

The Hardiness Level of The Visually Impaired People

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Abstract

Individuals with hardiness characteristics can control themselves, commit, face challenges. However, the visually impaired people seem to not show these characteristics proved by the environmental involvement. It is indicated by their inability to manage hardiness, for resistance is needed to boost their toughness. This study attempted to describe the level of the visually impaired people hardiness in *Komunitas Sahabat Mata* in Semarang City. Through field survey, the researchers involved 50 people with visual impairment using Hardiness Resilience Gauge (HRG) scale to reveal their hardiness level. Findings stated that the female person with visual impairment gained higher hardiness than the male ones, while in terms of gender and age, there found no significant difference between male and female. This study concludes that there is a not correlation between age and hardiness. Further, the findings of this study serve for guidance and counseling services for people with visual impairment.

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World Health Organization reported 2.2 billion people with visual impairment in 2019 (Kim et al., 2021). This number is predicted to keep increasing due to the growth of world population and aging (Flaxman, 2017; Fricke, 2018). What becomes the concern is that people who suffer from this impairment and fail to manage anxiety symptoms through rational ways may trigger their ego to rely on unrealistic ways (Corey, 2021). In this way, individuals, including people with vision impairment are urged to have hardiness attitude.

According to Zhang & Wong (2011) hardiness has a relationship with cognitive style. Highly hardworking people are truly motivated to learn and commit to participate (Kamtsios & Karagiannopoulou, 2013). In this way, hardiness is measured by three basic components, namely challenge, commitment, and control. Moreover, hardiness is a significant predictor of coping strategies and active effort (Hanton, et al., 2013); not to mention physical health mediated by mental health (Taylor, et al., 2013).

Hardiness positively influences the perception of stressful life events. At the same time, hard work beneficially relates to physical health and self-assessment symptoms as well as anxiety depression and mental health (Mosalanjad et al., 2012). In relation to hard work, adolescents with visual impairment are still in charge of accomplishing their developmental tasks. However, due to the lack of hardiness, they may consider the tasks as big challenges. Such condition certainly affects the mental health condition of them. (Brebahama & Listyandini, 2016) mention adults are poorly adapted to their social environment, which in turn causes feelings of unhappiness.

(Firnanda, et al., 2019) explains people with visual impairment are classified into two, namely total and low vision. Total means the sufferers cannot fully see something, while people with low vision are still able to see something partially. People with vision impairment face certain challenges in accomplishing the developmental tasks, such as building new interaction between peers with

different gender, involving social activities responsibly, and having abilities to plan career (Hurlock, 2012).

Regarding the above explanation, hardiness as the basic to build strong personality or toughness can deal with any upcoming problems. (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2005) add some ideas that hardiness of personality character can neutralize stress by turning it into a good urge to address. Finally, this attitude leads to the development of response and wide coping which enables individuals to act with purposes rather than be passive or helpless in facing stressful situations (Bartone, et al., 2020).

People with visual impairment can overcome internal and environmental challenges and finish developmental tasks well by having hardiness. Individuals with high hardiness generally tend to restructure stressful situation as less threatening and may experience less harmful physical and psychological stress that may limit their ability to be productive (Eschleman et al., 2010). (Gayton & Kahoe, 2015) suggests that hardiness personality aspect enables individuals to accept and cope with negative effects of unpleasant situations. Hardiness is energy represented by individual feelings (stability and calmness), self-sufficiency (control), endurance, and commitment. It is also an ability to internalize control (Sgatni, & Zerzour, 2021).

Unfortunately, there have been few empirical studies focusing on people with visual impairment. By conducting a study on this topic, the present study expected to enrich literature related to the level of hardiness by people with visual impairment. To acquire hardiness, the people must go through several subjects, namely hardy attitudes, hardy coping, hardy social support, and hardy health practices (Adi, et al., 2021). Above all, the current study attempted to describe the level of hardiness by people with visual impairment in Komunitas Sahabat Mata in Semarang City. It is hoped that the findings of this study can be a reference for further studies with the topic of hardiness by people with visual impairment.

METHODS

There were 50 people with visual impairment involved in this study, including 33 male and 17 female aged between 16-57 years in the Komunitas Sahabat Mata in Semarang City.

Hardiness Resilience Gauge (HRG) scale developed by Paul T. Bartone (2018) was used to measure their hardiness level. It assesses 3 aspects, namely control (7 items), commitment (15 items), and challenge (13 items). Of all aspects consisting of 28 items, the respondents were given four optional criteria, covering (1) totally agree, (2) agree, (disagree), (4) totally disagree.

In terms of reliability, the HRG scale gained the cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.749 or was reliable. Hence, this scale could be used to collect the data of this study. In addition,

data analysis was carried out using different test analysis techniques and product moment correlations with the help of the SPSS 23 program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the scale was distributed to the respondents, it was obtained the lowest score was 60, while the highest was 106. It indicated the hardiness of the people was in the high category. Moreover, there obtained mean (M) = 83.26 with a standard deviation (SD) = 12.545. In details, the male subjects gained (M = 83.12; SD = 12.79) while the female was (M = 83.53; SD = 12.42). Further data can be seen in the following table 1:

Table 1. Differences in The Hardiness of The Visually Impaired People Based on Gender

Variable	Male		Female		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Control	21.21	3.612	21.35	3.605	0.13
Comitment	22.97	3.901	23.18	3.746	0.18
Challenge	38.94	6.359	39.00	6.124	0.03
Hardiness	83.12	12.798	83.53	12.420	0.10

Since the value of (t=0.1; p>0.05), there was no significant difference between hardiness and gender variable. However, what was surprising was that the level of hardiness of both genders was high.

Furthermore, the hardiness of low vision people obtained the value of (M = 81.62;

SD = 10.47), while the average hardiness variable to total visual impairment was (M = 83.84; SD = 13.28). Since the value (t = 0.1; p>0.05), so it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the hardiness variable and the blind type. In details, the data are presented in table 2 as follows:

Table 2. Differences in The Hardiness of The Person With Visual Impairment Based on The Its Classification

Variable	Low Vision		Totally Blind		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Control	21.46	3.573	21.19	3.620	0.23
Comitment	21.69	3.568	23.51	3.827	-1.50
Challenge	38.46	4.484	39.14	6.767	-0.33
Hardiness	81.62	10.476	83.84	13.278	-0.54

In terms of pearson test, there found a correlation between age and hardiness (rxy=0.588,p>0.05). So it can be concluded that there is no positive

correlation between age and hardiness. Oppositely, there was no significant difference in the hardiness level regarding gender, blind type,

and age. It implied that aging could grow the level of hardiness.

Findings revealed the mean of control aspect of female people was higher than the male's. It is similar to a study by (Baldassini et al, 2022) that the control aspect is related to the individual's perception of influencing events. The aspect of commitment of women is higher than the mean of the aspect of commitment of men. Likewise, the challenge aspect for women is higher than the mean of the challenge variable for men.

Kamtsios & Evangelia (2012) state hardiness as a behaviour and skills to survive in interacting with the world by emphasizing the importance of isolation, helplessness control, and considering challenges not as threats. According to Sabela., et al (2014) hardiness is a character influencing individuals to examine a particular situation and determine the effective response. Thus, the visually impaired people who have high level of hardiness are supposed to have great commitment in their life, work hard, and active in responding to the environment.

The findings indicated that age showed no impact on hardiness level, but having high level of hardiness can make the individuals stay positive to their lives. They will also be able to overcome stressful events in their lives which sometimes become the source of burnout (Fyhn et al., 2016). Hardiness consists of cognitive, emotional and behavioral characteristics and defines the ability to maintain a healthy state during difficult times (Bartone et al., 2013).

The level of hardiness of the visually impaired people aged below 25 years was lower than that of above 25 years. It is supported by the previous study by (Bayer et al., 2021) that low hardiness is one of the most powerful resources capable of contributing to improving the physical and mental health of children and adolescents in dealing with situations and solving difficult life situations. The experience of microaggression and interpersonal victimization will be positively correlated to psychological stress and negatively related to hardiness (McDonald et al., 2021).

Social situation and threats are inseparable part of life (Kargapolitseva et al., 2019; Bayanova et al., 2019; Vinogradova et al., 2018; Quang et al., 2019; Caliskan et al., 2019). Through hardiness individuals can cope with these, think realistically and professionally, orienting towards better life, thoughts and goals. These manifestations would improve vitality, hardiness, and adaptation to life dynamics.

Based on the results of independent t-test, the mean of the variables of control, commitment, challenge, and hardiness of the subjects based on age was found no difference. It is supported by a study by (Huang, 2014) that the internal work ability partially mediates the relationship between hardiness and career decision self-efficacy. Resilience is seen as a personality style that influences how people think, feel, and behave. High levels of hardiness promote personal growth, resilience, and well-being. Meanwhile, low levels result in distress.

The aspect of control discusses the extent to which individuals believe to control themselves. It refers to the belief in continuous effort. On the other hand, commitment aspect covers individuals' tendency to involve themselves in life activities. Commitment is seen from the involvement, while challenge aspect concerns the extent to which individuals restructure any potentially stressful events to be chances for their growth and development. Further, by having strong hardiness individuals will be able to influence the scenario of their lives so that finally they can manage and overcome stress as a source of burnout (Talavera, et al., 2018).

People with high control level can interpret cognitive control or various events, evaluate them, and integrate them into their future plans. In relation to this, commitment aspect enables individuals to discuss everything they do in daily activities (Maddi, 2012). Meanwhile, those who have challenge aspect tend to be flexible and have strong skills as well as a willingness to improve themselves.

In contrary, a study by (Swestilangen & Syafiq, 2021) argues that early adult visually impaired people have low hardiness because of

the state of being alone due to their condition. The low self-esteem arises because of negative responses which somehow create social boundaries from surroundings, and as a result affect to the loneliness. Generally, the subjects tried to deal with loneliness by doing cognitive re-evaluation of their limitations and people's responses, doing various activities as distraction, and being active in doing adaptive behaviour to improve the quality of social relationship. The visually impaired people usually have several problems, namely feeling easily offended, being easily suspicious, and having excessive dependence (Lestari & Fitlya, 2021).

Hardiness is related to resilience that is conceptualized as dynamic processes which reflect individual's capacity to successfully and positively adapt and cope with difficulties and stress of the present and past conditions (Masten & Monn, 2015). It is a construction commonly used to assess individuals' resilience and reflects characteristics that enable someone to survive in countering stress and any disadvantage situation. The emergence of hardiness terminology emphasizes broader definition if it considers structural and social determinants of health (e.g., social support, social connectedness, family acceptance) in addition to individual-level factors (e.g., self-esteem, self-efficacy, proactive coping; (Colpitts & Gahagan, 2016); Gahagan & Colpitts, 2017).

Individuals with low hardiness, poor self-esteem, avoidant stress coping styles, and high neuroticism are vulnerable to burnout. This has been proved that people with less resilient personality are easy to burnout (Antoniou & Cooper, 2015; Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996). (Maharani & Halimah, 2015) people who are involved in activities and spend their time with close friends will feel pleased and have their hardiness improved. In other words, there is a good correlation between stimulation companionship and hardiness.

As people with visual impairment get older, their risk of getting dementia and cognitive disorder will increase (Shang et al., 2021). To prevent this, hardiness must be improved. Hardiness is realized by attitudes and

strategies prepared by individuals to cope with difficulties of life. It covers control, commitment, and challenge, reflecting one's belief about himself when interacting with his surrounding environment (Maddi, et al., 2012). Visually impaired people must be able to examine a situation and determine effective responses based on hardiness construction to create strong mental health.

The results of this study have implications for the study of guidance and counseling for special populations. Hardiness is important for every individual, including the visually impaired people. Through hardiness, these people will be able to cope with various situations, including internal and environmental problems which in turn will enable them to accomplish their developmental tasks. With strong hardiness, everything can be achieved. It is because hardiness is defined as a set of attitudes, beliefs, and tendency that include three parts, namely commitment, control, and challenge. By having these aspects, the visually impaired people will have mental and psychological support to face challenges and difficulties in carrying out activities and fulfilling their needs.

There were several limitations of this study. First, this study was limited to the hardiness of the visually impaired people. Second, the findings were based on the demographic factors for the blind. Even so, since there is lack of previous studies focusing on the visually impaired people hardiness, the present study can be a recommendation for further researchers to pay more attention to subjects with visual impairment in the investigation process.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, there is no significant difference between hardiness, gender, blind type, and age. However, there is a not positive correlation between hardiness and the age of visually impaired people. Hardiness is a form of personality characteristic that serves as a source of resistance for visually impaired people when facing stressful situations. The three basic

components of blind hardiness are control, commitment, and challenge. Based on the findings in this study, it can be used as a follow-up study on blind subjects with various patterns and levels of hardiness. Given the importance of growing hardiness for the blind, further research is also recommended to identify hardiness for the blind with intervention steps. Therefore, this research is expected to be an encouragement for counselors to help maintain the hardiness of the blind as they get older. This step can be done by involving the blind in the implementation of guidance and counseling services as a self-development effort.

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