Religious Coping: Exploring The Resilience of Covid 19 Survivors

Zuhdiyah¹

¹ UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, Indonesia

Corresponding Email: zuhdiyah_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

Abstract. The purpose of this study is to investigate adult religious coping strategies throughout the COVID-19 pandemic's quarantine phase. In-depth semi-structured interviews with thirteen adult COVID-19 survivors, ages forty to sixty, were undertaken. Open-ended questions on the state of the COVID-19 sickness, the psychological state, and the religious coping mechanisms used up until the point of cure were posed to the respondents. The information was categorized using thematic analysis. Three adult coping strategies—positive thinking, positive activity, and yielding to God—are shown by the classification results. According to this research, the respondent experiences resilience and serenity when coping with the COVID-19 virus when they practice good religious coping. This study demonstrates how adult respondents manage to endure till they heal, but additional investigation is required to comprehend how religious coping is employed by populations that are more vulnerable to pressures.

Keywords: Resilience, Religious Coping, Covid-19 Survivors

Introduction

The global COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as a significant health and psychological peril to all individuals, infected or not. (Kachanoff et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2020) Those who are infected will be subjected to quarantine and isolation from their familial and communal surroundings to effectively mitigate the spread of the virus. (Alpdagtas et al., 2020; Demaria & Vicari, 2021) The quarantine and isolation policy is beneficial as it effectively disrupts the transmission of Covid-19. However, Walecka has highlighted that individuals who are separated or quarantined may experience depression, stress disorders, and a heightened sense of fear. (Walecka et al., 2021). Kutana also stated that quarantine and isolation caused stress, anxiety and lack of sleep (Kutana & Lau, 2021). Individuals afflicted with COVID-19 not only encounter physical ailments, but also face psychological challenges. This condition necessitates an individual's capacity to exhibit resilience in the face of psychological challenges.

To endure the COVID-19 condition, resilience is required. Resilience is a dynamic process that enables individuals to recover from or adapt to difficult circumstances, particularly in managing stress in a way that maintains equilibrium. (Verdolini et al., 2021; Vinkers et al., 2020) The level of family resilience is influenced by various susceptibility factors, including developmental age, educational attainment, pre-existing mental health disorders, economic deprivation, and quarantine resulting from infection or fear of infection. (Gayatri & Irawaty, 2022).

Religious coping is considered a viable survival strategy since it has the capacity to effectively manage stressors. Positive religious coping has been linked to improved physical and mental well-being, whereas negative religious coping has been linked to heightened levels of stress and anxiety. (DeRossett et al., 2021; Fatima et al., 2022) Positive religious coping encompasses three facets, specifically, religious practice, which refers to spiritual activities such as prayer and worship. Secondly, benevolent reappraisal refers to the act of positively reassessing the difficulties that arise. Thirdly, active religious coping refers to the practice of
engaging in prayer and maintaining a belief that God would respond favorably to all of one's pleas. (Aflakseir & Coleman, 2011).

Resilience is a dynamic mechanism that enables individuals to bounce back or adjust to challenging circumstances, particularly in managing stress to maintain equilibrium. (Vinkers et al., 2020). Resilience can have beneficial effects on mental health throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. (Chan et al., 2021; Guillasper et al., 2021; Verdolini et al., 2021) Psychological therapies aid individuals by enhancing factors associated with resilience (Fiorillo, 2021; Panzeri et al., 2021). Consequently, enhancing resilience and coping mechanisms during the COVID-19 pandemic holds significant implications for mental well-being. The primary determinants of resilience are predominantly psychological, such as trait resilience and conscientiousness, in addition to the practice of social distancing. The characteristics that hinder resilience encompass COVID-19 anxiety, intolerance of uncertainty, loneliness, cohabitation with children, higher education, and residing in regions with high virus transmission. Fiorillo and Panzeri identify resilience tactics as encompassing the utilization of problem-solving techniques, the presence of robust social networks, and receiving support from family members. These strategies lead to positive long-term results and enable individuals to effectively navigate and adjust to the negative consequences of traumatic events.

The aforementioned research indicate that resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic necessitates the utilization of coping mechanisms, problem-solving techniques, and social support networks. Furthermore, this particular coping mechanism has been extensively researched. The initial investigation focuses on the strategies employed by Australian adolescents to manage and maintain their mental well-being within the COVID-19 pandemic (Beames et al., 2021). The study demonstrates that Australian adolescents typically encounter favorable experiences and employ proactive coping mechanisms amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Certain adolescents also exhibit elevated levels of resilience and possess the capacity to capitalize on unforeseen circumstances that significantly interrupt their regular daily activities. The second study examines stress, resilience, and coping methods in a group of older individuals residing in the community within the COVID-19 pandemic (Barbato, 2020; Beames et al., 2021). In the Arab community during the COVID-19 pandemic, the level of religious coping and spiritual well-being of 248 elderly people was higher and the level of death anxiety was lower. In India, during the COVID-19 pandemic, 872 adults had greater meaning in life with low levels of loneliness due to positive religious coping strategies. In the US, higher levels of negative religious coping in 970 respondents were positively related to COVID-19 anxiety. The results of a survey of 647 people (360 from Nigeria and 287 from India) proved that positive religious coping in the Nigerian population was significantly higher than that of the Indian population. Similarly, negative religious coping was significantly higher (for most items in the short RCOPE) in the Indian population than the Nigerian population. The five studies above prove that in many countries religious coping is a factor in strengthening the meaning of life, and resilience in the face of stress and anxiety in the face of death and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, these studies have not explored the phenomenon of religious coping in Muslim communities in Indonesia, especially adult Muslims who are infected or survivors of COVID-19. Therefore, this study aims to explore how the religious coping of covid 19 survivors aged 40-60 years old.
Material and Method

In order to survive the COVID-19 situation, resilience is needed. Meanwhile, resilience is a process that allows recovery or adaptation to adversity, especially in dealing with stress so that it remains balanced (Verdolini et al., 2021; Vinkers et al., 2020) The extent of family resilience is determined by many vulnerability factors such as developmental age, educational status, pre-existing mental health conditions, economically disadvantaged or quarantined due to infection or fear of infection (Gayatri & Irawaty, 2022).

One of the survival strategies is religious coping, because religious coping is one of the potential strategies to manage stressors. Positive religious coping has been associated with better physical and mental health outcomes, while negative religious coping has been associated with increased stress and anxiety (DeRossett et al., 2021; Fatima et al., 2022) Positive religious coping includes three aspects, namely, first, religious practice, namely spiritual activities carried out such as prayer and prayer. second, benevolent reappraisal, which is a positive reassessment of the problems that occur. Third, active religious coping, where someone prays and believes that God will answer all his prayers (Aflakseir & Coleman, 2011).

This study uses a qualitative research with Cloaizzi phenomenological method. The purpose of the phenomenological method is to uncover the original experience of the phenomenon under investigation. This allows researchers to put aside their perceptions of a phenomenon and give meaning to participants' experiences. Research participants were selected with inclusion criteria, namely: (a) Muslim adults; (b) lecturers, both public and private lecturers; (c) male or female; (d) 40-60 years old; (e) covid 19 survivors. Respondents who did not give consent were excluded from the study. Data were collected between 1 May to 30 June 2022 and a total of 60 adults who were confirmed to be infected with 2019-nCoV were contacted through purposive sampling technique.

Similar to human research, data collecting has significant hazards because to its involvement with crucial personal and sensitive ideas, emotions, and experiences. Hence, the research findings are presented in an anonymous and unidentifiable manner. The interview was conducted in the Indonesian language. Participants were requested to express their willingness to be interviewed by mobile phone. Open-ended questions were utilized to conduct in-depth interviews.

Each interview was conducted for 15 to 20 minutes. Interviews were conducted according to the convenience of the respondents. In the interview process, the researcher introduced himself and explained the purpose of the research. Verbal consent was received to record telephone interviews. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian. Audio recordings transcribed in text form. Colaizzi’s seven-step phenomenological method was used to analyze the data (Morrow et al., 2015). Within 24 hours of each interview, the recordings were transcribed with the help of Colaizzi’s phenomenological analysis method. The next researcher independently reviewed the code and categorized and turned it into themes.

Results and Discussion

Results

Based on the 13 respondents, there were 8 male respondents and 5 female respondents. Respondents who married 12 people, who did not marry 1 person. The age range of 40-49 is 10 people aged 50-60 years as many as 3 respondents who work as PNS lecturers are 11 people, Respondents who work as private lecturers are 2 people. Respondents who experienced a quarantine period of 1 to 2 weeks were 6 people, 2 weeks to 1 month 8 people and more than one month were 3 people.

From the interpretive phenomenological analysis, we identified three superordinate religious coping strategies for adult COVID-19 survivors, namely positive thinking, increasing worship, and having faith that they will recover.

Positive Thinking
The first form of religious coping is positive thinking. From the results of the interview, it was shown that the sufferers of covid-19 felt sad, anxious, afraid and even shocked, but finally they were able to think positively about the illness they suffered and realized that covid-19 was a test, a warning and God's will, what are the statements of the following respondents:

"Actually I was very sad, but over time I realized that this covid-19 was a test of Allah. (AL, Y, N)"

From this statement, it is clear that the respondent accepts sincerely that he is experiencing a very frightening disease, and realizes that it is all a test from Allah. Others think that the COVID-19 disease is a warning from Allah for him, as the following statement:

"Yes, I feel this is a test or a warning from Allah that we must draw closer to Him and not ignore His commands. (SN, RM, AS, RD, H)"

The three forms of statements illustrate that the survivors of Covid-19 feel that they are suffering from a disease as a result of Allah's warning to His servants. In addition, other survivors stated that covid-19 had become God's will and decree for him as stated in the following statement:

"Yes I feel that this is my destiny to be exposed to covid 19 (IA, R, IKN, RMZ)"

From the statements above, the positive thoughts of covid-19 survivors are, covid-19 is a test of Allah, Allah's warning and Allah's will. As the human, we must accept it and do the best to survive with the Covid 19.

**Positive activities**

The second form of religious coping is to carry out positive activities during the quarantine period, including listening to religious lectures as stated below:

"Early in the morning after breakfast, mother always opens YouTube and listens to lectures, thank God my heart is relieved after receiving a spiritual shower" (RMZ, AS, AL). "I usually open YouTube to listen to religious lectures," (SN, RM, N, H)"

In addition to listening to lectures, COVID-19 survivors also carry out positive activities by continuing to carry out daily activities, reading books, embroidering, or cleaning the house. "After the dhuha prayer, I usually embroidered, yes, it's an old hobby, as well as entertaining myself" (IA, NL, R, Y)". "I can still do light activities, read books and clean the house" (RD, IKN)"

Positive activities that are also carried out are establishing communication with friends and relatives by telephone or chatting so that they can entertain from distress. This statement can be seen in following statement:

"Alhamdulillah, it turns out that chatting with friends can be entertaining too," (SN, RD, N, RMZ, AL, AS)"

From the statements above, a positive form of activity for COVID-19 survivors is listening to lectures from YouTube and television channels. There are also those who carry out daily activities, namely reading books, embroidering, cleaning the house. Others carry out positive activities in the form of chatting and establishing communication with relatives and friends through cellular telephone facilities.

**Surrender to God**

The third form of religious coping is surrendering to God. From the results of interviews with respondents, data obtained that the form of surrender to God is to multiply worship as the following respondent's statement:
“If I pray five times a day, I always do it on time and at the beginning of the time, and also pray the caretaker, if I read the Qur’an every time I pray, for wirid the sentences are istigfar, tahmid, takbir, tasbih I read 1000 times a day (RM, AS, AL, SN, HE)”
“I also reading the Qur’an every spare time (R, Y, N)”

These statements illustrate that a lot of worship during the quarantine period, the worship is not only in the form of obligatory prayers but also sunnah prayers, reading the Koran, wirid, remembrance, prayer, listening to lectures, reading istighfar, tahmid and tasbih.

In addition to increasing prayers, the covid 19 survivors also stated that the things to do during the quarantine period were to remain grateful and patient as the following statement:
“Yes, no matter what happens, I still try to be grateful and patient (H, RD, IKN)” “With gratitude and a lot of patience that this is a test for all of us and the whole family (RMZ, NL)”

Other respondents stated that the form of surrender to Allah is to repent and improve worship which has been felt to have many shortcomings, as the following statement:
“I feel that behind all this there is a lesson, I who initially rarely pray now, thank God, I have become more diligent in praying. (AS, AL)”

In addition to repenting and improving worship, the respondents also acknowledged that the form of surrender to Allah is in the form of belief that Allah will answer all their prayers, as stated in the following statement:
“I am very sure that I will be healed, because according to God’s promise, whoever prays will surely be granted. (IKN)” “Very sure because the magic of prayer is very extraordinary impact. Prayer is something we don’t see, but we feel.”

From the statements above, the form of surrendering to God for the survivors of covid 19, is to increase worship in the form of prayer, reciting, remembrance, sholawat, istighfar. There is also surrendering patiently. There are those who repent and improve themselves by submitting themselves to Allah in the form of confidence with the power of prayer.

Discussion

The objective of this study is to investigate the encounters of individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 during the period of quarantine. Through the interpretive phenomenological analysis of the interviews, three distinct themes were identified: (a) optimistic mindset, (b) proactive behavior, and (c) submission to Allah. Descriptive data indicates that all participants employed religious coping methods during their experience with COVID-19, enabling them to endure and ultimately achieve a state of recovery.

The initial form of religious coping examined in this study is characterized by positive thinking, also known as husnudzon in religious terminology. Optimistic ideas have a crucial role in maintaining good health (Andrade, 2019). Even Tully conducted a study on the use of positive thinking in managing work-related stress among nurses in acute care (Tully et al., 2019).

The second manifestation of religious coping identified in this study is characterized as a constructive endeavor. According to theories and research, individuals have the ability to enhance their happiness by engaging in uncomplicated and purposeful beneficial activities, such as demonstrating appreciation or cultivating acts of kindness (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013). Meanwhile, the participants in this study disclosed that engaging in positive activities, such as listening to religious lectures, performing routine tasks like embroidery and house cleaning, and establishing online connections with family, friends, and relatives, can provide entertainment and happiness. In Islam, the worth of our deeds or efforts in this world would be considered worship
if they are performed with sincere intentions. The aim plays a crucial role in initiating and carrying out our daily tasks.

The third manifestation of religious coping observed in this study is the act of surrendering to God. Clements and McDonald’s research revealed that religion can have a beneficial effect on health by mitigating or minimizing stress reactions. They also found that surrendering to God is a specific feature of religiosity that can predict reduced stress levels (Clements & Ermakova, 2012; Wong-Mcdonald, 2000). Meanwhile, the researchers discovered that the survivors of Covid-19 found solace in surrendering to God through intensified worship, practicing patience, repenting, and placing their faith in the possibility of cure. Religious coping is an essential factor that can gauge the extent of human spirituality, enabling individuals to endure and overcome the emotional distress caused by the COVID-19 virus. Individuals who choose to surrender must demonstrate genuine sincerity in receiving all of the provisions bestowed upon them by God. Consequently, surrender necessitates a constructive mindset. Having faith that the provisions bestowed upon us are optimal, aligning with our aspirations and the supplications we consistently make in each prayer.

Conclusion
This study enhances the knowledge in the area of adult life experiences of those who have survived Covid-19 by employing religious coping mechanisms. Interviews were employed as a proficient approach to gather abundant and all-encompassing data. This study emphasizes the religious coping mechanisms employed by the respondents, which include adopting a positive mindset, engaging in positive activities, and surrendering to a higher power. Optimistic mindset of participants The respondents' reactions to the condition they are experiencing indicate that they perceive COVID-19 as a trial, a cautionary sign, and a manifestation of divine will. Respondents exhibit a positive mindset during the quarantine period, engaging in various activities to fill their time productively. These activities include listening to educational lectures on platforms like YouTube and television channels, reading books, engaging in embroidery, cleaning the house, and maintaining communication with relatives and friends through mobile phone facilities. Respondents’ religious coping is evident through their submission to Allah, demonstrated by an increase in acts of worship such as prayer, recitation, memory, istighfar, and patient endurance, as well as repentance and self-improvement to rectify their mistakes and misdeeds. Hence, this study is intriguing as it examines the respondents’ comprehensive religious coping experiences. However, it is not feasible to extrapolate the findings of this study to other cohorts. The participants in this study had strong religious coping mechanisms, which enabled them to tolerate their illness until they were deemed cured. It is important to highlight that the participants in this study exhibited favorable religious coping strategies. Additional research is required to have a comprehensive understanding of the religious coping mechanisms employed by the faithful group, as well as to explore the potential for enhancing these coping strategies.

Acknowledgements
This research is the outcome of a collaborative endeavor by researchers aimed at obtaining information regarding religious coping. The study explores the resilience of Covid-19 survivors and the funding received by the researchers. The researcher expresses profound gratitude to Allah, the epitome of benevolence and compassion, for bestowing upon me the fortitude, direction, and unwavering determination to successfully do this research. I would want to express my sincere gratitude to Prophet Muhammad SAW, who has served as a guiding figure for the whole Muslim community, for his profound influence in motivating us to pursue knowledge and comprehension. In addition, the researcher wishes to express gratitude for the outstanding assistance provided by UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, whose support and resources facilitated the successful execution of this research. The researcher is grateful for the generosity that has provided the opportunity to perform this research.
References


