

Effectiveness of Approach Coping Strategy and Academic Stress Problems among Male and Female Undergraduate Students at Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi, PathumThani Province, Thailand

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Abstract— *Academic stressors problems are important issues affecting student's learning. Approach coping strategy is effective tool in helping students to cope with their academic stressor's problems. This study was conducted on 300 students (150 males and 150 females) to find information about their academic stressors problems and compare the differences in response in strategy applied by males and females for the effective approach coping strategy to help them to cope with their academic stressor's problems. This study has done at Rajamagala University of Technology Thanyaburi, PathumTani Province, Thailand. This study applied the Approach Coping Strategy which contains 23 statements and the Factors Affecting Academic Stress Scale which contains 50 statements. The samples were randomly selected 300 undergraduate students from eight difference faculties; there were Agricultural Technology, Business Administration, Engineering, Fine and Applied Arts, Home Economics Technology, Liberal Arts, Science and Technology, and Technical Education. This study observed that out of 150 Thai male undergraduate students, 147 (98.00%) students expressed that they have problems in 'writing papers' whereas 135 (90.00%) Thai female students have problem in 'taken exams' (N = 150). The findings of interviews results found that 10 respondents who participated in this study, they practiced by using approach coping strategy when they faced academic stressors problems not before that.*

Keywords: *Approach Coping Strategy, Academic Stressors Problems, Undergraduate Students, Factors Affecting Academic Stress.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Stress was the physical and psychological response of the body to events that have made students feel threatened or upset in some way.¹ Stress is a constraining forced that causes to body or mental tension and can be a factor in disease causation. Stress is a disturbed state of an organism due to the numerous demands of life situation that demand more to be adjustment individuals. Stress is a state of an individual that caused by his/her perceived threat from their environment disturbs their academic issues and their well-being.²

Academic stress associated with academic adjustments problems among undergraduate students that occur at individual and social level. Academic stress namely, commerce management, humanities, and basic sciences. The five dimensions of sources such as personal inadequacy, fear of failure, interpersonal difficulties with lecturers, lecturers-students' relationship and inadequate study facilities were further analyzed and gender differences were also obtained. Stress among students needed the

effective counseling modules, approach coping strategy and intervention strategies to help the alleviated stress.³

Chan, Leung, and Liang (2018)⁴ studied the roles of motivation and coping behaviors in managing stress: Qualitative interview construction professionals in Mainland China. Their studies focused on the effectiveness of approach coping strategies that related to personal awareness of stress (cognitive, affective, and physical), experiences of practicing approach coping strategy to deal with stress, and the expectancies of the influence of stress are covered.

Undergraduate students are facing stress problems because they lack the academic coping strategy. So, need approach coping strategy to help them to cope with their stress and anxiety problems. The aim of this study is to investigate the factors affecting academic performance of undergraduate students at Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi who faced stress problems and how do they apply approach coping strategy to cope with their problems.

The main purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of approach coping strategy and coping abilities with stress and anxiety problems among Undergraduate Students at Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi, Thailand. Specifically, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the academic stressors problems faced by male and female undergraduate students at Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi.
2. To determine the approach coping strategy practiced by male and female undergraduate students at Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi to enhance their academic performance.

II. METHODOLOGY

This is a mixed method study that examined the effectiveness of approach coping strategy and its abilities on the stress problems among Thai male and female undergraduate students. The reason for collecting quantitative and qualitative data into one study, these brought together two types of information providing greater understanding and insight into research topics that could not have been obtained analysing and evaluating data separately.⁵

2.1 Population and Samples

The population for this study were undergraduate students who have been randomly selected students' samples by gender and year level as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Number of Selected Student Samples by Gender, Year Level of Studying

Gender	Student Samples			
	2nd Year	3 rd Year	4th Year	Total
Male	50 (8.34%)	50 (8.33%)	50 (8.33%)	150 (25.00%)
Female	50 (8.33%)	50 (8.34%)	50 (8.33%)	150 (25.00%)
Total	100 (16.67%)	100 (16.67%)	100 (16.66%)	300 (50.00%)

2.2 The Instrument

The original version of the Three Scales of Academic Coping Strategies (Sullivan, 2010⁶) was translated into Thai language and The Factors Affecting Academic Stress (Rajaskar, 2013⁷) was translated into Thai language.

The Approach Factor was measured using 23 statements and the Factors Affecting Academic Stress (Rajaskar, 2013⁷) consists of 50 statements.

2.3 Data Collection

The data for this study were collected in Thailand that included both, the participant answers to the questionnaires and conducts the interview.

Statistical analysis: Quantitative data was expressed as mean and standard deviation, all statistical analysis was done using SPSS (Trial version 24) software.

III. RESULTS

RQ1: What are the factors affecting academic stress problems faced by Thai male and female undergraduate students?

Table 2
Items of Academic Stress Problems Faced by Thai Undergraduate Students According to Five Sub-Factors of Academic Stressors Problems (Rajasekar, 2013)⁷

Male Students (N=150)			Female Students (N=150)		
Item of Problems	N	%	Item of Problems	N	%
Writing Paper	147	98.00	Taking Exams	135	90.00
Meeting deadlines for course assignment	135	90.00	Meeting deadlines for course assignments	133	88.67
Smoking	130	86.67	Participating in class	130	86.67
Personality	129	86.00	Paying monthly expenses	129	86.00
Heath worries	128	85.33	Being obligate to participating in family function	128	85.33
Handing relationship	127	84.67	Illness	127	84.67
Meeting with faculty	125	83.33	Lack of relaxation	120	80.00
Participating in class	120	80.00	Faculty treating different peer groups differently	118	78.67
Fear of failing to meet program expectations	115	76.67	Handling the academic workload	116	77.33
Family having money problems	113	75.33	Poor diet	115	76.67
Lack of relaxation	112	74.67	Loneliness	113	75.33
Perfectionism	111	74.00	Low self-esteem	110	73.33
Finding support group sensitivities to specific needs	108	72.00	Exam pressure	106	70.67
Living in the local community	106	70.67	Health worries	105	70.00
Adjusting to the campus environment	104	69.00	Peer pressure	100	66.67

Table 2 shows the 5 factors affecting academic stress problems faced by 150 males and 150 females according to academic stress problems (Rajaskar, 2013⁷).

- 1) **Academic Stressors:** Among 150 Thai male undergraduate students, 147 (98.00%) expressed that they have problems in writing papers, 135 (90.00%) students have met deadlines for course assignments. Whereas among 150 Thai female undergraduate students, 135 (90.00%) have stress of taken exams. (Table 2)
- 2) **Environmental Stressors:** One hundred and twenty-five (83.33%) Thai male undergraduate students claimed that they have been meeting with faculty, 120 (80.00%) students have participated in class. Whereas, 130 (86.67%) Thai female students have been participating in class. (Table 2)
- 3) **Monetary Stressors:** One hundred and fifteen (75.33%) Thai male undergraduate students expressed that they had money problems. Moreover, 129 (86.00%) Thai female students have been paying monthly expenses.(Table 2)
- 4) **Physical Stressors:** Among 150 Thai male undergraduate students,130 (86.67%) expressed that they have been smoking. Furthermore, 127 (84.67%) Thai female students have expressed illness. (Table 2)
- 5) **Psychological Stressors:** Among 150 Thai male undergraduate students, 129 (86%) expressed that they have had personality problems. Whereas in females, 113 (75.33%) have had loneliness. (Table 2)

3.1 Research Question 2

Table 3 showed demographic data of the 10 respondents according to the identification number of respondents, page number of interview transcripts, year of the study, school of the study, age, gender and cumulative grade point average (CGPA). The rule in Thailand is that students who has scored a CGPA lower than 2.00 in first year of their study is considered as having failed and will be dismissed from the university. Therefore, the interview results of this study showed that the 12 students who participated in the study have achieved CGPA at lease 2.5 or C⁺.

Demographic data in this study were obtained from the structured interview conducted with the students. Out of the 10 second year students who participated in the study, five of them were males and the other five were females. All of them were 19 years old (Table 3).

Table 3
Demographic Data of the 10 Respondents with Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).

Respondent	Page	Year	School	Age	Gender	CGPA
R1	4	2	Engineering	19	Male	C+
R2	11	2	Engineering	19	Female	C+
R3	18	2	Fine and Applied Arts	19	Male	C+
R4	25	2	Fine and Applied Arts	19	Female	C+
R5	32	2	Home Economics Technology	19	Male	C+
R6	39	2	Home Economics Technology	19	Female	C+
R7	46	2	Liberal Arts	19	Male	C+
R8	53	2	Liberal Arts	19	Female	C+
R9	60	2	Technical Education	19	Male	C+
R10	67	2	Technical Education	19	Female	C+

3.2 Findings of the Interviews

The 10 respondents who agreed to be interviewed in this study practiced academic coping strategy as described by the following strategies:

3.3 Approach Coping Strategy among the Respondents

Table 3 shows demographic data of the 10 respondents, which can be referred to by their identification number, page number in the interview transcript, year of the study, school of the study, age, gender, and CGPA.

Respondent '1' said that he used the approach coping strategy to solve his academic stressors problems and said "When I faced academic stressors problems during my study, I tried my best to stay calm and told myself that everything will be all right".

A female student, Respondent '2', described that she has tried to find out what she has done wrong from her past experiences and explained "I tried myself to learn something from the past experiences and I learnt from my mistakes to find out what I have done wrong and accepted my responsibilities for these problems".

Furthermore, Respondent '3' used his approach coping strategy to solve his academic stressors problems. He explained "When I faced academic stressors problems, I always asked myself about my problems and tried my best to think positively over the problems".

In addition, a female student, Respondent '4', described that she has set a goal in trying to solve her problems and said "I have been brainstorming a variety of possible solutions to the problem and I have set specific goals for solving the problems".

Another male student, Respondent '5' said that he applied approach coping strategy to solve his academic stressors problems. He said "When I had academic problems, I thought positive ways about the problem and I have engaged in physical activities which have helped me to feel better and less stressors when I exercised.

Respondent '6' described that she tried to adjust her personal priorities for solving her problems as she has mentioned "I have adjusted my personal priorities for solving my problems such as set a time management for studying, set a time for exercise, set a time for relaxation, and put some importance schedules for her routine".

For Respondent '7', he applied approach coping strategy to solve his academic stressors problems by thinking that something good will come from the problem situation as he explained".

Furthermore, Respondent '8' persisted in trying to solve or fix her problems by saying "I was persistent in trying to solve or fix the problems and I have tried to think about the problem carefully before acting. I have believed in my senses".

Additionally, Respondent '9' expressed that he has tried to fix his academic stressors problems by saying "I hoped in trying my best to solve or fix the academic stressors problems and I have accepted the actual causes of problems and showed responsibilities to solve about the problem carefully before acting".

Besides, Respondent '10' applied approach coping strategy to solve her academic stressors problems by saying "I set the best plans and tried to think about the problem carefully before acting. I have confirmed to be a stronger person when I have challenged with the problems".

IV. DISCUSSION

The present study observed that there were 5 factors affecting academic stress problems faced by 150 males and 150 females Thai undergraduate students according to academic stress problems (Rajasekar, 2013)⁷. For Academic Stressors Factor, 147 (98.00%) Thai male undergraduate students expressed that they have problems in 'writing papers'. Additionally, academic Stressors Factor, 147 (98.00%) Thai female undergraduate students have problem in 'taken exams', 133 (88.67%) students have problem in 'met deadlines for course assignments'.

The finding of interviews from the 10 respondents interviewed, five male and five female students indicated that they used approach coping strategy when they have academic stressors problem. It was also observed that different reasons were given by male and female students. They agreed that they used approach coping strategy when they have academic stressors problems.

Sami Abdo et al⁸ reported 46% of Malaysian medical students felt stress and most common stressor was worries of the future (71.0%), followed by financial difficulties. Whereas in UAE Gomathi et al⁹ reported that worries regarding the future (54.2%) and parental expectations (40.1%) were the major stressors and there were no significant differences observed in the stressors or coping strategies between genders or programmes.

Se-Hyuk Park et al¹⁰ reported that Korean adolescents developed their own coping strategies to deal with various academic stressors through either positive or negative forms of leisure.

V. CONCLUSION

As per the observation of this study, there are practical recommendations are given to the four main actors who are involved with undergraduate students i.e. the government, universities, counselors, parents, and undergraduate students. They are follows:-

Government is set up approach coping strategy on academic stressors problems among Thai undergraduate students, the government should support staffs/lecturers/professors' teachers to understand the role of approach coping strategy and serve undergraduate students approach coping strategy on academic stressors problems (Prau, 2015)¹¹.

University should consider the quality and quantity of approach coping strategy on academic stressors problems among undergraduate students (Hanna, etall, 2018)¹².

Counsellors should be needed to advocated for and constructed credit-earning courses that aimed to promote approach coping strategy that can be helped students navigate challenging achievement-oriented and these tasks may be an important in thwarting the academic stressors problems.

Parental involvement in university students' academic stressors problems has long been considered a key factor promoting a wide range of desired academic issue outcomes in their child (Pitt atall 2017)¹³.

Undergraduate students who have faced with academic stress problems or academic adjustment problems can be used the practices of approach coping strategy to cope with their academic adjustment and stress problems (Furman etall 2018)¹⁴.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared till now.

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