

# **SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE, DEPRESSION AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE ELDERLY IN MOJOKERTO, EAST JAVA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**BACKGROUND** : Elderly experience physical infirmity, brain devolution, slow metabolic rate, slow cell replacement, which eventually have inadvertent impact on cognitive capability, emotional stability, and social interaction. These natural changes may cause depression in the elderly. Spiritual experience may improve coping strategy, lower depression, and enhance quality of life. This study aimed to estimate the relationship between spiritual experience, depression, and quality of life of elderly.

**SUBJECT AND METHODS** : This was a cross sectional study, conducted in Mojokerto, East Java. A sample of 100 elderly was selected by random sampling from 18 villages in Mojokerto . The exogenous variables in this study was the spiritual experience, which was measured by a set of questionnaire. The endogenous mediating variable was the rate of depression, which was measured by Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS). The quality of life in the elderly was measured by Index Barthel. Psychological wellbeing and social relationships were measured by a structured questionnaire. The relationship among variables were estimated using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) run in AMOS.

**RESULTS** : The spiritual experience had negative effect on depression, and it was statistically significant ( $p = 0.004$ ). Larger spiritual experience reduced depression level. In turn depression level had negative effect on quality of life, and it was statistically significant ( $p = 0.003$ ). Deeper depression reduced quality of life.

**CONCLUSION** : Spiritual experience, appraisal and depression has positively significant influence on quality of life, but appraisal was not as predictor to depression. If the spiritual experience of elderly good, the elderly do not occur depression without any perception of elderly appraisal to stressor. Efforts to repair the quality of life for the elderly by improving the spiritual experience and appraisal to stressor positively.

Keywords: Spiritual experience, Depression, Quality of life, Elderly

## 1. Introduction

The rapidly increasing number of elderly people in Indonesia brings the impact of increasing the number of elderly dependency caused by the physical, psychological and social degeneration experienced by aging due to the aging process. The changes that occur in the elderly as a result of the aging process can decrease physical abilities and health conditions often a stressor for the elderly who need adjustment and regarded as a perceived stressor as an adverse threat. Problems that often cause stress in the elderly is post power syndrome, feelings of disappointment because no longer respected as before, less attention by children and grandchildren, feel lonely and solitude. In retirement, the elderly lost his busyness and position. Coinciding with that the children are married and leave home, while the body began to weak and not allow travel, so often cause stress (Azizah, *et al.* 2017).

Stuart and Sundeen (1998), suggests that if the stressor is meaningful to the individual, then it will seek to have owned resources and strategies to solve existing problems. Coping resources that can be used to solve problems such as the successful experience of using coping strategies before, health conditions, stressor significance, self-efficacy,

problem-solving skills, social skills, social support and his attachmen with God.

At the time of experiencing stressful events, people will again remember God as a place to complain and ask for help. The daily spiritual experiences reinforce the belief in the elderly in discovering the truth on higher strengths, gratitude, admiration, and compassion. Being aware of God's affection, and feeling closer to his God will bring peace to life and awareness of the forces beyond himself that are high and bring meaningfulness and prosperity in everyday life (Underwood, 2006). Spiritual development and experience of mature spirituality will help the elderly in the face of life change, formulate the meaning and purpose of existence in life.

Spirituality as a meaningful source for coping someone in the face of stressor life. When experiencing events that cause feelings of sadness, fear and loss, people will again remember God. This spirituality is needed to further enhance the understanding of self and existence as an individual, helping to achieve meaningful feelings in life on a spiritual based. Spiritual experience is able to provide a positive outlook on life, a belief in a higher power (supernatural), creating a feeling of peace and better health (Ellison and Daisy, 2008).

The coping mechanism used by everyone is different in helping to protect against feelings of helplessness and anxiety in the face of severe stressors, and one's ability to use coping sources strategies. Some research on daily spiritual experiences finds that being able to provide a positive outlook on life, a belief in a supernatural power, creates a feeling of peace, and better health (Bailly and Roussiau, 2010). Exploring spiritual experiences can increase religious belief and practice, happiness, relationships with God and others (Laubach, 2004).

The aim of this study to analyzed the influence of spirituality to stress and coping behavior of elderly.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### **2.1 Design and Participants**

This research design was explanatory with a cross-sectional design. The multistage random sampling selected to obtain the sample of 150 elderly from 18 villages in Mojokerto East Java from November 2015 to June 2016. The inclusion criteria were older adult age 60 years till 75 years old without dementia, not speechless and deaf, and lived with their families.

### **2.2 Research tools**

Research tools with interview-based questionnaires were validated for The variables of this study were spirituality evaluated through the index theistic and non theistic (Underwood and Teresi, 2002). This questionnaire contains five subscale and 15 items with a reliability of 0.81. The score on each item was determined by the frequency indicated on items, and a higher score indicated a higher frequency. The variables depend on stress was measured by questionnaire interview techniques with indicators from perception of a stressor, and stressor-related motivation. The Cronbach for validity the subscales ranged from 0.75 to 0.85. The coping behavior consists of problem management solving and emotional regulation from Lazarus & Folkman (1996). The reliability of the checklist was 0.69 with confidence interval 95%.

### **2.3 Statistical analysis**

The statistical inferential analysis to test the model of structural equations with Partial Least Square (PLS) to evaluate the outer weight, the inner model, and the path coefficient hypothesis test. The assumptions used are normally distributed data, the distribution of homogeneous data and

samples taken at random. The probability value  $p < 0.05$ .

#### 2.4 Ethical considerations

All participants agreed to sign an informed consent form. This study had obtained permission from local authorities and ethical approval from health research ethics committee Faculty of Public Health Airlangga University Indonesia.

### 3. Results

The result of the research showed the evaluation of outer weight measurement model all indicators have value factor  $> 0.5$  factor for all variables significantly were the dimension of the latent variable formed.

Table 1

Outer Weight indicators the influence of spirituality to stress and coping behavior

Exogen	Endogen	Loading	CR	AVE
Spirituality	Theistic	0.886	0.870	0.770
	Non Theistic	0.869		
Stress	Perceive stressor	0.892	0.781	0.644
	Motivator	0.701		
Coping Behavior	Solving	0.897	0.858	0.752
	Emosi regulation	0.836		

Table 1 showed testing goodness of fit all block of indicator actually measure the construct of spirituality, stress, coping behavior with

composite reliability (CR) value  $> 0.6$ , Cronbach's alpha over 0.5 and an average value of variance extracted (AVE)  $> 0.5$  which means that the indicators developed in the model are valid and reliable to measure the latent variables used in this study.

The result of evaluation of structural model (inner model) showed that the spiritual directly affects the primary appraisal is 51.6%, while the rest was the influence of other factors. The secondary appraisal was directly affected by the spiritual of 28.6% and the direct effect of primary appraisal is 55.3%. A coping effort was directly affected by the spiritual of only 5% and secondary appraisal direct effect was 71.5%.

Table 2

Inner model the influence of spirituality to stress and coping behavior

The influence	Koef	T	P
Spirituality Stress	0.516	8.289	0.00
Spirituality Coping behavior	0.286	3.868	0.00

Table 1 showed testing the hypothesis of spirituality significantly positive effect on reduce of stress ( $p = 0,00$ ) with the coefficient value of 0.516. Spirituality had a positive effect on the increase of coping behavior of

elderly ( $p = 0,00$ ) with the coefficient value of 0.286.

#### **4. Discussion**

Spirituality had a positive effect on the reduce of stress level in the elderly. Exploring the spirituality capable increase religious belief and practice, happiness, and a relationship with God and others, and further enhance the understanding of ourselves and our existence as individuals, helping to achieve a feeling of meaning in life. In the face of the problems of daily life, spiritual maturity elderly can help to adapt and solve problems (Ponce and Lorca, 2011).

At the moment of the events that lead to feelings of sadness, fear, and loss, people will come back to remember God as a place to complain and beg for help. Spirituality is a source of individual coping in the face of sadness, loneliness, and loss (Underwood and Teresi, 2002). The presence and guidance of God can reduce life stress and depression, can improve optimism and motivation of life, perceived social support, and increase life satisfaction and quality of life (Bailly and Roussiau, 2010).

Spirituality has significantly positive effect increase of coping behavior of elderly, which means the better the spiritual experience of an everyday life of elderly impact on improving confidence in finding the truth in a higher power and ultimately bring meaningfulness and well-being. Puchalski (2005) found that spiritual experience is able to provide a positive outlook on life, a belief in a higher power (supernatural), creating a feeling of peace and better health. Daily spiritual experiences were negatively correlated with the stress, because they feel a close relationship with God, thus increasing positive emotions and positive effect on coping. Ark (2002) found that the influence of religion involvement on individual copies undergoing long-term care.

Sanders, *et al.* (2010), suggests that the elderly more often use coping behavior focus of emotion is by praying. Perera *et al.* (in Santrock, 2002) argues that religion can meet some of the important psychological needs of the elderly in terms of dealing with death, discovering and retaining valuable feelings, and accepting old age shortcomings. Religious awareness on the elderly is related to the meaning of old age and diseases that help the elderly.

Spiritual strongly influences the acceptance of stress (primary appraisal) and utilizes secondary coping resources (secondary appraisal), and also had contribution in the selection of older coping strategies. The effectiveness of coping strategies used by individuals will result in both physical and psychological adaptations. By sensing God's presence and guidance can reduce life stress, increase optimism and life motivation, perceived social support, and improve life satisfaction and quality of life.

The findings in this studied that spirituality has directly affect to reduce of stress and increase of coping behavior of elderly.

## 5. Conclusion

The stronger the spirituality of the elderly, the better the elderly acceptance of stressors. With a strong spirituality in everyday life, the elderly can provide a positive outlook on life, a belief in a supernatural power, create a feeling of peace, and feel a close connection with his Lord, thereby enhancing positive emotions, accepting and taking wisdom over all events in his life and have a positive effect on coping.

If spirituality well, the elderly do not occur depression and is able to maintain a good quality of life regardless of the

perception of a stressor ratings elderly. Efforts to improve coping behavior and help to adapt and solve problems by improving the spirituality experience and appraisal stressor in a positive way.

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