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**ACCULTURATIVE STRESS WITH COPING STRATEGIES**  
**FROM CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE IN COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This research examines acculturative stress and coping strategies in the context of cross-cultural life experiences. Acculturative stress is commonly experienced by students transferring to higher education, especially when the move involves significant cultural mental wellbeing, lack of confidence in seeking social support, and challenges in language and specific cultural differences. This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological method. Subjects, namely informants, were taken because they were related to certain characteristics, and this research was conducted in Surabaya. This phenomenon is studied with relevant theories and the latest literature. The findings of this study provide insight into acculturative stress and coping strategies, which can inform the development of appropriate interventions to support cross-cultural student well-being. Acculturation stress is a form of stress experienced by individuals adapting to a new environment, such as Surabaya, which can include difficulties in understanding the Javanese language, interacting with friends, studying, and experiencing discomfort due to differences in food tastes and feelings of inferiority. Students at Surabaya State University cope with acculturation stress by seeking help, repeating lectures, reading textbooks, and completing coursework. Emotion-focused coping strategies help manage stress and foster psychological resilience.*

Keywords : Acculturative Stress, College Students, Coping Strategies, Cultural Perspective

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Berry et al. (2006) in (Pradana et al., 2021) state that physical stressors (such as climate, location), biological stressors (such as food, disease), social stressors (such as homesickness, isolation), cultural stressors (such as disparities in cultural values, racial discrimination), and functional stressors (such as language, work/school, finances, and transportation) are common causes of acculturative stress in cross-cultural life experiences. People's reaction to life experiences that have their roots in cross-cultural interaction is known as acculturative stress. These emotions are often accompanied by elevated degrees of sadness (associated with the sense of cultural loss) and anxiety (related to uncertainty about how one should live in the new society). In general, this notion and the concept of culture shock are equivalent (Oberg, 1960; see also Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001) in (Berry, 2006).

Acculturation stress is a common phenomenon among students who move for the purpose of pursuing higher education, especially if the relocation includes relocation between countries or regions that have different cultures. Acculturative stress occurs when individuals must adapt to different norms, habits, and levels of policy from their original environment. Immigrant students tend to view their presence as temporary. As a result, they tend not to make maximum efforts to take advantage of the experience of interacting with local communities when obstacles to adaptation arise.

Acculturative stress occurs when individuals must adapt to different norms, habits, and levels of policy from their original environment. Acculturative stress can affect students' mental and physical health. Students who experience acculturative stress will show symptoms such as decreased mental health, lack of confidence in seeking social capital and problems with language and certain cultural dialectics. Students find it more difficult to adapt the more the local culture differs from their culture of origin.

Acculturative stress itself is identified as a problem for overseas students who lack a sense and awareness of their social productivity who are not used to socializing in the city where they migrate. According to Berry (1997) in Maryam (2017) the concept of acculturative stress refers to a type of stress that is stress or a source of stress that is known to originate from acculturation processes, such as a decrease in mental health status, especially anxiety and depression. Acculturative stress in students needs to be researched because it can affect the individual's mental health and cultural adaptation. To deal with stress acculturation, students can use positive coping strategies, such as asking other people for help, studying better, connecting more with friends and being able to adapt to new cultures.

Even on a crowded campus, international students frequently experience isolation since they are away from home and comfortable settings. This issue may also be made worse by linguistic or cultural barriers that make communication difficult. For some overseas students, this burden can be too much to bear. Acculturative stress can lead to serious mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, or even social isolation.

Each individual certainly has their own way of dealing with stress, including acculturative stress. Coping mechanisms are the ways in which people manage their stress. Stress coping, as defined by Andriyani (2017), is the process of recuperating from the psychological and physical repercussions of stressful events or reactions that manifest as pressure, discomfort, or discomfort that a person is experiencing. It encompasses behavioral and cognitive coping mechanisms that are employed to manage

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emotionally and mentally taxing circumstances. adversely negative. All actions and ideas, whether good or negative, that help lessen an individual's load and prevent stress are considered types of coping (Maryam, 2017).

### **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods. Subjects, namely informants, were taken because they were related to certain characteristics, and this research was conducted in Surabaya. Because Surabaya is a large metropolitan city Immigrant students who want to study at university are researchers took a research subject at one of the universities in Surabaya, namely Surabaya State University or often called UNESA . This research uses the method for collecting data in-depth interviews (in-depth interviews).

The informants used in this research were four semester UNESA Guidance and Counseling Study Program students who came from outside Surabaya. There are several student characteristics that are used The sample in the research was aged between 18-20 years, students female or male, studying at Surabaya State University, coming from outside Surabaya, never lived in Surabaya before going to college, since starting college, living around campus or in a boarding house (not staying at a relative's house).

In this research, researchers used domain analysis techniques, namely analysis carried out to obtain a general and relatively comprehensive picture or understanding of what is covered in a focus or main problem being researched. To get a more detailed and in-depth picture or understanding of what is being researched, researchers use coding to make it easier for researchers to group and systemize data, so that they can create a picture of the topic being researched.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Researchers conduct a field orientation about the possibility of conducting research in accordance with the topic that the researcher has predetermined to conduct research. This orientation was carried out in April 2024 by conducting initial interviews with 3 students outside Surabaya who studied at Surabaya State University Guidance and Counseling Study Program to get an overview of the acculturation stress they experienced during lectures at UNESA.

The results of the research state that the first form of acculturation stress is difficulty adapting to a new environment, where the subject has difficulty understanding the Javanese language in Surabaya when gathering with friends or when in an environment where there are many native Surabaya residents. including those experienced, namely adjusting to new friends and having problems interacting with friends, when joking together or discussing things using Surabaya Javanese, the subject felt confused and did not understand what was being discussed by his friends and the subject. can only smile without understanding what is being said. The second is the difficulty of studying and studying, where the subject has to catch up and according to the subject the level of education in Java is more advanced than outside Java, so that a feeling of inferiority arises from the subject. Third, discomfort due to differences in food. According to the subject, the food in the area of origin and in Surabaya had different tastes, so the subject initially felt surprised and understood a little about the taste of the food, but the food was still eaten out of curiosity.

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The subject also feels equal, living away from the family is very painful for the subject where no one is known, so every time he comes home from college the subject goes straight back to the boarding house and stays silent in the boarding room. Fifth, there is difficulty in getting directions, feeling unfamiliar. When the subject was in Surabaya at the beginning of the semester, he was blind and didn't know where he was, making the subject confused and afraid to go out even just for a walk, so the subject just played around the campus area.

Other research results show coping with acculturation stress of students studying in Surabaya State University is as follows, first the subject asks for help and politely asks other people who use Surabaya Javanese to interpret Javanese so that the subject understands what is being said, the subject also learns and tries ask friends about Javanese in the Surabaya area, at least you can understand what Javanese people are talking about. Second, by repeating the lecture material every night, read textbooks and complete coursework before the deadline to overcome difficulties in learning during college, usually ask for help close friends to explain coursework, ask classmates who understand the material about lecture material. This is a form of coping from self-activity, namely an action that tries to eliminate or minimize the causes of stress and to improve the consequences. In other words, it is a person's attempt to cope, namely by acting directly. Third, the difference between Surabaya cuisine and the region of origin resulted in the subject receiving typical cuisine from the Surabaya region. The subject felt that Surabaya food was not suitable because he was not used to it, but over time he was able to accept the taste of the food. This business is a form of coping that includes self-activity. Fourth, try to get closer to college friends, the subject tries to get to know his boarding house friends. Look for study program organization groups or local organizations (Ormada) and join the Student Activity Unit (UKM) so you don't feel lonely. Fifth, the subject tries to ask boarding house friends, classmates to understand the streets of Surabaya, the subject asks for directions and which location to go to subject.

Based on the results of observations, it shows that the subject is still in the process of developing adapt, but have the confidence to be able to adapt because they have entered semester 4 and are starting to get used to the conditions in his new environment. Subject does not I'm afraid of being alone because I have many known friends. This is called problem focused impulsive coping according to Lazarus (Andriyani, 2017), namely that the individual feels optimistic or believes that he is able to solve the problem and the situation will improve again.

### **A. Understanding Acculturative Stress**

A degree of stress linked to transition known as acculturative stress is marked by a deterioration in both mental and physical health (Utami, 2015). The term "acculturative stress" describes a particular kind of stress, such as a decline in mental health status, particularly anxiety and depression, that is known to result from acculturation processes (Berry, 1997) in (Akhmad Zhauqi Thahir & Suryanto, 2022).

Since acculturation stress is a "cultural" phenomenon, the challenges associated with characterizing and operationalizing culture have significant effects on acculturation research as well as the development of relevant theories. Three distinct approaches are used to operationalize

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acculturation orientation: (i) interaction, or engaging in cross-cultural activities; (ii) cultural adoption; or (iii) identification with the dominant society. These differences in expression influence individual acculturation strategy preferences. This research shows that acculturative stress is operationalized in different ways.

It is still believed that a group's culture will adapt to one another quite quickly when they come into touch. It has also been suggested that people will adapt to cultural learning and unlearning processes with ease. But this isn't always the case—possibly not even most of the time. Cultures may clash, particularly if the interaction is antagonistic in nature. Conflict may result for the person, particularly in situations when resources are few.

In expansion, the learning and unlearning preparation may include mental struggle, for case incongruent values held by individuals of prevailing (lion's share) and non-dominant (minority) bunches. To overcome this issue, perspectives of acculturation, the concept of acculturative stretch was operationalized (Berry, 1970a). Acculturative stretch is an individual's reaction to life occasions (which are established in intercultural contact), which surpasses the limits of the individual's capacity to bargain with them (Berry & Ataca, 2000). Regularly, these responses incorporate expanded levels of discouragement (related to the involvement of social misfortune), and uneasiness (related to instability around how one will live within the modern society). This thought is for the most part comparable to culture stun (Oberg, 1960) but acculturative stretch is favored for two reasons. To begin with, the term "stun" has neurotic hints, whereas the term "stretch" incorporates a hypothetical premise within the ponder of how individuals bargain with negative encounters (called stretch triggers or stressors) by actualizing different adapting methodologies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In this study, people were seen as possibly able to bargain successfully with stressors in their lives and to realize a range of results (adjustments) extending from exceptionally negative to exceptionally positive. Hence, from a stretch point of view (as contradicted to stuns), acculturation encounters can be useful, such as giving a individual with openings and curiously encounters, whereas at the same time debilitating a person's life chances, such as restricting openings and diminishing the encounters that grant meaning to life.

There's another factor, which is that intercultural encounters contribute to stress since acculturation involves assimilating into several distinct cultures rather than just one. Therefore, it is possible to misidentify the source of the problem while using the term "culture." It is true that occasionally it may happen in a nondominant culture (like when there aren't enough resources, like education, to adjust to a new circumstance) or in a dominant culture (like when there is prejudice and discrimination).

From the explanation of the definition of acculturative and the sources that cause acculturative stress in students, it can be explained that they include homesickness. relocation and

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acclimatization of students to a new host community; typically, students spend the lecture term living in dorms or boarding houses as a halfway house. Longing for family, friends, and loved ones, loneliness, difficulty adjusting, and reflection at home are all included in the term "homesickness." It has been shown that students who suffer from separation anxiety and yearn for their families struggle more with acculturation. Students may become less engaged and interested in host community activities due to the presence of discriminatory practices and symbolic prejudice, which can also lead to directly observed discriminatory behaviors and psychological stress and alienation.

Culture shock college students also frequently struggle with cultural stress or culture shock, which causes them to become confused about the customs of their new culture because of cultural differences or incompatibilities. A significant portion of the student body was observed to suffer from culture shock often. Hatred, guilt, and fear. Due to emotions of anxiety and uncertainty, foreign students may physically tremble and dread the unknown when they relocate to a new sociocultural setting. The primary sources of threats to college students were determined to include prejudice, negative stereotypes, intergroup anxiety, practical dangers, and cultural threats pertaining to differences in societal values, morals, standards, beliefs, and attitudes.

According to Sandhu and Asrabadi in (W. T. Gebregergis, 2018), a number of additional general issues also play a role in the worries about acculturation that face overseas students. Concerns about not knowing how to communicate in the local language, feeling too shy to participate in social activities, not feeling like a part of the host community, and deciding whether to stay in the area or go back to one's hometown after finishing school are among the other issues.

### **B. Understanding of Coping Strategies**

According to Sarafino (2002) in (Maryam, 2017), coping is an attempt to make up for or lessen the stress that occurs. Haber and Runyon (1984) in (Maryam, 2017) define coping as any concept or behavior, whether constructive or destructive, that lessens an individual's exposure to stressful situations. Various attempts to overcome, overcome, or handle in the best way possible based on personal talents are collectively referred to as coping (Andriyani, 2019). Coping stress is a form of effort made by a person to overcome and minimize situations that are full of stress (stress) well cognitive or behavioral (Pradana, Suryanto & Meiyuntariningsih (2021).

The goal of coping methods is to manage circumstances and perceived demands that push, challenge, burden, and surpass one's own resources. A person's coping resources will determine the coping method they choose to solve different difficulties (Maryam, 2017). Different Coping Mechanisms. There are two forms of coping, according to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) in Maryam (2017): problem-focused coping, which is focused on issues, and emotion-focused coping, which is focused on emotions. The following is an explanation of these two forms of coping :

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### 1. Problem Focused Coping

Lazarus coined the phrase "problem-focused coping," which refers to cognitive stress-reduction techniques employed by people who confront challenges head-on and work through them (Andriyani, 2017). Coping mechanisms concentrate on issues and take steps to find solutions. People have a tendency to act in this way when they believe they still have control over and can address the issues they are facing. Problem-focused coping behavior is more likely to happen when someone thinks there is anything they can do to improve their circumstances or thinks they can use their resources to make a difference. Which includes focused problem solving strategies, namely :

- a. Planned issue solution involves taking an analytical approach to problem solving after reacting by making specific efforts to alter the situation. Someone who approaches issue resolution strategically, for instance, will work with complete focus, make excellent plans, and be prepared to alter their way of life in order to avoid problems that arise gradually and cannot be handled.
- b. Reacting to changes in circumstances that may indicate the amount of risk that must be taken is known as confrontational coping. For instance, a person using confrontative coping will resolve the issue by acting in opposition to the law, even when there are occasionally significant consequences.
- c. Seeking social support is the response of looking for outside help, be it in the form of knowledge, actual help, or emotional support. When someone is looking for social support, for instance, they are always attempting to figure out how to ask for assistance from people other than their family, such friends, neighbors, legislators, and experts. Both tangible and intangible forms of support are possible.

### 2. Emotion Focused Coping

Emotion-focused coping is Lazarus' term for a strategy for dealing with stress. Individuals respond to stressful situations in an emotional way, especially with defensive judgment (Andriyani, 2017). Emotion-focused coping strategies carry out purposeful efforts to modify emotional functioning without making efforts to change stressors directly. When people feel helpless to alter unpleasant circumstances and can only accept the situation as it is due to a lack of resources, they may engage in emotionally focused coping behaviors. Which includes coping strategies that focus on emotions, namely:

- a. Positive reappraisal, is to respond in a way that creates meaning and strives for personal growth, which may entail engaging in religious activities. Someone who practices positive reappraisal, for instance, will always have an optimistic outlook, learn from all that happens and never occurred, stop blaming others, and be content with what he still has.
- b. Accepting responsibility, that is, respond with a heightened sense of responsibility for the issues at hand and make an effort to restore order. For

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instance, a person who takes responsibility for their actions would accept the current situation as it is and be able to adjust to the circumstances.

- c. Self controlling, that is, to respond by putting appropriate rules into thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. Someone who uses this coping strategy, for instance, could solve issues. I promise to never act hastily and to carefully consider my options before acting.
- d. Distancing, that is maintaining your distance to prevent issues from getting in the way. Someone who engages in this type of coping, for instance, solves problems. His attitude suggests that he doesn't give a damn about the difficulties at hand and even makes an effort to forget about them.
- e. Escape avoidance, that is, evading the issues at hand. For instance, based on his attitude, a person who uses this coping mechanism to solve problems is usually evasive and frequently even engages in harmful behaviors like staying up late to sleep, abusing drugs, and refusing to interact with others.

### C. Coping Strategies in Cultural Perspective (Subandi, 2019)

#### 1. Passive or Avoidance Coping vs Active or Approach Coping

Chun et al. (2006) in (Subandi, 2019) claim that members of individualistic groups often employ coping mechanisms that are a reflection of their preferences. Conversely, members in collectivistic societies, who tend to view stressors as unfortunate and have a stronger external locus of control, depend more on avoidance coping, which is a reflection of their desire to meet coping objectives.

Based on the findings of an evidence-based literature review by Ben and Kuo (2011) in (Subandi, 2019), people from Asian backgrounds, as well as, to a lesser extent, people from African and Latino backgrounds, are more likely to use coping mechanisms that center on "Passive," or "Secret," "Targeting Internal," or "Secondary Control," as well as avoidance, withdrawal, and patience.

#### 2. Self-Focused Coping vs Meeting Others-Focused Coping

Individuals in individualistic cultural groups who prioritize self-focused coping and have a greater drive to maximize pleasure are more likely to focus their coping efforts on controlling their environment to fit their needs and personality, according to Chun et al. (2006) in (Subandi, 2019).

#### 3. Direct Coping vs Indirect Coping

Braje and Hall's (2016) research revealed that Chinese Americans had greater degrees of indirect coping and embarrassment/losing face. Additional research, compiled by Chun et al. (2006) in (Subandi, 2019), revealed that individuals from individualistic cultures—like Germans and European-Americans—are more likely to employ action-focused coping strategies as adults and children. direct coping, which includes problem-focused coping.



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### **4. Religious Coping**

Bardi and Guerra (2011) state in Subandi (2019) that non-Western societies are more likely to use religion as a coping mechanism. Religious coping is less common among societies that value individuality when it comes to adjusting to a new nation. People are supposed to assume responsibility in a society that values equality. Decisions on what to do are typically decided by higher authority in hierarchical cultures.

African Americans and African Canadians typically use spiritual, religious, and ritual-based coping strategies, according to research by Ben & Kuo (2011). According to study by Braam et al. (2010), religious coping is also relevant in European cultural groupings. Specifically, respondents who are Turkish and Moroccan are more likely to view an occurrence as a punishment from God, whereas Dutch natives place a greater weight on this concept, which is quite low.

Because Moroccan respondents believed that "mental health problems do not occur among Muslims," prayer and mosque attendance were shown to be connected with reduced levels of depressive symptoms. On the other hand, Surinamese Muslims and Hindus who attended mosques or temples reported greater prevalence of depressed symptoms.

## **CONCLUSION**

Acculturative stress poses significant challenges for international students adjusting to new cultural environments in higher education. It encompasses various stressors, including language barriers, academic pressures, and cultural adaptation difficulties, which can adversely affect students' mental and physical well-being. The research reveals that acculturation stress is a form of stress experienced by individuals adapting to a new environment, such as Surabaya. This can involve difficulty understanding the Javanese language, interacting with friends, and studying in a more advanced environment. The subject also experiences discomfort due to differences in food tastes and the feeling of inferiority. Living away from family can be painful, as the subject often stays silent and silent when returning home. Additionally, the subject faces difficulties in getting directions and feeling unfamiliar, as they are blind and afraid to go out.

Research shows that students at Surabaya State University cope with acculturation stress by asking for help, repeating lectures, reading textbooks, and completing coursework. They also seek help from friends and classmates to understand Javanese. The subject also tries to adapt to Surabaya cuisine, adjusting to the region over time. They also seek support from college friends, study program organizations, and local organizations like Ormada and UKM. They also ask for directions and help with understanding Surabaya's streets. However, coping strategies play a crucial role in mitigating acculturative stress. Problem-focused approaches, such as seeking social support and engaging in active problem-solving, empower students to address specific stressors effectively. Emotion-focused coping strategies help students manage the emotional distress associated with acculturative stress, fostering psychological resilience.

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Cultural perspectives influence the choice and effectiveness of coping strategies, with individualistic and collectivistic cultures emphasizing different approaches. Understanding these cultural nuances is essential for providing tailored support to international students.

To support the well-being and academic success of international students, educational institutions must offer comprehensive orientation programs, language support services, and culturally sensitive mental health resources. By fostering a supportive environment, institutions can enhance the overall experience of international students and promote diversity within the campus community.

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