

ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT IN RELIEVING THE MOMENTARY ANXIETY OF WIVES OF SOLDIERS DEPLOYED TO CONFLICT-PRONE AREAS

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Abstracts

The duties of the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) in conflict areas often require soldiers to be separated from their families, creating psychological distress, especially for their wives. This study aimed to examine the influence of four forms of social support on the state anxiety of wives of Indonesian Army personnel during their husbands' deployment. This research used a quantitative method with an inductive approach involving 45 wives of soldiers from Battalion Infantry 711, selected through total sampling. Social support was measured using a scale developed based on Sheldon Cohen and Harry M. Hoberman's (1983) theory, while anxiety was measured using a scale based on Charles D. Spielberger's (1972) theory. The findings showed that self-esteem support significantly influenced state anxiety, contributing 13.2%, while appraisal support, tangible support, and belonging support showed no significant effect. The study highlights the importance of strengthening psychological support for military wives during deployment.

Keywords : social support, state anxiety, Persit Kartika Chandra Kirana, Tentara Nasional Indonesia Army

1. Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelagic country characterized by a high level of social, cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity. This diversity serves as an important social asset for the nation; however, it also has the potential to trigger social and political conflicts if not managed effectively. Throughout Indonesian history, various communal and separatist conflicts have demonstrated that national stability remains a significant challenge in maintaining national integration. In this

context, the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) plays a strategic role in safeguarding national sovereignty, maintaining territorial integrity, and protecting society from security threats .

Military deployment, particularly in conflict-prone areas, is part of the TNI's primary responsibility and requires both physical and psychological readiness from soldiers. However, the impact of military deployment is not only experienced by the soldiers themselves but also by the family members left behind, especially their spouses. Long-term deployments, high-risk locations,

and communication limitations during military operations may become significant sources of psychological stress for military spouses. Previous studies have shown that military spouses experience higher levels of stress and anxiety during deployment periods compared to non-deployment periods (Ross et al., 2020) .

Within the Indonesian military context, soldiers' wives who are members of *Persit Kartika Chandra Kirana* face unique adaptive demands related to their husbands' military assignments. As part of the military family system, they encounter uncertainty, increased domestic responsibilities, and concerns about their spouses' safety. Preliminary interviews revealed that most military wives whose husbands were deployed experienced emotional reactions such as fear, worry, restlessness, and sleep disturbances caused by concerns about their husbands' safety in operational areas .

These psychological conditions can be explained through the concept of anxiety. According to Charles D. Spielberger (1972), anxiety is an emotional state characterized by tension, worry, and autonomic nervous system activation in response to real or perceived threats. In the context of military families, such threats may include the spouse's safety risks, armed conflict reports, and communication barriers during deployment. Ross et al. (2020) found that psychological distress among military spouses increases alongside heightened perceptions of threat and uncertainty during deployment .

To cope with such conditions, social support becomes an important protective factor. Social support refers to interpersonal resources that help individuals manage stress and improve psychological adaptation. According to Sheldon Cohen and Harry M. Hoberman (1983), social support includes

emotional support, instrumental support, self-esteem support, and belonging support provided by the social environment. Empirically, the stress-buffering hypothesis explains that social support reduces the negative impact of stress on mental health (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

In military family settings, social support has been shown to be an important factor in coping with deployment-related stress. O'Neal et al. (2020) found that social connections and community support significantly contribute to the psychological well-being of military spouses, particularly in reducing stress and enhancing adaptive coping. Additionally, Ross et al. (2020) showed that social support acts as a stress buffer, reducing psychological distress and anxiety among military spouses during deployment .

In the Indonesian military environment, social support may be obtained through *Persit* activities, interactions among military wives, and assistance from military unit members who remain at the headquarters. Social activities such as group exercise, religious gatherings, educational programs, and skill-building activities can strengthen a sense of belonging and reduce psychological distress. Instrumental support such as logistical assistance and emergency support also reinforces the psychological adaptation system of military wives .

Although previous studies have demonstrated a negative relationship between social support and anxiety across various populations, such as university students (Maziyah, 2015) and pregnant women (Dhidi, 2018), studies focusing on the wives of Indonesian Army personnel deployed to conflict-prone areas remain limited. This population faces unique stressors, including concerns about their spouses' safety, long deployment duration, and communication

uncertainty. Based on this research gap, this study aims to examine the influence of social support on the anxiety of Indonesian Army wives whose husbands are deployed to conflict-prone areas.

2. Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach using a non-experimental correlational design. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study aimed to examine the predictive relationship between social support as the independent variable and state anxiety as the dependent variable through statistical analysis. The non-experimental design was used because the researcher did not manipulate the study variables but observed participants' psychological conditions as they naturally occurred while their husbands were deployed in conflict-prone areas.

A correlational-regression design was considered appropriate for the study objective, which was to determine the extent to which social support dimensions (appraisal support, tangible support, self-esteem support, and belonging support) influence the anxiety levels of military wives.

The participants were wives of active Indonesian Army personnel who were members of Persit Kartika Chandra Kirana and resided in the Battalion Infantry 711/Raksatama military housing complex in Palu, Central Sulawesi. The population consisted of 57 military wives whose husbands were assigned to security operations in conflict-prone areas.

The sampling technique used was total sampling, in which all members of the population were included as research participants. However, after the screening process, the final sample analyzed consisted

of 45 participants. Six individuals were unavailable during data collection, while six others were excluded because they had high trait anxiety scores, which could potentially interfere with the measurement of situational anxiety (state anxiety).

Participant inclusion criteria were as follows:

- (1) wives of active Indonesian Army personnel,
- (2) husbands currently deployed in conflict-prone areas
- (3) residing in military housing during deployment, and
- (4) willing to participate in the study.

Demographic data collected included age, length of marriage, number of children, children's ages, employment status, previous deployment experience, communication frequency with husbands, and frequency of meeting extended family members.

Data were collected using a survey method with written questionnaires distributed directly to participants in the military housing complex. This method was selected because it allowed efficient and systematic psychological data collection within a relatively short period.

Data collection was conducted in three stages. The first stage involved screening using the *trait anxiety* instrument to ensure that the measured anxiety reflected situational anxiety rather than stable anxiety tendencies. The second stage measured social support, and the third stage measured state anxiety.

The study used three psychological instruments:

1. State Anxiety Scale

State anxiety was measured using an adapted version of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) developed by Charles D. Spielberger. The instrument specifically measures temporary emotional conditions arising in response to particular situations. The scale consisted of two dimensions: *apprehension* and *tension*, using a 4-point

Likert scale. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) showed factor loadings ranging from 0.669 to 0.833, while Cronbach's Alpha was 0.765.

2. Trait Anxiety Scale

This instrument was used as an initial screening tool to control for individual bias related to stable anxiety tendencies. It consisted of 20 adapted STAI-Trait items. The validity test showed factor loadings ranging from 0.502 to 0.889, while Cronbach's Alpha was 0.926.

3. Social Support Scale

Social support was measured using an adapted version of the *Interpersonal Support*

Evaluation List (ISEL) developed by Sheldon Cohen and Harry M. Hoberman. The instrument consisted of four dimensions: *appraisal support*, *tangible support*, *self-esteem support*, and *belonging support*, using a 4-point Likert scale. Validity test results showed factor loadings ranging from 0.519 to 0.921, while Cronbach's Alpha was 0.882 .

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. The primary analysis used multiple linear regression to test the effect of the four social support dimensions on state anxiety. Prior to regression analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted, including normality, linearity, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity tests

3. Result and Discussion

Table 1. Demographic Data

	Participant Data	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20 – 30 years	36	80%
	31 – 40 years	9	20%
Ethnic Group	Pulau Sulawesi	26	57,7%
	Pulau Jawa	11	24,4%
	Pulau Sumatra	3	6,6%
	Pulau Bali	3	6,6%
	Pulau Maluku	2	4,4%
Time of married	1– 5 years	39	86,6%
	6-10 years	5	11,1%
	>10 years	1	2,2%
Sum Children	1 child	16	35,5%
	2-3 children	15	33,3%
	None	14	31,1%
Children Age	< 1 years	9	29%
	1– 5 years	19	61%
	>5 years	3	9,7%
Work Status	Work	11	24,4%
	Unemployed	34	75,5%
Meet family intensity	Often	13	29%
	Rarely	25	55,5%
	Never	7	15,5%
Intensity of Communication with Husband	Often	42	93%
	Rarely	3	7%
Experience of being left behind by the previous task force	Yes	15	33,3%
	No	30	66,7%
Someone accompanied her at home while his husband was on duty	Yes	20	44,5%
	No	25	55,5%

The participants in this study consisted of 45 wives of active Tentara Nasional Indonesia Army personnel whose husbands were deployed to conflict-prone areas. Based on age, the majority of participants were between 20–30 years old, totaling 36 individuals (80%), while 9 participants (20%) were aged 31–40 years. In terms of ethnic background, most participants came from Sulawesi Island (26 participants; 57.7%), followed by Java Island (11 participants; 24.4%), Sumatra Island and Bali Island (3 participants each; 6.6%), and Maluku Islands (2 participants; 4.4%). Regarding length of marriage, the majority had been married for 1–5 years (39 participants; 86.6%), followed by 6–10 years (5 participants; 11.1%), and more than 10 years (1 participant; 2.2%). Based on the number of children, 16 participants (35.5%) had one child, 15 participants (33.3%) had 2–3 children, and 14 participants (31.1%) had no children. The children's ages were predominantly between 1–5 years (19 children; 61%), under 1 year old (9 children; 29%), and over 5 years old (3 children; 9.7%). In terms of employment status, most participants were unemployed (34 participants; 75.5%), while 11 participants (24.4%) were employed. Regarding family contact intensity, 25 participants (55.5%) rarely met their families, 13 participants (29%) frequently met their families, and 7 participants (15.5%) almost never met their families. Meanwhile, communication with husbands was relatively high, with 42 participants (93%) frequently communicating and 3 participants (7%) rarely communicating with their husbands. In addition, 30 participants (66.7%) had never experienced being left behind during previous military deployments, while 15 participants (33.3%) had experienced similar situations. Furthermore, 25 participants

(55.5%) did not have family members accompanying them at home during their husbands' deployment, while 20 participants (44.5%) had family members staying with them during the deployment period.

Table 2. Normality Test Result

Variable	Sig.
Social Support × State Anxiety	0,200
	Normal Distributed

Based on the results of the normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, a significance value of 0.200 ($p > 0.05$) was obtained, indicating that the research data were normally distributed.

Table 3. Linearity Test Result

Variable	Sig.
Appraisal Support × State Anxiety	0,317
	Linear
Tangible Support × State Anxiety	0,227
	Linear
Self-esteem Support × State Anxiety	0,725
	Linear
Belonging Support × State Anxiety	0,169
	Linear

The results of the linearity test showed that all variables had significance values greater than 0.05, indicating that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables was linear.

Table 3. Multicollinearity Test Result

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Appraisal Support	0,774	1,292
		Multicollinearity does not occur
Tangible Support	0,729	1,373
		Multicollinearity does not occur
Self-esteem Support	0,532	1,881
		Multicollinearity does not occur
Belonging Support	0,533	1,875
		Multicollinearity does not occur

Based on the results of the multicollinearity test, all variables showed tolerance values greater than 0.1 and VIF values less than 10, indicating that the regression model was free from multicollinearity.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results (F Test)

Model	F	Sig.	
Simultant Regression	1,866	0,135	Not significant

The results of the simultaneous test showed an F value of 1.866 with a significance value of 0.135 ($p > 0.05$). These findings indicate that, simultaneously, the dimensions of social support did not have a significant effect on state anxiety among the wives of Tentara Nasional Indonesia Army personnel whose husbands were deployed to conflict-prone areas.

Table 6. Parsial Test Result (Uji t)

Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig.	
Appraisal Support	-0,056	-0,041	-0,251	0,803	Not Significant
Tangible Support	-0,028	-0,017	-0,099	0,922	Not Significant
Self-esteem Support	-0,644	-0,425	-2,137	0,039	Significant
Belonging Support	-0,182	-0,095	-0,476	0,637	Not Significant

Based on the results of the partial test, only the self-esteem support variable showed a significant effect on state anxiety, with a significance value of 0.039 ($p < 0.05$). The negative direction of the relationship indicates that higher levels of self-esteem support were associated with lower levels of state anxiety.

Table 7. Results of the Coefficient of Determination Test

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
0,390	0,152	0,132	2,259

The Adjusted R Square value of 0.132 indicates that self-esteem support contributed 13.2% to state anxiety among the wives of Tentara Nasional Indonesia Army personnel, while the remaining variance was influenced by other factors outside the scope of this study.

Table 8. Social Support Categorization

Dimension Social Support	High (f)	High (%)	Low (f)	Low (%)
Appraisal Support	40	89%	5	11%
Tangible Support	42	93%	3	7%
Self-esteem Support	44	98%	1	2%
Belonging Support	44	98%	1	2%

The categorization results showed that the majority of participants had high levels of social support across all dimensions of social support

Table 9. State Anxiety Categorization

Categorization	Frequency	Percentage
Tinggi	31	69%
Rendah	14	31%
Total	45	100%

Based on the state anxiety categorization results, the majority of participants were classified in the high anxiety category, with 31 participants (69%). The findings of this study showed that, simultaneously, social support did not have a significant effect on state anxiety among the wives of Tentara Nasional Indonesia Army personnel whose husbands were deployed to conflict-prone areas. However, partially, the self-esteem support dimension was found to have a significant effect on state anxiety. These findings indicate that social support related to self-worth, self-confidence, and identity reinforcement as members of Persit Kartika Chandra Kirana contributes more substantially than other forms of social support .

Self-esteem support refers to support that helps individuals feel valued, competent, and capable of dealing with difficult situations. In the context of this study, encouragement, appreciation, and confidence from fellow Persit members helped military wives strengthen their self-confidence in facing their husbands' deployment. This support enabled participants to perceive themselves as capable of fulfilling their roles as military wives despite living in uncertain and stressful circumstances .

The negative regression coefficient of the self-esteem support variable indicates that increased self-esteem support was associated with lower state anxiety. This finding is consistent with Stanley Coopersmith's (1967) theory, which explains that individuals with higher self-esteem tend to be better able to cope with psychological pressure, have stronger confidence in their abilities, and adapt more effectively to difficult situations. This finding is also supported by the study of Rosen and Moghadam (1989), which found that emotional support in the form of self-esteem reinforcement helped military spouses cope with separation-related stress during deployment. Furthermore, Jeff Greenberg et al. (1992) suggested that self-esteem functions as an anxiety-buffering mechanism, enabling individuals to perceive threatening situations more positively and controllably .

From the perspective of Charles D. Spielberger's (1972) anxiety theory, this condition can be explained through the process of cognitive appraisal. When individuals face situations perceived as threatening, they evaluate their ability to cope with those threats. Self-esteem support helps military wives appraise themselves as capable of enduring and managing their husbands' deployment, thereby reducing the

intensity of state anxiety .

Meanwhile, the dimensions of appraisal support, tangible support, and belonging support did not show significant effects on state anxiety. Although most participants reported high levels of these types of social support, anxiety levels remained high. This suggests that these forms of support were not sufficient to reduce the main source of anxiety, namely concerns about their husbands' safety during deployment in conflict-prone areas .

This condition can be understood because the anxiety experienced by participants was situational and triggered by threats that could not be directly controlled. According to Spielberg (1972), state anxiety emerges as long as individuals perceive threats to themselves or to significant others. In this study, those threats involved concerns about their husbands' safety, uncertainty regarding their return, and the possibility of armed conflict during deployment .

The non-significant effect of appraisal support may be explained by the high frequency of communication between participants and their husbands. Most participants were still able to receive direct information and advice from their spouses, making informational support from fellow Persit members less influential in reducing anxiety .

Similarly, tangible support such as assistance with household tasks, transportation, or daily needs was helpful for participants' practical activities while living in military housing. However, this type of support was not directly related to the main source of anxiety, namely their husbands' safety in deployment areas. Therefore, instrumental support was not sufficient to significantly reduce anxiety.

Likewise, belonging support, which

refers to togetherness and acceptance within a social group, was also insufficient to reduce anxiety. Most participants were in relatively early stages of marriage and still experienced a high level of emotional dependence on their spouses. As a result, the need for their husbands' presence remained dominant despite receiving social support from the surrounding environment .

Overall, the findings indicate that the most influential form of social support in reducing state anxiety among military wives was support that strengthened self-confidence and appreciation of their role as military wives. These findings highlight the importance of psychological assistance programs focused on strengthening self-esteem within the Persit environment to help members cope with psychological distress during their husbands' deployment.

4. Discussion

Based on the findings of this study on the influence of social support on state anxiety among the wives of Tentara Nasional Indonesia Army personnel whose husbands were deployed to conflict-prone areas, it can be concluded that only self-esteem support had a significant effect on state anxiety, with a negative relationship and a contribution of 13.2%. This means that the higher the self-esteem support received from fellow members of Persit Kartika Chandra Kirana, the lower the level of state anxiety experienced by military wives. Meanwhile, appraisal support, tangible support, and belonging support did not show significant effects on state anxiety. This condition may be influenced by respondents' characteristics, such as relatively short marital duration, lack of previous deployment experience, unemployment status, frequent

communication with their husbands, and the presence of family support at home. In addition, the categorization results showed that although participants generally received high levels of social support, their state anxiety levels remained relatively high

RECOMMENDATIONS

Hospitals are expected to provide reflective spaces or psychological support for rehabilitation nurses to help them manage emotional experiences. while accompanying patients. Furthermore, future studies may involve more participants or explore the experiences of other mental health professionals within psychosocial rehabilitation settings.

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