

## The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Coping Strategies Among Alzheimer's Caregivers at Pusaka 41

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the relationship between emotional intelligence and coping strategies in caregivers with Alzheimer's disease at Pusaka 41 Nursing Home, Al Madiniyah Foundation. Caregivers who care for elderly people with Alzheimer's disease often experience significant emotional, physical, and psychological problems. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that influence their ability to cope with stress, including emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand and manage one's own and others' emotions. On the other hand, coping strategies are ways that a person uses to deal with pressure and difficult situations. The scale used in this study to measure coping strategies was sourced from Gustina (2019) and adapted to the research context by the researcher. Meanwhile, the scale in measuring emotional intelligence from Rofiah (2015) was also modified by the researcher. The study population consisted of 30 caregivers selected using the saturated sampling method. During data collection, questionnaires were distributed directly to respondents at the research location. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and coping strategies. The correlation coefficient was 0.461, with a significant difference of 0.010 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This means that the higher the caregiver's emotional intelligence, the more effective coping strategies they use to deal with stress in caring for the elderly with Alzheimer's disease. Conversely, lower emotional intelligence scores tend to be associated with higher emotional intelligence scores. Conversely, lower levels of emotional intelligence tend to correlate with the use of fewer coping strategies.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Coping Strategies, Caregiver

### Introduction

The care of the elderly, especially those with Alzheimer's disease in nursing homes, is a complex challenge that involves more than just providing basic physical care (Sulistyorini et al., 2022). The gradual decline in cognitive function, language ability, and memory in Alzheimer's patients slowly reduces their ability to perform daily activities independently (Williams et al., 2020). Therefore, elderly individuals with Alzheimer's disease greatly require support from caregivers. However, caregivers often experience stress in caring for them.

According to the 2023 Indonesian Health Survey (SKI) conducted by the Ministry of Health (Kemenkes) regarding community involvement and professional caregivers for elderly individuals with severe dependency. The closest family members as caregivers accounted for 80.8%, followed by domestic workers (PRT) at 12.9%, specialized elderly care professionals at 1.3%, nurses at 0.3%, and elderly individuals not cared for by specialized caregivers at 4.7%. The survey revealed a limited number of professional caregivers involved. This is because Alzheimer's disease is still relatively unknown in Indonesia.

The role of caregivers is clearly crucial in providing assistance to elderly individuals with chronic Alzheimer's disease, a responsibility that can be a significant source of stress for the caregiver population (Williams et al., 2020). Caregivers for elderly individuals with Alzheimer's disease require a deep understanding of the interaction between emotional intelligence and coping strategies to address complex demands. Coping strategies, defined as cognitive and behavioral

efforts to manage stressful demands, vary among individuals and are influenced by factors such as emotional intelligence, personality traits, and social support (Annisya et al., 2020). By identifying specific coping mechanisms that positively or negatively correlate with caregiver well-being, targeted interventions can be developed to enhance caregiver resilience and improve the quality of care provided to elderly individuals with Alzheimer's disease (Gümüşkaya et al., 2023).

A person's emotional intelligence enables them to cope with various environmental demands more effectively (Annisya et al., 2020). Therefore, caregivers must be able to cope with demands that include the ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions as well as the emotions of those they care for. Additionally, selecting and implementing appropriate coping strategies plays a crucial role in reducing the negative impact of stress from caring for the elderly and improving overall well-being. The demands of caring for the elderly can disrupt various aspects of life, exacerbating the psychological burden experienced by elderly caregivers (Wang & Irani, 2022).

Emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor one's own feelings and emotions as well as those of others, distinguish between different emotions, and use that information to guide one's thoughts and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Salovey, Mayer, and Caruso (2008) redefined emotional intelligence as the ability to process emotional information accurately and effectively and use that information to guide adaptive thinking and behavior. Meanwhile, Bar-On (2006) defines emotional intelligence as a set of non-cognitive abilities, skills, and competencies that influence a person's ability to cope with environmental pressures and demands and their success in adapting. Therefore, emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own and others' emotions to guide effective thinking, actions, and adaptation in facing environmental pressures and demands.

The demanding role of caregivers requires them to be able to manage their emotions well in order to cope with high emotional burdens and various difficulties arising from the behavior of elderly people with Alzheimer's disease. Caregivers with high emotional intelligence tend to choose appropriate and effective coping strategies to manage stress resulting from the challenging care of elderly individuals with Alzheimer's disease. Therefore, emotional intelligence helps caregivers understand how they use coping strategies to manage stress and emotional burdens, thereby maintaining psychological well-being and the quality of care provided to elderly individuals with Alzheimer's disease.

Coping is a dynamic process between individuals and their environment that involves assessing stress and selecting coping strategies based on that assessment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Based on the Dual Process Model by Stroebe & Schut (1999), coping is divided into two processes: loss-oriented coping (coping focused on loss) and restoration-oriented coping (coping focused on recovery). Loss-oriented coping focuses on dealing with feelings of loss, sadness, and grief. In contrast, restoration-oriented coping focuses on adapting to new changes and life demands after loss. Therefore, coping is a process involving the interaction between an individual and their environment in assessing and managing stress, with strategies that may focus on addressing loss or adapting to change.

Caregivers often face high emotional burdens, ranging from feelings of loss due to the declining condition of the elderly to the demands of adapting to changes during the care process. Stress is also related to an individual's ability to manage emotions (Sari & Sovitriana, 2025). If caregivers cannot manage stress effectively, it will affect their mental and physical well-being. In addition, they must accompany and care for all the needs of elderly people with Alzheimer's, so the coping mechanisms used by caregivers are very important to maintain their sanity. Individuals with emotional intelligence are usually able to describe problems that arise in themselves and their environment rationally and wisely (Safriati et al., 2023).

### Method

This study is a quantitative correlation study, which aims to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and coping strategies in caregivers of elderly people with Alzheimer's disease at the Pusaka 41 Nursing Home. In determining the sample, the researcher used a non-probability sampling method with a saturated sampling technique to obtain 30 respondents. The data collection method in this study was the Likert scale. The Likert scale is an ordinal scale consisting of several statement items that allow respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a statement, aiming to measure psychological variables such as attitudes or opinions (DeVellis, 2016). The researchers used two Likert scales: the Coping Strategies Scale developed by Gustina (2019) and the Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Rofiah (2015). The Coping Strategy Scale has eight aspects, namely (1) Self-control, (2) Seeking social support, (3) Accepting responsibility, (4) Positive reappraisal, (5) Confrontative coping, (6) Distancing, (7) Planful problem solving, (8) Escape avoidance. Meanwhile, the Emotional Intelligence Scale has 5 aspects, namely (1) Recognizing one's own emotions, (2) Managing emotions, (3) Motivating oneself, (4) Recognizing others' emotions, and (5) Building relationships.

### Results

Based on the descriptive results, it shows that most respondents are between 51 to 65 years old (40%), female (63%), and have a high school education (47%) and most have been caring for family members for less than five years (60%).

**Table 1.1 Empirical Values**

Score Value	Coping Strategy	Emotional Intelligence
<b>N</b>	30	30
<b>Min</b>	120	60
<b>Max</b>	149	92
<b>Mean</b>	129,97	74,73
<b>SD</b>	7,907	5,735

Empirical descriptive analysis showed that the mean-valued coping strategy 129.97 (SD = 7.91) varied between 120 and 149 and the mean-valued emotional coping strategy 74.73 (SD = 5.74) varied between 60 and 92.

**Table 1.2 Categorization of Coping Strategies**

Range of Values	Range of Values	Frequency	Percentage
<b>&lt; 48</b>	Low	0	0 %
<b>48 - 144</b>	Medium	30	100 %
<b>&gt; 144</b>	High	0	0 %
Total		30	100%

Based on the classification of coping strategies, all respondents (100%) were in the medium category, and no respondents had high or low coping strategies. This shows that all participants in this study consistently used long-term strategies to manage stress and anxiety in caring for the elderly with Alzheimer's disease.

**Table 1.3 Emotional Intelligence Categorization**

Range of Values	Range of Values	Frequency	Percentage
< 30	Low	0	0 %
30 - 90	Medium	29	96,7 %
> 90	High	1	3,3 %
Total		30	100%

The classification of emotional intelligence shows that most participants (96.7%) are in the medium category and only 3.3% of respondents have high emotional intelligence where there are no caregivers in the low category. This shows that most caregivers are competent enough to manage their own emotions, understand the emotions of others, and develop healthy interpersonal relationships.

The validity test results show 48 items in the coping strategy scale, 35 items are valid, and 13 items are invalid. On the other hand, of the 30 items in the emotional intelligence scale, 27 items are valid, and 3 items are invalid. The reliability test shows that these two scales have good reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.823 for the coping strategy scale and an emotional intelligence scale with a value of 0.709.

**Table 1.4 Data Normality Test**  
*One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test*

Unstandardized Residual	
N	30
Normal	Mean
Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Std. Deviation
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute
	Positive
	Negative
Test Statistic	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	

**Table 1.5 Data Linearity Test**

**ANOVA TABLE**

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
KE * Strategies Coping	Between Groups	(Combined)	617,367	15	41,158	1,712	
		Linearity	33,579	1	33,579	1,397	,257
		Deviation from Linearity	583,788	14	41,669	1,735	,157
	Within Groups		336,500	14	24,036		
	Total		953,867	29			

In addition, the results of the normality test with Kolmogorov-Smirnov gave a significance value of 0.085, meaning that the data were normally distributed ( $p > 0.05$ ) and the results of the linearity test gave a significance value of 0.157 ( $> 0.05$ ), indicating a linear relationship between the variables of emotional intelligence and coping strategies.

**Table 1.6 Hypothesis Test**

Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)
Coping Strategies and Emotional Intelligence	.461	.010

*\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Hypothesis testing with Pearson correlation showed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and coping strategies with a correlation coefficient of 0.461 and a significance value of 0.010 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted, and the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected. These results indicate that the better the caregiver's emotional intelligence, the better the coping strategy and vice versa.

### Discussion

Based on the hypothesis test results above, the research hypothesis  $H_1$  is accepted with a significant value of 0.010 ( $p < 0.05$ ), supported by an  $r$  value of 0.461. This means that coping strategies and emotional intelligence have a positive and direct relationship. The conclusion is that the higher the coping strategy, the higher the emotional intelligence, and conversely, the lower the coping strategy, the lower the emotional intelligence in caregivers of elderly people with Alzheimer's.

Based on the data above, the normality test results show that the significance value for both variables is 0.085, where both variables have a significance value  $> 0.05$ . Therefore, both variables in this study are normally distributed. From the descriptive statistical results of this study, it shows that the majority of caregivers use coping strategies in the moderate category, namely as many as 30 people (100%), which indicates that caregivers of elderly people with Alzheimer's at Pusaka 41 Nursing Home, Al Madiniyah Foundation tend to be willing to take risks to overcome problems related to the elderly, are able to control their emotions, seek support from others, are aware of their responsibilities, are able to see problems from a positive perspective, are able to avoid sources of problems, are able to make plans to overcome problems, and are able to forget the problems they have.

Then, from the descriptive results on emotional intelligence, it shows that the majority of caregivers of elderly people with Alzheimer's have emotional intelligence in the high category as many as 1 person (3.3%) and in the moderate category as many as 29 people (96.7%). This shows that caregivers are sensitive to their moods, can manage emotions, can get through problems, are sensitive to the feelings of others, and can establish good relationships with others. With high emotional intelligence, caregivers are able to understand the feelings of the elderly, and this enables caregivers to provide care in accordance with the feelings of the elderly.

### **Conclusion**

The study on the relationship between coping strategies and emotional intelligence among Alzheimer's caregivers at Pusaka 41 Nursing Home, Al Madiniyah Foundation created the following conclusions, limitations, and recommendations.

#### **Key Findings:**

1. Significant relationship: a statistically significant positive correlation ( $r = 0,461$ ,  $p = 0,010$ ) exists between coping strategies and emotional intelligence, indicating that higher coping skills correlate with higher emotional intelligence.
2. Emotional intelligence levels: 3,3% of caregivers exhibited high emotional intelligence, 96,7% fell into the moderate category, demonstrating abilities in emotional awareness, empathy, and interpersonal skills.
3. Coping strategy levels: all caregivers employed moderate level coping strategies, including risk taking in problem-solving, emotional regulation, and proactive planning.
4. Hypothesis validation: the hypothesis linking coping strategies and emotional intelligence was accepted.

#### **Study Limitations:**

- The large number of scale items for both variables led to caregiver fatigue and reduced focus during data collection.
- Location constrains that difficulty securing research sites impacted the study's timeline.
- Small caregiver population: Limited availability of qualified caregivers affected sample size.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Methodological improvement: Expand sample size and research locations to enhance generalizability and incorporate additional variables to explore nuanced interactions.
- Practical applications: Implement programs to enhance problem solving and emotional management skills for train the caregiver employee, and nursing homes should that emotional intelligence and adaptive coping strategies are critical for mitigating caregiver stress in dementia care.

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