

# ISRG Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ISRGJAHSS)



**ISRG PUBLISHERS**

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Arts Humanit Soc Sci

**ISSN: 2583-7672 (Online)**

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjahss>

Volume – II Issue-V (September-October) 2024

Frequency: Bimonthly



## RESILIENCE OF MOTHERS AFTER LAYOFFS DUE TO COVID-19: CHALLENGES AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S LEARNING OUTCOMES

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| **Received:** 28.09.2024 | **Accepted:** 03.10.2024 | **Published:** 07.10.2024

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### Abstract

*This study highlights the resilience of mothers who were laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic and how it has affected their children's learning outcomes. Based on interviews with 25 respondents, the study found that most mothers made efforts to recover from their hardships by demonstrating confidence and motivation to re-enter the workforce and meet their family's needs, including their children's education. Although a small portion of the mothers expressed doubt, the majority remained optimistic and confident that they would secure better jobs. This qualitative study was conducted in Pulogadung, East Jakarta, focusing on mothers who were laid off and have children currently attending middle school (SMP). The findings of this research indicate that post-layoff resilience played a significant role in supporting the education of their children. Despite facing substantial challenges, the mothers' determination and perseverance in adapting and overcoming the crisis were crucial factors in ensuring their children received a proper education during the pandemic.*

**Keywords:** Resilience, Layoffs, Learning Outcomes

### INTRODUCTION

Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati, in a statement to CNN Indonesia (2019), noted that economic growth in the first quarter declined to 2.97 percent, compared to 4.9 percent in the fourth quarter of 2019. The implementation of Large-Scale Social Restrictions in various regions during the second quarter of 2020 is expected to cause a sharper economic slowdown than in the first quarter (Sutrisno, 2021). In fact, due to the enforcement of physical

distancing in Jabodetabek since March, Indonesia's economic growth reached only 2.97 percent, far below the target of 4.4 percent. At the same time, she also revealed that state revenue (APBN) for the first quarter of 2020 still grew by 7.7 percent or 16.8 percent, while state expenditure only experienced a slight growth of 0.1 percent, reaching 17.8 percent in the first quarter of 2020. Meanwhile, according to Indayani & Hartono (2020), during

the COVID-19 pandemic, over 1.5 million workers faced layoffs or were sent home.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the world, especially in Indonesia, causing various sectors such as education, health, and the economy to come to a standstill. Rifani & Rahadi (2021) stated that the coronavirus pandemic of 2019 (COVID-19) did not only occur in Indonesia or Asia but is a global issue affecting more than 200 countries worldwide. Indonesia was also significantly impacted by COVID-19, with a mortality rate reaching 8.9% by the end of March 2020. On March 16, 2020, the government implemented important policies to curb the spread of the virus by enacting Large-Scale Social Restrictions, which required educational, work, and worship activities to be conducted from home. The Indonesian government was advised to tighten recommendations to stay at home, reduce disease spread through large-scale quarantines, enhance healthcare services, and ensure the availability of personal protective equipment.

Women play a crucial role in the family, not only as mothers but also in contributing to the family economy. Kurniasari et al. (2020) revealed that women have a significant role in the economic realm. Despite differences in the types of work performed by men and women, this does not hinder women from entering the workforce and helping support the family economy. However, the number of women reaching executive and professional positions remains very low. In the industrial sector, women's work patterns differ from the agricultural sector, which is predominantly male. Yuniti (2020) adds that women are involved in various professions within the wider community. Women's participation in the workforce is often associated with specific professions, such as writers, secretaries, service workers, teachers, nurses, agriculture, and domestic helpers.

The widespread pandemic across various regions in Indonesia has led to many workers losing their jobs, both men and women. The policy of self-quarantine has resulted in a paralysis of various sectors, including health, economy, industry, and education. The decline in public income has reduced consumer spending interest, which directly impacts female workers in garment and food factories. These factories, especially in industrial areas like Pulogadung, East Jakarta, generally employ women who are part of the urban population. In addition to the industrial sector, many women workers can also be found in offices, restaurants, hotels, and accommodations. During a virtual event organized by UN Women Asia Pacific & Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs), reported by CNN Indonesia on November 19, 2020, Finance Minister Sri Mulyani stated that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been more severe for women, particularly for those who are also single parents. The Minister explained that many female workers in heavily impacted business sectors saw a decrease in their participation in the workforce. Available data shows that 57 percent of the total 75 million women working in the business sector were directly affected by the pandemic, encompassing sectors like restaurants, hospitality, domestic assistance, and accommodations.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the resilience of mothers following layoffs due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to understand the challenges they face and the impact on their children's learning outcomes. This research aims to identify the factors that support and hinder mothers' abilities to cope with post-layoff pressures and their effects on mothers' roles in assisting their children in the learning process.

## THEORETICAL STUDY

### RESILIENCE

Resilience generally refers to the ability of individuals or systems to positively adapt when facing or after experiencing challenges or risks. According to Masten (2007), resilience refers to the dynamic capacity of a system to withstand or recover from disturbances. This perspective aligns with Grotberg (1995), who states that resilience is a universal capacity that enables an individual, group, or community to prevent, minimize, or cope with the negative impacts of adversity.

Resilience not only functions as a defense mechanism but also as the ability to confront and overcome challenges, ultimately strengthening or even transforming individuals through those experiences (Utami, 2017). In daily life, the development of resilience helps individuals manage stress, trauma, and various other issues that arise. Moreover, resilience embodies the awareness to change one's mindset when facing problems, allowing individuals not to easily give up (Pragholapati & Munawaroh, 2020). Thus, resilient individuals can adapt well to unpleasant situations, viewing them as opportunities for growth and better adaptation in the future.

### LAYOFFS

A layoff is the process of terminating an employment relationship, which results in the cessation of rights and obligations between workers or employees and employers (Hidayani & Munthe, 2018). There are several types of layoffs, including layoffs by employers, layoffs initiated by employees, legally nullified layoffs, and layoffs decided by the court (Frivanty & Ramadhani, 2020). The reasons for layoffs by employers are generally related to factors inherent to the employees, including both employee behavior and reasons concerning the sustainability of the company (Purnomo, 2019). Layoffs conducted by employers are regulated under Article 158 of Law No. 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower, which provides a legal basis for employers to terminate employment relationships.

According to Josviranto (2022), the dispute resolution process related to layoffs, known as Industrial Relations Disputes, can occur through two institutions. First, the Bipartite Institution, which involves negotiations between workers or labor unions and employers to seek direct solutions. Second, the Tripartite Institution, which includes mediation, conciliation, arbitration, and, if necessary, resolution through the Industrial Relations Court. This mechanism aims to ensure that both parties receive justice in resolving disputes arising from layoffs.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes refer to the final achievements attained by students after completing the learning process, serving as a benchmark for students' success in understanding the material presented (Syachtiyani & Trisnawati, 2021). These outcomes reflect changes occurring within individuals, both in terms of attitudes and skills, which can also be referred to as the results of the learning process (Hilmatussadiyah, 2020). Generally, students' learning outcomes are often indicated through a grading scale, which can be represented in letters, symbols, or numbers.

However, learning outcomes are not limited to academic assessments. In addition to measuring the extent of knowledge acquired by students, learning outcomes also encompass the experiences gained throughout the learning process (Somayana, 2020). Grades are not the sole indicator of success, as the attitudes

displayed by individuals or groups also reflect the results of the learning process. Furthermore, an individual's learning outcomes are not solely derived from personal effort but are also influenced by the surrounding environment and the experiences of others. Good learning outcomes can be used as an indicator that the learning process undertaken, whether by individuals or groups, has been successful (Nasution et al., 2018). This success is not only measured by understanding the material but also by the students' ability to apply the knowledge and skills acquired and how they adapt to various situations in their learning environment.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. A case study is a type of descriptive research that allows researchers to conduct clear and in-depth observations by collecting data through documentation, interviews, and observations. According to Yona (2006), case studies can address various emerging issues and phenomena, particularly in the social sciences. Rahardjo (2017) adds that case study research involves a series of intensive, in-depth, and detailed scientific activities focused on an event, whether it involves groups or individuals, with the aim of gaining a deep understanding of that event. The events studied must be ongoing, not those that have already occurred. In this research, the subjects are determined using purposive sampling, with the criteria being mothers who are victims of layoffs and have children attending junior high school, as well as junior high school teachers. Data collection techniques include interviews, observations, and document studies.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESEARCH PROFILE

This research was conducted in the Pulo Gadung area of East Jakarta, with respondents being mothers affected by layoffs. Most of them work in the Cakung industrial area of Jakarta. The selection of respondents was carried out using purposive sampling techniques, where the criteria for informants were women employed in various factories in the industrial area, such as textile, food, pharmaceutical, household goods, and chemical factories. These respondents have children who are currently pursuing education at the junior high school level in the Pulo Gadung area of East Jakarta.

The impact of layoffs is significant and creates various difficulties for the respondents, especially for those who are the breadwinners of their families. The respondents consist of working mothers, both supported by husbands and single mothers who bear the economic burden of the family. They have experienced layoffs for 10 months since the pandemic began. This criterion was chosen because after marriage or having children, living costs increase, putting additional financial and emotional pressure during the pandemic. Women are expected to remain stable physically and mentally while facing the challenges of this pandemic.

This study involved 25 respondents aged between 26 and 52 years who experienced layoffs and have children in junior high school. Most respondents are between 32 and 33 years old, with six individuals in that age group. This number indicates the impact of layoffs on the productive age group, who must also face family responsibility demands amid the pandemic situation.

### EFFORTS TO MEET STUDENTS' LEARNING MEDIA NEEDS AT HOME

Based on interviews with 25 women who are victims of layoffs, it was revealed that during the pandemic, they faced significant difficulties in meeting the needs for online learning. The devices required for online learning include computers, smartphones (Android), internet access, and Wi-Fi. In the era of web-based learning, students at the very least need stable internet access to support the learning process. During the even semester of the 2020/2021 academic year, in an interview conducted on December 25, 2021, KM, one of the students, explained the challenges of sharing a phone and laptop with her siblings at home for learning purposes. Although the school provided Chromebook loans, issues still arose due to the lack of Wi-Fi or adequate internet access.

KM also mentioned that to meet project-based assignment needs, many students relied on free internet quotas from the government, purchased weekly data plans, visited friends' or neighbors' houses with Wi-Fi, or even went to fast-food restaurants to access Wi-Fi for free. These efforts greatly assisted them in continuing their web-based online learning. Additionally, for devices like laptops or phones, students often had to take turns with their siblings or parents.

At the beginning of online learning, many students felt pressured and bored after months of studying from home. JN, in an interview on December 19, 2021, revealed that many students felt bored, stressed, and sometimes felt compelled to go to a friend's house just to study together or simply to meet and joke around. However, not all friends could be visited due to strict restrictions in many residential areas at that time.

### EFFORTS OF MOTHERS TO RECOVER MENTAL HEALTH POST-LAYOFF

A strong sense of confidence is a crucial strength for individuals when facing situations that do not meet their expectations, such as layoffs. Among the 25 respondents surveyed, 24% strongly agreed and 48% agreed that they have the belief to rise again and find new motivation to continue their lives. These respondents believe that they can regain their creativity and develop their potential, although 28% expressed doubts and uncertainty about their ability to recover from the difficult conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The confidence to secure a new job also serves as an indicator of the mental recovery of these mothers. Mother G, in an interview conducted on January 25, 2022, expressed her belief that she would obtain a better job than before. With this job, she hopes her income will be higher, enabling her to meet her family's needs, especially in supporting her children's education. Meanwhile, another respondent, Mother L, in the same interview, also expressed her confidence in finding a new job despite being aware that she would face competition from younger, more agile graduates experienced in the digital world. However, this challenge does not dampen her spirit to continue fighting.

This optimism is supported by survey results, where 40% of respondents strongly agreed and 44% agreed that they have hope for finding new employment. Only 16% expressed disagreement, reflecting the differences in individual confidence levels. Although a small minority still feel doubt, the majority of respondents demonstrate enthusiasm and determination to rise from the downturn following their layoffs, which is a vital part of their mental health recovery process.

## CONCLUSION

The greatest challenges faced by these mothers are the economic and psychological pressures resulting from job loss, which directly impact their ability to provide learning media and support for their children during online learning. Barriers such as limited internet access, technology devices, and non-ideal home learning environments also affect the quality of their children's learning outcomes. Nevertheless, the mothers strive hard to seek solutions, such as utilizing free internet quotas, sharing devices with family members, and using public facilities to access the internet.

Overall, this research indicates that the resilience of mothers post-layoff plays a significant role in supporting their children's education. Despite facing considerable challenges, the mothers' spirit and determination to adapt and rise from the crisis are essential factors in ensuring that their children continue to receive a quality education amidst the pandemic situation. This resilience not only reflects the ability to endure but also the mothers' capacity to find creative ways to overcome difficulties, ultimately influencing the quality of their children's learning outcomes.

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