

Resilience in Wives with Homosexual Husband

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Abstract

Wives who find out their husbands are homosexuals often experience emotional surges such as disappointment, stress, depression and lead to meaninglessness of life, although in particular reason some are stood up from the sufferings. This study aims to determine the condition of resilience of wives whose husbands are homosexuals and the factors that influence them. Hope the results of the study will be useful for wives, families or households, especially in Indonesia, if they have problems with homosexual husbands. Some of them are able to develop resilience skills, at least they can be lesson for motivation and inspiration for wives, especially in Indonesia who are homosexuals in order to develop resilience skills. This research uses qualitative methods with a phenomenological approach. The participants of this study were two wives with homosexual husbands who lived in Central Java and Yogyakarta. Data collection was based on interviews and observations conducted directly at the participants' places, namely Jepara and Batang and through video calls. The results of this study showed that both participants were able to develop resilience after learning that their husband was homosexual. The stages are based on aspects such as emotional regulation, impulse control, optimism, causal analysis, empathy, self-efficacy and reaching out. Cultural factors, spirituality, social support and interpersonal communication skills were factors that influenced both participants in developing resilience so that they can go through the dark period of suffering to a life of light.

Keywords: wife resilience, homosexuality, phenomenology

INTRODUCTION

Building a harmonious families become a dream for someone married. Differences in background, education and age become meaningless if couples accept and understand each other. This condition is the basis for building a quality family (Saidiah & Julianto, 2017). There is a purpose in marriage that becomes an agreement and has an impact on the future of married life until death separates (Manap, Kassim, Hoesni, Nen, Idris, & Ghazali: 2013). The purpose of marriage that all couples yearn for is a family full of peace, love, and affection

also having children (Wibisana, 2016). However, not all families and marriages are happy, among the reasons is when the wife finds out that her husband is homosexual (Wijayanto, 2018).

The phenomenon of wives whose husband are homosexual is common in Indonesia. Quoted from Detik.com in 2018-2019 at least 500 thousand married couples in Indonesia were forced to end their household dippers, including separating because it was revealed that her husband turned out to be a homosexual (Sahputra, 2019). A similar case also occurred in a civil servant couple who was sued for divorce by his wife as quoted from Detik.com that the wife knew that the husband was a same-sex lover, even the husband already contaminated with HIV / AIDS, at the end they decided to separate (Sahputra, 2020). Another case quoted from Tribunnews.com a wife sued for divorce from her husband after the marriage contract because the husband did not touch her on the first night because he was a same-sex lover (Hakim, 2022). Some of the cases above indicate that the phenomenon of homosexuality occurs in Indonesia.

The phenomenon of homosexual wives being a unique and interesting fact to be discussed more deeply. Several studies have revealed negative impacts for wives who find out their homosexual husbands. Research by Buxton & Schwartz (2004) stated that when the wife knows the husband's sexual identity, she is surprised, angry and various emotional surges. In the end, wives with homosexual husbands have great potential for despair and meaninglessness life. The phenomenon also occurs in the United States. Quoted from Globalnews.com that they also experience a devastating reality and are filled with pain, confusion, anger, and a loss of deep self-esteem (Scotti, 2018). Even quoted from Merdeka.com, some cases mention that due to psychological shocks the wife committed suicide because she find out her husband was a person who had same-sex attraction (Radityo, 2015).

Research from Buxton & Schwartz (2004) and some of the above information describe the severity of the wife in living and reconciling domestic life with a homosexual, they admit to being heavy in accepting this fact. Research conducted in early 2022 on the Facebook community called Menanti Mentari that is a community consisting of women whose husband are homosexuals. They experienced psychological shocks such as various studies and news

reports above. But uniquely there are some wives who find out their husbands are homosexuals and they are able to get up in accepting this harsh reality. They tried to get up and live their destiny as homosexual men wives with patience and sincerity. A person's ability to rise from a downturn and reach out well productively is called resilience.

Resilience is the ability to get up successfully despite experiencing situations full of risks that are classified as severe (Constantine, Benard, Diaz, 1999). This ability is subjective, between one person and another having their own resilience process (Reivich & Shatte, 2002). According to Reivich and Shatte (2002) there are seven aspects of resilience, namely emotional regulation, control of impulses, optimism, the ability to analyse problems, empathy, self-efficacy, and reaching out.

Based on the above facts, this research will explore resilience in wives who are homosexuals. Those who know a homosexual husband and are able to get through the harsh reality to be able to reach out and become a productive person are interesting things to explore more deeply. It is hoped that the results of the study will benefit wives, families or households, especially in Indonesia, if they have homosexual husband problems. Some of them are able to develop resilience skills, at least they can be a lesson for motivation and inspiration for wives, especially in Indonesia whose husbands are homosexuals in order to develop resilience skills.

A qualitative approach was used in this study with a phenomenological perspective (Kahija, 2017). Participants were determined through purposive sampling techniques and the number involved in this study was two participants, there are wives whose husband is homosexual domiciled in Central Java and Yogyakarta (Sugiyono, 2015). The mention of Nana and Lala in this study is the pseudonym. The data collection method uses interviews and observations that go through validation with triangulation, peer discussion and member check (Cresswell, 2014). The available data were analysed through the technical analysis of the Miles & Huberman model using phenomenological data reduction (Sugiyono, 2015).

DISCUSSION

A Picture of Resilience in Wives with Homosexual Husband

Wives who know that their husband is homosexual have dynamics related to changes in life, namely a dynamic process of adapting called resilience (Prince, 2013). According to Reivich and Shatte (2002) resilience is a mindset that allows humans to seek various experiences and view their lives as an ongoing activity. Resilience as the ability possessed by individuals to respond to unpleasant and traumatic circumstances in a healthy and productive way, especially in living life as a wife with homosexual husband (Reivich and Shatte, 2002).

Every wife who is homosexual has subjective resilience abilities, meaning that each individual has a different resilience. This is because, everyone has a construction of resilience, namely adversity or suffering and positive adjustment or reaction in the face of different risks of suffering (Reivich and Shatte, 2002). If the wife is facing adversity (suffering or risks) and has a positive adjustment (reaction in dealing with risks), her resilience ability will develop. It is characterized by the existence of aspects resilience as stated by Reivich and Shatte (2002) such as emotional control, control of impulses, optimism, ability to analyse problems, empathy, self-efficacy, and reaching out. This construction is the initial foundation for them to develop resilience skills in dealing with life problems as wives with homosexual husband (Nasution, 2011).

Of course, to achieve all these aspects, the individual is influenced by several factors such as I Have (external source of support), I Am (individual/internal ability) and I Can (social and interpersonal ability) (Gortberg, 1995). The above set of aspects of resilience and factors will run, develop and process in an individual wife whose husband is a homosexual. Resilience starts from individuals who face adversity (suffering or risk) and have positive adjustments (self-adjustment). Furthermore, it will start with the stage of overcoming or the stage of overcoming the problem, steering through or controlling, the stage of bounce back, reaching out or outreach (Reivich & Shatte, 2002).

The results showed that Nana and Lala had the same adversity or suffering, namely find out the husband of a homosexual. Nana and Lala feel emotional surges ranging from sadness, anger, disappointment, disgust and other negative effects. Nana did it with cursing on facebook, slamming things at home and hitting her husband until she was stressed and

depressed. Meanwhile, Lala strolling around without direction around the city like a dazed person full of confusion. Nana and Lala's response in the face of adversity is in line with the results of research Buxton & Schwartz (2004) mentions that when the wife find out the husband's sexual identity, she is surprised, angry, various turmoil emotion, despair and meaninglessness life. Various emotional turmoil experienced by a person with suffering will have an impact on obstacles in carrying out daily routines (Scotti, 2018). This is a natural response when someone experiences a difficult situation, one of which is knowing that the husband is homosexual (Lambert & Corps, 2020).

Although both participants had the same point of suffering or adversity of knowing a homosexual husband, they had different positive adjustments. Nana has a positive adjustment in the form of patience and Lala in the form of commitment in marriage. Nana in the passage of time, she accepted patiently. So, she is able to regulate emotions and has rarely made a facebook status with a rude words or cursing. Meanwhile, Lala always thinks that marrying her husband is her decision and desire, so she must commit to her marriage.

The Positive adjustment performed by Nana and Lala is a form of understanding of the steps to achieve optimal function in ongoing adversity. Schoon (2006) says that the positive adjustment criterion does not focus on the ability to achieve optimal functioning after facing adversity but rather how the individual seeks an understanding of the problem to involve the improvement of psychosocial resources and the development of new coping skills. Referred to Reivich and Shatte (2002) positive adjustment can be formed through a thinking style that determines a person's emotional response in the face of an event.

Positive adjustment doing by Nana and Lala's in response to adversity or suffering make them enter the overcoming stage. Nana begins to enter the overcoming characterized by the consciousness of awakening. Nana's awareness to rise is a trigger in analysing and changing perspectives to be positive and being able to control her life even though she is experiencing severe life tests. Unlike Nana, Lala begins to enter an overcoming marked by seeing her husband's efforts to leave the homosexual life, she can change the perception of the problem to be more positive. It is not without reason that Nana and Lala can go through the stages that arise from the dynamics of meaning to suffering with the awareness to rise up and see the husband's efforts to leave the homosexual life. According to Frankl (2017)

humans have the power to face life's difficulties by maximizing potential in seeking the meaning of life. The meaning of life has an impact on a person's expectations, beliefs and well-being in experiencing suffering which is full of risks of anxiety, stress to depression (Haugan and Dezutter, 2021).

Looking at the aspects of resilience according to Reivich and Shatte (2002) the change in Nana and Lala's perception occurs because there is an aspect of emotional regulation. Nana is able to control emotional outbursts and aggressive behaviour as well as being more stoic such as regulating emotions and no longer cursing in facebook posts and slamming things at home. Lala can also control anger by doing salat and reading the holy Quran and unlike before who prefers to drive around the city aimlessly when angry. Research from Mawardah & Adiyati (2014) states that a person's skills in managing emotions and self-control when getting problems in their life will have a good impact in directing their behaviour. Nana and Lala are able to manage emotions and control themselves when they know the harsh reality so that it has a good impact on her in directing behaviour in a positive direction such as praying and reading the holy Quran.

In addition to the regulation of emotions, there is also an aspect of impulse control, Nana is able to not take revenge on her husband and is grateful because for her husband there is still a lot of kindness given to her and the children. Likewise, Lala is able to act altruistically towards her husband and does not open her husband's disgrace even though she can do it when emotional. Nana and Lala's ability to regulate impulses that arise from within is caused by the ability to regulate emotions. Research from Sukmaningpraja & Santhoso (2016) stated that control of impulses is closely related to emotional regulation skills so that they have good control over impulses, so they tend to have good emotional regulation.

After passing the overcoming stage, Nana passed the steering through stage which was marked by hope and a sense of optimism for the future. Nana has this belief that she is able to face and control her problems. No matter how hard the test she is going through, Nana still performs her obligations as a wife. Likewise with Lala who has adapted to her marriage and understands her husband's condition as a man who has same-sex sexual attraction. Nana and Lala's ability to go through the steering through stages occurs because there are aspects

of optimism, causal analysis, empathy, and self-efficacy so that hope and optimism arise towards the future.

According to Nes & Segerstrom (2006) optimism is a positive and realistic way of thinking in assessing or viewing a problem. They believe that all difficulties can change for the better and turn into good. Those who are resilient have confidence that they are able to get through and overcome problems in their lives (Sagone & Caroli, 2016). In addition, wives with homosexual husbands with resilience abilities have hope for the future and believe they can control the direction and purpose of their lives (Mawardah & Adiyanti, 2014). Moreover, other studies have shown a positive relationship between optimism and resilience, and a negative relationship between optimism and perceived stress (Pathak & Lata, 2018). The next is empathy, Nana and Lala have feelings of unwillingness a pity for their husbands which in turn can increase their resilience (Mujahidah & Listiyandini, 2018). Moreover, Lala has a great sense of empathy because of her husband's great efforts in leaving the homosexual world.

All of the above aspects and factors made Nana and Lala go through the bouncing back stage with the return of their daily routines as housewives. But a person who is able to develop resilience not only accept suffering and do normal activities as before but can produce positive leaps. Reivich and Shatte (2002) explained that resilience not only makes a person able to overcome suffering but also improves aspects of his life by producing positive jumps or achievements. Those positive jumps in the resilience stage are called reaching out.

Through these stages, Nana and Lala can take wisdom or life lessons in ongoing the test as a wife whose husband is homosexual, namely being able to increase patience, gratitude, forgive the husband and try to be independent of the husband. However, there is one achievement that each of them does not have, namely being able to work or be independent for Nana and focusing on supporting her husband's struggle to leave the homosexual world. This is due to the condition of each husband. Nana's husband is affected by HIV positive and still has a homosexual lover, which makes Nana have to work and not rely on her husband. Meanwhile, Lala's husband's condition in the struggle to leave the dark times of the homosexual world and Lala's husband does guarantee the family's finances well.

Factors Affecting of Resilience in Wives with Homosexual Husband

There are several factors that affect Nana and Lala's resilience condition. There is a big difference for Nana in before and after knowing a homosexual husband is the ability to regulate emotions. It's not without reason that Nana can survive and live life as a wife with homosexual husband. Nana has a supportive and encouraging family. The spirit of the family became one of the environmental factors (I Have) for Nana so that she was able to live life as a wife whose husband was homosexual until now. Nana's family already knew that her husband was homosexual. If Nana is frantic, she comes to her sibling's house and is entertained by the siblings and nieces.

Likewise with Lala who has the power that is the I Have factor that comes from the closest people, which is her children and husband. Not without reason, the child is the motivation for her to rise, especially there is still a pearl of heart to be taken care of, a six-month-old baby. Next is the husband. Although the husband's intransigence as a homosexual is a source of suffering for her, the husband's efforts to leave the environment and homosexual behaviour are powerful.

In addition to Nana's family, she also has social support from neighbours and friends who encourage and strengthen. The form of support provided by neighbours and friends is to provide encouragement and advice to be patient, resigned, and trust. Draw closer to God through salat and recite so that the mind becomes calm. Nana's neighbours are very kind, although she rarely gathers with neighbours because of her busy life helping her husband prepare the Angkringan menu.

Research by Li, et al (2021) stated that resilience has a positive relationship with mental health, and social support serves as a buffer against the negative impact of low resilience on mental health. And Diener & Seligman (2004) says that social support is needed to achieve happiness. This is in line with the concept proposed by Reivich & Shatte (2002), that aspects of resilience include seven factors derived from resilience skills and social support. The results obtained in this study are in accordance with this aspect that the social support obtained by Nana and Lala is useful for rising from the slump and obtaining happiness in life.

In addition to family and social support factors (I Have factor) there are other factors, namely related to beliefs and feelings contained in Nana or internally (I Am factor). The reason for this is the willingness to accept the situation or accepting. This can be seen from her response to the husband admitting to being homosexual, she still carries out the role of wife with her husband. Although he did it to abort responsibility only, the rest she was indeed more focused on the children. Nana takes care of the children according to her ability and carries out the routine as it should be from waking up, cooking, doing the laundry, preparing breakfast, shopping to the market and preparing the Angkringan menu. That perception indicates Nana is a figure who holds Javanese cultural values that are embraced, namely *nrima*.

Cultures is one of the factors for women who are cheated on by their husbands and still maintain their marriages (Spring and Spring, 1997). Moreover, the patriarchal culture in Indonesia is still strong and has an impact on male superiority so that women are more formed passive and obedient individuals (Eleanora and Suprianto, 2020). Supported by Hanipudin and Habibah (2021) reasearch stated that the character possessed by Javanese women is *nrima ing pandum*, naive, obedient, caring for feelings, hardworking, generous, diligent, caring for others. Culture became a factor shaping *nrima* personality in Nana living life as a wife with homosexual husband.

In living live herself as a wife with homosexual husband, Nana follows her destiny and current. Sometimes emotions are sometimes under control. But she tried to follow the destiny given by God. For the rest, Nana prayed to God so that her husband could focus again on the family and children. The ability to follow God's destiny and hope for Him indicates spirituality is also a factor that supports Nana in living life. Spirituality is one of the significant factors in developing resilience in a person (Roberto et al, 2020). Individuals who have a high spirituality will have calmness and comfort in life (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

No different from Nana, Lala felt a big difference when and after find out her husband is homosexual. It's not without reason that Lala can survive and live life as a wife with homosexual husband. She has a high commitment to her choice in choosing a future husband as her life companion. This perception becomes reinforcing when emotional turmoil arises in living the life of a wife with homosexual husband. It's not just the high commitment that

affects Lala's resilience. Her feelings of love for the husband can be said to be great. Remembering back Lala was once betrothed and married to a man of her parents' choice until it ended in divorce. The divorce was caused because Lala chose a future husband who at that time was a lover to be her life companion. It was that feeling of love that made Lala strong in living a bitter life.

Stenberg (1986) describes the three components contained in love, namely intimacy, passion and commitment. One of the factors that caused Lala to develop resilience was the feeling of love for her husband in the form of a marriage commitment. In line with previous research that stated that the factor of love for a partner affects women's resilience (Putri & Aulia, 2021). Other studies also mention that love is closely related to a person's life satisfaction (Kim and Hatfield, 2004).

The last factor is I Can or interpersonal skills that make Nana strong in living life. Among them is being able to carry out good communication with family, friends and neighbours. When in a state of frantic she is able to communicate or devote heavy things in his life to friends, neighbours especially family. When able to communicate well interpersonally, Nana can understand and solve problems or problem solving, namely being able to be independent of her husband by receiving overlook services in order to support her children in the future.

The ability to communicate (I Can factor) in the middle of dealing of suffering is also one of the supporting factors for Lala. She had communicated problems related to her husband's past to her family. The sibling then apologized and begged Lala to guide her husband in a better direction and support him to be stronger and steadfast. Even though at this time the sibling-in-law was passed away and there was no longer someone to talk with, Lala was able to communicate the problem to the closest person. This is in accordance with the research of Barthel et al (2018) that emotional regulation often occurs interpersonally, meaning that interpersonal ability affects the regulation of a person's emotions in facing problems. Research by Tagay and Karakelle (2014) stated that there is a positive correlation between a person's ability to communicate and resilience.

Based on the discussion above, it can be seen that Nana and Lala have resilience abilities starting from adversity, positive adjustment, to the reaching out stage which is

supported by aspects of resilience according to Reivich and Shatte (2002). Nana and Lala's resilience ability is influenced by cultural factors, spirituality, social support and interpersonal communication skills. To make it easier to understand the dynamics of resilience in wives with homosexual husband, here is the flow of the dynamics:

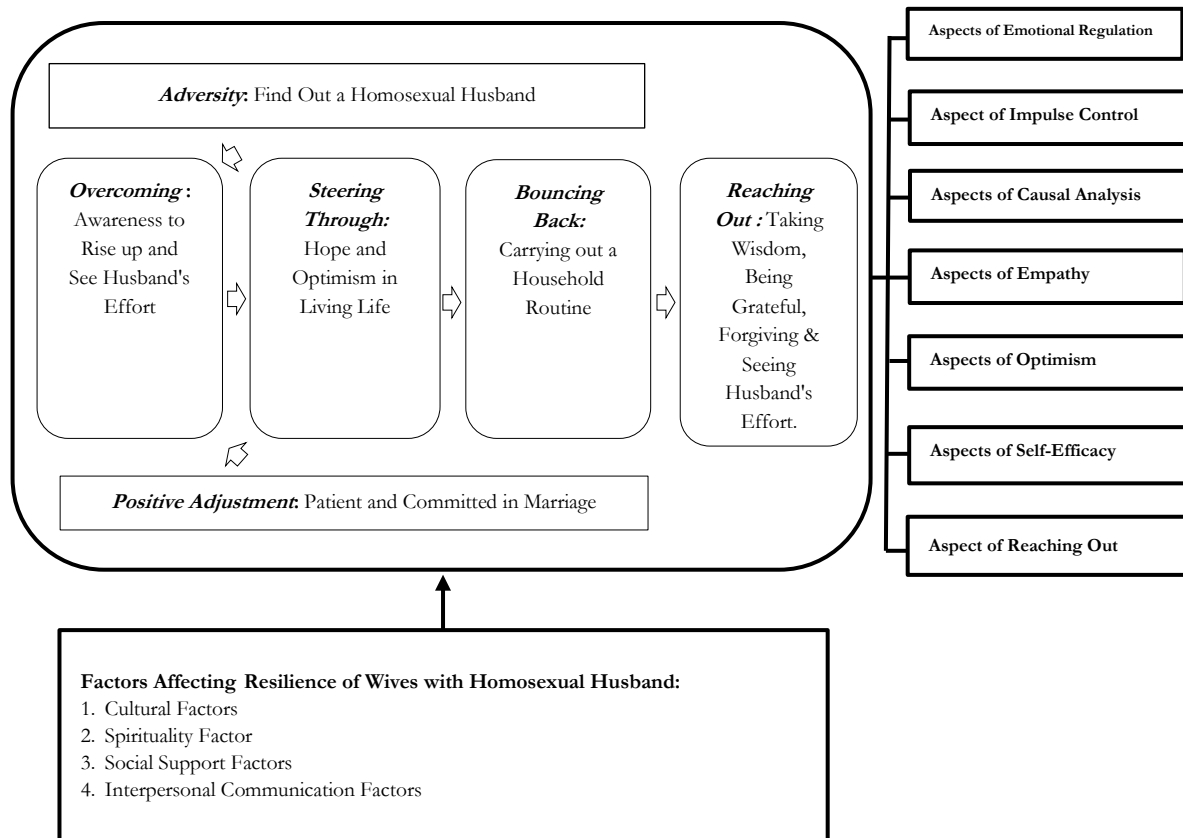


Figure 1. Dynamics of Resilience in Wives with Homosexual Husband

Cultural and Spiritual Factors in the Role of a Wife with a Homosexual Husband

There are factors that affect the resilience of the wife and become the values held in carrying out the role of a wife with a homosexual husband. The patriarchal culture that is still strong in Indonesia, especially in Java, makes them passive and obedient to their husbands (Eleanora and Suprianto, 2020). The characteristics possessed by Javanese women, namely *nrima* or accepting, avoid conflict, and being able to understand other people, make wives with homosexual husbands continue to act kind to their husbands. This was done by Nana by helping her husband to prepare *Angkringan*, shopping and cooking as well as providing

medicine when her husband was not feeling well. Likewise with Lala who helps her husband in producing cakes or bread to support the family on a daily basis.

In line with the facts above, Setiawan's research (2021) shows that Javanese women have a view of life that is held in carrying out their daily roles, namely *nrima* or accepting. Research from Anindita (2019) also stated that patriarchal culture makes wives keeping marriage even though their husbands have hurt them. This culture makes women passive, including when they find out that their husband is a homosexual. *Nrima* values make them accept their husband's condition well, even though at first they feel hurt.

Playing the role of a wife with a homosexual husband, Nana and Lala follow their destiny. Sometimes he tries to be pleased to follow the destiny that has been given by God. The rest, Nana prays to God so that her husband can focus again on family and children. The ability to follow God's will and hope in Him signifies spirituality is also a factor that supports Nana and Lala in living life. Spirituality is a significant factor in developing resilience in a person (Roberto et al, 2020). Individuals who have high spirituality will have peace and comfort in life (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Culture and spirituality become factors in wives who have homosexual husbands. They are able to accept condition and serve their husbands as well as possible. Starting from preparing daily needs, helping work, caring for children and so on. They try to be pleased to follow the destiny that has been given by Allah, the rest of the time they pray and hope in Allah so that their husbands can focus again on their family and children. Thus, they are able to be resilient in carrying out their role as wives with homosexual husbands.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the condition of resilience in wives whose husband are homosexual arises due to the interaction of *adversity* or suffering and *positive adjustment* or positive self-adjustment so that one can go through all stages of resilience. The stages are based on aspects such as emotional regulation, impulse control, optimism, causal analysis, empathy, self-efficacy and reaching out. Cultures, spirituality, social support and the ability to communicate interpersonally became factors that influenced both

participants so that they were able to develop resilience and get through dark times suffering towards a brighter life.

Based on the above conclusions, some suggestions can be given as follows: 1) A wife who cannot maintain a marriage after knowing her husband is homosexual does not mean that she has no resilience. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the dynamics of its resilience; 2) The results of the study can be used as a basis in developing a mentoring or pcdicoeducational model in increasing resilience for wives who have homosexual husbands; 3) Social support is influential in resilience, therefore fellow wives who finding out their homosexual husbands and preserves marriages can provide encouragement and support to each other.

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