

# Spirituality and Family Vulnerability during The Covid-19 Pandemic

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**Abstract:** The Covid-19 pandemic which brings uncertainty in various areas of life also has an impact on the family vulnerabilities. Family vulnerability includes physical-economic vulnerability, social vulnerability, and psychological vulnerability. This study aimed to determine the relationship between spirituality and family vulnerability, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research design is a cross-sectional study. The sample in this study consisted of 189 families who were taken using simple random sampling technique. Family vulnerability data were collected through questionnaires designed by Sunarti (2021), while spirituality was measured using DSES questionnaire by Underwood (2020). Data then were analysed using SPSS software. Results showed that there was a significant negative relationship between spirituality and family vulnerability. There is a tendency that the higher the spirituality, the lower the perceived vulnerability of the family. However, further studies are needed to discuss the link between spirituality and family vulnerability.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

During the Covid-19 pandemic that has been going on since 2020, the family is one of the institutions that has felt the real impact due to the many changes and uncertainties (Gayatri and Irawaty, 2021; Sunarti, et al., 2022). Some of the things experienced by families include: the main breadwinner losing his job leading to financial insecurity, parenting challenges, and pressures related to changes in life and routines. (Prime, Wade, Browne, 2020). The results of previous studies found that there was an increase in domestic violence during the pandemic (Campbell, 2020; Xue et al, 2020; Zhang, 2020), changes in risk factors and resilience (Prime, Wade, Browne, 2020), increased challenges faced family due to social distancing policies (Ares et al., 2021), as well as increased pressure/stress related to the parenting process (Brown et al., 2020). Meanwhile, World Bank data (2021) states that between March - September 2020, the poverty rate increased from 9.78% to 10.19%, where there was an increase in the number of poor families from 26.42 million to 27.55 million people.

Continuing to the impact and the influence of Covid-19, it causes instability in the family. Families

are increasingly vulnerable due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is due to various problems that arise such as job loss, feelings of grief due to the loss of family members, mental health shocks because they are required to survive during the pandemic, especially for those who are from lower-middle family status (Rahma et al, 2021).

One of the factors thought to be related to family vulnerability is spirituality. Family becomes an important component in terms of experience and practice of spirituality (Wright, 2005). Walsh (2011) also explains that families who share the value of meaningfulness are related to spirituality, tend to feel connection with the family, society, and the world. Family spirituality strengthens family relationships and increases family well-being (Chang et al, 1998; Friedemann et al., 2002; Mahoney, et al., 2003; Mahoney and Cano, 2014). In the context of couples, spirituality is also related to marital satisfaction (David and Stafford, 2015; Najafi et al., 2019). Furthermore, Coppola, Rania, Parisi, and Lagomarsino (2021) explain that spirituality and religiosity are protective factors that are related not only to mental and psychological health but also to physical health and the ability to increase coping resources in dealing with problems.

Many previous studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between spirituality and

family vulnerability. However, the novelty in this research is the relationship between the two variables in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, especially due to significant changes experienced by families. Thus, it is important to analyze the relationship between the two in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## 2 METHOD

This study used quantitative methods and cross-sectional study. The sampling technique was done by random sampling. Respondents involved in this study were 189 husbands/wives who were willing to participate. The data in this study were collected through filling out questionnaires by husband/wife which were included: family characteristics, spirituality, and family vulnerability. The spirituality variable was measured using the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) questionnaire by Underwood (2020). This scale consists of 16 question items related to transcendent elements in everyday life. The reliability score for this scale is = 0.967. Meanwhile, the family vulnerability variable was measured by the Family Vulnerability questionnaire compiled by Sunarti (2021). The reliability score for this scale is = 0.801. The data obtained were then analyzed using the Pearson correlation test with the help of SPSS software version 22.0.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Family Characteristic

The results of the study (Table 1) show that the average age of the respondents and their partners is in the early adulthood range which is around 37 years old. The length of marriage ranged from 0 – 41 years with an average length of marriage of 10.9 years. Furthermore, the average number of children is 1-2 people while the number of dependents in the family ranges from 0-9 people.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the respondents

Categories	Min-Max	Mean ± Std Dev.
Respondent's age (years)	22 - 63	37.43 ± 9.942
Spouse's age (years)	25 - 68	37.54 ± 10.401
Length of marriage (years)	0 - 41	10.95 ± 9.545
Number of children	0 - 8	1.98 ± 1.448

Number of family dependents	0 - 9	2.81 ± 1.755
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### 3.2 Spirituality and Family Vulnerability

The results of the study (Table 2) show that the majority of respondents' family vulnerability is in the low category (72%). Meanwhile, most respondents are in the moderate category (75%) for the spirituality variable

Table 2 Categorization of Research Variable Scores

Variable	Category	(%)
Spirituality	High	19
	Medium	75
	Low	12
Family vulnerability	High	5
	Medium	23
	Low	72

### 3.3 Relationship between Spirituality and Family Vulnerability

The results of the correlation test (Table 3) for these two variables indicate that there is a significant negative relationship between the variables of spirituality and family vulnerability.

Table 3. Correlation Test Results

Variable	R	Sig.	Explanation
X-Y	-0,166*	0,022	Negative significant

The results of this study indicate that most respondents have low family vulnerability. This shows that most respondents are in a condition of having the ability to be able to anticipate if things happen that are less favourable for the family. However, there are still respondents with high family vulnerability, meaning that they still need help to achieve family resilience. This finding is in line with several previous studies that the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on family conditions, especially those in the lower middle social class (Datta et al., 2020; Suryahadi et al., 2020; Sunarti, Kamilah, et al., 2021; Sunarti et al., 2022).

Other results show that there is a significant negative relationship between spirituality and family vulnerability. This result can be interpreted that there is a tendency that the higher the spirituality of the husband/wife, the lower the vulnerability of the family. These results support the findings of previous studies that family spirituality strengthens family relationships and increases family well-being

(Chang et al, 1998; Friedemann et al., 2002; Mahoney et al., 2003; Mahoney and Cano, 2014). Meanwhile, research by Ghaffari et al (2013) confirms that there are interrelationships among spiritual well-being and family protective factors and simultaneous effects on family strength. Furthermore, Kim, Kim-Godwin, and Koenig (2016) stated that family spirituality strengthens family health because it increases family commitment, emotional well-being, develops healthier behaviour, and provides healing experiences.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, spirituality became one of the mitigation factors in preventing the emotional ill effects of the pandemic (Kim, Quiban, Sloan, and Montejano, 2020; Arslan and Yildirim, 2021). Chirico (2021) stated that at the global level, spiritual resources and values could be decisive skills for coping with the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the short and long term. Spirituality is also significantly positively correlated with life satisfaction and well-being during a pandemic (Esteban et al., 2021; Supriyatna and Septian, 2021; Muralidharan, Roth-Cohen, LaFerle, 2022) and negatively correlated with stress, anxiety, and traumatic events during a pandemic. (Akanni, Olashore, and Oderinde, 2021; Biancalani, 2022; Margetic, 2022).

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to determine whether there is a relationship between spirituality and family vulnerability. Based on the research findings, it is known that there is a significant negative relationship between the variables of spirituality and family vulnerability. This result can be interpreted that there is a tendency that the higher the spirituality, the lower the vulnerability of the family. This finding also confirms several previous studies and thus contributes to the study between the two variables.

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