



A Challenge in Parenting: The Relation Between Parenting Stress and Regulation Emotion in Parent with Preschool Children

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Abstract *The child development process cannot be separated from the role of parenting style to children. The demands in role as a parent is often trigger stress in parenting. These demands make parent needs to be able keep carry out their roles and dealing with the stress they feel. A person ability to cope with stress is related to emotional regulation This study aims to determine the relationship between emotion regulation and parenting stress in parents of preschool children. Method: This study uses a quantitative method with a correlational approach. This study involved 111 parents with 2 – 6 years old child and taking care their children directly based in Indonesia obtained by using purposive sampling technique. The scale used to measure emotional regulation is the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) and for using Parenting Stress Scale (PSS).*

Keywords *emotion regulation, parent, parenting stress, preschool children.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Human development is involve in some aspects such as biology, cognitive, and socio-emotional aspect that go on as long as a lifetime (Santrock, 2011). In this life-span development, the first year until fourth year is called as a golden age. Golden age is defined by the stage when children have so many changes and rapid growth in their ability almost in every aspect. (Uce, 2015). Development process in this stage has significant impact for the future (Finegood & Blair, 2017). According to Hurlock (2012), childhood begins at the age of two to six years. At this age children are considered not physically and mentally ready enough to attend formal education so they are often referred to as preschool age Preschool children really need a lot of attention and guidance from parents (Hurlock, 2012). Research by Briggs-Gowan et al (2006) states that children at the age of two develop very quickly so that problems related to socio-emotional and behavior begin to emerge. The opinion from the expert states that this period is also called terrible two. This expression refers to behavior in the form of tantrums, aggressive behavior such as hitting and breaking objects that are done to children aged two to four years (Hughes et al, 2020). Meanwhile, at the age of 4 years and over, some children have undertaken early childhood education such as Play Group (KB) or Early Childhood Education (PAUD) and Kindergarten (TK). Research by Irma et al. (2019) states that parents are involved in the implementation of this early childhood education. The involvement of parents in children's education certainly has obstacles such as differences in parental understanding in following the development of the material taught at school and the lack of learning support provided by parents to children.

At the preschool period, children have an average level of difficulty in adapting higher than the average age (Loomis, 2020). This is related to the readiness of children to enter the school stage. At this stage, children are required to be ready and able to participate in school activities (Jackson, 2020). In addition, parents are also required to carry out their duties as "parents". This demand arises because of the dependence of children on parents, such as fulfilling hunger, providing comfort and attention. Most parents are not aware of this task before the presence of the child so that it often creates difficulties in adjusting to carry out their duties as parents which results in the emergence of parenting stress (Deater- Deckard, 2004). Research by Crnic et al (2004) states that children's preparation for school has a role in the stress experienced by parents. This stress arises in line with parents' concerns about the expectations and fulfillment of children's needs when entering school Parenting stress is a series of psychological and physiological aversion reaction processes that arise because of the demands of parenthood (Deater-Deckard, 2004). Parenting stress arises from a gap between the parenting abilities needs and the parenting abilities possessed by parents. This gap causes a mismatch of expectations when parenting, resulting in parenting stress on parents (Goldstein, 1995).

Based on the parenting stress scale compiled by Berry & Jones, there are at least two main domains that are factors of parenting stress, that is the demands and the ease of playing the role of parents (Louie, et. Al, 2017). These two main domains are then divided into four aspects, such as parental rewards, parental stressors, parental satisfaction and loss of control (Berry & Jones, 1995).

Parental reward is related to the position of the parent being valued by the child's existence. The main characteristic of parental reward is the feeling of joy that parents feel because of an intimate and affectionate interpersonal relationship (Nomaguchi & Brown, 2011). The parental stressor aspect relates to things that can encourage parenting stress in parents such as environmental conditions, relationships with partners, health conditions etc. (Sa'diyah, 2016). Loss of control is an aspect related to the loss of parental control over children. Parents tend to have difficulty regulating or controlling children's behavior. Parental satisfaction aspects relate to parental satisfaction in carrying out their role as parents. Parental satisfaction is supported by several things such as marriage, social support and marital conditions (Berry & Jones, 1995) Emotion plays an important role in the stress experienced by the individuals (Malesza, 2019). The individual's ability to regulate emotions has an impact on stressful events in a person's life (Richardson, 2017). Emotion regulation is an individual's ability to control, assess and express emotions. (Gross & Thompson, 2006).

Emotion regulation is a strategy undertaken by individuals to manage and express emotions so that emotional stability is achieved (Alfinuha & Nuqul, 2017). Although it does not rule out that parents also face other stressors, parents must also be able to regulate their emotions while at the same time need to get to know their children to be able to manage their emotions (Havighurst & Kehoe, 2017). Parental emotional regulation is related to the development of children's emotional competence. Children will find it easier to understand their emotional regulation with the help of their parents (Katz, 2012). Sanjaya (2012) states that the ability to manage emotions in individuals can affect the ability to build relationships with people around them and reduce stress experienced. The ability to regulate emotions is represented as having the opposite relationship with the emergence of stress or psychopathology in individuals (Bahlinger, 2020).

Emotional regulation is a condition for individuals to control their emotions. Emotional regulation that is carried out can affect the experiences and behavior of individuals in response to situations. Emotional regulation can be in the form of behavior that is blocked, reduced or increased in expressing it (Nisfianoor & Kartika, 2004). Meanwhile, according to Reivich & Shatte (2002) emotion regulation is an individual's emotional ability to remain calm even under pressure. Good emotional regulation allows individuals to remain in control of themselves, overcome anxiety, and be able to solve problems in unwanted situations.

When individuals regulate their emotions, there are at least two main aspects that become the main factors for individuals in doing emotional regulation, that is cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression (Gross, 2007). Cognitive reappraisal is also called cognitive reconsideration. Cognitive reappraisal is a condition of changing cognitive forms that involve the core situation of emotions that have an impact on emotional impact (Ratnasari & Suleeman, 2017). Expressive suppression is a condition defined as an attempt to hide, inhibit or reduce behavior arising from emotional expression (Cutuli, 2014).

Emotional regulation carried out by individuals also goes through a series of processes. This series of processes is also known as an emotional regulation strategy, namely situation selection, situation modification, attention deployment, cognitive change and response modulation.

Situation selection relates to how individuals choose actions that make them adaptive to the desired situation. While the situation modification is related to the way individuals take to change situations that can cause stressful emotions. This modification includes the selection of adaptive responses that suit the situation and goals. Attention deployment is related to the distraction of individuals to avoid situations that can cause excessive emotional responses.

The process of distraction has three strategies, these are rumination, distraction and concentration. Distraction involves physically distracting attention. Cognitive change is a strategy carried out by individuals by changing the way they think about a situation to regulate emotions. This change in thinking includes giving meaning to situations and choosing meaning. Then the last strategy is response modulation is an attempt to change the response that has previously been given in the same situation.

Research by Xuan, et al. (2018) on the relationship between parental conflict and behavior of preschoolers which is moderated by parenting stress and emotional conditions in preschool children states that stress in parenting partially mediates the relationship between parental conflict and internalizing and externalizing behavior in children. It can also be concluded that parenting conflicts are related to children's behavior problems which are directly or indirectly caused by parenting stress. In addition, the relationship between parental conflict and children's behavior is also moderated by the child's emotional condition. The higher the level of negative emotions the child has, the stronger the relationship between parenting stress and child behavior problems and in reverse.

2. METHODS

Participants

In this study 142 parents are participating from across Indonesia (n = 142). These subjects are determined based on Gpower for windows, for minimum subjects is 111. This amount already qualified for minimum sample subject. In taking samples, this study used a purposive sampling technique, which is selecting subjects based on predetermined criteria. Subjects are categorized into several categories such as gender, age, education and occupation. This categorization is done to make it easier if there is further research on work and education factors.

In the gender category, the number of subjects with maternal parents was more than 106 people or 74.65%, while the subjects of the father's parents were 36 or 25.35%. In the age category, subjects aged 26-30 years had the highest percentage, includes 42 people or 29.57% years and the average age of parents was 33.9 years. In the parental education category, the most levels were at Strata-1 or bachelor degree (S1) with 83 people or 58.45% and the most occupational categories were as housewives (IRT) as many as 40 people or 28.17% of the total.

Data categorization was also carried out on the age of the children owned by the parents. It is known that parents with preschool children in the 5-6 year category have the

highest percentage, namely 33.8% or as many as 48 people and 3-4 years of age have the lowest percentage, namely 17.61% or as many as 25 children with an average the average age of children is 4.1 years.

Measure

Parents who have met the predetermined criteria will fill out a questionnaire consisting of two scales. The scales are consist by two scales that is the parenting stress scale and the emotional regulation scale.

The parenting stress scale used is the trans-adapted parenting stress scale from Berry and Jones (1995) which was adapted by Pratiwi (2019). This scale measures four main domains of parenting stress experienced by parents, namely parental reward, parental satisfaction, parental stressor, and parental loss of control. This scale is used with the consideration that trans-adaptation has been carried out in various languages and has a fairly high reliability ($\alpha = .83$) This scale using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 ranging from "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neutral", "agree", and "strongly agree". PSS consists of favorable statements and unfavorable statements.

As for the emotion regulation variable, measurement was carried out using Gross and John's (2003) emotion regulation questionnaire. ERQ has ten items that measure the two main strategies taken by individuals in regulating their emotions, the domain are the cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. This scale was previously carried out by language translation then expert judgment and trial were conducted before finally being used for the data collection process. This scale also has high realibility ($\alpha = .83$). ERQ uses a Likert scale 1 - 7 ranging from "strongly disagree", "disagree", "slightly disagree", "neutral", "somewhat agree", "agree", and "strongly agree". ERQ consists of only favorable statement.

Procedure

The data collection process is using by online with a self-report system. The questionnaire was distributed through social media and groups containing parents who matched the criteria for the study sample. The time required for the data collection process took 7 days from spreading until the number of subjects met the minimum sample requirements.

The data that has been obtained are then analyzed using SPSS 26 for windows using the Pearson product moment correlation technique for hypothesis testing. At this stage, we also carry out an assumption test consisting of normality and linearity tests to find out whether the data used is linear and normally distributed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

Before testing the hypothesis, we performed an assumption test consisting of linearity and normality tests to determine whether the data used was linear (the relationship between the independent and dependent variables had a linear relationship) and was normally distributed. The following figure is the result of a normality test using the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test technique

Table 1. Normality Test
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

N		142	142
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	19.3099	56.7746
	Std. Deviation	6.13580	7.25561
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.168	.063
	Positive	.168	.054
	Negative	-.152	-.063
Test Statistic		.168	.063
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000 ^c	.200 ^d

Parenting stress

Emotion regulation

- Test distribution is Normal.
- Calculated from data.
- Lilliefors Significance Correction.
- This is a lower bound of the true significance.

The table shows that the significance value is .200 ($p > .05$) so that the data is normally distributed. While the linearity test shows that the sig.linearity is .015 ($< .05$) so that it is stated that the two variables, both parenting stress and emotional regulation, have a linear relationship.

Table 2. Linearity Test

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Emotion regulation *	Between Groups	1787.099	99	2089.355	1.918	.017
	Linearity	283.191	1	283.191	6.080	.015

Deviation from Linearity	1503.908	1979.153	1.699	.045
Within Groups	5635.689	12146.576		
Total	7422.789	141		

Hypothesis testing is analyzed by using the Pearson product-moment test after testing the assumptions and having met the requirements. The statistical results that produce a correlation coefficient (r) are $= - .195$. It is defined that there is a negative relationship, it states the lower the parenting stress, the higher the level of emotional regulation and also in reverse. The significance level used in this study is 5% (0.05) and the p-value is $0.020 < 0.05$, so it can be concluded that the hypothesis of this study can be accepted that there is a relationship between stress parenting and emotional regulation.

Table 3. Pearson Product Moment Test

		Parenting stress	Emotion regulation
Parenting Stress	Pearson Correlation	1	-.195*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.020
	N	142	142
Emotion regulation	Pearson Correlation	-.195*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	
	N	142	142

Discussion

This study aims to determine the relationship between parenting stress and emotional regulation in parents with preschool children. Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that there is a negative relationship between parenting stress and emotional regulation in parents who have preschool children. This result is in line with the same research by Srifianti (2020) regarding the relationship between parenting stress and emotional regulation in parents who have elementary school age children that there is a negative relationship. The results of this study indicate that there are differences in the age of children who have the same parents. Another study from Wu et al (2019) regarding the role of emotions in parenting stress in parents with preschool children states that emotional conditions

can predict the emergence of stress experienced by parents. This study also states that managing emotions can be a form of intervention program that can be done to minimize stress experienced by parents. Parenting stress is a very common condition experience for parents as a process of imbalance during parenting (Rajgariah, 2020). The stress conditions experienced by these parents can be caused by several predictor factors such as a lack of parental readiness to understand their children's needs, which can cause parents to have difficulty adapting to parenting practices (Barboza-Salerno, 2020). Thompson's research (2014) states that stress experienced by parents can be influenced by difficulties caused by children. This is related to parents having more burden to manage their emotions. This burden is in the form of a proactive strategy to regulate everyday emotions faced. Mawardah (2012) states that parenting stress experienced by parents is related to the ability of parents to manage their emotions. This management includes the ability to reduce, control and tolerate unwanted situations. The results of this study indicate that parents who have low parenting stress have high emotional regulation. Navon-Eyal & Ben-Ari (2020), emotion regulation is concerned with generating, maintaining or regulating emotions or regulating behavior related to emotions. The ability to regulate emotions in individuals affects how individuals express them both in the form of emotions and behavior. Research conducted by Hasanah & Widuri (2014), there are several factors that can affect an individual's ability to regulate emotions, namely intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factor is related to the uniqueness of individuals in regulating emotions. Meanwhile, extrinsic factors are related to stressors, conditions in the environment and family factors. So it can be concluded that conditions that are not stressors can form good emotional regulation. Individuals with good emotional regulation skills will have a positive assessment of their environment. In addition, individuals with good emotional regulation are also easier to adjust, recover from stress and have more positive emotions (Everaert & Joormann, 2020). Conversely, if the individual has less stable emotional regulation, it will affect the individual's social skills (Pratisti & Prihartanti, 2012)

Limitation

This study is inseparable from the limitations of the study. The limitation in this study is that we did not confirm whether the parents cared for their children at home directly or with the parents directly cared for their children at home or received help from other people such as baby sitters or if there was interference from the grandparents.

This is because during the data collection process, we did not provide a choice regarding the involvement of others in the care process. In addition, because this study is a self-report

online questionnaire, the research sample is very varied in a very wide area coverage.

Future Research

In further research, when using the same topic, we suggest that researchers consider providing a choice of questions about the involvement of other people in the parenting process, such as grandmothers or grandparents and also baby nurses.

Then if the data collection process will be online, it is better for researchers to carry out searches in social media groups related to parents. Because usually groups on social media are much more effective as a medium for distributing questionnaires.

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