

WELFARE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF RETIRED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: IDENTIFYING SYMPTOMS AND SOLUTIONS OF POST POWER SYNDROME – CASE REPORT

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CASE REPORT

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Post Power Syndrome is a psychological condition often experienced by individuals who lose an important social position or status, particularly in retirees who previously held leadership roles. The drastic change from being active and respected to being retired can lead to feelings of loss of identity and meaning in life, often resulting in psychological symptoms such as depression and anxiety. This study aims to understand the dynamics of Post Power Syndrome in a retired female teacher and the factors influencing her ability to adapt to post-retirement life.

Methods: This research uses a qualitative case study approach. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The Pattern Matching technique was used to analyze the data and identify main patterns and themes related to the experience of Post Power Syndrome.

Results: The study subject exhibited emotional symptoms such as sadness, anxiety, and feelings of isolation, as well as behavioral changes including difficulty sleeping and altered eating patterns. Although the subject managed to fill her free time with new activities like gardening, symptoms of Post Power Syndrome remained evident in her stories and behavior.

Discuss: Emotional distress leads to maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as substitutive reactions and overthinking memories. This study highlights the importance of direct observation and interviews to accurately analyse behavioural symptoms. Direct field observations and interviews are essential in understanding the behavioural changes exhibited by retired teachers experiencing post-power syndrome.

Conclusion: Post-Power Syndrome can affect individuals' emotional well-being and behavior after retirement. Social support and psychosocial intervention strategies are crucial for helping retirees manage life changes. This research also provides insights for educators and psychologists in offering more effective support to retired teachers.

Keywords: post-power syndrome, retirement, teacher.

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INTRODUCTION

Post Power Syndrome is a psychological condition often experienced by individuals who have lost an important social position or status. This phenomenon is often seen among retirees, particularly those who previously held leadership roles or significant responsibilities. The drastic change from being active and respected to being retired can lead to feelings of loss of identity and meaning in life, which in turn can lead

to psychological symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and decreased self-esteem.¹

Post Power Syndrome occurs during retirement, where someone who was actively working and had many activities suddenly loses everything due to retirement, causing discomfort to the person. Postmenopausal Syndrome is closely related to menopause, which is the transition period from the reproductive to the non-reproductive period. Menopause is a natural biological process that marks the permanent cessation of ovarian function and the end of a woman's reproductive

potential.² Menopause is a natural process that will be experienced by every woman and cannot be avoided in various ways. Some women find the arrival of menopause frightening and worrying. People who experience Post Power Syndrome cannot accept the changes that occur and feel excessive worry about them. In addition, several factors influence Post Power Syndrome, including religiosity, social support, emotional intelligence, optimism, self-acceptance, and self-esteem.³

The prevalence of post-power syndrome, a condition experienced by retirees, varies across studies. Research shows that mild post-power syndrome is prevalent among older adults, with 66.7% of respondents experiencing it.⁴ In another study, 75% of retirees with low self-esteem showed symptoms of post-power syndrome, which improved significantly after reminiscence group therapy.⁵ In addition, a study of civil servants found differences in the tendency of post-power syndrome among various groups, with different mean scores indicating different prevalence rates.⁶ Common symptoms of post-power syndrome include physical and emotional manifestations. Physical symptoms may include changes in vision, hearing, and motor skills, as well as decreased sensory function.⁷ Emotional symptoms may manifest as stress, sadness, decreased self-esteem, and confusion, leading to social withdrawal.⁵ In addition, retirees may exhibit temperamental behaviour, disconnection from routine, and feelings of weakness or unwellness, thus affecting their desire to engage in activities. Factors contributing to Post Power Syndrome include loss of social contacts, position, source of income, and sense of meaning. Efforts to reduce these symptoms may involve participation in social gatherings and forums to maintain connections and support networks. Individuals experiencing Post Power Syndrome may exhibit emotional distress, heightened sensitivity to criticism, and regret over past decisions, which can affect their energy levels and enthusiasm. It can manifest as weakness, lack of motivation, and disinterest in activities, potentially leading to conditions such as stroke or depression. Ultimately, Post Power Syndrome inhibits independence in meeting the needs of daily living, emphasising the importance of interventions to improve self-acceptance and social support for retirees.⁸

Some ways to reduce the tendency of Post Power Syndrome include increasing religiosity, which plays an important role in emotional management. In addition to religious factors, social support is highly influential for individuals entering retirement, as they are vulnerable to a crisis of confidence and decreased self-esteem. Therefore, it is important to provide support from their social environment.³

Teachers, especially those who have served in educational institutions for many years, often experience the significant impact of Post Power Syndrome after retirement. Primary school teachers, such as those at a primary school in Bengkulu Utara, spend most of their lives educating and guiding children. This role not only gives them a sense of purpose and meaning but also a respected position in society. When retiring, the loss of routine activities and social interactions with students and colleagues can lead to deep feelings of loss.⁹ This research focuses on a retired female primary school teacher from Bengkulu Utara who experienced Post Power Syndrome. The choice of a female subject is important because women tend to have strong emotional ties to their profession and are often more affected by major life changes than men.¹⁰ In addition, cultural factors in Indonesia that value the role of teachers as authority figures in the community also contribute to the level of stress and adaptation faced after retirement.

A qualitative approach was used in this study to gain a deep understanding of the subject's experience of Post Power Syndrome. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and participatory observation, which enabled the researcher to explore the subject's feelings and thoughts in greater depth. Data analysis was conducted using thematic coding techniques to identify patterns and main themes relating to the subject's Post Power Syndrome experience.¹¹

The main objective of this study was to identify and understand the dynamics of Post Power Syndrome among retired female primary school teachers in Bengkulu Utara, as well as the factors that influence their ability to adapt to post-retirement life. Hopefully, the results of this study can provide insights for education and psychology practitioners in providing more effective support to retired teachers. In addition, this research also seeks to contribute knowledge to the literature on Post Power Syndrome in the Indonesian cultural context.¹²

METHOD

This study used a qualitative case report approach, with data collected directly in the field (field research). The study was conducted by collecting data through observation, interviews, and documentation at the study location. The study subject was a retired primary school teacher in Bengkulu Utara. This study identifies several symptoms observed in the study subject. Qualitative studies must maintain objectivity and not allow personal biases to influence data interpretation. Qualitative research is often used in historical and descriptive studies, where data are collected from key informants with knowledge and experience of the topic under study. These subjects are seen as those who best understand and take full responsibility for the smooth running of the school learning process; in other words, they have a strong influence on the school environment due to their experience and strong mindset.

This study uses Pattern Matching data analysis, which identifies patterns in the data and connects them with relevant theories to explain the phenomenon under study. The steps in pattern matching include collecting data from various sources, such as observations, interviews, and documents. Then organise the data into relevant categories or themes. The next step is to identify patterns in the data, such as similarities, differences, and contradictions. Then compare the patterns found with relevant theories. The final step in this study is to explain the research phenomenon based on the identified patterns and theories.

This case report was conducted with institutional permission obtained from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Brawijaya, through formal administrative approval procedures. Verbal informed consent was obtained from the patient, and all identifying information was anonymized.

Interview

This study used a face-to-face interview method, selecting study subjects based on specific criteria to obtain key data. Interviews were conducted with a guide to ensure focus on the study and data consistency. Interviews were repeated several times until saturated and convincing data were obtained. The main purpose of the interview was to obtain accurate, open, and honest information from the study subjects. The researcher built a good rapport with the study subjects to create a comfortable, conducive atmosphere during the interviews.

Observation

In this study, the researcher conducted direct observation, ensuring the collection of the required information was structured. This means that the actions and observations were pre-planned by the researcher, and the observations were recorded directly based on the situation observed at the research site.

Documentation

This study used various documentary sources, including school and teacher profiles, personal documentary evidence from the subjects, and other data relevant to the research topic. This documentary data was collected to enrich the information and support the research findings. These different types of documentary data were analysed to identify patterns and meanings related to the research focus. The use of diverse documentary data helped to provide a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study.

RESULT

Subject Characteristics

The research subject is a 60-year-old retired civil servant and mother of a certified elementary school teacher. In addition to being a teacher, the subject is the Chairperson of Dharma Wanita, the Chairperson of the Cooperative, the Supervisor of the Women's Farming Group, a member of the Core Management of the Kwartir Ranting in Scouting, and active in the Pengajian Group. After retiring, the subject moved temporarily to another province because she lived with her son in Bangka Belitung.

Symptoms Experienced by Research Subjects and The Duration of Post-Power Syndrome Experienced

To find out the overall symptoms experienced by the subject about Post Power Syndrome, the chronology is told in detail and structured, which is obtained from the observation results as follows: the subject tells with pride the subject's journey as an elementary school teacher from being appointed for the first time as a civil servant to retirement. The subject spoke with complete sincerity about all his experiences, while recalling them and showing his personal documentation to the researcher. The atmosphere of chatting looks so warm between the subject and the researcher. Once the chat has established familiarity, the researcher begins to observe the subject carefully from both physical and emotional perspectives. The first observation by the physical researcher showed the subject in an aged condition; the skin had many wrinkles on the face and hands. During the interview, the subject wore a grey robe with a matching headscarf.

The subject has been retired since July 2023; the subject has been retired for 10 months. The subject's emotional state while speaking seemed calm, proud, and sincere. A sense of happiness was expressed when talking about the past, when he was a teacher, but the psychological symptoms of post-power syndrome were evident in several sentences from the subject, such as feeling sadness and losing the usual work routine. The subject said, *'I am happy to be retired now, but it is hard and sad when I remember the students and friends I left behind at school'*. The subject felt anxiety about the financial income previously obtained, felt isolated because it was no longer an important part of the organisation that the subject had been involved in, there were also complaints of difficulty sleeping, reduced frequency and amount of eating, conveyed in the

subject's sentence *'yes now I sometimes have trouble sleeping, eating is also not much like before, eating a little is full, a day can only be once'*. And the decline in cognitive abilities is characterised by the subject forgetting something that will be conveyed. The subject also said that he continued to remember his glory days.

During the interview, the subject did not show symptoms of post-power syndrome directly, but as the interview progressed intensely, the researcher found symptoms of post-power syndrome from the story told by the subject. The subject tells of activities before retirement that he really enjoyed, but after he retired and moved to Bangka Belitung, he could not continue them; community organisation activities could not be followed properly because he lived in a new environment. As the following interview results: *'No, I'm not sad. I'm happy to live with my grandchildren here. I also have more time to worship and not be chased by work. It's just that for the recitation, I still rarely, only once a month, join the yasinan at the Pesantren near the house, because I don't really know the neighbours around here.'*

The subject's activities are, of course, different when he is still an elementary school teacher, because now he is an ordinary citizen, living with children and grandchildren, and spending his spare time gardening vegetables in the yard. This shows that the subject experiences Post Power Syndrome, which is not acute, as evidenced by their ability to fill their spare time. Researchers assume the subject experiences Post Power Syndrome as evidenced by various physical, emotional, and behavioural symptoms. On the physical side, the subject appears old, with wrinkles on the face and hands. From an emotional standpoint, the subject looks sad as he reflects on his glory days before retirement. And in terms of behaviour, the subject complained of difficulty sleeping, reduced frequency and amount of eating. These symptoms are signs of Post Power Syndrome.

DISCUSS

Interpretation of Results

Emotional symptoms

In terms of emotional symptoms, this study found that retired primary school teachers at Bengkulu Utara experienced sadness, anxiety, and feelings of isolation. The subject may feel sad to leave students and friends at school. The subject loses social status because the subject is the Chairperson of Dharma Wanita, the Chairperson of the Cooperative, the Supervisor of the Women Farmers Group, a member of the Core Management of the Kwartir Ranting in Scouting, and active in the Pengajian Group. And the subject lost her usual work routine. The subject can also feel anxious about her finances, which have decreased in income. Feelings of isolation due to living in a new environment. These emotional symptoms can significantly impact the psychological well-being of individuals experiencing Post Power Syndrome.

The results of this study on emotional symptoms are in line with research (Setiyawati et al., 2019) in PEPABRI Housing, Samata village, showing that 75% of respondents had low self-esteem before undergoing memory group therapy. After the therapy, a significant increase in self-esteem was observed among the elderly participants. Wilcoxon test results showed a significant effect with a P value of 0.001 ($P < 0.05$), signalling an increase in self-esteem post-therapy. In conclusion, the application of reminiscence group therapy has a positive

impact on the self-esteem of elderly individuals post-power syndrome, as evidenced by the significant improvement observed in the study conducted in the PEPABRI Housing area of Samata village.⁵

Behavioural symptoms

The study results showed that the behavioural symptoms observed among study subjects with Post-Power Syndrome included difficulty sleeping and changes in eating patterns. This shows that the subjects have symptoms common to individuals experiencing Post Power Syndrome. These symptoms reflect the behavioural changes that occur after losing a position or power, indicating a significant psychological impact from the subject's life transition.

In terms of behaviour, this symptom indicates that the subject is having difficulty adjusting to new roles and routines after retirement. This can provide valuable insights into the psychological conditions individuals experience after losing their position or power, especially upon entering retirement. These symptoms can inform the development of appropriate psychosocial intervention strategies and support programs to help individuals experiencing Post Power Syndrome manage their behavioural changes and maintain psychological well-being.

The results of this study on behavioural symptoms are in line with research (Rahmat, 2016) at MAN 2 Yogyakarta, which focused on observing behavioural changes in retired teachers experiencing post-power syndrome and noted various manifestations in their interactions and communication. Behavioural changes included increased aggression, withdrawal from social interactions, and a tendency to isolate oneself. Subjects exhibited behaviours such as feeling embarrassed about meeting others and defence mechanisms such as excessive reminiscing about pleasant past experiences. Factors affecting behavioural changes in retirees were identified, with an emphasis on negative emotional disturbances. Negative emotions such as anxiety, hopelessness, fear, and worry about the future are prevalent among those with post-power syndrome. Emotional distress leads to maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as substitutive reactions and overthinking past memories. This study highlights the importance of direct observation and interviews to accurately analyse behavioural symptoms. Direct field observations and interviews are essential in understanding the behavioural changes exhibited by retired teachers experiencing post-power syndrome. Efforts to address behavioural changes include engagement in social activities and meetings organised by the school. Participation in school-facilitated forums and meetings is recommended as a strategy to address and alleviate behavioural symptoms associated with post-power syndrome.¹³

Physical/ cognitive symptoms

In terms of physical and cognitive symptoms, the research subjects looked old, with wrinkles, and experienced a decline in cognitive abilities, including difficulty remembering and an obsession with the past, characterized by reminiscing about their prime.

The results of this study on physical/cognitive symptoms are also in line with research (Rahmat, 2016) at MAN 2 Yogyakarta, with the results of physical symptoms: Post-power syndrome can manifest physically, with retirees experiencing symptoms such as premature aging, including hair whitening, skin wrinkles, a more haggard appearance, and potential health problems. This is evident in studies showing

that retirees exhibit signs of physical deterioration due to stress. Cognitive symptoms: The cognitive aspect of post-retirement syndrome involves emotional and behavioural changes. Retirees may become irritable, feel undervalued, desire isolation, and exhibit other cognitive symptoms. These changes can affect their overall well-being and social interactions. This study highlights that retirees can exhibit emotional symptoms, such as becoming more temperamental and experiencing a loss of social contact with colleagues, which can affect their sense of self-worth and their desire to withdraw socially. Overall, the physical and cognitive symptoms of post-retirement syndrome can significantly affect retirees' quality of life, requiring attention and support to mitigate these effects.¹³

PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF RETIRED TEACHERS FACING POST-POWER SYNDROME

Retirement is a new phase in life that brings a lot of free time. For some people, this can trigger boredom. However, retirees are wise to utilise their free time by doing various positive activities that benefit themselves and others. These activities can be carried out in various fields, such as religion, social, economic, and education.

Psychosocial Intervention Strategies

Religious field

In response to efforts from the religious field, the subject occasionally participates in routine religious activities, such as recitation and yasinan, at the Islamic Boarding School around the house.

This effort is supported by research (Astuti, 2022), which suggests that religiosity instills in individuals fortitude and patience to face injustice in the community environment. Every employee who works will feel the name retirement, so to prevent anxiety, worry, emotions, high religiosity is needed to suppress Post Power Syndrome. Individuals who recognise and feel the supreme power, which fortifies the lives of its servants, and only to the creator we surrender and depend, are manifested through religious compliance. Religiosity helps individuals understand and accept the situation, enabling them to reconcile their hearts.³

This result is also supported by research (Zahrah, 2014). The document also links congregational prayer to mental and physical health benefits and emphasises the importance of engaging in religious activities to reduce Post Power Syndrome. Other studies also support this research's findings by showing the relationship between prayer and a person's psychological state. The results of the study provide readers with wisdom to improve the quality of worship and to use it as motivation in dealing with Post Power Syndrome. There is also an emphasis on the importance of congregational prayer as a means of uniting the heart and the physical body, as well as conditioning the heart and reassuring the mind of the person who performs it. In addition, the results of this study also provide recommendations for the government and researchers to consider other factors that affect Post Power Syndrome. Thus, this study makes an important contribution by highlighting the relationship between congregational prayer and the reduction of Post Power Syndrome in retirees, as well as by providing useful recommendations for retirees and the government to address this issue.¹⁴

Social field

Handling efforts in the subject's social field include daily afternoon walks with local residents while getting acquainted with the new environment. He is active on social media and WhatsApp groups with his school friends.

This effort is in line with research (Ikawati & Tri Gutomo, 2018), with the results of research conducted in Yogyakarta, and aims to determine the effect of social support on anxiety conditions in facing retirement, known as Post Power Syndrome. This correlational research uses interview and observation techniques to collect data from 30 respondents who have retired, are over 60 years old, and have certain pension benefits. Regression analysis results showed that social support accounted for 72% of the reduction in retirement anxiety, with emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal support making distinct relative contributions.¹⁵

It is recommended that the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs, through the Directorate of Elderly Services, create programmes that involve the elderly to prevent Post Power Syndrome and improve social welfare. Families and communities are encouraged to respect and care for the elderly, while retirees should prepare economically, physically, and psychologically before retirement to prevent anxiety.

This research emphasises the importance of social support in helping older adults adjust to life after retirement and to prevent anxiety and inactivity. With strong support, older adults can remain engaged and useful to society.

Support and Education Programme

Economic field

Handling efforts in the economic field, the subject spends his free time gardening in the yard around the house and selling the produce from his vegetable garden to peddlers.

This effort is in line with research (Williams & Thompson, 2020), with the results of activities in the economic field can have a significant positive impact on women experiencing post-power syndrome. Engaging in economic activities, such as running a small business or participating in entrepreneurial projects, can provide a new sense of purpose and achievement for women who previously experienced a decline in self-esteem and loss of identity after retirement or no longer holding an important position. Studies show that involvement in economic activities can improve psychological well-being by providing structure, responsibility, and opportunities for

wider social interaction.¹⁶ Also in research (Anderson et al., 2019), economic activity can help these women feel financially independent, which can reduce anxiety related to financial matters and provide a greater sense of security¹⁷. Therefore, economic activity can be an effective way to ameliorate the symptoms of post-power syndrome in women, giving them the opportunity to rebuild their identity and self-esteem.

Education field

Handling efforts in the field of education, the subject processes cognitive work as a teacher by teaching his grandchildren to study at home (learning the Quran and school subjects).

This effort is in line with research (Smith, 2019), with the results of teaching activities showing a significant positive impact on women who experience post-power syndrome. Through teaching activities, these women can regain a sense of value and meaning, which is often lost after they retire or no longer hold positions of power. Studies show that involvement in teaching can boost self-confidence and provide a renewed sense of purpose, which can help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety often associated with post-power syndrome.¹⁸ Also with research (Jones & Brown, 2020), teaching activities allow these women to continue using their skills and knowledge, which can reduce feelings of identity loss and assist in the maintenance of cognitive function.¹⁹ Thus, teaching may be an effective intervention in addressing symptoms of post-power syndrome in women.

Limitation of study

This study has some limitations that need to be recognised. Firstly, as this study used a qualitative approach with a single subject, the results may not be generalisable to a wider population of retired teachers. Secondly, this study focused only on the experiences of a single retired female primary school teacher in Bengkulu Utara, so it did not consider variations in experiences by gender, geographical location, or other levels of education. Thirdly, the data collected through interviews and observations may be influenced by the subjective biases of both the researcher and the research subject. Finally, the limited time of data collection may not capture the long-term dynamics of Post Power Syndrome in retired teachers. Further research with larger samples and more diverse methods is needed to strengthen these findings and provide more comprehensive insights.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that Post Power Syndrome is a significant psychological condition faced by retired female teachers. The subjects' experiences showed that the loss of an active and respected role in the school environment led to feelings of identity loss and diminished meaning in life. The perceived psychological impacts include depression, anxiety, and decreased self-esteem, reflecting how closely emotionally tied they are to the teaching profession.

The results of the analysis suggest that cultural and social factors in Indonesia, which place teachers in a position of authority and high respect, contribute to the level of stress experienced at retirement. Retired female teachers tend to experience greater difficulty in adapting to their new lives as they lose the intense social interactions and daily routines that have shaped their identities over the years.

The research also highlights the importance of psychological and social support for retired teachers. Effective interventions, such as counselling and comprehensive retirement preparation programs, can help them in the adjustment process. Support from family and community also plays an important role in helping retired teachers cope with feelings of loss and find new meaning in post-retirement life. The findings can serve as a basis for education and psychology practitioners to develop more effective strategies for supporting retired teachers, as well as to highlight the need for policies that promote their psychological well-being. Thus, it is hoped that retired teachers can live their retirement more positively and meaningfully.

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