

## The Relationship of Coping Mechanisms and Mental Health After Breakup

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### Abstract:

A person's coping mechanism in dealing with problems in life, whether problems with family, friends, or problems with a partner, can affect mental health conditions. Unstable mental health conditions in students can have an impact on their daily lives. This study aims to determine the relationship between coping mechanisms and mental health after a breakup. By using a cross-sectional approach, a sampling technique using purposive sampling and 101 respondents participated. Data collection using a coping mechanism questionnaire and mental health after a breakup questionnaire. The results showed that some respondents had adaptive coping mechanisms (53.5%) and good mental health (55.4%). The results of statistical analysis using the chi-square test showed a significant relationship between coping mechanisms and mental health ( $p$  value=0.001) and students with maladaptive coping mechanisms were 10 times more likely to experience poor mental health after they experienced a breakup. Efforts are needed to improve students' adaptive coping skills to prevent poor mental health problems when they experience a breakup.

### Keywords:

coping mechanism; mental health; breakup; students

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## INTRODUCTION

Students as individuals who enter the adult phase have responsibilities for their lives. In socializing, students interact with each other, and often when interacting, it is not uncommon to argue with each other's opinions. The higher the level of education, the sense of responsibility also increases (Hulukati & Djibran, 2018). When entering the transition from adolescence to adulthood, students experience mental instability both psychologically and socially and are often faced with educational pressures that have an impact on mental health. In some individuals, mental health is very influential on emotional, physical, social, or even disruption of relationships between individuals. This condition can affect their lives, such as not being able to manage study time, not being able to face difficult conditions, even to withdraw from the social environment (Delviana et al., 2020).

Mental health is the feeling of every individual who feels happy, healthy, can accept themselves and others as they are, can solve life's challenges positively, and has a good attitude towards themselves and others (Kurniyawan et al., 2023). Mental health is closely related to physical health, reflecting the complexity of healthy and sick conditions involving biological, psychological, and social aspects (Azania & Naan, 2021). Mental health disorders are commonly

found in adolescence because this period is a transition from childhood to adulthood which has psychological needs in the form of the need to be loved and loved. Then later implemented in the form of a relationship. However, some adolescents experience that their relationships run aground which causes difficult situations such as insomnia, crying at night, and sometimes self-harm (Harisma, 2022). In reality, not all individuals who feel a breakup can think rationally and have clear considerations and thoughts in dealing with problems. One of them is about the termination of a relationship/breakup is an important event in life that must be faced by everyone and feels too heavy. Finally, quite a lot of individuals are out of control so they cannot think clearly about this (Tran et al., 2023). Feeling stress is a natural thing experienced by humans but if it is excessive and experiencing protracted sadness will certainly be a big problem. So a mechanism is needed to help solve problems and deal with them wisely (Yulianingsih, 2012). Mental health is very important for life, especially for adolescents who want to enter adulthood because mental health is the ability to adjust to themselves, others, and the surrounding environment (Radiani, 2019).

Despite its importance, many people still do not believe in mental health issues. The 2018 Riskesdas data shows that more than 19 million Indonesians experience mental and emotional disorders, with 6.1% experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression. College students are not exempt from this impact either. Studies show significant stress levels among college students (Riskesdas, 2018). If not addressed, mental health disorders can have a negative impact. The rise of the phenomenon of depression to suicide is a constant concern for society. This has made some people realize the importance of mental health in one's life (Radiani, 2019).

Based on research results from Dewi, (2020) In general, students who experience mild mental health problems amount to 48 people, or 16%. Students who experience severe mental health problems amount to 53 people or around 17.7%. While most were students who experienced moderate mental health problems, totaling 199 people or 66.3%. Students who use coping mechanisms when experiencing a low breakup amounted to 18% or 54 people. Students with high levels of coping mechanisms amounted to 21% or 64 people. Meanwhile, students with the most coping mechanisms are at a moderate level, totaling 61% or 182 people (Dewi, 2020). Research research on nursing students in Cirebon, measured using the DASS questionnaire, 77 respondents experienced severe stress (31.2%) and 42 other respondents experienced moderate stress (55.8%) (Suwartika et al., 2014). Meanwhile, 79.0% of regular students at the University of North Sumatra have moderate stress levels (Lombu & Setiawan, 2018).

To reduce the impact of mental health disorders, various activities such as counseling, talking openly, socializing, and seeking support from friends or family can help reduce the negative impact of mental health disorders (Hakim, 2012). Coping mechanisms are strategies that individuals use to manage sources of stress and these problems. Coping mechanisms can include several practical strategies such as looking for alternative solutions, collaborating with fellow students, using humor to defuse tension, adapting to changing situations, social support from family or related institutions (Kurniyawan et al., 2023). Emotional support from peers will build empathy when facing problems that occur in teenagers (Wuryaningsih et al., 2019). Coping mechanisms as a response to physically and psychologically threatening situations can vary between individuals. The use of effective coping mechanisms can lead to increased creativity and innovation, while ineffective coping mechanisms can worsen mental states (Wijayanti, 2016). The Research results from 86 respondents showed that students with low-stress scores are more likely to have adaptive coping mechanisms, while students who have high-stress scores tend to lead to maladaptive coping mechanisms. So it shows that there is a significant relationship between stress levels and coping mechanisms used (Anelia, 2012). Based on this background, this study aims to

find the relationship between coping mechanisms and mental health after breakup in college students.

## METHOD

This study used a cross-sectional research design. This research was conducted from September to October 2023 at Faletehan University. The number of sample 101 respondents was selected through a purposive sampling technique. The inclusion criteria are 1) Faletehan University students, 2) Students who have experienced a breakup in the last 2 years, and 3) Willing to be a respondent.

Data collection used a questionnaire. The questionnaires used were the coping mechanism questionnaire and the mental health questionnaire. The demographic data studied included gender, study program, and semester. The coping mechanism questionnaire consists of 25 questions adopted from previous research by Anelia (2012). The mental health questionnaire consisted of 30 statements. This questionnaire was adopted from Abrianto (2018). The validity test of the coping mechanism and mental health questionnaire has been tested on 30 respondents at Bina Bangsa University, with a Cronbach alpha of 0.753 for the mental health questionnaire and 0.886 for the coping mechanism questionnaire. In conclusion, these two questionnaires have been proven valid and reliable.

Data analysis was performed using the chi-square test, with the significance level set at p-value <0.05. This study has obtained an ethical eligibility letter from the ethics committee of Faletehan University with number 576/KEPK.UF/IX/2023.

## RESULT

### Overview of Respondent Characteristics

These characteristics are made to see an overview of respondents based on gender, study program, faculty, semester, and level. The results of data collection regarding the characteristics of respondents can be seen in the following table.

Table 1 Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Characteristics at Faletehan University in 2023

Respondent Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	22	21.8
Female	79	78.2
Study Program		
Nursing	62	61.4
Public Health	12	11.9
Midwife	10	9.9
Non-Health	17	16.8
Semester		
I	2	2.0
II	11	10.9
IV	30	29.7
VI	15	14.9
VII	1	1.0
VIII	12	41.6
Total	101	100

Based on Table 1, most of the respondents are female (78. 2%), nursing students (61. 4%), and in semester IV (29. 7%).

## Coping Mechanisms and Mental Health After Breakup among Faletahan University students

The description of coping mechanisms and mental health in this study can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Coping Mechanisms and Mental Health After Breakup among Faletahan University Students in 2023

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Coping Mechanism		
Maladaptive	47	46.5
Adaptive	54	53.5
Mental Health		
Poor	45	44.6
Good	56	55.4
Total	101	100

Based on the results of Table 2, illustrate the majority of respondents have adaptive coping mechanisms (53. 5%) and good mental health (55. 4%).

## Analysis of the Relationship between Coping Mechanisms and Mental Health After Breakup Among Faletahan University Students

Table 3 Analysis of the Relationship of Coping Mechanisms with Mental Health After Breakup in Faletahan University Students in 2023

Coping Mechanism	Mental Health			p-value	OR 95% CI
	Poor	Good	Total		
Maladaptive	29 (61.7%)	18 (38.3%)	47 (100%)	0.001	10.464
Adaptive	16 (29.6%)	38 (70.4%)	54 (100%)		
Total	45 (44.6%)	56 (55.4%)	101 (100%)		

Based on table 3, it can be explained from 47 respondents with maladaptive coping mechanisms, 29 (61.7%) respondents experienced poor mental health. Meanwhile, out of 54 respondents with adaptive coping mechanisms, 38 (70.4%) experienced good mental health. The statistical test results obtained P value = 0.001, it can be concluded there is a significant relationship between coping mechanisms and mental health after the breakup in Faletahan University students. The results of the analysis also obtained an OR (Odd Ratio) value = 10.464 these results indicate that respondents with maladaptive coping mechanisms have a 10.464 times greater risk of experiencing poor mental health compared to respondents who have adaptive coping mechanisms.

## DISCUSSION

### Coping Mechanisms after Breakup among Faletahan University Students

The results of the frequency distribution of coping mechanisms of Faletahan University students with a median score 76 and highest score 95 from a maximum score 100. Most respondents (53.5%) have adaptive coping mechanisms. Based on item analysis, the highest

score is obtained in the statement item "I accept reality and have to face reality" where out of 101 respondents, 92 people answered agree. While the lowest score was obtained on the statement item "When there is a problem after a breakup, I blame others for my problem" 77 people answered disagree. So it can be explained that respondents already have the right coping mechanism, namely adaptive coping mechanisms. Respondents also accept the existing reality, respondents chose to continue their life. This research results are in line with the research from Sumoked et al., (2019). From 73 respondents, the most students have adaptive coping mechanisms (58.9%).

Coping mechanisms can be learned from the onset of stressors and students will realize the impact of these stressors. The coping ability of an individual depends on temperament, perception, and cognition as well as the cultural background or norms in which he or she grows (Setyaningsih, 2012). Adaptive coping mechanisms can support integration functions, and learning to achieve goals which can be characterized by being able to talk to others, being able to solve problems effectively, and being able to carry out constructive activities in the face of stressors. Meanwhile, maladaptive coping mechanisms can inhibit the function of integration, reduce autonomy, and tend to control, such as overworking, and avoiding or losing control (Stuart, 2016). Adaptive coping mechanisms practiced by individuals can produce new habits and improvements in the situation and problems faced (Mulyadi & Hidayat, 2014).

## **Mental Health after Breakup among Faletehan University Students**

The results show that mental health after the Breakup among Faletehan University students has a median score 81 and a highest score 94 from the maximum score 120. Most respondents (55.4%) have good mental health. Based on item analysis, the highest score was obtained on the statement item "I am not used to feeling lonely after a breakup" where all respondents (100%) answered disagree. While the lowest score was obtained on the statement item "I feel irritable and angry after a breakup" 75.3% of respondents answered agree. it can be explained that the respondent's feelings are sensitive and easily offended by the situation after breakup experience.

This is in line with research conducted by Aziz et al., (2021) shows from the number of students who have a high level of mental health is 423 (50.60%) more than students who have poor mental health 415 (49.40%). The results of this study also show that the most dominant mental health profile of students is those who have a high level of psychological stress. The findings on the level of mental health of university students can be interpreted that there are currently important issues related to mental health in university students. The research study reinforces the conclusion that there are currently crucial and urgent issues to be addressed in relation to mental health in university students (Delviana et al., 2020).

## **The Relationship of Coping Mechanisms with Mental Health after Breakup in Faletehan University Students**

The research results show that students who have adaptive coping have good mental health. The research results also show that coping mechanisms greatly determine students' mental health when they experience a breakup. A breakup is an important event for everyone, and there is no specific factor that can cause severe mental disorders, but prolonged settlement can result in severe mental disorders (Tran et al., 2023). Coping mechanisms are one of the cognitive and behavioral efforts to balance, reduce, and tolerate external and internal demands and the conflicts that accompany them. Coping mechanisms in mental health are important so that the impact of exposure to psychological conditions on a person must be overcome (Tran et al., 2023).

There are several forms of coping strategies, there are problem-focused coping & emotional-focused coping. Many adolescents have a problem focused coping strategy which indicates that the adolescent would rather change the stressful situation than their emotions without changing the situation. For example, problem focused coping is persuading a partner to get back into the relationship or finding new information and skills to develop. This has been shown to help and influence the mental health of adolescents experiencing a breakup. While emotional focused coping is a form of action to regulate emotions without solving the root of the problem, for example by praying to God, seeking peace by meditating, or diverting stress by exercising so that the emotions felt by adolescents during a breakup are not too negative to affect their lives (Kurniawan, 2022).

The success of coping strategies is also determined by the resources possessed by individuals which include energy health, positive beliefs, problem-solving skills, social skills, social support, and material resources. Being able to overcome problems and adapt well to stressful conditions, can maximize the resources of the resources it has. And being able to maintain the condition of the body by adjusting the diet properly and then utilizing rest time effectively. These actions make health maintained and have enough energy to regulate coping mechanisms and deal with problems experienced (Nelma, 2022).

The results of this research show that there are still 47% of students who have maladaptive coping and of course this is very risky for experiencing poor mental health status. Thus, efforts are needed to improve students' coping abilities in order to improve their mental health. The research results also show that students have adaptive coping mechanisms, but they have good mental health. Likewise, students who have adaptive coping but have poor mental health. Further research is needed to determine the variables that influence students' mental health and coping mechanisms.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study shows that coping mechanisms influence mental health significantly. Students with adaptive coping mechanisms have good mental health status. Otherwise, students with maladaptive coping mechanisms have a high risk for poor mental health status. This study makes an important contribution to understanding the interrelationship between coping mechanisms and mental health, providing a basis for the development of more effective interventions in supporting students to cope with the emotional impact of a breakup.

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## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The researcher declares that there is no conflict of interest in this research.



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