

Self-adjustment phenomena among high school students: The role of coping strategy and parenting style

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ABSTRACT

Self-adjustment is one of the social skills that individuals urgently need. Self-adjustment helps individuals build social relationships positively with others, groups, and their environment. This study aimed to explore the factors that influence self-adjustment, both internal and external factors. Participants in this study were 116 grade XI high school students in Yogyakarta selected with proportional random sampling. The instruments in this study were the self-adjustment scale, problem-focused coping scale, emotional-focused coping scale, authoritarian parenting style scale, authoritative parenting style scale, and permissive parenting style scale. Multiple linear regression was used to analyze the data. The findings indicate highly significant relationships between coping strategies, parenting style, and self-adjustment. Afterward, the result shows that every parenting style (authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting style) and both coping strategies (problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping) contributed to self-adjustment. For practical implications, any programs designed to promote positive self-adjustment among adolescents may focus on internal factors, such as coping strategy and parenting style as external factors.

Introduction

High school students need to have self-adjustment to minimize the negative impacts of the issues they face (Turashvili & Turashvili, 2015). Self-adjustment helps maintain positive relationships between individuals and the environment over time and in various situations (Hidayah, 2021) and the extent to which individuals engage in intelligent social behavior and adapt to social context directly (Moritsugu et al., 2016). Therefore, they are more satisfied contributing to their social role (Mudhovozi, 2012), fostering prosocial behavior, establishing a positive friendship, decreasing aggressive behavior and social anxiety (Ryan & Shim, 2008). Failure in self-adjustment leads to depressive disorders due to environmental stress and behavioral disorders characterized by mood changes such as being short-tempered, sad, easily offended, and aloof (Ladd & Parke, 2021). Based on the importance of self-adjustment described earlier regarding personal and social impacts for high school students, it is essential to explore the factors contributing to self-adjustment.

Coping strategy as an internal factor may contribute to self-adjustment. An individual with a coping strategy can manage critical situations and adjust to the stressful environment (Turashvili & Turashvili, 2015). A coping strategy is an effort to address the adverse event and minimize stressors (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). The coping strategy includes searching for information, preparing for an action plan, looking for social support, and

controlling emotion (C. S. Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) classified coping strategies into two: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping.

Previous research among university students points out that problem-focused coping plays a significant role in late adolescents' self-adjustment and becoming administrators in student organizations (Semaraputri & Rustika, 2018). Problem-focused coping is an effort to change the situation that causes problems focuses on tasks or actions that can eliminate or improve problems (Carroll, 2020). Problem-focused coping aims to solve problems by creating positive attitudes (Stephenson & DeLongis, 2020).

Emotional-focused coping controls the emotional response to the demand of the situations (Lenz, 2010). Emotional-focused coping is emotion-based coping with settling stressful relationships between individuals and the environment (Biggs et al., 2017; Compas et al., 2001). Emotional-focused coping involves distracting attention or avoiding to keep away from a problem (Biggs et al., 2017). The benefits of emotional-focused coping are helping individuals to cope with emotions through cognitive processes such as rejection, withdrawal, and dissociation in uncontrolled situations (Corbin et al., 2013). Individuals will use emotional-focused coping when a problem is perceived to be out of control; minimizing the negative impact is to stay away from threats and eliminate negative feelings that make them feel better (Hager & Runtz, 2012).

The most decisive environmental factor in helping high school students is family (Wardani & Setyawan, 2020). In the high school students' age, individuals are more self-reliant and decrease their dependency on parents. However, legally, they are bound to parents, and their parents still support the basic needs in life. Parents are the main contributors in instilling social skills to adapt to social contexts outside the family (Scharf et al., 2011). Self-adjustment is highly connected to parenting style (Kim & Chung, 2003; Turner et al., 2009). The parenting type applied by parents will determine the development of an individual's social competence (Berger & Mclanahan, 2015). Empirical studies by some researchers found a relationship between parenting style with the development of an individual's self-adjustment in all development domains and across all developmental periods (Bornstein, 2013; Zakeri & Karimpour, 2011).

Parenting styles are classified into authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (D. Baumrind, 2013). Ahmad et al. (2020) convey a correlation between parenting style (authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive) and self-adjustment among junior high school students. Nonetheless, the research result did not reveal differences in the relationship of each type of parenting with self-adjustment. There are still certain shortcomings in which the role of each parenting style on self-adjustment has not been addressed entirely (Ahmad et al., 2020).

The authoritative parenting style is parenting that prioritizes the needs and abilities of individuals by applying the demands of maturity according to the age of individual development (Kuczynski, 2002). The authoritative parenting style, also known as democratic parenting, demands responsiveness on children (H. Wang, 2014). Parents with an authoritative parenting style will support children's quality in their age by setting standards to shape positive behavior in the future (Ahn, 2019). This parenting style requires parents to recognize the developmental needs of the children and maintain a positive relationship between parents and child by guiding their children warmly respectfully, using an excellent communicative style while promoting collective control, standards, power, and rational expectations. The authoritative parenting style between parents and children accepts the two-ways concept in which both parties are considered to influence their behavior and self-attitude (D. Baumrind, 2013).

Authoritarian parenting style is a parenting style that is demanding but unresponsive (D. Baumrind, 2013). Parents with an authoritarian parenting style try to control children's behavior and attitudes following an absolute standard set unilaterally; parents fully influence children's attitudes and behavior (D. Baumrind, 2013). Authoritarian parenting is not always

dangerous for families. For example, in certain regions, especially Asian-Americans, authoritarian parenting is seen as caring for and giving attention to children (Ahn, 2019).

Permissive parenting styles are child-centered, with higher warmth and low control (Mehrinejad et al., 2015). The permissive parenting style uses freedom to enforce routines or shape children's behavior; when children make mistakes, parents understand rather than punish them (Smetana, 2010). Parents with permissive parenting styles are more tolerant, not demanding, and accept the child's learning conditions and outcomes (Biggs et al., 2017).

Self-adjustment is an essential psychological attribute for high school students. This study examined the external and internal factors that influence self-adjustment, given the importance of self-adjustment. It sets to answer the following two research questions: 1) What type of coping strategy is more dominant in increasing self-adjustment? 2) What parenting style is more effective in increasing self-adjustment?

Method

Participant

One hundred and sixteen (116) students from two public and two private high schools in Yogyakarta participated in this study. Participants were selected through the proportional random sampling technique by establishing several criteria: students of grade XI, age ranged between 16-18 years, having both parents still alive, mother's education must be at least high school, and mothers have permanent jobs.

Instrument

A Likert model scale was used to collect data on self-adjustment, authoritarian parenting style, authoritative parenting style, permissive parenting style, problem-focused coping, and emotional-focused coping. The self-adjustment scale has indicators of objective thinking, sense of humor, responsibility, responsiveness, and satisfaction reflected in the theory of self-adjustment by some experts (Achenbach, 1995; Carey, 1998; Schneiders, 1964). The results of the field trial analysis on the self-adjustment scale resulting 39 items with a reliability coefficient (α) = .947 and discrimination index ranging from .657 to .718.

The scale of the problem-focused coping is reflected by the active indicators of coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint, seeking social support. Emotional-focused coping is reflected by indicators of escapism, minimization, self-blame, positive judgment (Aldwin & Revenson, 1987; Charles S. Carver et al., 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The reliability analysis on problem-focused coping obtained a coefficient of α = .933, while on emotional-focused coping, α = .842. Forty-six items were used as a research instrument based on the analysis results.

The authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting style scale emphasizes the elements of the indicators of discipline, control, reinforcement, and problem-solving (D. Baumrind, 1989; Hurlock, 1978; G. S. Pettit et al., 1997; A. Russell, 1997). The reliability analysis results on each parenting style scale obtained α = .783 for the authoritarian, α = .917 for the authoritative, and α = .504 for the permissive. The discrimination index on the scale of authoritarian parenting style, authoritative parenting style, and permissive parenting style ranged from .625 to .696, .638 to .719, and .647 to .705, respectively. Forty items were used as a research instrument based on the analysis results.

Data Analysis

Data in this study were analyzed by parametric statistics using SPSS 19.0 software for windows. Multiple linear regression techniques were applied to determine the role of each parenting style and coping strategies toward self-adjustment.

Results

The role of authoritative parenting style, authoritative parenting style, permissive parenting style, problem-focused coping, and emotion-focused coping to self-adjustment can be seen in [Table 1](#). The results showed the $R\text{ Square} = .992$, $F = 1.4377$ with a significance level of $p = .000$. These results indicate that parenting styles and coping strategies simultaneously contribute to self-adjustment. The contribution generated by all variables to self-adjustment is 99.2%.

Tabel 1

Major Hypothesis Test

Variable	R	R Square	F Value	Sig	Conclusion
Problem Focused Coping; Emotional Focused Coping, Authoritarian, Authoritative, and Permissive on Self-Adjustment	.996	.992	1.4377	.000	Significant

[Table 2](#) shows the role and contribution of each independent variable to self-adjustment without controlling other independent variables. All independent variables showed a significance level of $p = .000$, meaning that each parenting style: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive, and each coping strategy: problem-focused coping and emotional-focused coping have a significant role in self-adjustment. Based on the zero-order correlation, the correlation between problem-focused coping and self-adjustment is slightly higher than that of emotion-focused coping. While in the three parenting styles, the highest correlation is found between authoritative parenting style with self-adjustment, followed by authoritative and permissive parenting, respectively.

Table 2

Minor Hypothesis Test

Variable	Zero-order	Beta	t Value	Sig	Conclusion
Problem Focused Coping	.953	1.040	10.219	.000	Significant
Emotion Focused Coping	.929	1.067	9.962	.000	Significant
Authoritarian	.801	1.238	8.589	.000	Significant
Authoritative	.810	1.224	8.686	.000	Significant
Permissive	.789	1.257	8.461	.000	Significant

Discussion

This study discusses self-adjustment in students from public and private high schools in Yogyakarta. The findings of this study indicate that coping strategy and parenting style are significant contributors to the self-adjustment of high school students in Yogyakarta. Although conducted in different research and cultural settings, the results of this study are consistent with the results of the previous studies, which found coping strategies are essential and influential predictors in predicting adolescent self-adjustment ([Noor et al., 2016](#)). Coping strategies facilitate an individual's self-adjustment ([Rahat & İlhan, 2016](#)), increase optimism, problem-solving abilities, and individual environment control ([Baqutayan & Mai, 2012](#)).

This study examines two coping strategies: problem-focused and emotional-focused coping in predicting self-adjustment ability. Both strategies are essential and contributed significantly to self-adjustment for our sample. Problem-focused coping is related to modifying and solving problems; these efforts aim to manage emotional distress ([Cho et al., 2013](#)). Individuals with problem-focused coping will develop strategic planning that can change unpleasant situations; if the strategy is deemed ineffective or does not work well,

individuals will ask for suggestions or innovative solutions that involve social support (Aqeel et al., 2017). Individuals will consistently re-evaluate what has happened and what can be done to manage the situation to be more effective (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These are some processes that explain the importance of problem-focused coping on self-adjustment.

Previous studies found a significant role of emotion-focused coping in self-adjustment. Emotion-focused coping can simplify the way individuals respond to the demands (Skinner et al., 2003). The goal of emotion focus coping is to reduce negative emotions, manage feelings of distress, and deal with stress symptoms (Smith et al., 2007). Individuals with emotion-focused coping can be demonstrated by avoidance and wishful thinking (McCabe et al., 2004). Individuals will avoid all responsibilities or demands that are felt beyond their capabilities (Okanli et al., 2016). The use of emotion-focused coping effectively leads to psychosocial adjustment (Dennison et al., 2009).

This study found the role of parenting style in predicting high school students' self-adjustment. A series of previous studies have investigated the various positive effect of each parenting style on the process of instilling and developing self-adjustment skills (C. McKinney et al., 2011). Conformity in adopting parenting styles can optimize the self-adjustment ability of the adolescent (Cliff McKinney et al., 2014). Every individual has different characteristics and environmental situations, so do the parents; they have different parenting styles (C. McKinney et al., 2011).

This study applied three parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. The authoritative parenting style has a slightly higher contribution than the authoritarian and permissive parenting style. This research result reveals that the authoritative parenting style positively contributes to self-adjustment, implying that the more authoritative parents apply, the higher the self-adjustment of high school students. This research result is aligned with Steinberg et al. (2013) that an individual with authoritative parenting has better self-adjustment, social, and academic levels. Parents with authoritative parenting carried out their control in more flexible ways. Parents try to direct a child's behavior using applied rules and standards conforming to social norms. The control applied with discussion strategy. The authoritative parents use a child-centered communication style; parents will spare some time to discuss and explain their decisions that need to be agreed upon (Pilarinos & Solomon, 2017).

This study found that authoritarian parenting style positively correlates with self-adjustment among high school students in Yogyakarta. The research result is different from the previous research by Dwairy, Marwan, Fayad & Benyaqoub (2013) and Varma et al. (2018), conveying that the authoritarian parenting style negatively affected teenage self-adjustment because it is deemed too strict and not warm. However, this parenting style did not inflict any danger to mental health (Dwairy et al., 2006). On the other hand, this research result is also aligned with Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, & Farah (2006), explaining that parents who implement authoritarian parenting use the concept of self-discipline in instilling social values. Understanding social values will ease a person to adjust to the environment. This understanding builds positive behavior that corresponds to the norms expected by society or the environment (Chao & Tseng, 2002).

Subsequently, this research result shows that the permissive parenting style provides a positive role in self-adjustment. This statement can be interpreted as the more permissive parenting applied, the higher self-adjustment of high school students. This tendency is because the interaction between children and parents continues. The permissive parenting style provides warmth, emotional support, and freedom to explore (Wischerth et al., 2016), which later benefits shape a child's creativity and responsibility. On the other hand, when an individual has good emotional support and gets the trust from the closest people, that person is prone to increase their self-adjustment (D. Wang & Fletcher, 2016).

Our research has limitations, such as the amount of research subject and the school type only limited to high school. It needs to do further research on other types of high school, such

as vocational high school, religious teaching-based high school, or boarding school. Further research also may examine family factors influencing self-adjustment, aside from parenting style.

Conclusion

Coping strategies and parenting styles influence the self-adjustment of high schools students. In general, problem-focused coping contributes slightly higher than emotional-focused coping in self-adjustment. Whereas among the three parenting styles, the authoritative parenting style has the highest contribution to self-adjustment, followed by the authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. Therefore both coping strategies and parenting styles are essential in influencing self-adjustment. For practical implications, any programs designed to promote positive self-adjustment among high schools students should focus on internal and external factors.

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