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Analysis of the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Family Harmony: Case Studies on Family with and without People with Special Needs

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of this study was to know the impact of COVID-19 on family harmony. The research method used is a case study of 4 people who have families with different backgrounds, roles, and conditions (with and without people with special needs). Results showed that impact of COVID-19 to the family harmony caused decreases in domestic income, increases in frequency of family fights, financial management difficulties, and the double burden of the family, especially parents. These results come because there are actions that emerged after COVID-19 appeared, namely home quarantine and implementation of health protocols. This then necessitated adaptation in various sectors where working from home, school from home, and layoffs of employees. This research has an impact on analyzing family harmony during the COVID-19 pandemic for the development of sustainable family harmony to prepare families for unexpected future situations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit many sectors, one of which is the family sector. Family is the smallest structural unit in the social system. The family is the provider of the needs and centers of children's development and learning (Naomee, 2013).

There has been an increase in cases surrounding the family that occurred in Indonesia during COVID-19 due to the lack of family harmony. These cases have emerged, including the increase in divorce cases recorded by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion during June and July 2020 (Vyn, 2020), the concern of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia regarding the difficulty of reporting access for victims of domestic violence amid the pandemic (Uchino & Wahyuni, 2020), and protests which was posted on online learning by mothers and asked that the school be reopened because online learning was considered complicated (Syakriah, 2020). The most sadistic tragedy regarding online learning is the killing of a child by the mother herself due to difficulties learning online (Dagur, 2020). The risk of family violence is currently very high and is likely to remain so for the coming months during the pandemic (Campbell, 2020).

Harmony in the family has a significant effect on stress (Windarwati et al., 2020). This is why family harmony is very necessary, not only during the pandemic, but also needed at all times to prevent bad things from happening in the family. The terms used to describe a harmonious family vary greatly, but whatever term is used, there is a consistency of the main theme that is described, namely believing that they function well in life and are satisfied with their relationship with each other (Fauziah, 2020).

Many studies related to family harmony during the COVID-19 pandemic have emerged. One of them is a study entitled "Family Science in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Solutions and New Directions" (Brock & Laifer, 2020) focuses on solutions to family problems that emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially mental health, but has not yet connected how the covid-19 process affects family harmony.

The purpose of this study was to know the impact of COVID-19 on family harmony. The main originality was (i) COVID-19 impact for family harmony.

2. METHODS

The research stage begins with selecting a theme and title departing from the object of study, family harmony, which can be analyzed. The study was continued with reading the literature on family harmony to formulate the focus and research problems. After the focus and research problems were found, the authors began to create an interview instrument based on case study interview guidelines tailored to the focus of the research problem (Harrison et al., 2017). Data collection was carried out by specific interviews regarding the respondent's family life after the COVID -19 pandemic emerged in Indonesia and archival records from the interview. To improve the data, the authors matched the essence of the interview results with the problem formulation, then continued processing and refining the data (Alpi et al., 2019). Data is analyzed sequentially starting from general information to specific information so that data patterns can be seen. Theoretical dialogue is carried out with theory so that development occurs. The triangulation of findings was also reported to the interviewed informants. Informants are selected based on the objective conditions of family harmony. The research method used is a case study of 4 people who have families with different backgrounds, roles, and conditions (with and without people with special needs). The following informants involved in the research are listed in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Informants Data

Pseudonym	Role in the family	Occupation	Age
FKI	Daughter	Student	21
SN	Mother	Teacher	31
AA	Father	Merchant	53

The sample chosen represents the roles contained in the family such as father, mother, and children. As this is a worldwide phenomenon, it is hoped that the resulting data will help solve and reflect on similar cases.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Analysis of the Impact of Covid-19 on Family Harmony

The number of sectors that had to be closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the education and industrial sectors experienced by informants, had an impact on surrounding parties who benefited from there such as stalls in schools, internet cafes, and stationery places that went out of business because schools were closed. Industry also imposes shifts so that workers work time is reduced and it has an impact on their income.

From interviews with informants, the most pronounced impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is a decrease in income. As we know that COVID-19 pandemic has created a widespread economic slowdown and has affected different sectors of the economy (Roy, 2020). This is related to recent research which shows that the household sector is the sector most affected by COVID-19 (Susilawati *et al.*, 2020). Patrick *et al.* (2020) also shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on the number of unemployed, which of course, reduces the level of family income.

Decrease in income is the main source of problems in the family, such as an increase in the frequency of parental arguments and cuts in secondary expenditure. Released data based on the level of the economy, where couples with income below 5 million rupiah were twice as likely to admit that their relationship was increasingly tense compared to those with income above 5 million rupiah (Ridhoi, 2020). It can be seen that household harmony is correlated with the level of the economy.

The increase in frequency of fighting causes children, who often see arguments, become irritable and scream while talking. It is undeniable that this fight was caused by a broken relationship. This is certainly not good for children's development because there is a concern that irregularities will occur. Children who are exposed to maladaptive (destructive, intense) conflict accompanied by anger that is not resolved properly and family tensions that increase thereafter at the age of five increase the risk for internalizing the symptoms of behavior problems in early adolescence (Brock & Kochanska, 2016).

During the COVID-19 pandemic where income was reduced, the presence of family members affected by the disease was enough to hit financial management. Families who have been covered by health insurance are quite difficult because there are additional expenses from transportation and consumption both during treatment and during control to the hospital. In fact, in the context of COVID-19, households cut their consumption to basic necessities such as food and health care spending to offset lost income (Farrel *et al.*, 2020).

The informant said that children who used to go to school every weekday now have to learn from home. This makes it difficult for parents because they have to take the time to

accompany their children to study, as well as having to work both from home and from the office. For parents who have several children, they can direct their first child to accompany their younger siblings. However, this also becomes a double burden for the first child, where they have to do schoolwork, sometimes some do domestic work, and at the same time have to accompany their younger siblings to study. Global home schooling is seen as unable to replace the learning lost from schools (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020). However, there is likely to be substantial differences between families in the extent to which they can help their children learn with all the limitations such as time allocation, parental skills and understanding for teaching, and resources (Oreopoulos et al. 2006; Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020).

Behind the negative impacts that occur, families whose members are sent home can get together and have more time together, so that family members can pour out their feelings of love and help each other. Research found 46% of respondents answered, in which restrictions have provided the opportunity to reconnect with friends or family (Fleming & O'hara, 2020). However, in vulnerable families, gathering at home can be a threat (Campbell, 2020). Family members can become targets of violence and even murder by their own families. The family no longer provides protection and security in this context.

The informants suppressed the impact that occurred by believing that anything that happened could be learned, believing that sustenance had been determined by the Almighty, and still trying to find other side businesses to increase income.

3.2 How Covid-19 Impacts Family Harmony

From the results of the case studies, we get an explanation of how COVID-19 can affect family harmony (Figure 1). The cause of the impact of COVID-19 on the family is none other than the laying off of people. This being sent home is what spreads to other problems such as decreased income due to working from home or the 'shift' system according to health protocol, increased frequency of family fights—that is still connected to the decreased income, financial management difficulties, and the double burden of the family, shown by the role of parents who are also teachers to accompany children's school assignments apart from working. This impact could be stress in the family due to lack of family harmony as evidenced by the results of research show that family harmony has a significant effect on stress (Windarwati et al., 2020)

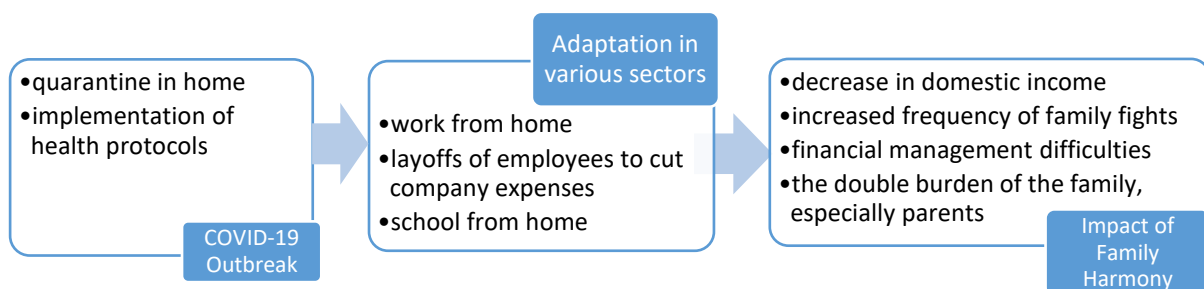


Figure 1. The COVID-19 process in affecting family harmony

4. CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has had an impact on family harmony. This impact does not necessarily hit directly, but through a gradual process. Starting from the beginning of the outbreak of COVID-19, the adaptation of various sectors to COVID-19, until finally affecting family harmony. Home quarantine and the implementation of health protocols, 'force' various sectors to adapt to the pandemic, so that all family members must gather at home, and problems with family harmony start from here. Domestic income decrease, difficulty in managing finances because the spending cuts, the frequency of family fights has increased, and the double burden of families to accompany their children to school from home—these have affected the family harmony.

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6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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