothers, which necessitate consideration in the child's educational and developmental processes. Mothers with strong psychological well-being have a significant impact on their children's development (Purwanti & Kustanti, 2018). Psychological well-being refers to the state in which an individual is able to accept their own strengths and weaknesses, maintain positive relationships with others, exhibit independence, exert control over their surroundings, have a sense of purpose in life, and experience

personal growth. The emotional well-being of women who have children with special needs is intricately linked to the provision of quality education, fostering their growth, and offering enough assistance for these children (Wijaya & Noviyanti, 2024).

Mothers who have children with special needs face a significant likelihood of encountering a range of mental health issues. This includes societal stigma, unfavorable economic circumstances, and inadequate welfare. An unsupportive social environment can contribute to the development of mental health disorders (Nurussyifa et al., 2009). The literature indicates that educational institutions, residential settings, and governmental regulations serve as significant strategic entities and hubs for mental health support for children with special needs and their families (Rahayu et al., 2024).

The consideration of the mental health of moms with children who have special needs is a crucial component that warrants attention. The act of raising a child with special needs might present distinct emotional and physical obstacles. Children who possess exceptional needs necessitate additional attention and tailored care within the realm of parenting. Mothers, in their role as primary caregivers, frequently encounter stress and intricate emotions. Dealing with a particular child's condition often leads to emotional loads, concerns, and feelings of guilt.

The mother, in her role as the primary caregiver for the child, will undoubtedly exert maximum effort and exertion to facilitate the child's growth and development. Nevertheless, providing care for children with impairments or special needs necessitates the implementation of specialized measures. Mothers with children who have special needs may experience a range of emotions, including shock, sadness, worry, and irritation, upon learning of their child's condition. Additionally, they can hold themselves accountable for their child's illness. This illness may be exacerbated by adverse perspectives or societal stigmatization.

Consequently, maternal figures who have children with special needs tend to isolate themselves from their surroundings, leading to a growing disruption in their mental well-being. Numerous studies have been undertaken to examine the resilience of mothers who have children with special needs. These studies encompass various aspects, such as the resilience exhibited by parents with children with special needs during the pandemic (Rahma Kusumandari, 2021), the correlation between gratitude and resilience in mothers with children with special needs (Wijaya & Noviyanti, 2024), and the depiction of resilience among mothers with children with special needs (Muzayyanah, 2023).

Nevertheless, the existing body of literature lacks research examining the impact of familial, social, and societal support on mother resilience. This study has the potential to enhance comprehension regarding the significant impact of social support on navigating the difficulties encountered by mothers who have children with special needs. The proposed study will employ a qualitative research methodology, specifically utilizing a case study technique.

Method

The utilization of a case study technique in qualitative research enables researchers to gain a comprehensive and contextual understanding of phenomena (Taylor, S. J., Bogdan, R., & DeVault, 2015). Qualitative research methods are distinct research methodologies that prioritize a comprehensive comprehension of social, cultural, or psychological phenomena (K yin, 2018). Qualitative methods, unlike quantitative research methods, prioritize meaning, context, and interpretation rather than focusing on numbers and figures (Chase, 2008). The researcher aims to comprehensively examine the mental health resilience of mothers with children who have special needs. The study seeks to gain a thorough understanding of the contextual factors influencing the health conditions of these mothers. Additionally, the researcher seeks to explore the psychological and cultural factors within society that contribute to the development or decline of health resilience among mothers with children who have special needs. Unique. The researchers will analyze the data using

interviews, observations, and literature reviews to get the necessary information for addressing the study questions (Creswell et al., 2003). Researchers seek research informants who possess specific characteristics, such as familiarity and active involvement in mental health resilience cases involving mothers of children with special needs. This includes mothers of children with special needs, husbands of mothers of children with special needs, individuals in close proximity to them, and psychologists who have experience with depression cases. In the context of women who have children with exceptional needs. The obtained data will initially be organized and categorized based on the research inquiries, subsequently validated with relevant theories, and ultimately presented as research findings (Bungin & Burhan, 2009).

Result

Having a kid is a blessing bestowed upon parents and a long-awaited aspiration for every couple. Nevertheless, not all children possess inherent perfection and progress in a typical manner. Certain individuals, commonly referred to as children with special needs, are born with impairments, encompassing both physical and mental disabilities. Informant A, who is the mother of a child with special needs, revealed that I never anticipated having a child with exceptional abilities. I refer to him as a celestial offspring due to the exceptional level of patience required to nurture him. The mother and father of the individual in question appear to possess a lifelong contractual agreement. He will perpetually require my presence as a mother. According to informant B, who is the father of a child with special needs, there was no alternative except to exhibit strength.

The aetiology of a child's exceptional needs might encompass various factors, including genetic predisposition, suboptimal prenatal nutrition, prolonged or preterm birth, and exposure to infectious diseases or toxic substances. Although my child is amiable, his growth was hindered, and as a family, we attributed it to his typical tardiness. At the age of one, he exhibited a lack of responsiveness to calls and was unable to walk, which is a common occurrence in the community.

Limited understanding regarding child development is observed in certain rural regions. Parents and local communities may lack access to current information regarding indicators of typical child development. In rural locations, several traditions and cultures regard variations in children's development as a customary occurrence. They place a higher importance on their daily lives and engage in agricultural work rather than giving special consideration to the development of children. Economic variables and the availability of healthcare services also exert influence. Informant C, a doctor at a hospital in Karawang Regency, clarified that certain rural regions suffer from restricted availability of healthcare facilities and skilled medical professionals. Parents of children with special disabilities frequently encounter distinct obstacles. Individuals are required to surmount emotions of concern, stress, and ambiguity pertaining to their child's medical condition.

Mothers are frequently held responsible by some individuals who believe they lack the ability to adequately care for their children, resulting in their children being born with imperfections. The societal stigma and perspectives contribute to the stress experienced by mothers of children with special needs. There are a range of public perspectives concerning children with special needs. Some individuals embrace their presence through behaviors such as socializing and showing concern, while others respond in a negative manner. Several perspectives prevalent in society encompass:

1. Social disapproval and errors: Occasionally, individuals perceive infirmities in others as a manifestation of sin or unfortunate circumstances brought about by the person in question, or even their parents or descendants.
2. Social Challenges: Certain individuals may attribute blame to the mother or family of a kid with special needs due to concerns that they may exacerbate the social circumstances or the family unit.

3. Insufficient comprehension: The presence of stigma and a lack of awareness regarding exceptional needs might result in a pessimistic perception of children with special needs.

Children who possess exceptional needs have distinct obstacles when it comes to communication. Mothers who have children with special needs frequently encounter a multifaceted communication experience characterized by a range of emotions, obstacles, and moments of joy. Many mothers frequently experience a sense of pride and enthusiasm while engaging in communication with children who have special needs. They embrace children in their current state, value every small advancement, and strive to comprehend the most effective methods of communication with their children. This requires the virtues of patience, affection, and unwavering assistance.

Children who have special needs encounter challenges when it comes to verbal communication and comprehension of language. Mothers should exhibit patience and ingenuity when seeking methods to engage in communication with their children. It is frequently important to employ sign language, visual aids, or assistive communication technology.

Certain children with special needs have challenges when it comes to engaging in social interactions. Mothers may have feelings of sadness or concern due to their child's challenges in interpersonal communication and adherence to societal expectations. Nevertheless, numerous mothers employ strategies to broaden their child's social network by participating in support groups and engaging in inclusive activities. Mothers encounter emotions of bereavement due to the distinctiveness of their offspring in comparison to their peers.

Women also express concerns about the future prospects of their offspring, encompassing aspects such as education, career, and autonomy. When addressing this issue, it is crucial to have assistance from family, friends, and specialists. Notwithstanding the difficulties, numerous moms perceive the act of engaging with children with special needs as a chance to acquire knowledge and develop. They actively pursue knowledge, engage in conversations with specialists, and exchange experiences with individuals facing similar circumstances. This enhances individuals' comprehension of communication and caters to their child's requirements.

The interaction between mothers and children with special needs is a vibrant and diverse experience. Mothers can facilitate the development and realization of their children's maximum capabilities through assistance, affection, and tenacity.

Providing care for a child with special needs is a complex and emotionally charged endeavour. This event might pose challenges and deplete the energies of a mother. Mothers frequently experience a sense of disorientation due to the distinctiveness of their children. Parents observe their kid's peers achieve developmental milestones, yet their child with special needs may experience delays or fail to meet them altogether. These emotions can be highly distressing and induce a sense of seclusion in moms.

Mothers frequently express concern regarding the future prospects of children with special needs. Will their offspring attain self-reliance? Is it possible for them to lead content and efficient lives? Informant E, a mother with special needs, noted that these questions persistently trouble the mother's thoughts and can lead to continued concern. Children with particular disabilities may encounter challenges in verbal communication or comprehension of language. Mothers should exhibit patience and ingenuity when seeking methods to engage in communication with their children. This phenomenon can potentially elicit feelings of irritation and fatigue. Mothers encounter societal stigmatization and pervasive condemnation.

Certain individuals may lack comprehension of the circumstances faced by children with special needs, leading them to perceive moms as inadequate in their caregiving responsibilities. This can be quite distressing and elicit feelings of marginalization among mothers. Mothers of children

with special needs frequently encounter difficulties in obtaining the necessary services and assistance. Obstacles such as bureaucratic processes, financial burdens, and limited comprehension by others might impede the provision of optimal care for one's child. Despite encountering several obstacles, numerous women who have children with exceptional disabilities exhibit resilience and a profound sense of affection. They endeavour to offer optimal care for their children, despite the prevalence of adverse encounters.

Discussion

To effectively manage stress and challenges and adapt to change in a constructive manner. Parents of children with special needs must cultivate resilience in order to effectively confront daily obstacles. The key to assisting parents of children with special needs in confronting daily problems lies in their resilience. Parents can cultivate robust mental resilience through acceptance, education, social support, flexibility, self-care, and positive expectations (Djap et al., 2021). Resilience refers to an individual's ability to effectively adjust to adverse or challenging circumstances. Resilience refers to an individual's capacity to promptly recover from and surmount challenging and demanding circumstances by leveraging their expertise and demonstrating positive and adaptable responses to changes resulting from experience, which is characterized by a high level of pressure (Fereidouni et al., 2021).

Several crucial elements of resilience encompass:

1. **Emotions and Emotional Regulation:** The capacity to maintain composure and emotional mastery throughout challenging circumstances.
2. **Optimism and Confidence:** Recognizing the dynamic nature of life and possessing the self-assurance to sustain an optimistic perspective.
3. **Problem-Solving Proficiency:** Capable of surmounting challenges and perceiving events as chances for growth and knowledge acquisition.
4. **Cognitive Resilience:** Capable of sustaining psychological equilibrium when confronted with stressors.

Maternal mental health is greatly enhanced by resilience (Dey & Amponsah, 2020). The following are a few advantages:

1. Resilience plays a crucial role in mitigating the likelihood of developing mental disorders, including but not limited to stress, sadness, and anxiety.
2. **Enhanced Resilience:** Mothers with a high level of resilience exhibit a quicker recovery from failure and unpleasant situations.
3. The ability to adapt to life changes is facilitated by resilience, enabling women to swiftly adjust to both favorable and unfavorable circumstances.

Resilience is a crucial factor in addressing daily obstacles and stress within the realm of maternal health. Mothers who possess this capability can exhibit greater resilience when confronted with change and triumph over challenging circumstances.

The correlation between maternal mental health resilience and family communication is significant. The subsequent elements exemplify the correlation between the two:

1. **Family Commitment:** The dedication exhibited by family members in providing support and fostering mutual understanding serves to enhance the resilience of the mother.
2. Establishing transparent communication and a dedication to cultivating constructive emotional connections can effectively mitigate the likelihood of developing mental problems.

The provision of emotional support to the mother is facilitated by effective communication within the family unit facilitates emotional support for the mother. The resilience of moms is enhanced when they perceive support and understanding from their family members. The ability to adapt to change is facilitated by effective communication, enabling moms to swiftly adjust to various life changes, encompassing both favorable and unfavorable circumstances (Alsa et al., 2021).

Effective communication between families can assist moms in managing stress and effectively confronting daily obstacles. Effective communication and reciprocal assistance within the family are crucial in enhancing the mother's ability to cope with challenges and preserving her psychological well-being. The absence of familial support can exert a detrimental influence on an individual's overall state of well-being. Here are some potential dangers that may arise:

1. The absence of effective communication and emotional expression within familial relationships might heighten the susceptibility to mental health conditions, including but not limited to sadness, anxiety, and stress. Family social support can alleviate emotional strain and foster a feeling of safety.
2. Social Isolation: In the absence of familial assistance, an individual may experience social isolation. Isolation has the potential to exacerbate both mental and physical health concerns.
3. Financial Instability: The presence of family assistance frequently influences financial circumstances. In the absence of such assistance, individuals may have challenges when confronted with financial troubles.
4. The impact of family support on physical health is especially noteworthy. In the absence of assistance, an individual may encounter challenges in adhering to a nutritious diet, effectively handling stress, and coping with disease. Hence, it is imperative to establish and sustain favorable familial connections in order to mitigate these potential hazards.

Conclusion

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