

## THE EFFECT OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND PROBLEMFOCUSED COPING ON STUDENT STRESS IN COMPLETING THESIS AT UISU (CASE STUDY OF 2021 STUDENTS OF MANAGEMENT STUDY PROGRAM, FEB)

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of interpersonal communication on student stress, to determine the effect of problem-focused coping on student stress, and to determine the effect of interpersonal communication and problem-focused coping on student stress in completing a thesis at UISU (Case Study of 2021 Students of the Management Study Program, FEB). The population used in this study was 112 students who were completing their thesis. Based on Slovin's calculation, the number of samples to be used in this study was 72 people. The data analysis techniques used in this study were by distributing questionnaires, interviews, document studies, and literature studies. The data analysis techniques used in this study were data quality testing, classical assumption testing, and hypothesis testing. Based on the results of the analysis and hypothesis testing, the results of the study are that Interpersonal Communication has a negative and significant effect on Student stress, Problem Focused Coping has a negative and significant effect on Student stress and Interpersonal Communication and Problem Focused Coping have a significant effect on Student Stress in completing the thesis at UISU (Case Study of Students of the 2021 FEB Management Study Program). The suggestion from this study is that students can better apply good Interpersonal communication in the future, both with family, friends, or supervisors. And also Students should focus more on problem solving and managing tasks rationally by managing time well. And for universities can offer training or workshops on stress management and the use of effective coping for students who are in the process of completing their thesis.

**Keywords:** *Interpersonal Communication, Problem Focused Coping, Student Stress*

### INTRODUCTION

Stress is the body's nonspecific response to any demands placed on it by its superiors. When a person experiencing stress experiences disruption to one or more bodily organs, preventing them from performing their job functions effectively, they are said to be experiencing distress. In stress, the symptoms experienced by sufferers are predominantly somatic (physical), but can also be accompanied by psychological symptoms. Not all forms of stress have negative connotations; many are positive, as stated by Selye (2015: 123). In the context of work or education, stress often develops into physical and psychological disorders that hinder an individual's ability to perform their duties effectively. If stress is not managed properly, it can turn into distress, negatively impacting physical and mental health. Stress in college students is often related to academic pressure, thesis completion, financial problems, and lack of social support. This disrupts their

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psychological well-being, ultimately affecting academic performance. According to some experts, stress doesn't always have a negative connotation. Hans Selye (2015) suggests that some types of stress are positive and can encourage individuals to be more productive. However, if the pressure is prolonged and not managed properly, it can lead to serious psychological problems, such as anxiety, depression, and fatigue. In this study, the primary focus is on the stress experienced by students during the thesis writing process, where various academic and social challenges often add to their mental burden. On the other hand, effective interpersonal communication plays a crucial role in reducing stress. Open, empathetic, and supportive communication between students and their supervisors can create a more supportive environment for completing their thesis. Poor or ineffective communication can lead to tension, miscommunication, and ultimately increase students' stress levels.

This study examines how interpersonal communication can affect students' stress levels during thesis writing, with the hope of providing insight into the importance of a good relationship between students and their supervisors. Furthermore, coping, or how individuals deal with stress, is also an important factor in this study. One coping strategy known to be effective is problem-focused coping, which involves a direct approach to solving problems. This strategy allows students to face existing problems, such as difficulties in writing a thesis, in a more rational and structured manner. By using problem-focused coping, students can more easily overcome the challenges they face, thereby reducing their perceived stress levels. This study aims to examine the influence of interpersonal communication and problem-focused coping on the stress levels experienced by students while writing their theses. Previous research has shown that good communication and effective coping strategies can reduce student stress levels. Therefore, this study focused on students in the Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Islamic University of North Sumatra (UISU), class of 2021, to further explore the influence of these two factors on their academic stress.

## THEORITICAL REVIEW

Interpersonal communication is a dynamic process in which two individuals exchange messages that influence each other's behavior. They explain that this communication occurs in direct interaction between two or more people, allowing them to build mutual understanding and develop social relationships. In this context, interpersonal communication focuses not only on the exchange of information but also on the reciprocal influence that forms deeper and more complex relationships (Littlejohn, 2021: 123). *Problem-focused coping* is an approach to dealing with stress that focuses on efforts to overcome or resolve the problem that is the source of the stress, by taking practical steps or direct action to change the difficult situation (Fitzpatrick J) (2014: 162). Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that problem-focused coping is a way or strategy to overcome problems or stressful situations by facing them directly and finding effective alternatives and not avoiding the problem. Student stress refers to the psychological experience that arises when students face situations that are perceived as threatening or challenging, where perceived demands (such as academic, social, or financial burdens) exceed their abilities or resources to deal with them (Lazarus et al., 2014: 30).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The location of this research was conducted at the Faculty of Economics and Business, UISU, Jl. Sisingamangaraja No. Kelurahan, Teladan Bar., Medan Kota District, Medan City, North Sumatra 2017, Telp: (+62)61-7869790, Email: [infokom@uisu.ac.id](mailto:infokom@uisu.ac.id). The objects used in this research are: namely the Influence of Interpersonal Communication and Problem Focused Coping on student stress in completing a thesis.

## DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

### Partial Test (t-Test)

According to Ghozali (2019:59), the t-test is used to determine the partial effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. If the significance value is  $<0.05$ , then there is an effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, so the hypothesis is accepted. Conversely, if the significance value is  $>0.05$ , then there is no effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, so the hypothesis is rejected.

The statistical t-test value will be compared with the t-table value with an error rate of  $\alpha = 5\%$ . The hypothesis used in this test is:

H<sub>0</sub>: The independent variables (interpersonal communication) do not have a significant partial influence on the dependent variable (student stress).

H<sub>a</sub>: The independent variables (Interpersonal Communication) have a significant partial influence on the dependent variable (student stress).

H<sub>0</sub>: The independent variables (Problem Focused Coping) do not have a significant partial influence on the dependent variable (student stress).

H<sub>a</sub>: The independent variables (Problem focused coping) have a significant partial influence on the dependent variable (student stress).

### Simultaneous Test (F)

The F-statistic test was conducted to see whether there was a positive or significant influence of the independent variables, namely interpersonal communication (X<sub>1</sub>), problem-focused coping (X<sub>2</sub>), on student stress as the dependent variable (Y). The F-statistic value will be compared with the F-table value with an error rate of  $\alpha = 5\%$ . The hypothesis used in this test is:

H<sub>0</sub> : Independent variables (Communication *interpersonal* and Problem focused coping) do not have a significant influence simultaneously on the dependent variable (student stress).

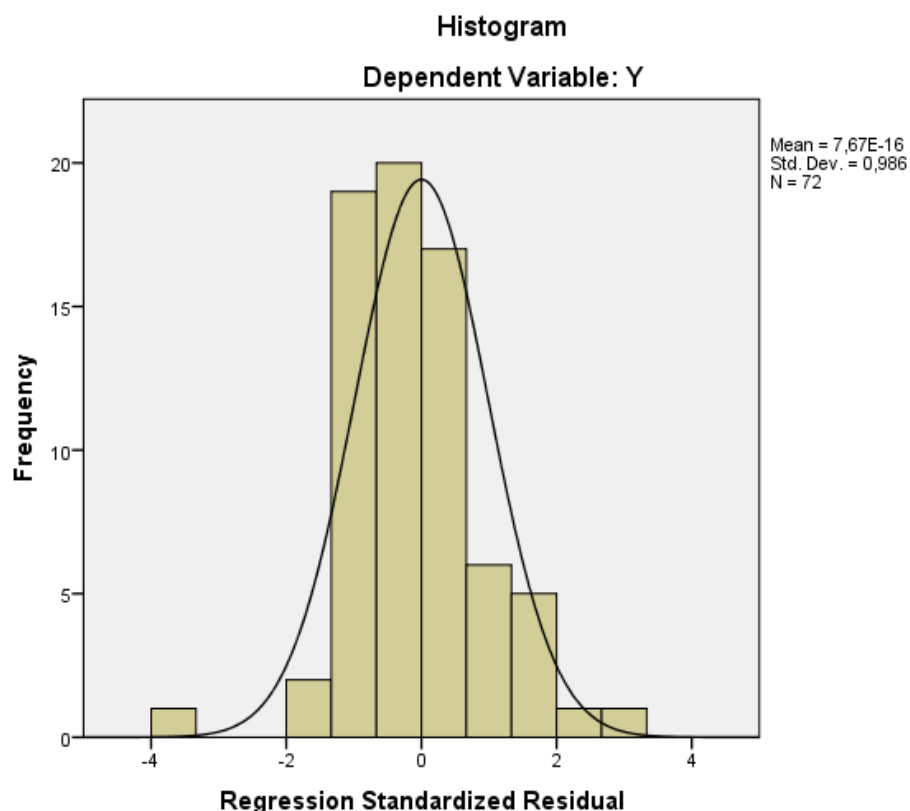
H<sub>a</sub> : The independent variables (interpersonal communication and problem focused coping) have a significant influence simultaneously on the dependent variable (student stress).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A population is the entire research subject; it is also the collection of all elements that select one or more attributes that are the objective. A population is a generalization area consisting of objects/subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and then conclusions drawn. To ensure that generalizations in research are not too broad, it is necessary to first determine the population (Sugiyono, 2013). The subjects used in this study were 112 students from the Management Study Program at the Islamic University of North Sumatra, class of 2021. The total sample taken was 72 students from the Management Study Program at the Islamic University of North Sumatra, class of 2021.

### Data Normality Test Results

Normality can be seen in the data distribution, namely in a histogram or a normal probability plot. In a histogram, data is said to be normally distributed if it has a bell-shaped shape. In a normal probability plot, data is considered normal if the points are distributed around a diagonal line and follow the direction of the diagonal line.



### Multicollinearity Test Results

To determine the presence or absence of multicollinearity, the tolerance and VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) values can be seen. A VIF value  $< 10$  indicates that the regression model is free from multicollinearity, while a tolerance value  $> 0.1$  (10%) indicates that the regression model is free from multicollinearity.

**Table 4 Multicollinearity Test**

| Variables                          | <i>Tolerance</i> | VIF   |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-------|
| Interpersonal Communication (X1)   | 0.290            | 5,742 |
| <i>Problem Focused Coping</i> (X2) | 0.290            | 5,742 |

Source: Processed data, 2025

In the Interpersonal Communication variable (X1), the tolerance value is 0.290 and this value is greater than 0.1 ( $0.290 > 0.1$ ) and the VIF value is 5.742 and this value is less than 10 ( $5.742 < 10$ ), so it can be said that the data is free from multicollinearity. In the Problem Focused Coping variable (X2), the tolerance value is 0.290 and this value is greater than 0.1 ( $0.290 > 0.1$ ) and the VIF value is 5.742 and this value is less than 10 ( $5.742 < 10$ ), so it can be said that the data is free from multicollinearity.

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## t-Test Results (Partial Test)

The t-test is used to determine the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable partially.

**Table 5.15 t-test**

|   | Model      | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig. |
|---|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
|   |            | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1,412                       | ,537       |                           | 2,627 | ,011 |
|   | X1         | ,373                        | ,132       | ,313                      | 2,828 | ,006 |
|   | X2         | ,297                        | ,096       | ,345                      | 3,109 | ,003 |

Source: Processed data, 2025

Based on the t-test results table above, the significance value of each variable can be seen. The significance value of the Interpersonal Communication variable (X1) is 0.006 and this value is less than 0.05 ( $0.006 < 0.05$ ), so the hypothesis is accepted, which means there is an influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Partially, Interpersonal Communication has a significant effect on Student Stress in completing the thesis at UISU Management Study Program, FEB class of 2021. Significance value of variables *Problem Focused Coping* (X2) is 0.003 and the value is less than 0.05 ( $0.003 < 0.05$ ) then the hypothesis is accepted, which means there is an influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Partially, Problem Focused Coping has a significant effect on Student Stress in completing the thesis at UISU Management Study Program, FEB class of 2021.

## Simultaneous Test (F Test)

The F-test is used to determine the effect of all independent variables on the dependent variable simultaneously. If the significance value is  $<0.05$ , then there is an effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable, and the hypothesis is accepted. Conversely, if the significance value is  $>0.05$ , then there is no effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable, and the hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 5.16 F Test**

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F      | Sig.  |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|-------|
| 1     | Regression | 10,232         | 2  | 5,116       | 15,514 | ,000b |
|       | Residual   | 22,754         | 69 | ,330        |        |       |
|       | Total      | 32,986         | 71 |             |        |       |

Source: Processed data, 2025

Based on the F-test results table above, the significance value of the variables can be seen simultaneously. The significance value of the variables Interpersonal Communication (X1) and Problem Focused Coping (X2) simultaneously is 0.000 and this value is less than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) so the hypothesis is accepted, which means there is an influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Simultaneously, Interpersonal Communication and Problem Focused Coping have a significant effect on Student Stress in completing the thesis at UISU Management Study Program, FEB class of 2021.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and hypothesis testing on the influence of Interpersonal Communication and problem-focused coping on student stress in completing their thesis at the Islamic University of North Sumatra, Management Study Program, FEB class of 2021, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Interpersonal communication has a significant influence on student stress in completing a thesis at the Islamic University of North Sumatra, Management Study Program, FEB class of 2021.
2. *Problem Focused Coping* has a significant effect on student stress in completing the thesis at the Islamic University of North Sumatra, Management Study Program, FEB class of 2021.
3. Interpersonal Communication and Problem Focused Coping have a significant influence on student stress in completing their thesis at the Islamic University of North Sumatra, Management Study Program, FEB class of 2021.

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