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Factors Shaping Problem-Focused Coping in Blind Students

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Abstrak

Mahasiswa tunanetra, seperti mahasiswa pada umumnya, menghadapi kesulitan dan persoalan dalam masa perkuliahan. Dalam proses penyelesaian permasalahan tentunya terdapat faktor pembentuk individu dalam mengambil sebuah keputusan dalam penyelesaian masalah. Penelitian ini berfokus pada faktor – faktor pembentuk problem focused coping mahasiswa tunanetra dengan kriteria responden yaitu mahasiswa tunanetra yang pernah mengalami suatu persoalan dan mampu menghadapinya.

Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara semistruktural bersama kedua subjek dan orang terdekat yang relevan. Hasil data penelitian dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis tematik. Penelitian mengungkap pembentukan coping dalam menyelesaikan masalah pada subyek dipengaruhi oleh dua hal yakni dua faktor yakni faktor individu dan lingkungan. Responden dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya faktor pembentuk coping yang baik dalam menghadapi permasalahan. Faktor individu berupa kesehatan mental, kepribadian, keterampilan dalam memecahkan masalah, serta kematangan emosional. Faktor lingkungan berupa dukungan sosial yang sangat penting bagi kedua subjek dalam menghadapi permasalahan yang ada, dan juga sistem budaya serta jenis kelamin yang dapat membedakan subjek dalam membentuk coping.

Kata Kunci: *Problem-Focused Coping, Blind Students*

Abstract

Blind students have difficulties and problems in class time just like other regular students. In the process of solving a problem, there is an individual forming factor in deciding solving the problem. This research focuses on the factor-forming problem-focused coping students with criteria respondents are students who have experienced a problem and can cope with it. Data is collected through semi-structured interviews with subjects and the closest relevant people. The results of the research data are analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. Research reveals that the formation of coping in solving problems in subjects is influenced by two things, namely two factors, namely individual and environmental factors. Respondents in this study indicated that there are factors that form good coping in dealing with problems. Individual factors include mental health, personality, problem-solving skills, and emotional maturity. Environmental factors in the form of social support are very important for both subjects in dealing with existing problems, and also cultural systems and gender which can differentiate subjects in forming coping.

Keywords: *Problem-Focused Coping, Blind Students*

INTRODUCTION

Getting a higher education is the dream of every child of the nation, one of which is being able to continue their education to college level so that they can be called a "university student". The dream of becoming a student is not only owned by non-disabled students but also by students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are usually called disabled students. There are several categories of disability such as hearing impairment, visual impairment, and physical impairment (Manar, 2015). The limitations of students with special needs can certainly impact the student interaction process during lectures. For example, students with visual impairments have obstacles in their sense of sight so they can not directly see their interaction partners and in lectures they also only rely on their hearing ability to digest learning material (Panjaitan, 2017). Furthermore, deaf-speech students with inability to speak or hear, therefore they could only rely on their vision ability when interacting or digesting lecture materials (Soeratman, 2017).

In the midst of the existing limitations and obstacles, their intention to pursue higher education and obtain a degree for blind people did not preclude them. For instance, Didi Tarsidi, mentioned in Aulia & Nurdibyanandaru (2020), is a fully blind person who was able to complete postgraduate education and successfully become a lecturer at IKIP Bandung. Not only that, in Aulia & Nurdibyanandaru (2020) it is also stated that a blind person named Mimi Mariani Lusli also managed to overcome her limitations, therefore she is now able to have a master's degree at Leed University and become a lecturer at Atmajaya

University. Mimi Mariani Lusli also succeeded in building a place that provides counseling services for children with special needs.

Blind students are the same as non-disabled students, they both have the opportunity to gain knowledge and develop their potential (Mir'atannisa, 2017). Non-disabled students in general experienced difficulties in terms of social interaction, in receiving and absorbing learning material, and in working on lecture assignments. These difficulties and problems can cause stress and academic burden (Dini, P. R., & Iswanto, A., 2019). Considering that non-disabled students can experience difficulties and problems during lectures, in general, blind students also experience difficulties and problems during the learning process. Disability means that blind students can not optimally absorb lecture lessons like other non-disabled students and can cause greater difficulties. Not only that, the negative stigma of society towards disabled students can cause these students to feel isolated from their environment (Nurul, 2021).

The results of the research stated in Aulia & Nurdibyanandaru (2020) show that blind students have positive effects such as feelings of happiness, pride and high optimism, but also have negative effects such as feelings of shame, sadness, and inferiority that arise as a result of acceptance factors, self-confidence, environmental support, self-disclosure, and environmental awareness.

Indirectly, blind students also experience a sense of lack of self-confidence. There is a possibility that some of the other non-disabled students will give bad words or pity when they look at disabled students. Therefore, the difficulties in interacting, the obligation to attend class, making assignments as requirements for passing exams and getting a degree are certainly quite draining for blind students' energy and mind. The coping strategy that can be used to overcome difficulties and burdens felt during the lecture period is a coping strategy in the problem focus coping category (Suardiantari, L.N., & Rustika, I.M., 2019).

According to Lazarus & Folkman, coping strategy is an action taken by an individual to reduce the negative effects that occur on that individual (in Vidyaputri, Y.X., Zefanya, N., & Hestyanti, Y.R., 2022). Lazarus and Folkman also define coping itself as an individual's effort to process internal and external demands that can burden the individual (in Vidyaputri, Y.X., Zefanya, N., & Hestyanti, Y.R., 2022). Meanwhile, Problem Focused Coping according to Carver et al., is an effort in the form of active coping, planning, and using instrumental support carried out by individuals to change and manage the environment that can cause stress (in Vidyaputri, Y. X., Zefanya, N., & Hestyanti, Y.R., 2022).

Raharjo & Prahara (2022) explained that students who have a high level of problem focused coping will easily find solutions to overcome problems. Apart from that, students can also minimize academic stress, such as good time management, good negotiations, the ability to collaborate or cooperate with colleagues, and minimize conflict between study and work. On the other hand, according to Tarwiyati (2013), students with low problem focused coping will more easily experience academic stress and will find it difficult to overcome their own problems. This is because of the lack of ability in time management and low ability in the process of formulating strategies to deal with doubts that can cause students to experience academic stress (Tarwiyati, 2013). In Ogma's research (2020) entitled "Problem Focused Coping Burnout In The Medical Student. The Case Of Selected Medical School In Kenya" which proves that problem focused coping is more often used in reducing learning difficulties and capable of reducing academic stress, whereas disabled students with low problem focused coping will more easily experience academic stress and will find it difficult to solve the problem themselves.

This aligns with disabled students at IAIN Salatiga who have good coping with the existence of obstacles. For example, responding to obstacles in the form of campus infrastructure that is not suitable for disabled students, namely the large number of stairs on campus to get to the 3rd floor. Based on the research results of Chairunnisa (2016) stated that the students overcome their problems by continuing to think positively regarding the existing obstacles and controlling themselves in responding to problems. So that in their education, the students are able to achieve both academic and non-academic achievements. The student succeeded in winning second place in a chess tournament at IAIN in Sulawesi and the student was also capable of getting good academic results while being a student at IAIN Salatiga in Palu, namely getting an academic GPA of 3.64.

Moreover, in research conducted by Perianto (2016) with blind student respondents at PGRI Yogyakarta University, it was explained that these respondents had difficulties in the form of crowded classroom conditions that make it difficult for respondents to listen to the explanations material presented by lecturers. So the response carried out by the respondent was asking directly to non-disabled students who were their classmates to get notes on the material presented by the lecturer. Perianto (2016) also stated in the results of his research that the respondents also experienced limitations in knowing campus facilities and finding the same form of assignments as non-disabled students, which made the respondents experience difficulties. So the respondent resolved this obstacle by asking

friends when he wanted to visit a place and asking for a companion while the exam was in progress.

How problem focused coping is formed is also determined by several factors that can influence the individual. As mentioned by Permadi & Lasmono (in Fadlan, 2019) which explains that PFC can be influenced by experience, intellectual ability, health, personality, education and situations that can cause stress or threats to individuals. Furthermore, according to Fadlan (2019), several factors have an impact on the process of selecting coping strategies, namely individual and social factors. The individual factors in question are related to age development, education level, gender, personality, emotional maturity, socio-economic status, mental health, and problem solving skills. Meanwhile, the social factors referred to by Fadlan (2019) are in the form of cultural systems and social support.

In the preliminary study, questions and answers were conducted with blind students who were also the subjects of this research. These students are people with a classification of visual impairment. Subjects R and Z are totally blind, both of them are students with disabilities who have a lot of achievements and are active in organizations. Apart from that, the high enthusiasm and good motivation possessed by subject R makes the author think about how they can solve problems so that they can become an outstanding and enthusiastic student. Meanwhile, subject Z is a student who has experienced verbal bullying and sexual harassment, so the author wants to know how Z can struggle amidst problems but can qualify to become an student organization participant.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research will use a case study approach method. Case study approach is a scientific research activity carried out in an intensive, detailed, and in-depth manner which relates to events that occur in individuals, groups, organizations and institutions to achieve the goal of being able to explore in-depth information related to unique events and issues, this uniqueness can be studied through a case study approach (Raharjo, 2017). Meanwhile, the relevant participants in this research were State University of Surabaya blind students. The two participants were Subject R and Subject Z, from two different faculty in State University of Surabaya.

The data collection technique that will be used in this research is using in-depth interview techniques. In-depth interviews according to Denzin & Lincoln (in Risna & Nurchayati, 2021) are a process of gathering information which is carried out freely, openly and in depth but still refers to the topic of the research. The interviews that researchers will

use are semi-structured. In this case, researchers will gain the advantage of using semi-structured interview techniques in the form of more flexible time in conducting the interview process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews conducted with each subject, it is known that both subjects are students with total visual impairment. Subject Z explained that he had been completely blind since childhood because of rubella virus infection and he had a prosthetic eyeball in one of his eyes.

Disabled students often experience difficulties or problems that can trigger stress or feelings of pressure within them during their university life. For instance, subject R explains that the lecture problem that becomes a stressor is when deadlines for college assignments and student organization are too close, this is accompanied by feelings of personal ambition that can be a pressure for subject R. This can be overcome by subject R by making notes related to the activity schedule. In contrast to subject Z, apart from the form of assignments being based on projects, he also experienced difficulties in getting groups during lectures because the assignments given by lecturers were mostly based on projects by forming groups.

As a blind student who has visual impairments, they naturally face difficulties when visiting new places, subject R certainly needs another individual to direct him to the place the subject is going. Subject R believes that when he experiences difficulty in finding an area on campus if he wants to try and walk, there will definitely be another individual who will direct him, even if he only shows a few directions.

Problems in college life are not only related to visual limitations of lecture material and assignments, but also related to how interactions occur between disabled students with non-disabled students and lecturers. This was mentioned by subject R who realized the importance of communicating with other individuals regarding disability conditions by introducing themselves and understanding to other individuals about visual impairment as a form of adaptation for subject R with other individuals. Apart from that, the way of communication used by subject R is a casual communication style in the form of jokes in the hope that he will be well accepted by his friends.

Likewise, subject Z explained that communication is very important, especially with lecturers when discussing the learning process. However, subject Z also said that he had communication problems with the research methodology lecturer who he thought did not

understand the condition of subject Z. Subject Z clarified the reason why he thought the lecturer did not understand him, especially when in the methodology course subject Z felt required to be able to get references that comply with the provisions given without helping subject Z to get them and the lecturer also has no intention to share ebook access with subject Z.

Difficulty in communicating was not only felt by subject Z with the lecturer who was teaching but also with other individuals. Subject Z explained indirectly that there were negative words about him which could damage his mentality. When there is a problem that is serious enough to put pressure on him, subject Z tends to bury it and do self-harm as a form of coping with his problem. Subject Z again explained the reason why he committed self-harm, namely that he experienced a lack of confidence in himself and others. When in a situation that is considered difficult, subject Z still has a tendency to keep trying by trying more to overcome the problem and believes that he must be able to help himself. Subject Z also explained that the most important thing in solving problems is to prepare mentally first. Because subject Z had experienced bad behavior where he felt that he was not accepted anywhere, which made him feel useless.

The existing problems subject Z made him want to be free from the burden of his thoughts. He also explained that he had been struggling with self-harm for the past 4 years, starting from 2020 until he realized he was experiencing PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). The self-harm that is referred to by subject Z is in the form of stabbing one of his hands with a needle and hitting his head against a wall.

The life experience in subject Z college life is indeed different from subject R, where subject Z has experienced several unpleasant incidents in the form of bullying and harassment. Subject Z said that he understood it naturally when he was doing KKN (Kuliah Kerja Nyata) or Community Service Learning activities. The perpetrator did the harassment on the subject by touching the buttocks area twice, with one of the perpetrators touching the subject's buttocks area using a stick.

Subject Z tried to solve the problem by defending himself in the hope that the people around him could help him, but the reality was not what Subject Z expected. When he complained, he was asked to remain silent and even asked to apologize to the perpetrator of the harassment. Regarding this problem, subject Z did not want to complain to the campus because he was afraid that there would be differences of opinion from the campus side. Things that revive subject Z's enthusiasm are writing, listening to music, and talking to individuals who are able to understand him emotionally.

In the midst of the problems and difficulties experienced by both of the subjects do not make their enthusiasm stop for becoming outstanding students despite their condition. They are active students who are able to achieve a multitude of achievements. Subject R is a disabled student who actively takes part in short story writing competitions. Subject R explained that while participating in the competition he managed to collect several certificates. He also explained that in participating in the competition he succeeded in becoming the favorite champion and now has a target of becoming at least the top three champion. Likewise, subject Z, a disabled student, won a music competition and took part in Students Creativity Program and passed the national level. Subject Z placed second in the radio star competition and would take part in the internal selection for the student arts fair.

There are two factors that can influence the coping selection process, namely individual and environmental factors (Fadlan, 2019). The individual factors that can influence the choice of coping strategies are based on research data, especially those that are related to mental health. The better the subject's mental condition, the more likely they are to make efforts as a form of coping than individuals with less good mental health conditions.

Through the results of the research data, it can be said that subject R's mental health condition is in good condition. In contrast to subject Z, he has a high level of anxiety so it can be said that he is not in a good mental condition. This is supported by significant other subject Z's statement which explains that subject Z's mental health range is at number 8 for his anxiety level. Being in a poor mental health condition makes Z choose to cope with self-harm or hurting himself. He realized that this was the wrong thing to do while he was experiencing a crisis of trust in anyone and thought he would never be heard by anyone.

Subject Z explained that he realized that he was not feeling well mentally. The subject said that he had been struggling with self-harm for the past 4 years. Subject Z said that as a child he experienced trauma, resulting in PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Apart from that, subject Z also said that he experienced unpleasant behavior while participating in KKN or Community Service Learning activities. Where subject Z received sexual harassment treatment carried out by a local from the place where the subject carried out Community Service Learning activities. When he received this treatment, he did not receive any assistance in voicing unpleasant treatment. The subject said that he tried to speak out to defend himself, but the party where the Community Service Learning

activities subject was located chose to ask subject Z to stop speaking up and apologize to the perpetrator of the sexual harassment on the grounds that the subject had hit the perpetrator with a stick. Feeling that there are no individuals on their side, the subject chooses to remain silent and do self-harm as coping to relieve stress. Subject Z thinks that self-harm can make him feel calm. In line with the results of research conducted by Asyafina & Salam (2022) on Pekanbaru students who carried out self-harm, it was explained that self-harm is a way that can bring calm and free oneself from the psychological feelings that are being experienced. What Subject Z did was similar to the participants in Aulia & Nurdibyanandaru's (2020) research, which revealed that the results of the research were that participants tried to overcome themselves when they were sad by listening to music and singing.

The next individual factor is personality. The subject's personality can differentiate the strategies that will be used in dealing with problems. Subject R is an individual with an extrovert personality. They easily mix with anyone, so they can easily ask for help from friends or other individuals when they are experiencing an obstacle. Meanwhile, subject Z is a flexible individual and does not like making to do lists.

Moreover, the factors that can influence coping in each subject are also determined by the subject's problem-solving skills. This involves the subject's ability to analyze something with the aim of being able to identify problems so that they can create alternative strategies (Fadlan, 2019). Based on the results of the interview data, subject R has skills in solving problems with an informal communication style. Where subject R chooses to carry out joke activities such as jokes or stand up comedy with the aim of being accepted in his circle of friends. In line with the explanation in research (Mir'atannisa, 2017) that blind students with their visual impairment make them continue to make more efforts to continue adapting to the campus environment, friends, lecturers, and in learning activities.

Furthermore, emotional maturity can also influence individuals in creating coping. Subject R has quite good emotional maturity because he is more likely to face existing problems by not being afraid to apologize first and choosing not to remember the bad words said by other individuals towards him. This is different from subject Z, who chooses to avoid something when he encounters something that makes him uncomfortable. This is in line with the explanation from Fadlan (2019) that individuals with emotional maturity will be oriented towards direct action, while individuals with low emotional maturity choose to calm down.

Subsequently, environmental factors. These environmental factors are related to social support, cultural systems, and gender (Fadlan, 2019). Based on the research results, social support was very influential for both subjects, considering the physical limitations in vision, which made the subjects have visual impairments, especially when encountering tasks in the form of pictures. In line with the research results of Aulia & Nurdibyanandaru (2020) which stated that the research participants had a minimum achievement index of 3.00, were able to test lecture learning and organizational activities on campus, and were also committed to graduating Bachelor's degree and had the desire to continue their education at master's level.

Regarding the cultural system, subject Z said that there are rules from nature in the form of good treatment that come from good behavior. In addition, based on the gender factor, based on research data, significant other subject Z said that subject Z is an individual who tends to use feelings in solving problems like women in general. As well as significant other subject R which explains that subject that subject R strives to be an individual who has a good career as a man should.

CONCLUSION

The results of the research data show factors that could influence subjects in taking strategies in solving problems, namely individual and environmental factors. Where individual factors include mental health, personality, problem-solving skills, and emotional maturity. The second subject has the same boundaries, that is totally blind, but there are differences between the two in terms of mental health and emotional maturity. Where subject R indicates that the subject is an individual who has a good level of mental and emotional health. This is different from subject Z, who has poor mental health and emotional maturity, so the coping carried out by subject Z is in the form of self-harm to relieve the stressors they are experiencing. As well as environmental factors in the form of social support which is very important for both subjects in dealing with existing problems, and also cultural systems and gender which can differentiate subjects in shaping the coping.

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