

**The Correlation Among Academic Expectation Stress, Adaptive Coping
Strategies, and English Proficiency of Undergraduate Students in the
English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University**

A Thesis

by

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English Education Study Program

Language and Arts Education Department



FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

2024

APPROVAL

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DECLARATION

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Certify that thesis entitled "The Correlation Among Academic Expectation Stress, Adaptive Coping Strategies, and English Proficiency of Undergraduate Students in the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University " is my own work and did not have any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethics and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Palembang, 2024

Undersigned,



Omar Zidane Abdullah

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my cherished family: Abah, Mimi, Adek, Nyai, and my dearest friends. For your unwavering support and boundless love, I am forever grateful. Your encouragement has been my guiding light, illuminating the path to this achievement. Thank you for being my constant source of strength and inspiration.

MOTTOS

“Only one thing matters, one thing; to be able to dare!”

-Khabib "The Eagle" Nurmagomedov

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is intended to fulfil one of the prerequisites for the Undergraduate Degree (S1) in English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University. In the first place, the writer wishes to express his heartfelt gratitude to Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala, the Most Gracious and Merciful, for His blessings, mercy, and guidance that permitted this thesis to be completed. In finishing this thesis, the writer would like to express his heartfelt gratitude to:

First, Nova Lingga Pitaloka, S.Pd., M.Pd. as his advisor, who always helped, guided, and motivated him in finishing his thesis.

Second, the Dean of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Sriwijaya University (Dr. Hartono, M.A.), the Head of Language and Arts Education Department (Prof. Soni Mirizon, M.A., Ed.D.), the Coordinator of English Education Study Program (Eryansyah, M.A., Ph.D.), and all the lecturers and staff members of the English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University. All knowledge and experience that has been given are very useful for the writer.

Third, all research participants who have been willing to help the writer to collect data.

Fourth, all of writer's friends from Palembang class, who have accompanied the writer from the beginning to the end.

Fifth, dearest parents, brother, and grandmother who always care, gives strength, and never ending pray. Without them, the writer will never be reached this point of his life.

Last, Salsabila Adawiyah Ripa Syahirah who has helped, motivated, and inspired the writer to work on his thesis.

Palembang, 19 December 2024

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The Correlation Among Academic Expectation Stress, Adaptive Coping Strategies, and English Proficiency of Undergraduate Students in the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of academic expectation stress and adaptive coping strategies on the English proficiency of undergraduate students enrolled in the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. Using a quantitative correlational research design, data were collected from 191 students through the Academic Expectation Stress Inventory (AESI), Adaptive Coping Scale (ACS), and Universitas Sriwijaya English Proficiency Test (USEPT). Descriptive and inferential analyses revealed that the majority of participants experienced high levels of academic stress and demonstrated moderate coping abilities. However, most students were categorized as having lower-intermediate-level English proficiency. Correlation analyses indicated no significant relationships among academic expectation stress, adaptive coping strategies, and English proficiency. Furthermore, multiple correlation analysis showed that these variables do not significantly predict English proficiency outcomes. These findings underscore the complex interplay of psychological and educational factors affecting language learning. The study suggests the need for college students to address mental health issues, educators teach coping strategies for stress management, and future researchers investigate broader contexts and additional psychological factors to gain a better understanding of the relationship between academic stress, coping strategies, and English proficiency.

Keywords: academic expectation stress, adaptive coping strategies, English proficiency.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses four topics: (1) the study's background, (2) the research questions, (3) the research's objectives, and (4) the significance of the research.

1.1 Background

Mental health has received a great deal of attention in recent years. Among the numerous populations affected, college students have emerged as the main concern. According to Lipson et al. (2022), mental health issues have increased significantly among college students of all races and ethnicities in recent years, specifically from 2021 to 2013. The transition from high school to college results in significant changes in college students' lives. During this period, students face a variety of potentially stressful situations every day, which can have a negative impact on their academic performance and overall well-being (Freire et al., 2020). Stress has become a crucial part of students' academic lives. According to Samaha & Hawi (2016), Students frequently face high levels of academic stress due to increased workloads, which often occur alongside adaptations to new peers and lecturers, learning new material, entering the job market, distancing from family, reorganizing their curricula, and dealing with selective and demanding assessments

Academic stress is one of the most common types of stress that students experience. It is defined as a “psychological state of the individual generated by continuous social and personal pressure that produces a depletion of the individual’s reserves” (Khorasani et al., 2023). This type of stress is frequently cited as a major source of stress for adolescents, as they spend a significant portion of their time in school settings (Rukavina & Nikčević-Milković, 2017; Park et al., 2018; Hosseinkhani et al., 2019). Moreover, excessive or chronic stress decreases cognitive functioning, reduces attention and concentration, and disrupts memory processes (Girotti et al., 2017), all of which are essential for EFL learning (Taheri et al., 2019). In addition, according to Reddy et al. (2018), the only task that students are expected to complete is studying, which is never considered a burden. What proves stressful are parents' expectations of their children, which develop into a burden of responsibility greater than the students can handle.

One form of academic stress that students frequently encounter is academic expectation stress. This type of stress arises when students feel pressure to meet the high academic standards set by themselves, their parents, or their educational environment (Ilyosovna, 2020).

In addition to adjusting to unfamiliar university environments, many students experience self-doubt about whether they can meet the expectations of parents, friends, and themselves in terms of their education (Blimling & Miltenberger, 1981; Rogers et al., 2018). This is particularly evident in Asian countries where the values of hard work and devotion instilled by the Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) tradition which fostering the importance of education and academic achievement (Ho, 2020) and the high expectations of parents, teachers and students themselves often place enormous pressure on students (Tan & Yates, 2010; Xu et al., 2024). Furthermore, these expectations can lead to anxiety, self-doubt, and a diminished sense of well-being (Poots & Cassidy, 2020). In terms of language learning, the negative effects on academic success may create a vicious cycle, making it even harder for EFL learners to overcome challenges in learning English (Kao, 2024).

Although academic expectation stress is common among college students, it cannot be taken for granted. Students need to take actions that can reduce psychological stress and improve students' mental health (Hasanah et al., 2022). Coping strategies are essential as they help individuals mitigate the adverse effects of stressful situations by adjusting their thoughts, behaviors, or emotional responses (Jahara et al., 2022). Furthermore, coping has been shown to have an effect to reduce academic stress (Jahara et al., 2022). According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping involves managing external demands or challenges that are perceived as exceeding a person's resources, aiming to reduce psychological distress. In academic settings, students often adopt adaptive coping mechanisms to effectively manage the stress and challenges associated with their studies.

Students who employ adaptive coping strategies consciously challenge and reframe negative thoughts related to academic pressures. Instead of dwelling on self-defeating ideas, they replace them with more positive and constructive ones (Kao, 2024). By actively reshaping their thinking patterns, students can better manage their emotional reactions to academic stress, thus reducing anxiety and enhancing their resilience in the face of academic challenges. This mental shift enables them to approach academic demands with a more balanced and empowered mindset (Kao, 2024). By coping well with stress, students can maintain a clearer focus on their studies. In the context of English education students often encounter stress as they are required to achieve a high level of English proficiency. Moreover, Devi (2023), argues that college students, particularly those majoring in English or English Education, need a high level of English proficiency to understand subjects that are mostly offered in English. This emphasizes the relevance of adaptive coping methods in effectively managing academic stress

and improving English proficiency among undergraduate students enrolled in Sriwijaya University's English Education Study Program.

There have been previous similar studies investigating academic stress, coping mechanism and English proficiency. A study conducted by Kao (2024) found that academic stress had a significant negative impact on EFL students perceived English language abilities. In contrast, another study from Yogyakarta State University showed that while there was a relationship between some indicators of academic stress and coping strategies, there was no significant relationship with overall academic achievement (Basith et al., 2021). Moreover, the study conducted by Kao (2024) relied on self-report measures to assess the four variables (academic expectation stress, adaptive coping, and academic resilience on perceived English proficiency), giving the possibility of response bias. Additionally, previous research conducted by Kao (2024) in the Taiwanese tertiary educational context may limit the generalizability of the findings. Similarly, a study conducted by Basith et al. (2021) in Yogyakarta offers insights that may not be fully applicable to other regions. In short, exploring these connections in different educational settings across diverse learner groups will provide a clearer understanding of the factors contributing to academic stress, adaptive coping strategy, and its impacts to students' English proficiency (Kao, 2024; Haidar and Lestari, 2024; Hasanah et al., 2022).

The contradictory findings from Kao (2024) and Basith et al. (2021) highlight the importance of understanding how academic stress impacts various areas of academic performance, including English proficiency, which is an essential aspect of academic achievement. In addition, English proficiency was tested objectively, namely using the Universitas Sriwijaya English Proficiency Test (USEPT), rather than self-reporting, which will reduce bias in terms of English proficiency. Furthermore, this study seeks to investigate the broader connections among academic stress, adaptive coping strategies, and English proficiency across college students, particularly in the Palembang context. This study, **“The Influence of Academic Expectation Stress and Adaptive Coping Strategy on English Proficiency of Undergraduate Students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University”**, attempts to fill this gap. Lastly, this study attempts to provide deeper insights into how Academic Expectation Stress and Adaptive Coping Strategy affect English Proficiency.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Three research questions emerge, aiming to explore further into the relationship between academic stress, adaptive coping strategies, and English proficiency on Students' English Proficiency.

1. Is there a significant correlation between academic expectation stress and students' English proficiency?
2. Is there a significant correlation between adaptive coping strategies and students' English proficiency?
3. Is there a significant correlation among academic expectation stress, adaptive coping strategies, and English proficiency?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

Building on the research questions, the objectives of this study are to:

1. To investigate the correlation between academic expectation stress and students' English proficiency.
2. To investigate the correlation between adaptive coping strategies and students' English proficiency.
3. To investigate the correlation among academic expectation stress, adaptive coping strategies, and English proficiency

1.4 Significance

The significance for students, lecturers, and future researchers includes the following:

For students, understanding the correlation between academic expectation stress and adaptive coping strategies on students' English proficiency is essential for enhancing students' ability to manage stress effectively. This can lead to better stress management and improved academic performance. Specifically, in the context of English proficiency, students who manage stress well are likely to perform better in language learning. Effective stress management not only benefits academic performance but also contributes to overall well-being, creating a more balanced university experience.

For lecturers, insights from this research can provide valuable information to lecturers about the academic stressors their students encounter and the critical role of fostering adaptive coping strategies. By understanding these stressors and supporting effective coping mechanisms, lecturers can create a more supportive learning environment that enhances

students' overall learning experiences and academic outcomes. Implementing strategies to help students manage stress effectively can lead to improved performance, particularly in challenging subjects like English, and contribute to students' well-being and academic success.

For Future Researchers, this study enriches the understanding of how academic expectation stress and adaptive coping strategies interact to influence English proficiency among undergraduate students. The findings can serve as a foundation for future researchers to explore these variables in different contexts, such as across various disciplines, cultural backgrounds, or educational levels. Moreover, the study's outcomes could inform future research on institutional policies and curricular designs that support students in managing academic expectations while fostering their academic and personal growth.

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