

Patriarchal System And Stress Levels In Mothers With Toddlers

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ABSTRACT

Background: Women who perform their duties as wives within a patriarchal system are responsible for household management, which can make women one of the groups vulnerable to mental disorders, especially stress. This research is important to conduct in order to examine the relationship between the patriarchal system and stress levels in mothers with toddlers, as an effort to broaden the understanding of social determinants of maternal mental health and provide a basis for family-based psychosocial interventions.

Methods: This study uses a quantitative method with a cross-sectional approach. The population of this study consisted of 37 mothers who have toddlers. This study uses a bivariate test, namely the Mann-Whitney test.

Results: The bivariate analysis using the Mann-Whitney test showed no significant difference in stress levels, with a significance value of 0.124.

Conclusion: In conclusion, research on the patriarchal system and stress levels in mothers with toddlers indicates that, descriptively, mothers living in a patriarchal system tend to have higher stress levels compared to mothers who do not live in a patriarchal system. However, the results of the Mann-Whitney U test show that the difference in stress levels between the two groups is not statistically significant.

ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: Wanita yang menjalankan tugasnya sebagai istri dalam sistem patriarki merupakan penanggung jawab rumah tangga, hal ini dapat menyebabkan wanita menjadi salah satu golongan yang rentan menderita gangguan mental, terutama stress. Penelitian ini penting dilakukan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara sistem patriarki dan tingkat stres pada ibu yang memiliki balita, sebagai upaya memperluas pemahaman mengenai determinan sosial kesehatan mental ibu serta memberikan dasar bagi intervensi psikososial berbasis keluarga.

Metode: Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan metode cross sectional. Populasi pada penelitian ini yaitu ibu yang memiliki bayi balita sebanyak 37 orang. Penelitian ini menggunakan uji bivariat yaitu Mann-Whitney.

Hasil: Hasil analisis Bivariat dengan menggunakan Mann-Whitney menunjukkan tidak terdapat perbedaan tingkat stress yang signifikan dengan nilai Sig 0,124.

Kesimpulan: Kesimpulannya, penelitian mengenai sistem patriarki dan tingkat stres pada ibu yang memiliki balita, dapat disimpulkan bahwa secara deskriptif ibu yang hidup dalam sistem patriarki cenderung memiliki tingkat stres yang lebih tinggi dibandingkan ibu yang tidak hidup dalam sistem patriarki. Namun, hasil uji Mann-Whitney U menunjukkan bahwa perbedaan tingkat stres antara kedua kelompok tersebut tidak signifikan secara statistik.

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INTRODUCTION

Married women are considered one of the groups vulnerable to mental health problems, particularly stress. Stress in married women arises from the lack of support from the closest environment, especially husbands, due to the patriarchal culture embedded in our social environment. Indonesian women live with the assumption that after marriage, life must be dedicated to household matters such as taking care of the husband, children, domestic work, and managing finances. This patriarchal culture indirectly makes husbands feel they have no commitment to running the household together. Husbands assume that earning a living is an absolute role that must be fulfilled, and often neglect domestic affairs (Astuti, 2025).

Women who perform their duties as wives within a patriarchal system are responsible for household management, which can make women one of the groups vulnerable to mental disorders, especially stress. This is caused by the lack of support from the closest environment due to the patriarchal system that exists within the household. Stress is an uncomfortable condition where humans feel burdened or beyond their ability to meet those demands. Stress is a reaction that arises in humans caused by various pressures, for example when humans face *challenges* that occur in daily life. Stress also arises when there are extraordinary demands that make humans feel it will become a threat to their safety or integrity (Sulistiyorini and Kholifah, 2024).

Research from the *Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, University of Washington* in 2019 stated that the number of people with mental disorders (ODGJ) has increased over the past 30 years, and is most commonly experienced by women as housewives. Mothers as individuals who manage the household situation rely not only on physical health but also require psychological balance. The time dedicated to caring for family members causes mothers to neglect their own needs. This is what makes housewives less attentive to their own needs, which can ultimately disrupt the mother's mental health (Rahayu et al., 2024).

Stress experienced by mothers will affect the parenting patterns of their children, because *parenting stress* will cause problems in children's growth and development. The mother's stress condition will be related to the child's first experiences that determine success or failure in the future. If parents cannot control their emotions and have high stress levels, along with poor emotional regulation strategies, this will affect the child's emotional and mental processes. Stress problems in mothers will cause children to be at risk of more serious psychological disorders in their future, such as depression and suicide risk (Fithriyah, 2023).

Although various studies have examined the relationship between patriarchy and women's mental health, most research has focused on depression as a psychological outcome. Studies that specifically examine the relationship between the patriarchal system and stress levels in mothers with toddlers are still limited, particularly in the socio-cultural context of Indonesian society. In fact, the toddler caregiving phase is a period vulnerable to increased psychological burden on mothers.

Therefore, this research is important to conduct in order to examine the relationship between the patriarchal system and stress levels in mothers with toddlers, as an effort to broaden the understanding of social determinants of maternal mental health and provide a basis for family-based psychosocial interventions.

METHOD

Types of Research

This study used a quantitative research method with a *cross-sectional* study design.

Research Location and Time

This study was conducted in September 2024 in Rawa Bangun Village, Rengat Sub-district, Indragiri Hulu Regency, Riau Province.

Population and Sample

This study used total sampling of 37 mothers with toddlers in Rawa Bangun Village.

Data Collection

Data collection was carried out using questionnaires and observation methods. In qualitative research, the researcher becomes the key instrument of interaction. The researcher's interaction with informants is expected to obtain information that can reveal problems completely. Data validity was ensured through observation persistence in the field and triangulation techniques.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data collection was conducted through surveys and data were collected using the DASS 42 questionnaire and a patriarchy questionnaire. DASS 42 is an instrument used to measure depression, anxiety, and stress. This study focused on the relationship between patriarchy and maternal mental health, specifically focusing on stress. The interpretation of stress levels based on the stress aspect scores was: 0–14 (normal), 15–18 (mild), 19–25 (moderate), 26–33 (severe), and 34+ (extremely severe) (Warella et al., 2021).

RESEARCH RESULTS

The research results include maternal characteristics, statistical test results using the DASS 42 measurement focusing on stress, patriarchy, and the relationship between patriarchy and stress measured through DASS 42.

a. Univariate Analysis

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Characteristics of Mothers with Toddlers

No	Characteristics	n(f)	%
1	Age		
	<35	2	5.4
	21 – 35	35	94.6
2	Education		
	Basic	2	5.4
	Secondary	28	75.7
	Higher	7	18.9
3	Occupation		
	Unemployed	33	89.2
	Employed	4	10.8

Based on the table above, of the 37 respondents, the majority were aged 21–35 years, totaling 35 mothers (94.6%). The remaining 2 mothers (5.4%) were above 35 years of age. Regarding education, the majority of mothers had secondary education at 28 mothers (75.7%), followed by higher education at 7 mothers (18.9%) and basic education at 2 mothers (5.4%). For occupational characteristics, 33 mothers (89.2%) were unemployed and the remaining 4 mothers (10.8%) were employed.

b. Stress in Mothers with Toddlers

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of DASS 42 on the Stress Aspect

No	DASS 42 (Stress)	n(f)	%
1	Normal	17	45.9
2	Mild	11	29.7
3	Moderate	9	24.3
	Total	37	100

The descriptive analysis results showed that out of 37 mothers who were respondents, most were at the normal stress level (45.9%), followed by mild stress (29.7%) and moderate stress (24.3%).

c. Patriarchy

Patriarchy was measured using a patriarchy questionnaire with the interpretation of "patriarchal" and "non-patriarchal". The results are shown in the table below:

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Patriarchy Characteristics

No	Variable	n(f)	%
1	Patriarchal	16	43.2
2	Non-Patriarchal	21	56.8
Total		37	100

The descriptive analysis results showed that out of 37 mothers who were respondents, the majority had non-patriarchal characteristics (56.8%).

d. Relationship between Patriarchy and Stress in Mothers with Toddlers

The relationship between patriarchy and stress in mothers can be seen in the following table:

Table 4. Mann-Whitney Test Results

	Stress
Mann-Whitney U	118.000
Z	-1.539
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.124

The bivariate analysis using the Mann-Whitney test showed no significant difference in stress levels, with a significance value of 0.124.

DISCUSSION

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test showed that there was no significant difference in stress levels between mothers living in a patriarchal system and those who did not ($U = 118.00$; $Z = -1.539$; $p = 0.124$). However, descriptively, mothers in a patriarchal system had higher mean rank stress values compared to mothers not in a patriarchal system. Although no statistically significant difference was found, the research results showed a tendency toward higher stress levels in mothers living within a patriarchal system. This condition indicates that the patriarchal system has the potential to become a psychosocial risk factor for maternal mental health, although its influence is not yet strong enough to show a statistically meaningful difference. The non-significance of the research results may have been influenced by the relatively small sample size and the presence of other factors such as social support, economic conditions, and maternal coping strategies that were not measured in this study.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the results. First, the sample size in this study was relatively limited, which may have affected the statistical power in detecting differences in stress levels between the group of mothers living in a patriarchal system and those who did not. A small sample size has the potential to cause research results not to show significant differences even though there is a descriptive tendency for differences.

Second, the measurement of the patriarchal system in this study was conducted through grouping based on average scores, so it has not been fully able to describe the complexity of the practices and dynamics of the patriarchal system in household life. This approach has the potential to simplify a multidimensional social phenomenon.

Considering these limitations, the results of this study are expected to serve as a basis for further research with a more comprehensive design and more in-depth variable measurements from various factors that can cause stress in mothers with toddlers, such as husband's support, parenting patterns, and so forth.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the research on the patriarchal system and stress levels in mothers with toddlers, it can be concluded that descriptively, mothers living in a patriarchal system tend to have higher stress levels compared to mothers who do not live in a patriarchal system. However, the results of the

Mann–Whitney U test showed that the difference in stress levels between the two groups was not statistically significant.

This research recommends that further studies be conducted with larger sample sizes and more comprehensive measurement instruments, incorporating variables such as social support, economic conditions, and coping strategies. Health institutions and community organizations are also encouraged to develop family-based psychosocial intervention programs aimed at reducing the psychological burden on mothers, particularly those living within patriarchal family structures.

Author’s Contribution Statement:

Restianingsih Putri Rahayu: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – Original Draft, Supervision, Funding Acquisition. Anjeli Ratih Syamlingga Putri: Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft. Fitriyani Bahriyah: Methodology, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing. Izzawati Arlis: Methodology, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing. Monifa Putri: Investigation, Resources, Project Administration.

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