

Journal Homepage: https://jurnal.ugm.ac.id/gamajop Email : gamajop.psikologi@ugm.ac.id ISSN 2407 - 7798 (Online)



Volume **10** Number 1, 2024 Page: 14–21 DOI:10.22146/gamajop.84748

Received 24 May 2023 Revised 6 October 2023 Accepted 6 November 2023 Published 31 May 2024

Keywords: coping strategies; COVID-19; culture; online learning; students

\*Author for correspondence: Email: nurussakinah@uinsu.ac.id

## $\mathbf{C}(\mathbf{i})$

© GamaJOP 2024. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/bysa/4.0/), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

## Coping Strategies to Survive Online Learning Difficulties: Qualitative Survey Study of Bataknese and Javanese Students

## Nurussakinah Daulay\* and Widia Fransiska

Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

#### Abstract

It is apparent that students' perceptions of the online learning experience during the pandemic led to the development of coping abilities to deal with stress. This research aims to explore coping mechanisms that Bataknese and Javanese students in Medan City used to minimise stress related to online learning difficulties during the COVID 19 pandemic. A total of 671 students participated in the study by completing a self-reported survey online. This research is qualitative research with a thematic analysis approach. The findings were categorized into two main themes: 1) online learning difficulties (consisting of 3 subthemes: technical problems, task overload, emerging negative emotions); 2) overcoming online learning difficulties (consisting of 3 subthemes: patience, prayer, and parental support). This research implies that the coping strategies students use can help them survive adversity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of education is the shift from face-to-face learning to online learning by emphasizing the use of information technology and internet networks (Choudhury & Pattnaik, 2020). The impact of online learning especially on students is crucial to study. The importance of studying the impact of this learning system change has also been proven by various previous research including a study of online learning strategies combining synchronous and asynchronous modes (Moorhouse, 2020); while another study also found that most of the lecturers and students are not ready to adapt to online learning experiences is that online learning is an alternative that can replace face-to-face learning during a time of crisis (Manegre & Sabiri, 2020) and students become adept at using technological devices (Király et al., 2020).

However, the impact of online learning also has negative sides, including students becoming less than optimal in their learning due to various obstacles such as poor internet connection (Morgan, 2020) and the adjustments required in using a variety of applications (Dinh & Nguyen, 2020); and they cannot perform field practice in the form of community services (Corbera et al., 2020). The phenomenon of difficulties for students studying online in Medan was also found, such as: students felt that learning costs had become more expensive than before (Amrizal & Yusriati, 2021); network constraints and teachers' lack of understanding explanations (Setiawan & Ritonga, 2022). Various mental health issues during the crisis when COVID-19 were initially found at the end of December in Wuhan, China (Bao, 2020), which resulted in various sudden changes in student learning because students were required to adapt to difficulties related to online learning and respond to the emerging stressors for which some coping strategies were needed to keep them mentally healthy.

Stress management relates to coping strategies because one of the goals of coping is to protect oneself against sources of stress (Harrington, 2012). The roles of coping during the COVID-19 pandemic have also been proven through previous research studies, including improving mental health (Kar et al., 2020); as a way of dealing with stress (Park et al., 2020); and moderating the relationship between depression and life satisfaction (Litam & Oh, 2020). Even though the pandemic has passed. It appears that there are a lot of things to take away from this experience, one of which is how students cope with the stress they experience. The role of coping in students has also been researched in several countries, including in Vietnam by Baloran (2020) who reported that the coping strategy applied by students as an effort to deal with anxiety during the pandemic is avoiding crowded places. Research with students in Malaysia showed the importance of external support and acceptance of the current situation (Kamaludin et al., 2020). Another study found that anxiety in nursing students can be minimized through resilience and lots of humor for self-entertainment (Savitsky et al., 2020).

However, discussions that emphasize student coping experiences linked to the Indonesian culture are still very limited, especially the ability of Indonesian students when experiencing difficult conditions during the pandemic. Previous research in Indonesia has not focused on the role of culture in shaping students' coping abilities. Coping and culture are closely related (Ahmadi et al., 2018), meaning that the ability to overcome difficulties is also influenced by how the individual lives. Indonesian society consists of more than a thousand ethnic groups who live in an area stretching from Sabang (the westernmost region of Indonesia) to Merauke (the easternmost region of Indonesia) (Sitompul et al., 2020). These diverse ethnic groups have differing beliefs, norms, and cultural attitudes toward mental health (Putri et al., 2019). For example, Bataknese forms an identity or personality derived from the values of religious teachings (Bataknese forms an identity or personality derived from the values of religious teach- ings (mardebata) and tradition (maradat). Firm belief in God enables Batak people to survive difficult situations) and tradition (maradat). Firm belief in God enables Batak people to survive difficult situations (Sibarani, 2018). Meanwhile, people with Javanese ethnicity uphold the values of harmony and *nrimo* (accepting) (Rahmawan, 2012). The belief each ethnic group in Indonesia holds is an empowering factor for them in coping with crises (Putri et al., 2019).

Several studies have proven the important role of coping in helping individuals during a pandemic, including Kar et al. (2020); Park et al. (2020); Baloran (2020); Litam and Oh (2020). Likewise, research on students in Indonesia on the role of coping in overcoming academic stress (Fitriasari et al., 2020); the role of social support in helping coping strategies (Alfarisi et al., 2021), which, as a whole, show that coping strategies enable individuals to adapt to the difficulties that arise during this pandemic. However, what about research that examines the relationship between coping and the perspective of a particular culture? This research was conducted with Bataknese and Javanese students and sought to inform how a particular culture in an area can affect individual survival during crises. The novelty of this present research is not only complementing and enriching the results of previous research on the importance of student coping strategies but also exploring the important role cultural values play in helping them to survive difficulties during the COVID19

pandemic in Indonesia. Based on the aforementioned reasons, this study explained more on the following research question: How did Batak and Javanese students experience coping strategies in adapting to Covid-19?

## Method

## Study Design and Participants

This research uses a qualitative approach, namely research conducted to understand a phenomenon experienced by research subjects in the context of the Moleong (2007) scientific method. Exploring students' coping experiences in adapting to online learning is one of the objectives of this study. Data collection was carried out using a qualitative survey to analyze the diversity of characteristics of respondents. The data collection was carried out for one month in July 2021 with 671 students of Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan. The technique for taking research participants is purposive sampling in that the samples determined by the researcher using certain criteria. The participant criteria: 1) Students have active status in the even semester of the academic year 2020/2021; 2) Students of Bataknese and Javanese ethnicity; 3) Students have experienced online learning for at least one year.

(See Table 1)

The respondents were undergraduate students in the even semester of the academic year 2020/2021. The reason of why the researcher used these two ethnicities as research respondents was because the number of these students was the largest at the university. Apart from that, these two tribes are quite famous for their cultural concepts, namely the Batak tribe with the concept of dalihan na tolu, and the Javanese tribe with the concept of *narimo ing pandum*. This cultural concept also helps students in realizing coping strategies.

## Procedures

This research consists of several stages, the first step was the research preparation stage which included preparing the online instrument that explained the research objectives, instructions, informed consent, personal data, and two open-ended questions. The answers to these two open-ended questions were not limited in the number of words used to give participants the freedom to explore in responding to them. The second step was the implementation of survey research in the form of data collection by distributing online instruments through the student WhatsApp group, every student who completed the online instrument was deemed to give their informed consent as evidence of willingness to participate in this research voluntarily. The two questions were as follows:

- 1. What are the difficulties that arise in the implementation of online learning?
- 2. What efforts do you make to overcome these difficulties?

Participants' Demographics

Characteristics	Categories	No.(%) of participants
Age	17 – 21 years 22 – 25 years	497 (74.06%) 174 (25.93%)
Gender	Men Women	248 (36.95%) 423 (63.04%)
Ethnic groups	Batak Java	569 (84.79%) 102 (15.20 %)
Parents' occupation	Work full time Work part time Uncertain	325 (48.43%) 248 (36.95%) 77 (11.47%)
Socioeconomic Status	IDR 500.000 - IDR 1.000.000 IDR 1.000.000 - IDR 3.000.000 IDR 3.000.000 - IDR 5.000.000 • IDR 5.000.000	104 (15.49%) 454 (67.66%) 78 (11.62%) 35 (5.21%)
N	Total	100%

Notes: IDR = Indonesian Rupiah; Currency conversion: 1 USD = IDR 16.000

## **Data Collection**

Students' coping experiences in overcoming online learning difficulties were collected online with two open-ended questions. The results of the online self-reported survey were used to determine the sub-themes of the two predetermined themes: online learning difficulties and the efforts to cope with online learning difficulties. The items in the questionnaire included personal information which included name, gender, age, ethnic group, parents' occupation, and parents' monthly income. The participants were also asked to give examples of daily activities they had applied in dealing with online learning difficulties.

## Data Analysis

The open questionnaire data were analyzed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to find patterns and themes of tendencies that frequently arose. In this present study, we imported the interview data into the qualitative data management program NVivo to make data management easier. The data obtained from the google form completed by the participants were read over and over and then coded. The initial raw data coding was made in tabular form to make the coding easier. After generating many codes, similarities and differences between the codes were identified. Codes with the same meaning became the sub-themes of each theme, whereas codes with differing meanings were reread to be re-categorized. There are four stages of thematic data analysis, namely: raw data, coding, sub-themes, main themes.

#### **Findings**

In this research, there are two themes and six sub-themes that reveal coping experiences in overcoming online learning difficulties for Batak and Javanese students in Medan. (See Table 2)

In summary, this research revealed two main themes and six sub-themes derived from the experiences of coping strategies to survive online learning difficulties as follows (See Table 3):

## Theme 1: Online Learning Difficulties

The online self-reported survey data completed by the respondents provided some important information related to online learning difficulties experienced by students and the efforts they had made to overcome these difficulties. During ten months of the pandemic, students were required to be able to adapt to the various changes occurring. This is certainly not an easy thing for students as shown by the various difficulties they experience which were represented by the following three sub-themes:

#### Subtheme 1.1: Out-of-Control Technical Problems

Not all lecturers and students were ready to face changes in the learning system during this pandemic. Students were required to be able to be independent in studying learning material so that they could be easier to follow the online learning process. However, students also encounter many obstacles in online learning, especially internet connections. An unstable internet connection makes students worry about various technical problems such as unsuccessful submissions of assignments, unexpected power out- ages, being late for classes, inaccessible learning links, and difficulty listening to lecturers' explanations properly.

"It is not easy to adapt to learning online during this pandemic, we are experiencing many difficulties especially those related to poor internet connection because many of us live in rural areas, far from cities." (online self-reported survey, 12 January 2021).

"Learning online is costly because the cost of accessing the Internet is expensive for many of us who come

## Table 2

Raw Data, Coding, Sub-Themes & Themes

Raw Data	Coding	Sub-Themes	Main themes
It is not easy to adapt to learning online dur- ing this pandemic, we are experiencing many1. difficulties especially those related to poor in- ternet connection because many of us live in rural areas, far from cities. Learning online is costly because the cost of2.		Out-of-control technical problems (including un- stable internet connec- tion, power outages, in- accessible learning links, high-cost expensive in- ternet connection)	Online Learning Difficul- ties
accessing the Internet is expensive for many of us who come from underprivileged families. This certainly is very burdensome for us.	Expensive internet costs		
To be honest, I am more comfortable learn- ing face-to-face than online, because study- ing online has many obstacles, including the many assignments the lecturers give to stu- dents, the deadlines for submitting assign- ments are too short, and sometimes I can't understand the materials presented by the lecturers	Learning face to face is eas- ier	Overwhelming assign- ments	
Some of the difficulties that I especially felt are the poor internet connection, the many assignments from lecturers, and the cost of the internet which is not cheap, making me feel very depressed and difficult to concen- trate on studying	Depressed	The emergence of neg- ative emotions (irritable, angry, burnout, etc.)	
Being patient is an effort to control anger and irritability, and relieve anxiety. If that irritation arises, then I make myself sug- gested by telling myself to be patient, be- cause calamities will certainly pass	Controlling	Being patient	
			Coping strategy to deal with online learning difficulties
It is not easy for us to study online, and we are required to be able to adjust to the var- ious obstacles of studying online. When I have a problem and my heart is restless, I will do a prayer and, afterward, pray to God to be given peace and ease in facing the dif- ficulty	Get closer to God	Praying	
I am very grateful for the attention that my parents give me, including when I have diffi-1. culty learning online. My parents often give me advice to sincerely accept the crisis we are currently undergoing. This makes me en- couraged to stay motivated.	Advice	Seeking support	
When I was stressed, I would tell my mother 2. My mother will listen intently, after which she will encourage me. This is what makes me strong	Discuss		

#### Table 3

Main Themes and Sub-Themes of Coping Experiences

No	Main themes	Sub-themes
1.	Online learning difficulties	<ol> <li>Out-of-control technical problems (including unstable internet connection, power outages, inaccessible learning links, high-cost expensive internet connection)</li> <li>Overwhelming assignments</li> <li>The emergence of negative emotions (irritable, angry, burnout, etc.)</li> </ol>
2.	Coping strategy to deal with or learning difficulties	<ol> <li>Being patient</li> <li>Praying</li> <li>Seeking support</li> </ol>

from underprivileged families. This certainly is very burdensome for us." (online self-reported survey, 15 January 2021).

## Subtheme 1.2: Overwhelming Assignments

Almost all respondents said that the biggest difficulty in learning online is the many assignments given by the lecturers. The implementation of the home study policy resulted in most students feeling anxious and stressed due to the many assignments given by the lecturers.

"To be honest, I am more comfortable learning faceto-face than online, because studying online has many obstacles, including the many assignments the lecturers give to students, the deadlines for submitting assignments are too short, and sometimes I can't understand the materials presented by the lecturers." (online self-reported survey, 27 January 2021).

The many assignments assigned to students force them to work morning to evening completing all their online assignments. Such a condition did not occur when teaching and learning activities were still carried out face-to-face in classes.

# Subtheme 1.3: The Emergence of Negative Emotions (irritable, angry, burnout, etc.

Several obstacles in the implementation of online learning were raised by the respondents, including internal and external constraints. Internal constraints include negative feelings and thoughts that come from within students while adapting to online lectures (such as anxiety, being depressed, and stress), whereas external obstacles include poor internet connection due to living in a rural area, lack of facilities because not all students have laptops to follow online lectures and rely solely on their smartphones and quite expensive internet costs.

"Some of the difficulties that I especially felt are the poor internet connection, the many assignments from lecturers, and the cost of the internet which is not cheap, making me feel very depressed and difficult to concentrate on studying" (online self-reported survey, 6 January 2021).

"The things that make me stressed, because the many tasks that have piled up and the deadlines for submitting assignments make me stressed" (online self-reported survey, 17 January 2021).

#### Theme 2: Coping With Online Learning Difficulties

For students, the best choice when they are in a crisis like this pandemic is to accept the reality with patience and pray to reduce the negative emotions that arise in undergoing online learning. Students try to strengthen themselves to keep themselves resilient and excited to do learning activities at home. The efforts to overcome online learning difficulties appeared in three sub-themes, namely:

## Subtheme 2.1: Being Patient

All respondents have the same response as an effort to overcome learning difficulties online, namely being patient and praying a lot, with which respondents feel psychologically stronger in coping with difficulties during the pandemic. Patience is manifested in behaviors such as controlling annoyance, holding back anger, accepting reality, and thinking positively.

"Being patient is an effort to control anger and irritability, and relieve anxiety. If that irritation arises, then I make myself suggested by telling myself to be patient, because calamities will certainly pass." (online selfreported survey, 11 January 2021).

#### Subtheme 2.2: Praying

Almost all respondents stated that the spiritual way of praying to God can strengthen them and reduce stress in dealing with challenges they are facing during online learning. Praying provides them hopes and an effort they can make every day, at any time, to deal with any physical and psychological problems they are experiencing.

"It is not easy for us to study online, and we are required to be able to adjust to the various obstacles of studying online. When I have a problem and my heart is restless, I will do a prayer and, afterward, pray to God to be given peace and ease in facing the difficulty" (online self-reported survey, 21 January 2021).

## Subtheme 2.3: Seeking Support

Most respondents stated that their parents have a significant influence in helping them during the online learning process. Parents do not only serve as substitutes for teachers at home in guiding their children but also as motivators who provide encouragement and support.

"I am very grateful for the attention that my parents give me, including when I have difficulty learning online. My parents often give me advice to sincerely accept the crisis we are currently undergoing. This encourages me to stay spirited." (online self-reported survey, 24 January 2021)

"When I was stressed, I would tell my mother. My mother will listen intently, after which she will encourage me. This is what makes me strong" (online self-reported survey, 27 January 2021).

#### Discussion

Various problems arise when people around the world face the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic due to the presence of various stressors, including in education, teachers and students alike are forced to adapt to online learning conditions (Murphy, 2020); the reduced frequency of social interactions that can lead to psychological disorders (Xue et al., 2020); the loss of the learning process in the classroom is likely to cause loss of human resources if it lasts for an extended period (Azorín, 2020). The complexity of the problems to deal with during this pandemic may cause individuals prone to experiencing stress (Gritsenko et al., 2020), as well as the emergence of additional negative emotions, such as depression and insomnia (Pappa et al., 2020); psychological stress and decreased mental health (Bao, 2020); post-traumatic stress symptoms (Yin et al., 2020); anxiety (Peteet, 2020); and reduced wellbeing (Hu & Huang, 2020).

This present study aimed to explore students' experiences about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of which is the difficulty of learning online and how the role of coping strategies in helping them minimize the stress related to online learning difficulties during the pandemic. The difficulties experienced by students based on the results of this study were influenced by two main factors, internal and external factors. Regarding external factors, some difficulties have emerged, which have also been confirmed by previous research results. Difficulties that arise include the out-of-control technical disturbances such as poor internet connection especially for students who live in rural areas, far from cities (Kalloo et al., 2020); Internet costs are not cheap, especially for students with below-average family economic conditions (Huber & Helm, 2020); not all students can adapt quickly to using online learning links (such as zoom, google classroom), considering that previously students were used to learning face-to-face in class (Flores & Gago, 2020); the many assignments given by the lecturers present more burdens for them in undergoing online learning (Moorhouse, 2020). This online learning difficulty factor is also supported by the demographics of the participants, who as a whole come from families whose parents work full time (48.43%) with socioeconomic status at the middle level, tending towards the lower level, namely 67.66%.

Regarding internal factors, the emerging negative emotions affect student motivation to take part in online learning. In the first months of the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, some students were unable to adapt immediately. This research was conducted on students who were at the stage of adolescence developmentally. For adolescents, environmental changes caused by this pandemic require them to immediately adapt, which seemingly can have negative impacts, including frustration and anxiety (Gittings et al., 2021), greater academic burdens (Almomani et al., 2021), and the lessening mental health conditions (Schmidt et al., 2021).

There have been quite a lot of studies on the difficulties students face during the COVID-19 pandemic. This present research, apart from explaining the students' challenges in responding to the various sources of stress, also describes the coping strategies they use to minimize stress. Stress occurs when a person feels a depressed state due to their inability to cope with demands or the presence of stressors (Harrington, 2012). The complexity of the problems that must be faced during a crisis may cause an individual prone to experiencing stress (Extremera, 2020). Stress management is closely related to coping strategies, which aimed to protect oneself from a stressful condition to enable them to adapt to the presence of stressors (Rice, 1999). The current pandemic has to be lived and addressed positively so that the stress does not have a negative impact (distress) and becomes pathological and efforts to increase survival through the use of some coping strategies are thus needed. Coping is the process by which people try to manage the real or perceived discrepancy between the demands and resources they appraise in stressful situations (Sarafino & Smith, 2014).

Since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, formal learning that was previously carried out conventionally at schools must be carried out at home. The adaptability of students is the key to their success in the online learning process (Azhari & Fajri, 2021). The results of this present study showed that most respondents handled the difficulties they experienced during the ten months of online learning according to their coping abilities. The coping mechanism is influenced by some factors from inside and outside the students, which can be supporting or hindering them in finding effective ways to relieve the pressure they feel. The results of this study revealed that their internal coping strategies were patience and prayer, whereas their external coping strategy was seeking support from others.

Patience is one of the key issues in ethics and is one of the moral concepts emphasized in Islamic ethics (Khormaei et al., 2014) and that of other religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Buddhism. Patience is an active process that makes the individual not complain, have fortitude when confronting with difficult and sometimes impossible to change situations, and be stable in carrying out the activities (Hashemi et al., 2017). The meaning of patience here is the student's effort to control themselves during difficult and stressful conditions and is manifested in positive behaviors such as accepting the pandemic conditions, controlling negative emotions, and trying to be strong. This is confirmed by previous research that has proven the importance of patience as a coping strategy, including giving strength in waiting (Hänsch, 2019), waiting while working to make something happen (Procupez, 2015), endurance under in difficult circumstances and fortitude in the face of adversity (forbearance) (Khormaei et al., 2014), helps a person accept situations and conditions wherever he is (Shokoofehfard, 2012), provides calm when facing failure, adversity or suffering (Schnitker, 2012). Other positive benefits of patience are negatively related to aggression and hopelessness (Shokoofehfard, 2012), reduce depression and anxiety (Kalantari, 2011), and suicidal ideation (Haghjoo, 2013).

Apart from being patient, the coping strategy which comes from within the students is praying. Praying is a ritual act, composed of a cause or motive to pray (for instance, a problem), an act which constitutes the prayer proper, an orientation (towards God, for instance, towards a higher power, or one's inner self) and the desired effect that correlates with the cause for prayer (such as the solution to a problem) (Bänziger et al., 2008). For students, praying is a form of hope that there will be better changes in overcoming online learning difficulties. Several studies have proven the importance of the benefits of prayer, including as a coping strategy (ap Siôn & Nash, 2013), improving well-being (Grossoehme et al., 2011), improving mental and physical health (Cardella & Friedlander, 2004), controlling anxiety (Bade & Cook, 1997), and promoting psychological recovery for those who are experiencing illness (Ai et al., 2000).

Coping that comes from outside the students is seeking support from parents. Indonesia is part of a collectivistic Eastern culture, where the prominent cultural value in a collectivistic society is to emphasize interdependence between individuals, give higher priority to family bond, cooperation, solidarity, conformity, and harmony, commitment to parents and extended family, and the welfare of others (HajYahia & Sadan, 2008; House et al., 2004). Close relations and social connections are prominent features of collectivistic culture (Frías et al., 2013). The close relationships and social connections with the evidence that this student seeks support from his parents are evidence of a collectivistic Eastern culture which is new to this research.

In this study, the student participants stated that parents' social support affects their ability to survive difficult situations. Parental support which includes informational support in the form of giving advice, suggestion, and direction as well as giving admonitions and emotional support that enable them to remain resilient, reduce anxiety, and caring. This is confirmed by several previous studies proving the importance of parental social support which plays a role in achieving children's mental health (Lo et al., 2019), reducing psychological disorders (major depression, anxiety) (Gayman et al., 2010), helping regulate emotions (Karaer & Akdemir, 2019), and communicating with each other helps understand the children (Curran et al., 2020).

The research respondents were dominated by students from the Batak ethnic group. Batak people in Indonesia adhere to their belief in God and this makes them strong and able to survive difficult situations (Sibarani, 2018). Therefore, amid online learning difficulties and uncertain situations due to the pandemic, students still have optimism and can get through difficulties by implementing religious coping strategies, namely being patient and praying, and seeking support from their parents by not hesitating to tell the problems they face to their parents. The Batak people have positive characteristics including being straight to the point, being tough and hard workers, being ambitious, loyal, helpful, and confident, and they love their families so much (Sitompul et al., 2020). This belief is assumed to be a buffer in dealing with distress, presumably creating resilience (Putri et al., 2019).

A small proportion of respondents in this study also involved students of Javanese ethnicity. The Javanese also have the strength to face life's difficulties. Javanese people uphold a strong belief in the concept of harmony and nrimo (acceptance). This belief is assumed to be a buffer in dealing with distress, presumably creating resilience (Putri et al., 2019). Indonesia is a country with a collectivism culture, which is a condition of community members who have strong group ties and are bound throughout their lives to take care of each other. People with high levels of collectivism are usually indicated by high attitudes and empathy towards other individuals in the same group and expect the group to show concern for themselves (Hofstede et al., 2010).

This can be seen from the theme that emerged in the research results, that Batak and Javanese students carried out religious coping, namely being patient, praying, and seeking support, as an effort to overcome difficulties during online learning during the pandemic. This coping strategy shows the uniqueness of Indonesian society which is religious and interprets God's presence in every difficult situation.

#### Conclusions

The findings of this study prove that the various negative impacts arising from the COVID-19 pandemic can be minimized with coping strategies. The experience of stress and depression during this pandemic is subjective, meaning that when a student has good personal resources, such as the ability to control oneself and use appropriate coping strategies as a self-protection factor, the stressors can immediately be circumvented so that they can remain strong and capable to adapt and motivate yourself. Bataknese and Javanese students have the coping strategy through a religious approach by being patient and praying seems adaptive and enables them to calm themselves and reduce their anxiety, and getting support from the closest people makes them stronger both psychologically and physically.

#### Recommendation

This research is the first step to explore coping mechanisms that students in Medan City used to minimise stress related to online learning difficulties during the COVID 19 pandemic. So the suggestion that can be given for further research is to conduct survey research using stress coping instruments on a wider number of respondents, and to add determinants of coping strategies involving other research variables. The benefit of this paper is to inform that the coping strategies students use help them to minimize stress and manage negative emotions and provide knowledge for parents and educators about the appropriate coping strategies to deal with difficulties during the pandemic.

## Declaration

#### Acknowledgment

The author is grateful to the research participants and The Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training in UIN Medan, Indonesia, for their contributions and cooperations to this study.

#### Funding

The author received no direct funding for this research.

## Authors's Contribution

ND is the sole author of this manuscript, designing the research and study, conducting the research and collecting the data, analyzing the data and interpreting the results, Writing the manuscript, including the introduction, methods, results, and discussion.

#### **Conflict of Interest**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

#### **Orcid ID**

Nurussakinah Daulay 
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6223-8546

Widia Fransiska lo https://orcid.org/0009-0007-5057-7675

#### References

- Ahmadi, F., Khodayarifard, M., Zandi, S., Khorrami-Markani, A., Ghobari-Bonab, B., Sabzevari, M., & Ahmadi, N. (2018). Religion, culture and illness: A sociological study on religious coping in Iran. Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 21(7), 721–736.
- Ai, A. L., Bolling, S. F., & Peterson, C. (2000). The use of prayer by coronary artery bypass patients. *International Journal* for the Psychology of Religion, 10(4), 205–220.
- Alfarisi, M. B., Anganthi, N. R. N., & Partini. (2021). Peran mindset, spritual koping, dan dukungan sosial terhadap flourishing pada mahasiswa di tengah pandemi covid-19 [the role of mindset, spiritual coping, and social support in student development amidst the covid-19 pandemic] [Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta].
- Amrizal, D., & Yusriati. (2021). The effectiveness of online learning for islamic-based higher education towards a new normal era in kota medan. Proceeding International Seminar on Islamic Studies, 2(1), 876–881.
- ap Siôn, T., & Nash, P. (2013). Coping through prayer: An empirical study in implicit religion concerning prayers for children in hospital. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 16(9), 936–952.

21

- Azhari, B., & Fajri, I. (2021). Distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic: School closure in Indonesia. International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology, 53(7), 1934–1954.
- Azorín, C. (2020). Beyond covid-19 supernova. is another education coming? Journal of Professional Capital and Community, 5(3/4), 381–390.
- Baloran, E. T. (2020). Knowledge, attitudes, anxiety, and coping strategies of students during COVID-19 Pandemic. Journal of Loss and Trauma, 25(8), 635–642.
- Bänziger, S., van Uden, M., & Janssen, J. (2008). Praying and coping: The relation between varieties of praying and religious coping styles. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, 11(1), 101–118.
- Bao, W. (2020). COVID 19 and online teaching in higher education: A case study of Peking University. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 2(2), 113–115.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77–101.
- Cardella, L. A., & Friedlander, M. L. (2004). The relationship between religious coping and psychological distress in parents of children with cancer. *Journal of Psychosocial On*cology, 22(1), 19–37.
- Choudhury, S., & Pattnaik, S. (2020). Emerging themes in e-learning: A review from the stakeholders' perspective. *Computers* & *Education*, 144(103657), 1–20.
- Corbera, E., Anguelovski, I., Honey-Rosés, J., & Ruiz-Mallén, I. (2020). Academia in the time of COVID-19: Towards an ethics of care. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 21(2), 191– 199.
- Curran, T., Seiter, J., Guan, M., & White, T. (2020). Associations between mother-child communication apprehension, and young adult resilience, depressive symptoms, and selfesteem. *Psychological Reports*, 124(3), 1093–1109.
- Dinh, L. P., & Nguyen, T. T. (2020). Pandemic, social distancing, and social work education: students' satisfaction with online education in Vietnam. *Social Work Education*, 39(8), 1074–1083.
- Extremera, N. (2020). Coping with the stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic: Future research agenda based on emotional intelligence [Afrontando el estrés causado por la pandemia COVID-19: Futura agenda de investigación desde la inteligencia emocional]. International Journal of Social Psychology, 35(3), 631–638.
- Fitriasari, A., Septianingrum, Y., Budury, S., & K, K. (2020). Stres pembelajaran online berhubungan dengan strategi koping mahasiswa selama pandemi covid-19. Jurnal Keperawatan, 12(4), 985–992.
- Flores, M. A., & Gago, M. (2020). Teacher education in times of COVID-19 pandemic in Portugal: National, institutional and pedagogical responses. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 46(4), 507–516.
- Frías, M. T., Shaver, P. R., & Díaz-Loving, R. (2013). Individualism and collectivism as moderators of the association between attachment insecurities, coping, and social support. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 31(1), 3–31.
- Gayman, M. D., Turner, R. J., Cislo, A. M., & Eliassen, A. H. (2010). Early adolescent family experiences and perceived social support in young adulthood. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 31(6), 880–908.
- Gittings, L., Toska, E., Medley, S., Cluver, L., Logie, C. H., Ralayo, N., Chen, J., & Mbithi-Dikgole, J. (2021). 'Now my life is stuckl': Experiences of adolescents and young people during COVID-19 lockdown in South Africa. *Global Public Health*, 16(6), 947–963.
- Gritsenko, V., Skugarevsky, O., Konstantinov, V., Khamenka, N., Marinova, T., Reznik, A., & Isralowitz, R. (2020). COVID 19 fear, stress, anxiety, and substance use among Russian and Belarusian university students. *International Journal* of Mental Health and Addiction, 19(6), 2362–2368.
- Haghjoo, S. (2013). Prediction of suicidal ideation based on components of patience and emotion regulation [Doctoral dissertation, Shiraz University].

- HajYahia, M. M., & Sadan, E. (2008). Issues in intervention with battered women in collectivist societies. Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 34(1), 1–13.
- Hänsch, V. (2019). On patience: Perseverance and imposed waiting during dam-induced displacement in Northern Sudan. *Critical African Studies*, 12(1), 79–92.
- Harrington, R. (2012). Stress, health and well-being: Thriving in the 21st century.
- Hashemi, R., Moustafa, A. A., Rahmati Kankat, L., & Valikhani, A. (2017). Mindfulness and suicide ideation in Iranian cardiovascular patients: Testing the mediating role of patience. *Psychological Reports*, 121(6), 1037–1052.
- Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind, third edition.
- House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (2004). Culture, leadership, and organizations: The globe study of 62 societies.
- Hu, X., & Huang, W. (2020). Protecting the psychological wellbeing of healthcare workers affected by the COVID19 outbreak: Perspectives from China. Nursing & Health Sciences, 22(3), 837–838.
- Huber, S. G., & Helm, C. (2020). COVID-19 and schooling: Evaluation, assessment and accountability in times of crisesreacting quickly to explore key issues for policy, practice and research with the school barometer. *Educational As*sessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 32(2), 237–270.
- Kalantari, S. (2011). Comparison of mindfulness and patience in depressed, anxious, and normal people [Doctoral dissertation, Shiraz University].
- Kalloo, R. C., Mitchell, B., & Kamalodeen, V. J. (2020). Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in Trinidad and Tobago: Challenges and opportunities for teacher education. *Jour*nal of Education for Teaching, 46(4), 452–462.
- Kamaludin, K., Chinna, K., Sundarasen, S., Khoshaim, H. B., Nurunnabi, M., Baloch, G. M., Sukayt, A., & Hossain, S. F. A. (2020). Coping with COVID-19 and movement control order [MCO]: Experiences of university students in Malaysia. *Heliyon*, 6(11), e05339.
- Kar, S. K., Yasir Arafat, S. M., Kabir, R., Sharma, P., & Saxena, S. K. (2020). Coping with mental health challenges during COVID-19. In *Medical virology: From pathogenesis to disease control* (pp. 199–213).
- Karaer, Y., & Akdemir, D. (2019). Parenting styles, perceived social support and emotion regulation in adolescents with internet addiction. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 92, 22–27.
- Khormaei, Zareie, F., Mahdiyar, M., & Farmani, A. (2014). Role of patience and its components as moral constructs in predicting hope among university students. *Iranian Journal* of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine, 7(3), 58–68.
- Király, O., Potenza, M. N., Stein, D. J., King, D. L., Hodgins, D. C., Saunders, J. B., Griffiths, M. D., Gjoneska, B., Billieux, J., Brand, M., Abbott, M. W., Chamberlain, S. R., Corazza, O., Burkauskas, J., Sales, C. M. D., Montag, C., Lochner, C., Grünblatt, E., Wegmann, E., ... Demetrovics, Z. (2020). Preventing problematic internet use during the COVID-19 pandemic: Consensus guidance. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 100, 152180.
- Litam, S. D. A., & Oh, S. (2020). Ethnic identity and coping strategies as moderators of COVID-19 racial discrimination experiences among Chinese Americans. *Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation*, 13(2), 101–115.
- Lo, C. K.-m., Ho, F. K.-w., Yan, E., Lu, Y., Chan, K. L., & Ip, P. (2019). Associations between child maltreatment and adolescent's health-related quality of life and emotional and social problems in low-income families, and the moderating role of social support. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(15-16), 7436–7455.
- Manegre, M., & Sabiri, K. A. (2020). Online language learning using virtual classrooms: An analysis of teacher perceptions. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 35(5-6), 973–988.
- Moleong, L. (2007). Metodologi penelitian kualitatif [qualitative research methodology]. Rosda.
- Moorhouse, B. L. (2020). Adaptations to a face-to-face initial teacher education course 'forced' online due to the covid-19 pan-

demic. Journal of Education for Teaching, 46(4), 609-611.

- Morgan, H. (2020). Best practices for implementing remote learning during a pandemic. The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas, 93(3), 135–141.
- Murphy, M. P. A. (2020). COVID-19 and emergency eLearning: Consequences of the securitization of higher education for post-pandemic pedagogy. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 41(3), 492–505.
- Osman, M. E. (2020). Global impact of COVID-19 on education systems: The emergency remote teaching at Sultan Qaboos University. Journal of Education for Teaching, 46(4), 463– 471.
- Pappa, S., Ntella, V., Giannakas, T., Giannakoulis, V. G., Papoutsi, E., & Katsaounou, P. (2020). Prevalence of depression, anxiety, and insomnia among healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review and metaanalysis. Brain, Behavior, and Immunity, 88, 901–907.
- Park, C. L., Russell, B. S., Fendrich, M., Finkelstein-Fox, L., Hutchison, M., & Becker, J. (2020). American's COVID-19 stress, coping, and adherence to CDC guidelines. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 35(8), 2296–2303.
- Peteet, J. R. (2020). Covid-19 anxiety. Journal of Religion and Health, 59(5), 2203–2204.
- Procupez, V. (2015). The need for patience. Current Anthropology, 56(S11), S55–S65.
- Putri, A. K., Yahya, A. N. F., & Saputra, A. R. (2019). Indonesian faculty barriers in providing help to college students in distress. Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 23(4), 929–944.
- Rahmawan, D. (2012). Resiliensi berbasis budaya jawa pada korban lahar dingin merapi [resilience based on javanese culture for victims of the cold lava of mount merapi] [Doctoral dissertation, Thesis, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora. Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga].
- Rice, P. L. (1999). Stress and health.
- Sarafino, E. P., & Smith, T. W. (2014). Health psychology: Biopsychosocial interactions.
- Savitsky, B., Findling, Y., Ereli, A., & Hendel, T. (2020). Anxiety and coping strategies among nursing students during the covid-19 pandemic. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 46, 102809.
- Schmidt, S. J., Barblan, L. P., Lory, I., & Landolt, M. A. (2021). Age-related effects of the covid-19 pandemic on mental health of children and adolescents. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 12(1).
- Schnitker, S. A. (2012). An examination of patience and well-being. The Journal of Positive Psychology, 7(4), 263–280.
- Setiawan, H. R., & Ritonga, M. (2022). The effectiveness of online learning system in Arabic subject at Al-Ulum Islamic Junior High School integrated of Medan. Arabiyatuna : Jurnal Bahasa Arab, 6(1), 47.
- Shokoofehfard, S. (2012). An inquiry into the predictive role of components of patience in students aggressive behavior. Ravanshenasi Va Din, 5(2), 99–112. https://Sid.Ir/Paper/ 99444/En
- Sibarani, R. (2018). Batak Toba society's local wisdom of mutual cooperation in Toba Lake area: A linguistic anthropology study. International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare, 11(1), 40–55.
- Sitompul, R., Alesyanti, & Ridwan, M. (2020). Domestic violence as initiated by Batak culture in East Medan, Indonesia. Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 30(7), 835–842.
- Xue, E., Li, J., Li, T., & Shang, W. (2020). China's education response to COVID-19: A perspective of policy analysis. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 1–13.
- Yin, Q., Sun, Z., Liu, T., Ni, X., Deng, X., Jia, Y., Shang, Z., Zhou, Y., & Liu, W. (2020). Posttraumatic stress symptoms of health care workers during the corona virus disease 2019. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 27(3), 384–395.