



# STRESS COPING STRATEGIES OF STUDENTS THREATENED TO DROP OUT IN PREPARING THEIR THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

This article aims to find out the description of stress and how to cope with it for students preparing their theses at the Department of Biology Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah, and Teacher Training, State Islamic University Alauddin Makassar. This study employed a qualitative approach in the form of a case study. The participants comprised two students who had been at risk of dropping out (DO). Data collection encompassed observations, interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis, involving data reduction, presentation, and conclusion or verification. The results of the study describe the forms of stress experienced by students who are preparing their thesis in general, namely: (1) biological stress such as fatigue, body aches, headaches, difficulty sleeping, disturbed digestion due to irregular eating, changes in facial skin due to acne, and dullness from lack of rest; (2) psychological stress such as thought process disturbances, always avoiding people you know, being easily angry, sensitive, and always feeling tense and anxious. Meanwhile, the stress coping strategies used are emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping.

**Keywords:** Drop out; thesis preparation; coping strategies; stress; final-year students

## 1. INTRODUCTION

National education functions to develop capabilities and shape dignified national character and civilization in the context of educating the nation's life, aiming at developing the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God

Almighty, have a noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become a democratic and responsible citizen.

The thesis is the final task that must be completed by students, thesis is a scientific work that follows a scientific research procedure, which is made by undergraduate students (S1) as the forerunner of scholars (Mukhtar, 2013). Universities have rules for achieving graduation of undergraduate students who are required to complete the final thesis assignment, in accordance with the Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 60 of 1999 concerning higher education Chapter V article 16, namely the final examination of a study program for an undergraduate program, namely with a thesis exam. Likewise, the rules contained in the UIN Alauddin Makassar Education Guidebook.

The thesis is the final assignment of students in tertiary institutions that not only bring happiness but also have an impact on psychology. Many students feel haunted in the process so it creates its own stress and gives rise to various coping stresses (FJ Monks, 2001). Generally, students who are preparing their thesis show symptoms of stress, including many complaints, feeling confused, admitting that they have difficulty sleeping, and often even looking anxious (Aditama, 2017).

Some of the obstacles that students usually experience in working on their thesis are difficulty finding ideas or topics to be used as research, difficulty determining the references needed, making revisions many times, difficulty finding research data, many references to read, difficulty finding research samples, difficulties in writing words, difficulties in making introductions (chapter I), confused where to start writing, feelings of boredom, laziness, confusion because what the writer hopes for are not in accordance with expectations, thesis supervisors who are difficult to find, thesis advisors who ask for theories but the references were not found, parents' demands to finish their thesis as soon as possible, as well as other related problems such as lost data and broken computers.

Final-year students who are unable to deal with these various pressures will be prone to experiencing stress. According to Taylor (in Melly, 2008), stress is a condition of unpleasant feelings, tension, or pressure experienced by individuals. Research conducted by Hapsari (2004) reported that 45.3% of final-year students experienced stress while working on their thesis. Stress on students can reduce motivation and reduce concentration it can interfere with completing the thesis (Fadillah, 2013).

There have been various attempts made by students to complete their thesis, including by taking shortcuts and quickly through the thesis service bureaus and undergoing scheduled intensive guidance, but some did not last long undergoing guidance and ended up running away for several semesters (Results of the interview on

21 August 2017 at 11.00 on the UIN Alauddin Makassar campus, to be precise, the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training for students who are threatened with dropping out.

Various efforts both in the form of cognitive and behavioral efforts mentioned above are aimed at reducing, overcoming, or eliminating the thesis stressors that are felt as burdensome demands. The efforts or efforts of a person that are carried out continuously in order to overcome demands that are burdensome (Stressful) are referred to as coping. In the modern and postmodern era, understanding various coping stresses has brought fresh air for students in writing their thesis, which previously brought psychological pressure, but is now considered to be able to develop potential, intelligence, and self-awareness (Dela, 2019).

Based on the background and facts that have occurred mentioned in the background, the authors are interested in conducting research "Student Stress Coping Strategies Threatened to Drop Out in Writing Thesis for the Department of Biology Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training UIN Alauddin Makassar.

## **2. METHODS**

The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach, namely the data obtained is not touched by interpretation or various additions and subtractions. All symptoms as data are painted and explained as they are. In this study, a phenomenological research design was used. This approach is used to describe things that happen to the object of research by describing events that occur systematically by examining various kinds of local community activities (Idrus, 2009).

The data sources used in this research are: (1) Primary data is data obtained directly from the research location after conducting interviews and observing the problem objects to be studied. In this study, researchers will take participants, namely 2 Biology Education students at Alauddin State Islamic University Makassar who are threatened with dropping out (DO); (2) Secondary data is collected data obtained from library research, research reports, books, literature, and other sources related to the problem under study.

Data collection techniques are used and are basic techniques, namely: observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis uses descriptive qualitative which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### *Stress Level of Students Threatened to Drop Out in Compiling Thesis*

In compiling a thesis, it often gives a separate burden to students so that it can cause increased stress, especially for students who are almost dropping out. Participants said they felt tired, lethargic, exhausted and felt body aches because they had been working on their thesis for too long.

*"Ehh.. yang saya rasakan itu Rin lelah lesu dan capek Rin. sakit badanku". (P1)*

*"mmm... selama kerjaka skripsiku sakit badanku rin, mungkin karena capek berfikir capek karena kerjaka juga untuk biyai kuliahku karena tidak maumi orangtuaku biyaiika karena nabilang semester XIII (tiga belas) ma belumpa selesai-selesai." (P2).*

Participants also said they often experienced headaches when working on their thesis.

*"Iye sering sakit kepalaku karena tidak bisaka terlalu lama depan laptop. Iye saya kalau menatap layar laptop terlalu lama agak pusingka sakit kepalaku karna memang kadang tidak cocok sama layar laptop". (P1)*

*"Iye rin sering sakit kepalaku mungkin karena kurang tidurka karena kalau pulang kerja kusempatkan kerja skripsiku sedikit baru istirahatka. Susahka juga tidur rin karena banyak kufikirkan manapi skripsiku yang tidak selesai-selesai, biaya kuliahku, baru tinggal berapa bulan mami nadiDOma sakit kepalaku fikirki deh". (P2).*

Participants said that while writing the thesis, their appetite decreased because their mind was only focused on the thesis.

*"Iye rin berkurangki selera makan ku karna banyak pikiranka. Pikiranku itu itu fokus ke skripsi saja tidak ada yang lain-lain. Intinya selesai skripsi dulu.Ee iye meningkatkanki mungkin karna pengaruh cemas atau takut ini skripsi dipantul lagi." (P1)*

*"Selama ini menyusunka skripsi berkurang nafsu makanku karena lebih fokuska sama pekerjaan dan skripsiku, lapar betulpa lagi baru makanka". (P2)*

There was also a change in the participant's face because every night they had to stay up late working on their thesis so pimples started to appear.

*"Ee kalo perubahan rin semenjak saya mulai kerja skripsi kegagahan saya lebih bertambah. bercandaja rin. Jerawatji yang bermunculan". (P1)*

*"Iye berubahki kulitku jadi tambah hitam, cu'malak apalagi mukaku hancurmi jadi banyak jerawatku tambah jelekma kasian". (P2)*

In addition to biological stress, during the preparation of the thesis participants also experienced psychological stress. Participants said that while writing their thesis, their thinking processes were disrupted.

*"Eee dipikiranku itu toh rin satuji, bisajikah selesai ini skripsiku tepat waktu apalagi waktu juga agak sempitmi toh mauma di DO". (P1)*

*"Iye terganggu proses berfikirku rin jadi pelupaka, jadi sensitif sekaligus juga apalagi kalau ada tanya masalah skripsiku kayak naik tandukku kurasa. Hhahhaaa..."(P2)*

Furthermore, participants said their concentration and focus began to decrease because they felt burdened with the preparation of their thesis.

*"Baaa berkurang konsentrasi ku rin karena kayak terbebanika sama penyusunan skripsi ini". (P1)*

*"Hhahaahaha.. iye rin berkurang konsentrasiku kadang tidak fokuska. Di tempat kerjaku saja biasaka kayak orang dongo-dongo karena kebingunganka biasa nabilang teman kerjaku kenapa selaluki menghayal". (P2)*

In addition, participants sometimes get angry when they are asked about their thesis by their friends because according to them, working on a thesis is not as easy as they imagined.

*"Iye biasaka marah kalau ada yang tanya masalah skripsi dia kira mungkin itu gampang kerja skripsi nakira mungkin kayak makalah-makalah biasaji ternyata lebih rumitki skripsi dibanding tugas-tugas makalah yang kayak dibuat biasa, sensitifka memang kalau ditanya masalah skripsi". (P1)*

*"Selaluka menghindar kalau ketemuka teman-teman seangkatanta di kampus karena pasti skripsiji natanyakan". (P2).*

Participants also felt anxious and worried because their thesis was not finished and they were threatened with dropping out.

*"Eee cemas ia rin .. karena kalau tidak selesai skripsiku berarti tidak bisaka juga cepat diwisuda apalagi waktuku sekarang sempitmi mauma di DO". (P1)*

*"Cemas ia rin ka tinggal berapa bulan mami waktuku ini kerja skripsi mauma kodong di DO rin. Selaluka sedih rin, kalau sudahma lagi bimbingan sama dosen*

*pembimbingku baru masih banyak yang direvisi biasa muncul difikiranku untuk berhenti kuliah tapi kufikir lagi sia-sia selama ini waktuku kalau tidak selesaika. Kasian juga orangtuaku biyai kuliahku selama ini” (P2).*

### *Strategies for Dealing with Stress (coping stress) Students are Threatened with Drop Out in Compiling Thesis*

Coping stress is a form of action or effort carried out by an individual as a reaction to a stressful situation both from outside and from within him. The process of preparing a long thesis often makes students experience stress. Therefore, the inability to adapt desires to the reality that exists, both inside and outside the self, causing biological stress and psychological stress. Problem-oriented coping behavior (Problem-Focused Coping) and emotion-oriented coping behavior (Emotional-Focused Coping) were used as an alternative to finding stress solutions the participants.

#### 1. Problem-oriented coping behavior (Problem-Focused Coping)

The participant said that he always carefully considered several alternative solutions when he had a problem and always asked the opinion of people around him to solve his problem if he could not solve his problem.

*“Kalau pertimbangan iye harus. Kupertimbangkan sekali kalau lagi ada masalahku karena tidak selesai itu masalah kalau tidak dipertimbangkan dengan betul-betul bertambahji saja masalah jadi harus memang dipertimbangkan dulu. Iye selaluka minta pendapatnya orang di sekitarku rin untuk ada masalahku. Baik itu masalah skripsi maupun masalah lain yang tidak bisaka selesaikan sendiri. Biasanya mintaka pendapat sama teman-teman kelas, teman-teman dari jurusan lain juga biasa bantuka”. (P1)*

*“Iye selaluka pertimbangkan i rin.. Selaluka jugan minta pendapatnya teman-teman kalau ada masalahku yang tidak bisa kuselesaikan sendiri” (P2).*

Participants said they were very careful in deciding something, especially regarding the preparation of their thesis, and always asked for a solution if there was something they did not understand in the preparation of their thesis.

*“Alhamdulillah kalau persoalan mengambil keputusan saya sangat berhati-hati jangan sampai kedepannya salah lagi. Eee carika jalan keluar, tapi kalau tidak dapatka saya minta pendapat dari teman-teman bagaimana supaya cepat selesai ini masalah, minta sarankah atau pendapat-pendapat bagaimana cara menyelesaikan masalahku. Eee.. kalau itu saya selalu rin selaluka minta disemangati bagaimana supaya semangatka kerja skripsiku” (P1)*

*"Nassami rin hati-hatija dalam memutuskan sesuatu apalagi menyangkut masalah skripsiku, selaluka juga minta solusi sama orang di sekitarku rin, untuk tingkatan penyusunan skripsiku dan untuk mengatasi masalah-masalah yang kuhadapi" (P2).*

## 2. Emotion-oriented coping behavior (Emotional Focused Coping)

Participants said that if they had a problem, they often imagined being in a pleasant state when they got into trouble and they always went to a crowded place so they could relieve stress.

*"Iye rin selaluka membayangkan ada di posisi yang menyenangkan dan selaluka ke tempat yang ramai untuk refresing biar tidak terlalu pusing". (P1)*

*"Hhahahhaa... iye selaluka menghayal coba bisami cepat selesai skripsiku kasian dan secepatnya wisuda. " (P2)*

Furthermore, the participant said that he often blamed himself when there was a problem because he realized that problems could arise because of him. But from these problems, he can take the positive side and make it a lesson on how to solve problems and from these problems he will be more careful in doing something.

*"itumi selaluka salahkan diriku kalau ada masalah. Ada masalah karna ulahku sendiri juga. Menyesal begitu. begitumi mungkin karena terlalu meremehkanka skripsi itu yang saya jadikan bahan pelajaran untuk kedepannya. Sisi positif yang bisa saya ambil dari maslahku tidak bisaki pale anggap sepele apa-apa di. Apalagi mengenai skripsi ededede luar biasa. Dari adanya masalah yang kemarin-kemarin jadi selaluka hati-hati dalam kerjakan sesuatu rin apalagi skripsi. Haruski memang betul-betul bersungguh-sungguh dalam mengerjakan skripsi". (P1)*

*"Dulu begituka rin selaluka abaikan masalah kuliahku jarangka datang kuliah dan akhirnya beginimi belumpa selesai-selesai dan sekarang haruska kerja untuk dapat uang kuliah karena tidak maumi orangtuaku biayaika, menyesalka kurasa tidak aktif kuliah dulu rin, tapi sakitka juga dulu waktu semester V (lima)ki dioperasika kasian makanya jarangka masuk waktu semester V (lima). Tapi berubahma kodong tidak mauma abaikan masalahku sekecil apapun itu karena akan berdampak negatifji untuk saya, Jadi kutaui kalau tidak bisaki sepelekan hal kecil sekalipun karena akan berdampak dan berpengaruh untuk masa depanku." (P2).*

Students, especially final-year students, often face various obstacles when working on their thesis. Maritapiska (in Rafikasari, 2015) mentions some of these obstacles including difficulties in determining titles, getting references, the number of revisions from supervisors, limited research time, supervisors who are difficult to find, and others.

Sarafino and Smith (2012) divided stress into two aspects, namely biological aspects and psychological aspects. The biological aspect of stress is in the form of physical symptoms. Physical symptoms of stress experienced by individuals include headaches, sleep disturbances, digestive disorders, eating disorders, skin disorders, and excessive sweating. While the psychological aspect of stress is in the form of psychological symptoms including symptoms of cognition (thoughts) including impaired memory, attention, and concentration. Emotional symptoms that show symptoms of irritability, excessive anxiety about everything, feeling sad, and depression. As well as behavioral symptoms, where stressful conditions can affect daily behavior that tends to be negative, causing problems in interpersonal relationships.

Efforts used in controlling and dealing with stress are stress coping strategies. Coping is always followed by the word stress, which generally experts define as a stressful event that someone in a helpless state will have a negative impact, for example, dizziness, high blood pressure, irritability, sadness, difficulty concentrating, increased appetite, difficulty sleeping, or continue to smoke (Chandra, 2014). Stress is also associated with the stressor side (stress source). Stress in this case is described as a force that causes pressure within oneself, stress in this approach arises if the pressure faced exceeds the optimum limit (Fajar AS, 2016). In the interactionist approach, stress is defined by the transaction between external pressures and individual characteristics, which determines whether the pressure causes stress or not (Suharsono & Anwar, 2020). Thus coping with stress is an effort in the form of cognitive and behavior that is specifically carried out to manage the demands that cause stress.

The research conducted (Syakrina, 2017) says that final-year students can understand and manage stress well by using effective coping strategies, namely the type of problem-focused coping that focuses on problem-solving and gaining control over the situation when they feel stressed while working on their thesis rather than the type of emotional focused coping. In line with research (Kasimo, 2021) says that coping strategies affect the stress of students who are completing their thesis by 27.2%.

## **CONCLUSION**

Writing a thesis is a new experience that makes final students confused about what to do. Feelings of fear and worry arise that there will be problems with the supervisor and the fear of not being able to complete the thesis on time before they are dropped out. The forms of stress experienced by students who are preparing their thesis in general are biological stress such as fatigue, body aches, headaches, difficulty sleeping, disturbed digestion due to irregular eating, changes in facial skin due to acne, and dullness due to lack of rest. As well as psychological stress such as thought process disturbances, always avoiding people you know, irritability, sensitivity, and always feeling tense and anxious.



So it can be concluded that there are internal and external factors experienced by students in writing their thesis.

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