

The Role of Resilience to Coping Trauma in Post-Disaster Children with Social Support as a Mediator

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ABSTRACT

Childhood is a developmental stage that is vulnerable to psychological impacts, especially when children experience traumatic events such as natural disasters. This study aims to examine the relationship between resilience and coping trauma, with social support as a mediating variable in post-disaster children in Ponorogo. This study uses a quantitative approach with survey methods and mediation analysis techniques. The participants of this study are children aged 9-12 years old who were victims of the disaster in the Ponorogo area, with a sample of 899 children. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results of the study show that resilience has a positive and significant effect on coping trauma. In addition, social support is also able to partially mediate the relationship between resilience and coping trauma. These findings provide theoretical and practical implications for the development of psychosocial interventions in post-disaster children.

INTRODUCTION

Today's children, especially those belonging to the Alpha Generation, grow up in a highly dynamic and uncertain world. The Alpha generation, namely children born since 2010, is a generation that is fully in the digital era and cutting-edge technology (McCrindle & Fell, 2020). They are highly exposed to information and digital connectivity, but do not yet have mature emotional skills to face life's challenges. In disaster situations, children are among the most psychologically vulnerable groups due to limitations in understanding and managing traumatic events (Peek, 2008).

In Indonesia, data shows that children who are victims of disasters experience various psychological disorders such as extreme anxiety and sleep disorders (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2024). Events such as floods and landslides that occurred in Ponorogo, East Java, show the great impact experienced by children, including lost sense of security and drastic changes in daily life (Lintas86, 2024). Therefore, special attention to the psychological aspects of children in the context of disasters is a must. From the point of view of psychosocial development, children aged 9–12 years are at a critical phase in the formation of self-concept and social responsibility.

According to Piaget, children of this age are already able to think logically about real events through concrete operational stages. But in Erikson's framework, they are at the stage of industry vs. inferiority, which emphasizes the importance of success and recognition from the environment (Erikson, 1963). When children experience disasters, this developmental process can be disrupted and cause long-term effects such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Morganstein & Ursano, 2020). Emotional disorders such as difficulty concentrating and inability to express emotions often appear. Therefore, psychological recovery cannot be separated from efforts to understand how children cope with stress through appropriate coping strategies. A comprehensive approach needs to be developed so that children can survive and thrive after disasters.

Coping trauma is an important mechanism that children use to manage psychological distress due to traumatic experiences. This strategy can be in the form of problem-focused coping such as helping post-disaster activities, or positive cognitive restructuring such as seeking comfort from adult figures (Camisasca et al., 2012). In addition, children can also channel stress through distraction strategies such as drawing and playing, or showing avoidant coping that tends to avoid the reality of trauma. Camisasca et al (2012) classified this coping strategy into five categories, namely problem-focused, positive cognitive restructuring, support-seeking, distraction, and avoidance. Understanding these types of coping is very important so that the interventions provided are appropriate to the needs and age of the child. An effective coping response can speed up recovery and strengthen their psychological resilience to traumatic experiences. Conversely, non-adaptive coping can be an obstacle to the healing process and signal the need for continued support.

In the post-disaster recovery process, resilience is an important component that allows children to continue to be able to function even in stressful

conditions. Resilience is not merely innate, but rather the result of complex interactions between individual, social, and environmental factors (Classen & Clark, n.d.). Emotional support from family, teachers, and local communities can increase resilience and reduce symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (La Greca et al., 2010). Research shows that coping training can improve the resilience of trauma victims (Magomed Eminov et al., 2015). Thus, resilience can be grown through appropriate and sustainable intervention approaches. In the midst of the uncertainty faced by children after disasters, resilience serves as a bridge to a healthier adaptation process. The role of the social environment in strengthening resilience is key to the overall psychological recovery process of children.

Social support has proven to be a very important protective factor in helping children cope with trauma and build resilience. This support includes involvement from family, peers, teachers, and the community who are emotionally present and provide a sense of security (Calhoun et al., 2022). Children who received social support showed increased resilience and decreased symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Avivah et al., 2019). Social support also serves as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between resilience and coping of childhood trauma (Gartland et al., 2011). Unfortunately, there are still few studies that explicitly test the role of this mediation in children victims of natural disasters in Indonesia. Moreover, local contexts such as Ponorogo are rarely the main focus in the study of child disaster psychology. Therefore, it is important to explore the relationship between resilience, coping trauma, and social support comprehensively, in order to produce evidence-based and contextual interventions.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Trauma Coping Theory

Coping trauma is an active process carried out by individuals to manage psychological distress due to traumatic events. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as an ever-changing cognitive and behavioral effort to cope with external or internal demands that are perceived to exceed an individual's resources. In children, coping strategies include various forms such as *problem-focused coping*, *Positive Cognitive Restructuring*, *distraction*, *avoidance*, and *support-seeking* (Camisasca et al., 2012). Adaptive coping responses can accelerate psychological recovery, while maladaptive coping can exacerbate the impact of trauma (Kar, 2022).

Resilience Theory

Resilience is a child's psychological capacity to survive, bounce back, and function adaptively in stressful situations. Goodman (2017) states that resilience is formed from complex interactions between personal, social, and environmental factors. Children with high levels of resilience tend to show more effective coping strategies and have a lower risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (La Greca et al., 2022). Resilience can also be improved through consistent training and social support (Magomed-Eminov et al., 2015).

Social Support Theory

Social support is emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance from the immediate environment such as family, peers, and teachers. Calhoun et al. (2022) refer to social support as a protective factor in trauma recovery in children. Research by Nikmah et al. (2022) and Gartland et al. (2019) confirms that social support not only has a direct impact on reducing the symptoms of *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* PTSD, but also mediates the relationship between resilience and coping trauma.

H1: There is a positive association between resilience and coping trauma in post-disaster children. H2: There is a positive relationship between social support and coping trauma in post-disaster children. H3: There is a positive relationship between resilience and social support in post-disaster children. H4: Social support mediates the relationship between resilience and coping trauma in post-disaster children.

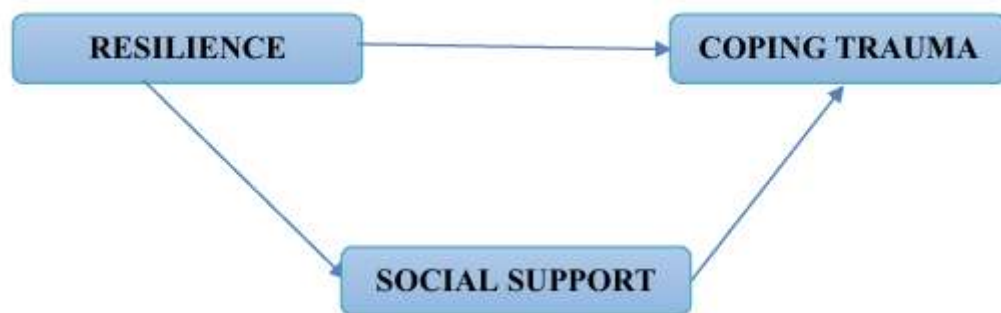


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey design to examine the relationship between resilience, coping trauma, and social support in Generation Alpha children affected by disasters. The research population is students in grades 4 to 6 of elementary school in Ponorogo Regency who have experienced natural disasters in the last two years.

A sample of 889 students was obtained through the quota sampling technique, with inclusion criteria that were 10-12 years old, affected by disasters, received parent/guardian permission, and were able to understand instructions. Prior to the main data collection, the instrument was tested on 30 students to ensure validity and reliability.

The instruments used consisted of three psychological scales, namely the resilience scale (Wagnild & Young), the coping trauma scale (CCSC-R1 by Camisasca et al.), and the social support scale (based on Susan Harter's theory). All measuring instruments have been tested for validity and reliability.

Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with JASP software. The bootstrapping technique was used 10,000 times to test the direct and indirect relationships between variables in the model.

RESULTS

Data collection in this study was carried out in Ponorogo Regency from June 16, 2025 – June 18, 2025. The method used in this study is to use quantitative research methods. This study involved as many as 889 respondents who were the alpha generation of elementary school children in grades 4 to 6 with the age of 10 years to 12 years old in Ponorogo.

The results of the distribution of trauma coping categories, resilience and social support from this study can be seen from table 1 to table 3 below, which can be concluded if all participants in this study have trauma coping trauma, resilience, and social support in the medium category.

Table 1. Categorization of Coping Trauma

Category	Number of Participants	Percentage
Low	126	14,2%
Keep	594	66,8%
Tall	169	19,0%
Total	889	100%

Table 2. Categorization of Resilience

Category	Number of Participants	Percentage
Low	186	20,9%
Keep	549	61,8%
Tall	154	17,3%
Total	889	100%

Table 3. Categorization of Social Support

Category	Number of Participants	Percentage
Low	197	22,2%
Keep	522	58,7%
Tall	170	19,1%
Total	889	100%

The aspect of coping trauma that has the greatest contribution is *Positive Cognitive Restructuring* of 37.42% as presented in the following table.

Table 4. Contribution of Coping Trauma Aspects

Aspects	Average Score	Average Percentage	Information
1. <i>Problem Coping Focus</i>	11,27	29,6%	Fairly high / Medium contributor
2. <i>Positive Cognitive Restructuring</i>	14,12	37,42%	Highest / Largest contributor

Aspects	Average Score	Average Percentage	Information
3. <i>Seeking Support Strategies</i>	2,83	7,31%	Low / Small contributor
4. <i>Strategic Distraction</i>	2,37	6,2%	Lowest / Smallest contributor
5. <i>Avoidance Strategies</i>	7,27	19,33%	Still used quite high / Medium contributor
Total		100%	

Meanwhile, in the resilience variable, the aspect that has the greatest contribution is *Personal Competence* , which is 65.12%, as presented in the following table.

Table 5. Contribution of *Resilience Aspect*

Aspects	Average Score	Average Percentage	Information
1. <i>Personal Competence</i>	9,59	65,12%	Highest/highest contributor
2. <i>Acceptance of Self and Life</i>	5,23	34,88%	Lowest / Smallest contributor
Total		100%	

In the social support variable, the aspect that has the largest contribution is *Close Friend Support* (close friend support) of 29.59%, as presented in the table below.

Table 6. Contribution of Social Support Aspects

Aspects	Average Score	Average Percentage	Information
1. <i>Parental Support</i>	8,75	19,07%	Quite low / Needs to strengthen family communication
2. <i>Teacher Support</i>	12,59	27,56%	Significant contributors of the school environment
3. <i>Classmate Support</i>	10,93	23,79%	Moderate/Relatively stable classmate support
4. <i>Close Friend Support</i>	13,46	29,59%	Highest / Primary source of emotional support
Total		100%	

Hypothesis Test

1. H1: There is a positive and significant effect of resilience on trauma coping skills in post-disaster children

There is a positive and significant influence between resilience to trauma coping skills in post-disaster children. Based on the results of the direct effect analysis, it is known that resilience has a significant direct influence on coping trauma, with *Estimate* values = 0.168; $z = 2.885$; $p = 0.004$; and $CI\ 95\% = [0.054 - 0.285]$. A p -value smaller than 0.05 as well as a range of confidence intervals that do not include zero indicate that the effect is statistically significant. These findings show that the higher the level of resilience a child has, the greater their ability to cope with psychological distress due to disasters.

Table 7. Direct Effect Test Results

Line	Estimate	p-value	CI 95%
RS → CoT	0,168	0,004	(0,054, 0,285)

2. H2: There is a positive and significant influence between Social Support on trauma coping skills in children after disasters.

There is a positive and significant influence between social support on trauma coping skills in post-disaster children. The results of the second hypothesis test showed that social support also had a significant influence on coping trauma, with an *Estimate* value = 0.086 and a p -value < 0.001. This influence was also stated to be significant because the p value was less than 0.05 and the confidence interval did not include zero. This means that children who feel supported by their social environment such as parents, teachers, or peers have a better coping capacity for trauma than children who do not feel supported.

Table 8. Coefficient Test Results

Line	Estimate	p-value	CI 95%
SS → CoT	0,086	<0.001	(-0,392, -0,044)

3. H3: There is a positive and significant influence between Resiliencies to Social Support in post-disaster children

The results of the third hypothesis test between resilience and social support showed a very significant influence, with an *estimated* value of 0.757 and a p -value of < 0.001. This indicates that children who have a high level of resilience tend to be better able to build and maintain healthy social relationships.

Table 9. Coefficient Test Results

Line	Estimate	p-value	CI 95%
RS → SS	0,757	<0.001	(0,415, 1,247)

4. H4: Social Support significantly mediates the relationship between resilience and trauma coping ability in post-disaster children

Social Support mediates significantly the relationship between resilience and trauma coping ability in post-disaster children. Based on the results of *the indirect effect test*, it is known that Social Support mediates significantly the relationship between resilience and coping trauma. The value of the estimated indirect effect was *Estimate* = 0.065; *z* = 4.006; *p* < 0.001; and *CI 95%* = [0.038 - 0.103]. Since the *p* value is less than 0.05 and the confidence interval does not include zero, it can be concluded that the mediation effect is statistically significant.

Table 10. Indirect Effect Test Results

Line	Estimate	p-value	CI 95%
RS → SS → CoT	0,065	<0.001	(0,038, 0,103)

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that resilience plays an important role in shaping trauma coping skills in post-disaster children. Children who have a high level of resilience tend to be better able to adjust, manage emotions, and recover from psychological pressure due to traumatic events. Resilience allows individuals, including children, to remain functioning adaptively despite situations of uncertainty and pressure. One of the dominant aspects of resilience in this study is personal competence, which includes confidence, resilience, determination, and the ability to make decisions independently in crisis situations. Children with strong personal competence are generally able to remain calm in the face of crises, maintain an optimistic attitude, and find constructive solutions when faced with difficulties. This concept is in line with Masten's view of ordinary magic, which states that resilience is not an extraordinary capacity, but rather a general but essential ability to support a child's healthy development in extreme situations. In addition, these findings also support the perspective of developmental psychopathology, which emphasizes the importance of the interaction between individual and environmental factors in shaping children's psychological resilience.

This research also shows that social support plays a significant role in improving children's ability to deal with trauma. Social support serves as a psychological buffer that helps maintain emotional stability and increase the

perception of control over stressful situations. In this case, social support helps children feel more safe, understood, and accepted, thus strengthening their adaptive capacity in dealing with traumatic experiences. The most prominent coping strategy in this context is positive cognitive restructuring, which is the ability of children to change their perspective on traumatic events to be more positive and hopeful. Children who use this strategy tend to be able to take meaning from negative experiences, develop more realistic perceptions, and maintain emotional balance. This strategy is classified as emotion-focused coping which is adaptive and has been shown to be effective in accelerating children's psychological recovery. These findings are also consistent with previous studies that affirm the importance of a supportive social environment in the post-disaster child recovery process.

Furthermore, this study identified a positive relationship between resilience and children's perception of social support. Children with high levels of resilience tend to have better social openness, are able to establish healthy interpersonal relationships, and evaluate the social environment more positively. They are more likely to receive emotional support and establish warm interactions with those around them. In this case, the support of close friends is the most prominent aspect. Peers play an important role as an equal source of emotional support, where children feel comfortable sharing feelings and experiences without fear of being judged. Positive interactions with peers also reinforce the feeling that they are not alone in facing difficulties, which ultimately speeds up their emotional recovery. Therefore, the peer group-based intervention approach is a potential strategy in strengthening the social support system for post-disaster children.

The most important finding of this study is that social support plays a mediator in the relationship between resilience and coping trauma. Resilience not only contributes directly to children's coping skills, but also indirectly through increasing children's perception of the social support they receive. This mediation pathway describes an interconnected process: children with high personal competence tend to have a sense of confidence and resilience that encourages them to establish strong social relationships. Relationships formed, especially with peers, provide a safe space for children to express their emotions and seek the emotional support they need. This friendship then strengthens the child's tendency to use healthier coping strategies, such as positive cognitive restructuring. Through this path, the child's recovery process depends not only on internal strength, but also on the quality of the social relationships they have.

Thus, the results of this study confirm the importance of building children's resilience while creating a supportive social environment as an integrated effort in helping children overcome post-disaster trauma. This approach is not only oriented towards short-term recovery, but also builds the child's adaptive capacity to face future psychological challenges.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Resilience has been shown to have a positive effect on coping trauma. The higher the child's resilience, the stronger his ability to deal with psychological pressure. Resilience is an important internal capacity in maintaining emotional

stability and post-disaster adaptation. Social Support also has a significant effect on coping trauma. Children who feel supported by parents, teachers, or peers tend to be better able to manage psychological impacts. In addition, Social Support partially mediates the relationship between resilience and coping trauma, suggesting that internal and external forces contribute to each other's recovery.

Descriptively, the *Personal Competence* is the highest dimension of resilience, describing the child's ability to interpret difficult experiences. On social support, the *close friend support* occupying the highest score, signifies the importance of the role of peers in recovery. The most dominant coping strategy is *Positive cognitive restructuring*, which is the child's effort to see trauma more positively and build new hopes. These findings confirm the importance of strengthening resilience and peer social support as the basis for post-disaster child psychosocial interventions.

Recommendations

1. Psychosocial interventions aimed at post-disaster children need to be designed comprehensively by strengthening aspects of personal competence, such as building confidence, decision-making skills, and emotional resilience.
2. Educational institutions and local communities are encouraged to develop peer-group-based programs in an effort to strengthen sustainable social support, particularly through activities that allow children to share their experiences and emotions safely.
3. Training for teachers and child companions needs to be carried out to equip them with skills in detecting psychological disorders and providing appropriate emotional support to traumatized children.

FURTHER STUDY

The next researcher will use a longitudinal approach to trace the development of coping trauma and child resilience over a longer period of time, especially in the various phases of disaster recovery. Future research can also expand the scope of study on child populations in different types of disasters and different cultural backgrounds, so that the results of the research have a wider generalization. In addition, the addition of other variables such as self-efficacy, emotion regulation, or teacher and community support as mediators or moderators can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the post-disaster children's psychological recovery process. Approach mixed methods It can also be used to explore more deeply a child's subjective experience of dealing with trauma and building new expectations.

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