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Dynamics of Coping Strategy on Academic Demands of Students at University with Multiple Roles

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Abstract:
Facing various constraints and problems in carrying out academic demands put students at university with multiple roles and high academic achievement to conduct actions or reactions of coping. This research is aiming at disclosing the dynamics of coping strategies on academic demands of students at university with multiple roles with high academic achievement by referring to coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman. This research used qualitative approach with phenomenology method. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews as the main source and observation to four research informants by involving their significant others. This research found three types of coping: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and religion-focused coping. These types of coping were used interchangeable in accordance to situations, individuals' behaviors, religious and cultural values, as well as informant's judgment towards factors (coping resources) they have.

Keywords: dynamics of coping strategy, academic demands, students at University with multiple roles, high academic achievement

1. Introduction
Coping is one of efforts or reactions conducted by a person when facing demands such as academic demands as a student at university. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined coping as cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage external and internal demands that are exceeding the capacities of the person.

Students in university will face various academic demands. Academic demands include homework, class meeting, various campus' activities, and demands in studying classes' subjects. Ultimately, academic demands become pressures for students. Kausar (2010) stated that academic stressesare related with learning problems, academic achievement, and adjustment in academic environment.

There are many women who have multiple roles that are having two or more roles that required fulfillment simultenously (Irawaty and Kusumaputri, 2008). It then becomes a problem when they have to play roles not only as student but also as mother and wife as well as employee. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) delineated that conflicts arise in role-playing due to various issues such as limited time, pressure on certain role that affect other role, and difficulties of changing behavior from one to another role.

According to Puwanto (2009), married and working students have difficulties in self-management when self-studying outside class due to internal factors such as laziness, less persevered, depend on other people too much, and external factors such as workloads in various roles.

The abilities of students with multiple roles to achieve high academic performances have become evidences of efforts making or reaction called as coping in order to deal with pressurize situations, such as academic demands in Master Program, in such they achieved good academic performances. As stated by Heiman and Kariv (2004) that students will manage coping in dealing with academic demands when they faced learning difficulties. A research by Kember (1999) showed that students with multiple roles such as worker, family member, and community member would do coping such as searching for social support, to sacrifice something, and negotiate in order to fulfill academic demands.

Coping strategy can be seen based on types of coping carried out. Types of coping strategy conducted by student with multiple roles who have high achievement performances can be seen by referring to types of coping as suggested by Lazarus and Folkman (1984): problem-focused coping strategy and emotion-focused coping strategy. Problem-focused coping strategy is one of coping style conducted when a person has self-confidence that pressurized situation could change. While emotion-focused coping strategy was conducted when a person has no confidence on his/her ability to change the pressurized situation (Lazarus and Folkman, 1986). Both of these coping strategies occurred due to existing stressful situation and appraisal towards one's factors (coping resources). Coping resources consist of social supports, health and energy, believes in positivity, social skills, problem-solving skills, and material resources (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

This research aimed to see how far those coping strategies conducted by students with multiple roles who has high academic achievement and what factors or coping resources used as their judgment basis. Besides, this research is also intended to see further on

whether coping strategy theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) are used by students with multiple roles who have high academic achievement.

The research questions used as guideline in this research are:

1. How is the dynamics of problem-focused coping strategy and emotion-focused coping strategy on students with multiple roles that has high academic achievement?
2. What are the factors (coping resources) that become basis for judgment for students with multiple roles that has high academic achievement that trigger problem-focused coping strategy and emotion-focused coping strategy?

2. Method

Moleong (2011) stated that qualitative research is a research intended to understand the whole phenomenon of things going on with research subjects, putting it in description with words and languages according to its natural context and method such as behaviors, perception, motivation, actions and etcetera.

The design of this research uses phenomenology method. Phenomenology aims to persevere optimally the phenomenon and contexts as occured in the world by supposing individual to be the first party to describe their life (Smith, 2009). Moustakas (1994) also stated that phenomenology aims to finding meanings of what could be seen to attain the core of intuition and reflection in conscious behaviors based on experiences, ideas, concept, opinions, and understanding.

The person involved in this research are students of a university with multiple roles: a student, a housewife, and an employee. The location which researcher chose in finding informants for this research is one of Public University for Master Program in Yogyakarta Municipality.

Data resources used are personsthat have direct experiences on such phenomenon. Such person is called informant. Characteristics of informant for this research are:

i. Women, with age around 20 – 45 years old.
ii. Married or a housewife
iii. Currently working
iv. Currently studying a master degree in Yogyakarta Municipality
v. Current academic achievement at ≥ 3,50 cumulatively
vi. Willingly to participate and filling informed concern form

Applied sampling technique was purposive sampling.

Researcher's role in this research is as key instrument, as what stated by Poerwandari (1998) that in qualitative research, researcher play important role in the whole research processes starts from choosing topic, approaching the topic, collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data.

Researcher started data collection processes through rapport building with the informants, followed by semi-structured interviews based on generated interview guideline.

Besides interview results, researcher also conducted observations and collected field notes. Observations were intending to see directly informants' behaviors in coping with their academic demands. Sometimes observations were carried out during interviewing processes. Sometimes they were carried out in campus where informants usually conducted their academic demands. The outcomes of interviews and observation were then made into field notes in order to help researcher in analyzing phenomenon and making inferences.

2.1. Analysis Procedure and Data Interpretation

Method of analysis and data interpretation used in this research is modified method of Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen from Moustakas (1994). Analysis procedure and data interpretation include:

a. Full description of events or phenomenon experienced by informants,
b. Following informants' statements, researcher then:

b.1. Studied every statement related to research problem,

b.2. Recorded and wrote down relevant statements,

b.3. Put all statements in lists (phenomenon meaning unit) in order to ensure there would be no overlapping or repeated statements,

b.4. Categorized every meaning unit into themes,

b.5. Generated synthesis from meaning units and themes (textual description), including verbal statements as core meaning unit,

b.6. Maintained reflection of structural self-description through variations of imaginations, from which researcher generated structural description constructs,

b.7. Combined textual and structural descriptions in order to determine the meanings and essences of phenomenon,

c. Carrying out steps on point b for every informant,
d. Generate overall descriptions from every meaning and essence of acquired phenomenon.

During the processes of research, in order to gain valid data, researcher conducted interviews with significant others of informants to crosscheck statements from informants. These were carried out from time to time, that is from first interview up to last interviews in different times. Researcher also always did crosschecking during interaction with informants, both during data collection and times when researcher met informants, by observing their actions, behaviors, as well as statements outside processes of interviews.

3. Results

Aspek	Informan			
	EN	**NE**	**S**	**X**
Last GPA	3,68	3,88	3,93	3,56
Agewhen interviewed	31 years	30 years	28 years	26 years
Religion	Islam	Islam	Islam	Kristen Protestan
the order of the Family	3rd child	The last child	The firstchild	The secondchild
Education	S1 Aqidah	S1 Psychology	S1Psychology	S1 Psychology
Work	lecturer	lecturer	lecturer	ParttimepersonnelandLecturers
Otheractivities	Early childhood administrators, school committee chairman, the author	-	author	-
Husband'sjob	Head ofSchool(SD)	Private employees	entrepreneur	Private employees
Number ofChildren	3 (almost 4)	1	-	1
Live with-	Husband, brother, nephewandson	husband and son(sometime with parents and parents in law)	Husband, parents and sister	Children, parents, sister and maid
The problems thatlead tocoping	Weak physical condition / illness, the demands of the role comes along, can not run these roles together at the same time, the demands of learning does not run as desired.	Feelingsaffect thedemands ofthe role, can not meet the demands ofvariousrolesat a time, manydemands ofthe role to beundertaken, the demands ofthe role committed in an unhappy situation or couse ofdeadline.	Demands ofthe rolecamealong,	A lot of activities and persons to take care of, many tasks to be done, and there are many task deadlines, unstable feeling interfere with the activity, there is things happen not like the way she want it to.
Copingtype	Make arrangements, schedule, prioritize tasks, delegate tasks, to sacrifice something, run the two roles at once, religious coping	Emotionalcontrol, positive thinking, give up something, determinepriority tasks, push yourself, shrink issues, run thetworolesat once	Negotiations, focus on one task, controlling your emotions, do not do anything, stop thinking about the problem, run the two roles at once, prioritize tasks, allowing up feeling sad and powerful at the moment not able to deal with the issue, the religious coping	Create a schedule, spare time, push herself, controlling her emotions,determinepriority tasks, religiouscoping.

Tabel 1: Summary of Informants characteristics

There are some similarities and also some differences found on the results of this study compared with Lazarus and Folkman's coping concept (1984). The results found that coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman still relevant in the current context but some part of the theory is not relevant to explain the phenomenon studied on this research.

No	Lazarus and Folkman's coping concept	Coping Based on Findings
1	Problem Focused Coping (Do when one considers that he can change the situation)	Problem Focused Coping (performed when there is a judgment that the problem can be solved immediately otherwise it will cause the unconfortable feeling and believed will cause a new problems)
	a. Planning the problem solving (collecting information, making decisions, planning the way to resolve conflicts)	a. Determine the tasks priority b. Make a schedule c. make arrangements d. Minimizing the problem e. Spend the spare time f. Focus on one task g. Running two roles at once
	a. Deniying the situation	-
	b. Seeking social support	a. Trying to negotiate b. Trying to delegate the tasks
2	Emotion-focused coping (Do when one considers that he can not change the situation)	Emotion-Focused Coping (performed when someone assesses the situation will get better and when she belives that her condition is not possible to resolve the problem directly)
	a. Make a distance to the problem or make a positive view (efforts to escape from the situation or making a positive outlook)	a. Trying to stay out of the problem b. Do nothing c. Positive thinking d. Forcing herself
	b. Escape or avoidance	-
	c. self-control (activity limitation or feeling and action regulation)	a. Trying to control the emotions
	d. Accept responsibility	-
	e. Re-assess the positive things (creating a positive sense of the situation for self-development, can be in the form of religiousness)	a. Religious coping (before or after the problem occurred)
	- -	a. To sacrifice something b. Let herself felt the sadness and powerless at the moment she notable to deal with problems

Table 2: Comparison of Lazarus and Folkman Coping with Coping based on research results

4. Discussion

Research outcomes showed that abundant activities needed to be conducted by informants raised conflicts due to time constraints. They find it difficult to manage their time in order to fulfill academic demands and other demands in other roles they are in-charge. Conflicts of roles arose due to pressures in one role affects other roles, such as work pressure (task to produce book) caused difficulties in concentrating on thesis production. These conflicts caused informants having difficulties in fulfilling academic demands as students, they thus conducted coping to deal with related problems along with academic demands.

Interview outcomes with informants did not show that there was conflict due to behavioral change. This is due to there was not much differences of behavioral changes among roles taken which put them in difficulties. Informant as lecturer needs to obey the rules in working place including obeying supervisor. This behavior is similar to the role of a wife to obey her husband; and as a student to obey rules of university.

The difference of this research with coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman is that this research does not show existence of reaction in form of opposing directly toward situation (in problem-focused coping). Informants preferred to solve the problems and get social supports from members of family or from supervisor in working environment. In emotion-focused coping, there is also no existence of reaction of escaping or avoiding and types of coping that refer to accepting responsibilities without any efforts made. Informants tends to regulate their emotion, trying to see positive meanings of problems, taking distance from problems, positive thinking, sacrificing something, and letting out their feelings of sadness and weakness.

This different finding from Lazarus and Folkman's coping theory may due to cultural factor in Eastern society, particularly of Javanese ethnic in Indonesia. Society in Indonesia, especially Javanese ethnic do not allow aggressive behaviors or damaging actions (opposing directly) as well as avoiding behaviors by using alcohol or daydreaming. Such behaviors are assumed as wrong and being less accepting the reality of "*narima*". Such behaviors are also assumed as not in accordance with religious values.

Religion-focused coping found in this research is beyond the concept of revaluing positive things as suggested by Lazarus and Folkman. In their religious concept, Lazarus and Folkman stated that it is a process to change the meaning and revaluing certain situation positively by referring to God's role when faced with problems or situations. Meanwhile, religion-focused coping in this research showed that the process of giving meaning towards certain thing is not merely occurred during the happening of an

undesirable event or existing of certain problems, but has occurred before problems arose. The behaviors of changing the meaning of an event by giving it positive meaning based on faith towards God also happened when a person experienced academic success as the will of God. This proves that informants possess the awareness of God's roles.

The concept of religion-focused coping in this research also differs from concept of religion-focused coping suggested by Pargament (1997). Pargament suggested that humankind is assumed able to take care of their problems and managed their lives without God. Humankind also can surrender their selves to God without any effort, also men and God can work together in dealing with problems. Meanwhile, this research showed that God has roles in determining success or failure of informants. Believes that God has power, will, and best choices for informants have become the value believed and internalized by informants. These religious values (believe on the power of God and destiny) possessed by informants and become foundation for them to conduct various activities and coping strategies, either problem-focused coping (generate schedules, decide priorities) or emotion-focused coping (emotion control).

The awareness of *darma* (duties of life) and efforts needed to be conducted in order to find one's destiny, and internalized believes of the power of God (destiny) do not make informants not give their best efforts in dealing with problems related to academic demands. In contradictory, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) stated that external locus of control (believes in destiny) could reduce the ability of problem-focused coping. This means that believe in destiny is not an external but an internal locus of control for informants.

Religion-focused coping in this research showed as a form of positive religion-focused coping. Informants do not see God's role from negative perspective towards tests and problems they faced. Informants see that belief in God make them become more compose and relax. They find it is not easy for them to become disappointed, sad, happy, or arrogant when what happened either according or not according to their expectations. According to their statements, informants always conduct various religion-related activities. Those show that informants have strong relationship with God. Such activities are *sholat* (ritual prayers and actions performed five times daily), fasting, and praying for Moslem informants and services in church for Christian informants.

Other differences found in this research if compared to coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman is that another coping strategy by sacrificing something that showed that there is willingness to leave something behind. Other coping strategy is by temporarily letting out sad feelings and weaknesses when informants found not able to face their problem. These two types of coping cannot be categorized into five coping types of problem-focused from Lazarus and Folkman as they have different concepts.

Shah and Thingujam (2008) stated that regulation of emotion as an important ability that serves as self-control as one of coping strategy. Coping strategy of regulation of emotion can be said as emotion regulation efforts conducted by a person when faced with stressful situation. Reivich and Shatté (2002) said that emotion regulation is the ability of a person to stay calm when under pressure. A person that has the ability to regulate emotion can control him/her self when in upset condition and can manage feelings of worry, sad, or anger, and thus can speed up the solution of the problem.

Besides being able to carry out activities in swiftly manner, a person's ability in regulating his/her emotion also enable him/her to handle tension. Gunby, Aultman and Schutz (2009) stated that regulating in an effort to change between good and bad valences happened to one with his/her environment as coping strategy and psychological defense mechanism. In regulation processes also exist emotion control in certain situation by stopping or regulate arose emotion before deciding to conduct actions towards certain event.

In Javanese culture, such feeling of understanding is called *mawas diri* (self-correction through introspection). According to Jatman (2011), *mawas diri* is being thorough with one's feeling: one's joy and sorrow, one's happiness and woes. *Mawas diri* helps informants to control their emotion. For example, X understands that she needs other people to help her in carrying out her roles as well as a shoulder to cry on in order to enable her to control and stabilize her emotions. NE understands that her activities are very much depended on her feelings' condition, thus she controls her emotions to be in steady and good mood.

Emotions experienced by informants showed that there is reciprocal relationship between coping and emotion. Reciprocal relationship between coping and emotion found in this research is not in accordance with the concept of coping and emotion of Lazarus'. Lazarus sees emotion as result of conducted coping. The reciprocal concept found in this research is more similar to concept of Folkman and Moskowitz (2003) who stated that coping and emotion affect each other. The research of Iwasaki (2001) also showed similar result.

Situation in which there is high social support can help a person in conducting problem-focused coping strategy, as found in informant EN who conducts more problem-focused coping strategy compared to emotion-focused coping strategy. Along with this finding, Frydenberg (2004) inferred earlier that coping is conducted based on one's judgment towards an event or interaction between a person and his/her situational factors.

Social supports also experience by informant EN, NE, S, and X. Social supports are also related to culture in societies of Indonesia, particularly in Javanese culture that obliged its society to live in harmony. Live together in perfect harmony expected by society make a person will exert to live harmoniously with other people and will offer helps when needed, as seen in family members of all informants who helps informants in carrying out their duties.

Resources of social supports coping are external, thus could change anytime (Lazarus, 1993). In this respect, social supports will affect type of coping conducted by a person.

According to Folkman and Lazarus (1980) coping can happen when there is a judgment of a person on situation and how it relates him/her with his/her environment. Problem-focused coping is an effort carried out by a person to deal with her academic demands in university in the form of cognitive or behavioral reactions triggered by a person's judgment upon factors (coping source) she has; a judgment that a problem can be handled directly, and a judgment that if the problem is not handled directly will cause a problem and a cost to feeling.

When a person judged the coping source, she has will enable her to handle the problem directly, then problem-focused coping will occur. A person's judgment towards existing social supports incurred problem-focused coping by determining priorities, conducting management, delegating duties and generating schedules. A person's judgment towards her health and energy incurred problem-

focused coping by determining priorities, spending leisure time with activities, and delegating duties. A person's judgment that thing will become better incurred coping by determining priorities, downsizing problem, playing two roles simultaneously, and generating schedules. A person's judgment that she can concentrate on working her tasks though condition of environment is not supporting incurred coping strategy focused on one task, and judgment that she can communicate her problems with other person made her conduct negotiation coping strategy.

Emotion-focused coping is an effort conducted to handle academic demands in forms of emotional responses both positively and negatively triggered by a person's judgment toward her coping sources, and a judgment that condition would become better, also judgment that her condition would not allow her to directly handle the problem.

When a person judged that coping source she has would not be able to help her to take care of existing problem directly, then she would conduct emotion-focused coping strategy. Judgment toward coping sources that caused emotion-focused coping strategy to incur was judgment towards health and energy which caused occurrence of coping strategy by sacrificing something, forcing self, doing nothing, and stop thinking about problem. Judgment that positive thing could happen caused incurrence of self-forcing coping strategy, positive thinking, emotion control, and letting out sad emotion and weaknesses when a person felt that she could not take care of the problem.

Religion-focused coping is the belief of power of God in determining success and failure when fulfilling academic demands. Religion-focused coping is related to a person's judgment on what has been determined by God is the best for her. Religion-focused coping believe that God's power exists when an event, either expected or unexpected, happened. Religion-focused coping also showed that power of God becomes the foundation for a person in conducting her activities, including coping strategy in dealing with academic demands such as generating schedules, determining priorities, and controlling emotion by having prior belief that that plans will run smoothly or not, and will succeed or not, are all according to God's will.

Further research is expected to more widely delineate the dynamics of coping strategies, particularly on individuals with Javanese background by considering problems' situation that can be changed and cannot be changed by individual, as well as various coping strategies available before deciding to conduct certain coping strategy.

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