

Resilience: Protective Factor and Outcome (literature review)

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Resilience is an individual's ability to maintain adaptive functioning and recover optimally after facing stress, difficulties, or psychosocial risk experiences. The study aims to explore the dynamic nature of resilience and identify the factors influencing it. **Method:** The research method used is a literature review, with the literature for this study accessed by the author from electronic document providers such as Google Scholar, Scopus, EBSCO, and Science Direct. The researcher searched for literature using the keywords "resilience, resilience factor, resilience protective factor, resilience risk factor, resilience antecedent, resilience outcome." **Results:** The presence of protective factors, such as personal competence, self-efficacy, self-esteem, optimism, family support, and social support systems, plays an important role in increasing resilience, while risk factors such as stress, anxiety, and psychological pressure are negatively correlated with it. High levels of resilience are associated with better mental and physical health, subjective well-being, and optimal quality of life. **Novelty:** The study highlights the dynamic nature of resilience as an evolving process influenced by both internal and environmental factors. It emphasizes the significant role of protective factors like self-efficacy and social support in fostering resilience, and their positive impact on mental health and quality of life, offering a more nuanced understanding of resilience beyond being a fixed trait.

INTRODUCTION

Resilience is generally understood as the result of positive adaptation. Friberg et al. define resilient individuals as those who can maintain normal development despite experiencing long-term stress, hardship, or abuse [1]. Rutter states that resilience is characterized by the absence of psychopathology in individuals after experiencing psychosocially risky events [2]. A.S. Masten explains that resilience indicates recovery, or how well an individual rises and recovers after facing challenging situations [3]. Furthermore, Obradović et al. define resilience as a broad concept referring to positive adaptation in the face of challenges or threats [4]. Resilience does not protect individuals from negative events in life, but helps them cope with stress more flexibly [1]. It can be concluded that resilience is an individual's ability to positively adjust when facing stress, by optimizing protective factors, both internal and external to themselves, so that their mental health remains intact or within normal levels [1].

According to Rutter, resilience to stress is relative, not absolute, and is not a stable characteristic of an individual but varies over time and adapts to circumstances [2]. This view aligns with Felsman & Vaillant, who argue that resilience is a process, not a trait [5]. As Anthony & Cohler concluded, resilience is not a lasting characteristic but a process shaped by the impact of certain life experiences on people with specific concepts of their life history or personal story [6]. When situations change, resilience follows suit. Resilience is a dynamic process [7]. It is not fixed but dynamic, can change over time, and

depends on the interaction between an individual's internal factors and their environment [8].

METHODOLOGY

This type of research is a literature review, which is a comprehensive overview of previous research findings on a specific topic [9]. The literature search in this study was conducted by the author using electronic document providers such as Google Scholar, Scopus, EBSCO, and Science Direct. The researcher searched for literature using the keywords "resilience, resilience factor, resilience protective factor, resilience risk factor, resilience antecedent, resilience outcome." Inclusion criteria were set to limit the search and make it easier for the author to find the desired literature [10]. The inclusion criteria established by the author are: 1) The language used is English and Indonesian; 2) The publication period is 10 years, from 2010 to 2020; 3) The literature consists of scholarly articles from primary research and is available in full-text format; 4) The research results can be either qualitative or quantitative; 5) The themes discussed are related to the factors influencing resilience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Nature of Resilience

Masten & Wright state that resilience is a dynamic concept arising from many processes and interactions that extend beyond the boundaries of the individual organism, including variables such as close relationships and social support [11]. Resilience is considered dynamic because the same individual may exhibit maladaptive functions at one time and become resilient at another time, or vice versa. This dynamism of resilience has been proposed by previous experts such as Dyer & McGuinness, who stated that resilience is not fixed but dynamic, can change over time, and depends on the interaction among various factors surrounding the individual [8]. Luthar et al. and Yates et al. also view resilience as a developing process [7], [12].

2. Protective Factors

One of the key constructs of resilience is protective factors, which are factors that enhance the occurrence of positive outcomes. The higher an individual's level of resilience, the more protective factors they have, and the lower the psychological symptoms they experience, or, to a certain extent, no psychopathological symptoms appear [13], [14]. According to Rutter, protective factors are those that reduce the impact of risks from stressors, decrease the negative chain reactions from stressors, build and enhance self-esteem and self-efficacy, and open greater opportunities for problem-solving [15]. J. H. Lee et al. state that protective or promotive factors are characteristics that improve adaptation abilities or are positively correlated with resilience [16]. Protective factors are variables that protect or shield individuals from the negative influence of stressors. A variable is considered a protective factor if it functions to reduce risk impact, decrease negative chain reactions, build and maintain self-esteem and self-efficacy, and open opportunities for problem-solving.

The opposite characteristic of protective factors is risk factors, which are variables that refer to psychological attributes or dispositions that increase the likelihood of maladaptation. A.S. Masten & Wright state that risk factors generally refer to the prediction of undesirable outcomes and increase the likelihood of one or more severe problems [11]. Risk factors include traumatic experiences and various difficulties that have the potential to hinder development or substantially disrupt adaptive functions. Masten succinctly states that risk factors are variables that precede poor outcomes.

3. Sources of Protective Factors

Resilient individuals are more flexible and able to cope with stressors by optimizing their resources or protective factors, whether they come from within themselves or from external environments [1]. Friborg et al. summarize three sources of protective factors: psychological/dispositional attributes, family support and cohesion, and external support systems [1]. Rutter outlines three sources of protective factors: personality traits, family cohesion, and changes made that reflect a willingness to utilize external support systems that encourage hope and optimism and reinforce coping efforts [15]. According to A.S. Masten & Wright, the sources of protective factors include individual abilities, social support and relationships, and protections embedded in religion, community, or other cultural systems [11]. Rutter mentions that protective factor sources include interpersonal processes, family experiences, peer group quality, and coping strategies [2]. Werner summarizes protective factors into three groups: first, at least the individual has average intelligence and dispositional qualities that elicit positive responses from others; second, affectionate bonds with surrogate parents such as grandparents and siblings; and third, external support systems, in church, youth groups, or schools, that value competence and give individuals a sense of coherence [17].

A.S. Masten & Wright mention six important protective factors in systems that determine role changes in life: close relationships and social support; intelligence or problem-solving skills; self-regulation skills, including the ability to direct or control emotions and actions; agency, mastery motivation, and self-efficacy; meaning-making (building meaning and a sense of coherence in life); and cultural traditions, particularly through religion [11].

4. Antecedents of Resilience

Antecedents of resilience are variables that have significant positive or negative correlations, which can be used as indicators of whether an individual is resilient or not. Skodol concludes research by experts that resilient individuals are characterized by traits that reflect strength, a well-differentiated, and integrated self-concept (self-structure) [18]. Rutter adds that resilience is shown by traits that lead to the ability to build strong reciprocal interpersonal relationships with others [15]. These positive traits collectively contribute to high adaptive levels. The traits of resilient individuals are understood as the opposite of those of individuals with personality disorders, such as maladaptive patterns of perception, thinking, and relationships, low self-concept, and poor interpersonal relationship-building capacity, as well as inflexibility [18].

Grossman, in his research, inventories the characteristics of resilient individuals,

including persistence, warmth, comfort with change, strong personality, goal orientation, high self-esteem, patience, ability to cope with stressors, high spirituality, optimism, positive affect, positive emotions, and effective coping [19]. This research leans more toward protective factors as antecedents of resilience, as stated by White et al., that the more an individual possesses protective factor attributes, the greater their chance of adapting to disruptive life events, whereas individuals with fewer protective factors are less likely to succeed in adaptation [20]. According to Smith et al., most resilience measurement tools are designed to assess resilience from the perspective of protective factors.

Antecedents of resilience are generally divided into two categories: variables that stem from individual differences and variables that originate from the contextual environment. Connor & Davidson, and Masten A.S. state that contextual environmental factors play an important role in the formation of resilience, or crucial resources for resilience, including environmental and constitutional elements [21], [3]. Likewise, Obradović et al. argue that positive adaptation is a function of internal or external variables, or a combination of both [4]. Resilience is a multi-dimensional variable consisting of psychological and dispositional attributes, such as competence, external support systems, and personal structure [3].

Lee et al. inventories variables that serve as antecedents to resilience through meta-analysis research and classify them into three categories: low effect if the r value is around 0.1 - 0.2; moderate effect size if r is around 0.3; and large effect size if the r value is greater than 0.5. Variables with low effect include demographic factors (age, $r = 0.09$, $p < 0.01$; gender, $r = 0.12$, $p < 0.01$). Variables with large effect sizes include life satisfaction, $r = 0.43$, $p < 0.001$; optimism, $r = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$; positive affect, $r = 0.59$, $p < 0.001$; self-efficacy, $r = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$; self-esteem, $r = 0.55$, $p < 0.001$; social support, $r = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$. Variables with effects include anxiety, $r = -0.38$, $p < 0.001$; stress, $r = -0.39$, $p < 0.001$; PTSD, $r = -0.29$, $p < 0.001$; negative affect, $r = -0.27$, $p < 0.001$; perceived stress, $r = -0.36$, $p < 0.001$ [16]. Research by Lee et al. shows that the effect of self-efficacy ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$) is the largest, followed by positive affect and self-esteem. A meta-analysis of 30 studies on the relationship between resilience and the big five personality traits by Oshio et al. shows that resilience correlates with Neuroticism ($r = -0.46$), Extraversion ($r = 0.42$), Openness ($r = 0.34$), Agreeableness ($r = 0.31$), and Conscientiousness ($r = 0.42$) [22]. The large correlation coefficients, ranging from 0.31 to 0.42, indicate that the big five personality dimensions are significant antecedents for resilience.

5. Dimensions of Resilience

Friborg et al. and Hjemdal et al. propose the dimensions of resilience in their Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA) as follows [13], [23]:

- 1) Dispositional attributes consist of 3 dimensions: personal competence, social competence, and personal structure.
 - a. Personal competence measures self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-liking, hope, determination, and realistic life orientation.
 - b. Social competence measures extraversion, social skills, positive mood, ability to

initiate activities, good communication skills, and flexibility in dealing with social problems.

- c. Personal structure measures the ability to perform routine activities well, the ability to plan and organize activities.
- 2) Family cohesion/ warmth, which consists of dimensions such as frequency of family conflicts, cooperation, support, loyalty, and stability.
- 3) External support systems consist of dimensions such as access to external support from friends and relatives, intimacy, and an individual's ability to give support.

Baek et al. and Connor & Davidson describe the dimensions of resilience in the CD-RISC scale as follows [24], [21]:

1. Personal competence, which indicates high standards, persistence, and individual characteristics that do not give up easily when facing challenges.
2. Self-confidence, tolerance for the negative influences of stress. This factor is characterized by careful thinking and decision-making ability when facing stress.
3. Acceptance of positive change and maintaining positive relationships with others. This factor relates to the ability to adapt to changes.
4. Control ability, referring to the ability to control goal achievement and seek help from others.
5. Spirituality and individual beliefs in God.

The five characteristics or dimensions of resilience, which serve as the conceptual foundation of the resilience scale developed, are [25], [26]:

1. Perseverance, or persistence, is the act of continuing despite difficulties or despair, which implies the willingness to continue fighting to reconstruct one's life and remain engaged in the face of adversity. Perseverance is the ability to keep going despite setbacks.
2. Equanimity, the balance of mind, is the ability to maintain a balanced perspective between life and experiences, possibly seen as a relaxed attitude and accepting what comes, thus moderating extreme responses to difficulties. Those who are calm often have a sense of humor.
3. Meaningfulness, the awareness that life has a purpose and recognizing that there is something worth living for.
4. Self-reliant, those who are self-reliant trust in themselves, recognize and rely on their personal strengths and abilities, and use past successes to support and guide their actions.
5. Existential aloneness is the awareness that everyone is unique, and while some experiences can be shared, others must be faced alone. With existential aloneness comes a sense of uniqueness and possibly freedom.

In short, the five dimensions of resilience above are grouped into three main categories: personal/dispositional attributes, family support, and external support systems [27], [2].

6. Outcomes of Resilience

Based on the meta-analysis results conducted by Grossman on 432 studies related

to resilience, it was found that resilience is positively correlated with mental health, physical health, and subjective well-being [19]. Other studies show that resilience is directly or indirectly correlated with lower psychological stress, better relationship functioning, better sleep quality, and better overall health [28], psychological well-being, positive affect [29], mental health, quality of life, and marital satisfaction [30].

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: Resilience is the ability of an individual to positively adapt and bounce back after facing stress, difficulties, or risky experiences, without experiencing significant psychological disorders. High resilience is associated with better mental and physical health, subjective well-being, and a more optimal quality of life. **Implication:** The development of resilience is closely related to the presence of protective factors, such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, optimism, personal competence, family support, and external support systems, and is negatively correlated with risk factors such as stress, anxiety, and psychological pressure. **Limitation:** Resilience is not a fixed trait but rather a dynamic process that can change over time, influenced by the interaction between internal factors and the environment. **Future Research:** Because resilience is a dynamic process influenced by the interaction between internal factors and the environment, future studies should investigate how specific external support systems and internal protective factors evolve over time to sustain an optimal quality of life across different life stages.

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