

# Correlational Model of Coping Strategy, Social Interaction, and Self-Adjustment

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**ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of the present study was to examine the correlational model between coping strategy, social interaction, and self-adjustment. This was categorized as a correlational study. 660 17-18 years old students from the public and private high school participated in this study. They were selected by using proportional sampling from the population of 128,288 students. The data were analyzed using Structural Equational Modeling (SEM). The result of the study showed that 1) social interaction was the intervening variable (mediation) of coping strategy and self-adjustment. Coping strategy significantly affect social interaction, social interaction significantly affect self-adjustment, and 2) Coping strategy directly associated with self-adjustment. It was found that coping strategy significantly affected self-adjustment. The result of this study can be used as a reference to construct a guidance and counseling program regarding coping strategy, social interaction, and self-adjustment since these three aspects may be the determining factors of students' success at school.*

Keywords: coping strategy, social interaction, self-adjustment

**INTRODUCTION**

Every individual has their own life problem. Their coping strategy determines whether or not they are capable of overcoming their problems. Both men and women need to possess coping strategy. There is no statistically significant difference regarding coping strategy and its association with gender (Caycho, 2016). However, coping strategy and consequence are different among the individuals due to age, although they possess the same source of work satisfaction and stress (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Besides, coping strategy relies on individuals' personality, perception,

and past experiences (Kwaah & Essilfie, 2017).

Coping strategy is a must-have aspect in all field. According to Welle and Graf (2011), coping strategy is urgently needed by the students to face burnout, unstable emotion, insomnia, and anxiety. Jiao, et al. (2013) argue that study in coping strategy and experiments in coping strategy affect the students' performance in criticizing article and research proposal assignments. Coping strategy is also required in teaching activity (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). For school counselor, coping strategy is required both in a small and big school, both in a big city or in

a rural area (Onoyase, 2015). Nursing students face a vast amount of pressure throughout their study, which affects their academic personality and performance. Accordingly, they need to possess coping strategy to overcome their personal and academic issues they face throughout their study (Yehia et al., 2016), even during their clinical training (Mahfouz & Alsahli, 2016). Giamos et al. (2017) add that coping strategy is also needed by new students to maintain their mental health regardless of the culture they experience on campus. Furthermore, Yayli (2017) finds that coping strategy is needed by new teachers who experience new learning process with students at school.

Coping strategies possessed by each individual affects their intra-personal and interpersonal life. Coban (2013) proposed the predictor of interpersonal rejection among the coping strategies, namely, avoidance, self-blame, and support-seeking. Accordingly, individuals should possess an effective coping strategy when interacting with others. As a social creature, social interaction skill is needed, even by children with autism spectrum disorder (Gardner, et al., 2014; Beach & Wendt, 2015). Even, in a classroom learning process, social interaction should exist since it can improve the assignment punctuality, involvement, motivation, and achievement (Saurino, et al., 2009).

Social interaction refers to a form of interaction between internal and external environment, which affect an individual's behavior (Penagos-Corzo et al., 2015). This indicates that within an individual, there are potentials that will be admitted when they meet other individuals through interaction. Social interaction can be performed directly or indirectly (Lárez, 2014; Uz & Cagiltay, 2015), through computer (Khlaif et al., 2017), and audiovisual mass media technology (Bahrani & Sim, 2012).

However, it should be noted that every individual possesses a different ability for social interaction. Belford (2017) argues that in order to support social interaction among the students from various countries, some pivotal attributes are needed. They are

cultural similarity, intercultural communication competence, intercultural companionship, and relational identity to affect their experience. A study shows that linguistic and cultural obstacle may interfere in social interaction among students (Li & Zizzi, 2016). The more social interaction is made, the more knowledge is obtained by individuals. Accordingly, they have a better ability to interact in the future (Patrick, 2014). And, social interaction requires a good coping strategy.

Coping strategy is also needed by individuals to adjust themselves to their surrounding. Donoghue et al. (2014) assert that coping strategy is needed when a student is bullied. It is needed because the victim of verbal and social intimidation in high schools may suffer from diseases, psychological stress, and self-maladjustment. Coping strategy the students used when they are intimidated may affect the possibility and the severity of this negative effect. Besides, the larger use of coping strategy, the higher acculturation stress, and fewer social support is associated with more depression and difficulties in cultural-social adjustment (Jackson et al., 2013). However, no study finds difference in self-adjustment between men and women ( $t = 1,142$ ;  $p = 0,253$ ). (Japar & Purwati, 2014).

Based on the description above, it is expected that there is a synergistic relationship between coping strategy, social interaction, and self-adjustment. This article describes the correlational model of coping strategy, social interaction, and self-adjustment. The result of this study can be used as a reference to construct a guidance and counseling program regarding coping strategy, social interaction, and self-adjustment since these three aspects may be the determining factors of students' success at school.

## **METHODS**

This was categorized as a correlational study. 660 17-18 years old students from the public and private high school participated in this study. They came from five locations in

the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Those locations were Yogyakarta city, Sleman Regency, Bantul Regency, Kulon Progo Regency, Gunung Kidul Regency. The respondents were selected by using proportional random sampling. Out of 128,288 students as population, with 1% of the level of significance, 660 respondents were selected, 480 respondents were from public school, and 180 respondents were from the private school, they were determined based on the formula proposed by Krejcie and Morgan. The data were analyzed using Structural Equational Modeling (SEM) with AMOS.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the analysis is shown in Figure 1.

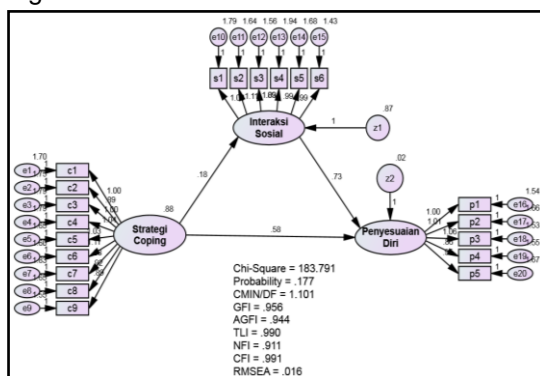


Figure 1. The result of Data analysis with Amos V.22

Figure 1 above shows that Goodness of Fit of the SEM model meet the criteria of Good since it satisfies the evaluation requirement (Chi-square  $\leq X^2$  table = 167;  $X^2$  significance probability  $\geq 0,05$ ; Relative  $X^2$  CMIN//DF  $\leq 2,00$ ; GFI/Goodness of Fit  $\geq 0,90$ ; AGFI/Adjust Goodness of Fit Index  $\geq 0,90$ ; TLI/Tucker-Lewis Index  $\geq 0,90$ ; NFI/Normated Fit Index  $\geq 0,90$ ; CFI/Comparative Fit Index  $\geq 0,90$ ; AND RMSEA/Root Mean Square Error of Approximation  $\leq 0,08$ ). All item are also reliable because each item' (c1 = 1.00, c2 = 0.888, c3 = 0.996, c4 = 1.045, c5 = 1.034, c6 = 1.114, c7 = 0.877, c8 = 0.915, c9 = 0.887; s1 = 1.000, s2 = 1.111, s3 = 1.025, s4 = 0.888, s5 = 0.985, s6 = 0.986; p1 = 1.000, p2

= 1.007, p3 = 1.059, p4 = 0.864, p5 = 949) estimate Standardized Regression Weights  $\geq 0.5$

In addition, it was found that: 1) Social interaction emerges as intervening variable (mediation) between the independent variable (coping strategy) and the dependent variable (self-adjustment). Coping strategy significantly affect social interaction by  $P = 0.008 \leq 0.05$ , and estimate value of 018. Social interaction significantly affect self-adjustment by P value of  $P = *** = 0.000 \leq 0.05$ , and estimate value of 0.73; and 2) coping strategy holds direct relationship with self-adjustment.. Coping strategy significantly affect self-adjustment by P value =  $*** = 0.000 \leq 0.05$ , and estimate value of 0.58. The estimate value shows that: 1) Coping strategy significantly affects social interaction by 18% and social interaction significantly affects self-adjustment by 73% and 2) coping strategy significantly affects self-adjustment by 58%.

In general, individual cannot be separated from problems. When an individual does not find a solution for his problems, it will result in a new problem, which is more complex and more challenging to overcome. In order to obtain a solution, an individual should possess a coping strategy. Frydenberg and Lewis (1993) argue that coping strategy is a cognitive and affective measure to improve responses toward certain phenomena. It also refers to an individual's response that covers cognitive or behavioral aspect to reduce or to diminish the psychological stress.

Coping strategy refers to an ability to self-regulate a problem. Coping refers to stress management, it can also be defined as a process to overcome stress, demands, and it is seen as an essential resource to help an individual maintain his psychological adaptation throughout the stress period (Majitha & Sajan, 2015). Coping strategy is a specific, psychologically or physically to control, to ignore, and to minimize an event that leads to stress (Cohen & Lazarus in Calvo-Novell, 2002; Lazarus, 1971; 1991). Moss and Schaefer (1993) state that coping strategy is a cognitive and behavioral attempt that is done to decrease stress and other emotional difficulties to maintain

psychosocial adaptation. Besides, coping strategy also refers to an action or belief which functions to assess and to change interpretation in order to survive a stressful situation (Aldwin & Revenson, 1987). Furthermore, Sarafino (1997) argues that coping strategy is a procedure of emotional response toward a stressful situation in order to remove unfavorable fact through a cognitive strategy.

Based on the experts' discussion above, it could be concluded that coping strategy is cognitive, affective, and behavioral measure. Coping strategy aims to adjust to or to adapt with a psychosocial conflict that culminates internally or externally in order to achieve balance and stress-free. In addition, coping strategy is also reported as a dynamic process of a thinking and behavioral pattern that is employed to overcome a stressful and tense situation (Stone & Neale, 1984). Mason (2017) states that coping strategy refers to an ability to react to stress and others, that should be started when an individual consider a situation as potentially threatening and dangerous.

Some individuals manage to compromise with their problems and survive their stressful environment. That strategy is performed to detach problems from a stressful situation (Lazarus, 1976). The strategy an individual selects will affect his reaction when facing the same problems in the future. Studies prove that individuals who can solve their problems properly, possess self-control, directing ability, control of desire (Carton, Nowicki, & Balsler, 1996), and stable emotion (Campos, Frankel, Camras, 2004; Greenberg, 2004; Planalp, 1999). In contrast, An individual with emotional strategy finds many hindrances and ends with new problems (Dodds, 1993).

A good coping strategy makes an individual feels peace in living his life. However, not all individual possesses it. This results in various impacts; some of them are a low academic performance, school dropout, addiction, and crime (Kwaah & Essilfie, 2017). Lawuo et al. (2015) argue that coping strategy is needed by the students who are affected by family problems due to marital conflict. These students face unfavorable academic achievement. They

are often angry. They experience sleep disorder, abused by their parents, deviant behavior, insufficient basic needs, bad medical treatment, sadness, and depression. Lawuo et al. add that there is a difference in terms of gender; it was found that female children experience more significant problems than male do. 47.3% of female experience abuse from their parents, 44.7% of the female with problems are crying and angry more often, also, 42.2% of them show a less favorable academic achievement than the male students (23.6%). In contrast, deviant behavior is reported to be found most in male children (36.8%). In addition, a weak coping strategy can cause adolescents to turn into an internet addict (Çevik, 2017).

The present study found that coping strategy can affect social interaction. Interaction is conceptually defined as the core of system approach and synergy, and give a substantial methodological significance (Gilemkhanova, 2016). Cave (1974) reveals that dynamic social interaction may develop affection, friendship, empathy, and mutual assistance in order to achieve a particular goal that has been agreed. This interaction involves formal and non-formal aspect. It establishes recognition or desire to be like other people. There is also a collaboration and learning each other ability in order to perform changes (Kochanska, 1992).

Social interaction is one of the individual's means to fulfill their needs. Social interaction refers to someone's ability in associating with one or more individuals where the related individuals affect, change, or improve each other behavior so that there is value crystallization (Craig, 1980; Berndt, 1992; Gerungan, 2000; Schuster & Ashburn, 1980; Walgito, 2001). In addition, social interaction also refers to a dynamic social relationship, including a personal or group relationship. (Sukanto, 2002). Mussen et al. (1984) argue that social interaction is a learning process to establish a peer relationship. In addition, social interaction is also a process where individuals maintain each other's behavior, develop each others' interest, and share each other problems or feeling. Furthermore, Gerungan (2004) reports that social interaction ability refers to

an ability that involves the relationship between two or more individuals to influence, to change, and to improve each other's behavior in order to achieve a certain purpose.

Based on the discussion above, it could be concluded that social interaction ability is an ability in establishing a dynamic social relationship. Social interaction ability contains cooperation, mutual learning, and mutual change for achieving a certain goal that has been agreed.

For adolescent students, social interaction is the key to be accepted by a group of friends. Along with their friends, an individual will gain social support that can be used to reinforce their psychological condition, which results in their ability in driving their impulses and behaviors (Bandura, 1986; Carver & Scheier, 2001; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Lin, Dean, & Ensel, 1986). In addition, social interaction will also help establish a stable emotion. (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1992; Eisenberg et al., 1996; Greenberg, 2004; Kendall, 2002; Lazarus, 1991). Social interaction can also be used to improve resilience and reduce pathological disorder (Bowlby, 1980; Sarason & Sarason, 1990).

Human is a part of a social system who are always active in organizing, building, and maintaining social activity (Bandura, 1986; Carey, 1998; Small, 1990; Wentzel, 1994). Therefore, in carrying out their duty as a human, individual need to possess a good self-adjustment ability. Self-adjustment is also a process that involves mental and behavioral aspect in facing internal or environmental demands in order to achieve balance (Schneiders, 1964).

In order to achieve balance, someone should be creative and good in manipulating the environment. This is consistent with the Calhoun and Acocella (1990) and Kendall (1991) who state that self-adjustment is a continuous response or interaction between oneself, other people, or environment creatively. There is also another notion that self-adjustment refers to someone's ability in adjusting and adhering to all regulation in the surrounding. In another study, it is reported that self-adjustment is a cognitive ability to solve a problem properly (Dodge, 1993;

Carey, 1998; Steinberg & Belsky, 1991) while Ahmadi (1991) stated that self-adjustment is an environmental condition that suits the individual.

Based on the discussion of the various definition above, it can be concluded that self-adjustment refers to someone's mental ability in fulfilling demands from themselves, other people, and the surroundings, it occurs continuously and creatively to achieve balance. Self-adjustment is someone's creativity and intelligence in manipulating their surroundings to achieve balance (Schneiders, 1964). Therefore, individuals who manage to adjust themselves are capable of solving a problem properly (Carey, 1998; Dodge, 1993; Steinberg & Belsky, 1991). In contrast, those who fail to perform self-adjustment find themselves in an emotional and aggressive situation. (Achenbach, 1995). Besides, they are anxious, delinquent, and antisocial, and they withdraw from society.

## CONCLUSION

The result of the study concludes the correlational model of coping strategy, social interaction, and self-adjustment. The model shows that coping strategy affect social interaction, social interaction affects self-adjustment, and coping strategy affect self-adjustment. The result of this study can be used as a reference to construct a guidance and counseling program regarding coping strategy, social interaction, and self-adjustment since these three aspects may be the determining factors of students' success at school.

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