



# The Contribution of Optimism to Resilience in Employees Experiencing Termination of Employment

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## ABSTRAK

*Persoalan yang muncul dari pandemi COVID-19 telah berdampak pada semua aspek kehidupan manusia, salah satunya pemutusan hubungan kerja. Pemutusan hubungan kerja merupakan hal yang ditakuti oleh semua pekerja. Adanya reaksi yang bervariasi yang diberikan baik dari karyawan maupun lingkungan. Ada karyawan yang bisa resilien dan menerima keadaan yang dialaminya, namun ada juga karyawan yang tidak menerima keadaannya dan kesulitan menghadapi berbagai rintangan karena hilangnya optimisme diri. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kontribusi optimisme terhadap resiliensi karyawan yang mengalami pemutusan hubungan kerja. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan desain regresi sederhana. Partisipan penelitian ini melibatkan 40 orang dengan menggunakan teknik insidental sampling. Pengukuran penelitian menggunakan skala optimisme dan skala resiliensi. Analisis data untuk pengujian hipotesis penelitian menggunakan uji regresi sederhana. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa optimisme tidak berpengaruh terhadap resiliensi pada karyawan yang mengalami pemutusan hubungan kerja dengan nilai  $t$  hitung  $1,320 < t$  tabel  $1,685$ . Hal ini mengindikasikan bahwa optimisme bukan menjadi faktor pemicu individu untuk bisa resilien dari situasi-situasi buruk akibat mengalami pemutusan hubungan kerja.*

## ABSTRACT

The problems that arise from the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted all aspects of human life, one of which is termination of employment. Termination of employment is something that is feared by all workers. There are varied reactions given by both employees and the environment. There were employees who can be resilient and accept the situation they are in, on the other side there were employees who did not accept their situation and have difficulty facing various obstacles because of the loss of self-optimism. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the contribution of optimism to the resilience of employees who experienced termination of employment. This research used quantitative method with a simple regression design. The participants of this study involved 40 people using incidental sampling technique. The measurement of this research used an optimism scale and a resilience scale. Data analysis for testing the research hypothesis uses a simple regression test. The results showed that optimism had no effect on the resilience of employees who experienced termination of employment with a  $t$  value of  $1.320 < t$  table of  $1.685$ . This indicates that optimism is not a factor that triggers individuals to be resilient from bad situations due to experiencing layoffs.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, which is still happening today, there are many challenges and risks that impact all sectors of human life, including the world of work (Setijadi, 2021; Syahril, 2020). During the Covid-19 pandemic, companies in Indonesia experienced the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Losses were caused by a decrease in the number of sales, so the company was forced to reduce the amount of production, which could not be separated from the reduction in sales. Companies in the world, especially in Indonesia, are forced to reduce the number of employees. The number of employees who have experienced layoffs (PHK) is 2.56 million Indonesians, thus making it difficult for employees to meet their daily needs.

The life of someone who has experienced layoffs has an impact on all aspects of life and their family, and these impacts include low job satisfaction and no happiness (Soehardi et al., 2020; Sulastri, 2021). In addition to experiencing the problem of decreased income, an employee who has been laid off also experiences other problems, namely family problems caused by the impact of a decrease in income experienced by employees where the result of a decrease in income disrupts the family relationship of the employee. The phenomena that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic experienced by companies and employees greatly influenced the amount of sales and income, as experienced by several entrepreneurs who experienced losses because people tended to be afraid to make purchase transactions. This causes companies to be forced to lay off employees, which can cause mental disorders such as stress to depression. Another problem that arises is that individuals will find it difficult to be resilient in difficult situations.

Resilience itself can be interpreted as a form of manifestation of personal qualities that help individuals to develop in overcoming difficulties (Connor, K. M., & Davidson, 2003; Pondalos, T., & Santi, 2021). Someone who does not have resilience, will tend to experience psychological problems that endanger the physical and mental state (Bitsika et al., 2010; Pantan et al., 2021). Based on the results carried out by previous research, it was revealed that individuals with low levels of resilience are unable to assess, overcome and improve themselves or change themselves from adversity or adversity in life (Mir'atannisa et al., 2019). On the other hand, other research reveals that if individuals have good resilience skills, it will make it easier for them to face every difficulty in life (Alhaitamy & Netrawati, 2021).

Optimism has an important contribution in the process of building resilience. Resilience will be difficult to form without the role of optimism (Missasi & Izzati, 2019; Putri & Alfinuha, 2021; Roellyana & Listiyandini, 2016). In this case, especially for employees who have experienced layoffs, previous research argues that individuals who have good resilience are due to the role of optimism, where individuals believe that everything can change for the better (Khodabakhshi-Koolae et al., 2019). Therefore, employees who have experienced layoffs need a role of optimism in solving the problems they face, and have an attitude of self-acceptance towards the situation they are facing with an active response, not easily give up when they encounter difficulties, plan for the best version of the future, and try to find way out when encountering obstacles. From the results of previous studies, it was found that optimism plays an important role in increasing resilience in first-year students (Dawson & Pooley, 2013). Likewise with previous research which suggested that optimism has a contribution to increasing resilience in retired TNI-AL (Putri & Alfinuha, 2021).

Referring to the results of previous research which showed that optimism plays a role in resilience, thus providing a positive picture that resilience is inseparable from optimistic self-character. However, researchers consider that the topic of the contribution of optimism to resilience still has an urgency to be researched because of the problems that occurred suddenly due to the unresolved Covid-19 pandemic. Especially in the research taken were employees who experienced layoffs. Apart from having pressures and problems in meeting the high needs of life, plus the pandemic factor which has to return to looking for work and adapting to changes in the new environment, causing serious life problems holistically and the effects of severe mental problems. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the contribution of optimism to resilience in employees who have experienced layoffs. Then, the hypothesis proposed is that there is a contribution of optimism to resilience in employees who have experienced layoffs.

## 2. METHOD

This study uses a quantitative type with a simple regression design to see the contribution of the independent variable (optimism) to the dependent variable (resilience). The participants involved were 40 employees who experienced layoffs in Central Kalimantan using the incidental sampling technique which is a sampling technique based on chance, that is, anyone who coincidentally or incidentally meets a researcher can be used as a sample, if it is deemed that the person who happened to be found is suitable as a data source (Sugiyono, 2012). All participant demographic data are described in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Participant Demographic Data

Characteristics of Participants	Valid (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Man	25	62.5%
Woman	15	37.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age of Employees Who Experiencing Layoffs</b>		
30 years	7	17.5%

Characteristics of Participants	Valid (n)	Percentage (%)
31 years	3	7.5%
33 years	6	15%
35 years old	9	22.5%
36 years old	7	17.5%
38 Years	8	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Length of Work at the Company</b>		
6 years	10	25%
7 years	10	25%
8 years	15	37,5%
9 years	5	12,5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Year of Termination of Employment</b>		
< 6 months ago	10	25%
6-12 months ago	13	32.5%
1-2 years ago	17	42.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Responsibilities Status in the Family</b>		
Backbone	25	62.5%
No	15	37.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Status of Having Children</b>		
1 Child	15	37.5%
Two children	25	62.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data collection method used is a questionnaire method or a psychological measurement scale (questionnaire). The questionnaire used in this study uses digital assistance, namely the Google form due to the problem of the Covid-19 pandemic, so that health protocols must be implemented. Data collection consisted of two scales, namely the optimism scale and the resilience scale. The optimism scale is based on the theory of optimism which consists of three aspects, namely permanence, pervasiveness, and personalization. The optimism scale consists of 29 item statements that have passed the selection. The answer choices provided consist of four choices, namely STS (Highly Unsuitable), TS (Not Appropriate), S (Suitable) and SS (Highly Appropriate). From the test results, the reliability coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha 0.920 is obtained which is classified as very reliable.

The scale used to measure resilience was adapted from CD-RISC which refers to aspects of resilience, namely personal competence, self-confidence and tolerance for negative affect, positive acceptance of change, self-control by regulating emotions and behavior when faced with stressful situations, and spiritual towards God for what happened. The resilience scale consists of 18 statement items that have passed the selection. The answer choices provided consist of four choices, namely STS (Highly Unsuitable), TS (Not Appropriate), S (Suitable) and SS (Highly Appropriate). From the test results, the reliability coefficient Cronbach's Alpha was 0.899 which was classified as very reliable. Data analysis for testing the research hypothesis uses a simple regression test. This analysis is used to determine whether or not there is a contribution of optimism to the resilience of employees who have experienced layoffs. All research data were tested with the help of SPSS series 18 for windows computer.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### Result

##### *Descriptive Analysis*

Based on empirical optimism descriptive analysis data is shown in [Table 2](#). Based on [Table 2](#), there were 15 participants (37.5%) who had a very low level of optimism, 16 participants (40%) had a low level of optimism, 6 participants (15%) had a moderate level of optimism, 1 participant (2.5%) had a high level of optimism, and 2 participants (5%) had a very high level of optimism. The minimum score is 47, the maximum score is 99, and the average is 62.18 with a standard deviation of 13.115. Thus, it can be said that the optimism of the participants is mostly in the low category. Based on empirical descriptive analysis data on resilience is show in [Table 3](#).

**Table 2.** Optimism Categorization

Interval	Category	F	Percentage
$88,6 \leq x \leq 99$	Very high	2	5.0%
$78,2 \leq x \leq 88,6$	High	1	2.5%
$67,8 \leq x \leq 78,2$	Medium	6	15.0%
$57,4 \leq x \leq 67,8$	Low	16	40.0%
$47 \leq x \leq 57,4$	Very low	15	37.5%
<b>Jumlah</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.** Resilience Categorization

Interval	Kategori	F	Persentase
$67,2 \leq x \leq 70$	Sangat Tinggi	6	15.0%
$64,4 \leq x \leq 67,2$	Tinggi	3	7.5%
$61,6 \leq x \leq 64,4$	Sedang	3	7.5%
$58,8 \leq x \leq 61,6$	Rendah	19	47.5%
$56 \leq x \leq 58,8$	Sangat Rendah	9	22.5%
<b>Jumlah</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Assumption Test**

Furthermore, the normality test results for the optimism variable obtained a KS-Z value of 1.156 with sig = 0.138. Whereas for the resilience variable the KS-Z value is 1.218 with sig = 0.103 thus both variables have a value of  $p > 0.05$  which indicates normal distribution of data. For the linearity test, the deviation from linearity value was 1.899 with a significance value of 0.081 ( $> 0.05$ ) which shows that the relationship between optimism and resilience in employees who have experienced layoffs is linear.

**Hypothesis Testing**

Based on the simple linear regression equation test is show in [Table 4](#).

**Table 4.** Simple Regression Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	56.435	3.611	15.630	0.000
	Optimism	0.075	0.057	0.209	0.196

Based on [Table 4](#), the calculated t value is smaller than t table ( $1,320 < 1,685$ ). It can be said that optimism contributes to the resilience of employees who experience layoffs.

**Discussion**

The results of the study prove that optimism does not contribute to the resilience of employees who experience layoffs, which means that the research hypothesis is rejected. This research shows that optimism is not a factor that causes employees to be resilient from difficult and difficult situations during the COVID-19 pandemic due to layoffs. If seen, resilience itself is described as a manifestation of personal qualities that help individuals to develop in overcoming difficulties ([Cooke et al., 2019](#); [Missasi & Izzati, 2019](#)). Individuals who can develop a career, make it able to improve the quality of self and the necessities of life ([Azhari & Wicaksono, 2017](#); [Hooley & Rice, 2019](#)). However, in this study the resilience of employees who have experienced layoffs is in the low category, which indicates that employees who have experienced layoffs feel pressured by changes in circumstances and conditions due to loss of livelihood, which are then required again to immediately find solutions to meet their daily needs.

Every life problem that cannot be controlled due to layoffs is a difficult situation, and often causes individuals to be helpless and trapped in hurting themselves and their surroundings. The crucial circumstances experienced by the participants made it difficult for them to be resilient properly. The description of low resilience also has an impact on self-realization that is difficult to build on life goals ([Bufquin et al., 2021](#); [Caniëls & Hatak, 2022](#)). Individuals who are unable to be resilient are individuals who find it difficult to rise from life's problems, and are unable to recover in the face of stress experienced. In addition, other problems that arise are poor adaptation to all situations that occur, and low control or self-control ([Athota et al., 2020](#); [Khan et al., 2020](#)).

This problem seems to be experienced by research participants, where from the results of follow-up interviews it is found that employees who are the breadwinners of the family experience severe mental problems. As the head of the family, he must fully support the family and children, thus triggering the emergence of severe mental stress and losing hope of achieving family welfare. Male and female participants who were laid off had the same complexity of problems, where this unsafe or unfavorable condition raised doubts about being able to get up and recover to the original situation. The state of stress that is felt and the hope of getting a new job becomes difficult because the situation does not allow it, even the individual's inability to be resilient is shown by the unacceptance of the destiny that is experienced at this time due to experiencing layoffs. Previous research revealed that if an individual has doubts about the belief that God will leave him, then these thoughts and feelings will make him unable to do anything to get out of trouble (Byrne-Martelli & Rosenberg, 2022).

The complete problems experienced by the participants and the lack of resilience ability, specifically it can be said that optimism does not play a role in the high or low resilience experienced by the participants. Optimism is a crucial thing that cannot be formed by participants because they feel useless in meeting life's needs, both housing needs, children's education or other necessary needs. The results of the study found that the optimism of the participants was in the low category, which was predicted to cause participants to experience stressful life cycles and transitions. This is supported by the opinion of previous research, which stated that individuals with low optimism are at risk for poor mental health in the long term (Mangestuti et al., 2020). The control possessed by individuals in the absence of optimism tends not to be able to help individuals survive difficult periods (Roellyana & Listiyandini, 2016; Santa-Cruz et al., 2019). Low optimism also triggers a cycle of grief including depression, anxiety, relationship problems, and a worsening quality of life.

Negative acceptance of change and having a bad relationship with the social environment, results in bad talk from the social environment who views employees who experience layoffs as having no job. This results in low individual self-control in managing emotions, stress and depression when faced with stressful situations (de Miquel et al., 2022; Rachmad, 2021). In the aspect of spiritual resilience, employees who experience layoffs feel heavy feelings and tend to feel that they have been given a tough trial and then think that God does not care about them or those they love. Great fear and worry for the future of the family and feeling that things are continuing to get worse due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the difficulty in finding a job makes the participants unable to think rationally and lose their sense of optimism in the face of pressure (Decuyper & Schaufeli, 2020; Wiltshire, 2016).

The implications of this research provide a new picture that it is not easy for individuals to be progressively resilient from the difficult situations they experience. Mental adventure requires time and a deep process of self-reflection to find new enthusiasm and fighting power. For this reason, the issue of layoffs can still be investigated on an ongoing basis with comprehensive studies. Thus, this study still has deficiencies that can affect the results of the study in full, such as researchers paying little attention to the level of understanding of participants in the use of technology or situations and environments that are less conducive.

Based on the results and conclusions, the researcher's suggestions for further research can continue discussing similar research, by providing some additional data regarding the characteristics of the participants by looking at the background, their understanding in filling out research questionnaires or questionnaires via the *Google form* and also looking at companies, both companies private sector, BUMN and UMKM, so that the data is more valid by comparing based on the background of the participants and further researchers can also determine other variables that can affect resilience or can conduct resilience studies through qualitative studies.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that optimism does not contribute to resilience in employees who have experienced layoffs. The optimism score is in the low category, and the resilience score is in the low category. These results indicate that optimism is not a factor in increasing the resilience of employees who experience layoffs.

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