



## Academic Burnout in University Students During Covid-19 Pandemic: Viewed from Readiness to Change with Religious Coping as a Moderator

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### Abstract

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The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in various problems in almost all aspects of life, one of which is education. As one of the educational institutions, universities have finally implemented distance learning to reduce the spread of the virus on campus. However, this policy can also cause several new problems for students, including unpreparedness and boredom when implementing distance learning. This study aimed to determine the effect of readiness to change on university students' academic burnout and to prove that religious coping as an internal resource can strengthen its influence. This research used quantitative research, especially correlational research design, using a hierarchical regression test to compare the results of the effect with and without the moderating variable. The sampling technique used in this study was a non-probability sampling with an accidental sampling technique in which it was obtained 300 active university students from the provinces of DKI Jakarta, West Java, and Yogyakarta. The results of the analysis showed that readiness to change could explain the academic burnout variance by 27%. Religious coping can be a moderator and strengthen the effect of readiness to change on academic burnout with a beta coefficient of -.003, which means an increase in one readiness to change score and religious coping can reduce academic burnout by 3%.

## INTRODUCTION

Humanity is currently faced with a troubling situation, where the COVID-19 pandemic has spread almost throughout the country. The psychological reactions that arise from the community are also diverse, including those who feel fear, anxiety, anger, panic, and depression (Yang & Xu, 2020). Governments in some countries have finally made policies to minimize the spread of this outbreak, such as conducting lockdown in areas already included in the red zone of the virus spread and physical distancing to avoid the spread through physical contact between humans (Stier et al., 2020). With the recommendation of physical distancing, various facilities that allow the gathering of people, including schools, houses of worship, and offices, are temporarily closed. As a result, various community activities such as studying at school, worshipping, and working have become more limited and have been done at home. (Painter & Qiu, 2020).

There has been a lot of recommendation in the academic community to start adapting to online learning, which requires students to adjust to the new academic system during the pandemic (Corbera et al., 2020). Schools and colleges eventually implemented distance learning through online media (Dingel & Neiman, 2020). Teaching and learning activities at school have been temporarily suspended due to the spread of the virus, which is increasingly massive and can be transmitted through droplets and various physical contacts. As a result, more than 370 million students from 39 countries did not attend school (UN News, 2020).

Distance learning can have a diverse positive impact, including learning materials that are still conveyed to students, indirectly interacting between one student with another or lecturers with students (Markova et al., 2017). However, this phenomenon can become a new problem in students' lives and cause various psychological impacts due to the demands to adapt to new learning models, online learning (Hodges et al., 2020). Distance learning can result in negative psychic symptoms, ranging from depression and stress to burnout (Pavlakis & Kaitelidou, 2012).

In addition to readiness to change, motivational-affective factors in learning at the university also emphasize the importance of certain aspects of how students overcome stress and burnout, one of which is using religious coping (de la Fuente et al., 2020). There has been a lot of research showing that there is a phenomenon where people begin to switch deepening religion to overcome the psychological distress caused by this pandemic. This is natural if people will approach their religion more in the event of a natural disaster (Sinding Bentzen, 2019). In the context of education, it was found that students in the Asian region have higher spirituality and religiosity (Gardner et al., 2014). (Cinnirella & Loewenthal, 1999) also mention that when there is a stressor, Muslims will be more likely to make religion a mechanism to deal with perceived problems and stress than other religious believers. This makes researchers interested in examining the usefulness of university students' religious coping in Indonesia, the Asian region with the most Muslims in the world.

Religious coping is the ability of the human to deal with problems through a religious approach by performing a series of worships and rituals and asking for guidance from an existence that is considered to have supernatural abilities (Harrison et al., 2009). Religious coping is divided into two, positive religious coping, where the human views God as a source of love and support, and negative religious coping, where human views God as a pain giver and tormentor. People who use negative religious coping when facing problems will get more stress. This is caused by despair, where people feel too much sin and consider that God is not a forgiving existence (Pargament et al., 1998). Religious coping has 5 dimensions, meaning, which is the effort of giving meaning done by the human to an event experienced. Control is controlling an event and a quest for power. Comfort is an effort to seek comfort and nearness with God. Intimacy is establishing a relationship with God and the surrounding community. Furthermore, life transformation is an effort to make changes for the better (Pargament

et al., 1998).

Religious coping that humans do in dealing with problems also varies based on the religion they adhere to. In Islam itself, problems and trials will always come in human life, as Allah *subhanahu wa ta 'ala* explains in the Quran (Al-Baqarah, 155-156; Ali-Imran, 186; Al-Anbiya, 35; Al-Ankabut, 2; & Muhammad, 4 & 31). Indeed, trials such as this pandemic produce various responses, such as stress, feeling various negative emotions, depression, and others (Yuwono, 2010). In dealing with problems and managing psychological distress, the Quran and hadith have directed Muslims to do religious coping (Anggantyo, 2014). A Muslim believes in Islam as a comprehensive way of life, including how to behave, manage affections, hone cognitive skills, and develop spirituality (Adam & Ward, 2016). Previous research also mentions that in facing a crisis religious, students prefer religious assistance in the form of carrying out rituals or prayers that are in accordance with the religion adhered to psychological help, in which it is proven that religious coping can predict academic burnout in students (Noh et al., 2015).

Some types of religious coping, such as prayer and dhikr, can be methods used to reduce stress and anxiety levels (Doufesh, 2014). Coping strategies through this Islamic approach can be applied in Muslim communities that are indeed psychologically affected by the pandemic (Cinnirella & Loewenthal, 1999). Based on previous research, religious coping is proven to be able to predict academic burnout in students (Noh et al., 2015). Besides, people who use religious coping strongly have low burnout (Ross, 1990).

In dealing with academic burnout, students' adaptability is also needed (Xie et al., 2019). The ability to adapt is determined by the readiness of students to change, especially in the readiness of students to conduct the teaching and learning process through virtual and readiness to use new technology (Windardi & Prianto, 2016). Readiness to change is a cognitive state when individuals have positive beliefs, attitudes, and intentions in facing changes (Rafferty et al., 2013). With the readiness of students to change, it is expected that they can adapt by following the distance learning system optimally, especially during the current pandemic. Without the will and readiness to change, the potential of individuals to experience burnout is higher when one experiences burnout (Ahadi et al., 2015).

Researchers were interested in conducting this study because there has not yet been a study that discusses the effect of readiness to change on burnout in the academic context in which religious coping can be the moderator of the model. Besides, it is expected that this research can be continued in the form of interventions that can contribute to decreasing academic burnout during the pandemic. Based on the description, the researchers were interested in studying further and conducting research on "Academic Burnout in University Students during COVID-19 Pandemic viewed from Readiness to Change with Religious Coping as a Moderator".

## METHOD

In this study, a quantitative approach and type of associative research were used to examine three variables: religious coping as the first independent variable, readiness to change as the second independent variable, and academic burnout as the dependent variable. The participants in this study were active undergraduate students in semesters 3, 5, and 7 in the Province of DKI Jakarta, West Java, Yogyakarta and were actively studying on campus, which implemented distance learning during the pandemic. This was because the three provinces included the five regions with the most spread of COVID-19. The sampling technique used in this study is convenience sampling or incidental sampling, where the population is unknown, and the sample is taken based on the availability and accessibility of researchers to research subjects (Etikan et al., 2017). From the data collection process, the number of respondents for the tryout of measuring instruments was 50 people, and the research respondents were 300 people.

In this study, there are 3 measuring instruments used, including measuring religious coping using the Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE) based on the theory of Pargament (2000), which has been adapted to Indonesian by (Suprayogi & Aljufri, 2020). This measuring instrument consists of 5 aspects, namely meaning, control, intimacy, comfort, and life transformation, which contains 26 items, such as "I feel that the problem I am experiencing is a punishment from God" and "I feel that the problem is a valuable lesson that God has given to me." From the results of item analysis, 20 items (.324 - .750) were multidimensionally valid (.692 - .862) with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .885. To measure readiness to change, researchers used the readiness for change scale, which has been adapted to the educational context in the readiness of students to face changes in the online learning system. This measuring instrument consists of 5 aspects, namely discrepancy, appropriateness, efficacy, principal support, and personal valence, which contains 30 items (Armenakis & Harris, 2009), such as "my learning load is increasing with changes in the learning system in campus" and "I believe I can adapt to changes in the learning system in campus." From the results of the item analysis, 28 items (.385 - .640) were multidimensionally valid (.696 - .875) with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .892. Meanwhile, to measure academic burnout, an academic burnout scale was used. This measuring instrument consists of 3 aspects, namely exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy, which contains 13 items (.477 - .749) that were multidimensionally valid (.488 - .874) with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .864 (Arlinkasari & Akmal, 2017). Examples of these items include, "I became less enthusiastic with my lectures" and "I learn a lot of interesting things in the lectures I am in today."

Due to the pandemic situation, the questionnaire was distributed via google form online, five months after the COVID-19 case was found in Indonesia. Participants answered a questionnaire containing demographic information (age, gender, and location of universities) and the attached research instrument. In this study, descriptive data analysis and inferential data analysis were used. Descriptive analysis used in this study

included the mean score and standard deviation. Inferential analysis used multiple linear regression. Besides, the calculation process used statistical software. The normality test was also used to see whether data was spread normally or not. Moreover, a linearity test was used to see whether or not there was a linear relationship between the variable of readiness to change to academic burnout. Next, the hierarchical regression test was used to compare the effect of readiness to change on academic burnout with religious coping as a moderator.

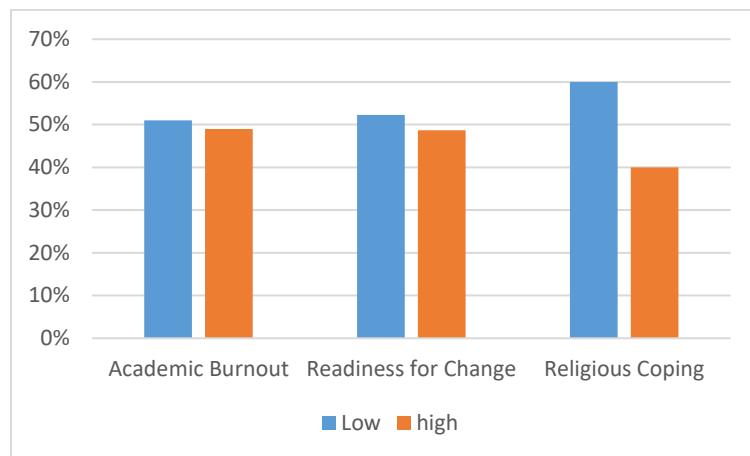
## RESULTS

**Table 1. Demographic Data of the Participants**

| Component                  | %    |
|----------------------------|------|
| <b>Age:</b>                |      |
| 18 - 20                    | 64,7 |
| 21 - 23                    | 34   |
| 24 - 26                    | 1    |
| 27 - 29                    | 0,3  |
| <b>Gender</b>              |      |
| Male                       | 29.3 |
| Female                     | 70.7 |
| <b>University Location</b> |      |
| West Java                  | 91.7 |
| Jakarta                    | 7    |
| Yogyakarta                 | 1.3  |
| <b>Semester</b>            |      |
| 3                          | 21.7 |
| 5                          | 51   |
| 7                          | 27.3 |
| <b>Internet access</b>     |      |
| Easy                       | 93.3 |
| Difficult                  | 6.7  |

Based on the analysis of research variables using a t-test regarding gender, it was obtained that academic burnout of male ( $M= 35.15$ ,  $SD=13.03$ ) and female university students ( $M= 33.63$ ,  $SD= 11.86$ ) in which it indicated that there was no significant difference. Besides, the readiness to change of male ( $M= 74.09$ ,  $SD=10.48$ ) and female university students ( $M= 73.63$ ,  $SD=10.83$ ) indicated that there was a significant difference. Furthermore, religious coping of male ( $M= 66.51$ ,  $SD= 9.48$ ) and female students ( $M= 66.81$ ,  $SD= 6.74$ ) indicated no significant difference.

The t-test based on internet access showed that the variable of readiness to change on easy internet access ( $M= 82.08$ ,  $SD=7.60$ ) and on difficult internet access ( $M=68.9$ ,  $SD=10.82$ ), indicating that there was a significant difference in readiness scores between students who had difficulty accessing the internet, and students who had easy access to the internet. Generally, readiness scores based on internet access were in the low category (87%), and others were in the high category (13%).



Participants with academic burnout were generally in the low category (51%), and some were in the high category (49%). Participants with readiness to change were generally in the low category (52.3%), and some were in the high category (48.7%). Finally, the participants using religious coping were generally in the low category (60%), while others were in the high category (40%).

Assumption tests were carried out (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity test). Based on the normality test results, a significance level of .200 was obtained, which means that the sample data comes from a normally distributed population. From the multicollinearity test, the value of tolerance was .968, and VIF was 1.033, which means no multicollinearity in the regression model. Besides, from the heteroskedasticity test, the significant value of the religious coping variable was .949, and the readiness to change variable was 0.938, which means that there are no symptoms of heteroskedasticity in the model. Based on the classical assumption test that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the model is considered to meet the criteria of regression analysis.

**Table 2. Simple Regression Test Results**

| Model | Sum of     |     |             |         |      |  |
|-------|------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|--|
|       | Squares    | df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig. |  |
| 1     | Regression | 1   | 12095.044   | 110.043 | .000 |  |
|       | Residual   | 298 | 109.912     |         |      |  |
|       | Total      | 299 | 44848.837   |         |      |  |

A Dependent Variable: CSPI Academic

**Table 3. R Square Tests**

| Model | R    | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .519 | ,270     | .267              | 10.484                     |

A Predictors: (Constant), READINESS

From the results of a simple regression test, the effect of readiness to change on burnout was statistically significant with  $F = 110.043$ ,  $p = .000$ , and the value of  $R^2 = .270$ . This also showed that 27% of the variation in the academic burnout variable could be explained by the religious coping variable and readiness to change, while the other 73% was influenced by other variables not studied in this study.

After that, an interaction test was conducted to see the effect of religious coping as a moderator.

**Table 4. Moderator Interactions Tests**

| Model | Coefficients <sup>a</sup>      |                              |       | t      | Sig. |
|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|--------|------|
|       | Unstandardized<br>Coefficients | Standardized<br>Coefficients | Beta  |        |      |
|       | B                              | Std. Error                   |       |        |      |
| 1     | (Constant)                     | 76.436                       | 4.193 | 18.231 | .000 |
|       | RTC                            | -.378                        | .098  | -.332  | .000 |
|       | RC                             | -.117                        | .095  | -.162  | ,220 |
|       | RTC_RC                         | -.003                        | .001  | -.229  | .008 |

a. Dependent Variable: ACADEMIC

From the test results of the interaction, it was found that religious coping can be a moderator variable in the effect of readiness to change on academic burnout with a beta coefficient value of  $-.003$  with a significance level of  $.008$ . This means that every increase in one score of readiness to change and religious coping can decrease academic burnout by 3%.

## DISCUSSION

This study shows that readiness to change with religious coping as a moderator has a role in decreasing academic burnout in the pandemic. Based on previous studies, it was stated that significantly, readiness to change is negatively correlated with burnout (Arvandi et al., 2016) in the context of the organization. However, based on another study, it was stated that readiness to change could predict burnout. People with a low readiness to change score have a high burnout (Ahadi et al., 2015).

Based on the results of the above categorization, almost half of the university students had a low readiness to change. The cause can be changes in learning system methods that can cause students to be stressed due to the lack of time to adapt to the situation (Meng et al., 2020). Especially in this study, the students must be able to adapt to the environment due to the pandemic, one of which is with a distance learning system. (Hodges et al., 2020) state that the adaptation process can also affect students' psyche; they feel exhausted. Readiness in adapting to the academic system is negatively correlated and can predict burnout experienced by university students (Xie et al., 2019). Besides, the online lecture experience can add to student readiness to face the changes in the lecture system (Rapanta et al., 2020).

Based on the results of the interaction tests, religious coping was found to moderate the effect of readiness to change on academic burnout of university students during the pandemic. These results are in line with the research of (Azkiati Z et al., 2019), which found

that religious coping and psychological capital are negatively correlated with burnout. This is because the ability of religious coping can help psychological adjustment in dealing with psychological distress (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005). Similarly, in another study, it was stated that 77.6% of students at Jaffna University, Srilanka, used religious coping which is significantly associated with burnout (Weerasinghe et al., 2020). The use of religious coping such as rituals and worship is common in countries around southern Asia, and the practice is used to ask God for help when facing various problems (Hussain & Cochrane, 2003). Various techniques of religious coping, such as spiritual and mindfulness training, can also reduce burnout (Shin et al., 2014). It has also been proven that religious coping has a role in decreasing burnout and improving performance (Lal et al., 2020).

Moreover, Noh et al. (2015) found that religious coping has a role in decreasing academic burnout in religious students. This is due to the effect of individual beliefs on the effectiveness of rituals or religious activities. Religion adhered to can also have an effect because of the teachings and rituals conveyed. However, this has not been explored further in this study, so further research is needed to determine the role of religious coping of various religious believers in the academic context. So, this study focuses on the role of religious coping as a moderator in Muslim students when facing academic burnout, considering that in Gardner et al., 2014, university students in Asia were found to have high spiritual and religiosity. However, the findings in this study found that less than half of the participants used religious coping.

## CONCLUSION

This study found that religious coping can moderate the effect of readiness to change on academic burnout. This means that the effect of readiness to change on academic burnout will be stronger when there is religious coping. Internet access also affects university students' readiness to face changes in the learning system in higher education. In the next study, the researchers suggested following up the research by exploring demographic data regarding factors such as economic conditions and native places that can affect the research variable. Researchers also suggested conducting research on various religions as a comparison, considering that this research was only conducted on Muslim students.

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