
**COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ADAPTATION AND STRESS PROCESSES
IN REGULAR STUDENTS AND STUDENTS TRANSFER DURING
THESIS DRAFTING PROCESS IN STIKES KARSA HUSADA GARUT**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined differences in stress levels and adaptation processes between regular and transfer students while completing their undergraduate thesis. Thesis preparation is a mandatory requirement for earning a bachelor's degree and often presents academic, personal, and environmental challenges that can trigger stress. Students are expected to manage stress effectively and develop adaptive coping strategies to complete their thesis successfully. A comparative descriptive design was employed, involving 84 respondents selected through simple random sampling, comprising 38 regular students and 46 transfer students. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Statistical analysis showed no significant difference in stress levels between the two groups ($p = 0.554$; $\alpha = 0.05$), indicating that both regular and transfer students generally experienced normal levels of stress. However, a significant difference was found in the adaptation process ($p = 0.024$; $\alpha = 0.05$). Transfer students demonstrated more maladaptive adaptation than regular students, largely because their attention was divided between academic responsibilities, work, and family commitments. The findings suggest that higher education institutions should strengthen academic support, facilities, and policies to facilitate thesis completion and help students develop effective stress management and adaptive coping skills.

Keywords: *Adaptation, Regular students, Stress, transfer students.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is of utmost importance to humanity because it fosters high-quality, intellectually capable individuals and combats ignorance (Salsabilla & Yoenanto, 2025). The stages of education in Indonesia include higher education, which follows secondary education, one of the programs within higher education is the bachelor's degree. To earn a bachelor's degree, one must first complete studies at a higher education institution (Pratiwi, 2024).

One of the leading health-related institutions of higher education in the city of Garut is the Karsa Husada Garut College of Health Sciences (STIKes). One of the programs offered there is the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (S1). The Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut consists of both regular and non-regular / transfer students (Perceka, 2020). Regular students are those in the general admission track, while transfer students are those in the special admission track—specifically, students who are advancing their studies from an Associate's degree (D3) to a Bachelor's degree (S1), also known as the non-regular or transfer track (Perceka & Sutrisno, 2020a).

Students at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut will face a series of academic requirements and obligations that they must fulfill to earn a bachelor's degree in their chosen field. One of the requirements that plays a key role in determining a student's graduation from college is the research report. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), a research report is a scientific paper that students are required to write as part of the final requirements for their academic education (Melliasany & Perceka, 2021). A research report is a scientific paper based on the results of 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. The research report serves as proof of the student's academic ability in conducting research related to educational issues within their field of study (Perceka & Sutrisno, 2020b).

(Li & Hasson, 2020) explains that research is a scientific endeavor that requires precision and consumes 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 retain information; the ability to think originally and objectively; patience; the capacity for collaboration; and personal perseverance.

The research report remains the primary obstacle to completing one's studies. According to the academic division at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut, among the 2017 graduating class, 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). There are various factors that hinder the completion of research reports; among them, the primary difficulty in the writing process is translating ideas into a logical, systematic, and communicative text while adhering to standard writing conventions. Additionally, activities unrelated to the research report can divert one's focus while working on it. Furthermore, this can reduce motivation to work on the research report when one's interest, energy, and thoughts are directed more toward those other activities (Marshall et al., 2020). Other obstacles include burnout from working on the research report, the time-consuming process of searching for and collecting data, difficulty balancing time between working on the research report and other activities—such as a job—and a lack of English proficiency needed to read the literature (Fard et al., 2020). 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, students may even decide not to finish their research report. According to various sources, the stress experienced by students while writing research reports includes physical, emotional, intellectual, and interpersonal symptoms (Samura & Tellen, 2019).

The process students undergo while 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 (Sembiring & Lim, 2020). This statement implies that a person can be said to be experiencing stress when they face internal pressure stemming from demands originating both within themselves and from their environment.

Stress does not always have a negative impact on an individual; it can also have a positive impact. Stress that has a negative impact is called distress, while stress that has a positive impact is called eustress (Jiang et al., 2025). The difference in how stress affects individuals is due to differences in each person's characteristics. These differences in characteristics determine an individual's response to the stimulus that causes stress, so each person's response will vary even if the source of stress is the same. Short-term stress may have beneficial and positive effects, but if stress persists over time, the consequences become negative, as it can disrupt health and other aspects of life. Factors influencing stress among college 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 academic assignments, the social environment, and the physical environment, both within the family and on campus (Pratiwi, 2024).

Based on initial observations of regular students, the researcher found that students felt unprepared for the process they were facing, as well as confused, stressed, anxious, and so on. Some of the obstacles in this process include students still feeling confused about the process they are undergoing, having the same research title as other students, difficulties in finding references or research literature, determining the main research problem and collecting data, differences in 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 proficiency and understanding regarding the preparation of research reports, difficulty meeting with their academic advisors, and the transfer students' busy work schedules (Tumanggor, 2023).

To overcome these feelings and obstacles, students are required to adjust or adapt to the process. Adaptation is a change that occurs within an individual in response to changes in the environment and can affect the integrity of the body—both physiologically and psychologically—resulting in adaptive behavior (Li & Hasson, 2020).

The adaptation mechanisms of each student in dealing with the research report writing process will naturally vary and may be either adaptive or maladaptive. This is based on several factors; among them, when 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 supervision process with their academic advisor, and integrating learning experiences and theories acquired during lectures in previous semesters (Moon & Jung, 2020).

METHODS

The research method used in this study is a descriptive-comparative method. This study aims to identify differences in the adaptation and stress processes among regular students and transfer students during the research report writing process at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut in 2025.

The population in this study 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 the process of preparing research reports at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut in 2025. The sampling

technique used in this study was random sampling with a simple random sampling approach. The sample size, calculated using the Slovin formula, resulted in a sample of 38 regular students and 46 transfer students.

The data collection instrument used in this study was a questionnaire administered to regular students and transfer students who were in the process of preparing their research reports at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut.

A validity test for the stress level was not conducted because the study used the standardized DASS (Depression Anxiety Stress Scale). Meanwhile, the validity test for the adaptation process was conducted at the University of Garut's Department of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, using a sample of 20 participants and the Pearson product-moment correlation technique; the reliability test utilized the Cronbach's Alpha formula. Data analysis of the research results utilized univariate and bivariate analyses. 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

1. Result

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Stress Levels of Regular Students During the Research Report Preparation Process

Stress	F	Percentage (%)
Normal	20	52,6
Light	9	23,7
Middle	6	15,8
Heavy	3	7,9
Very Heavy	0	0
Amount	38	100

Table 1 above shows that more than half (52.6%) of regular students experienced normal stress levels, and none experienced severe stress.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Transfer Students' Stress Levels During the Research Report Preparation Process

Stress	F	Percentage (%)
Normal	26	56,5
Light	12	26,1
Middle	7	15,2
Heavy	1	2,2
Very Heavy	0	0
Amount	46	100

Table 2 shows that more than half (56.5%) of transfer students experienced normal stress, and none experienced severe stress.

Table 3. Differences in stress levels between regular and transfer students

Class	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	P-value
Reguler	38	44,07	1674,5	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.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Regular Students' Adaptation Process During the Research Report Preparation Process

Adaptation Process	F	Percentage (%)
Adaptive	20	52,6
Maladaptive	18	47,4
Amount	38	100

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

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Transfer Students' Adaptation Process During the Research Report Preparation Process

Adaptatiton Process	F	Percentage (%)
Adaptive	13	28,3
Maladaptive	33	71,7
Amount	46	100

Table 5 shows that more than half (71.7%) of transfer students were

maladaptive, and nearly half (28.3%) were maladaptive.

a. 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	
Amount	84			

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

2. Discussion

A research report is a student's final project submitted to fulfill one of the requirements for obtaining an academic degree from a university; it must adhere to standard and systematic writing conventions as well as scientifically sound and accountable methods (Wati et al., 2025). During the writing process, students encounter various difficulties; these difficulties place pressure on the students, which can lead to stress. Therefore, students themselves must be able to adapt to the stress they experience (Rohmadani & Khoiryasdien, 2022).

a. Stress Levels Among Regular and Transfer Students

Stress has different meanings for different people; some define it as pressure, tension, or an unwanted external force, while others view it as an emotional response (Setiawan et al., 2026).

According to the Psychology Foundation of Australia (2014), stress levels, as measured using the DASS (Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale), can be categorized into five levels: normal, mild, moderate, severe, and very severe. At STIKes Karsa Husada Garut, there are 60 regular students and 86 transfer students currently in the process of preparing their

research reports. Based on the results of a study conducted during April and May involving 38 regular students and 46 transfer students, the frequency distribution of stress levels by gender showed that among regular students, there were 22 male and 16 female respondents. Meanwhile, among transfer students, the frequency distribution of stress levels consisted of 25 male and 21 female respondents. Based on age characteristics, the frequency distribution for regular students showed an average age of 21.66 years, with the youngest being 20 years old and the oldest 23 years old. Meanwhile, for transfer students, the average age was 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 research report writing process at STIKes Karsa Husada Garut in 2025 was as follows: 52.6% (20 students) experienced normal stress, 23.7% (9 students) experienced mild stress, 15.8% (6 students) experienced moderate stress, 7.9% or 3 students experienced severe stress, and no one experienced very severe stress. The frequency distribution of stress levels among transfer students showed that 56% (26 students) experienced normal stress, 26.1% (12 students) experienced mild stress, 15.2% (7 students) experienced moderate stress, 2.2% (1 student) experienced severe stress, and none experienced very severe stress.

The research results indicate that there were more male respondents than female respondents among both regular and transfer students. This is because the distribution of male students was larger than that of female students, with the majority experiencing normal stress levels; this contradicts (Kalmakis et al., 2020), which states that stress levels are higher among men. Regarding age characteristics, 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, and the highest 53 years and the lowest 23 years among transfer students, with the majority in both student groups

exhibiting normal stress levels. This contradicts the research by (Couette et al., 2020), which found differences in stress levels across age groups. As age increases, there is a tendency for stress levels to decrease. Thus, the older the age, the lower the stress level.

The results of the study also show that the average stress level among regular students is 46.29, and the average stress level among transfer students is 39.37. The results of the hypothesis test using the Mann-Whitney U test yielded a p-value of 0.554, which is greater than the alpha level ($\alpha = 0.05$). This indicates that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is rejected and the null hypothesis (H_o) is accepted, meaning there is no difference in stress levels between regular students and transfer students. These findings are consistent with a study conducted by (Aisa et al., 2021), comparing stress levels between advanced-track and regular students in relation to insomnia among final-semester students while completing their research reports in the Nursing Science program at Unsrat Manado, which concluded that there was no difference in stress levels between advanced-track and regular students.

Each student's response to stressors will vary based on factors such as the nature, duration, and number of stressors, past experiences, personality type, and developmental stage (Zar & Suryaratri, 2025). An individual's assessment of stressors influences their ability to take preventive actions against stressors that cause stress (Rivaldi, 2024a). The stress experienced by students at STikes Karsa Husada Garut who are preparing their final research reports is predominantly at normal and mild levels; this indicates that students generally do not face significant issues regarding their stress levels. The development of good resilience among students facing pressure from the process of preparing these research reports results in normal and mild stress responses. These normal and mild stress levels are not particularly harmful; that is, they do not have a negative impact on the students' own development. The pressure students face

during the research report writing process is viewed as an inevitable task that every student encounters and is considered part of the learning experience. Mild stress generally lasts longer than normal stress, typically ranging from a few hours to several days. In (Rivaldi, 2024b), study, it was stated that there are two factors influencing stress among students during the preparation of research reports: internal environmental factors—which include 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.

Normal and mild levels of stress are indeed essential for individuals to be motivated to work hard to overcome stressors; however, if stress becomes excessive, an individual's functions will be paralyzed, leaving them helpless. To address the issue of stress among students while working on research reports, specific methods or patterns for managing stress are necessary. As stated by (Barus et al., 2022), there are three patterns for managing stress: the healthy pattern, the harmonious pattern, and the pathological pattern. The healthy pattern involves the best approach to dealing with stress—managing one's behavior and actions so that stress does not cause disruption but instead fosters health and growth. The harmonious pattern involves coping with stress by managing time and activities in a balanced way that avoids creating various obstacles. Finally, the pathological pattern involves coping with stress in a way that results in various physical and socio-psychological disturbances. Stress must be approached positively so that it can be transformed into positive stress (eustress)—that is, stress that is beneficial, does not disrupt the individual, and fosters feelings of joy and enthusiasm. Eustress is a positive, healthy, and constructive response to stress.

b. Adaptation of Regular Students and Transfer Students

Adaptation is an individual's process of responding to environmental demands and the ability to cope with stress. An individual's adaptation to stress is evaluated as either adaptive or maladaptive (Diaz & Budiman, 2019). Even though stress levels fall within the normal range, stress should still be anticipated and managed appropriately so that the adaptation process involved in preparing a research report does not result in maladaptive responses.

The results of this study revealed that, in terms of gender characteristics—with males constituting the majority in both groups—regular students showed adaptive responses in 20 cases (52.6%), while the remainder exhibited maladaptive responses; in contrast, among transfer students, 33 students (71.7%) demonstrated maladaptive responses, with the remainder showing adaptive responses. These results indicate that the majority of regular students exhibited adaptive responses, whereas the majority of transfer students tended to exhibit maladaptive responses. This finding contradicts the research by (NUR, 2021), which stated that gender does not serve as a distinguishing factor for students in terms of adaptation.

Based on the results of the hypothesis test using the Mann-Whitney U Test, a p-value of 0.024 was obtained, which is smaller than the alpha level ($\alpha = 0.05$). This indicates that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, meaning that there is a difference in the adaptation process between regular students and transfer students.

Difficulties in preparing research reports can arise due to several factors, leading to maladaptive patterns. This aligns with the findings of (Fung et al., 2023) study on the research report preparation process, which indicated that one of the main challenges in writing research reports is the difficulty of translating ideas into logical, systematic, and communicative writing while adhering to standard writing conventions. Additionally, activities

unrelated to the research report can divert attention while working on the report, particularly for transfer students, the majority of whom are already married and employed. Furthermore, this can reduce motivation to work on the research report when interest, energy, and focus are directed toward those other activities. The fear of meeting with the academic advisor can also hinder smooth communication between the advisor and the student. The progress of research reports and the graduation of classmates also have a significant influence in encouraging students to complete their research reports. Other factors, such as slow correction processes, a lack of coordination among academic advisors, and financial issues, can hinder the completion of research reports. Additionally, a lack of agreement and commitment—particularly regarding scheduling with academic advisors—as well as having to wait for other classmates to attend advising sessions, can also hinder the advising process.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that more than half of the regular students exhibited normal stress levels during the research report writing process. More than half of the transfer students exhibited normal stress levels during the research report writing process. More than half of the adaptation processes among regular students during the research report writing process were adaptive. More than half of the adaptation processes among transfer students during the research report writing process were maladaptive, and there was no difference in stress levels between regular and transfer students during the research report writing process. Additionally, there were differences in the adaptation processes between regular and transfer students during the research report writing process.

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