

COPING MECHANISM CONCERNED WITH CULTURE DIFFERENCES OF OUTER REGION STUDENTS IN THE FIRST YEAR

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Abstract

First year student is one of population who susceptible become stress which one of the causes was because of culture differences between home town and the new region where they took education. Coping mechanism was used by students to cope the culture differences. The first year students' experiences of coping mechanism became the research base so that experiences description of coping mechanism concerned with culture differences in the first year students were providable. This research was a qualitative study with phenomenological approach using in-depth interview method. The research had been done at PSIK FK UNDIP which involved five outer region students in the first year who never stayed in Java. This research showed that there are differences between respondents' home town and Java, such as: cultures, infrastructures, environment, and community, which made problems and various feelings. In solving the problems, they used positive and negative coping mechanism. Based on their experience, internal and external aspects were being the self preparation. Culture differences which have never known by students caused problems and various feelings and afterwards turned up the coping mechanism to solve it. Quality of nurse role as a counselor, care giver and rehabilitator can increase the optimum self function of the outer region students in the first year.

Keywords: coping mechanism, culture differences, first year students.

Introduction

Student is one of the most vulnerable population to get stress. This condition is caused by the transition from childhood to adulthood in which there is demand for them to continue the study in another region.

Cultural differences between home town and the region where they take education can happen. Culture is a socially movement about behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, values, customs, way of life, and all results of human work and thinking characteristics of a population which guide through point of view and the decision-making (Purnell & Paulanka, 2003).

The cultural differences caused a various things. Based on previous research, students of different cultures felt homesickness and psychological reactions such as longing for family, sad, uncomfortable with the environment and loneliness (Niam, 2008; Santos & Domingo, 2007).

Preliminary study showed that the outer region students experienced problems in performing daily activities because of the different language and taste of the food. It affected the decreasing score of the first semester.

Those problems caused a coping mechanisms of the outer region students. According to Keliat, coping mechanism is the way of the outer region students in doing problem solving, adapting to the changes, and providing a response to something threatening (Nasir & Muhith, 2011).

Previous research explained that maladaptive coping mechanisms tend to be used by cultural difference students (Sailaja, Punia, & Balda, 2002; Tuna, 2003). The impact of maladaptive coping would push one's creativity, withdrawal from social structures and mental disorders (Nasir & Muhith, 2011).

The results of this research became the base of how to give an intervention for students who have different cultures in order to optimize the quality of health life. The study is expected to give an idea of what coping mechanisms done by outer region students in facing the cultural differences.

The research benefit for nursing educational institutions was to provide an overview of the coping mechanisms that must be owned by a student especially in dealing with cultural differences, so it can add the discourse in educational goals.

Methods

The study was conducted in Nursing Science Program, Faculty of Medicine, Diponegoro University Semarang. It was qualitative study by using phenomenological approach. The data were obtained from informants' experience in performing coping mechanisms with cultural differences.

The population in this study were first year students who are studying in Nursing Science Program, Diponegoro University, are from outer region of Java and had never lived in Java before. The sample were selected purposively with certain sample criteria: a first year student at PSIK UNDIP; have lived outside Java since they were born and have never lived in Java; if the tribe is Java, they had never lived on Java; their willingness to be an informant; students can use Bahasa. Sampling was carried out using a random system. This was done by the time they returned to Java from holiday. The sample was five respondents. Sampling was discontinued because there was no additional data that provided new information / saturated.

The data collection method was in-depth interview. Types of questions used in collecting the data were the questions related to perceptions or views and experiences or behaviours. The tool used in data collection was researchers themselves. Validity and reliability assessment of the study was based on the credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability.

Analysis of data was based on Colaizzi phenomenological study as: had a clear description of the phenomenon being researched; made interview result transcript with the respondents' experience of coping mechanisms of the first year student on cultural differences; read all of respondents' transcript five times; searched for ideas meant by the respondent in form of keywords then marked with colors that could be grouped; determined the meaning of any critical statement from each respondent and statements related to the student experience in performing coping mechanisms; grouped data into various categories to be understood completely; determined the major themes that

emerged, and integrated the overall results in the form of narrative (Saryono & Dwi, 2002).

Results

The study was conducted from February 22nd, 2012 until February 24th, 2012. This study used five informants. The first informant is Javanese, from Sukamara, Central Kalimantan. The second informant is Malaynese, from Sukamara, Central Kalimantan. The third informant is Dawanese, from Soe, East Nusa Tenggara. The fourth informant is Oganese, originally from Baturaja, Oku, South Sumatra. The fifth informant is Javanese, from the Metro, Lampung. All of them are 19-year-old informants.

This research theme was coping mechanism. There are two sub themes in coping style that is positive and negative coping styles. There were four categories in positive coping styles. Those were problem solving, utilizing social support, looking for silver linings and diversion.

The first category, problem solving, was used by five informants to solve problems arising from cultural differences. Key words that emerge from this category were cooking by themselves, trying by themselves, speaking training, self-adaptive, self-motivation, learning the culture and using facilities.

"... sering belajar-belajar bahasa Jawa ... Yah, mengumpulkan sedikit kosakata Jawa biar lebih mempermudah memahami bahasa gitu."

The informant said that they learned language. Therefore, they could understand when they are in conversation with them.

Utilizing social support mechanisms was the second category used by the informants. Keywords that arise from this category were learning to organize, asking friends and calling parents.

"... masalah bahasa ... minta ajarin lah sama temen-temen gitu."

The informant said that they asked some friend to teach them language. Because they realized that they needed support system by others.

Four informants used looking for silver lining coping mechanisms. Keywords that arised from this category were following the style, enjoying, giving in, taking the positives, and respecting the customs.

"Diambil hikmahnya. Toh kita kan enggak sehari dua hari tinggal disini, pasti lama gitu."

The informant said that they took the wisdom. Because they could do nothing to cope the cultural differences.

Hanging out, playing games, listening to music, and activating the social network account were the keywords that arised in diversion category.

"... pelampiasannya (jika merasa jengkel) ke jalan gitu mbak. Biar rada-rada refreshing dikit."

The informant did diversion to make them refreshed. One of it was hanging out. The second sub-theme was negative coping styles. Two sub-categories emerged in this theme. Those were avoidance and self-blame.

The first category was avoidance used by the three informants. The keywords were getting hunger strike, letting alone and leaving.

"... ya awalnya mogok makan. Soalnya aku pengennya yang pedes-pedes gitu kan."

The informant felt uncomfot with the differences in Java, especially in food taste. So that they decided to have hunger strike.

Self-blame was used by three informants. Self-blame became the second category and the key words were being silent and hiding the origin.

"... kita diem aja. Biar enggak kelihatan kalo dari luar Jawa."

The informant felt that they different with others. So they hidden their origin.

Discussion

Other studies (Niam, 2008; Sailaja, Punia, & Balda, 2002; Santos & Domingo, 2007; Tuna, 2003) were quantitative researches. The selection of the qualitative design of this study was to find in-depth experience of the first year students who come from outer region and have never lived in Java.

The whole informants in this study stated there were changes and problems that arise because of the differences between home town and Java. Coping mechanisms were appeared to cope that. Coping mechanism is a way for someone to perform troubleshooting, adjustment to the changes, and providing a response to something that is threatening (Nasir & Muhith, 2011).

Coping mechanisms can arise with different expressions. One of the things that underlie is cultural (Kusumawati & Hartono, 2010). The results of Sailaja's research (2002) showed that all informants who are stress have different coping mechanisms.

Based on the characteristics, coping mechanisms are divided into two kinds, namely positive and negative coping styles (Nasir & Muhith, 2011). In this study both coping mechanism were used by all informants like the other studies (Hamid PN, Yue XD, & Leung CM, 2003; Phinney, & Haas, 2003).

The study said that positive coping styles were used by all informants. The other research (Kasayira, Chipandambira, & Hungwe, 2007) also showed that students used positive coping mechanism to cope the stressor.

Five informants also used negative coping styles. It can decrease the integrity of the ego, where the determination of coping styles and self-harm would damage the student (Nasir & Muhith, 2011). Negative coping styles used by the informant were avoidance and self-blame. Avoidance was also coping mechanism that used in other studies (Hamid PN, Yue XD, & Leung CM, 2003; Phinney, & Haas, 2003).

Informants in this study were not classified as in a study conducted by Niam (2008) which was only done on the outer region students with culture shocked. However, there is similarity between the results of this study and Niam's. Niam's research (2008) stated that positive coping (reducing the burden, seeking social support, accepting of differences) and negative coping (avoiding the problem) were done. Based on that, although there was no classification of samples by culture shocked, outer region students who have never lived in Java tend to have a positive coping mechanism.

The study also obtained the results that the informant done diversion action to deal with problems arising from cultural differences. In other studies (Niam, 2008; Sailaja, Punia, & Balda, 2002; Santos & Domingo, 2007; Tuna, 2003; Hamid PN, Yue XD, & Leung CM, 2003; Phinney, & Haas, 2003; Kasayira,

Chipandambira, & Hungwe, 2007), there was no statements that diversion used by students with cultural differences.

The diversion was carried out by the informants as informants' attempt to divert temporarily the uncomfortable circumstances. The informant claimed to do things like hanging out, playing games, listening to music and activating the social network which did not take a long time. When the informant was able to eliminate the sense of uncomfortable feeling, the informant immediately performed other activities. Since there was no adverse impact of this diversion coping mechanism, the researchers characterized the diversion to the positive coping mechanisms.

Research conducted by Santos and Domingo (2007) mentioned that by having sufficient language skills and staying for a longer time could solve problems arising from cultural differences in the first year students. Compared to the study, this research got the result that informant solved more diverse problem than Santos and Domingo's research (2007).

Problem solving is an effort made to solve students' problem (Nasir & Muhith, 2011). Cooking by themselves, trying by themselves, training a lot of talking, self-adapting, self-motivation, learning culture, and using facilitation were selected by informants as problem solving.

Students do not have the same levels in problem solving ability. So they need help like suggestions to solve the problem. This is called utilizing social support (Nasir & Muhith, 2011). Learning to organize, asking friends and calling parents were selected by informants because they need the support of others who can be trusted.

Sometimes there is a problem that can not be resolved in any way. Therefore, students were expected to accept the fact that there are problems as a test and trials that must be faced without lowering enthusiasm and motivation in problem solving (Nasir & Muhith, 2011). It is looking for silver lining as practiced by the informants, like following the style, enjoying, giving in, taking the positives and respecting the customs. Niam's research (2008) also mentioned looking for silver lining in the results of her research, namely acceptance.

Based on the information from the informant, there were some positive coping styles that can be classified into the cultural ability (Purnell & Paulanka, 2011). Accepting, respecting cultural differences and adapting in order to understand other's culture is cultural ability owned by the informant.

Five informants also did negative coping styles. Previous research (Sailaja, Punia, & Balda, 2002; Tuna, 2003) also stated that maladaptive coping mechanisms tend to be used by cultural differences students. Negative coping styles that used by informants in this study were avoidance and self-blame.

Avoidance is a form of internalization process towards a settlement of the problem into the unconscious with relieving mental pressure caused by the problems being faced. This method is a part of escaping process from the problems encountered that would normally lead to the accumulation of problems in the future (Nasir & Muhith, 2011). These were getting hunger strike, letting alone and leaving.

Phenomenon that emerged from this study one of them was on avoidance coping mechanism, a hunger strike. Hunger strike was done by three informants because of different food taste in Java with their home town. Hunger strike was carried out at the beginning when they were in Java, from one week to one month. The informant stated that after a hunger strike, they replaced the coping

mechanisms so that they were getting used to tasting different flavors of Java cuisine. Eventually, the informant stated that they were starting to like the Javanese dishes.

The second negative coping style used by the informant was self-blame. It is a student's powerlessness facing the life problems by blaming themselves without an optimal evaluation. Therefore, it pressed the creativity and ideas that impact the withdrawal of the social structure (Nasir & Muhith, 2011). Self-blame shown by informant were having no effort to solve existing problems and hiding the origin.

Another phenomenon that emerged in this study that did not mention in other studies (Niam, 2008; Sailaja, Punia, & Balda, 2002; Santos & Domingo, 2007; Tuna, 2003; Hamid PN, Yue XD, & Leung CM, 2003; Phinney, & Haas, 2003; Kasayira, Chipandambira, & Hungwe, 2007) was a form of self-blame that hides the area of origin. Informants stated that they did not want to be known as people from outer region. It was because they did not want to be thought as rude person. Having view that Javanese culture is so gentle that it made informants hide their true identity in order to be accepted in the new environment.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The differences between the informants' home town and Java related to culture caused coping mechanisms. Coping mechanisms used by informants to solve problems that arise including positive coping such as problem solving, utilizing social support, looking for silver linings and diversion; and negative coping such as avoidance and self-blame.

Qualified nurse's role as a counselor, care giver and rehabilitator are able to carry out the first year students having a positive coping mechanisms that lead to own optimal function. A good self-preparation by the outer region student is able to make them have a positive coping mechanism. Identification of the outer region students by the nursing educational institutions can give an exact intervention appropriate with their condition.

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