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Social Support, Maternal Stress, and Social-Emotional Development of Preschool Children among Working Mothers' Family during COVID-19

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many changes that have forced working mothers to adapt. This is more challenging if working mothers have preschool children. This study aimed to analyze the effect of social support and maternal stress on the social-emotional development of preschool children among working mothers' families during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study involved 70 mothers who worked formally or informally, had children aged 4-6 years, came from intact families, and were domiciled in DKI Jakarta and West Java. Sample selection was made by voluntary sampling, and data were collected self-administered using an online questionnaire. Based on the independent sample T-test, there was no significant difference between formal and informal working mothers on social support, maternal stress, and children's social development. The regression test results showed that social support could improve children's social-emotional development. Conversely, maternal stress can reduce children's social-emotional development. Another finding is that girls have better social-emotional development than boys. The study results have implications that working mothers must have good stress management and coping strategies so that children's social development can develop properly.

Keywords: maternal stress, preschool children, social-emotional development, social support, working mothers

Abstrak

Pandemi COVID-19 menyebabkan ibu bekerja harus menyesuaikan diri mengingat banyak hal yang berubah selama pandemi. Hal tersebut semakin menantang jika ibu bekerja memiliki anak prasekolah Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh dukungan sosial dan stres ibu terhadap perkembangan sosial emosi anak prasekolah pada keluarga dengan ibu bekerja selama pandemi COVID-19. Penelitian ini melibatkan 70 ibu bekerja formal dan informal yang memiliki anak usia 4-6 tahun, berasal dari keluarga utuh, dan berdomisili di Provinsi DKI Jakarta dan Jawa Barat dengan teknik *voluntary sampling* dan dikumpulkan secara *self-administered* melalui kuesioner *online.* Berdasarkan hasil uji beda (*independent sample T-Test)*, tidak ada perbedaan yang signifikan antara ibu bekerja formal dan informal pada dukungan sosial, stres ibu, dan perkembangan sosial anak. Hasil uji regresi menunjukkan bahwa dukungan sosial dapat meningkatkan perkembangan sosial emosional anak. Sebaliknya, stres ibu dapat menurunkan perkembangan sosial-emosional anak. Temuan lainnya yaitu anak perempuan memiliki perkembangan sosial-emosional yang lebih baik daripada anak laki-laki. Hasil penelitian memiliki implikasi bahwa ibu bekerja harus memiliki manajemen stres dan strategi koping yang baik agar perkembangan sosial anak dapat berkembang dengan baik.

Kata kunci: anak usia prasekolah, dukungan sosial, ibu bekerja, perkembangan sosial emosi, stres ibu

Introduction

Coronavirus Disease 2019, is a new outbreak caused by the Sars-CoV-2 virus that has never been recognized in humans before (Ministry of Health, 2020). The impact of this epidemic is working system changed into *work from home* (WFH) in organizations by prohibiting employees from working in offices and gathering in a room to prevent the spread of COVID-19. That work system has not yet become a work culture in Indonesia (Mustajab et al., 2020). Students are also required to conduct online learning from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This adds to the role of working mothers because they have to guide their children to study at home.

Based on Sakernas data as of February 2020 (BPS, 2020), Indonesia's Female Labor Force Participation Rate (TPAK) is 54.56 percent, an increase of 2.67 percent compared to August 2019. This shows that women aged 15 years and over are entering the workforce. Women participate in the force because of their `will or to help the family economy (Midawati, 2016). Like the work sector occupied by working people, working mothers can also be distinguished based on the industry of work, namely mothers who work in the formal and informal sectors. The definition of formal workers is the operational status of mothers in the permanent work sector, such as permanent laborers and employees. At the same time, informal is the active status of mothers working alone and free employees such as in the agricultural/non-agricultural sector (BPS, 2020). The dual roles borne by working mothers can cause work-family imbalances or work-family conflicts. The problems faced by working mothers due to work-family imbalances can trigger stress (Shepherd-Banigan et al., 2016). Stress experienced by working mothers is not only work stress but also parenting stress.

According to Östberg and Hagekull (2000), high social support can reduce parenting stress. Social support is supportive behavior provided by individuals or communities in social networks by protecting individuals from stressful life events (Pocnet et al., 2016). Stress on working mothers can increase during the COVID-19 pandemic, which causes mothers to work from home while caring for and educating their children, so the mother's domestic and public roles will be carried out simultaneously at one time and place. This becomes a challenge if working mothers have preschool children because preschool children are in the golden age.

The golden age period that children go through in the preschool age is an opportunity to maximize children's growth and development, one of which is their social-emotional development. Social-emotional development in preschoolers is needed for school readiness which includes self-confidence, capacity to develop positive relationships with peers and adults, concentration and persistence in doing tasks, ability to communicate emotions effectively, ability to hear instructions and pay attention, and able to solve social problems (Shonkoff & Philips, 2000).

Based on the 2018 Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) research results, around 30.1 percent of preschool children have social-emotional problems that hurt school development and readiness (Kemkes, 2018). Therefore, children need to get Early Childhood Education (ECED) services. ECED helps children develop physical and motor skills, intelligence, social-emotional, language, and communication skills. However, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, some preschool-aged children are hampered from attending ECED. Tabi'in's research (2020) shows that preschool children in the study experienced problems when staying at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, namely stress, tantrums, not being independent, feeling more sensitive, and behavioral disorders.

According to research by Safarina, Amalia, and Dewi (2021), mothers experience stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, especially activities related to online schools and health risks when working outside the home. Susilowati and Azzasyofia (2020) found that 71.88 percent of mothers experienced high s of stress. Based on research by Rahmah and Khoirunnisa (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic causes three sources of stress for working mothers who have dual roles, namely taking care of children, working from home, and housework or domestic work.

During the pandemic, working mothers who have preschool children need social support from their husbands, friends, and extended family because the sources of stress experienced by working mothers are increasing, so stress tends to increase. Based on Slykerman et al. (2005), maternal stress and the lack of social support received by the mother during pregnancy were significantly associated with the low score on the child's intelligence test. In addition, there is evidence in some children that good maternal social support can reduce the negative impact of maternal stress on children's cognitive development. Therefore, the influence of social support and maternal stress on children's social-emotional development is a crucial part to be studied, especially for working mothers who have preschool-age children, mainly because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in mothers working in new situations.

The grand theory used as a conceptual approach in this research is the structural-functional theory. Based on the structural-functional approach, each member has duties and roles, including mothers. However, when mothers work, the family structure changes because working mothers have multiple functions, so they do play not only a domestic role but also a public role. Meanwhile, Bronfenbrenner's human ecology theory is used as a middle theory. The ecological theory sees child development through environmental systems, namely microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The microsystem includes the direct interaction of children with the family environment. The state of the home environment can affect children's behavior because the subsystems influence each other (Mujahidah, 2015). The mesosystem can include parent-teacher interactions during school from home. The exosystem in ecological theory consists of the environment where mothers work, while the chronosystem in this study is the COVID-19 pandemic.

The difference in this study from Slykerman et al. (2005) is that the subject studied is working children grow to preschool age. In addition, this research was also conducted mothers who have preschool-aged children, while Slykerman et al., examines mothers who are pregnant until their birth during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide empirical evidence about how social support and stress of working mothers affect the social-emotional development of preschoolers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study hypothesizes that family characteristics, child characteristics, social support, and maternal stress influence children's social-emotional development.

Methods

Participants

This study used a quantitative approach with an explanatory study design to test the hypotheses that have been prepared. This research was conducted purposively in DKI Jakarta and West Java areas because based on data on the distribution of cases per province as of February 2021, DKI Jakarta and West Java had the highest percentages of

25.2 percent and 14.2 percent, with a total of 437,872 points (Satgas COVID-19, 2021). This study includes married working mothers with preschool children aged 4-6. The sampling technique was carried out purposively with a voluntary sampling technique due to the limitations of the pandemic situation, which did not allow data collection by direct interviews, but online. Examples in this study were 70 working mothers who had preschool-aged children. If working mothers have more than one preschool child, the first child in preschool is measured. Data were collected from late April 2021 to mid-July 2021.

Measurement

Family characteristics include the age of the father and mother, the mother's type of job, the length of education of the father and the mother, the income of the father and mother, and the income of other family members who live in the same house, the length of the mother's working hours in one week, and the mother who has done WFH or not. Characteristics of children include age and sex of children. Social support is the mother's perception of the support or assistance provided by her husband, extended family, and friends when they are in need or are in a stressful situation. The social support questionnaire uses the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support questionnaire developed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley (1988). Social support includes social support from particular people, family, and friends, with Cronbach's alpha value of 0.834. The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions and scored 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, and 4=strongly agree.

Maternal stress is the difficulty and burden experienced by working mothers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as caring for preschool-age children. Maternal stress was measured using the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-42) instrument developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995) with 42 questions. This study only uses the stress dimension on the instrument to measure stress, which consists of 13 questions. The instrument uses a Likert scale with 4 answer choices, namely 0 = never, 1 = sometimes, 2 = often, and 3 = always. The stress indicator on the instrument consists of nine (9) indicators, namely irritation at small things, overreaction, difficulty relaxing, wasted energy, impatience, annoying to others, difficulty tolerating distractions, tension, and anxiety. The assessment itself is divided into five levels, namely normal (0-14), mild (15-18), moderate (19-25), severe (26-33), and very severe (≥34). Cronbach's alpha value of this instrument is 0.932.

Social-emotional development is one aspect of the development of preschool-aged children that must be achieved by the stages of development consisting of dimensions of social competence and emotional maturity. The "Early Development Instrument" questionnaire developed by Janus and Offord (2007) measured children's social-emotional development. The questionnaire measures early childhood development based on several dimensions: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language, and cognitive development, as well as communication skills and general knowledge. The questionnaire only took two dimensions, social competence, and emotional maturity, because this study only measured preschoolers' social-emotional development. The questionnaire initially consisted of 55 questions, but eight items were invalid, so they were deleted. Therefore, the instrument is divided into 47 questions with answer choices of 1=almost never shown at home, 2=rarely demonstrated at home, 3=often demonstrated at home, and 4=almost always shown at home. The value of Cronbach's alpha of this instrument is 0.918.

Analysis

The data was processed using descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. The descriptive analysis includes number, percentage, mean value, standard deviation, minimum value, and maximum value. Descriptive analysis was used to identify family characteristics (age of wife and husband, mother's type of job, wife's and husband's occupation, wife's and husband's income, income of other family members in the same house, mother's experience with WFH, mother's WFH condition, mother's working hours per week), child characteristics (sex and age of children), social support, stress, and social-emotional development of preschool children.

The social support and social-emotional development variables index scores were categorized into low, medium, and high. The categorization is based on the cutoff categorization by Sunarti et al. (2005) that <60 is categorized as low, 60-79 is classified as moderate, and 80 is ranked as high. Meanwhile, maternal stress variables were categorized into five, namely normal stress (0-14), mild (15-18), moderate (19-25), severe (26-33), and very severe (≥34). The categorization is based on the DASS-42 instrument (Lovibond & Lovibond 1995).

Inferential statistical analysis was carried out, namely the independent sample T-Test, which was carried out to find out whether there were differences between the groups of mothers working formally and informally, along with multiple linear regression tests to determine the effect of the variables of family characteristics, social support, maternal stress on the social-emotional development of preschool children. Three variables use a dummy variable regression test, namely the sex of children with provisions of 1 for male and 0 for female, the mother's type of job with requirements of 1 for formal and 0 for informal, and mothers who have done WFH with provisions of 1 for never and 0 for never.

Findings

Family and Children Characteristics

The descriptive test results showed that most mothers working formally and informally in this study were in the DKI Jakarta area, namely 55.7 percent, followed by Bekasi City with as much as 14.3 percent and Bogor with as much as 11.4 percent. Seven out of ten families are a small families with a maximum of 4 family members. The age of preschool children in the study was 38.6 percent aged six years, followed by four years old at 32.9 percent, and finally five years old at 28.6 percent. 51.4 percent of the male preschoolers, while 48.6 percent of the girls.

The working mothers in this study were 34.27 years old on average. Regarding education, the number of working mothers who completed high school and undergraduate education is almost the same, each as many as two out of five mothers. More than half of mothers work in the formal sector, and nearly half of the mothers work in the informal sector. In addition, more than a third of mothers who work as traders dominate in the informal sector, while in the formal sector, almost a third of mothers work as BUMN employees. Furthermore, half of the husbands have jobs as private employees. Mothers work an average of 41.3 hours a week, with an average income of IDR 4,925,000.00. During the COVID-19 pandemic, almost four out of five majority mothers have done WFH, and nearly half of working mothers are currently working from home as well as going to the office.

Social Support

Social support consists of dimensions of extended family, special people or husbands, and friends. Based on the study's results in Table 1, more than half of working mothers have social support in the medium category. The average index value is 64.24. More than half of extended family and husband dimensions are in the moderate category, while the dimensions of friends are more than half in the low sort. Based on the analysis of the respondent's statement items, 75.7 percent of mothers received the help and emotional support needed from their extended family, 78.6 percent of mothers received help from their friends, 65.7 percent of mothers agreed that their husband is a real source of comfort for them during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents based on the dimensions of social support and type of job

Social Support	Type of Job				Total (n=70)	
	Formal (n=39)		Informal (n=31)			
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total Social Support						
- Low (<60)	12	30.8	9	29.0	21	30
- Moderate (60-79)	23	59.0	18	58.1	41	58.6
- High (≥80)	4	10.3	4	12.9	8	11.4
Total	39	100.0	31	100.0	70	100.0
Min-Max	16.67 – 91.67		47.22 - 100		16.67 – 100	
Mean ± SD	63.10 ± 12.69		65.68 ± 11.42		64.24 ± 12.13	
P-value	0.381					
Husband Social Support						
- Low (<60)	8	20.5	5	161	13	18.6
- Moderate (60-79)	19	48.7	19	61.3	38	54.3
- High (≥80)	12	30.8	7	22.6	19	271
Total	39	100.0	31	100.0	70	100,0
Min-Max	25 - 100		33.33 - 100		25 - 100	
Mean ± SD	70.51 ± 18.32		72.31 ± 16.72		71.30 ± 17.52	
P-value	0.673					
Family Social Support						
- Low (<60)	16	41.0	10	32.3	26	37.1
- Moderate (60-79)	18	46.2	18	58.1	36	51.4
- High (≥80)	5	12.8	3	9.7	8	11.4
Total	39	100.0	31	100.0	70	100.0
Min-Max	0 - 100		33.33 - 100		0 - 100	
Mean ± SD	61.11 ± 18.95		64.24 ± 12.76		62.50 ± 16.46	
P-value	0.433					
Friends Social Support						
- Low (<60)	22	56.4	14	45.2	36	51.4
- Moderate (60-79)	14	35.9	14	45.2	28	40.0
- High (≥80)	3	7.7	3	9.7	6	8.6
Total	39	100.0	31	100.0	70	100.0
Min-Max	16.67 - 91,67		33.33 - 100		16.67 - 100	
Mean ± SD	57.69 ± 14.73		60.48 ± 17.07		58.92 ± 15.75	
P-value	0.466					

Note. (*) significant at p<0.1; (**) significant at p<0.05; (***) significant at p<0.01

Based on the independent sample T-Test results, there is no significant difference between the social support obtained by mothers who work formally and informally, either from their husbands, family, or friends. Even so, social support in every dimension, both husband, extended family, and friends in informal working mothers have a higher average than formal working mothers.

Maternal Stress

Maternal stress in this study was divided into five categories: normal, mild, moderate, severe, and very severe. Based on the study's results in Table 2, half of working mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic had severe and very severe stress, while only one in four mothers had normal stress. In addition, the average value of the maternal stress index is 27.65 and is in the category of severe stress. Analysis of statement items from respondents' answers shows that as many as 72.9 percent of mothers are sometimes angry because of trivial things during the pandemic. In addition, working mothers sometimes find it difficult to relax during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the independent sample T-Test results, the stress of mothers working formally and informally does not have a significant difference (Table 2). Another finding is that more than five out of 10 mothers working formally have severe and very severe stress. In comparison, almost five out of 10 mothers working informally have severe and very severe stress. Even so, the stress on informal working mothers is higher than that of formal working mothers.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents based on maternal stress and type of job

Maternal Stress	Type of Job				Total (n=70)	
	Formal (n=39)		Informal (n=31)			
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Normal (0-14)	10	25.6	8	25.8	18	25.7
Mild (15-18)	3	7.7	5	16.1	8	11.4
Moderate (19-25)	4	10.3	4	12.9	8	11.4
Severe (26-33)	13	33.3	3	9.7	16	22.9
Very severe (≥34)	9	23.1	11	35.5	20	28.6
Total	39	100.0	31	100.0	70	100.0
Min-Max	0 – 53.85		0 - 66,67		0 – 66.67	
Mean ± SD	26.36 ± 13.07		29.28 ± 20.5		27.65 ± 17.03	
p-Value	0.501					

Note: (*) significant at p<0.1; (**) significant at p<0.05; (***) significant at p<0.01

The results of the independent sample T-Test showed that mothers with daughters had very severe stress, more than twice as high as mothers with sons (Table 2). Meanwhile, mothers with sons had more than twice the normal stress as mothers with daughters. Based on the different tests (independent sample T-Test), there was a significant difference (p<0.1) between the stress of working mothers based on the sex of the children. The stress of working mothers with daughters was higher than that of working mothers with sons. Based on the study results, as many as 4 out of 10 working mothers with daughters have very severe stress. Meanwhile, more than 3 out of 10 working mothers with sons have normal stress.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents based on maternal stress and the sex of children

Maternal Stress	Sex of Children				Total (n=70)	
	Boy (n=36)		Girl (n=34)			
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Normal (0-14)	13	36.1	5	14.7	18	257
Mild (15-18)	3	8.3	5	14.7	8	11.4
Moderate (19-25)	6	16.7	2	5.9	8	11.4
Severe (26-33)	8	22.2	8	23.5	16	22.9
Sangat parah (≥34)	6	16.7	14	41.2	20	28.6
Total	36	100.0	34	100.0	70	100.0
Min-Max	0 – 53.85		0 – 66.67		0 – 66.67	
Mean ± SD	24.35 ± 17.24		31.14 ± 16.32		27.65 ± 17.03	
p-Value	**0.096***					

Note: (*) significant at p<0.1; (**) significant at p<0.05; (***) significant at p<0.01

Children's Social-Emotional Development

The social-emotional development of children in this study is divided into two dimensions: social competence and emotional maturity. Preschool children in this study had social-emotional development in the moderate category. Emotional maturity has a higher average score than social competence. The highest score is that seven out of ten children often show good self-confidence and can play carefully so as not to get hurt at home. Meanwhile, on the dimension of emotional maturity, the development of children in the medium and high categories has the same amount, namely 41.4 percent. Item analysis of respondents' statements shows that the highest score achieved is that seven out of ten children often play carefully so they can't get hurt. Seven of ten children also rarely take things that do not belong to them and rarely attack other people or friends (biting, kicking, hitting). With the same amount, children are also rarely seen scared, worried, and nervous at home these days during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4. Distribution of respondents based on the dimensions of children's social-emotional development and type of job

Social-Emotional Development of Preschool Children	Type of Job				Total (n=70)	
	Formal (n=39)		Informal (n=31)			
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total Social-Emotional Development of Preschool Children						
- Low (<60)	10	25.6	5	16.1	15	21.4
- Moderate (60-79)	23	59.0	20	64.5	43	61.4
- High (≥80)	6	15.4	6	19.4	12	17.1
Total	39	100.0	31	100.0	70	100.0
Min-Max	48.94 – 95.04		47.52 – 95.74		47.52-95.74	
Mean ± SD	69.74 ± 10.21		70.94 ± 12.46		70.27 ± 11.20	
p-Value	0.658					
Social Competence						
- Low (<60)	12	30.8	6	19.4	18	25.7
- Moderate (60-79)	23	59.0	20	64.5	43	61.4
- High (≥80)	4	10.3	5	16.1	9	12.9
Total	39	100.0	31	100.0	70	100.0
Min-Max	31.82 – 95.45		18.18 – 98.48		18.18 – 98.48	
Mean ± SD	64.99 ± 11.80		67.98 ± 15.15		66.32 ± 13.37	
P-value	0.356					
Emotional Maturity						
- Low (<60)	7	17.9	5	16.1	12	17.1
- Moderate (60-79)	16	41.0	13	41.9	29	41.4
- High (≥80)	16	41.0	13	41.9	29	41.4
Total	39	100.0	31	100.0	70	100.0
Min-Max	21.33 – 94.67		36 – 93.33		21.33-94.67	
Mean ± SD	73.91 ± 14.33		73.54 ± 14.99		73.75 ± 14.52	
P-value	0.917					

Note: (*) significant at p<0.1; (**) significant at p<0.05; (***) significant at p<0.01

Based on the independent sample T-Test results, the social-emotional development of children between formal and informal working mothers, both from the dimensions of social competence and emotional maturity, did not show a significant difference (Table 4). However, based on the average score, the index of children's social-emotional development in mothers who work in the informal sector is higher than that of mothers who work formally. Likewise, in the dimension of social competence, children of informal working mothers have higher achievements. This shows that the social skills of children in a family of formal working mothers are lower than children in a family of the formal working mother. On the other hand, formal working mothers' preschool children have higher emotional maturity achievement.

Table 5. Distribution of respondents based on the dimensions of children's social-emotional development and sex of children

Social-Emotional Development of Preschool Children	Sex of Children				Total (n=70)	
	Boy (n=36)		Girl (n=34)			
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total Social-Emotional Development of Preschool Children						
- Low (<60)	10	27.8	5	14.7	15	21.4
- Moderate (60-79)	19	52.8	24	70.6	43	61.4
- High (≥80)	7	19.4	5	14.7	12	17.1
Total	36	100.0	34	100.0	70	100.0
Min-Max	47.52 – 95.04		51.06 – 95.74		47.52 – 95.74	
Mean ± SD	68.93 ± 12.22		71.69 ± 9.99		70.27 ± 11.20	
P-value	0.306					
Social Competence						
- Low (<60)	10	27.8	8	23.5	18	25.7
- Moderate (60-79)	20	55.6	23	67.6	43	61.4
- High (≥80)	6	16.7	3	8.8	9	12.9
Total	36	100.0	34	100.0	70	100.0
Min-Max	18.18 – 96.97		48.48 – 98.48		47.52 – 95.74	
Mean ± SD	65.19 ± 14.96		67.51 ± 11.55		66.32 ± 13.37	
P-value	0.472					
Emotional Maturity						
- Low (<60)	7	19.4	5	14.7	12	17.1
- Moderate (60-79)	14	38.9	15	44.1	29	41.4
- High (≥80)	15	41.7	14	41.2	29	41.4
Total	36	100.0	34	100.0	70	100.0
Min-Max	21.33 – 93.33		45.33 – 94.67		21.33 – 93.33	
Mean ± SD	72.22 ± 16.41		75.37 ± 12.23		73.75 ± 14.52	
P-value	0.368					

Note: (*) significant at p<0.1; (**) significant at p<0.05; (***) significant at p<0.01

The results showed that the social-emotional development of preschool-age children, on average was higher than that of boys, both from the dimensions of social competence and emotional maturity (Table 5). However, after a different test, the results showed no significant difference between boys and girls in their social-emotional development. Even so, based on the average score, the achievement index of children's social-emotional development in girls is higher than that of boys. Likewise, in the dimensions of social competence and emotional maturity, girls have higher achievements in their social-emotional development than boys.

Analysis between Family and Children Characteristics, Social Support, Maternal Stress, and Children's Social Emotional Development

The multiple linear regression analysis results in Table 6 show the effect of family characteristics, social support, and maternal stress on preschoolers' social-emotional development. This regression model has passed the classical assumption test and is normally distributed, and the model is significant at $\alpha < 0.05$. The study results are shown in Table 6 that the value of the adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R Square) indicates the number 0.206. This means that 20.6 percent of the factors that influence preschoolers' social-emotional development are explained by the variables studied in this study, while inaccurate variables affect the rest (79.4%).

Table 6. Effects of family characteristics, child characteristics, social support, and maternal stress on children's social-emotional development

Variable	Non-standardized Coefficient (B)	Standard Error	Beta Standardized Coefficient (β)	Sig.
Constanta	4.202	16.406		0.013
Children's Characteristics				
Age (year)	1.447	1.641	0.110	0.382
Sex (1=boy, 0=girl)	-5.739	2.591	-0.258	0.031**
Family Characteristics				
Family size (person)	-0.583	0.995	-0.074	0.560
Mother's age (year)	0.074	0.467	0.032	0.875
Father's age (year)	0.115	0.393	0.055	0.771
Mother's education (year)	-0.487	0.711	-0.133	0.496
Father's education (year)	0.930	0.716	0.239	0.199
Type of job (1=formal; 0=informal)	-3.372	3.108	-0.151	0.283
Per capita income (rupiah)	-1.018E-08	0.000	-0.003	0.984
WFH Mothers (1=ever; 0=never)	5.566	3.380	0.205	0.105
Hours worked per week (hours)	-0.038	0.087	-0.054	0.664
Social support (index)	0.299	0.104	0.324	0.006***
Maternal stress (index)	-0.255	0.080	-0.388	0.002***
F		2.376		
Sig.		0.013**		
R^2		0.355		
Adjusted R^2		0.206		

Note: (*) significant at p<0.1; (**) significant at p<0.05; (***) significant at p<0.0

The results of multiple regression analysis showed that social support (β = 0.324; p=0.006) significantly positively affected the social-emotional development of preschoolers. That is, every increase in one unit of social support obtained by mothers from their husbands, extended family, and friends will increase the social-emotional development of preschool-aged children by 0.299 points. Maternal stress (β = -0.388; p=0.002) had a significant negative effect on the social-emotional development of preschool-aged children, meaning that each increase of one unit of maternal stress would decrease the social-emotional development of preschool-aged children by 0.255 points. The sex of children (β = -0.258; p=0.031) also significantly negatively affected preschool children's social-emotional development. This shows that girls have better social-emotional development than boys.

Discussion

The results showed that the dimension of social support with the highest average obtained by the mother was the husband dimension. The form of support from the husband that the wife most feels in this study is that the husband cares about the mother's feelings and can share joys and sorrows with the mother. The support that working mothers get from their husbands will affect the conflict between work and family

(Soeharto & Kuncoro, 2015). Research by Dawenan and Shanti (2021) found that the higher the husband's social support, the lower the mother's anxiety. The family dimension has the second highest average, followed by the friend dimension, meaning that mothers who work during the COVID-19 pandemic receive help and emotional support from their extended family. However, working mothers still struggle to rely on their friends and extended family. Mothers with good social support reduce family and work conflicts (Soeharto, Kuncoro, & Prahara, 2020).

Working mothers who face the demands of work and family can experience stress. Based on the study results, half of working mothers had severe and very severe stress, and only one in four working mothers had normal stress. This shows that working mothers with preschool children sometimes have difficulty relaxing, feel worried and nervous, easily angry and restless, and overly reactive and impatient. This is in line with the research of Brown et al. (2020) that COVID-19-related disorders and high anxiety and depressive symptoms were associated with higher parental stress. In addition, according to a study by Sari, Pranaji, and Yuliati. (2015), individual sources of stress in families with working mothers are included in the high category.

The social-emotional development of preschool-aged children during the COVID-19 pandemic assessed by mothers in this study is experienced in the moderate category. This can be interpreted that more than half of children ren can get along with relatives or friends in the home environment and show their confidence well during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, regarding emotional maturity, more than half of children can comfort their parents when they are sad. According to Egan et al. (2021), children's social-emotional development is severely disrupted during pandemic social restrictions. It is also found that children miss their friends, want to play with other children, and miss school routines (ECED). Egan et al. (2021) also stated that the negative impact of school closures was that children experienced anxiety, boredom, and lack of stimulation. However, there is also a positive impact that children have more time to play with siblings and can take a break from the usual routine.

The regression test showed that the model produced in this study was significant and able to explain the effect of social support and maternal stress variables on the social-emotional development of children in families with working mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic. These results follow the research of Slykerman et al. (2005) as the primary literature that high maternal stress and low social support obtained by mothers are significantly associated with low children's intelligence scores. The independent variables that have a real influence on the regression model are social support, maternal stress, and the sex of the children.

Based on the regression test, the social support obtained by the mother can increase children's social-emotional development. Fauzia and Mangunsong (2020) suggest that social support affects children's social-emotional abilities mediated by parental acceptance of children. Parents receive various forms of social support that can help improve children's social-emotional skills, tangible information, emotional support, and mentoring. This is thought to occur because mothers who receive good social support can provide optimal stimulation for children's social-emotional development. The research shows that the husband's social support has the highest average of other social support (extended family and friends). Mothers with good social support can more easily access emotional and material assistance and control child care further to optimize child development (Belsky, 1984). Mothers who receive social support are expected to be more

involved and responsive in the upbringing of their children, and this positive parenting practice will promote better child development (Serrano-Villar et al., 2017).

The social-emotional development of children in families with working mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic is also influenced by maternal stress. Based on research by Susilowati and Azzasyofia (2020), high parental stress at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic was caused by the inability of parents to guide learning, family health problems, and family economic problems. This condition will likely continue with the extended time to study from home. Based on research by Anthony et al. (2009), the influence of parental stress can be transmitted to children through the global affective context at home rather than the immediate context of parent-child interaction. The stress experienced by parents during the COVID-19 pandemic also indirectly impacted children's behavioral and emotional problems because parents experienced many difficulties in dealing with quarantine (Spinelli et al., 2020). This becomes difficult for parents, especially working mothers, because of the dual roles of work and family that must be balanced. Working mothers are at higher risk of experiencing difficulties that could potentially interfere with their ability to be supportive caregivers. Children's lack of support in difficult times may be the reason children's psychological symptoms are more prominent (Spinneli et al., 2020). Adverse affective climates such as reduced emotional expression and response and inconsistent family interactions have been shown to directly affect children's social-emotional competence (Anthony et al. 2009).

Parents with high stress tend to find it more challenging to understand their child's needs and respond sensitively (Abidin, 1992; Scaramella, Sohr-Preston, Callahan, & Mirabile, 2008). Stress is often associated with abusive behavior and difficulty defining boundaries and discipline (Spinelli, 2020). Thus, children in families with mothers who have higher stress may feel less understood by their mothers and may react in more harmful and aggressive ways (Pinquart, 2017). According to Moroni, Nicoletti, and Tominey (2019), children with low social-emotional development will be more vulnerable to a stressful home environment, while children with high social-emotional development will show resilience. Especially during this COVID-19 pandemic, children are less able to deal with the many changes that the pandemic has brought to their lives (Liu et al., 2020).

The sex of children in this study also significantly negatively affected children's social-emotional development. The results showed that girls were superior in social-emotional development in the moderate category. Based on several studies, women tend to outperform men in regulating and reading emotions and functions in social groups (Śmieja, Orzechowski, & Stolarski, 2014; Kret & De Gelder, 2012; Thompson & Voyer, 2014).

This study has limitations in that data collection is only obtained from the mother's perspective. Further research is expected to make direct observations of children so that answers are more objective in assessing their social-emotional development. In addition, the questions in this research questionnaire are closed questions, so they cannot analyze the mother's answers more deeply. This study also has limitations on the construction of variables that need to be explored, specifically the direct influence of maternal stress and social support on children's social-emotional development.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

Almost half of working mothers in this study received moderate social support, especially social support from their husbands and extended family. Half of working mothers have severe and very severe stress, while only one in four mothers have normal stress. Meanwhile, according to the perspective of working mothers in this study, the social-emotional development of preschool children was in the moderate category, namely three-fifths of children. When viewed from the dimensions, children's emotional maturity is better than social competence because the average value of emotional maturity is higher than social competence. Based on the independent sample T-Test, there was no significant difference between formal and informal working mothers on social support, maternal stress, and children's social development. The regression test results showed that social support could improve children's social-emotional development. Conversely, maternal stress can reduce children's social-emotional development. Another finding is that girls have better social-emotional development than boys.

Recommendation

The study found that half of the mothers experienced severe and very severe stress. In addition, the higher the stress of the working mother, the lower children's social-emotional development. Thus, mothers are expected to manage stress, such as providing time to relax, being patient when things are upset, and continuing to develop their personalities to be better. In addition, working mothers can also perform coping strategies, such as positive thinking (emotion-focused coping), communicating well things that trigger anger (problem-focused coping), as well as regular worship and meditation (spiritual-focused coping). It is also hoped that the government and institutions or practitioners that focus on the field of family empowerment can provide free counseling or counseling that is easily accessible online for working mothers so that they can become individuals who can manage their emotions and stress, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social support in this study also has a positive influence on the social-emotional development of children. Therefore, the role of a husband, extended family, and friends in the life of a working mother is also vital in children's social-emotional development. Mothers and husbands can set aside a particular time to chat together each day, visit extended family for specific periods, and join a positive and supportive community of friends. Based on the research, the husband's social support is lower for formal working mothers than for informal ones, so they can work together with their husbands in carrying out their roles. In addition, the social support of friends for formal working mothers is also lower than for informal working mothers. This can be a record for the company to build a mutually supportive work atmosphere between colleagues or make policies such as a hybrid work model, so working mothers are more flexible in their work.

This study found that the total social-emotional development of children and children's social competence in formal working mothers was lower than in informal working mothers. This can be a record for mothers to spend time with their children to socialize with their peers and provide opportunities for children to take the initiative when doing their activities. However, on the dimension of emotional maturity, children of mothers who work informally have lower achievements. Thus, mothers can teach children to manage emotions and express their feelings. The study also found that girls had better

social-emotional development than boys during the COVID-19 pandemic. Suggestions for further research can examine how differences in the sex of children can affect the social-emotional development of children by using the proportional sampling technique.

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