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A Comparative Study Of The Adaptation Process And Stress Among Regular And Transfer Students During The Thesis Writing Process At STIKes Karsa Husada Garut

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Abstract

Thesis is the final task that must be done by the student as one of the requirements in obtaining his bachelor degree. In the process of formulation of students meet various kinds of difficulties so that it becomes a pressure on students who will cause stress. Stress is a condition of physical and psychological pressure due to the demands of the self and the environment. Students who are preparing a thesis should be able to adapt in the face of stress and obstacles they experienced. Stress should be anticipated and managed appropriately so that the process of adaptation in the preparation of the thesis does not cause a maladtive range. This study uses a comparative descriptive method. The sample is determined by simple random sampling approach, with 84 people consisting of 38 regular students and 46 transfer students, while for the data collecting of the researcher using questioner. After testing the hypothesis at the stress level obtained results p value: 0,554> alpha (α = 0,05). This indicates that Ha is rejected, ie there is no difference in stress level between regular students and transfer students. With the average result of normal stress level. While in hypothesis testing of adaptation process got p value: 0,024 <alpha (α = 0,05), this mean Ha accepted that show difference of process of adaptation between student of regular and transfer student. With the difference of transfer students more maladaptif than regular students are more adaptive, this happens because transfer students experience some obstacles in the process of arranging the scheme of them is because the focus of attention transfer students diverted by work and family. It is expected that the education can improve the support, facilities and policies to support the smoothness of students in the process of preparing the thesis. For students who will prepare the thesis is expected to add insight about stress and adaptation so that it can be a motivation in completing the process of preparing the thesis.

Keywords: *Stress, adaptation, regular students, transfer students.*

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INTRODUCTION

Education is of utmost importance to humanity because it fosters high-quality, intellectually capable individuals and combats ignorance(Perceka, 2020a). The stages of education in Indonesia include higher education, which follows secondary

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education; one of the levels within higher education is the bachelor's degree. To earn a bachelor's degree, one must first complete studies at a university (Perceka, 2020b).

One of the leading health institutions in Garut is the Karsa Husada Garut College of Health Sciences (STIKes). One of the programs offered there is the Bachelor of Nursing (S1) program. The Bachelor of Nursing program at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut consists of both regular and non-regular/transfer students. Regular students are those from the general admission track, while transfer students are those from the special admission track—specifically, those continuing their studies from an Associate's degree (D3) to a Bachelor's degree (S1), also known as the non-regular/transfer track (Perceka, Erlinawati, et al., 2021).

Students at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut will face a series of academic requirements and obligations that must be fulfilled to earn a bachelor's degree in their chosen field (Awaludin et al., 2021). One of the requirements that plays a key role in determining a student's graduation from the institution is the research report. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian Dictionary), a research report is a scientific paper that must be written by students as part of the final requirements of their academic education. A research report is a scientific paper based on field research and/or literature review, prepared by students in accordance with their field of study as a final assignment in their formal higher education program (Perceka, Rusyani, et al., 2021). The research report serves as proof of the student's academic ability in conducting research related to educational issues within their field of study. (Fard et al., 2020) explains that research is a scientific endeavor that requires precision, time, effort, and internal capacity. The internal capacities a researcher must possess to conduct research effectively include: a relevant academic background, the ability to reason and recall information, the ability to think originally and objectively, patience, the capacity for collaboration, and personal perseverance (FAWZIYYA, n.d.).

The research report remains the primary obstacle to completing studies. According to the academic department at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut, among the 2024 graduates, at least 10 regular students and 5 transfer students have yet to complete their final research reports. If these students fail to complete their final research reports within two years, they face the risk of being dismissed or dropping out (DO). Various factors hinder the completion of research reports; among them, the primary difficulty in the writing process is translating ideas into logical, systematic, and communicative text while adhering to standard writing conventions. Additionally, activities unrelated to the research report can divert attention during its preparation. Furthermore, this can reduce motivation to work on the research report when interest, energy, and focus shift toward those other activities (Zimmerman et al., 2023). Boredom in working on the research report, the lengthy process of data search and collection, difficulty balancing time between the research report and other activities—such as work—and a lack of English proficiency to read the literature. If these obstacles are not promptly resolved, they can lead to stress, low self-esteem, frustration, loss of motivation, delays in completing the research report, and in some cases, the decision to abandon the research report altogether. According to various sources, the stress experienced by students while writing research reports encompasses physical, emotional, intellectual, and interpersonal symptoms (MacCann et al., 2020).

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The process students go through when working on research reports makes them vulnerable to stress. Stress is a condition characterized by physical and psychological pressure resulting from internal and environmental demands (Bruffaerts et al., 2018). This means that a person can be said to be experiencing stress when they are under internal pressure due to demands originating from within themselves and their environment (Amin, 2017).

Stress does not always have a negative impact on an individual; it can also have a positive impact. Stress with negative effects is called distress, while stress with positive effects is called eustress. The differing impacts of stress on individuals stem from variations in their individual characteristics. These differences in characteristics determine an individual's response to the stimulus that serves as the source of stress; thus, each individual's response will vary even if the stressor is the same. Short-term stress may have beneficial and positive effects, but if stress persists continuously, the consequences become negative, as it can disrupt health and other aspects of life. Factors influencing stress among students during the preparation of research reports include internal environmental factors—such as physical condition, behavior, interests, emotional intelligence, intellectual intelligence, and spiritual intelligence—and external environmental factors, namely tasks, the social environment, and the physical environment, both within the family and on campus (Charitaki et al., 2021).

(Korosando & Raji, 2020) Based on initial observations of regular students, the researcher found feelings of unpreparedness regarding the process they were facing, as well as confusion, stress, anxiety, and so on. Some of the obstacles in this process include students still feeling confused about the process they are undergoing, research titles overlapping with those of other students, difficulties in finding references or research literature, determining the research problem and collecting data, differing arguments among advisors, and balancing time with ongoing coursework. Meanwhile, initial observations of transfer students revealed feelings of confusion, stress, anxiety, worry, sleep disturbances, and a decreased appetite, while the obstacles they faced included a lack of mastery and understanding regarding the preparation of research reports, difficulties meeting with their academic advisors, and the transfer students' busy schedules (Messi et al., 2018).

To address these feelings and obstacles, students are required to adjust or adapt to the process. Adaptation is a change that accompanies an individual's response to changes in the environment and can affect the integrity of the body—both physiologically and psychologically—resulting in adaptive behavior (Schunk, 2023). The adaptation mechanisms of each student in facing the research report preparation process will naturally vary and can be either adaptive or maladaptive. This is based on several factors, including the fact that in preparing a research report, students are required to be more independent and disciplined in managing a tight schedule to achieve planning targets related to their research report, conducting field surveys, thinking and writing scientifically, undergoing the guidance process with their academic advisor, and integrating learning experiences and theories acquired during lectures in previous semesters.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive-comparative approach. The study population consisted of 60 regular students who were in the process of preparing research reports at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut in 2025 and 86 transfer students who were in

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the process of preparing research reports at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut in 2025. The sampling technique used in this study was random sampling, comprising 38 regular students and 46 transfer students, and the data collection method employed was a questionnaire. A validity test for stress levels was not conducted because the study used the standardized DASS (Depression Anxiety Stress Scale) measurement scale, and the reliability test employed the Cronbach's Alpha formula. This study was conducted over a period of 1.5 months, from March 14, 2025, to May 30, 2025, at the STIKes Karsa Husada Garut campus.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

a. Stress Level Results

1. Stress Levels of Regular Students

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Stress Levels Among Regular Students During the Process of Preparing Research Reports at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut in 2025

Stress	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Normal	20	52,6
Low	9	23,7
Middle	6	15,8
Heavy	3	7,9
Very Heavy	0	0
AMount	**38**	**100**

Based on Table 1 above, it is known that more than half (52.6%) of the regular students experienced normal stress levels, and none of the students experienced extremely severe stress.

2. Stress Levels of Transfer Students

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Stress Levels Among Transfer Students During the Process of Preparing Research Reports at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut in 2025

Stress	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Normal	26	52,5
Low	129	26,1
Middle	7	15,2
Heavy	1	2,2
Very Heavy	0	0
AMount	**46**	**100**

Based on Table 2, it is shown that more than half (56.5%) of the transfer students experienced normal stress levels, and none of the students experienced extremely severe stress.

3. Differences in Stress Levels Between Regular Students and Transfer Students

Table 3. Differences in Stress Levels Between Regular Students and Transfer Students

Class	N	Mean	Sum of	P Value

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		Rank	Ranks	
Reguler	38	44,07	1674,50	0,554
Transfer	46	41,21	1895	

Table 3 above shows that the average stress level for regular students was 44.07, while the average stress level for transfer students was 41.21.

4. Adaptation Process Results

a) Adaptation Process Results for Regular Students

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of the Adaptation Process for Regular Students During the Research Report Preparation Process at Karsa Husada Garut Health College in 2025

Adaptation Process	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Adaptif	20	52,6
Maladaptif	18	47,4
Amout	**38**	**100**

Table 4 shows that more than half (52.6%) of regular students are adaptive, and almost half (47.4%) of regular students are maladaptive.

b) Results of the Transfer Student Adaptation Process

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of the Transfer Student Adaptation Process During the Research Report Preparation Process at Karsa Husada Garut Health College in 2025

Adaptation Process	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Adaptif	13	28,3
Maladaptif	33	71,7
Amout	**46**	**100**

Table 5 shows that more than half (71.7%) of transfer students were maladaptive, and nearly half (28.3%) were maladaptive.

5. Differences in the Adaptation Process between Regular and Transfer Students

Table 6. Differences in the Adaptation Process between Regular and Transfer Students

Class	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank	P-Value
Reguler	38	36,89	1402	0,024
Transfer	46	47,13	2168	
Amout	84			

Table 6 shows that the average adaptation process for regular students is 36.89, while the average adaptation process for transfer students is 47.13.

Discussion

Research reports are final assignment documents submitted by students to

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fulfill one of the requirements for obtaining an academic degree from a higher education institution. These reports must follow standardized and systematic writing principles as well as scientifically accountable methods (Aisa et al., 2021). During the preparation process, students encounter various difficulties, which become a source of pressure that may lead to stress (Hasibuan, 2020). Therefore, students themselves must be able to adapt in dealing with the stress they experience**.**

a. Stress Levels Among Regular and Transfer Students

Stress has different meanings for each individual. Some people define stress as pressure, tension, unwanted external demands, or an emotional response (Welong et al., 2020). According to the Psychology Foundation of Australia (2014), stress levels based on the DASS (Depression Anxiety Stress Scale) measurement can be categorized into five levels: normal stress, mild stress, moderate stress, severe stress, and extremely severe stress.

At STIKes Karsa Husada Garut, there were 60 regular students and 86 transfer students who were in the process of preparing research reports. Based on research conducted during April and May involving 38 regular student respondents and 46 transfer student respondents, the results showed that, according to gender characteristics, the frequency distribution of stress levels among regular students consisted of 22 male respondents and 16 female respondents. Meanwhile, among transfer students, there were 25 male respondents and 21 female respondents.

Based on age characteristics, the frequency distribution among regular students showed an average age of 21.66 years, with the youngest being 20 years old and the oldest 23 years old. In contrast, transfer students had an average age of 32.98 years, with the youngest being 23 years old and the oldest 53 years old.

The frequency distribution of stress levels among regular students during the preparation of research reports at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut in 2025 showed that 52.6% or 20 students experienced normal stress, 23.7% or 9 students experienced mild stress, 15.8% or 6 students experienced moderate stress, and 7.9% or 3 students experienced severe stress, while none experienced extremely severe stress. Among transfer students, the results showed that 56% or 26 students experienced normal stress, 26.1% or 12 students experienced mild stress, 15.2% or 7 students experienced moderate stress, and 2.2% or 1 student experienced severe stress, while none experienced extremely severe stress.

The research findings indicate that male respondents outnumbered female respondents in both regular and transfer student groups. This is because the distribution of male students was greater than that of female students, with the majority experiencing normal stress levels. This finding contradicts Edward's opinion cited in Pathmanathan (2012), which states that stress levels in men tend to be higher.

Regarding age characteristics, the findings showed that the average age of students was 21.66 years and 32.98 years, with the highest age being 23 years and the lowest 20 years among regular students, while among transfer students the highest age was 53 years and the lowest 23 years. Both groups predominantly experienced normal stress levels. This finding contradicts the study conducted by Susi Purwati (2010), which stated that differences in stress levels are related to age variation. According to the study, the higher the age level, the greater the tendency for stress levels to decrease. Thus, increasing age is associated with lower stress levels.

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The research results also showed that the average stress level among regular students was 46.29, while among transfer students it was 39.37. Hypothesis testing using the Mann–Whitney U Test produced a p-value of 0.554, which is greater than the alpha value ($\alpha = 0.05$). This indicates that Ha was rejected and Ho was accepted, meaning that there was no significant difference in stress levels between regular and transfer students.

These findings are consistent with research conducted by Muldianto et al. (2015) concerning the comparison of stress levels between advanced program students and regular students in relation to insomnia among final-semester students completing research reports in the Nursing Science Study Program at Unsrat Manado. The study also concluded that there was no difference in stress levels between advanced program students and regular students.

Responses to stressors vary among students depending on factors such as personality traits, duration and number of stressors, past experiences, personality type, and stage of development (Rahmat, 2009). An individual's assessment of a stressor will influence their ability to take preventive actions against stress-inducing factors (Safaria & Saputra, 2009).

Most students at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut who were preparing their final research reports experienced normal and mild levels of stress. This indicates that students generally did not face overly significant problems related to stress levels. Good integrity development among students who faced pressure during the research report preparation process resulted in normal and mild stress responses. These levels of stress are not considered highly dangerous, meaning they do not negatively affect the students' personal development.

The pressure experienced by students during the preparation of research reports is viewed as a common responsibility that every student must face and is therefore regarded as part of the learning process. Mild stress generally lasts longer than normal stress, usually ranging from several hours to several days. Sudarya's study (2014) stated that there are two factors influencing stress among students during the preparation of research reports: internal environmental factors, including physical condition, behavior, interests, emotional intelligence, intellectual intelligence, and spiritual intelligence; and external environmental factors, including assignments, social environment, and physical environment, both within the family and the campus environment.

Stress at normal and mild levels is actually necessary for individuals because it encourages them to work harder in overcoming stressors. However, if stress becomes excessive, an individual's functions may become impaired, causing the individual to feel helpless. To address student stress in completing research reports, appropriate strategies or patterns for coping with stress are required. As stated by Mangkunegara (2013), there are three patterns for coping with stress: healthy patterns, harmonious patterns, and pathological patterns.

A healthy pattern refers to the best way of dealing with stress, namely through the ability to manage behavior and actions so that stress does not create disturbances, but instead promotes health and personal growth. A harmonious pattern refers to coping with stress through the ability to manage time and activities harmoniously without causing various obstacles. Lastly, a pathological pattern refers to coping with stress in ways that result in physical as well as socio-psychological disturbances.

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Stress must be managed positively so that it can become positive stress, or *eustress*, which is beneficial stress that does not disturb individuals and instead creates feelings of happiness and enthusiasm. Eustress is a positive, healthy, and constructive response to stress.

b. Adaptation of Regular and Transfer Students

Adaptation is a process in which individuals respond to environmental demands and develop the ability to cope with stress. Individual adaptation to stress is evaluated within adaptive or maladaptive ranges (Stuart, 2009). Although stress levels may remain within the normal range, stress should still be anticipated and managed properly so that the adaptation process during the preparation of research reports does not lead to maladaptive conditions.

The results of the study showed that, based on gender characteristics where males were the majority in both groups, regular students demonstrated that 20 students (52.6%) showed adaptive responses, while the remainder showed maladaptive responses. Meanwhile, among transfer students, the results indicated that 33 students (71.7%) demonstrated maladaptive responses, while the rest showed adaptive responses. These findings indicate that regular students were predominantly adaptive, whereas transfer students tended to be predominantly maladaptive. This finding contradicts the study conducted by Lidya Irene (2013), which stated that gender is not a distinguishing factor in students' ability to adjust or adapt.

Based on the results of hypothesis testing using the Mann–Whitney U Test, a p-value of 0.024 was obtained, which is smaller than the alpha value ($\alpha = 0.05$). This indicates that Ho was rejected and Ha was accepted, meaning that there was a significant difference in the adaptation process between regular students and transfer students.

Difficulties in preparing research reports may arise due to several factors, leading to maladaptive conditions. This is consistent with the findings of Utama's study (2010) regarding the process of preparing research reports, which showed that difficulties often occur in expressing ideas or concepts in logical, systematic, and communicative writing while still adhering to standardized writing conventions.

In addition, activities outside the preparation of research reports may divert students' attention when working on their reports. This is especially true for transfer students, the majority of whom are already married and employed. Furthermore, such circumstances may reduce motivation to complete the research report when interests, energy, and thoughts are directed more toward those activities.

Fear of meeting with academic supervisors may also hinder smooth communication between lecturers and students (Gallos & Bolman, 2021). The progress of research reports and the graduation of classmates also exert considerable influence in motivating students to complete their reports. Other factors, such as delays in the correction process, lack of coordination among supervisors, and financial issues, may obstruct the completion of research reports. Additionally, the absence of agreements and commitment—particularly regarding scheduling arrangements with supervisors—as well as having to wait for other students to attend supervision sessions, may also hamper the supervision process.

CONCLUSSION

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Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that more than half of the regular students demonstrated normal stress levels during the process of preparing their research reports. More than half of the transfer students also demonstrated normal stress levels during the preparation of their research reports.

More than half of the adaptation processes among regular students during the preparation of research reports were adaptive. In contrast, more than half of the adaptation processes among transfer students during the preparation of research reports were maladaptive.

The study also found that there was no difference in stress levels between regular students and transfer students during the preparation of research reports. However, there was a difference in the adaptation processes between regular students and transfer students during the preparation of research reports.

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