



Increase Students' Self-Confidence And Reduce Anxiety During Covid-19: Is Coping Strategy Becomes The Solution?

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effect of coping strategies on increasing self-confidence and reducing anxiety. This study adopted a mixed method. Seventy students taken from primary school. This study used questionnaires as a quantitative instruments to measure students' confidence and anxiety as well as in-depth interviews through Zoom Meetings as a qualitative instruments. Quantitative data analysis using IBM SPSS to find descriptive statistics, normality and paired sample t-test serves to determine differences in the value of self-confidence and anxiety before and after the intervention and qualitative data analysis through the data is sorted by categorization based on similarity and a collection of similar phrases is grouped. The results of the quantitative study showed that coping strategies for 9 meetings could effectively increase self-confidence and reduce anxiety of students. While the qualitative results showed that the majority of students stated that their self-confidence increased and anxiety decreased drastically. This research obtained empirical evidence that coping strategies have great impact to increase self-confidence, as well as reduce the level of anxiety of students.

Keywords: *anxiety; coping strategy; covid-19; self-confidence*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efek strategi coping terhadap peningkatan rasa percaya diri dan penurunan kecemasan. Penelitian ini mengadopsi metode campuran. Tujuh puluh siswa diambil dari sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini menggunakan kuesioner sebagai instrumen kuantitatif untuk mengukur kepercayaan diri dan kecemasan serta wawancara melalui Zoom Meetings sebagai instrumen kualitatif. Analisis data kuantitatif menggunakan IBM SPSS untuk mencari statistik deskriptif, normalitas dan paired sample t-test berfungsi untuk mengetahui perbedaan nilai kepercayaan diri dan kecemasan sebelum dan sesudah intervensi dan analisis data kualitatif melalui pengurutan data berdasarkan kategorisasi berdasarkan kesamaan dan kumpulan frasa serupa dikelompokkan. Hasil penelitian kuantitatif menunjukkan bahwa strategi coping efektif dapat meningkatkan rasa percaya diri dan mengurangi kecemasan. Sedangkan hasil kualitatif menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa menyatakan rasa percaya diri meningkat dan kecemasan menurun drastis. Penelitian ini menjadi bukti empiris bahwa strategi coping berdampak besar untuk meningkatkan rasa percaya diri, serta menurunkan tingkat kecemasan siswa.

Kata Kunci: *kecemasan; strategi mengatasi; covid-19; kepercayaan diri*

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Introduction

COVID-19 that comes from Wuhan city China country began to attack Indonesian society (Leal Filho et al., 2021). The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic (Blanco et al., 2020). Based on warning issued by WHO, the Indonesian government has implemented a number of measures to prevent COVID-19 from spreading massively in the society, for example applying social distancing (Chang et al., 2020) and physical distancing (Mahdy, 2020), lock down (Morgül et al., 2020), then to prohibiting daily activities in groups with relatively large numbers in public places, shops, industry and schools (Lee & Chen, 2020). The existence of these policies often triggers negative effects on the psychological aspects of society (Saladino, Algeri, & Auriemma, 2020; Li, Wang, Xue, Zhao, & Zhu, 2020; Cielo, Ulberg, & Di Giacomo, 2021), including students at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Self-confidence is one of the psychology aspects that generally has a definition as a student's belief on their own's ability to do the best assignment in school or sports activities. Self-confidence is one of the aspects that must be developed in students character, because by possess a high level of self-confidence will help them become more enthusiastic in studying at school and at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent studies report that crises in most of the current education system are due to low self-confidence which causes low participation in learning activities (Ravichandran, 2021). According to Purnomo & Hariono, (2020) self-confidence is needed for a student to be implicated in learning activities. The results of another study found that the self-confidence factor is the key for student's to achieve optimal performance in a competition and a high level of confidence is claimed to be able to overcome other psychological factors, such as anxiety, mood, worry, nervousness, or anxiety about a situation (Balyan et al., 2016). However, it is better when someone has a low level of self-confidence, then often leads to higher levels of anxiety, depression, stress and has an impact on decreased performance (Marshall & Gibson, 2017). Recent studies have reported that a high level of self-confidence can overcome transmission of COVID-19 (Li et al., 2020). In addition, low levels of self-confidence will greatly affect a person's motivation and learning outcomes (Malureanu et al., 2021). Even the biggest disadvantage is when a person has a low level of self-confidence, it is possible to trigger extreme stress (Litwic-Kaminska, 2020).

Anxiety is a psychological aspect that currently often appears during education in the COVID-19 era (Wang et al., 2021; Aperribai, Cortabarría, Aguirre, Verche, & Borges, 2020; Faulkner et al., 2020; Basheti, Mhaidat, & Mhaidat, 2021). A recent study reported that students' anxiety levels while taking lessons in the COVID-19 era increased by 12% (Moeller et al., 2020). A student who experiences high anxiety, might have feelings of fear, anxiety, panic and worse can lead to weakness, nausea, dizziness, shaking, loss of concentration and decreased motor skills (Runswick, Roca, Williams, Bezodis, & North, 2018; Sundarasan et al., 2020). Recent studies have reported that several factors that cause the increment of anxiety levels are online learning which has various obstacles is a trigger for anxiety symptoms in students (Basheti, Mhaidat & Mhaidat, 2021). Several factors caused the level of anxiety during the pandemic increase drastically, were students were afraid of contracting COVID-19, students had to undergo isolation/lock down (Millar et al., 2021), or the difficulty of carrying out physical education learning online (Jumareng et al., 2021).

Coping strategy is one of the lessons that can be used in sports and in the context of physical education learning to reduce anxiety levels in students and is claimed to have the power to trigger self-confidence (Radochoński et al., 2011). According to the theory of coping is a psychological response to a threat, loss or negative things and through coping strategies all problems that attack aspects can be overcome (Skapinakis et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Bamuhair et al., (2015) explained that coping is a theoretical framework for controlling anxiety through a series of activities to assess and evaluate the danger, threat or hand that comes to students. In coping, there are several strategies that can be used, starting from problem focused coping, emotional focused coping (Muthmainah, Purwanta, Suwarjo, & Mariani, 2021; Basith

et al., 2021). Previous studies have proven that effective coping strategies can overcome the stress experienced by a person (Gustems-Carnicer, Calderón, & Calderón-Garrido, 2019; Freire et al., 2020; Babicka-Wirkus, Wirkus, Stasiak, & Kozłowski, 2021). According to Cosh & Tully, (2015) coping strategies have been used in the context of sports and physical education and have been shown to significantly reduce anxiety levels. However, not all coping strategies are effective in reducing anxiety (Basith et al., 2021). Although research on coping strategies had been extensively researched internationally and reported by previous studies (Vidic, Martin, & Oxhandler, 2016; Kaplánová, 2019; Gustems-Carnicer et al., 2019; Morales & Pérez-Mármol, 2019; Babicka-Wirkus et al., 2021). But as far as we are concerned, our study is the first work that try to explain how self-confidence can be increased and anxiety can be decreased through the application of a coping strategy. In addition, our research offers something different from previous studies, namely conducting research in a mixed method, therefore the data was collected by quantitative and qualitative, and the results were much more accurate.

The physical education learning process in the current COVID-19 era often triggers negative effects on the psychological aspects of students, such as laziness, depression, stress (Alzween et al., 2021), frustration, anxiety, fear and loss of self-confidence to learn (Espino-Díaz et al., 2020). In addition, several studies have reported that in an outbreak of COVID-19 it often creates negative moods such as panic, helplessness, and anger (Du et al., 2021). With the emergence of negative effects on the psychological aspects of students, it will have an impact on decreasing student learning outcomes in physical education classes. A recent study reported that psychological aspects have an important role in influencing students' academic achievement levels (Phan et al., 2019; Camacho-Zuñiga et al., 2021).

The importance of this research lies in the need to increase aspects of self-confidence and reduce student anxiety during physical education learning, because these two aspects are very important and support optimally on academic achievement in the period before and before COVID-19 (Ouyang et al., 2020). A previous study reported that students who have high self-confidence will be much more successful than those who do not have self-confidence (Ilhan & Bardakçı, 2020). Furthermore, a recent study reported that anxiety is a psychological aspect that has an important role in sports activities (Knowles et al., 2021), and physical education learning, because anxiety is closely related to student performance. Given how important the psychological aspect between self-confidence and anxiety is, we consider that this research is important. This effort is expected to be able to presentation further research directions on learning psychological skills and to provide useful data for designing learning psychological skills in the field of physical education.

The objective of this study were: (1) First, to increase students' self-confidence levels during COVID-19 through the application of coping strategies. (2) second, to reduce students' self-anxiety levels during COVID-19 through the application of coping strategies.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed method, which is a study that combines quantitative and qualitative research types (Hanif et al., 2021). The design used in this mixed method is the explanatory sequential. The population taken by the researcher was students from the Ibtidaiyah Junior High School and sampling by using a purposive technique, namely selecting students with female gender and those who had symptoms of insecurity and seemed to often feel anxious when attending physical education lessons. Before the research was conducted, all samples were asked to write a letter of willingness to participate in all activities in this study. The characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Sample

	N=70	Mean±SD
Age (y)		20.67±1.34
Height (cm)		1.61±2.17
Weight (kg)		57.67±4.45

Instruments for quantitative research using questionnaires, including: **Self-Confidence**. The instrument for measuring self-confidence was a questionnaire that adopted from Sari et al., (2015) with 19 items, but researchers developed it into 20 item. This questionnaire using a Likert scale with points 1 to 5. This instrument has a validity level of 0.88 and a reliability of 0.79. **Anxiety**. In this study used the self-rating anxiety scale (SAS) to measure students' anxiety levels. This instrument has been used by previous studies and has Cronbach's alpha = 0.897 and intraclass correlation = 0.913. To fill out this questionnaire, you can use a Likert scale ranging from 1 = never feel, 2 = sometimes feel, 3 = often feel and 4 = very often feel. Questions 1-5 characterize emotional cues of anxiety, while questions 6-20 indicate physical symptoms of anxiety (Sundarasan et al., 2020). While the instrument for qualitative research is through in-depth interviews with samples with a duration of 30 minutes per person and interviews were conducted through Zoom Meeting using Indonesian (Hanif et al., 2021).

This research has received permission from the Ibtidaiyah Middle School with approval date 3/03/2021 and approval number E 201-03-2021. All subjects were given 40 minutes to fill in the self-confidence and anxiety instruments in the pretest and posttest activities. After completing the questionnaire, data was collected and analyzed by 3 psychology experts. The treatment program was given 3 times a week, namely on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays with a duration of 60 minutes for 9 online-based meetings. While the qualitative research procedure is through in-depth interviews with samples for 30 minutes per person in their respective homes and interviews were conducted using Indonesian language through the Zoom Meeting platform. For more details on the Coping Strategy program, it is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Coping Strategy Program for Kids

Variable	Indicator	Activity
Coping Strategy	Coping Emotional	1. Learn Breathing Exercises.
		2. Participate in Exercise.
		3. Play Music
		4. Play a Game.
		5. Watch a Funny Video.
Coping problem		1. Ask for Help.
		2. Engage in Problem-Solving.
		3. Tips for Parents.

Quantitative data were analyzed using the IBM SPSS 25.0 application in order to find descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation), normality, and Paired sample t-test is use to determine the increase in self-confidence and decrease in anxiety before and after the intervention (Altinkök, 2017). Meanwhile, qualitative data were analyzed through several stages which include: (1) Interviews were transcribed word for word. (2) The interview transcript was read over and over again by the researcher and 3 experts in the field of psychology to gain a broad understanding. (3) The data was sorted by categorization based on similarity. (4) A collection of similar phrases that were grouped and organized into narrative data (Hanif et al., 2021).

Results and Discussion

The first results in the quantitative study showed that the normality test was normal ($p > 0.05$). Meanwhile, the Paired sample t-test analysis showed that there was an increase in self-confidence ($p < 0.05$) (Table 3) and a decrease in anxiety among students due to the effect of coping strategies ($p < 0.05$) (Table 4).

Table 3. The Paired Samples t-test results of the pre-test and post-test self-confidence variables

Variable	Test	Mean±SD	t-test	
			t	p
Self-Confidence	Pre-test	50.64±5.62	35.75	0.000
	Post-test	79.94±4.21		

Table 4. The Paired Samples t-test results of the pre-test and post-test anxiety variables

Variable	Test	Mean±SD	t-test	
			t	p
Anxiety	Pre-test	70.27±5.22	13.12	0.000
	Post-test	58.69±5.74		

While the results of qualitative research from in-depth interviews with the subject obtained the following findings:

Impact of Coping Strategies on Self-Confidence

Some students argued that, "Coping strategy is the right method to use during the COVID-19 pandemic because it has a positive impact in changing our confidence level. For example, it change our confidence from not confident to use a laptop to be willing to learn.

Some students argued that "our level of self-confidence got better after learning coping strategies during the pandemic. Before learning coping strategies, we always felt lazy, unexcited and unable to concentrate when taking online physical education lessons. However, after learning coping strategies, the real change was observed from our enthusiasm, motivation and confidence are increasing to take part in learning in online physical education classes."

Some students argued that "Physical education during the COVID-19 pandemic made us lazy, lacked of mood and often difficult to concentrate and the worse was it triggered insecurity feeling to learn, due to the lecturer repeatedly gave many assignments that relatively difficult for us. But now we become more enthusiastic to learn even though the assignments given by the teacher are difficult, and all because of the coping strategies".

Impact of Coping Strategies on Anxiety

The students argued that, "Learning physical education and sports activities during the COVID-19 pandemic often makes us feel anxious, some of the conditions that trigger anxiety for us are fear of contracting COVID-19, unable to use laptops or Zoom Meeting platform, unable to do the assignments given by the lecturer, hesitate and are afraid to ask. But all of these problems can be solved by learning coping strategies." This is also in accordance with the opinion of Basith et al., (2021) that coping seeks to overcome the problems faced by a person by creating a positive thought, for example thinking about finding solutions to solve problems and trying to change negative emotions into positive ones.

Some students argued that, "We feel lucky to be able to learn coping strategies, because it makes us free from anxious feeling when facing a problem in learning in physical education class. And we can find solutions and solve problems independently without help from

teachers." This is in accordance with the opinion of Basith et al., (2021) coping strategies can change conditions and reduce the burden of problems on a person, so that it could not generate high anxiety.

The main goal of our study is to increase students' self-confidence and the second goal is to reduce students' anxiety levels in physical education classes during COVID-19.

The results of data analysis showed that coping strategies were proven to significantly increase students' self-confidence to be higher than before. The first finding in this study is in line with previous studies which reported that emotional coping was an effective way to increase students' self-confidence in learning (Dolenc, 2015). According to Borkoles et al., (2018) coping strategies that focus on emotions are efforts to reduce negative things, for example eliminating feelings of anxiety and insecurity. In addition, coping strategies that focus on emotions can manage students' negative feelings in a positive direction (Heffer & Willoughby, 2017; González-García et al., 2019). In addition, emotional-focused coping strategies have a significant effect on controlling emotions and are the key to improving cognitive, affective, motivational abilities (Basith et al., 2021), while problem-focused coping strategies can make a person have the ability to overcome a problem (Muthmainah et al., 2021). A recent study reported that coping strategies are the key to dealing with all problems that often arise during the current COVID-19 pandemic (Yano et al., 2021). Coping strategies are able to change threats into challenges, so that they can increase faith and self-confidence, students are more motivated and able to control the situation becomes more conducive (Litwic-Kaminska, 2020).

The second finding in this study shows that coping strategies that focus on emotional and problems have a positive effect on reducing students' anxiety level in physical education classes during the COVID-19 period. Basically, coping strategies that are integrated in physical education programs can facilitate students to gain skills in managing and reduce anxiety or stress to be lower (Nopembri et al., 2019). Coping strategies have the main strength, namely being able to manage negative thoughts into positive ones or change bad conditions becomes better (Pons, Viladrich, Ramis, & Polman, 2018; Borkoles et al., 2018). Previous studies also support the results of this study, where coping strategies are an effective method for a person to control and reduce stress levels (Bamuhair et al., 2015) and anxiety (Millar et al., 2021). In addition, using coping strategies with properly will be an effective pedagogical tool to reduce stress and anxiety of students when studying both offline and online class (Basith et al., 2021). The ability to manage anxiety could create greater opportunities to achieve high academic achievement.

Conclusion

After receiving a coping strategy program that focused on emotional and problems for 9 times meetings, our research confirmed that students' self-confidence began to increase and the anxiety aspect decreased drastically. This study was limited by online filling method of self-confidence and anxiety questionnaires, that could not be ensure the honesty level of participants. In terms of future work, it would be interesting to repeat the experiments described here by direct filling method towards questionnaire and closely monitored and improve the psychological aspects of mood state or can reduce the fear aspects of students.

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