

# Mental Health and Coping Strees: A Study in Talang Lahat Village, Curup Bengkulu

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## Abstract

This article aims to present the research results on the analysis of the mental health of vegetable farmers in terms of coping with stress. The condition of crop failure is something that all farmers do not expect, but this condition cannot be predicted because it depends on natural factors. One of the stresses that arise when a crop failure occurs is disappointment, lack of financial capital, feeling a heavy burden, and harboring many desires that cannot be realized. This research used a mixed-method approach (quantitative and qualitative). The research sample consisted of 25 productive farmers in a Talang Lahat Curup Bengkulu Village farmer group. The results showed that coping stress was positively correlated and tended to be high ( $r(25)=0.515$ ;  $p<0.008$ ) with the mental health of vegetable farmers. The simple linear regression test shows that the model is known to be suitable in explaining the data ( $F(1, 23)=8.321$ ;  $p<0.008$ ;  $R^2=0.266$ ). This means that coping with stress can explain 26.6% of the mental condition of vegetable farmers who experience crop failure. Farmers who fail to harvest can survive due to several factors, one of which is the religious attitude of praying and continuing to try to be one of the main things in the life of vegetable farmers so that they remain mentally healthy in the face of unwanted conditions. The dominant stress-coping component is problem-focused, oriented to the subject matter, and tends to solve the problem immediately.

**Keywords:** Mental Health; Coping Stress; Farmers

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is located in a geographical condition where most of its area is surrounded by mountains and hills. This condition allows the people to make a living as farmers. The agricultural potential in Indonesia, especially crops, is at the highest level, so it is very natural for Indonesia to be called an Agricultural Country. The term palawija is no stranger to people who work as farmers. Literally, palawija means the second crop at the main level after rice. Several types of palawija plants that are often found are corn, carrots, cabbage, leeks, shallots and white onions, cassava peppers, sweet potatoes and so on. Some of these plants indirectly become basic needs consumed by the wider community, especially in urban areas, and not a few people sometimes buy directly from farmers to get prices that are much cheaper than market prices.

Bengkulu Province especially in hilly areas such as the Rejang Lebong Regency area, there are several villages located on the slopes of the foot of Kaba Hill. The area has a normal temperature with an average of 17.73 °C to 30.94 °C with a humidity of 85.5%. The lowest air temperature is at 16.2 °C and the highest is at 36 °C (wikipedia.org). With these climatic conditions, productivity of palawija crops in several villages can be categorized as sometimes successful or even failing to harvest. The success of farmers is very dependent on weather conditions or natural factors that dominate life. Not a few farmers experience stress due to this condition causing various conflicts within themselves both psychologically, financially and health. There are several reasons for choosing the topic in this study. These reasons can be grouped into: 1) reasons based on the theoretical gap aspect, 2) reasons based on the research gap aspect, and 3) empirical phenomena aspects in Talang Lahat village, curup (empirical gap). ). The following sub-chapters will describe one by one these reasons.

This research focuses on villages that in recent years have experienced a decline in the productivity of producing crops. Researchers highlighted one of the villages named Talang Lahat village which is located on the slopes at the foot of Bukit Kaba. Talang Lahat village in recent years has been a producing area for good quality chillies and vegetables. However, since the extreme weather conditions and the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic which has spread throughout the region, various kinds of problems have occurred, such as massive crop failures experienced by farmers. This problem causes farmers to experience great losses both physically, psychologically and financially related to the capital that has been issued. Not only limited to that, the problems that arise, farmers have to face price games that are carried out by "middlemen" / vegetable token who they take advantage of the conditions of the farmers. Token vegetables sometimes deliberately play with the purchase price from farmers at very low prices. Researchers conducted a survey directly to the field and found that the price of 1 kg of mustard greens was 300 rupiah by middlemen, even though when the middlemen resold it to buyers who would distribute it to the market, the price had risen drastically to 5000 rupiah/kg. The PPKM and Lockdown conditions also prevented harvested goods from being sold to other areas. This has also paralyzed the economy in Talang Lahat Village. Research conducted by Kusumawati (2020) 36.6% of farmers on the island of Java experience anxiety and fear, especially during the new normal period.

Several other problems that researchers can describe from the village are apart from the unstable weather, it turns out that the supply of fertilizers and seeds from the government is inadequate. Expensive fertilizer prices and seeds that have been contaminated with plant diseases are also factors that cause crop failures for farmers. Farmers need help from the government to replant the plants they plant, starting with

selecting good seeds and adequate alternative fertilizers to improve the quality and fertility of the soil on their land. As is the case in a study conducted by Nuvey et.al (2022) 60% of breeders have poor mental health. Of these, 72% experienced depression, 66% anxiety, and 59% stress. Mental well-being is negatively associated with the number of adverse events experienced.

With the various kinds of problems and conditions experienced by these farmers, it is only natural that the mental health of farmers becomes problematic both physically, psychologically and socio-economically. Positive mental health is defined as the integration between emotional (emotional), psychological (Psychological) and social welfare (Social Well-Being) aspects. In Canada, it shows that the stress level is 57% and the anxiety level is 33% and is dominated by female farmers, and resilience is below average (Jones-Bit et.al, 2020). The same definition from the World Health Organization (WHO) is a prosperous condition where a person/individual realizes the potential that exists within him, so that with this potential the individual can overcome the pressures of life that occur, even able to work productively, usefully and provide contribution to the surrounding environment. From this definition it can be observed that the three components reflect optimal functioning in social life (Lamers, 2012). Physically, many farmers are sick due to declining health, especially during the transition season and the ongoing pandemic. Declining health factors will have an impact on the daily performance of farmers. The psychological problem that arises is stress due to pressures for inner needs. Stress is a condition of a person who experiences gaps in his life which gives rise to positive and negative feelings and is required to rebalance them so that serious problems do not occur in the future. To unravel the stress required attitude or behavior to minimize stress, this behavior is called Coping. So Coping Strategies are various things that individuals do to reduce or minimize the stress experienced so that the goals and potential within can function properly. The main goal of the farmers is to want quality well-being physically, psychologically and economically.

Thus, there are several academic reasons and objective considerations that can be concluded and can be a contributing novelty in this research, namely: First, as community empowerment so as to minimize unhealthy mentality in vegetable farmers; Second, as learning for students to understand and assist vegetable farmers in understanding the mental health of vegetable farmers and to be able to conduct counseling, Focus group discussions on mental health and or mental health seminar activities; Third, for local governments to innovate and be creative in utilizing vegetables which are other market commodities both in processing vegetables into food ingredients, or special dishes or making regional vegetable tourism villages.

Mental health problems are one of the main causes of the global disease burden, which is a challenge in effectively gathering the combination of mental and physical health needs that are part of the wider problem of people with co-morbidities (Nejib, et.al, 2020). Mental health in the workplace is often neglected, even though it has long been known that workers' mental health is a key factor in determining the long-term effectiveness of an organization (OECD, 2010). Mental health can be interpreted as an individual condition that is free from mental disturbances both physiologically, psychologically and socially. Mental health has become an emerging global challenge. Psychological stress and anxiety have been experienced by survivors during the recent epidemic for many years (Mahmood, et.al , 2022). Mental condition cannot be separated from good physical condition, both of them are one unit which if there is a disturbance, it will malfunction or not function normally (Elfiah & Tadjuddin, 2018). A study conducted by

Gabriel, P., & Liimatainen, (2000) in 5 countries that have relatively large labor markets, namely Finland, Germany, England, Poland, and the United States, shows that mental health in the workplace plays an important role. in achieving company goals. Workers' mental health problems will have an impact on workplace productivity and medical expenses will swell.

Mental health is a benchmark for psychological well-being (psychological well-being and subjective well-being) and social welfare (social well-being) in the community. Positive mental health reflects a state of well-being that goes beyond the mere absence of psychopathology. It includes emotional and psychological well-being, and functioning in the psychological, social and social domains which are important in identifying well-developed individuals (Chang, 2022). The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes that health is a perfect state, which is not only free from disorders and diseases but emphasizes matters which include subjective well-being, self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence and recognition of the ability to maximize intellectual potential. and individual emotions. As according to Fakhriyani (2017) a condition of a person that allows the development of all aspects of development, both physical, intellectual and emotional that are optimal and in harmony with the development of others, so that they are then able to interact with the surrounding environment.

Similarly, Brooks (2022) has collectively identified various risk factors associated with poor well-being, including loneliness and long-term separation; fatigue; high workload; long trips; long working hours; noise and vibration; economic pressure; disturbed sleep. However, the capacity and quality of mental health services lags behind societal demands for mental health care (Dewi, 2012; Liu, et.al, 2018). It was further stated that the place of work and work play a dual role in the mental health of workers. Mental health can be a source of stress due to culture, organization and workplace demands; or can be a source of support and contribute to overall mental health and the recovery process from mental illness (OECD, 2010).

Coping is a form of action carried out by individuals either visibly or covertly under stress conditions that aim to reduce or eliminate psychological disorders (Maryam, 2017). Another definition of coping is the process that is passed to solve problems in various ways so that a balance between demands and reality is realized. The efforts made refer to things to reduce, eliminate burdens that cause stress (Salihu & Abdussomad, 2021). Lazarus and Folkman (in Rositoh, Sarjuningsih & Imadatus, 2017) define coping as an individual process in dealing with internal and external pressures that affect daily life which are considered burdensome for individuals to solve them. The strategy carried out according to Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub (in Lubis & Irma, 2015) can be carried out with two strategies, namely by managing emotional responses or solving directly at the center of the problem.

Lazarus (Andiyani, 2019) managing emotional responses (emotional-focused coping) is a strategy carried out to reduce anxiety and stress through emotional reactions. Several aspects of coping strategies according to (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989) on emoticon focused coping are as follows: a). Emotional Social Support (social emotional support) is a condition where individuals seek support from the people around them in the form of understanding, compassion, morals, caring, the desire to be appreciated and others. b). Positive Interpretation, which means that individuals positively view events or problems that cause stress within themselves and continue to be active in problem solving and decision making. c) Acceptance, the condition of accepting the circumstances/problems that come with a lot of pressure and situations that encourage

them to face problems. d) Denial, the condition of an individual who denies the existence of a problem, meaning that the individual considers the problem does not exist, depicting as if these problems do not need serious attention in order to escape and focus on positive views. e) Religiosity, as well as individual attitudes towards religion, calm and help people solve difficulties through religion. by withdrawing mentally and physically, or by avoiding adversity.

The next coping strategy, namely focusing on problems (Problem-Focused Coping), is a strategy that involves cognitive abilities in dealing with stress and trying to solve it (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). Carver, et al divided it into several aspects, including the following: a) active coping, namely the act of removing the source of stress directly. b) planning, namely planning how to deal with problems related to the source of stress. c) suppression of competing activities, namely behavior not to get involved in other problems and focus on solving problems even not caring if there is pressure from other problems. d) restraint coping is the behavior of self-restraint and limiting competitive activities and not rushing in making decisions. e) seeking of instrumental social support, namely asking for social assistance in the form of guidance, assistance, or information to others. Each individual has the ability to cope with the stress they experience. Individuals are naturally able to adapt to the various conditions they are experiencing. The two stress coping alternatives can be used according to the capacity or capabilities possessed.

## **METHODE**

### **Design**

This study uses a quantitative method approach. There are 2 variables in this study, namely mental health as the dependent variable and coping stress as the independent variable.

### **Participants**

The population in this study were vegetable farmers who were members of a farmer group in Talang Lahat Curup Bengkulu Village, totaling 50 farmers. The sampling technique uses the power formula analysis of Onwuegbuzie, Jiao & Bostick (Martens, 2010) for small groups of farmers (around 20-50 people/group) and a sample of 25 farmers is drawn. The sample looks relatively small due to the activities of productive farmers on the land, so they cannot participate in activities when the research is taking place.

### **Instrument**

Data collection was carried out by distributing a Likert scale questionnaire. The Likert scale was compiled based on the theory stated earlier. The scale for viewing mental health uses the MHC-SF (Mental Health Continuum-Short Form) developed by Keyes (2005). The MHC-SF scale consists of 14 items consisting of 3 aspects, namely emotional well-being (3 items), psychological well-being (5 items), and social well-being (6 items). and meets the goodness of fit indices (CFI 0.921; SRMR 0.061; ECV 0.73; RMSEA 90% CI 0.053-0.087) and the reliability value based on Keyes is 0.90. While the coping stress scale developed by Lazarus (adapted by Aida Nur Kumala, 2013) consists of 17 items which have been re-modified by researchers based on 2 aspects of coping stress namely problem focused coping (PFC) and emotional focused coping (EFC) with a total item correlation value 0.4-0.7 reliability value of 0.947.

## Data Analysis

In this study the data were analyzed through simple linear regression analysis with sample characteristics that tended to be homogeneous, interval data and a sample of 25 vegetable farmers. This test was conducted to find the degree of closeness of the relationship between the two variables by looking at the strength and weakness of the relationship between the two variables and the contribution of influence given by the independent variable, in this case the coping strategy and mental health of vegetable farmers. The classical analysis test carried out is to test the normality of the data, test the linearity of the data, test the validity and reliability. All analysis tests will be assisted by SPSS 21.0 software.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research involved 25 active and productive vegetable farmers. Normality and linearity prerequisite tests were carried out before being tested by simple linear regression analysis. The normality prerequisite test is carried out through a visual method by looking at the histogram and Q-Q plot. The normality test based on Kolmogorov-Smirnov shows ( $SD = 6.471$ ;  $p > .995$ ) this indicates that the residual data is normally distributed (the curve forms a bell image and the data points spread proportionally around the normality line). The results of the linearity test show that the significance value of deviation from linearity is 1.404 ( $F_{Dev} = .310$ ;  $p > .05$ ) meaning that the deviation from linearity is not significant, so the data can be said to be linear. The significance value of linearity is .00 ( $F_{linearity} = 12.472$ ;  $p < .05$ ) meaning that the relationship between the two variables has a steep linearity. The following are the results of hypothesis testing with simple linear regression analysis.

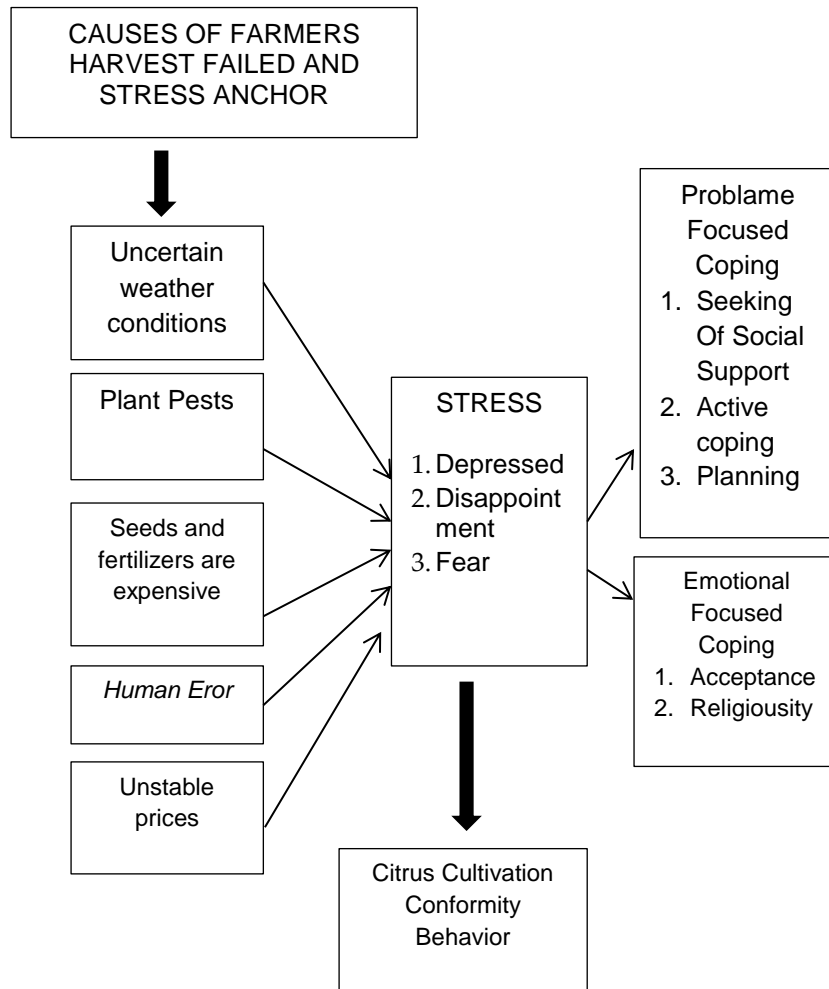
Table 1. Hypothesis Test Results

Variable	<i>r</i>	$R^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Coping Stress	0.515	0.266	8.321	0.008
Mental Health				

Based on the above data it is known that coping stress is positively correlated and tends to be high ( $r(25) = 0.515$ ;  $p < 0.008$ ) with the mental health of vegetable farmers. The simple linear regression test shows that the model is known to be suitable in explaining the data ( $F(1, 23) = 8.321$ ;  $p < 0.008$ ;  $R^2 = 0.266$ ). Meaning coping stress can explain 26.6% of the mental condition of vegetable farmers who experience crop failure. The results of the reliability analysis test using the Cronbach's alpha technique for both scales can be concluded quite high, namely mental health (14 items;  $\alpha = .84$ ), coping stress (9 items;  $\alpha = .76$ ), separately.

The scheme of the results of the study is qualitatively related to the problems experienced by farmers which cause stress when the crop fails. See chart below:

Picture 1 . Flowchart of Interview Results of Vegetable Farmers



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