

Optimism And Problem-Focused Coping On Students During The Pandemic Covid-19

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Abstract. *The purpose of this research is to explore the influence of optimism on the problem-focused coping of students at Ar-Raniry State Islamic University and to find out the difference in optimism and problem-focused coping between male and female students. Data were collected from 320 students (81 male and 239 female) using a proportional stratified sampling. Data were collected by using two questionnaires, (1) Optimism by using the scale of optimism (Seligman, 2008) and (2) Problem-focused coping by using the Coping scale (Lazarus, 1984). Data were analyzed descriptively, and statistical analysis (hypothesis testing) was done using a simple regression procedure under SPSS/PC Ver.23.00. This study's results indicated a significant positive correlation between optimism and problem-focused coping among students. The respective R-square is 0.166, a result of the coefficient is 0.407. There was different result based on gender difference. Male students are more problem-focused with coping and optimism than female students.*

Keywords: Covid-19, Optimism, Problem Focused Coping

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh *optimisme* terhadap *problem focused coping* mahasiswa Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh dan mengetahui perbedaan *optimisme* dan *problem focused coping* di antara mahasiswa laki-laki dan perempuan. Sampel penelitian ini berjumlah 320 mahasiswa (81 laki-laki dan 239 perempuan) dengan menggunakan proporsional stratified sampling. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menggunakan dua kuesioner, (1) *Optimisme* dengan menggunakan skala *optimisme* (Seligman, 2008) dan (2) *Problem focused coping* dengan menggunakan skala *Coping scale* (Lazarus, 1984). Data dianalisis secara deskriptif dan analisis statistik (pengujian hipotesis) dilakukan dengan prosedur simple Regression. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terdapat hubungan positif yang signifikan antara *optimisme* dengan *problem focused coping* pada siswa. Nilai R-square sebesar 0,166, dengan nilai koefisien adalah 0,407. Ada perbedaan hasil dalam konteks jenis kelamin, bahwa laki-laki lebih tinggi *problem focused coping* dan sikap *optimisme* daripada mahasiswa perempuan.

Kata kunci: Covid-19, Optimisme, Problem Focused Coping

The teaching and learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic has caused many problems for students (Setiawan, 2020). The problems experienced by most students are additional expenses for buying internet data, boarding room fees that must be paid even though they are not occupied and poor signal quality (Maryam, 2017). Students also complain about excessive assignments, boredom (Tuasikal & Retnowati, 2019), unable to meet loved ones, unable to attend online learning due to signal limitations, unable to carry out hobbies as usual (Firman & Rahayu, 2020), and unable to apply practical laboratory learning due to unavailability of tools (Khairunnisa, 2020; Livana, Mubin, and Basthomi, 2020).

Various forms of obstacles during online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic can be overcome through the ability of individuals to manage stress, such as finding solutions or carrying out other activities, each individual can do how to manage the stress they face (Fitriasari, Septianingrum, Budury, and Khamida, 2020). The strategies used by individuals to deal with stress or psychological tension in dealing with daily life problems are referred to as coping stress (Bakhtiar & Asriani, 2015). Individuals need personal abilities

and external support to reduce stress. In other words, coping is the process individuals go through to resolve stressful situations or pressures. Coping is an individual's response to situations that threaten him both physically and psychologically (Rasmun, 2004).

Coping stress is divided into two categories, namely, emotional-focused coping and problem-focused coping. Emotional Focus Coping is a coping strategy that is more emotion-oriented, which is an attempt to relieve or manage emotional stress that arises when individuals interact with the environment. Another coping strategy is called problem-focused coping, which is a coping strategy that is more directed at solving problems directly without avoiding the problems at hand (Adler & Park, 2003). Problem-focused coping can be directed at the environment as well as at oneself. Bakhtiar & Asriani (2015) stated that problem-focused coping is an attempt to change a situation or goal by changing a stressful environment or how a person reacts in a stressful phase.

Problem-focused coping can be grouped into (a) Information searching, efforts to obtain accurate information related to the problems and look for people to exchange ideas and help solve problems,

and (b) Problem solving, efforts to think of solutions on how to solve problems (Maryam, 2017).

According to Sarafino and Smith (2012), problem-focused coping is an effort to reduce stress or develop the ability to deal with pressure. Someone who uses problem-focused coping in dealing with stress tends to focus more on their problems and try to find various ways to solve them. Unlike the individual who uses emotional focus coping, he is more emotion-oriented to relieve emotional stress when interacting with his environment. He avoids the problem at hand, not trying to find solutions to the problems. Therefore, this research is more focused on students who use problem-focused coping. They are students who will look for alternative solutions to problems so that the demands of college can be fulfilled optimally.

In another study by Brissette, Scheier, and Carver (2002), the results showed that optimistic students prefer to use problem-focused coping in planning to deal with stressful situations where students try to find solutions to problem-solving rather than denying their stressful conditions and experiences. Thus, optimism can influence a person's stress-coping strategies for solving problems. Likewise, Ningrum's (2011)

research stated a positive and significant relationship between optimism and coping with stress in students writing a thesis. Students with a low tendency to optimism also have low stress coping. The results of Erteka's research (2018), involving 56 students completing their thesis at the University of Medan Area, show a positive relationship between optimism and coping with stress. However, Valentsia and Wijono (2020) explained that there is a positive relationship between optimism and problem-focused coping in students who are working on their final projects. This study involved 134 students using an incidental sampling technique. This study uses an optimism scale and a problem scale that focuses on coping using the WCQ (Ways of Coping Questionnaire). Based on previous studies' results, there still needs to be a gap between the variables used, the sample and research methods, and the current research results. Therefore, this study fills the existing gap.

Based on the previous explanation, this research's first hypothesis is that optimism affects problem-focused coping in junior students at UIN Ar-Raniry during the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, the second hypothesis is that there is a significant difference in the level

of problem-focused coping and optimism in male and female students.

Method

This research is field research with a quantitative correlational approach. The population in this study was junior students of UIN Ar-Raniry class of 2020 who actively participated in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research sample was 320 students (81 male and 239 female) using a proportional stratified sampling technique. Data were collected using two questionnaires, (1) Optimism using the optimism scale (Seligman, 2008) and (2) Problem-focused coping using the Coping scale (Lazarus, 1984). This study used the optimism and problem-focused coping scales. Answers on this scale are stated in four categories, which are Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS). The optimism and the problem-focused coping scales were compiled using a Likert scale. The optimism scale is based on the optimism dimensions proposed by Seligman (2008), which consists of three dimensions; permanence, personalization, and pervasiveness. The total number of items on this scale is 30 statements. This scale passes the content validity test conducted through

expert judgment. After the item discriminatory test was carried out, the optimism scale showed that of the 30 items tested. The internal consistency for the optimism scale was $r = 0.804$. Examples of items on this scale include: "I believe, *my decline in grades in this online course is only temporary*" (Dimension of Permanence); "I believe my test scores are dropping because it is God's destiny" (Dimension of Personalization); and "I do not blame the lecturer when the grades drop" (Dimension of Pervasiveness). The problem-focused coping scale is based on the problem-focused coping dimensions proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which consists of three aspects: seeking informational support, concocitive coping, and planful problem-solving. The total number of items on this scale is 36 statements. This scale passes the content validity test conducted through expert judgment. After the item discrepancy test was carried out, the problem-focused coping scale showed that out of the 30 items tested. The reliability score was 0.867. Examples of items on this scale include: "I consult to *Psychologist regarding academic stress*" (Aspects of Seeking informational support); "If I get a low score, I will study hard" (Confrontive Coping Aspect); and "If

I was reprimanded by the lecturer in class, I will introspect myself” (Planful problem-solving aspect).

The data were analyzed descriptively, and statistical analysis was carried out using the Stepwise Multiple Regression procedure and t-test to see the differences between male and female respondents.

Result

1) Descriptive Analysis of Research Data Based on Table. 1, the findings of this study indicate that a descriptive analysis of frequency and percentage was used to describe the demographics of the study respondents, which included gender, faculty,

and age for the 320 respondents of this study. Based on these figures, 239 respondents (74.7%) were female, and 81 were male, equivalent to 25.3 percent of female respondents involved in the study. Furthermore, the results showed that most respondents came from the Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty, equivalent to 40.9 percent, and only eight respondents came from the Islamic Economics and Business faculty, equivalent to 2.5 percent. In addition, the results of the study also showed that the majority of respondents were aged 19-20 years, 172 students, 54 percent, and students aged 23 who participated in this study were only six people, with 2 percent.

Table 1
Demographic Respondents

Demography		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	81	25,3%
	Women	239	74,7%
Faculties	Tarbiyah and Education	131	40,9%
	Sharia and Law	9	2,8%
	Da'wah and Communication	22	6,9%
	Literature and Humanities	9	2,8%
	Social and Government Science	15	4,7%
	Science and Technology	15	4,7%
	Islamic Economics and Business	8	2,5%
	Usuluddin and Philosophy	22	6,9 %
	psychology	104	32,5%
	Age	≤ 18 year	115
19 – 20 year		172	54.0
21 – 22 year		27	8.0
> 23		6	2.0

Table 2
Description of Research Variable Data

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	Minimum	Maximum
Optimism	320	3.370	.323	2.44	4.23
Problem-focused coping	320	3.590	.579	2.28	4.97

Table 3
Frequency of Optimism and Problem Focused Coping

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Optimism	Low	22	6.9
	Middle	235	73.4
	High	63	19.7
Problem-focused coping	Low	55	17.2
	Middle	217	67.8
	High	48	15.0

2) The Effect of Optimism on Problem Focused Coping

Table 4. shows the study's results for simple regression analysis using the enter method to the independent variables showing that optimism has a significant effect on problem-focused coping at the level of p

<0.05, R2 = .166. This situation explains that optimism has given as much as a 16.6% change in variance to problem-focused coping. The results of statistical tests on the value of the beta coefficient showed that the optimism variable ($\beta = .407$, $p < .000$) had a significant effect on students' problem-focused coping.

Table 4
The Influence of Optimism Dimensions on Problem-Focused Coping

Forecasting Variables	B	Sig.
Optimism	.407	.000
Result R ²	.166	
Result F	216.930	

P < .05

The regression analysis results showed that the optimism variable significantly contributed 52.1% to problem-focused coping ($p < .05$).

3). Differences in Optimism and Problem-Focused Coping students by gender.

Table 5 below shows that there is no difference in students' optimism ($t = .81$, $p > .05$) and problem-focused coping ($t = 1.16$; $p = .92 > .05$) based on gender.

Table 5
Differences in Optimism and Problem-focused coping on gender

	Gender	N	Mean	T	Sig.
Optimism	Male	81	3.60		
	Women	239	3.55		
	Total	320		.81	.06
Problem-focused coping	Male	81	3.39		
	Women	239	3.33		
	Total	320		1.66	.92

Discussion

This study aims to explore the influence of optimism on problem-focused coping among UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh students during the Covid-19 pandemic. The regression analysis showed that optimism had a significant effect on problem-focused coping among students of UIN Ar-Raniry during learning during the Covid-19 pandemic (the hypothesis is accepted). The analysis results show that the value of R Square (R^2) = 0.166, which means optimism has a 16.6% effect on problem-focused coping, while other factors influence 83.4%. These factors include health and energy, problem-solving ability, social skills, social support, and material resources. Seeing the

condition of the Covid-19 pandemic that never ends, it can be assumed that the most prominent factors influencing problem-focused coping among junior college students are health and energy. However, other factors also gave an impression on the problem-focused coping strategy for the students at UIN Ar-Raniry during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, the result of the study shows that most students have moderate optimism because they still believe in a good situation in the future, marked by the enthusiasm to take online lectures, carry out lectures and take exams. On the other hand, some new students get low scores when the exam is conducted online, even though they

still maintain an excellent ability to complete tasks and problems. They also still have the desire to solve problems.

The results of this study, per the research conducted by Karisha and Sarintohe (2019), show that positive belief is one factor that influences problem-focused coping. The tendency of individuals to perceive things from good or positive sides and conditions and expect the most satisfactory results also called optimism. Seligman (2008) explains that optimistic people will quickly recover from temporary despair. After failing, they try to get up, forget their failure, and then start trying again. Optimistic individuals always think positively, succeed in work, school, and the game, and never give up on facing problems. They approach their problems with their mindset (Syahniar & Ifdil, 2016). The results of this study support previous research (Suwarsi & Handayani, 2017; Valentsia & Wijono, 2020), explained that there was a relationship between optimism and Problem Focused Coping. Furthermore, there was a positive relationship between optimism and coping with stress in final students writing their thesis (Ningrum, 2011; Erteka, 2018). However, this study's results differ from the research conducted by Indawati and Kholifah (2017). The results of

the analysis show that there is no relationship between optimism and problem-focused

However, the results of this study show various obstacles during online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, and they are trying to overcome them. A student tries to change a situation, goal, or goal by changing something from an uncomfortable environment to a better place. He tries to find information and solve problems. He thinks about and solves problems that might be done by taking action to solve online learning problems he has faced so far. Some students reduce the stress they experience by diverting their minds by doing other activities or sleeping. When experiencing signal problems, students will take part in learning by looking for places that have more vital internet network access.

Several obstacles for new students in the transition phase from school to the world of lectures, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, and problem-focused coping strategies are used to overcome these obstacles. Implementing online lectures changes students from learning usually carried out directly in class, turning to distance learning using media that can only be accessed using the internet. New students have not been able to adapt their learning

patterns to the demands of the new era of lectures, have yet to adapt to the long and different study periods, and have been unable to manage their study time. Coping mechanisms play an essential role in overcoming or reducing the stress experienced by individuals because appropriate and effective coping can block the influence of stress on individuals' physical and mental health.

Some students will find it easy to do strategies to manage stress with problem-focused coping is to having positive beliefs or optimistic nature in dealing with problems. Positive beliefs form the basis of hope and support action efforts in stressful conditions. An attitude of optimism makes a person get out quickly from the problems they face because of the thoughts and feelings of having the ability, also supported by the assumption that everyone has their luck. Therefore, to deal with uncomfortable situations during online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, students must be optimistic and always try to achieve the best in life. So to become an unyielding and demanding person, an optimistic attitude must be embedded in an individual, which is to have a positive mindset that this pandemic will not hinder the spirit of learning. With an optimistic attitude,

individuals will be vigorous in facing every trial with complete confidence. Optimistic individuals always think positively and have success at work, school, and in a game. They never give up in the face of problems and approach them with a mature mindset.

Furthermore, this research aims to find out the difference in optimism and problem-focused coping between male and female students. The T-test analysis showed no difference in student optimism and problem-focused coping based on the gender of students of UIN Ar-Raniry during learning during the Covid-19 pandemic (the hypothesis is rejected). Based on the differences in problem-focused coping and optimism based on gender, there were no significant differences. However, this study found that male students had more problem-focused coping strategies and were more optimistic than female students.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, there was an effect of optimism on problem-focused coping. Furthermore, there were no significant differences in the level of problem-focused coping and optimism in male and female students.

Suggestion

The study recommends that students need to learn in managing the stress they face during online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic by optimizing and implementing problem- focused coping strategies. This suggestion is constructive for students to continue learning enthusiastically, even in an uncomfortable environment, especially new students. Meanwhile, parents, educators, and the government need to provide facilities that support online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, such as adequate internet signals, free data packages for students, more exciting learning methods, and learning processes by adjusting the time spent during online learning.

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