

# **Stress Level and Coping Strategies Among Nursing Students Engaged in Student Union**

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## **Abstract**

Extracurricular activities or student union is a means for students to develop their interests, talents, and potentials. Student involvement in the student union can cause stress such as pressure to accomplish tasks and responsibilities within the limited time period, besides stressors from curricular tasks. Aim of this study was to describe stress and coping strategies Among students engaged in student union. This study used a cross-sectional descriptive method using accidental sampling Consist of 87 respondents. Data Collected used DASS stress levels and Brief COPE for coping strategies. Result Showed that most of respondents experience stress in a normal stress level by 44.8%. Religious was the highest average value (6:06) of coping strategies used by students. Its needed for student engaged in student union to learn and practice effective coping strategies to deal with high stressors as multiple tasking student.

**Keywords:** Level of Stress, Coping Strategies, Student Union

## **Purpose**

This Study Aimed to know stress level and coping strategies used by students engaged in the student Body/ union.

## **Background**

Student has important role as an agent of change with their talent and capabilities in directing better condition of the nation (Ahmad, 2014). These can be developed by engaging in the student union. Activities in the student union has positive impact by increasing knowledge beside academic standards, allowing them to practice effective time management, increasing emotional quotient, and enhancing soft skills capabilities.

Beside its positive side, involmment in student union also can cause least time to accomplish academic tasks and decreases of learning motivation (Govaerst & Gregoire, 2004). Academic load it self already a stressor for students, it wil be multiplied for students engaged in student union activities. Nursing student received more load of study than other subject student, especially obligation to accomplish clinical practice tasks is one of the subject which can lead stress for them (Liu, Gu, Wong, Luo, Chan, 2014; Khater, Akhu-Zaheya, Shaban, 2014). These stress lead them to develop and practice coping mechanisme. Study describes student's coping in facing stressful situations during following competency-based curriculum learning is listening music, sleep, and walking around. Coping selected and practiced included emotional focused coping ie

avoidance coping meaning escape from an unpleasant situation by concerning themselves to other activities, such as listening music, singing, sleeping, and walking around (Dayfiventy & Nurhidayah, 2012).

### Design

This research uses descriptive quantitative method used cross-sectional study design.

### Method

Population in this study is student who engaged in one of the student union in School of Nursing Universitas Diponegoro. Sampling techniques with accidental sampling, respondents who took part of the organization that are in Semarang by 87 respondents. Stress levels measured by DASS, while coping strategies used the Brief Cope questionnaire.

### Result

**Table 4.1 Distribution of Demographic Data of Student Engaged in One of Student Union of School of Nursing Universitas Diponegoro, 2014 (n = 87)**

No	Demographic Data	Frequency	(%)
1	Age		
	17-19	61	70.1
	20-21	26	29.9
2	Gender		
	Male	10	11.5
	Female	77	88.5
3	Semester		
	8	3	3.4
	6	24	27.6
	4	30	34.5
	2	30	34.5
4	Length of engaging in the student union		
	≤ 1 year	57	65.5
	> 1 year	30	34.5

Table 1. showed that of 87 respondents, the largest percentage characteristics of student in this study were 17-19 years consist of 61 student (70.1%), female 77 student (88.5%), four and two semesters were 30 student (34.5%), length of engaged with student union by ≤ 1 year were 57 students (65.5%).

**Table 4.2. Distribution of Stress Levels among Students Engaged in One of Student Union of School of Nursing Universitas Diponegoro, 2014 (n = 87)**

Stress	Frequency	Percentage
Normal	39	44.8
Light	19	21.8
Medium	22	25.3
Hard	6	6.9
Severe	1	1.1
Total	87	100.0

Table 2. indicates stress level of students were 44.8% of respondents experienced normal stress levels.

**Table 3. Distribution of Coping Strategies among Students Engaged in One of Student Union of School of Nursing Universitas Diponegoro, 2014 (n = 87)**

<b>Coping Strategies</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Religion	6.06	1.466	3	8
Self Distraction	5.63	1.080	4	8
Use of emotional support	5.52	1.328	3	8
Use of instrumental Support	5.49	1.256	3	8
Acceptance	5.48	1.219	3	8
Active Coping	5.44	1,227	3	8
Planning	5.3	0.954	3	8
positive Reframing	5.18	1,377	2	8
Self blame	4.67	1,291	2	8
Venting	4.66	1,189	2	8
Humor	4.06	1,124	2	7
Behavioral disengagement	3.68	1,334	2	6
Denial	3.37	1,163	2	6

Table 4. showed that the highest average value of coping strategies is religion coping consist of 6.06 and the lowest average is Denial coping consist of 3:37

The average age of students respondents was 17-19 years consist 61 students. Age related to one's experience facing wide variety of stressors, ability to utilize support sources and better skills to manage stress (Stuart & Laraia, 2005). Study by Furryanto (2012) show that among teenagers generally age didnt corelate with different uses of coping strategies if they were at same educational level. Most of students engaged in student union were female. Level of stress occurs among female tends to be higher than in men, it is because female more often used task-oriented coping mechanisms, so they more easily identify if being in stress conditions. While male tend to use ego oriented, so they are is more relaxed when facing stressor (Baldwin, 2002). Most of students were in semester four and two. Study showed that students whether in semesters two or four, none of them are resistant to stress, eventhough semester four students less experienced stressor than two (Muhammad, 2011).

Study result showed that most of student engaged in student union (44.8%) were at normal, 25,3 % light, 21,8 % medium, 6,9% severe stress, and only 1.1% at severe stress level. These congruent with Behere, Yadaf, and Behere (2011) findings among general nursing student in India, most of them experienced normal stres level. Whereas Labrague (2013) found most of nursing student in Philippine experienced moderate level of stress. Normal stress experienced by every person and become inseparable part in life, stress makes them think and strive to solve a problem or challenge in life as a form of adaptation response. Stress level of students affected by various conditions including the demands of academic life, socialization and adjustment to fellow students, developing talents and interests through non-academic activities such as follow student union activities (Furryanto, 2012). Both academic and clinical tasks may become stressors for nursing student

(Liu, Gu, Wong, Luo, Chan, 2014; Pulido-Martos, Augusto-Landa, Lopez-Zafra, 2011). In clinical setting 47,82 % nursing student had stress level above mean related to assignment, patient care, nursing staff and teachers (Khater, Akhu-Zaheya, Shaban, 2014). Activities in student union may increase stressors even though in this study in majority still at normal level.

The sequence of coping strategies used by student were Religion, Self Distraction, Use of emotional support, Use of instrumental Support, Acceptance, Active Coping, Planning, positive Reframing, Self blame, Venting, Humor, Behavioral disengagement, and Denial. Kumar and Nancy (2011) found the same that most of coping strategies used by nursing student was positive coping but with different order with the most common coping strategy used was seeking diversion and the least used is seeking professional support. Khater, Akhu-Zaheya, and Shaban (2014) also found that most of coping strategies used by nursing student in clinical setting was positive i.e problem solving.

Engagement in student union should be recommended for nursing student because of its positive impact, even though it may increase level of stress. This is not significantly related to the output of the academic result. Study by Febriana, Betie, Amriyatun, Winanti and Amelia (2013) showed that there is no differences of grade point between student engaged in student union and who not engaged.

Study results showed that the most coping strategies used was Religion with average value by 6.06. According to Pargament religious coping is an attempt to understand and tackle the sources of stress in life by performing a variety of ways to strengthen the individual's relationship with God. Furthermore, Pargament explained that the diversity of religious coping viewed by individuals, situations and cultures that make up the various religious coping. Students who have religious coping has a low level of stress. Individuals who have a religious coping will make efforts to demonstrate the expression of spirituality and strengthen spiritual ties. It is due to the belief that there is meaning in individual lives as God's creatures, so individual will tend to strengthen his relationship with God. While individual spiritual relationship to others include support spiritual derived from the environment, which it will impact on the response in the face of stressful situations. Individuals who have a positive religious coping will have a positive impact also on his relationship with God and his relationship with environment. (Pargament, 2011). While denial coping is at last sequence coping used. Denial is a condition in which individuals reject the existing problems assuming as if an individual problem does not exist, meaning that individual ignores the faced problems (Sarafino, 2006).

### **Conclusions**

Most of student who engaged in student union were in normal stress level and most of coping strategies used was religious coping, and the least was denial. Student should wisely decide to engage in student select and practiced effective coping mechanisms to deal with academic and extracurricular stressors.

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