



Family Education As An Adult Learning Ecosystem: Mapping Coping Strategies And Protective Factors to Strengthen Family Resilience

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ABSTRAK

Ketahanan keluarga menjadi isu penting seiring meningkatnya kompleksitas tantangan yang dihadapi keluarga, seperti kesulitan pengasuhan, tekanan ekonomi, tuntutan pekerjaan dan keluarga, konflik interpersonal, serta tekanan psikologis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana orang dewasa mengembangkan ketahanan keluarga melalui strategi koping dan faktor protektif dalam konteks pendidikan keluarga sebagai proses pembelajaran orang dewasa secara informal. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan melibatkan sepuluh orang dewasa yang memiliki peran pengasuhan (*caregiving responsibilities*) di Kota Serang, Banten. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui kuesioner terbuka, observasi, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan empat tema utama dalam pengembangan ketahanan keluarga, yaitu stresor keluarga, motivasi harian, strategi koping, dan faktor protektif. Stresor keluarga yang dialami partisipan, seperti tantangan pengasuhan, tekanan ekonomi, tuntutan pekerjaan, dan konflik keluarga, menjadi titik awal terjadinya proses refleksi dan pembelajaran yang mendorong individu mengembangkan strategi koping adaptif, meliputi koping berorientasi masalah, koping berorientasi emosi, dan koping berbasis spiritualitas. Selain itu, dukungan keluarga, dukungan sosial, spiritualitas, optimisme, dan motivasi diri ditemukan sebagai faktor protektif yang memperkuat kemampuan keluarga dalam menghadapi berbagai tantangan. Penelitian ini menghasilkan model konseptual pengembangan ketahanan keluarga melalui alur **Family Stressors → Reflection and Learning → Coping Strategies → Protective Factors → Resilience Development**. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ketahanan keluarga bukan hanya kemampuan untuk bertahan terhadap tekanan, tetapi juga merupakan proses pembelajaran berkelanjutan ketika individu dan keluarga mengubah pengalaman hidup menjadi kompetensi adaptif. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi bagi kajian pendidikan keluarga dengan menempatkan keluarga sebagai lingkungan pembelajaran orang dewasa yang berperan dalam membangun ketahanan keluarga.

Kata Kunci: *Pembelajaran Orang Dewasa, Ketahanan Keluarga, Strategi Coping, Faktor Protektif, Pendidikan Keluarga, Andragogi*

ABSTRACT

*Family resilience has become an important issue as families face increasingly complex challenges, including parenting difficulties, economic pressures, work-family demands, interpersonal conflicts, and psychological stress. This study aims to explore how adults develop family resilience through coping strategies and protective factors within the context of family education as an informal adult learning process. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach involving ten adults with caregiving responsibilities in Serang, Banten, Indonesia. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires, observations, and documentation, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed four main themes related to family resilience development: family stressors, daily motivators, coping strategies, and protective factors. Family stressors experienced by participants became starting points for reflection and learning, enabling adults to develop adaptive coping strategies, including problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and spiritual coping. Furthermore, family support, social support, spirituality, optimism, and self-motivation emerged as essential protective factors that strengthened resilience. This study proposes a dynamic pathway of family resilience development: **Family Stressors → Reflection and Learning → Coping Strategies → Protective Factors → Resilience Development**. The findings indicate that family resilience is not merely the ability to endure adversity but a continuous learning process in which adults transform life experiences into adaptive competencies. This study contributes to family education research by highlighting the role of informal adult learning processes in strengthening family resilience and providing implications for developing resilience-oriented family education programs.*

Keywords: Adult Learning, Family Resilience, Coping Strategies, Protective Factors, Family Education, Andragogy

INTRODUCTION

The family represents the first and most influential social environment where individuals develop emotional regulation, interpersonal competence, values, and adaptive behaviors. Beyond its biological and social functions, the family also operates as an informal learning environment in which adults continuously acquire knowledge, skills, and coping capacities through everyday experiences. In contemporary society, however, families increasingly encounter complex challenges, including parenting demands, economic uncertainty, work–family conflict, health problems, and changing social expectations. These conditions create significant pressures that may affect family functioning and psychological well-being if families lack adequate resources and adaptive capacities.

Recent studies indicate that family resilience should be understood as a dynamic process rather than merely an individual psychological characteristic. Family resilience emerges from the interaction between risk factors, protective resources, family relationships, and contextual environments. Families experiencing economic hardship or major life transitions may maintain adaptive functioning when they possess strong social support, effective communication, and meaningful coping resources (Leung, 2026; Masten, 2018). This perspective shifts the understanding of families from being passive recipients of stress toward active systems capable of learning, adapting, and transforming adversity into opportunities for development.

The increasing complexity of family challenges requires a broader understanding of how individuals develop resilience through daily experiences. Research demonstrates that family stress is frequently associated with multiple sources, including parenting responsibilities, employment demands, financial pressures, and interpersonal conflicts. Work–family conflict and role overload represent

significant challenges for family functioning because individuals must continuously negotiate competing occupational and domestic demands. Previous studies demonstrate that work–family conflict is associated with poorer psychological well-being and increased stress, while parental burnout research highlights the importance of resilience resources and protective factors in maintaining adaptive family functioning (Liu et al., 2022; Pien et al., 2021). These findings indicate that resilience development cannot be separated from the capacity of families to manage competing demands and develop adaptive strategies.

In responding to stressful conditions, coping strategies represent an essential mechanism that determines whether families experience psychological deterioration or adaptation. Contemporary resilience studies emphasize that adaptive coping strategies, including problem-solving, emotional regulation, and meaning-making processes, contribute significantly to maintaining psychological stability during adversity. Recent evidence shows that problem-focused coping and family protective factors jointly predict parental resilience, demonstrating that coping competence operates together with available family resources rather than independently (Agustina et al., 2026).

Furthermore, family resilience is strongly influenced by protective factors such as emotional support, social networks, spirituality, and positive family interactions. Research on family social support has demonstrated that supportive family environments strengthen resilience by increasing individuals' ability to regulate emotions, develop self-efficacy, and maintain adaptive behaviors under pressure (Suud et al., 2024a). Similarly, spirituality and belief-based support have been identified as important resources that strengthen family adaptation, particularly among families experiencing prolonged caregiving burdens and health-related stressors (Retnaningsih et al., 2026a).

Although family resilience research has expanded considerably, most studies continue to examine resilience primarily from psychological, social support, or intervention perspectives. Less attention has been given to understanding family resilience as a continuous adult learning process. Families do not only receive support but also actively learn from everyday challenges by reflecting on experiences, modifying behaviors, and developing new strategies for managing future difficulties.

This perspective aligns with adult learning theory, which emphasizes that adults learn most effectively when learning is connected to real-life experiences, immediate problems, and personal reflection. Recent discussions in adult education highlight that parenting education should recognize parents as adult learners who construct knowledge through lived experiences rather than simply receiving instructional information (Medina-Rangel & Bohonos, 2026). Therefore, family education can be conceptualized as an informal adult learning ecosystem where individuals develop competencies related to communication, emotional regulation, financial management, and problem-solving.

The relationship between adult learning and family resilience becomes increasingly relevant because many family challenges require continuous adaptation rather than temporary solutions. Adults facing family pressures often engage in experiential learning processes, where difficult experiences become sources of reflection and behavioral adjustment. Recent research on adult learners demonstrates that balancing work, family responsibilities, and personal development requires adaptive coping strategies and resilience capacities developed through ongoing learning processes (Mamba & Phebeni, 2026).

Despite these developments, limited empirical studies have integrated family resilience theory and adult learning perspectives to explain how everyday family experiences contribute to resilience

formation. Existing research has identified important protective factors and coping mechanisms, but the process through which adults transform family stress into learning experiences remains insufficiently explored. This represents an important research gap, particularly in the context of Indonesian families where family relationships, spirituality, and social connectedness strongly influence adaptation processes.

Therefore, this study aims to examine family resilience through an adult learning perspective by exploring four interconnected dimensions: (1) life stressors experienced by families, (2) daily motivators that maintain psychological balance, (3) coping strategies used to manage adversity, and (4) protective factors that support resilience development. This study contributes theoretically by positioning family education as an informal adult learning process that strengthens resilience through experiential learning, reflection, and adaptation. Practically, the findings provide implications for developing family education programs that emphasize parenting skills, communication competence, financial literacy, emotional regulation, and strengthening social and spiritual resources. Through this approach, family education can become a strategic mechanism for supporting families in navigating increasingly complex social challenges.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the experiences of adults in managing family stress, developing coping strategies, and utilizing protective factors to strengthen family resilience. A qualitative approach was selected because this study aimed to understand participants' subjective experiences, meanings, and adaptation processes within their family contexts rather than examining statistical relationships between variables. This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to explore participants' experiences and interpretations regarding family stress, coping strategies, and resilience development. Qualitative research is appropriate when researchers aim to understand meanings constructed by individuals within their social contexts (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D, n.d.). Participants were selected through purposive sampling because qualitative studies require information-rich cases that can provide deep understanding of the investigated phenomenon (Michael Quinn Patton, n.d.). Data were subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis to systematically identify and interpret patterns of meaning across participants' accounts (Virginia Braun & Victoria Clarke, n.d.).

The study focused on four analytical dimensions: life stressors, daily motivators, coping strategies, and protective factors that contribute to family resilience. The conceptual framework was developed based on the integration of family resilience theory and adult learning theory, which views family experiences as continuous learning processes where adults develop adaptive skills through reflection and real-life challenges (Knowles et al., 2014). The participants consisted of 10 adults with caregiving responsibilities within their families in Serang, Banten, Indonesia. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the criteria that participants actively performed caregiving roles and had direct experiences related to family challenges, stress management, and resilience development. Data were collected through three techniques: open-ended questionnaires, observations, and documentation. The open-ended questionnaire allowed participants to describe their personal experiences related to family stress, motivation, coping mechanisms, and protective resources. Observation and documentation were used as complementary sources to enrich contextual understanding and strengthen the interpretation of

participants' experiences. The use of multiple qualitative data sources is consistent with qualitative research principles because triangulation can enhance the depth and credibility of findings by comparing information from different sources (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D, n.d.).

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis framework, consisting of data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and reporting of findings. This analytical approach was applied to identify patterns related to family stress experiences, adaptive coping strategies, protective factors, and the role of family education in resilience development. The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through triangulation involving participant narratives, observations, and documentation, following Lincoln and Guba's criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This methodological process enables a comprehensive understanding of how families transform daily challenges into learning experiences that contribute to adaptive coping and resilience development.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Family Stressors as a Context for Resilience Development

The findings revealed that participants experienced multiple forms of family stress originating from parenting responsibilities, occupational demands, economic difficulties, interpersonal conflicts, and psychological challenges. The analysis showed that parenting-related stress was one of the most dominant challenges experienced by participants. Participants reported difficulties in managing children's behavior, communicating with adolescents, handling children's emotional needs, and dealing with feelings of guilt associated with previous parenting decisions. These findings indicate that family stress is not only generated by external conditions but also emerges from complex relational processes within the family system.

In addition to parenting challenges, participants experienced significant pressure from work responsibilities and domestic obligations. Several participants described exhaustion resulting from simultaneous professional and household demands, reflecting the condition of role overload. Economic pressure was also identified as an important source of stress, particularly related to household expenses, children's education costs, installment payments, and uncertainty regarding future financial conditions. These findings demonstrate that family stress is multidimensional and results from the interaction between individual responsibilities, family roles, and broader socioeconomic conditions.

The findings are consistent with recent research showing that work-family conflict and competing role demands contribute significantly to psychological distress and reduced family well-being. Work-family conflict represents an important psychological burden because individuals must negotiate competing expectations between occupational and family roles (Pien et al., 2021). Similarly, prolonged parental demands may increase parental burnout, while resilience resources can reduce negative psychological consequences (Liu et al., 2022).

However, this study extends previous research by showing that family stressors may also function as learning contexts. From an adult learning perspective, stressful experiences provide opportunities for adults to acquire new knowledge, evaluate previous actions, and develop adaptive strategies. Rather than viewing stress solely as a negative outcome, the findings suggest that family adversity can become a

form of experiential learning through which individuals strengthen problem-solving abilities and emotional regulation.

This interpretation aligns with the concept of family resilience, which emphasizes that resilience emerges through continuous adaptation between family demands and available resources. Recent meta-analytic evidence indicates that family resilience is negatively associated with perceived stress, demonstrating that stronger resilience capacities can reduce the psychological impact of stressful experiences (Li et al., 2025). Therefore, the stress experienced by participants should not be interpreted merely as vulnerability but also as a potential catalyst for resilience development.

Daily Motivators as Emotional Resources Supporting Family Adaptation

The findings identified four major sources of daily motivation that helped participants maintain psychological balance: family togetherness, social support, personal self-care activities, and spirituality. Among these factors, family interaction emerged as the most dominant source of emotional strength. Participants described spending time with spouses and children, communicating with family members, and engaging in shared activities as meaningful experiences that provided emotional stability.

Social relationships beyond the immediate family also played an important role. Participants reported that interactions with friends, colleagues, and extended family members created feelings of appreciation, belonging, and emotional support. These findings demonstrate that resilience is developed through relational processes rather than individual capacity alone. Supportive relationships provide individuals with emotional resources that strengthen their ability to manage family challenges.

This finding is supported by recent research emphasizing the importance of family and social support in strengthening resilience. Family and social support enhance individuals’ perceived coping ability and psychological well-being by strengthening psychological flexibility when facing stressful life events (Peleg & Peleg, 2025). Similarly, research involving Indonesian and Turkish students demonstrated that family social support contributes to resilience development through self-regulated learning processes, highlighting the importance of family environments in developing adaptive capacities (Suud et al., 2024b).

Participants also identified personal activities such as listening to music, resting, watching entertainment programs, exercising, and engaging in hobbies as strategies for maintaining emotional balance. Although these activities appear simple, they function as self-regulation mechanisms that help individuals restore psychological energy. This finding supports recent perspectives that resilience is strengthened through everyday adaptive practices rather than only through responses to major crises.

Spirituality was another significant source of motivation. Participants reported that prayer, gratitude, religious activities, and acceptance helped them construct meaning from difficult experiences. This finding is consistent with research demonstrating that belief-based family support interventions can strengthen resilience by improving family communication, coping ability, and adaptive role management among caregivers (Retnaningsih et al., 2026b).

Table 1. Thematic Summary of Family Resilience Dimensions

Theme	Sub-themes	Empirical Findings	Theoretical Interpretation
Family Stressors	Parenting challenges, work burden,	Participants experienced multiple	Stress becomes an experiential learning context

	economic pressure, family conflict	and overlapping pressures	
Daily Motivators	Family togetherness, social support, self- care, spirituality	Participants maintained emotional balance through meaningful activities	Daily experiences become resilience resources
Coping Strategies	Problem-focused, emotion-focused, spiritual coping	Participants developed adaptive responses to adversity	Coping represents adult learning competence
Protective Factors	Family support, social networks, optimism, religiosity	Internal and external resources strengthened adaptation	Protective factors facilitate family resilience

Coping Strategies as Experiential Learning Processes

The analysis revealed that participants employed three major coping strategies when facing family-related challenges: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and spiritual-focused coping. These coping patterns illustrate that participants did not respond to adversity through a single mechanism but developed multiple adaptive responses depending on the nature and intensity of the problems they encountered. The findings indicate that coping strategies functioned as practical resources that enabled participants to maintain family functioning while managing emotional and psychological demands.

Problem-focused coping emerged when participants attempted to address the source of difficulties directly, including managing household financial problems, improving communication within the family, and finding solutions to parenting challenges. Participants demonstrated efforts to actively evaluate problems and identify possible solutions rather than simply accepting stressful conditions. This finding suggests that resilience development involves an active process of problem negotiation, where individuals transform stressful experiences into opportunities to develop competencies.

This finding is consistent with recent research demonstrating that problem-focused coping and family protective factors contribute significantly to parental resilience. Problem-focused coping was positively associated with parental resilience among parents of children with special needs, indicating that individuals who actively address challenges tend to develop stronger adaptive capacities (Agustina et al., 2026). Similarly, resilience research emphasizes that adaptive coping strategies operate as mechanisms that reduce the negative consequences of adversity by increasing perceived control and self-efficacy (Abate et al., 2024).

Emotion-focused coping was also identified among participants through activities aimed at managing emotional responses, such as seeking emotional support, engaging in relaxation activities, taking personal time, and sharing experiences with trusted individuals. These strategies demonstrate that participants recognized emotional regulation as an essential component of maintaining family resilience. Rather than eliminating stressful experiences, emotion-focused coping enabled individuals to manage psychological reactions and preserve emotional stability.

The importance of emotional regulation is supported by recent studies showing that family resilience is closely associated with the ability to regulate emotions and maintain adaptive responses during stressful situations. Family resilience is related to emotional difficulties and coping patterns, particularly through communication and problem-solving capacities within family systems (Vladislav et

al., 2024). Therefore, emotion-focused coping should not be interpreted as avoidance but as an adaptive process that helps individuals maintain psychological resources.

Another important finding was the emergence of spiritual-focused coping. Participants described religious beliefs, prayer, gratitude, and acceptance as mechanisms for interpreting difficult experiences. Spirituality enabled participants to reconstruct the meaning of adversity and develop psychological acceptance when facing conditions beyond their control. This finding indicates that coping processes involve not only behavioral adjustment but also cognitive and existential transformation.

Recent resilience literature confirms that religious involvement and meaning-making processes represent important protective mechanisms following adversity. An umbrella review of resilience studies found that religious involvement, social support, positive self-perception, and self-regulation are among important protective factors associated with resilience development after adverse experiences (Abate et al., 2024).

From an adult learning perspective, these findings demonstrate that coping strategies represent a form of experiential learning. Participants continuously learned from challenging situations by evaluating previous responses, reflecting on personal limitations, and developing new approaches for future challenges. Therefore, coping competence should be understood not merely as a psychological response but as an acquired capability developed through repeated interaction with life experiences.

Protective Factors as Foundations of Family Resilience

The findings demonstrate that protective factors played a central role in enabling participants to maintain resilience despite experiencing various family stressors. Four major protective factors emerged from the analysis: family support, social support, spirituality, and internal psychological resources. These factors functioned as resources that reduced the negative effects of stress and strengthened participants' ability to adapt to changing family conditions.

Family support emerged as the strongest protective factor identified by participants. Participants emphasized the importance of spouses, children, parents, and siblings as sources of emotional encouragement, motivation, and security. Family relationships provided psychological resources that helped participants maintain hope and persistence during difficult periods. The findings suggest that family resilience is strongly influenced by relational quality rather than individual capacity alone.

This finding aligns with contemporary family resilience research demonstrating that supportive family relationships are central mechanisms in adaptation processes. A recent meta-analysis found that family resilience has a significant positive relationship with mental health outcomes and reduces negative psychological consequences associated with adversity (Cheng et al., 2024). Furthermore, research on family adaptation indicates that communication quality and social support contribute substantially to strengthening resilience among families facing prolonged challenges (Kim et al., 2024).

Social support outside the immediate family was another important protective resource. Participants reported that relationships with friends, colleagues, and community members provided emotional validation and opportunities to share experiences. These interactions reduced feelings of isolation and strengthened confidence in dealing with family difficulties.

Recent studies confirm that social support contributes to resilience by increasing psychological flexibility and strengthening individuals' perceptions of coping ability. Peleg and Peleg (2025) demonstrated that family and social support enhance mental well-being because supportive relationships improve individuals' ability to manage stressful life events (Peleg & Peleg, 2025). Similarly, studies of

family and social resilience emphasize that resilience emerges through interactions between families and their broader social environments rather than through isolated individual processes (Bawati et al., 2025).

Spirituality also emerged as a significant protective factor. Participants described religious practices and spiritual beliefs as sources of emotional stability, optimism, and acceptance. Spirituality allowed individuals to interpret adversity within a broader meaning framework, reducing feelings of helplessness and supporting psychological adaptation.

The role of spirituality in resilience is consistent with recent evidence showing that religious involvement contributes to resilience after adversity by providing meaning, emotional regulation, and psychological support (Abate et al., 2024). Within the context of family education, spirituality represents not only a belief system but also a learning process through which adults construct meaning from their experiences.

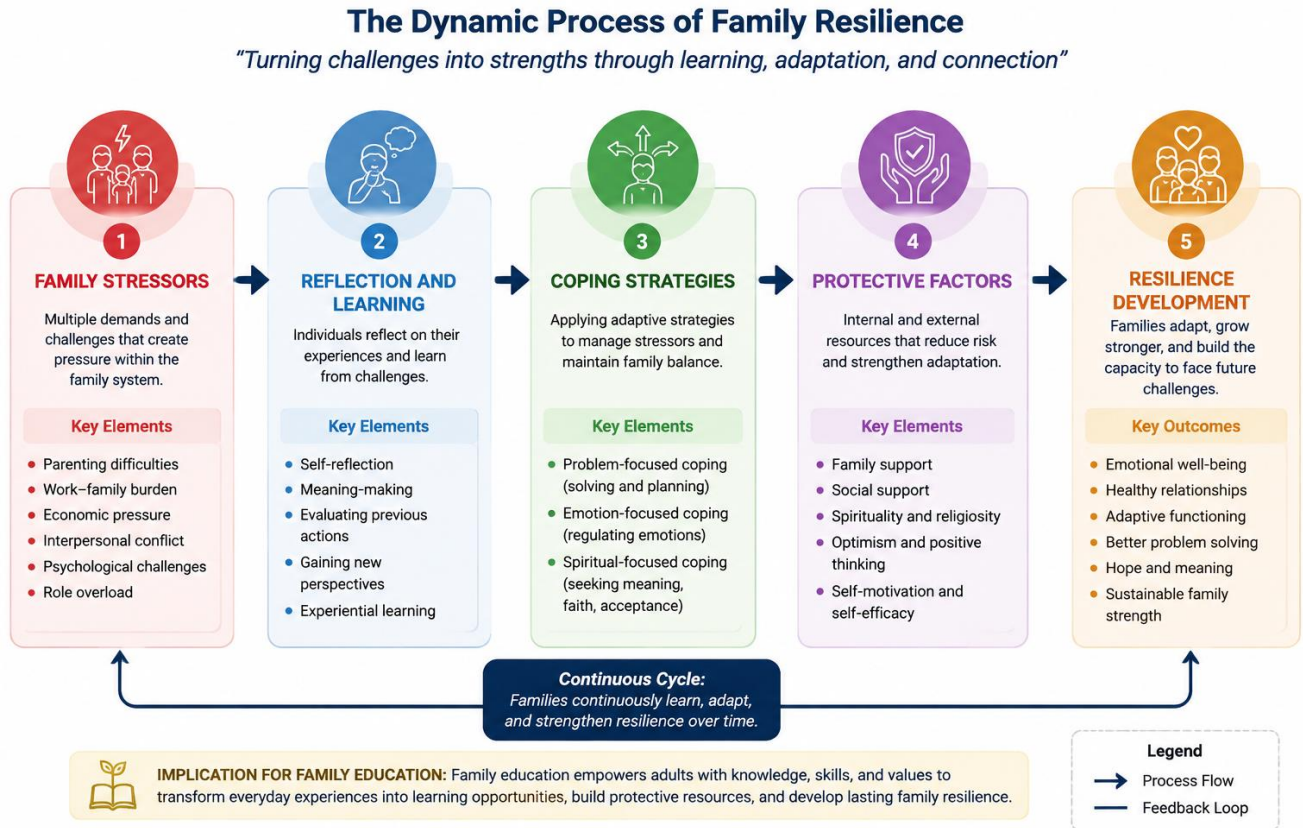
Finally, internal psychological resources, including self-motivation, optimism, positive thinking, and previous achievements, were identified as important resilience resources. Participants who possessed stronger internal motivation tended to interpret challenges as manageable situations rather than irreversible problems. These findings indicate that resilience is produced through the interaction between external support systems and internal psychological capacities.

Overall, the findings support the argument that protective factors function as foundations of family resilience. Families are not simply recipients of stress but active systems capable of learning, adapting, and developing resilience through daily experiences. Family education therefore plays an important role

in strengthening these protective mechanisms by improving communication skills, emotional competence, problem-solving abilities, and reflective learning processes.

Integrative Interpretation of Findings

Across the four themes, the findings demonstrate that family resilience develops through a dynamic cycle:



Family resilience is not a fixed trait, but a dynamic process built through learning, relationships, and meaning."

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Family Resilience Development through Adult Learning Processes

Figure 1 illustrates the dynamic process of family resilience development, in which family stressors become triggers for reflection and learning, leading to adaptive coping strategies, strengthening protective factors, and ultimately promoting resilience development. The model highlights family education as an informal adult learning process where individuals transform everyday challenges into knowledge, adaptive competencies, and resilience capacity.

The results indicate that stressful experiences are not automatically associated with family dysfunction. Instead, when families possess adequate protective resources and adaptive coping mechanisms, adversity can become a source of learning and transformation. This finding expands conventional resilience perspectives by positioning family resilience as an outcome of continuous adult learning processes occurring within everyday family life. Recent literature supports this interpretation by emphasizing that resilience develops through interactions between adversity, protective factors, coping strategies, and social environments (Bawati et al., 2025). Therefore, family education should be

conceptualized not merely as knowledge transmission but as a lifelong learning ecosystem that enables adults to transform experiences into adaptive competencies.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that family resilience develops through a dynamic and continuous process involving the interaction between challenges, learning experiences, adaptive responses, and available resources. The findings demonstrate that family stressors, including parenting difficulties, work-family burdens, economic pressures, psychosocial challenges, and interpersonal conflicts, become initial conditions that encourage adults to reflect on their experiences and develop new perspectives. Through the process of **Family Stressors → Reflection and Learning → Coping Strategies → Protective Factors → Resilience Development**, individuals transform challenging experiences into opportunities to strengthen coping abilities, emotional regulation, and adaptive capacities. The study confirms that family resilience is not merely the ability to endure adversity but represents a learning-based capacity in which families continuously adapt, develop, and strengthen their functioning through everyday experiences.

The findings imply that family education should be positioned as an informal adult learning process that enables families to transform challenges into meaningful learning opportunities. Family education programs should emphasize the development of reflective capacity, coping competence, communication skills, emotional regulation, problem-solving abilities, and the strengthening of protective factors such as family support, social networks, spirituality, and self-motivation. This framework suggests that interventions for family resilience should not focus only on reducing stressors but also on enhancing the learning processes and resources that allow families to adapt effectively. Therefore, collaboration among educators, policymakers, and community practitioners is needed to create supportive environments that empower families to continuously learn, adapt, and develop sustainable resilience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa for the support, facilities, and academic environment provided throughout the research process. Appreciation is also extended to all informants who voluntarily participated in this study by sharing their time, experiences, and valuable perspectives regarding family dynamics, coping strategies, and family resilience development. Their contributions were essential to the completion of this research.

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