

## The Relationship Between Gratitude and Resilience in Workers Who Experienced Layoffs Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

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### Abstract

*This study aims to determine whether there is a relationship between gratitude and resilience in female workers who have been laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The hypothesis in this study is that there is a relationship between gratitude and resilience. Participants in this study were 150 workers who were laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Sampling was carried out using a purposive sampling technique. The measuring instrument used was a resilience scale that refers to the resilience aspect proposed by Connor and Davidson (2003) and a gratitude scale that refers to the gratitude aspect proposed by According to McCullough, Emmons and Tsang (2002). Hypothesis testing was carried out using Pearson's product moment correlation analysis. The results of the person's product moment correlation showed a value of  $r = 0.638$  with a  $p$  value =  $0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). This shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between gratitude and resilience. Thus the proposed hypothesis is accepted.*

**Keywords** Resilience, Gratitude, Layoffs.

### INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic is a global problem that cannot be predicted to occur, which then has many negative impacts on many sectors of people's lives (Syafrida, Safrizal, & Suryani, 2020). One of them according to Riyanto and Ropidin (2020) is that many companies went bankrupt during the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in employee layoffs and termination of employment. The issue of termination of employment (PHK) is always interesting to study and examine in more depth, because PHK is a crucial topic because it concerns human life issues (Zaini, 2017). In Law of the Republic of Indonesia no. 13 of 2003 concerning employment, it states that termination of employment is the termination of an employment relationship caused by something that results in the termination of rights and obligations between workers/laborers and employers/employers. The Indonesian Minister of Manpower, Mrs. Ida Fauziyah revealed data as of April 20, 2020, the number of workers who were laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic totaled 2,084,593 workers from the formal and informal sectors from 116,370 companies. The number of formal workers who were laid off was 241,431 workers from 41,236 companies (Ministry of Manpower Public Relations Bureau 2020). Reported in Kompas.com (2020) DKI Jakarta is the area with the highest number of layoffs. The Head of the DKI Jakarta Manpower, Transmigration, and Energy Agency, Andri Yansyah, also stated that there were 323,224 employees affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, namely 272,333 employees in 32,882 companies were laid off, and the remaining 50,891 employees in 6,782 companies were laid off (Karunia, 2020).

The Ministry of Manpower survey in 2020 noted that around 88% of companies were affected by the pandemic during the last six months, from May to November 2020. It was



even stated that 9 out of 10 companies in Indonesia were directly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The data was obtained from 1,105 companies in 32 provinces in Indonesia. Meanwhile, according to a survey conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) from 12 to 23 October 2020 with 35,992 respondents online, the results showed that the companies that reduced the most employees came from the manufacturing industry sector, which was 17.62% of the workforce. According to Sunija, Febriani, Raharjo and Humaedi (2019) layoffs can have an impact on a person's social functioning, economy, psychology and affect quality of life. Meanwhile, according to Hisbullah and Hudin (2020) people who are laid off experience high psychological problems, this happens because of the economic burden that must be borne in order to meet daily living needs. This is also in line with Siregar's research (2019) which states that termination of employment is a serious problem for the future life of workers, it will show changes in themselves such as loss of personality, despair, disappointment and even distancing themselves from their social life. Garaga (2017) also revealed that termination of employment may be a difficult ordeal for employees who experience it. Therefore, according to McLarnon, Rothstein and King (2020), when individuals are in difficult conditions such as losing their jobs, they need resilience.

When viewed from the explanation above, it can be seen that gratitude will make individuals have a more positive view and a broader perspective on life, namely the view that life is a gift (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Emmons and McCullough (2003) explain the concept of gratitude as a form of feeling amazed, grateful and appreciative of the benefits obtained. These feelings can be directed at others or at oneself. Gratitude itself can be assumed as a virtue that directs individuals in achieving a better life. There are three components of gratitude, namely, (a) a feeling of warm appreciation for someone or something; (b) a desire or goodwill directed at someone or something; and (c) a tendency to act positively based on the sense of appreciation and goodwill that is possessed (Fitzgerald, 1998). Emmons and Mishra (2012) explain that the concept of gratitude in its implementation will direct positive conditions for individuals, one of which is related to the process of enjoying life. This context of gratitude makes individuals able to enjoy life which is the result of the individual's ability to see positive things from the life process that they live. Based on the explanation above, gratitude is one of the factors that can influence a person's level of resilience. Therefore, researchers are interested in conducting research on the relationship between gratitude and resilience in workers who have been laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Resilience**

Connor and Davidson (2003) said that the ability of individuals to survive, overcome, and even thrive in the midst of adversity is called resilience. Reivich and Shatte (2002) said that resilience is the process of responding to something in a healthy and productive way when faced with adversity or trauma, especially to control the pressures of everyday life. The ability to continue living after being hit by adversity or after experiencing severe stress

and increasingly difficult situations is not a matter of luck, but it illustrates the existence of certain abilities in individuals known as resilience (Tugade & Fredrikson, 2004).

According to Grotber (1999), resilience is the ability to survive and adapt to face and solve problems after experiencing difficulties. Meanwhile, according to García-León et al (2019), resilience is the ability to overcome frustration and problems experienced by individuals. Resilient individuals will try to overcome problems in life, so that they can be free from problems and are able to adapt to these problems. Another opinion states that resilience is an ability possessed by individuals to immediately free themselves from unpleasant conditions (Seligowski et al., 2020).

In his book, Desmita (2010) states that resilience is a human ability or capacity possessed by individuals, groups or communities that enable them to face, prevent, minimize and even eliminate the adverse impacts of unpleasant conditions, or even change miserable life conditions into something that is normal to overcome. Etymologically, the word "resilience" comes from the Latin "re-silere" which means a capacity to recover or rise again (Masten & Gerwartz, 2006).

According to Bonanno (2004), resilience is the human capacity to maintain psychological and physical functions to remain balanced and normal in the face of anything that is unbalanced and normal in the face of anything that is unfavorable and life-threatening. According to Unggar (2008), resilience is also defined as the ability of individuals to overcome difficulties and continue development tasks as before. This means that resilient individuals are able to quickly return to conditions before trauma, stress or stressful events occur.

Connor and Davidson (2003) stated that resilience consists of five aspects, including, a. Personal competence, high standards, and tenacity. These are aspects that support individuals to continue to feel capable of achieving goals when they experience stressful situations or failures. b. Trust in one's instincts, tolerance of negative affect, and strengthening effects of stress. This relates to calmness and coping with stress, thinking carefully and focused even in problems. c. Positive acceptance of change, and secure relationships. Related to the adaptation that a person has. d. Control. Focusing on control in achieving goals, individuals know how to ask for help from others when they are unable to overcome the problems they face. e. Spiritual influences. This is a person's belief in God or fate.

### **Gratitude**

McCullough, Emmons and Tsang (2002) explain the concept of gratitude as a form of feeling amazed, thankful and appreciative for the benefits obtained. These feelings can be directed at others or at oneself. Polak and McCullough (2006), say that gratitude is an acknowledgment that individuals can receive benefits from the kindness of others.

Emmons and McCullough (2003) then explained that gratitude is a form of emotion or feeling, which then develops into an attitude, good moral character, habits, traits, personality, and will ultimately influence someone to respond/react to something or a situation. A life filled with gratitude will create happiness in the heart. When deciding to be



grateful, life becomes more meaningful, because everything is felt to be enough and accepted with a happy heart.

Gratitude is a pleasurable emotion, but it differs from happiness in that gratitude is specifically preceded by the perception that an individual has benefited or benefited from the kindness of another individual (McCullough, Kimeldorf & Cohen, 2008). The findremind and bind theory explains gratitude and suggests that the positive emotion of gratitude serves an evolutionary function in strengthening relationships with responsive interaction partners (Algoe, Haidt, & Gable, 2008).

Hlava, Elfers and Offringa (2014) stated that gratitude is an experience related to oneself that is based on reciprocal benefits. This relationship emphasizes the improvement of a relationship or in other words gratitude is seen as a feeling towards others that describes a change from the individual's self-experience to outside oneself.

Gratitude means an emotion or state resulting from awareness and appreciation of what is valuable and meaningful to oneself (Lambert, Graham, & Fincham, 2010). Gratitude is an instrument that can reduce various negative influences on an individual. In a traumatic situation, gratitude is a growth process that follows a crisis or trauma (Subandi et al., 2014).

Gratitude can also be called a deep sense of gratitude is an inherent relational emotion, and most modern also places it in a position that influences the interpersonal relationship between the grateful recipient and a grateful target and genuine benefactor (Algoe, Fredrickson, & Gable, 2013). Some experts also argue that the nature of gratitude is characterized by the attitude that all life is a gift (Watkins, Woodward, & Kolts, 2003).

According to McCullough, Emmons and Tsang (2002) mentioned several aspects of gratitude consisting of four elements, namely: a. Intensity, someone who is grateful when experiencing a positive event is expected to feel more intense gratitude. b. Frequency, someone who has a tendency to be grateful will feel many feelings of gratitude every day and gratitude can cause and even support simple actions and kindness or politeness. c. Span, meant by the number of life events that make someone feel grateful, for example feeling grateful for family, work, health, and life itself, along with various other benefits. d. Density, refers to the number of people who feel grateful for something positive. Grateful people are expected to be able to write down more names of people who are considered to have made them grateful, including parents, friends, family, and mentors.

### **The Relationship Between Resilience and Gratitude**

According to Sills and Steins (2007) resilience is a positive adaptation in dealing with stress and trauma. Meanwhile, according to Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, and Bernard (2008) resilience is the ability to bounce back or recover from stress, able to adapt to stressful situations or difficulties. In addition, according to Taylor (2000) resilience is also considered a multidimensional condition so that individuals may have different abilities in dealing with the same form of difficulty.

Fernanda Rojas (2015) stated that resilience is the ability to face challenges, resilience will appear when someone faces a difficult experience and knows how to deal with or adapt to it. Meanwhile, according to Keye and Pidgeon (2013) resilience is defined as the

ability of individuals to choose to recover from sad and challenging life events, by increasing knowledge to be adaptive and overcome similar adverse situations in the future.

Every individual is born with the ability of resilience so that resilience is not something spectacular because it is a process experienced by every individual (Richardson & Waite, 2002). Bernard (2007) also added that 70% of young people who live in difficulties are accustomed to facing difficulties, developing their abilities and skills to face life. Masten (2009) stated that psychologically resilience is the tendency to be able to face stress and difficult conditions. Wolin and Wolin (1993) explained that strength can emerge after facing difficulties. According to Masten and Reed (2002) resilience has been widely studied as an individual's ability to adapt, face stress, and face difficult conditions.

Gratitude is described by Lambert, Graham and Fincham (2009) as a factor that can control the effects of depression, especially helping to re-appreciate situations full of problems to feel lighter. Cannon (2002) also showed that gratitude is one of the differences between those who can survive and gratitude is in the stories of victims who can survive. Wood, Joseph, and Maltby (2009) added that gratitude is a form of a positive thinking person, who presents life as more positive.

There are several studies that state the relationship between gratitude and resilience. According to McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002), grateful individuals have positive coping in facing life's difficulties, seek social support from others, interpret experiences from different perspectives, and have plans to solve problems. Emmons and Crumpler (2000) also added that gratitude is a virtue and human nature, so grateful individuals always feel grateful in all forms of conditions and times.

Furthermore, research conducted by Utami et al. (2016) showed that there is a relationship between gratitude and resilience. This relationship is positive, meaning that the higher the gratitude, the higher the resilience. Firaesy (2015) conducted a study and found that there is a positive relationship between gratitude and resilience in poor people. This shows that the higher the gratitude, the higher the resilience, and vice versa. Research conducted by Cahyani (2013) showed that there is a positive relationship in the same direction between gratitude and resilience in deaf students. This means that an increase in gratitude is proportionally followed by an increase in resilience. The results of research conducted by Utami (2020) showed that there was a significant influence of the gratitude variable on the resilience variable. The findings in this study indicate that gratitude contributes to the formation of resilience.

## **METHOD**

In this study, there are two variables that will be measured, namely resilience and gratitude.

Resilience is the ability that exists in workers who have been laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic, used to process things in a healthy way and the ability to survive the problems that befall them and be able to recover from difficult conditions to continue living.

To reveal the resilience variables, researchers compiled their own resilience scale based on resilience aspects using the theory proposed by Connor and Davidson (2003),



namely, personal competence, high standards, and tenacity, trust in one's instincts, tolerance of negative affect, and strengthening effects of stress, positive acceptance of change, and secure relationships, control, spiritual influences. The higher the resilience score, the higher the resilience behavior carried out by workers who were laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Gratitude is an instrument that can reduce various negative influences on workers who have been laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic, thus creating an inherent relational emotion and producing meaningful appreciation for oneself. To reveal the gratitude variable, the researcher compiled his own gratitude scale based on aspects of gratitude using the theory put forward by McCullough, Emmons and Tsang (2002), namely, intensity, frequency, span, and density. The higher the gratitude score, the higher the grateful behavior carried out by workers who have been laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The number of samples in this study refers to Roscoe's theory (Sugiyono, 2018), namely that the size of a feasible research sample in a study is 30 to 500. Therefore, the number of samples for this study was 150 workers who were laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia who represented the population, with a trial sample of 50 people. The characteristics of the subjects in this study include:

- a. Experiencing layoffs during the Covid-19 pandemic This is based on research conducted by Juaningsih (2020) that one of the impacts felt by the community with the presence of Covid-19 is Termination of Employment (PHK). This is reinforced by data from the Central Statistics Agency released since February 2021, the number of workers who experienced layoffs due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was 1.62 million people in Indonesia.
- b. Not getting a job since being laid off during the Covid-19 pandemic or currently still unemployed. According to Dharmakusuma (1998) unemployed is a person who has not worked and is actively looking for work for the previous four weeks, is waiting for a call back for a job after being laid off or is waiting to report for a new job within four weeks.

The psychological scale used in this study consists of the Resilience and Gratitude scales. The scale uses the Likert scale method. The Likert scale used in this study is in the form of a checklist, where the researcher will give a mark (✓) on the answer that is considered most appropriate to the respondent. According to Sugiyono (2018), the answer to each instrument item using the Likert scale has a gradation from very positive to very negative.

The data analysis method used in this study is statistical data. The method used in data analysis uses the statistical data processing software SPSS version 16.00 to determine whether there is a relationship between gratitude and resilience in workers who have been laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The area chosen by the researcher in this study is Indonesia. Indonesia consists of 34 provinces. Indonesia is the country with the largest population. Based on data obtained from the population census conducted by the Central Statistics Agency in 2020, it is known that the population of Indonesia was recorded at 270.20 million people. This figure makes Indonesia the fourth most populous country in the world. With a land area of 1.92 million

square kilometers, Indonesia's population density is 141 people per square kilometer. However, the distribution of Indonesia's population is still concentrated on the island of Java. Java is inhabited by 151.59 million people or equivalent to 56.10% of Indonesia's population.

Referring to the current conditions, Indonesia is experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic, so that many workers have experienced layoffs (PHK). Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of workers who experienced layoffs (PHK) throughout Indonesia due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic as of February 2021 was 1.62 million people. Layoffs (PHK) during the Covid-19 pandemic often occurred in employees working in the tourism, hotel, restaurant, industry, retail, trade and transportation sectors.

Men are the gender that is most unemployed due to Covid-19 compared to women, which is 73.57% or 1.19 million people. Meanwhile, based on age, the adult age group (25-59 years) has the highest percentage of unemployed, which is 67.05% or 1.08 million people compared to the young age group (15-24 years) and the old age group (60 years and over).

Normality test was conducted using Kolmogorov-Smirnov analysis on resilience and gratitude variables to determine whether the data on both variables in the study were normally distributed or not. On the resilience variable, the results of the normality test showed a K-SZ value of 0.698 with a significance value of 0.550 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, it can be concluded that the research data on the performance variable are normally distributed. Then, the results of the normality test on the gratitude variable showed a K-SZ value of 0.715 with a significance value of 0.923 ( $p > 0.05$ ) so that it can be concluded that the research data on the gratitude variable are also normally distributed.

From the results of the hypothesis test, it was found that the significance value was 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) so it can be concluded that the hypothesis in the study is accepted, namely that there is a relationship between gratitude and resilience. Based on the results of the hypothesis test above, it also shows that the two variables have a correlation value ( $r$ ) of 0.638. These results indicate that there is a positive relationship between the variables of gratitude and resilience. This means that the higher the gratitude, the higher the resilience in the individual.

Based on the results of the different test of research subjects using the Independent Sample t-test, it can be seen that the significance value of the resilience variable is 0.294 ( $p > 0.05$ ). This means that there is no difference in age in the resilience variable, while the significance value of the gratitude variable is 0.424 ( $p > 0.05$ ). This means that there is also no difference in age in the gratitude variable.

Based on the results of the different test of research subjects using the Independent Sample t-test, it can be seen that the significance value of the resilience variable is 0.089 ( $p > 0.05$ ). This means that there is no difference in marital status in the resilience variable, while the significance value of the gratitude variable is 0.247 ( $p > 0.05$ ). This means that there is also no difference in marital status in the gratitude variable.

Based on the results of the research subject difference test using OneWay Anova, it can be seen that the significance value of the resilience variable is 0.297 ( $p > 0.05$ ). This means that there is no difference in the island in the resilience variable, while the significance



value of the gratitude variable is 0.360 ( $p > 0.05$ ). This means that there is also no difference in age in the gratitude variable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, hypothesis testing was conducted using the Pearson product moment correlation technique to determine the relationship between gratitude and resilience in workers who were laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on the results of the study on the two variables, a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) was obtained. It was concluded that the hypothesis put forward in this study was accepted, namely that there was a significant relationship between gratitude and resilience in workers who were laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In line with research conducted by Pondalos and Santi (2021) which stated that resilience can grow and develop when employees who experience layoffs (PHK) have a sense of gratitude.

Based on the results of the hypothesis test, it can be seen that the gratitude and resilience variables have a value of  $r = 0.638$  with  $p = 0.000$ . These results indicate that there is a positive relationship between the gratitude variable and resilience. This means that the higher the gratitude, the higher the resilience in the individual. The results of the hypothesis in this study are in line with the research conducted by Estria (2018) which has a Pearson correlation value ( $r$ ) between gratitude and resilience of 0.360. This shows that there is a positive relationship between gratitude and resilience, where gratitude is one of the factors that contributes to the high and low resilience of a person.

Luthar, Chichetti, and Becker (2000) explained that resilience is a dynamic process to maintain positive adaptation and effective coping strategies in the face of adversity. Ong, Bergeman, Bisconti, and Wallace (2006) said that positive emotions can act as a protector for people who face stressful situations. Therefore, individuals who have a sense of gratitude will influence their resilience abilities to be better.

According to Fitzgerald (1998), one form of gratitude is the tendency to act positively based on a sense of appreciation and goodwill that one has. This shows that gratitude is also a form of resilience that comes from within a person. As the results of a study conducted by Kawilarang and Kadiyono (2021) stated that workers who were laid off had the willingness to continue the struggle and build their lives, had the personal ability to keep moving forward in difficult situations, and perseverance in difficult times.

Furthermore, the researcher conducted a descriptive analysis of the resilience categorization in this study and obtained the highest frequency in the high category, namely 78 people (52%) had a high level of resilience. Then, the researcher also conducted a descriptive analysis of the gratitude categorization in this study and obtained the highest frequency in the low category, namely 112 people (74.7%) had a low level of gratitude.

Missasi and Izzati (2019) stated that resilience is influenced by external and internal factors. Meanwhile, according to Astria and Alfinuha (2021), optimism is a protective factor that can influence someone to become resilient, which means that if someone has optimism in their soul, they will become more resilient.

There are factors that are suspected of causing a misalignment between the results of the categorization of resilience variables and gratitude variables with the survey results, namely the existence of social desirability. Sjoström and Holst (2002) social desirability is an effort to display something good and hide the bad. Paulhus (1984) distinguishes social desirability into two types, namely impression management which aims to increase the attractiveness of others and self-deception which is a form of respondent self-defense when facing a dangerous situation. In addition, the scale in the form of a self-report has the potential for respondents who fill it out to provide false information (Oktapialdi, Tarigan, & Musthofa 2018).

Situational factors may also have an influence, such as the tendency of subjects to respond to research scales dishonestly with their actual conditions, this occurs because of faking good, namely the tendency to give only good answers (Setiawati, 2012). Research subjects are also suspected of not trying their best in responding to measurements because they feel their self-esteem is threatened and feel doubtful about the privacy of the data provided (Juneman, 2013).

Researchers have also analyzed the mean level of gratitude aspects. The results found that span is the most dominant aspect, which has a value of 20.18. This is in accordance with the research of Emmons and McCullough (2003) which states that someone who is grateful by recording the kindness they receive shows increased social relationships, improved health, feels life satisfaction and feels happy. Lyubomirsky and Kristin (2013) said that gratitude can help someone enjoy positive life experiences, such as enjoying a reward or something desired in life, so that individuals are able to achieve the greatest possibility of satisfaction and joy from the situation at that time.

Furthermore, the analysis of the mean level on the resilience aspect found that spiritual influences were the most dominant aspect with a value of 13.38. In line with research conducted by Resnick, Gwyther, and Roberto (2011) which stated that spirituality is one of the factors that can increase resilience in individuals. Graham, Furr, Flowers and Burke (2001) showed that the more important spirituality is to a person, the greater their ability to overcome the problems faced.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it shows that gratitude has a significant relationship with resilience. Thus, the hypothesis in this study can be accepted, namely that there is a relationship between gratitude and resilience in workers who have been laid off due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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