



## Problem-Focused Coping, Self-Efficacy, and Stress in Early Adults

**Rachmawati Nurfadillah**

Faculty of Psychology, Gunadarma University, Depok, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: [rachmawatinurfadillah15@gmail.com](mailto:rachmawatinurfadillah15@gmail.com)

**Abstract.** The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of problem-focused coping and self- efficacy on stress that occurs in the early adult phase. The participants of this study are 101 individuals who are in the early adult phase, namely 21-40 years old who live on the island of Java. This research design is cross sectional and non-experimental research. The measuring instruments used are DASS-21 to measure stress, GSES to measure Self-efficacy, and adaptation of The Way of Coping to measure Problem-Focused Coping. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. The results obtained in this study are the absence of the overall influence of the two variables, namely Problem-Focused Coping and Self- efficacy.

**Keywords:** Early Adulthood, Problem-Focused Coping, Self-Efficacy, Stress.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Humans are born and experience several phases of development where individuals have tasks that demand to be fulfilled. Starting from the prenatal period, infants, children, adolescents, adults, to the elderly. Each phase of development has a different task load and continues to change. Individuals who have succeeded in fulfilling developmental tasks in each phase will reach maturity so that they become mature individuals. However, if the individual is unable to go through the changes, then the individual will experience difficulties when entering early adulthood (Cahya, 2021).

Early adulthood according to Hurlock (2003) starts from the age of 18 years to the age of 40 years. In this phase individuals begin to experience many things in life, such as being trapped in daily activities so that life becomes empty, confused, meaningless and many demands from the surrounding environment. According to Hurlock (2003) early adulthood is a phase of adjustment to new patterns of life and new social expectations. Individuals in this phase are expected to play new roles such as breadwinner, husband/wife, and parent. This is in accordance with the census conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics (2020) which states that as many as 33.30% of individuals aged 19 years to 21 years are first married, so the problems that individuals face are adjusting to marriage relationships, responsibilities as a spouse, career advancement, and even becoming parents.

At this stage, the response that each individual raises can vary, some can overcome and some are difficult to get through. The inability of individuals to adjust to this makes individuals experience stress. According to Silverman, et al. (2010) Stress is the body's reaction to changes that require physical, psychological, and emotional responses, regulation, or adaptation. Stress can come from situations, conditions, thoughts, which cause frustration, anger, nervousness, and anxiety. Huffman, Vernoy, and Vernoy (2000) explain that there are 5 main factors that cause individuals to experience stress, including *life changes*, *chronic stressors*, *hassles*, *frustration*, and *conflict*. When individuals are stressed, they experience several physical and psychological symptoms. To deal with the stress that occurs, a strong drive is needed so that individuals can reduce or eliminate the stress, one of which is by *coping strategies*.

*Coping* according to Foley & Murphy (2015) is an effort made by individuals (behavioral and cognitive) to change their environment and manage their emotions in response to stressful situations. According to Brougham, Zail, Mendoza, & Miller (2009) *coping* is classified into two categories, namely *emotion focused coping* and *problem focused coping*. *Emotion focused coping* is concerned with expressing emotions and changing expectations, while *problem focused coping* is a conscious and direct approach to problems using behavioral activities, namely planning and action. Armajayanthi, Victoriana & Ayu (2017) explain *problem focused coping* is a condition when individuals use cognitive strategies in dealing with stress and try to solve it. Research conducted by Wulandari (2015) states that there is a positive relationship between *problem-focused coping* and stress in students. Besides having to have good *coping*, individual stress is related to the level of *self-efficacy*.

*Self-efficacy* is defined as an individual's belief in the ability to organize and perform actions aimed at achieving goals and trying to assess the level and strength in all activities (Bandura, 1997). The role of *self-efficacy* on stress is that individuals are able to provide positive values within themselves so that tasks become lighter and are maximally completed (Agung, 2013). As in research conducted by Yuningsih (2019) which states that the higher the *self-efficacy* of individuals, the higher the tolerance to stress. Individuals who have high *self-efficacy* will make greater efforts to overcome all difficulties and mobilize all cognitive resources, motivation, and plan what actions are needed to achieve the desired situation. *Self-efficacy*'s role as a cognitive mechanism gives rise to this control function in reacting to stress. Individuals who are confident in their self-control and can control stress effectively will avoid feelings of anxiety, but on the

contrary, if individuals are not sure of their self-control when facing problems, they tend to experience stress (Bandura, 1997). In difficult situations, individuals with low *self-efficacy* tend to give up easily and individuals with high *self-efficacy* will overcome the situation harder. This indicates that individuals with high *self-efficacy* make efforts and actions against the problems experienced, which means that these individuals use *problem-focused coping*.

This is supported by the results of research conducted by Wulansari & Desiningrum (2013), namely that there is a positive relationship between *self-efficacy* and *problem-focused coping* which shows that *problem-focused coping* in Madrasah Aliyah Islamic boarding school students of Al Burhan Hidayatullah Semarang is in the high category which indicates the subject in solving a problem that is a source of stress by taking direct action or increasing existing resources. Meanwhile, Sujono's research (2014) is that there is a positive relationship between *Self-efficacy* and *Problem-Focused Coping* in the thesis preparation process, which means that the higher the *Self-efficacy*, the higher the *Problem-Focused Coping* of students.

Previous studies related to stress in early adulthood have only targeted academic stress and work stress using *coping strategies*. Therefore, the difference between this study and previous studies is that this study discusses *coping strategies* that focus on *problem-focused coping* and *self-efficacy* in individuals who are in the early adult development phase who experience stress.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

### Participants

The participants in this study were 101 early adult individuals between 21-40 years old as the population and the sample used was adult individuals who experienced stress and lived on the island of Java. The *nonprobability sampling* technique used was *purposive sampling*. This questionnaire was distributed via *Google Form* from December 17, 2023 to December 23, 2023. This questionnaire contains *informed consent*, participant identity, and a number of scales from each variable. The participants in this study consisted of 21 men and 80 women. The average age of participants was 24 years old and the majority of participants were students.

### Design

This research is a quantitative research type. The research design used was *cross-sectional* and non-experimental.

## Measurement Tools

**Stress.** In this study stress was measured using the Indonesian version of the *Depression Anxiety Stress Scales 21* (DASS- 21) scale. This scale consists of 21 statement items, one example of this scale is "I find it difficult to rest" with a response range of 0-3. Witha =.918

**Problem-Focused Coping.** In this scale, the measuring instrument used is a modification of *The Way of Coping* measuring instrument by Folkman (1985). Taking the *problem-focused coping* dimension as many as 10 items. This measuring instrument is taken because it wants to see how individuals can cope with stress by focusing on problems. For example, the statement "I think about what I will say and do" with an answer response of 0 to 3 on each item. Each item describes the intensity of each statement, which is on a scale of "Very Infrequently (0)", "Infrequently (1)", "Often (2)", and "Very Often (3)". Each item is scored, starting from a score of 0 for the option "Very Not Often" to a score of 3 for the option "Very Often". Witha =.887

**Self-efficacy.** In this scale, it is measured using the Indonesian version of the *General Self Efficacy Scale* adapted by Novrianto, Marettih, and Wahyudi (2019) which totals 10 items. One example of this scale is "I can always solve difficult problems if I try hard" with the answer responses STS (Very Unsuitable), TS (Unsuitable), Neutral (N), CS (Quite Suitable), SS (Very Suitable). Witha =.869

## Analysis Technique

The main data analysis technique used in this research is multiple regression, which is a regression analysis method that involves the relationship of two independent variables (Sugiyono, 2012). The analysis stage carried out in this research is to perform multiple regression using IBM SPSS Version 29.

**Tabel 1. Model Summary**

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>	<i>Sig. F Change</i>
1	.118 <sup>a</sup>	.014	-.006	9.48224	.504

a. Predictors: (Constant), SE, PFC

**Tabel 2. Model Summary**

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>	<i>Sig. F Change</i>
1	.023 <sup>a</sup>	.001	-.010	9.49798	.820
2	.118 <sup>b</sup>	.014	-.006	9.48224	.252

a. Predictors: (Constant), PFC

b. Predictors: (Constant), PFC, SE

### 3. RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of hypothesis testing conducted with multiple regression analysis techniques show that there is no significant effect of *Problem-Focused Coping* and *Self- efficacy* on Stress.

**Tabel 3. ANOVA**

<i>Model</i>		<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1	Regression	2	.689	.504 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	97		
	Total	99		

a. Dependent Variable: Stress

b. Predictors: (Constant), PFC

c. Predictors: (Constant), PFC, SE

Judging from table 3 Anova above, it shows that the sig value. > 0.05, which means that there is no significant effect of *Problem- Focused Coping* and *Self-efficacy* on Stress.

### Discussion

Referring to the results of the research that has been conducted, it is known that the participants in this study totaled 101 individuals consisting of 80 women and 21 men with an average age of 24 years, the majority of whom were students. The results obtained in this study are the absence of the overall influence of the two variables, namely *Problem-Focused Coping* and *Self-efficacy*. This may be because there are other factors besides the two variables studied. a relaxed condition. this shows that most Gen Z use *emotion-focused coping* compared to *problem-focused coping*. This is in line with Putri and Mulia's research (2023) which says that generation Z uses *emotion-focused coping* strategies as an effort to adapt to problems that arise.

Research conducted by Wirawan, Saidi, & Kusumowidagdo (2022) on self- efficacy in generation Z in Surabaya in the perspective of therapeutic photography, explains that in general the problems experienced by Gen Z include: First, there is a fear of failure, uncertainty, over

*thinking*, *negative thinking*, low self-esteem, depressed, jealousy of others, and *body dysmorphia*. Second, lack of *self-control*, tendency to shut down, restrictive routines, task *overload*, and insomnia. Third, problems in the environment. Such as family pressure and demands, relationships between families, parents not giving good understanding, being compared and shamed, and social media. These three things cause a decrease in *self-efficacy* which indicates that generation Z has a low level of *self-efficacy* when individuals are in a phase of stress or even depression.

In overcoming the above, as a generation known as the internet generation, fluent in using applications, quickly accessing information, and very intensely communicating and interacting through social media, this generation needs motivation and social support obtained from their environment. Like the results of Suryani's research (2017), the social support received by Gen Z in using social media is emotional support and informational support. Forms of emotional support include comments and *like* symbols in every post on social media, while informational support is support in the form of information obtained from these posts.

In addition to motivation and social support through social media, Gen Z also needs this in their immediate environment, such as motivation and social support from family, partners, friends and relatives. Reporting from Kompasiana.com, Meitana (2023) explains that when a problem occurs and then there is encouragement or motivation from outside (other people) to deal with the problem, individuals can automatically feel warmth and help from outside to do something more calmly and enthusiastically. This is in line with the research of Sari, Lestari, & Yulianti (2016) which states that *social support* can reduce the stress experienced by a person. The concept of *social support* shows that there are parties who pay attention to individuals who are in a state of stress. Supported by Bart's (1994) statement which says that the factors that can change the experience of stress are: relationship with the social environment, *social support* received, and integration in social networks.

Thus, the characteristics of Gen Z, which is the internet generation, have *coping* strategies that mostly involve emotions in it, such as getting emotional social encouragement from the closest people and their environment.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The role of *Problem-Focused Coping* and *Self-efficacy* on stress was not found to have a significant effect overall. This may be due to other factors besides the two variables studied, namely the coping strategies used by participants with the majority of individuals aged 24 years and are in generation Z, tend to use *emotion-focused coping*, one of which is by complaining or complaining. In addition, in the participants of this study no significant influence of *self-efficacy* was found, this may be because participants need extrinsic motivation more than extrinsic motivation, namely the need for social support from the surrounding environment. Therefore, the researcher suggested to future researchers to pay attention to the characteristics of the majority of participants, and other things that were not examined in this study.

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