

## How Does Homeless Family Survive in The Street? : A Qualitative Approach

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### ABSTRACT

The task of family and rights is guaranteed physical and spiritual aspects. But this is different from homeless families. The purpose of this study is to find out how the survival strategy is on a homeless family in the city of Semarang. The research method used is a case study approach. The source of data in this study were homeless families who had lived in the streets for more than 2 years. Data collection techniques used were interviews, observation, and documentation. Validity checking techniques use source triangulation, data collection techniques, and time triangulation. The data analysis technique used through a case study approach. The results of this study were conducted by the strategy to survive on the streets in terms of sleep, doing activities by utilizing public facilities, having relations with security officers, and surviving on the streets to avoid conflict. While the difference in strategy of the two subjects is often about friendship relations and health conditions experienced. After living wandering, both efforts have to improve life in a better direction. There are similarities found outside of life survival themes, including the theme of hedonism, and lack of wife's role in the family. These are the outside of survival strategy themes, including the themes of psychiatric conditions, partner attitudes while living on the streets, feelings for children, and feelings when staying on the street.

**Keywords:** *Homeless Families, Live Survival Strategy, Streets*

The population distribution that occurs in Indonesia is still far from evenly distributed. This is proven by the number of people living in the city more than the number of people living in the village. This can happen because the average villager moves to the city for reasons of looking for work (urbanization) which is reinforced by the results of 2017 statistics which show that urbanization growth in Indonesia has increased to 4.1 percent (Andreas, 2017).

The growth of urbanization spread to every major city in Indonesia. As happened in Semarang, which became the Capital of Central Java Province, with an area of 373.78 km, the city of Semarang became a modern urban city which had extensive facilities and infrastructure and extensive employment so that the city became an attraction for residents to

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urbanize. This causes the population in the city of Semarang also increased to 1,815,729 in 2018 (Semarang City Dispendukcapil, 2018).

If observed, many of the residents who urbanize are included in the homelessness (beggars, homeless people and displaced people). Based on data from the Ministry of Social Information Data Center which recorded in the past 5 years the number of sprawl increased by 17 percent (Wismoyojati, 2012), in 2013 the number of beggars and street children in the city of Semarang has increased from 270 inhabitants to 350 inhabitants (Aprianto, 2013). This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Iqbali (2008) which states that homelessness and beggar behavior are closely related to urbanization, and urbanization is closely related to the gap in rural development. In the end, indirectly making the city of Semarang has a special attraction for them to flock to earn a living and wander the streets of Semarang.

The problem of homelessness is the accumulation and interaction of various problems such as poverty, low education, lack of work skills possessed, social culture, health and so forth. Homeless people who are perceived as an eyesore and public order as dirty, criminal source, without norms, untrustworthy, disorganized, deceitful, petty thieves, and even referred to as the dregs of society. Homeless people tend to be placed in a disadvantaged position or seen as a negative image life. Though homelessness is also part of a protected citizen and has the same basic rights to be prosperous and happy.

As other people in general who do their daily routines, homelessness also has life. Most homeless people decide to live on the streets alone to make a living to meet their needs. Some of them decided to live in a homeland together with their families. This is certainly different from those who wander alone, those who choose to live wandering with their families certainly have greater demands and risks in meeting their daily needs.

Ideally a family is fulfilling the rights and obligations in the household such as guaranteed physical, spiritual, social health, giving love, attention, security among the family, fostering the maturity of the personality of family members and living and resting in a house. Houses can be interpreted as a place to take refuge or take shelter from the influence of the surrounding natural conditions such as rain and hot sun, and is a place to rest after serving to meet their daily needs. The house is a place that is considered safe and comfortable, safe from disruption of order which at times lurks, is convenient because it can be freely in the environment or the world they have been living.

Unlike the family homeless, they will perform daily activities on the streets, starting from waking, working, bathing, cooking, washing, etc. without having a home or a permanent residence. This certainly will further hamper household activities that should be done in the house. In addition, greater risks for security and safety in the family will be obtained so that the rights and obligations that should be obtained in the family cannot be fulfilled because they cannot carry out full family functions.

As stated by Zefianningsih et al., (2016) that homeless people are people who live in a situation that is not in accordance with decent living norms in the local community, and do not have permanent residence and work in certain areas and live wandering in public place. In the limitation of living space as a homeless person, they try to only be able to survive in urban areas in various ways. Wandering as a way to earn a living and fulfill life's needs has many challenges, obstacles and obstacles. To ensure survival, homeless people maintain

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assets, develop strategies that are more accurate and deal with various challenges, which are called Life Survival Strategies.

According to Suharto (2009) defines a survival strategy as a person's ability to implement a set of ways to overcome various problems surrounding his life. Suharno (2003) states that the strategy of survival in overcoming economic shocks and pressures can be done in three ways, namely: a) active strategy, namely a strategy that optimizes all family potential; b) Passive strategies, namely reducing family expenses; c) Network strategy, which is making connections with other people.

Survival as an effort to fulfill one's basic needs is inseparable from physical and spiritual aspects which include growth or maintenance, requires food, shelter, water, air, health care and adequate rest (Suharno, 2003). In homeless families who are urbanized, they must still be able to maintain life sustainability, with all the resources they have. They overcome and face difficult times in their own ways. Leiten (in Akbar, 2016), divides the theory of survival into two models, namely:

1. Survival Models

In situations and conditions for survival, homeless families will take the principle of putting safety first as an effort to maintain survival.

2. Emancipation Model

The emancipation model is of the opinion to improve one's condition, by contributing broadly to the position of others, the conviction to change one's actions with the actions of others, and acknowledging cooperation with others for a joint support.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher feels that further research is needed on life survival strategy in the homeless family with the hope that through this research the community or at least readers will be able to know the picture of life survival strategy on a homeless family in the city of Semarang. Research on homelessness have been conducted, but the context of the research focuses on urban studies and not on a psychological assessment. Secondly, a lot of research on homelessness has been done, but not many studies have discussed homeless families. On the other hand, through this research, it is expected to provide information for the development of psychology studies by providing additional empirical data that is scientifically tested on life survival strategies on homeless families and can be used as material for consideration to change people's negative perceptions or views of homeless families .

## **METHODOLOGY**

The type of research used is qualitative research using a case study approach. The unit of analysis that will be investigated relates to survival strategies that are owned by homeless families. The things that want to be revealed are the survival model and the psychological study of the lives of homeless families.

In this study, researchers used the subject as primary data, by observing and interviewing and documenting the subject to obtain data desired by the researcher. According to Lofland (in Moleong, 2010: 157) the main data sources in qualitative research are words and actions. The characteristics of the primary subjects in this study are as follows:

1. Families who live are homeless consisting of husbands, wives, and children.
2. Located in the Semarang area.
3. Has been living in a homeland for more than 2 years because he has had a lot of life experiences on the streets.

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The technique of checking the validity of the data in this study is by using triangulation. Triangulation is checking data from various sources in various ways, and time. Triangulation used was source triangulation, triangulation of data collection techniques, and time triangulation.

Data analysis techniques used by researchers are data analysis techniques through a case study approach. In the analysis model, researchers collect qualitative data, analyze it based on a particular theme or perspective, and report 4-5 themes (Creswell, 2010).

### RESULTS

The following will be discussed in general the same themes then followed by the findings of different themes in each subject in sequence based on the chronology of the events experienced by the two subjects.

#### 1. General Themes

- a. Ride in other people's stalls to sleep: While living in the streets for 3.5 years, subject 1 (HH) and subject 2 (BW) survive on the streets by riding in other people's stalls for free. This is in accordance with the statement conveyed by the two subjects as follows:
- b. Do activities by utilizing public facilities: When living on the streets of subject 1 (HH) and subject 2 (BW) develop the same strategy in maintaining their lives, that is by doing daily activities by utilizing existing public facilities. When bathing, washing, and defecating, both subjects have to use public bathrooms and use parking lots for income. This is in accordance with the statement conveyed by the two subjects as follows:
- c. Have a relationship with a security officer: At the time of life on the street subject 1 (HH) and subject 2 (BW) had acquaintances with the Satpol PP officers so that both the subject and his family were safe from the raid because they already had a relationship with the security officer. This is in accordance with the statement conveyed by the two subjects as follows:
- d. Survive on the streets to avoid conflict: Subject 1 (HH) and subject 2 (BW) decided to survive on the streets due to avoiding conflict between subject 1 (HH) and in-laws and other neighbors. By living and living on the streets subject 1 is no longer in conflict and can live freely. This is in accordance with the statement conveyed by the two subjects as follows:
- e. Efforts to improve life: After 3.5 years of life vagrancy found the same themes on the subject 1 (HH) and subject 2 (BW) ie k Secondly subjects have the same desire about their lives. Both of them have a life change business in a better direction. Both subjects have done a way to formally arrange marriage papers so that children can have an identity so they can continue school. This is in accordance with the statement conveyed by the two subjects as follows:

#### 2. Specific Themes

- a. Hedonism : When living wandering on the streets, subject 1 (HH) and subject 2 (BW) claimed that the necessities of life while living on the streets felt more spending than when living at home or at boarding. This is what causes the two subjects have difficulty to save or set aside income earned.
- b. Lack of role in the family : While living in the streets on subject 1 (HH) and subject 2 (BW) claimed that HH could not carry out his role as a good wife for BW due to the lack of privacy while living on the streets and the absence of complete facilities to carry out housework.

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- c. Psychiatric condition: The next difference is regarding the mental condition of the two subjects. Before hiring, HH felt that the couple had no depression, while BW admitted that his partner had a condition that led to a tendency to depression. BW admitted that the couple had a problem after giving birth to their child.
- d. The attitude of a partner while living on the streets: Furthermore, there were differences in themes outside the life survival strategy between HH and BW, namely regarding the attitude of the couple while living on the streets. On the subject of HH it was found that couples were fully responsible as the head of the family in protecting their family's survival while in BW it was found that couples increasingly did not respect the subject as a husband and head of the household in the family while living on the streets. This is because couples are never grateful for the hard work of BW to support their families.
- e. Feelings for children: Another difference between the theme of HH and BW is that during the life of the wanderer for 3.5 years, that is the feeling of the child. HH is frustrated with the condition of the child who is less able to be controlled while in BW has more feelings of guilt for his children.
- f. Feelings while living on the streets : The next difference is about feeling when living on the streets. HH doesn't have the shame of living on the streets while BW has the feeling of being embarrassed to live on the streets. This is due to his role as head of the family so that he feels embarrassed when other people see the condition of his family having to live wandering on the streets.

### 3. Differences Themes Between Subjects 1 and 2

- a. Friendship relationship: At the time of the findings found differences in the findings of the life survival strategy theme regarding friendship relations. HH has a friendship relationship that is increasingly minimal while in BW it is found that friendship relationships are owned by many and try to be maintained. This is because BW has lived a long time in wandering since childhood so it is better able to adapt to the environment on the streets.
- b. Health condition: The difference between the next theme findings between HH and BW is about health conditions. When living in a house, HH had a health problem because HH often complained of pain while BW was not found to have health problems because he was used to adapting to the environment on the streets since he was a child.

## DISCUSSION

The first theme of survival strategy is to ride other people's stalls to sleep. Both subjects survive on the streets by riding in rest and sleeping in other people's stalls for free. Both subjects and their children rested and slept in other people's sidewalk stalls next to one of the shopping centers in Semarang. Both subjects can rest after the stall used for selling has closed. This is in accordance with the results of Smith's study (2008) showing that, homeless people fulfill basic needs to survive on the streets by looking for food, seeking shelter and shelter for shelter.

The second theme is the same: doing activities using public facilities. In doing everyday activities, both of them utilize the facilities subject man in common rooms for bathing, washing, and waste water. This is reinforced by the results of the study (Stolte & Hodgetts, 2013) which states that homelessness maintains itself by utilizing public bathroom facilities in parks, bars and public libraries.

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The next theme is to have relations with security officers. When living on the streets the two subjects have a security officer relationship so that they and the child can be free from raids while living and living on the streets. This is in accordance with the opinion Iqbali (2008) which states that the coping strategies of homelessness of the developed is to take advantage of the opportunities that exist, and develop the potential and where possible reduce the constraints that exist, all of which are expected to touch the material needs or spiritual. This is also reinforced by the opinion of Ahmad (2010) which states that the vagrant survival strategy is carried out with various models, ranging from how to secure the operation area, improve strategies and techniques to influence others, so that their hearts are touched.

The fifth theme is to stay on the streets to avoid conflict. Both subjects chose to stay on the streets for 3.5 years because to avoid the emergence of conflicts caused by the subject 1. Both subjects chose a strategy to improve their condition precisely by deciding to live and live on the streets because the two subjects thought that while living and living on the streets, subject 1 can be free to do activities without causing conflict with others. This is in accordance with the opinion of Leiten (1989) which states that the emancipation model is used to improve a person's condition and activities carried out by others help to determine the position of others widely.

Furthermore, it was found the similarity of life survival strategy theme from the two subjects after wandering, namely having a business to improve life in a better direction. Both subjects wished to take care of marriage documents formally to obtain legal status and identity in the eyes of the law so that children could have an identity so they could continue their education. Both subjects wanted to have and live in a decent home so that the two subjects and their children did not live in the streets.

In accordance with the results of Ahmad (2010) research stating that to survive the vagabonds and beggars turned out to continue to ignite the fire of hope, there was still hope to always strive for improved destiny, starting from preparing a better generation, demanding government care in formulating policies and programs, to expectations of the importance of building rich and capable community participation to be part of building a better tomorrow for homeless and beggars.

This is also supported by the results of Wijayanti's (2010) study that behind a difficult life, there is an expectation to have a better life. With the hope of improving living conditions, can improve the psychological well-being of both subjects such as body image, appearance, and better self-esteem so that it will also improve their quality of life (WHO, 1996).

Furthermore, there are several findings on the theme of the theme outside of life survival strategy on both subjects, namely hedonism. Both subjects complained about the high costs of living. Both claimed that the necessities of life and living on the streets felt more spending than when living at home or at boarding. The costs incurred while living on the streets turned out to be incompatible with the expectations and desires of the two subjects, making it difficult for the two subjects to improve their quality of life (Power, 2003) so that they demanded ways to cover a lot of expenses by having several other businesses.

The similarity of themes beyond the next survival strategy is the lack of the role of wives in the family. Both subjects acknowledge that while living on the streets, HH cannot carry out their roles properly. HH admitted that he could not make a relationship as a husband and wife because of the lack of privacy while living on the streets. Both subjects admitted that HH did

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not provide good service to BW. This limitation is due to the result of the living environment that makes their families have to live in a homeless way.

In accordance with the opinion of Indrawati et al., (2014) families who are homeless are included in a social and psychological problematic family where the family has a relationship between family members, especially between husband and wife, so that the family's duties and functions do not work properly. With the failure of tasks and functions in the family they make it difficult for them to fulfill physical and psychological elements in the family. By not fulfilling these elements can affect their quality of life (Rapley, 2003) .

After there were similarities between the two subjects, it was revealed that there were also differences in the theme of life survival strategy in both subjects when living in the streets. The difference in the findings of the first theme is about friendship relations. HH felt that the friendship relations that were owned were increasingly minimal while BW felt that the friendship relations that were held were trying to be maintained. BW feels more happy and comfortable to hang out and make friends on the streets. BW has a lot of friends than HH because BW has been living wandering since childhood. This is in accordance with the results of the study of Nasution & Nashori (2007) which states that street children can make or maintain friendships with new people and those they have known for a long time.

This is also reinforced by the results of the study by Puruhita et al. (2016) which states that street children have a high sense of solidarity among fellow street children and behave politely towards older and unknown people. BW is easier to have friendship relations on the streets due to social environmental factors, namely the streets that form BW personality since childhood so that when in a depressed condition (living alone on the streets) makes him have more experience related to his own abilities or ways when facing difficult times (Akbar, 2016).

The difference in subsequent theme findings is regarding the health conditions experienced by the two subjects. When holding for 3.5 years HH experienced health problems compared to BW who did not experience health problems because they were used to life on the streets. HH complained that he often experienced itching on the skin. HH also often experiences complaints such as colds, dizziness, coughing, and diarrhea so that it sometimes disrupts their activities .

In accordance with the opinion of Anggriana & Dewi (2016) which states that homeless and beggars have a low level of health because the cleanliness of the environment in which they live is inappropriate also lack of adequate nutrition because the food consumed tends to be minimal and does not pay attention to the nutrition needed by the body. Supported by opinion (Vikasari et al., 2016) which states that street children are often identified as communities that pay less attention to healthy life.

This is also supported by the results of research (Hodgetts et al., 2007) which states that homeless people living on the streets are prone to health problems and serious illness because they have to live in humid conditions. By experiencing health problems, the level of a person's quality of life also decreases. This is reinforced by Hidayati et al. (2016) which states that sick individuals tend to have poor quality of life.

Subject 2 (BW) does not have health problems even though life is wandering on the streets because the subject has a tough personality (hardiness) so that he can do a good adaptation

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process to new things. This is in accordance with the opinion (Smet, 1994: 222) which states that hardiness can keep individuals to stay healthy despite experiencing stressful events. Because they are more resistant to stress, individuals will also be healthier and not easily fall ill because of the way they deal with stress better than individuals with low hardiness .

Furthermore, it was found that the differences in findings outside the life survival strategy theme were related to the psychiatric conditions of the two subjects. BW feels that the couple has a condition that leads to a tendency towards depression while the HH does not find a partner experiencing interference. HH often participates in BW when going to work and when he is not beside HH, HH will get angry and make words that hurt BW. When communicating with other people, BW admitted that HH often provoked conflict until it caused conflict.

This is in accordance with the opinion of Rathus (in Mutawally, 2018) which states that people who experience depression generally experience disorders that include emotional, motivational, functional, and behavioral movements and cognition. The environment will react to the behavior of depressed people who are generally negative, such as irritability, irritability, isolation, sensitivity, easily fatigued, easily hurt), and experience social problems in the form of problems of interaction with others.

Those whose psychiatric conditions experience shocks will create more negative feelings towards the surrounding environment which can affect the psychological well-being of a person. When aspects of psychological well-being cannot be fulfilled, this will also have an impact on the level of quality of life of a person (WHO, 1996).

When living on the streets subject 2 does not have physical or psychological health problems even though they experience a lot of stresses and stressors from their environment. This is because the subject has a strong personality (hardiness). This is in accordance with the opinion of Smet (1994: 222) which states that hardiness can keep individuals to stay healthy despite experiencing stressful events. Because they are more resistant to stress, individuals will also be healthier and not easily fall ill because of the way they deal with stress better than individuals with low hardiness .

The difference in the findings of the next theme is about the attitude of the couple while living on the streets. BW feels that couples are increasingly disrespectful when living on the streets compared to HH who feel that couples are responsible for their families. BW felt that while living and living on the streets, the attitude of his wife increasingly made him hurt by the treatment of HH who did not accept the income given by BW plus BW which had a dual role in earning a living while taking care of children.

In accordance with Sekaran's opinion (Gradianti & Suprapti, 2014) that the role of unequal husband and wife such as the distribution of unbalanced responsibilities, unequal distribution of time by husband and wife for family and work can cause marriage instability. If marital instability often occurs, the risk of individuals being separated or divorced is also higher, which in turn will also affect the quality of their lives (Moons et al., 2004).

The difference in the findings of the next theme is about feelings towards the child. HH is frustrated with the condition of the child who is less able to be controlled while in the BW more to the emergence of feelings of guilt towards the child. HH complained about the attitude of her children who were naughty and had never permitted her when playing. This is supported by Liunardi et al. (2011) who stated that problems in educating children are often



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experienced by married couples. Whereas BW felt that guilty of selfishness shared with HH caused his children to stay and live to roam on the streets.

This is in accordance with the opinion of English & Macker (Amalia, 2017) which states that feelings of guilt result from violations of internal standards and there is a feeling of regret in which remorse arises because of negative thoughts, feelings or attitudes that are unacceptable, good by oneself or by other people. This is also supported by Xu et al. (In Utami & Asih, 2016) that guilt arises because an individual has committed a wrong action or made a mistake which according to him and his environment the action is not in accordance with the moral and norms.

The difference in findings outside the last life survival strategy theme is about feeling after living on the streets. BW claimed to feel ashamed to live on the streets while HH did not have the shame of living on the streets. BW feels embarrassed as a husband and family head when he sees his family must live in the streets. BW was embarrassed when he learned that HH and his son were begging on the streets to get money because BW thought that the problem of earning a living was his responsibility as head of the household in the family. BW also said he was embarrassed when he met with relatives or close relatives who knew him because he saw the condition of his family who had to live wandering on the streets.

This is in accordance with the results of Suzanna (2018) which states that street children feel embarrassed when they have to make money on the streets and are seen by friends and neighbors. This is also reinforced by the results of the study of Kumalasari & Wijayanti (2013) which states that 4% of street children have poor self-esteem marked by feelings of shame when they have to make money on the streets and meet different friends of the opposite sex.

Based on the description described in the discussion section, and in accordance with the focus and purpose of the study, the conclusions in this study are:

1. Both subjects developed a strategy to survive on the streets by riding in other people's stalls to sleep, doing activities by utilizing public facilities, having relations with security officers, and surviving on the streets to avoid conflict. While the difference in strategy of the two subjects when wandering is about friendship relations and health conditions experienced.
2. After living wandering, both subjects have an effort to improve life in a better direction.
3. There are similarities of findings outside of the life survival strategy theme, namely hedonism and lack of wife's role in the family.
4. There are differences in findings beyond the theme of life survival strategy, including the theme of psychological conditions, the attitude of the couple while living on the streets, feelings for children, and feelings when living on the streets.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

I declare that there is no conflict of interests between researchers and others.

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