PROBLEMS, STRESS, SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND COPING STRATEGIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: CASE OF INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

Covid-19 has an impact on various areas of life in all walks of life. This condition also has an impact on students, especially in their education. This study aimed to analyze the effect of problems, stress levels, and social support on the coping strategies of international students in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study used a cross-sectional design with a quantitative approach—data were collected for two months, June-July 2020. The sample of this study was 88 foreign nationals who studied in Indonesia during the Covid-19 period. Findings, students had difficulty taking distance lectures because of weak signals and limited internet quota. Coping strategies used by this research sample in dealing with problems were spiritual support and rebuilding communication with family and friends online. The primary support in solving problems was family, especially parents. More than half of students fell into an average level of stress. The regression test results showed that income had a significant positive effect on coping strategies. This research implication suggests that the findings can be used to understand problems, stress levels, and coping strategies carried out by students during the Covid-19 pandemic to help stakeholders develop programs and policies related to learning problems during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: coping strategies, Covid-19, international students, social support, stress level

Permasalahan, Stres, Dukungan Sosial, dan Strategi Kopi Selama Pandemi Covid-19: Kasus Mahasiswa Internasional Di Indonesia

Abstrak

Covid-19 berdampak pada berbagai bidang kehidupan di semua lapisan masyarakat. Kondisi ini juga berdampak kepada para pelajar, terutama dalam pendidikannya. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis pengaruh masalah, tingkat stres, dan dukungan sosial terhadap strategi koping mahasiswa internasional di Indonesia pada saat Covid-19. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain *cross-sectional study* dengan pendekatan kuantitatif. Contoh penelitian ini adalah warga negara asing yang belajar di Indonesia pada saat Covid-19 sebanyak 88 orang. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa mahasiswa kesulitan menempuh perkuliahan jarak jauh karena sinyal lemah dan kuota internet terbatas. Strategi koping yang digunakan mahasiswa internasional dalam menghadapi masalah adalah melalui dukungan spiritual serta membangun kembali komunikasi dengan keluarga dan teman secara *online*. Dukungan utama dalam menyelesaikan masalah adalah keluarga, terutama orang tua. Hasil lain juga menunjukkan bahwa lebih dari separuh mahasiswa masuk dalam kategori stres pada tingkat normal. Hasil uji regresi menunjukkan bahwa pendapatan berpengaruh positif signifikan terhadap strategi koping. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah hasil temuan dapat digunakan untuk memahami masalah, tingkat stres, serta strategi koping yang dilakukan mahasiswa asing selama pandemi Covid-19 sehingga dapat membantu *stakeholder* untuk membuat program dan kebijakan terkait masalah pembelajaran bagi mahasiswa asing di masa pandemi Covid-19.

Kata kunci: Covid-19, dukungan sosial, mahasiswa asing, strategi koping, tingkat stress

INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 has spread almost all over the world. There have been 102,584,351 confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide, including 2,222,647 deaths (WHO, 2021). Meanwhile, Indonesia is one of the countries affected by Covid-19, with several cases of 1,099,687, recovered 896,530, and died of 30,581 cases (Satgascovid19, 2021).

Human activities become paralyzed, such as education, economy, health, even friendship or family relationships. Thus, the pandemic has negative impacts on health, economic, and education issues. In addition, the imposition of social restrictions makes people stockpile essential products around the world, namely daily food products (bread, water, meat), medicines, sanitary and hygiene products (toilet paper, disinfectants) (He & Harris, 2020; Sheth, 2020).

The Covid-19, according to Hagerty and Williams (2020), is a significant threat to humanity, especially human relations. Difficulty in making friendly relationships will lead to feelings of loneliness and is associated with worse cognitive performance, negativity, depression, and sensitivity to social threats (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). Human relations will suffer destruction because humans experience stress during a pandemic. Stressful individuals make them overly reactive, feel nervous, irritate, and even commit addictive substance abuse and suicide. In the family, parents find it challenging to enjoy interactions with children and commit violence in the household and children. This stress has a significant impact on the well-being of children (Alradhawi et al., 2020; Spinelli et al., 2020). All levels of society, both young and old, have difficulty carrying out activities outside the home and communicating with the surrounding environment. This condition has an impact on them, and one of the effects is stress. As is known, almost half of human time is spent outside the home every day, such as work, school, walking, and exercising. Community stress levels and coping strategies for individuals, age groups, and regions may vary during the pandemic. Specific research on these issues, such as stress levels and coping strategies for international students over the age of 18 and studying in Indonesia, has not been studied. They live far from their families, thus, feeling lonely and during the pandemic as they cannot go outside the home.

Students, as one of the layers of society affected by Covid-19, have various problems. Undergraduate students in China, for example, during the Covid-19 outbreak, showed higher anxiety (Wang & Zhao, 2020). In his research, Young Minds (2020 in Grubic, Badovinac, & Johri, 2020) revealed that eight out of 10 young respondents agreed that the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing mental health conditions, mainly due to school closures, loss of routine activities, and limited social relationships. Of the 101 students in Indonesia, 50 students experienced stress (Sugiyanto,

Prasetyo, & Pramono, 2020). Revealed that eight out of 10 young respondents agreed that the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing mental health conditions, mainly due to school closures, loss of routine activities, and limited social relationships (Almendingen et al., 2021; Zalat, Hamed, & Bolbol, 2021)

During the pandemic, there are many problems in education, especially with online learning systems, such as limited online learning infrastructure, limited exposure to teachers, information gaps, and a less conducive learning environment (at home) (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). As most activities can only be carried out in the house, students experience worries about their studies and future, so they experience boredom, anxiety, and even frustration (Aristovnik et al., 2020). International students also experience this problem. One vulnerable group is international students, including international students in Canada. They generally come from developing countries and experience economic problems and emotional distress (Firang, 2020). Likewise, students in Indonesia are also experiencing problems during the pandemic. Several studies revealed that about 5 out of 10 students experienced stress during the pandemic (Sugiyanto et al., 2020); among 288 female respondents, 96 percent experienced severe academic stress (Andiarna & Kusumawati, 2020), 83.6 percent of respondents experienced mild stress, and 59.7 percent of respondents experienced fatigue during the online learning (Pustikasari & Fitriyanti, 2021).

Do international students in Indonesia also experience the same thing? In this regard, not much research has been done to investigate. Before the pandemic, international students in Indonesia had faced several problems, such as cultural adaptation, language, differences in the education system, and the health care system (Widiasih, Hermayanti, & Ermiati, 2020). For example, during the pandemic, international students from Thailand in Indonesia had problems adapting to changing schedules and unstable internet networks (Ferdiansyah, Supiastutik, & Angin, 2020). On the other hand, Australian students experience difficulties in online learning because they cannot see the teacher's body language (Defina, 2021). Based on the research objectives, there are three hypotheses in the study. The two ideas are as follows. Hypothesis 1 is students' problems have a significant positive effect on coping strategies. Hypothesis 2 is the stress level of students has a significant positive impact on coping strategies. Hypothesis 3 is the social support of students has a significant positive

impact on coping strategies. According to the Covid-19 pandemic circumstances, the research objectives are as follows: to identify the problem, stress level, social support, and coping strategies of international students (IS) in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic; to analyze the differences of problem, stress level, social support, and coping strategies between male and female international students in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic; and to analyze the influence of problem, stress level, and social support on IS' coping strategies in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic.

METHOD

This study used a cross-sectional study design and was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. Data were collected from June to July 2020. The population in this study was international students (IS), both married and unmarried, studying in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic. The sampling technique was the voluntary sampling method. The number of respondents who filled out the research questionnaire was 97 people. However, based on the cleaning data results, respondents who filled out all questionnaire items were 88 respondents from 9 universities in Indonesia that are IPB, UNS, UIN Jakarta, UIN Makassar, UMP, Unair, UI, Unpad, and Unsoed. Respondents came from 24 countries that are Nigeria, Tanzania, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Sudan, Uganda, Ghana, Iraq, Afghanistan, Madagascar, United States, Australia, Rwanda, Pakistan, Thailand, Myanmar, Cameroon, South Africa, Canada, Gambia, Syria, Egypt, Liberia, and Colombia. Data was collected using Google Forms. We distributed questionnaires on google form via Whatsapp. There are three ways to distribute this questionnaire: 1) give the google form link directly to IS at IPB; 2) ask for help from IS to share a google form link to their friends who are still studying in Indonesia; 3) ask for help from Indonesian language teachers from other universities in Indonesia to share the link to their IS. The variables measured in this study were student characteristics, student problems, social support, stress levels, and coping strategies.

Student characteristics are unique identity of IS consist of name, age, gender, national origin, length of stay in Indonesia, university, source of tuition fees, income, marital status, and language use. Student problem is problems experienced by students during a pandemic related to internet signals, language, online

lectures, social relations, conflict, finance, health, food, and housing. Researchers and consists of 14 questions developed the instrument. The questionnaire used a Likert scale which consists of 0=No, 1=Yes. Based on the reliability test, the Cronbach alpha value of the student problems instrument has a reliability of 0.743.

According to Lin, Simeone, Ensel, and Kuo (1979 in Ozbay et al., 2007), social support is the person's support. That support is obtained because of social ties with other individuals, groups, or the larger community. Social support can come from three specific sources: family, friends, and close people (Canty-Mitchell & Zimet, 2000). Social support, especially from family and friends, is an integral part of stress and coping strategies. Another social partner who plays an essential role in every step of the coping process is the teacher. Teens and adults will seek support from friends, peers, teachers, counselors, or other family members, depending on the problem and the type of support they are asking for, such as asking for information, advice, strategies, comfort, perspective, listeners, or instrumental help (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2016). Social support in this study was the party who helped the sample overcome problems during the Covid-19 period. The instrument developed by the researcher combines Lin et al.'s concept (1979 in Ozbay et al., 2007), Canty-Mitchell and Zimet's (2000) concept, and Skinner and Zimmer-Gembeck's (2016) concept of social support sources. The instrument consists of 14 questions with a scale of 0 = No, one = Yes, and has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.798.

Stress can be defined as the body's response not specific to any current demands (Selye, 1975 in Fink, 2009). Lazarus (1966 in Jamieson et al., 2019) says that stress consists of three processes. The three processes are 1) primary appraisal, 2) secondary appraisal, and coping. Furthermore, primary assessment is the process of perceiving threats to oneself. Meanwhile, secondary assessment is a process of reminding potential responses to threats. Conversely, coping is the process of executing that response. "Lazarus's (1966 in Jamieson et al., 2019) classic stress and coping theory distinguish between two types of cognitive appraisals: primary and secondary appraisals (Greenaway et al., 2015)." The stress level is the scale of the feelings felt by IS in terms of difficulty relaxing, nervous arousal, and being easily upset/agitated, irritable/over-reactive, and impatient during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 1 Characteristics of international students

Variabel	Male (n=45)		Female (n=43)		Total (n=88)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Age (years)						
≤ 20	7	15.6	15	34.9	22	25.0
21-25	18	40.0	20	46.5	38	43.2
26-30	16	35.6	0	0.0	24	27.3
>30	4	8.9	8	18.6	4	4.5
Total	45	100.0	43	100.0	88	100.0
Mean ± SD (years)	25.933±7.907		22.58±3.304		24.30±6.303	
Min-Max (years)	19-70		19-30		19-70	
Difference Test (*p-value*)						0.012*
Length of Stay (years)						
≤5 years	44	97.8	42	97.7	86	97.7
>5 years	1	2.2	1	2.3	2	2.3
Total	45	100.0	43	100.0	88	100.0
Mean ± SD (years)	2.03±1.299		2.08±4.009		2.06±2.935	
Min-Max (years)	0-6		0-27		0-27	
Difference Test (*p-value*)						0.939
University (years)						
IPB	35	77.8	39	90.7	74	84.1
UNS	1	2.2	0	0.0	1	1.1
UIN Jakarta	3	6.7	2	4.7	5	5.7
UIN Makassar	1	2..2	0	0.0	1	1.1
UMP	1	2.2	0	0.0	1	1.1
Unair	1	2.2	0	0.0	1	1.1
UI	0	0.0	1	2.3	2	2.3
Unpad	1	2.2	1	2.3	1	1.1
Unsoed	2	4.4	0	0.0	2	2.3
Total	45	100.0	43	100.0	88	100.0
Source of fund						
0= Non-scholarship	23	51.1	27	62.8	50	56.8
1= Scholarship	22	48.9	16	37.2	38	43.2
Total	45	100.0	43	100.0	88	100.0
Mean ± SD (score)	0.49±0.506		0.37±0.489		0.43±0.498	
Min-Max (score)	0-1		0-1		0-1	
Difference Test (*p-value*)						0.274
Income						
1= <IDR 2.500.000	16	35.6	20	46.5	36	40.9
2= IDR 2.500.000 - IDR 3.000.000	15	33.3	13	30.2	28	31.8
3= IDR 3.000.001- IDR 3.500.000	7	15.6	7	16.3	14	15.9
4= IDR 3.500.001- IDR 4.000.000	3	6.7	0	0.0	3	3.4
5= > IDR 4.000.000	4	8.9	3	7.0	7	8.0
Total	45	100.0	43	100.0	88	100.0
Mean ± SD (score)	2.20±1.254		1.91±1.130		2.06±1.197	
Min-Max (score)	1-5		1-5		1-5	
Difference Test (*p-value*)						0.253
Marital Status						
0= single	41	91.1	40	93.0	81	92.0
1= married	4	8.9	3	7.0	7	8.0
Total	45	100.0	43	100.0	88	100.0
Mean ± SD (score)	0.09±0.288		0.07±0.258		0.08±0.272	
Min-Max (score)	0-1		0-1		0-1	
Difference Test (*p-value*)						0,744
Language Usage						
0= Indonesian only	32	71.1	31	72.1	63	71.6

(Continue) Table 1 Characteristics of international students

Variabel	Male (n=45)		Female (n=43)		Total (n=88)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1= mix of Indonesian and English	13	28.9	12	27.9	25	24.4
Total	45	100.0	43	100.0	88	100.0
Mean ± SD (score)	0.29±0.458		0.28±0.454		0.28±0.454	
Min-Max (score)	0-1		0-1		0-1	
Difference Test (*p-value*)					0.920	

Note: n=number of respondent; %=percentage of respondent

This research's stress level was measured by Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) instrument (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). This instrument consists of 14 items with a scale of 0: Did not apply to me at all, 1: Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time, 2: Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time 3: Applied to me very much, or most of the time. Cronbach's alpha value of this instrument was 0.940.

The coping strategy in this study is a strategy taken by respondents to deal with problems during the Covid-19 pandemic. Lazarus and Folkman (1984, p.141 in Greenaway et al., 2015) reveal that coping is a continuous effort to change cognitive and behavior in managing external and internal demands that burden or exceed the person's resources. Lazarus and Folkman (1984 cited by Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007; Folkman, 2012) reveal that modern coping research is twofold. First, coping focuses on emotion, which refers to the regulation of emotions brought about by the judicial process, such as anger or sadness in response to an assessment of loss, anxiety, or fear in the case of a threat assessment, and enthusiasm and excitement, mixed with some worry, in the case of challenge assessment. The second, problem-focused coping, refers to managing self-problems. Furthermore, Folkman (2012) revealed that in addition to focusing on emotions, handling is also related to future orientation, religious and spiritual coping, and interpersonal coping. The measurement of coping strategy refers to and modification of the questionnaire from Lazarus and Folkman (1984), measured using a Likert scale of 0: I have never done it until 3: I do it very often. The coping strategy instrument consists of 14 items with two dimensions: focusing on problems and emotions with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.850.

The data was collected by filling out a questionnaire then processed and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS 25.0. The data processing process includes editing, coding, entrying, scoring, analyzing, and interpretation. The research variables were then given an assessment score on each questionnaire question. The analysis used in the study these are (1) Descriptive analysis. This analysis used to describe characteristics students (Age; length of stay, university, source of fund, income, marital status, language usage), student problems, social supports, student stress level, and student coping strategies, (2) Analysis of differences to see differences in problems, stress levels, social support, and coping strategies between male and female IS in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic, (3) Multiple linear regression analysis used to analyze the influence of problems, stress levels, and social support on IS 'coping strategies in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESULTS

Students Characteristics

The results showed that the average age of IS was almost 25 years, with a minimum age of 19 years and a maximum of 70 years. Based on the results of different tests, male students were three years older than female students. Almost all students have lived in Indonesia for less than five years. Based on the university (IPB, UNS, UIN Jakarta, UIN Makassar, UMP, Unair, UI, Unpad, and Unsoed), four of the five samples study at IPB University. Nearly half of the sample of schools in Indonesia are awarded scholarships. Nearly a third of the sample had an income of between IDR 2.500.000 – IDR 3.000.000 (Table 1). Almost all samples are single, and more than half of the sample only use Indonesian when communicating with Indonesians.

Student Problems

Based on the results of research related to the problems faced by students during the Covid-19 period, all aspects identified (14 aspects) as problems were experienced by students.

Table 2 Percentage of answers to student problems and social support during the Covid-19 period (n= 88)

Statement	Male (n=45)		Female (n=43)		Total (n=88)		Average Difference Test		
	0	1	0	1	0	1	M	F	p-value
Student problem									
Bad signal	60.0	40.0	72.1	27.9	65.9	34.1	0.40	0.28	0.235
Indonesian Language	53.3	46.7	69.8	30.2	61.4	38.6	0.47	0.30	0.115
Limited internet quota	51.1	48.9	72.1	27.9	61.4	38.6	0.49	0.28	0.043*
Lack of concentration	55.6	44.4	48.8	51.2	52.3	47.7	0.44	0.51	0.534
Problems with Indonesian friends	84.4	15.6	72.1	27.9	78.4	21.6	0.16	0.28	0.165
Problems with friends from other countries	86.7	13.3	76.7	23.3	81.8	18.2	0.13	0.23	0.235
Problems with neighbors	88.9	11.1	81.4	18.6	85.2	14.8	0.11	0.19	0.330
Romance Problems	93.3	6.7	93.0	7.0	93.2	6.8	0.07	0.07	0.955
Conflict with parents	100.0	0.0	90.7	9.3	95.5	4.5	1.00	0.09	0.044*
Financial Problem	77.8	22.2	72.1	27.9	75.0	25.0	0.22	0.28	0.544
Health problems	93.3	6.7	88.4	11.6	90.9	9.1	0.07	0.12	0.424
Problems in choosing food	77.8	22.2	76.7	23.3	77.3	22.7	0.22	0.23	0.909
Problems in accessing food	86.7	13.3	90.7	9.3	88.6	11.4	0.13	0.09	0.557
Problems with the location of residence	86.7	13.3	97.7	2.3	92.0	8.0	0.13	0.02	0.055
SOCIAL SUPPORT									
Parents	20.0	80.0	18.6	81.4	19.3	80.7	0.80	0.81	0.870
Indonesian friends	33.3	66.7	46.5	53.5	39.8	60.2	0.67	0.53	0.212
Friends from other countries	40.0	60.0	53.5	46.5	46.6	53.4	0.60	0.47	0.209
Friends of the country	22.2	77.8	20.9	79.1	21.6	78.4	0.78	0.79	0.885
Girlfriend/boyfriend	80.0	20.0	88.4	11.6	84.1	15.9	0.20	0.12	0.286
Husband/wife	93.3	6.7	93.0	7.0	93.2	15.9	0.07	0.07	0.955
Lecturer	48.9	51.1	39.5	60.5	44.3	55.7	0.51	0.60	0.383
Neighbors	60.0	40.0	60.5	39.5	60.2	39.8	0.40	0.40	0.965
Boarding mother	53.3	46.7	67.4	32.6	60.2	39.8	0.47	0.33	0.180
Embassy of your country	60.0	40.0	58.1	41.9	59.1	40.9	0.40	0.42	0.861
International Cooperation of college	42.2	57.8	62.8	37.2	52.3	47.7	0.58	0.37	0.054
Professionals	68.9	31.1	65.1	34.9	67.0	33.0	0.31	0.35	0.711

Note: 0= No, 1= Yes, M= Male, F=Female; *=significant α<0.05

The most prominent aspect of the problem is concentrating on distance learning. Almost half of the sample felt that they lacked concentration in attending distance lectures. More than half of female students cannot concentrate on distance learning. The second aspect of the problem that stands out for international learners is the limited internet quota and the problem of using Indonesian in distance learning. More than a third of the sample had difficulty attending distance lectures due to the Indonesian language and the limited internet quota—male students, almost half, experience this problem. The limited quota, but another problem experienced by more than a third of the respondents, is the internet network that is not good (Table 2). Furthermore, 2 out of 10 respondents experience financial problems, Indonesian friends, and Indonesian food that suits their tastes. Almost all samples did not experience love problems (romance issues) with their partners and conflicts with their parents. Based on the results of the different tests, the male sample had a higher score than the female sample in terms of limited internet quota (p-value = 0.043) and conflicts with parents (p-value = 0.044) (Table 2).

Social Supports

The results showed that four out of five samples felt that their parents were the ones who helped solve problems during the Covid-19 period. Respondents who said that lecturers and friends, Indonesian friends, friends from other countries, or friends of the same country were the people who helped solve their problems during the pandemic, more than half.

Table 3 Percentage of students stress during the Covid-19

Statement	Male (n=45)				Female (n=43)				Average Difference Test		
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	M	F	p-value
Disappointed by trifles	51.1	35.6	8.9	4.4	53.5	34.9	11.6	0.0	0.67	0.58	0.603
Overreact to situations	51.1	31.1	13.3	4.4	39.5	41.9	14.0	4.7	0.71	0.84	0.492
It's hard to relax	51.1	28.9	15.6	4.4	37.2	34.9	25.6	2.3	0.73	0.93	0.293
Easy to be disappointed	51.1	35.6	8.9	4.4	39.5	41.9	11.6	7.0	0.67	0.86	0.292
Feeling drained a lot	44.4	42.2	8.9	4.4	37.2	34.9	18.6	9.3	0.73	1.00	0.166
Impatient when experiencing delays	40.0	37.8	15.6	6.7	37.2	37.2	20.9	4.7	0.89	0.93	0.829
A little sensitive	35.6	31.1	24.2	8.9	20.9	58.1	11.6	9.3	1.07	1.09	0.893
Hard to relieve tension	51.1	28.9	17.8	2.2	48.8	27.9	18.6	4.7	0.71	0.79	0.672
Easy to get angry	46.7	37.8	13.3	2.2	34.9	55.8	7.0	2.3	0.71	0.77	0.722
Hard to calm down	53.3	31.1	15.6	0.0	46.5	41.9	9.3	2.3	0.62	0.67	0.744
Hard to tolerate being disturbed	42.2	46.7	11.1	0.0	44.2	41.9	14.0	0.0	0.69	0.70	0.952
Ever tense	37.8	42.2	11.1	8.9	30.2	41.9	20.9	7.0	0.91	1.05	0.488
Can't stand doing the same things or people	55.6	28.9	13.3	2.2	53.5	23.3	20.9	2.3	0.62	0.72	0.585
Worried about the Covid-19 pandemic	37.8	28.9	22.2	11.1	34.9	39.5	18.6	7.0	1.07	0.98	0.667
Feeling sad / lonely	24.4	44.4	13.3	17.8	18.6	34.9	37.2	9.3	1.24	1.37	0.537
Feeling bored with life	44.4	24.4	20.0	11.1	39.5	20.9	30.2	9.3	0.98	1.09	0.608

Note: 0=Did not apply to me at all; 1=Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time; 2=Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time; 3=Applied to me very much, or most of the time; M=Male, F=Female
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Meanwhile, the parties felt that the samples did not resolve boyfriends and professional staff (doctors, psychologists, counselors) (Table 2).

Based on the results, there were more female students than male students in terms of feeling supported by their parents, friends of the country, lecturers, embassy of their country, and professionals. However, based on male students, they are more numerous than female students in terms of feeling supported by Indonesian friends, friends from other countries, girlfriends, neighbors, and the international cooperation of the college. Different tests showed no significant difference between male and female students regarding those who helped overcome problems during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Student Stress level

Based on stress variables, one in five students was strong enough or often found it difficult to be relaxed/relaxed and not calm/anxious about the Covid-19 disaster. Nearly half of the students felt somewhat sensitive, irritable, difficult to tolerate any disturbance. They had been in a state of tension of mind, although not too loud or infrequent. On the other hand, more than half of the students felt that they were never disappointed with relatively trivial things

and could endure even though they had to work consistently (Table 3).

However, based on the average, the female student had a higher score than the male student. Male students scored higher than female students in terms of being disappointed by trifles and worried about the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on the different test results, there was no significant difference between men and women based on students' stress items. Based on the stress level's categorization, more than half of the samples, both men and women, were categorized as stress at normal levels. No sample felt stress at a hefty level, but there were still those who felt stress at a severe level by 8 percent, and one in eight samples felt stress at a moderate level (Table 3).

Student Coping Strategies

Based on students' coping strategies in dealing with the Covid-19, more than half of students pray to God very often, believing in their prayers. In addition, almost half of them often try to strengthen themselves. They deserve to be grateful for everything I have, rebuild friendship/communication with family and friends using the internet network, and sleep or rest better.

Table 4 Percentage of student coping strategies in dealing with the Covid-19

Statement	Male (n=45)				Female (n=43)				Average difference test		
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	M	F	p-value
Telling other people	31.1	17.8	42.2	8.9	34.9	30.2	27.9	7.0	1.29	1.07	0.302
Can solve problems on your own	6.7	22.2	48.9	22.2	16.3	11.6	37.2	34.9	1.87	1.91	0.844
Strengthen ourself and be grateful	6.7	15.6	28.9	48.9	14.0	2.3	39.5	44.2	2.20	2.14	0.773
Pray to God	4.4	13.3	17.8	64.4	23.3	16.3	20.9	39.5	2.42	1.77	0.005**
Do another activity	17.8	28.9	24.4	28.9	11.6	14.0	53.5	20.9	1.64	1.84	0.369
Communicate with family	6.7	13.3	31.1	48.9	11.6	16.3	34.9	37.2	2.22	1.98	0.238
Communicate with friends	6.7	15.6	37.8	40.0	4.7	11.6	37.2	46.5	2.11	2.26	0.443
Not cry	24.4	24.4	31.1	20.0	27.9	30.2	32.6	9.3	1.47	1.23	0.289
Sleep	8.9	8.9	37.8	44.4	7.0	11.6	30.2	51.2	2.18	2.26	0.696
Doing activities as usual	11.1	26.7	31.1	31.1	9.3	20.9	44.2	25.6	1.82	1.86	0.853
Take up a hobby	13.3	11.1	25.6	40.0	9.3	18.6	44.2	27.9	2.02	1.91	0.583
Do social activities	28.9	17.8	28.9	24.4	48.8	20.9	20.9	9.3	1.49	0.91	0.015*
Join online seminars	17.8	15.6	22.2	44.4	44.2	11.6	16.3	27.9	1.93	1.98	0.014*
Not angry	8.9	24.4	31.1	35.6	7.0	18.6	44.2	30.2	1.93	1.98	0.829

Note: 0=I have never done it until 3: I do it very often; M=Male, F=Female; *=significant α<0.05

Based on different tests, male students have a higher average than female students praying to God and believing in all their prayers (p-value= 0.005) and engaging in online social and organizational activities (p-value= 0.015). Meanwhile, female students have a higher average than male students participating in online seminars via WAG/webinar/Zoom (p-value= 0.014) (Table 4).

Although not significantly different, based on average, a Female student has a higher score than the male student in terms of solving problems on your own, doing another activity, communicating with friends, sleeping, and doing activities as usual. More than half of the female sample and more than a third of the male model had a low coping strategy based on the study results. In the male example, only one-fifth and nearly 10 percent of the women had a high-category coping strategy (Table 4).

Analyze the differences test results in problems, stress level, social support, and coping strategies

There were no significant differences between males and females based on the differences in test results in problems, stress level, social support, and coping strategies. And then, based on the mean value, female IS has a higher score than male International Students in student problem and stress levels. However, based on social support and coping strategies, male International Student has a higher score than female IS (Figure 1).
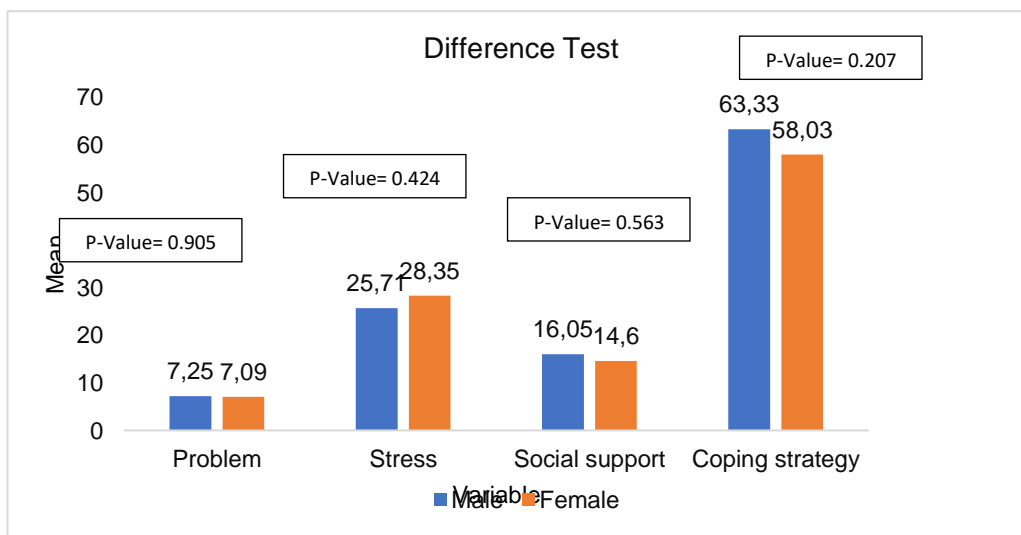

Figure 1 Difference test of student problems, stress level, social support, and coping strategies

The influence of problem, stress level, and social support on coping strategies of international students in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic

The regression test was conducted to analyze the extent of the influence exerted by the independent variables in this study, namely student characteristics, student problems, social support, and student stress level on coping strategies carried out by students during the Covid-19 pandemic. The regression test results showed that the adjusted R square value was 0.105. It means that 10.5 percent of the coping strategies of IS did were influenced by student characteristics (age, gender, length of stay, income, marital status, and language used), student problems, social support, and stress level. Conversely, other variables outside the study variables explain the rest. Based on the regression test results, only income (β=0.369) significantly influences coping strategies. Therefore, the increase in income will increase the coping strategy of IS 0.369 in standard deviation units (Table 5).

Table 5 Results of multiple regression analysis of problems, social support, and stress level on coping strategies

Variable	Coping Strategy		
	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standardized Coefficient Beta (β)	Significance
(Constants)			0.000
Age (years)	-0.291	-0.093	0.508
Gender (0=Male; 1=Female)	-4.593	-0.118	0.282
Length of stay (years)	-0.145	-0.022	0.847
Income (1-5)	6.055	0.369	0.001**
Marital status (0=unmarried, 1=married)	1.879	0.026	0.857
Language used (0=Indonesian only, 1=mixed)	-5.957	-0.138	0.192
Problems (index)	0.553	0.176	0.133
Social support (index)	0.030	0.013	0.911
Stress (index)	0.078	0.084	0.434
R^2			0.197
Adj R^2			0.105
F			2.132
Sig			0.036

Note: * Significant at p<0,05; ** Significant at p<0,01

DISCUSSION

The research finding is that students have difficulty taking distance lectures due to weak or low signals. This finding is also by the findings of Irawan, Dwisona, and Lestari (2020); Gonzalez et al. (2020); and Mishra, Gupta, and Shree (2020). Baloran's findings (2020) that more than two-thirds of students experience poor internet connections. Another finding is the limited cost so that the internet quota is limited. This limited internet quota is also experienced by students in the province of Davao del Sur, Philippines, which is more than half of the respondents (Baloran, 2020). Most students experience technical problems with online applications, difficulty studying online (Son et al., 2020), and difficulty concentrating (Lischer, Safi, & Dickson, 2021). So, the problem for students studying online during the pandemic is finance, especially the cost of purchasing internet quotas and bad internet networks, making them less focused on learning.

The coping strategy that this research sample uses in dealing with problems is pastoral support, namely praying and being grateful for everything they have. More than half of the respondents pray to God, and almost half are grateful for everything that exists. This percentage of religious support is higher than Baloran's (2020) findings and Lai et al. (2020) in their research, namely 39,06 percent and 34 percent, respectively. Another coping strategy undertaken by the sample is that almost half of the respondents rebuild friendship/communication with family and friends using the internet network. Again, this finding is lower than Baloran's (2020) findings and Dangi, Dewett, dan Joshi's (2020), who are more than half of the respondents.

Based on filling out an open-ended questionnaire, students wrote down their activities in dealing with problems during the Covid-19 pandemic. Students do various activities outside and inside the house. The outdoor activities they do include 1) sports (jogging, swimming, playing tennis) and 2) offline shopping (looking for food). The indoor activities they do at home include 1) watch TV, videos, and YouTube; 2) cook food and cakes; 3) clean the house/environment; 4) online shopping; 5) take self-development classes; 6) meditation and relaxation; 7) play games; 8) online trading; 9) sleep; 10) art activities such as listening to music, singing, dancing, making calligraphy; 11) read and write; 12) study and do thesis. So, students' activities during the

Covid-19 pandemic are not limited to studying but also pleasurable activities. For positive coping in solving problems during the Covid-19 pandemic, people can overcome mental health challenges by adopting various lifestyle-related actions, namely playing indoors, relaxation exercises, yoga and meditation, aerobic exercise players, creative activities, positive thinking, hope-setting, reading, music, and online learning courses. With positive thinking, one can do regular exercise, a balanced diet, relaxation sports, daily routine, socialization (online), break from work-life routines, and other healthy lifestyle measures. People should not do drugs, consume too much fast food, do an excessive online activity, and watch television excessively (mostly news). Besides, people do not like parties and travel, focus on the negative aspects of the Covid-19, post about Covid-19 on social media and spreading fake news, and belief in fake news. Students in Saudi Arabia have found the positive impact of the pandemic, namely being able to gather with family members, value life and death, reorganize priorities in life, and clean up the environment (Alghamdi, 2021).

The existence of positive activities during the Covid-19 pandemic is also found by Donthu and Gustafsson (2020), such as developing new skills and taking better care of their residence, learning how to bake, keeping in shape through exercise, and reading. Lesser and Nienhuis (2020) found that students do physical activities; 3 out of 10 students doing running activities, 2 out of 10 students doing walking activities, and 1 in 10 students doing cycling activities. Physical activity, especially physical activity outside the home, provides protective benefits in well-being. Likewise, Pan (2020) revealed that 7 out of 10 students watch frequently and 5 in 10 students play computer games with entertainment activities.

In solving the problems that students face based on the findings, families especially parents, helped solve the problem during the Covid-19 period. Social support, especially from family and friends, can help reduce problems (Amalia & Rahmatika, 2020). Social support, especially in the family, has a significant correlation with stress levels (Lai et al., 2020). This study's findings indicate that more than half of the students experienced stress at an average level. However, less than a tenth felt stress at a severe level, and one in eight samples felt stress at a moderate level. These results were in line with Zuhara, Muflikhati, and Krisnatuti (2017). They found that the source of stress of the postgraduate students is in a low

category, and the most perceived is from themselves. But, it is different from the research findings of Lai et al. (2020), in which over 80 percent of IS in the UK and USA have moderate to high perceived stress. Fitriasari et al. (2020) also found that most students' stress levels were moderate, namely 75,8 percent. Students feeling stressed or anxious during the Covid-19 outbreak are understandable because of the uncertainties associated with additional studies and concerns about their future. So, they mostly get support from lecturers (Lischer et al., 2021).

Based on the regression test results, five variables influence the IS coping strategy in respondent characteristics: age, gender, length of stay, income, marital status, and the language used. Even from these five aspects, it is income that has a significant positive effect on coping strategies. There is also a significant positive relationship between income and social support (Zabalegui et al., 2013). There is a connection between the Covid-19 and income or work situations and the need for social support (Yu et al., 2020; Bavel et al., 2020; Son et al., 2020). Economic hardship is also experienced by students in the United States, in which students are provided relatively little financial assistance during the pandemic as compared to other Northern World countries (Browning et al., 2021). Financial management also has a significant positive relationship with coping strategy (Sunarti et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Most of the international students in Indonesia were nearly 25 years old, and many of them were unmarried, so problems with spouses were almost non-existent. The problems they faced during the Covid-19 pandemic with the distance learning were generally weak or inadequate signals and limited internet quotas, impacting reduced concentration or focus on learning. Many of them experienced moderate stress. To overcome the problems experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic, they implemented coping strategies through religious means and social support. The social support they mostly got was support from family and friends. They communicated with family and friends via the internet network. From the difference test, the male samples had a higher score than female samples regarding limited internet quota and conflict with parents. In coping strategies, male students had a higher average score than female students in terms of praying to God, believing in all their prayers, and engaging in online social and

organizational activities. Meanwhile, female students had a higher average score in terms of online seminars participation via WAG/webinar/Zoom. The regression test showed that income had a significant positive effect on coping strategies.

This study has several limitations. First, the researcher did not use a randomly selected sample, thus, the results could not be generalized and represent the population. Second, data were obtained only through questionnaires with closed questions; it is recommended to conduct open interviews. Third, the studied variables are limited; further studies are suggested to include other variables. Based on the problems experienced by IS in taking long-distance studies with limited quotas and weak signals, several suggestions can be given. *First*, the government or higher education institutions are expected to provide internet subsidies, especially for IS who are also scholarship awardees. *Second*, educational institutions or distance education specialists are expected to provide programs that address the strategies for increasing distance learning concentration. *Third,* local students and the IS' parents should continue providing social support for IS in Indonesia, especially during the pandemic. *Fourth,* the Government of Indonesia and higher education institutions should provide financial additions for students who experience financial constraints during the pandemic.

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