

Religious Coping and Stres in Academic Context

Ulfiah Ulfiah, Andika Nur Farida and Sulasman Sulasman
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Jl. A.H. Nasution 105, Bandung, Indonesia
ulfiah@uinsgd.ac.id

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Abstract: This research was inspired from observing Arabic language students in UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung that used religious coping to relieve their stress. Most students said that religious coping that they used reduce their stress. However, few students claimed that coping strategy that they used was not able to reduce the stress that they encounter. This study was aimed at finding out if there is a correlation between religious coping and stress in Arabic education program UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. This study was a correlational study. Out of the 366 students of the population, the research took as many as 25% or 93 students as the research sample. The instrument in this study was religious coping scale adapted from Aflakseir and Coleman and stress scale adapted from Sarafino. The scales were using Likert scale for the measurement. And for the analysis, the data were computed using person's r . The pedagogical implications from this study are that the Arabic education students in UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung can choose an appropriate coping strategy that they can use to reduce their stress. So as to reduce the stress that they might have from different kinds of situations.

1 INTRODUCTION

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), stress is an internal condition caused by physical insistence from body or environmental and social conditions that are considered harmful, uncontrollable or too much for an individual to cope with. Further, Sarafino in Damayanti (2013) defined stress as a desperate feeling in handling social insistence so that it cause tense and inconvenient.

Every individual may encounter stress, including students. Students are individuals who continue their education to college with greater duties and responsibilities than the previous level of education. In college, individuals are required to be more mature in thinking and acting. University demands for students not only in academic achievement, but also students are required to contribute well to the professional matters later. In addition, students are also required to contribute to overcome the social problems that occur in their surroundings.

This demand is in contrast with the student situation, as a student with all limited social experiences. This causes the student fails to solve the problems experienced by himself. Students are having heavy college loads. Every day they must do the tasks assigned by the lecturer.

Even before graduating from the university, students are still experiencing conflicts in making thesis, such as material that is difficult to get and lecturers who are difficult to contact. Thus, from the beginning of the semester until the final semester the students faced situations that can make them stressed. This situation is experienced by most students with various problems and levels. Various problems that occur in the students make themselves distressed and complaining.

In the process, when a person experiences stress or pressure, he or she needs a proper coping mechanism. According to Sarafino and Smith (2011) Coping is a process whereby individuals attempt to regulate the perceived situation of which there is a gap between their effort and ability considered as the cause of a stressful situation. Coping refers to cognitive and behavioral efforts to master, reduce or manage the internal and / or external demands created by stressful situations (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

One of the things that plays an important role in managing stress is religion, because religion can provide individual direction / guidance, support, and hope, as well as on emotional support Pargament in Utami (2012) and Loewenthal in angraini (2014) says that a person under stress conditions arising from anxiety can use a religious coping strategy to reduce

the effects of stress within himself. Religious coping is an effort to understand and overcome stressful sources in life by doing various ways to strengthen individual relationships with God (Pargament et al., 2011).

Pargament in Angganantyo (2014) states that religious coping often occurs in critical situations experienced by a person such as an accident, death, critical illness and failure to achieve what is desired so that it can cause stressful effects. This is supported by Ellison's research by interviewing methods that find prayers used for coping, related issues and life crises that are too much to handle on their own (Pargament in Angganantyo, 2014).

Some research on religious coping among Muslim populations, such as Kesselring et al. in Siegel (1986) compared the use of religious coping between Egyptians and Sweden's. They reported that 92% of Egyptian patients with cancer expressed confidence that God would help them, in contrast to only 37% of Swedish patients suffering from the same disease. Similarly, Hussain and Cochrane in Aflakseir and Coleman (2011), in a study of Muslim women with depression, found that coping through religion was the most common strategy, in which women prayed for help and read many prayers and verses from the Qur'an specifically to seek protection from disease.

Furthermore, Dahlan's research in johan and Thodora (2011) divides the religious-focused coping into two parts, namely religious belief and religious behavior. Dahlan in johan and Thodora (2011) finds that religious-focused coping is always done by Indonesian subjects, when they encounter certain stressors. Therefore, this study also uses religious-focused as one type of coping which is likely to be selected by the sample, since the sample of this study is Indonesian. This research only focuses on religious-focused coping in the form of religious belief.

In the Qur'an it is explained that by remembering God the heart will be calm and serene, as in Ar-Ra'd verse 28.

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured."(QS. Ar-Ra'd: 28)

In line with the verses of the Qur'an, Rasulullah SAW also implies the condition of the believer, when faced with a failure or disaster. As mentioned in the hadith which means: "There is no hope and worry in

the heart of a believer except Allah Almighty and His Majesty gives him hope and secures him from fear" (HR. Thabrani).

Based on the explanation, the researcher is interested in doing more research about the relationship between religious coping with stress on Tarbiyah faculty students majoring in Arabic Education UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. The purpose of this study was to find out the relationship between religious coping and stress.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Religious Coping

According to Pargament et al. (2011) religious coping is an effort to understand and overcome stressful sources in life by doing various ways to strengthen individual relationships with God. Religious coping involves the use of cognitive or behavioral strategies based on beliefs or religious practices to help manage emotional stress or physical discomfort (Koenig in Aflakseir and Coleman, 2011).

Pargament in Angganantyo (2014) states that a religious coping strategy tends to be used when an individual want something that cannot be obtained from a human being, as he finds himself incapable of facing reality. Consequently, individual can divert his weakness to an infinite power in order to gain strength to overcome that reality (Angganantyo, 2014).

Pargament in his research identifies three strategies of religious coping, (1) self-directing (religious coping method by focusing and relying on oneself rather than God). Self-centeredness does not mean to forget God, only the intensity is different (2) deferring (more likely to suspend and pass it all to God passively), and (3) collaborative (a composite of self-directing and deferring where individuals and God become partners, individuals and God work actively together for problem solving). In addition to the three kinds of religious coping, there are two other patterns of religious coping, namely *positive religious coping* and *negative religious coping*.

However, in this study researchers used the theory of Religious coping of Pargaments that had been filtered and adapted for individuals with an understanding of Islamic religion by Aflakseir and Coleman (2011). There are three kinds and two patterns relevant to the concept of Islam, namely:

- *Religious practice (spiritual behaviors and actions such as prayer, du'a, dzikr, Qur'an recitation, fasting);*

- *Negative Feeling Toward God* (the individual has a negative prejudice to the god of the problem being experienced);
- *Benevolent Reappraisal* (reassessment of God-given issues with positive consideration);
- *Passive Religious coping* (more likely to suspend and pass it to God passively).

Active Religious Coping (looking for control through a cooperative relationship with God in problem solving).

2.2 Stress

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), Lovullo in Sarafino (2011) stress is a condition that is caused when a person's differences or environment are related to the individual, i.e. between the desired situation with the biological, psychological or social system of the individual.

Sarafino (in Damayanti) defines stress as a feeling of being unable to cope with various demands of the environment causing tension and discomfort.

Sources of stress can vary, in line with human development but stress conditions can also occur at any time throughout human life (Smet, 1994). Sarafino (2011) distinguishes sources of stress into three parts, namely:

2.2.1 The Sources of Stress Within a Person

Illness and age are sources of stress in a person. Where pain creates physical and psychological demands on stressful individuals. The body's ability to fight disease usually improves in childhood and declines in old age. In addition, for adults, the assessment of the disease usually includes current difficulties and concerns for the future, whereas for children only focus on the present.

Another thing that triggers stress is conflict. According to Miller in Sarafino (2011), the drivers and pullers of the conflict produce two opposite tendencies, namely approach and avoidance. This tendency generates the basic types of conflict (Sarafino, 2011):

- *Approach-approach Conflict*. It comes when we are attracted to two equally good goals;
- *Avoidance-avoidance Conflict*. It Appears when we have to choose two unpleasant situations. Sarafino (2011) explains that people usually try to delay or avoid the decision in avoiding this conflict. Therefore, usually avoidance-avoidance conflict is very difficult to solve;

- *Approach-avoidance Conflict*. It appears when we see interesting and unattractive conditions in a purpose or situation.

2.2.2 The Source of Stress in a Family

Sarafino (2011) explains that the behavior, needs, and personalities of each family member impact on interactions with people from other members of the family that sometimes cause stress. According to Sarafino (2011) factors from families that tend to allow the emergence of stress is the presence of new members, divorce and the existence of a sick family, disability, and death.

2.2.2 Stress Sources Within Communities

Contact with people outside the family provides many sources of stress. For example, children experience in school and competition. The existence of experiences related to work and also with the environment can cause a person to become stressed (Sarafino, 2011), such as extreme temperatures, noise, and stuck congestion (Smet, 1994).

3 METHODS

3.1 Research Approach and Instruments

This study belongs to quantitative study using correlational design. The respondents of the study are 366 students of Tarbiyah Faculty. Out of the population, 93 students were selected as the sample using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The population was stratified on the basis of academic year. There are four different academic years. The following table describes the distribution of the sample based on their academic year.

Table 1: The distribution of the respondents based on their academic year.

Academic Year / Semester	The number of respondents
Semester I	34
Semester III	20
Semester V	21
Semester VII	18
Total respondents	93

The data were obtained from two instruments; Religious coping and stress scale. Religious Coping scale was modified from similar scale originally

developed by Aflakseir and Coleman (2011) This scale consists of five indicators; Religious practice, Negative Feeling Toward God, Benevolent Reappraisal, Passive Religious coping, and Active Religious Coping. The stress scale was adapted from Sarafino (2011) covering four aspects: physical and Psychological aspects (cognition, emotion and behavior)

Before collecting the data, the two instruments were tested for their respective validity and reliability. The result is presented in the following table.

Table 2: Research Instrument Validity Index.

Instrument	The number of tested aspects	The number of valid aspects	Validity Index
Religious Coping Scale	5 Aspects	4 Aspects	0.295 – 0.853
Stress Scale	4 Aspects	4 Aspects	0.642 – 0.925

The table shows that 4 Religious Coping aspects are valid but the other aspect is not, it is in negative feeling toward god aspect. However, Since the four other aspects are valid and represent all aspects, religious coping aspects are deemed valid in measuring religious coping. Furthermore, the four aspects of stress are valid with the lowest validity index 0,642 and the highest 0,925.

After validity test, reliability test was also carried out and has resulted in the following results.

Table 3: Research Instrument Reliability Index.

Instrument	Alpha Coefficient
Religious Coping Scale	0.713
Stress Scale	0.741

Based on table 3, it was verified that the two instruments are reliable based on the Cronbach alpha requirement. This has led to a conclusion that the two instruments used in this research are valid and reliable

3.2 Data Collection Techniques

This study belongs to quantitative study using correlational design. The respondents of the study are 366 students of Tarbiyah Faculty.

Overall, the procedure of the research is divided into five stages: preparation stage, implementation stage (data retrieval), data processing stage, data analysis stage and final step (drawing conclusion and report writing). Prior to conducting the research, the researcher took care of the permit and asked permission at the research site,

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The implementation process is done by giving questionnaires to samples that have been specified as many as 93 students During data collection, the researcher experienced obstacle in the form of filling the questionnaire that is not in accordance with the number of items, so after some time the researcher reshared the questionnaire.

The data analysis used SPSS (*Statistical Program for Social Science*) version 17. The data analysis technique in quantitative almost always uses statistical computation. There are two types of statistical analyses in this research; descriptive and inferential. The data was analyzed using Pearson correlation to determine the correlation between the two observed variables.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data from the sample, it was revealed the following categorization:

Table 4: Respondent based on Religious coping.

Categories	Interval	Total Number	Percentage
Low	$X \leq 64$	15	16,1 %
Moderate	$64 \leq X \leq 77$	62	66,7 %
High	$X \leq 77$	16	17,2 %

Table 4 describes that the students with low religious coping are 15 students or only 16.1%, those with moderate religious coping are 62 students (66.7%) and those with high religious coping are 16 students (17,2%). It can be concluded that most students have moderate religious coping.

Table 5: The distribution of students based on Level of Stress.

Categories	Interval	Total Number	Percentage
Low	$X \leq 142$	12	12,9 %
Moderate	$142 \leq X \leq 185$	71	76,3 %
High	$X \leq 185$	10	10,8 %

Table 5 describes that the students with low stress level are 12 students (12.9%), those with moderate stress level are 71 students (76.3%) and those with high religious coping are 10 students (10,8%). It can be concluded that most students have moderate level of stress.

After the distributions had been identified, correlation analysis was carried out to find out the

correlation between the two variables. What follows in table 6 are the correlation test result.

Table 6: The correlation between Religious Coping and Stress.

Correlation Coefficient (r)	Analysis Indexes
Correlation Coefficient (r)	- 0,57
Determination Coefficient (r ²)	- 0,325
Confidence Level (α)	5% (0,05)

Based on the analysis, it was discovered the following results: $r = - 0,57$, $r_s^2 = - 0,325$, $\alpha = 0,05$, $N = 93$, $Pvalue = 0,587$. If $Pvalue \geq \alpha$, $0,587 \geq 0,05$, it means that H_0 is accepted and H_1 is rejected. This implies that there is no correlation between religious coping and stress in Arabic education students in UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

The result confirmed that there is no correlation between religious coping and stress in the students.

The finding of the study is expected to be beneficial for further research so as to the students have more effective coping strategies in attaining psychological well-being.

5 DISCUSSION

The result is in contrast with the existing theories. Wong, McDonald and Gorsuch in Utami (2012) say that religious coping is an individual way of using his belief in managing stress and problems in his life. In addition, Pargament et al. (2011) reveals that measurement of religious coping has proven to be a stronger predictor in the face of stressful situations.

In this case, the researcher considers the statements of some subjects stating that even though they already do religious coping especially on the religious practices aspect, they do not get the peace and remain anxious.

In Qur'an surah Ar-Ra'd: Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured." in Jalalain Tafsir the verse is translated as "those who believe and whose hearts are reassured find rest by God's remembrance that is by His promise of reward. Verily by God's remembrance are hearts reassured that is the hearts of the believers;

The tafsir emphasizes on the phrases those who believe. Iman literally means believing in something. Islamic scholars define iman as to believe with one's

heart, to confess with one's tongue and to demonstrate in one's physical actions. This is consistent with the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW saying that: Iman is to believe with one's heart, to confess with one's tongue and to demonstrate in one's physical actions (HR Thabrani). It is also explicitly stated in Al-Hujurat: 15 The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their properties and their lives in the cause of Allah. It is those who are the truthful.

The verse implies that Iman that will reassure one's heart. The faith and the submission to Allah is the key by believing that Allah controls everything and Allah provides solution for everything. When individuals have faith, they will feel calm and peaceful.

Abu Hurairah r.a said that one Rasulullah said: Pray to God, while you will be sure your prayers will be answered. Know that God does not grant prayers from a careless heart. (HR. Imam Ahmad).

The high degree of religious coping in students can be influenced by several factors, such as education, experience, environment, etc. Pargament suggests that the use of religious coping is unstable and may vary according to the level of stressors and life experiences (Angganantyo, 2014).

Several factors that can affect stress levels such as psychological resistance, where psychologically people with high psychological endurance tend to be more effective in dealing with stress. Ability to respond to the emergence of problems or conflicts is also a factor that affects the level of stress, weaker response in dealing with stress may cause heavier and more complicated stress. The gap between the expectations and limitations of one's ability also affects the level of one's stress. The bigger the gap between expectation and limited ability will be the greater the degree of stress faced (Anggraini, 2014).

6 CONCLUSIONS

The result confirmed that there is no correlation between religious coping and stress in the students of Arabic Education Department UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

The pedagogical implications from this study are that the Arabic education students in UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung can choose an appropriate coping strategy that they can use to reduce their stress. So as to reduce the stress that they might have from different kinds of situations. For the next researcher, in this research there are still many things

that have not been answered and need to be further researched. Therefore, if the researcher wants to examine the stress, it is recommended that the researcher does research on the appropriate specific conditions that describe the stress situation, and other researchers can also use the verses of the Qur'an as literature in making measuring instruments to conform to Islamic principles. In addition, other researchers can also conduct research with more population and similar stress levels.

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