

## PATIENCE IN REDUCING WORKING MOTHER'S STRESS DURING PANDEMIC OF COVID-19

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### ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of Covid 19 pandemic that has been going on since 2020 has brought changes in our society, including the demands put on working mother that needs to help with household needs and working as employee as well. This study was conducted to examine the effect of patience on working mother's stress level during the Covid 19 pandemic. The sampling techniques used was non-probability sampling with total respondents of 244 working mothers. This research used the measure of patience based on Islamic literature review that was developed by the author. Using Perceived Stress Questionnaire to measure stress, the results showed a significant effect of patience on stress by 9% with regression coefficient  $\beta = -.387$  ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Keywords:** Patience, Stress, Pandemic, Working Mother

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### INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought many changes to the social fabric of Indonesian society. This disease requires humans to keep their distance to avoid viruses. This new habit causes various changes in life. To prevent and overcome this condition, the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture initiated policies related to social restrictions, such as working from home (WFH), and school from home system. These became a new routine for society, moving from real life interaction into online activities (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020).

Before the Covid-19 pandemic era, data showed that working mothers compensated their absence from children's activities after working hours and during weekend. However, due to government regulation to dismiss working from office and the home learning system, working mothers must be able to multitask between fulfilling

their children needs (Khairat & Junaidi, 2022), helping them with their school (Citra & Arthani, 2020), while also carrying out their responsibilities as an employee (Kusumastuti, 2020). Many activities were centralized at home and demand high attentions at many aspects from mother (Darniati Putri et al., 2021). This is a challenge faced by parents to adapt with this new routine where parents are required to play a dual role. This new role might be a burden for parents, especially mother (Helen & Pasca, 2022).

Survey conducted by Save The Children in 37 countries from May until July 2020, involved 17.565 parents and caregivers, found that during the first lockdown, parent's level of stress was on 83,2% and increased into 95,1% on the second lock down (data.tempo.co, 2020). From the data, we can see the high level of stress from parents during the pandemic of Covid-19.

This data are in line with the results of several previous studies regarding the stress experienced by parents, especially mothers during a pandemic. Previous research found that there are three main challenges that became the source of stress for the mother during the pandemic (Rahmah & Khoirunnisa, 2021). These are the burden of caring for children, working with the WFH system, and domestic loads. However, the researchers found that the burden of caring for children was the biggest source of stress for the participants. Other research showed that there is no differences on stress level on mother in age categories and working status (Palupi, 2021).

Stress can cause bad performance at work (Astuti et al., 2021), reduce productivity (Halkos & Bousinakis, 2010), and decrease quality of life (Çelmeçe & Menekay, 2020). Other than that, conflict between work and parenting can cause stress on parents that can evolve parenting stress that lead into children development (Anna, 2015).

Conceptually, there are three approaches to define stress; stimulus model, response model, and transactional model (Gaol, 2016; Harrington, 2013). Similar to a stressor, stimulus model of stress sees stress as a disturbing stimulus generated from the external or internal environment (Harrington, 2013). This definition identify an environment as a stimulus that cause suppressive reaction in individual when exposed to a stressful stimulus. Meanwhile, Barnes & Montefuscio (2011) stated that response model or subjective stress involves an individual appraisal in perceiving an internal or external stimulus as a stressor when it was perceived unpleasant. Transactional model conceptualized by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) combined stimulus and response model. Lazarus and Folkman defined stress as a relationship between individual and environment that is

evaluated as a demand or inability to deal with stressful situation (Gaol, 2016).

To reduce the stress level that can induce the worse several aspects of life, mothers need to find a way to overcome their stress at home. One of which is with patience. Study showed that some people believe religion helps them in overcoming their problems (Tiliouine et al., 2019). Islam, as a way of life, has given protection against mental health problems in providing them with a structure and purpose in life (Hankir et al., 2015).

According to Al-Qur'an 2:177, patience in individual differs in how they are capable, from knowledge and skill, to control every situation and utilize it as a chance to live, work, and worship as best as they can. This concept is especially related to individual's spiritual, material, and financial needs to be successful internally and physically. From the verse, it informs that the foundation of patience is the level of one's faith and piety because they believe that they will get guidance from Allah in finding solutions to overcome the difficulties they are facing. By asking for patience, they will avoid stress because they never complain in accepting all forms of tests from Allah. They remain optimistic and calm, so they have stable state physically and mentally.

Subandi (2011) in his research explained about patience in various religion perspectives that patience has numerous meaning, which are self-control, acceptance as an effort to overcome problem, endurance, feel bitterness without complain, persistence, and strive to achieve goal. Furthermore, in empirical studies, the concept of patience includes self-control (emotions and desires), survive in difficult situations, accept reality, think long, not being reactive or impulsive, calm attitude, willing to wait, forgive, and maintain good social relationships.

Ibn Qoyyim Al-Jauziyyah (in Madarij al-Salikin bayn Manazil Iyyaka Na'budu wa Iyyaka Nasta'in, 2006) divided patience into three types, which are; a) Sabr Wajib (Required Patience), patience in obedience to Allah Swt, b) Sabr Sunnah, patience in doing sunnah, refrain self in facing bad deeds, and c) Sabr Mubah, refrain self from all treatment that are equally good to be done of left and being patience with them.

Mothers whom implementing patience to manage their stress means that they can refrain (dlobith an nafs) from unpleasant things (Al-Ghazali, t.h). Therefore, mothers who have patience are likely to be able to manage their stress in taking care of family, such as guiding children's learning, family health problems and family economic problems. The patience that parents have can always help them to survive and find a way out or the right solution for the problems they are facing.

Considering that there were only few concepts of patience discussed in psychology and Islamic literature, the importance to conduct this study is aimed to explore patience from Islamic perspectives and its interconnection with psychological concept, to develop the concept of patience in the form of a quantitative measuring instrument, and to see the effect of patience in overcoming working mother's stress during the Covid-19 pandemic. The new concept of patience that is used in this research is based on Islamic perspective from The Quran, hadith and literature review. This Islamic patience concept has never been discussed before.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Quantitative study was conducted with the aim of obtaining comprehensive, valid and reliable data about the effect of patience in dealing with stress for working mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The sampling technique used was non probability sampling.

Participants were recruited through announcements on social media channels and the data were collected using google forms as there was still a limitation of social gathering due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Participants of this study were 244 muslim working mothers. There are 43% (105 participants) civil servants, 19% (47 participants) work in private sector, 14% (35 participants) are teacher, 11% (26 participants) are self-employed, and 13% of them work in the sector other than the ones already mentioned. Most of participants are in the age of 40-50 years old, it is 45% of them (109 participants). There are 28% (69 participants) in the age of 31-40 years old, 22% (53 participants) older than 50 years old and 5% (13 participants) are in their 20s. There are 58% (142 participants) in Bachelor degree, 27% (66 participants) have their master degree. Only 2% or 5 participants got their doctoral degree. Due to the research being about working mom, the criteria required is having minimum of one child. Most of the participants, 41% (101 participants) are having 2 children.

Each instrument was tested for validity using the CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) method with the help of LISREL 8.8 software. This study also used multiple regression analysis with SPSS Statistics 26 software to see the effect of patience on stress.

The measure of patience used the scale development as the result of Islamic literature review by Layyinah et al (2023). The patience construct validity test was conducted using a second order model on 27 items with 4 aspects. The criteria for the fit model are the RMSEA value ( $0.05 < RMSEA < 0.08$ ), NFI 0.95, and CFI 0.95 (Brown, 2015). The initial results of the test showed that the results were not fit so that modifications were to obtain a fit model with a Chi-Square value = 708.49, df = 280, P-value = 0.000, RMSEA = 0.079. Testing the significance of all items in measuring the

factor to be measured and whether or not the item needs to be dropped is also carried out with the criteria of an item being considered significant, namely the T-value  $> 1.96$  with a positive coefficient value. Based on this criterion, 27 items significantly measure the patience construct.

To measure Stress of the working mothers, author used the Perceived Stress Questionnaire (Levenstein et al., 1993) and adapted it into Bahasa Indonesia. The PSQ assigned seven scales (Harrassment, Overload, Irritability, Lack of Joy, Fatigue, Worries, Tension) with 30 items. The answers were using four-point rating scale with preference to the period of the last two years of the Covid-19 pandemic era in Indonesia. The validity test of Stress as a construct also conducted using second order model towards 30 items with the criteria described above. Modifications were made to get the value of Chi Square = 771.91,  $df = 350$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.070$ ,  $NFI = 0.95$  and  $CFI = 0.97$  until the model was fit. The results of the item validity test showed that all items on the instrument correctly measure the factor to be measured for both Patience and Stress construct.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The pandemic situation that obliges parents, especially mothers, to play a dual role in domestic responsibilities and work obligations, is a burden for mothers who are not accustomed to this condition. This study showed that 63.5% of working mothers experienced moderate stress and 19.7% experienced high levels of stress. Various factors can be protective factors for mothers in overcoming stress due to this dual role, one of which is patience. Lazarus and Folkman (1984), in the theory of transactional stress, stated that stress is a relationship between the individual and the environment which is perceived by its person as a demand or inability to handle stressful situations. This

theory explains the different levels of stress in each working mother with similar obstacles. The dual role between working and taking care of domestic responsibilities might be interpreted as an inability to regulate one's impulses or as a desire to change one's environment to continue carrying out both duties. Many factors, both internal and external, might aid a working mother in managing stress.

The role of the spouse or other party may or may not assist the mother in adjusting to this dual role. Considering that oneself is the most reliable figure, therefore, the authors try to focus on researching protective factors that support mothers in overcoming stress, one of which is to be patient.

The patience that parents have can always help them to survive and find the right solution to the problem at hand. The results showed that patience has a significant influence on stress in working mothers during the Covid-19 pandemic. Multiple regression analysis was used. From Table 1, it indicates that the patience as predictor explained 9.2% of the variance  $e$  ( $R^2 = .092$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Table 2 showed that that patience significantly predicted stress ( $\beta = -.387$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Individuals who are patient with stressful situations that require adaptation during the Covid-19 pandemic focus more on the process of solving the problem, both with effort and prayer so that the stressful situations not to be perceived as an inability. The results also indicated that the patient variable has a negative influence on direction; the higher the level of patience, the lower the stress endured by the individual, and vice versa. This illustrates that the level of patience in individuals is very significant in managing the stress experienced by working mothers during the pandemic.

Table 1  
*Regression Analysis*

Model	R	R Square	Estimated Std. Error	Sig. F Change
1	.304 <sup>a</sup>	.092	16.81156	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Patience

In conclusion, the hypothesis was denied. Although the percentage number of  $R^2$  is small, but it has significant effects to reduce mother's stress.

Table 2  
*Regression Coefficients*

Model	B	Std. Error	Std. Coefficient s Beta	Sig.
1	69.361	.092	4.047	.000
(Constant)				
Patience	-.387	0.078	.078	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Stress

In line with previous research on role of Islam in psychiatric disorders, Sabry and Vohra (2013) said that meditation that give sense of internal peace and calm which resemblant with patience adds an additional factor that helps in stress elimination. Eddie et al (2019) also found that individual that has higher mindfulness have better physical and mental health.

## CONCLUSION

The dual role of a working mother relatively raises the level of stress in individuals ranging from moderate to high levels. Patience is one of the internal protective factors that help individuals to manage stress by taking care of the household and completing their responsibilities at work.

As resulted from the research, we can conclude that there was a significant effect of patience variable to working mother's stress level during pandemic of Covid-19 of 9.2%

with the remaining percentage being influenced by other variables outside the study.

This study also showed a valid quantitative measurement for patience as a variable in which the theoretical basis of this measuring instrument is based on a combination of Psychology and an Islamic approach.

Being closer to God through worship and relying on all things back to God is man's attempt at entrusting his problems to the Almighty. Showing patience means that we are persistent to face the God-given trials and strive to rise from the problem with an open heart. Individuals, who patiently believe that this hardship came from Allah, will see those oppressive experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic as an opportunity to surrender more to Allah SWT. Researchers hope that the results of this study are able to broaden scientific insights into Psychology in the context of the Islamic religious perspective and can be applied directly by every working mother as a form of self-evaluation to develop greater patience. For further study, it is recommended to test our developed patience variable measurement in a wider population to get more valid and reliable results.

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