



Received: 21-04-2024
Accepted: 01-06-2024

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Spirituality and Social Support as Predictors of Resilience in Long Distance Marriage (LDM): Study on HKBP Congregation in District XVIII JABARTENGGDIY

¹Fera Maylinda Nababan, ²Dr. Maria Goretti Adiyanti, ³Dr. Heru Astikasari Setya Murti
^{1, 2, 3} Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Indonesia

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2024.4.3.2910>

Corresponding Author: Fera Maylinda Nababan

Abstract

This study aims to determine whether spirituality and social support simultaneously predict resilience in long-distance marriages (LDM) among members of the HKBP congregation in District XVIII Jabartengdiy. The hypothesis of this study is that spirituality and social support simultaneously predict the resilience of long-distance marriages among HKBP congregation members in District Jabartengdiy. The method used is a quantitative method with a correlational design. Data were collected and processed using the Resilience Questionnaire Test (RQ Test) to measure the resilience variable (Y), the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) to measure the spirituality variable (X1), and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived

Social Support (MSPSS) to measure the social support variable (X2). The participants consisted of 76 HKBP congregation members in Regional District XVII Jabartengdiy who were in long-distance marriages, obtained through purposive sampling technique. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with the SPSS 21 program. The analysis results showed a simultaneous influence of spirituality and social support on resilience in Regional District XVII Jabartengdiy members who were in long-distance marriages, with an F-value of 230.681 and a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). The coefficient value (R²) was 0.863, indicating that the contribution of spirituality and social support to resilience was 86.3%.

Keywords: Social Support, Long Distance Marriage, Resilience, Spirituality

Introduction

Human awareness of their basic needs as social beings renders them incapable of living in isolation. This stems from the inherent human desire to be loved and to belong (Litiloly & Swastiningsih, 2014) ^[13]. According to Maslow (in Feist & Feist, 2008) ^[9], this need for love and belonging drives humans to form friendships, have partners, offspring, and the need to be attached to a family. One way to fulfill this is through marriage (Banggu, 2022) ^[5].

Marriage is a permanent partnership established with a commitment between husband and wife (Amri, 2022) ^[11]. It is not only a formal bond but also a symbiotic mutualistic relationship where both parties complement and need each other (Subhan, 2022) ^[25]. If either the husband or wife fails to uphold their commitment in marriage, it can disrupt the marital relationship and lead to various problems (Prianto *et al.*, 2013) ^[18].

One issue that can arise in marriage is when the husband and wife live apart, without meeting face-to-face or being close, commonly known as a long-distance marriage (LDM) (Harsari, 2020) ^[10]. According to Wijayanti (2021) ^[28], a long-distance marriage is a type of marriage where the couple is geographically separated for a certain period or even permanently. Although statistical data on the number of families in long-distance marriages in Indonesia is unavailable, in the United States, the Center for the Study of Long-Distance Relationships conducted a survey in 2005, revealing that 3.5 million Americans were in long-distance marriages (Rachman, 2018) ^[19]. The Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP) Church Bureau has not yet conducted a survey on its members experiencing LDM. LDM refers to situations where spouses are geographically separated for a significant period due to economic demands, work, education, or other reasons (Pistole in Anisah *et al.*, 2023) ^[2]. According to Prameswara (in Nugraheni & Pratiwi, 2020) ^[17], jealousy and suspicion about a partner's fidelity can also trigger conflicts that cause stress in an LDM.

According to Bangnu (2022) ^[5], marriages that can maintain a healthier and happier relationship and endure separation by distance are those with resilience. Reivich and Shatté (2002) ^[20] define resilience as the ability to endure and adapt to pressure or difficult situations. Aspects of resilience according to Reivich and Shatté (2002) ^[20] include emotional regulation, impulse control, optimism, problem analysis, empathy, self-efficacy, and achievement. Couples must adapt and release themselves from the pressures and changes occurring in marital life during long-distance periods. A study by Sawai *et al.* (2021) ^[24] on 110 couples in long-distance marriages found that love and trust tend to encourage couples to maintain their marriages. Conversely, Harsari (2020) ^[10] found that three wives in LDMs experienced communication problems, frequent quarrels, loneliness, and limited involvement from their husbands in parenting.

Supporting factors in resilience include personal factors, biological factors, and environmental-systemic factors (Herrman *et al.*, 2011) ^[11]. Personal factors encompass personality characteristics, self-efficacy, self-esteem, optimism, hope, emotional regulation, and spirituality. Biological factors involve the development of brain structure, function, and neurobiological systems. Environmental-systemic factors include social support from family, friends, community, and places of worship like mosques and churches that can influence one's resilience.

Considering these factors, the researcher focuses on spirituality and social support as factors influencing resilience. Previous research by Safitri *et al.* (2022) ^[21] found a positive influence of spirituality on resilience, meaning spirituality affects an individual's resilience. Underwood and Teresi (2002) ^[27] define spirituality as the perception of something transcendent in daily life and the perception of the involvement of transcendent events in daily life. Spirituality is also an integral part of religious and spiritual life. Based on this definition, the researcher adopts the definition provided by Underwood and Teresi (2002) ^[27]. Dimensions of spirituality according to Underwood and Teresi (2002) ^[27] include connection, joy, strength and comfort, peace, divine help, divine guidance, perception of divine love, awe, thankfulness, compassionate love, mercy, and union closeness.

Social support also has a strong relationship and influence on resilience. This is evidenced by Mufidah's (2017) ^[16] findings that social support positively correlates with resilience among 50 Bidikmisi students. Similarly, Azmy and Hartini's (2021) ^[3] research found a positive influence of social support on resilience in teenagers with divorced parents. Social support is the encouragement obtained from special people like parents, friends, community, and close individuals who care about the person or LDM couples (Zimet in Terok & Huwae, 2022) ^[26]. Dimensions of social support according to Zimet *et al.* (1988) ^[29] include family support, friend support, and significant other support. Aspects of social support according to Sarafino and Smith (in Candrakanti & Chusairi, 2023) ^[7] include emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and social network support.

Previous research by Caton (2021) ^[8] and Malau *et al.* (2022) ^[14] also revealed that spirituality and social support can predict a person's resilience. This means that individuals with strong spirituality and social support have high resilience. Conversely, if a person's spirituality and social

support are low, their resilience will also be low.

In the context of long-distance marriage (LDM), the church serves as a place for congregants of all ages and backgrounds to gather. The church is not just a gathering place; it creates an environment where each congregant feels heard, accepted, emotionally supported, comforted in loneliness, and spiritually and practically uplifted. This is also true for the HKBP Church, which plays an important role in all its services, including marriage counseling. As part of its pastoral and spiritual duties, HKBP guides, supports, and conducts pastoral marriage counseling according to the church's doctrine (HKBP, 2020) ^[12].

Therefore, the hypothesis in this study is that spirituality and social support are predictors of resilience in long-distance marriages among HKBP congregation members in District XVIII JABARTENGDIY. This research is important to review considering the significant influence of spirituality and social support in building resilience in individuals undergoing LDM.

Method

This study employs a quantitative approach using a correlational design to determine the relationships among three variables: Resilience (dependent variable), spirituality (independent variable 1), and social support (independent variable 2).

Data Collection Process

Data collection was conducted through WhatsApp by sending the research questionnaire in the form of a Google Form. The completed questionnaires were then downloaded via Google Sheets for data processing. Information about the number of informants was obtained from the database of each church and communicated to the researcher by each Pastor and Elder.

Participants

The study involved a population of registered congregants of the Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP) Church in the Regional District XVIII JABARTENGDIY (covering West Java, Central Java, and Yogyakarta) who are currently experiencing a long-distance marriage. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling based on these criteria, resulting in a sample of 76 participants.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study are as follows:

1. Resilience was measured using the Resilience Quotient Test (RQ) developed by Reivich and Shatté (2002). This scale consists of 59 items based on 7 aspects, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.980.
2. Spirituality was measured using the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) developed by Underwood and Teresi (2002) ^[27]. This scale consists of 39 items based on 12 dimensions, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.940.
3. Social Support was measured using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) by Zimet *et al.* (1988) ^[29], modified by Terok and Huwae (2022) ^[26] and based on aspects described by Sarafino and Smith (in Candrakanti & Chusairi, 2023) ^[29]. This scale consists of 56 items based on 3 dimensions and 4 aspects, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.976.

The scales employed a Likert scale method with four alternative responses. The responses for positive (favorable) statements were weighted as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The item scores for negative (unfavorable) statements were: Strongly Agree (SA) = 1, Agree (A) = 2, Disagree (D) = 3, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 4.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted using multiple

regression analysis to determine the relationships between the two independent variables and the dependent variable. The analysis was performed using SPSS 21. Assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and linearity) and correlation tests were conducted as prerequisites for the regression model before testing the hypotheses

Results

Table 1: Uji Signifikansi Simultan (Uji F)

ANOVA ^a						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	39014.763	2	19507.381	230.681	.000 ^b
	Residual	6173.185	73	84.564		
	Total	45187.947	75			
a. Dependent Variable: Resiliensi						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Dukungan Sosial, Spiritualitas						

Table 2: Uji Signifikansi Parsial (Uji t)

Coefficients ^a						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	-51.505	16.887		-3.050	.003
	Spiritualitas	.714	.168	.281	4.242	.000
	Dukungan Sosial	.760	.072	.698	10.545	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Resiliensi						

Table 3: Uji Koefisien Determinasi (R²)

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.929 ^a	.863	.860	9.196
a. Predictors: (Constant), Dukungan Sosial, Spiritualitas				
b. Dependent Variable: Resiliensi				

Based on the hypothesis test results, it is evident that there is a simultaneous correlation between spirituality and social support with resilience in long distance marriages among the HKBP congregation in District XVIII Jabartengdiy.

Discussion

Spirituality as a Predictor of Resilience in Long Distance Marriage Congregants of HKBP in District XVIII Jabartengdiy

The hypothesis testing results indicate that spirituality significantly and positively affects the resilience of long-distance marriage (LDM) congregants of HKBP in District XVIII Jabartengdiy, with a t-value of 4.242 greater than the critical t-value of 1.996 and a significance level of 0.000 (p < 0.05). This means that higher spirituality is associated with higher resilience among these congregants.

This finding aligns with previous research by Cahyani and Akmal (2017) [6], which demonstrated that a person's resilience is influenced by their spirituality. Reoper (as cited in Azwan *et al.*, 2015) [4] also supports this by stating that individuals with good spirituality enhance their coping mechanisms, optimism, hope, reduce anxiety, and support feelings of comfort and tranquility. In other words, individuals with high spirituality have a positive and hopeful outlook, leading to a relaxed state and reduced anxiety while facing the challenges of LDM, enabling them to handle issues more calmly.

Social Support as a Predictor of Resilience in Long Distance Marriage Congregants of HKBP in District XVIII Jabartengdiy

The linearity test results show that social support significantly and positively influences the resilience of LDM congregants of HKBP in District XVIII Jabartengdiy, with a t-value of 10.545 greater than the critical t-value of 1.996 and a significance level of 0.000 (p < 0.05). Thus, higher social support correlates with higher resilience in these congregants.

This finding is consistent with the research by Sasongko *et al.* (2020) [23], which states that higher perceived social support correlates with higher resilience. External or social environmental support influences an individual's resilience level. High social support from the environment helps individuals withstand challenges they face.

Spirituality and Social Support as Joint Predictors of Resilience in Long Distance Marriage Congregants of HKBP in District XVIII Jabartengdiy

The data analysis for HKBP District XVIII Jabartengdiy congregants undergoing LDM shows that spirituality and social support together contribute 86.3% to resilience. The F-value of 230.681 with a significance level of 0.000 (p < 0.05) indicates that spirituality and social support significantly influence the resilience of LDM congregants in this district. Therefore, spirituality and social support

together can predict the resilience of LDM congregants in HKBP District XVIII Jabartengdiy.

According to Meezenbroek *et al.* (2012) ^[15], spirituality is defined as one's struggle and experience of connection with the essence of life. Underwood and Teresi (2002) ^[27] describe spirituality as the perception of a transcendent element in everyday life and the involvement of transcendent events in daily life. Spirituality is an integral part of religious and spiritual life.

Alongside high spirituality, receiving social support from others also influences the resilience of LDM congregants in HKBP District XVIII Jabartengdiy. According to Sarafino and Smith (2014) ^[22], social support refers to the care, comfort, or assistance available to an individual from others or groups. Zimet *et al.* (1988) ^[29] identified three essential sources of social support: Support from friends, family, and significant others. In this study, support was received from spouses, friends, and pastors.

Thus, having high spirituality and receiving social support from those around can influence the resilience of LDM congregants in HKBP District XVIII Jabartengdiy. This is supported by previous research by Caton (2021) ^[8] and Malau *et al.* (2022) ^[14], which revealed that spirituality and social support can predict an individual's resilience. Individuals with strong spirituality and social support tend to have higher resilience, while those with low spirituality and social support tend to have lower resilience.

Conclusion

Based on statistical tests and discussions, it can be concluded that there is a simultaneous influence of spirituality and social support on the resilience of LDM congregants of HKBP in District XVIII Jabartengdiy. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.863, indicating that spirituality and social support contribute 86.3% to the resilience of LDM congregants in HKBP District XVIII Jabartengdiy. Spirituality partially affects the resilience of these congregants, and social support also partially affects their resilience.

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