

Identify Stress and Coping for Women with Single Parent Status

Hanifa Timur Mawarizka¹, Latipun²

¹(Master of Professional Psychology, Muhammadiyah Malang University, Malang, Indonesia)

²(Master of Professional Psychology, Muhammadiyah Malang University, Malang, Indonesia)

ABSTRACT: *Single parent* is a status attached to women who have experienced a divorce so that they have a dual role to meet the needs of themselves and their children. Often women with *single parent* experience stress due to work and household workloads that must be taken care of on their own. This study aims to determine the causes of stress experienced by *single parent* and also the coping strategies used to overcome this. This research is qualitative with a case study approach. The research subjects consisted of three primary subjects. The data collection technique used in-depth interview techniques to explore in more detail the problems experienced by women with *single parent status*. The results obtained, it can be concluded that the three subjects experienced stress due to limited financial factors and taking care of children alone. Meanwhile *coping* is to worship and establish good social relations as well as social support from family.

Keywords –stress, coping strategies, woman single parent

I. INTRODUCTION

Ideally the family consists of father, mother and children, but due to disharmony, many couples are divorced or one of the partners dies which forces the individual to assume the role of a single parent or *single parent*. Sager [1] said that *single parents* are parents who raise their children alone without the presence, support or responsibility of their husbands. Women with this status have a dual role to meet the needs of themselves and their children. Starting from working, taking care of children, taking care of the house and so on are responsibilities that must be completed independently because children with parents who experience divorce usually live with their mothers [2].

According to Hetherington[3], there are several factors that affect single parent status, including pregnancy before marriage, death of husband or wife, divorce and adoption. For this reason, women with single parent experience stress due to the burden of meeting their daily needs and also playing a role as a father. If stress management is difficult to control, it will affect the psyche itself, such as sadness, anxiety, anger and frustration. In addition to the personal problems experienced by single parent women, they also have to help their children to solve problems in their academic fields and so on. This of course makes psychological stress and problems more complex.

Several studies have revealed that *single parent* experience economic and psychological problems, such as low self-esteem and depression Brody & Douglas[4]. The label of *single parent* on women sometimes also receives a different stigma from society. This is reinforced by research by Broussard et al[5] who conducted a study of 12 *single parent* and concluded that there is still an *internalization of stigma* or negative stigma that considers them low and pathetic because of an insufficient economy. Ahmad [6] examined finances on 521 *single parent* and stated that 34.9% have a low economy, 37% are moderate and only 28% have high finances. For this reason, women with *single parent* experience stress due to the burden of meeting their daily needs and also playing a role as a father.

Previous research conducted by Kim et al [7] on 497 *single mothers* showed the highest level of stress and the use of alcohol frequency (*alcohol used disorder*) of 38.5% was experienced by women with *single mother* than women who still had partners, only 28.6%. Then, Chanda[8] conducted a study to determine the psychological well-being of 30 *single parent* and concluded that the majority of *single parents* experience stress due to unstable financial and emotional problems that have an impact on their psychological well-being. In addition to these problems, they also have to help children to solve problems in their academic fields and so on.

This of course makes psychological stress and problems more complex. Jonathan[9] said that the dynamics of stress in *single parent* also involve the symptoms, sources and responses to stress experienced.

Quoted from Republika.co.id, in the current situation when the COVID-19 pandemic hits, many people are suing for divorce from their partners, one of the factors is the increasingly narrow economic limitations[10]. According to data, in June and July 2020, the number of divorces increased to 57 thousand cases with 80% of divorce lawsuits from women [11]. Moreover, cases of violence, careers of women who are better than their partners and character incompatibility are also the reasons why individuals decide to divorce.

From this discussion, the researcher wants to know how the psychological dynamics and coping women single parents are more prone to stress. The definition of coping itself is an individual's effort to manage a mismatch between demands and resources when he is in a stressful condition, this method is done in various ways, not only to solve the problem but to relieve the pressure felt. of stress coping, namely emotional focused coping which focuses on regulating emotional reactions that arise because of a problem for example by doing positive things such as relaxation, but this strategy is only temporary stress relief while problem focused coping is done through steps to deal with or deal with solve problems directly, for example recognizing the skills possessed by individuals to overcome existing problems[12].

II. METHOD

This type of research is qualitative research. Bogdan and Biklen [13] explained that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of speech or writing and the behavior of the people being observed. Qualitative research aims to gain a general understanding of social reality from the participant's perspective.

The method used in this research using the case study method *is* part of a research methodology whose subject matter requires the author or researcher to be more careful and in-depth in uncovering an individual or group case. Stake[14] said the purpose of case study research is to reveal the characteristics or characteristics contained in the case being studied. The type of this research case study is descriptive where all the conclusions will be described in the form of a description associated with the theory.

The subjects in this study were three single parents who were divorced or due to the death of their husbands. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling. The criteria have previously been determined, namely being a single parent, working and having children who are in school or college. The assessment method in this study is a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews are interviews using guidelines and developing topics through the flow of conversation so that they are not stuck with the text and their use is more flexible.

III. RESULT

SOURCES OF STRESS EXPERIENCED BY *SINGLE PARENT*

Of the three subjects interviewed, there are differences in the sources of stress they feel, as expressed by subject H who feels stress when his child is difficult to manage when he has to take care of the child alone as well as work to meet economic needs, he also told that she had a negative stigma from her neighbors because of her status as a single parent divorced while the second subject, namely subject A, said that the source of stress was due to having children with special needs and also he only worked as a housemaid so that economic limitations were quite felt. Then the third subject is subject N said, the stressors he experienced apart from the economic demands from trading, he also sometimes had to give him extra pocket money for his son who was in college but the child of subject N also had special needs so subject N had to always deliver and pick up to his son's college.

Different from subject H, who is a *single parent* due to divorce, subject A and N are single parents whose husband has died. In more detail, the author quotes the words of each subject as follows:

Subject H

"The stress I feel is when the child is fussy, especially when I have to take care of myself. I also have a family but I don't want to be a burden. I also felt very stressed because my neighbors looked down on my status as a single parent, there were only negative words to me even though I also worked outside of that to meet daily needs and children."

Subject A

"I feel stressed because of economic limitations to make ends meet, especially since my youngest child is not normal (physically), he is also often sick. His older brothers who are already working sometimes give me money if there is more fortune"

Subject N

The thing that makes me stressed is when I have to divide my time to take care of children who are adults but still can't be independent, I have to pick them up everywhere and besides that, I need to trade to meet the needs of myself and my children."

Effects of stress**Subject H**

"If the effects of stress I feel are the dizziest, I've also had the effect of being angry with my children, so when I got home from work I kept calling him, but he didn't come. said (hurt) words that my child shouldn't have heard."

Subject A

"The effect of stress is when I feel a headache, it's hard to sleep and my mind goes all over the place (I can't focus), but I don't always feel that either."

Subject N

"I don't really feel the effects that are too bad, because if I find it difficult, I entertain myself by walking, venting to relatives or playing social media."

Support from the family is the main factor for the subject to stay enthusiastic

The three subjects said that family support became a trigger for them to be enthusiastic in living life, especially when subjects H and N were assisted by their families in financing their children's education.

Subject H

"Alhamdulillah, so far my family has also supported me, and my friends have also given me a lot of good advice, so I don't feel too burdened by the condition as a single parent, although sometimes neighbors have negative views because I am the one who works in the laundry from morning sometimes come home late at night, but I don't care and just continue to live life, the important thing is that I find the money it's lawful because I divorced because of different principles from my ex-husband and also he himself is now married, so I don't expect more also"

Subject A

"In my family, the most frequent support is from my children who continue to encourage me to work. My son always says, "Mama, don't get sick, if you get sick, you won't be able to work, look for money. So as long as I am still able to work, I will do it even though I am old."

Subject N

"I feel grateful to have relatives who still maintain good relations through Whatsapp groups or also meet in person, from there I feel that I have full support from my family, my brother also helps my child's college costs."

Coping with stress with worship

When asked about how each subject copes with stress, it is by worshipping, going to science councils, playing on social media, visiting family homes or taking walks.

Subject H

"The way I deal with stress is by praying because every problem I'm facing must have a solution, even though it's not direct, there is a bright spot. When I draw closer to Allah I feel comfortable, I also meet positive friends, come to the assembly, listen to lectures like that."

Subject A

"I relieve stress by praying, working, attending ta'lim assemblies. If you take it to work like washing clothes, then the stress will go away."

Subject N

"I myself overcome it by visiting relatives who are still in the same city and continue to talk about it and fortunately my brother understands the problems I am facing, sometimes to entertain myself I also play social media or go for walks."

Patience is the wisdom behind subject H's divorce

Of all the subjects interviewed, subject H had time to tell about the lessons that can be learned because of his divorce status. She admitted that after divorcing her ex-husband she learned more to be patient with all the conditions she was in.

Subject H

"The lesson I can take from my status as a single parent is patience because patience means broad, there are no limits and it will also be a gift in the future. I liken this patience to clothes, after finishing ironing there are other clothes, as well as problems, so I learned to be patient. The point is that the problem should not run away from reality, but we will face it."

Educating children alone

Although the subjects can only take care of children alone without the help of a husband figure, they still educate their children well without doing things that have a bad impact on their children's physical or psychological.

Subject H

"The way I educate him is that I can't fully educate, because yes, his life is still a child's world, so what I see seems like my son is intelligent, can accept things easily, so if I'm at home, I turn on the TV or When I was

watching soap operas there was a negative scene, I told you "you can't be like that, right?" Then sometimes at work, I bring my child, it's good to interact with people there, can adapt to people."

Subject N

"As long as I have been a single parent, I have tried to educate my child as best as I can without any negative treatment at all because this is my only child, so I have to be able to give the best for him."

The subject's expectations for the future

At the end of the interview, the writer asked about the hope for the subject and their children in the future. The answers given were also quite diverse, subject H said that his hope was to just live in peace and work for his child's future, while subject A hoped that in the future he would always be given health to be able to work optimally in order to be able to provide for his child. Then subject N hopes that his only child who also has special needs can go to college smoothly and marry his son to a man who can understand his daughter's condition.

Subject H

"My future expectations are not too high, the point is I just live quietly, have enough for daily needs, work for the future of my children and be grateful for the blessings that exist."

Subject A

"I just hope that I can always be given health so that I can work, earn a living for my last child because he can be said to be abnormal, so I also hope that my child doesn't recur again."

Subject N

"In the future, I hope that my only child who is currently studying will be given fluency even though I have to always pick up and drop off, but that's okay, I'm willing to sacrifice and soon she will get a job, can marry the right man."

IV. DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews with the three subjects, it can be said that the stress experienced is based on taking care of children without the help of others and financial factors for the necessities of life. This is in line with the theory put forward by Hashim[15], where daily tasks such as caring for children and domestic obligations represent categories of sources of stress related to the daily functions of single parents. In addition, the life of a mother as a single parent is more vulnerable to stress in daily life than mothers who have husbands or partners. Research conducted by Faizah & Azian[16] also concluded that the problems that often afflict *single parents* are economic, emotional, psychological problems, social stigma and family issues. What's more, the stress experienced by the subject has an impact on physical responses such as dizziness, headaches and difficulty sleeping. Therefore, the need for coping with individual single parents.

If further reviewed, the three subjects overcome stress through emotional focused coping to regulate emotional reactions that arise due to a problem by means of worship such as praying, reading the Koran, dhikr, visiting the assembly, interacting with the social environment and working. This is supported by research conducted by Meier et al [17] which concluded that *single parents* who work have lower levels of stress and sadness than *single parents* who do not work. In addition, the level of religiosity or worship such as praying, reading the Koran, dhikr and visiting the assembly and interacting with the social environment is also an alternative for *single parent* to reduce the stress they feel. Research conducted by Hasanah shows that worship is effective in reducing psycho-physiological reactions to stress, even being able to have strong, calm, patient and optimistic self-control [18].

Then, family support from the three subjects also went well because it was this support that made *single parents* tough in living life and could prevent negative influences that could lead to stress [19]. Aswana[20] also said that the function of affection and socialization in *single parent* families does not just disappear but can be replaced by functions performed by the extended family. According to Gottlieb [21] social support is also beneficial for individuals because they can get advice or pleasant impressions that are useful in solving problems.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of these interviews, it can be concluded that the three single parent women who were sampled experienced stress due to limited financial factors and took care of children alone. Meanwhile *coping* is to worship, work and establish good social relations as well as social support from family.

REFERENCES

- [1] S. Primayuni, "Kondisi Kehidupan Wanita Single Parent," *SCHOULID Indones. J. Sch. Couns.*, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 17, 2018, doi: 10.23916/08425011.
- [2] M. S. ÖZTÜRK and A. AYDINER BOYLU, "Investigation of Economic Activities of Single Parent Families," *Sosyoekonomi*, vol. 23, no. 25, 2015, doi: 10.17233/se.13693.
- [3] E. . Hetherington, *Coping With Divorce, Single Parenting, and Remarriage: A Risk and Resiliency Perspective*. New York: Psychology Press. New York: Psychology Press, 1999.
- [4] L. Gading MSocSc, "European Journal of Special Education Research THE ROLES OF SINGLE PARENT," vol. 4, pp. 143–161, 2019, doi: 10.5281/zenodo.3379059.
- [5] C. A. Broussard, A. L. Joseph, and M. Thompson, "Stressors and Coping Strategies Used by Single Mothers Living in Poverty," *Affil. - J. Women Soc. Work*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 190–204, 2012, doi: 10.1177/0886109912443884.
- [6] S. Y. Ahmad, "Self-coping mechanism of single mothers to achieve financial security in life," *Int. J. Stud. Child. Women, Elder. Disabled*, vol. 3, pp. 91–102, 2018.
- [7] G. E. Kim, H. Y. Choi, and E. J. Kim, "Impact of economic problems on depression in single mothers: A comparative study with married women," *PLoS One*, vol. 13, no. 8, pp. 1–14, 2018, doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0203004.
- [8] K. Chanda, "Stress and Psychological Well-Being among Single Parents," *Int. J. Pure Appl. Biosci.*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 226–232, 2018, doi: 10.18782/2320-7051.6692.
- [9] D. E. Ximenes Dos Reis, E. R. Surjaningrum, and I. Herdiana, "Analisis Analisis Strategi Coping Stres pada Ibu Single Parent Setelah Ditinggal Suami: Literatur Sistemik Review," *J. Educ. Hum. Soc. Sci.*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 1378–1388, 2021, doi: 10.34007/jehss.v3i3.570.
- [10] F. Yolandha, "Perceraian karena Sulit Ekonomi Saat Pandemi Bukan Solusi," *republika.co.id*, 2020. <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/qfv07t370/perceraian-karena-sulit-ekonomi-saat-pandemi-bukan-solusi>.
- [11] R. Halidi, "Penyebab Tingginya Angka Perceraian di Indonesia Saat Pandemi Covid-19," *suara.com*, 2020. <https://www.suara.com/lifestyle/2020/08/31/182022/penyebab-tingginya-angka-perceraian-di-indonesia-saat-pendemi-covid-19>.
- [12] S. Lazarus, R & Folkman, *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. New York: Springer International Publishing, 1984.
- [13] I. Sudrajat, D & Moha, "Ragam Peenelitian Kualitatif," 2019. doi: <https://doi.org/10.31227/osf.io/jaxbf>.
- [14] R. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*. New York: Sage Publications, 1995.
- [15] I. H. Mohd Hashim, A. A. Azmawati, and N. Endut, "Stress, Roles and Responsibilities of Single Mothers in Malaysia," *SHS Web Conf.*, vol. 18, no. 2003, p. 03003, 2015, doi: 10.1051/shsconf/20151803003.
- [16] A. . Faizah, A.G & Azian, "Profile of Single Mother in Southern Malaysia and Issues Afflicting Their Lives," *Br. J. Arts Soc. Sci.*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2013.
- [17] A. Meier, K. Musick, S. Flood, and R. Dunifon, "Mothering Experiences: How Single Parenthood and Employment Structure the Emotional Valence of Parenting," *Demography*, vol. 53, no. 3, pp. 649–674, 2016, doi: 10.1007/s13524-016-0474-x.
- [18] M. Hasanah, "Stres dan solusinya dalam perspektif psikologi dan islam," *J. Ummul Qura*, vol. XIII, no. 1, pp. 104–116, 2019.
- [19] A. T. Pitasari and R. Cahyono, "Coping pada Ibu yang Berperan Sebagai Orangtua Tunggal Pasca Kematian Suami," *J. Psikol. Pendidik. dan Perkemb.*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 37–41, 2014.
- [20] R. B. Yasa and Fatmawati, "Persepsi keberfungsian keluarga bagi anak dari keluarga single parent," *J. Edukasi J. Bimbing. Konseling*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 167–180, 2018.
- [21] P. S. P. Putra and L. K. P. A. Susilawati, "Hubungan Antara Dukungan Sosial Dan Self Efficacy Dengan Tingkat Stres Pada Perawat Di Rumah Sakit Umum Pusat Sanglah," *J. Psikol. Udayana*, vol. 5, no. 01, p. 145, 2018, doi: 10.24843/jpu.2018.v05.i01.p14.