



Navigating Self-Efficacy: Coping Strategies of Domestic Migrant Students Facing Homesickness and Insecurity

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the emotional experiences, social adjustment, and coping strategies of domestic migrant students in Bengkulu who experience homesickness and insecurity during their adaptation process in higher education. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through semi-structured interviews and observations involving undergraduate students from semesters 2 to 6. The findings indicate that domestic migrant students commonly experience emotional challenges in the early stages of adaptation, including loneliness, anxiety, reduced self-confidence, and feelings of social isolation. These challenges are primarily influenced by environmental transitions, cultural and linguistic differences, and the demands of independent living in a new social context. Despite these difficulties, students gradually develop adaptive coping strategies through peer interaction, social support systems, and both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping mechanisms. The results further show that self-efficacy plays a supportive role in helping students regulate psychological stress, although it is not the sole determining factor in overcoming homesickness. Strong social support networks and effective coping strategies are found to be more dominant in facilitating successful adaptation. Overall, the study highlights the importance of strengthening social support systems and psychological resilience to improve the well-being and adjustment of domestic migrant students in higher education settings.

Keywords: *migrant students; homesickness; insecurity; self-efficacy; coping strategies.*

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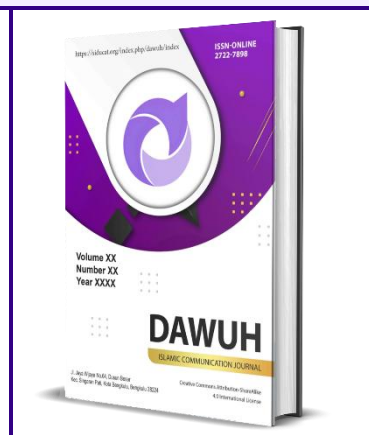
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INTRODUCTION

Homesickness is a common psychological condition experienced by students who migrate for higher education and live away from their family and familiar environment. It is characterized by emotional distress such as loneliness, anxiety, reduced self-confidence, and difficulties in adapting to new social and academic contexts (Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2010; Kerns et al., 2008).

In the context of higher education, migrant students are particularly vulnerable due to the sudden transition into unfamiliar cultural and social environments, which often require rapid psychological adjustment. Homesickness is not merely an emotional reaction but is closely related to students' ability to adapt and regulate their psychological responses during transition. Students who experience homesickness often face challenges in managing academic responsibilities, building social relationships, and adjusting to institutional expectations. These difficulties may reduce overall well-being and academic engagement if not properly managed (Verschuur et al., 2016).

Coping strategies play a central role in helping students manage homesickness. Previous studies show that students commonly use both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies, including seeking social support, engaging in activities, and cognitive reframing (Asdhar, 2024; Saravanan et al., 2019). Effective coping is often layered and dynamic, involving multiple strategies depending on situational demands.

In addition to coping strategies, self-efficacy is an important psychological factor that influences how individuals respond to stress and unfamiliar environments. Self-efficacy refers to individuals' belief in their ability to manage challenges and regulate behavior effectively. Recent studies show that higher self-efficacy is significantly associated with lower levels of homesickness and better emotional adjustment among migrant students (Sondakh & Soetjningsih, 2021; Sondakh, 2023). Students with strong self-efficacy tend to demonstrate better adaptation skills, emotional regulation, and resilience in dealing with academic and social pressures.

Individuals who continue their education to the university level are referred to as college students. Students are part of an educated group preparing for their future professional careers. Some students choose to pursue higher education outside their hometowns. These individuals are known as migrant students. The tradition of migration has long existed in Indonesian society and is often interpreted as a symbol of independence and maturity. Migration is also regarded as an effort to improve one's quality of life. The motivations for migration vary, ranging from employment to continuing education. For university students, the decision to migrate is generally based on academic considerations. They seek institutions with better educational quality, while new environments are considered capable of providing broader opportunities. Thus, migration becomes a strategic step toward achieving personal goals and a brighter future (Morin & Hastuti, 2025).

The adaptation process presents unique challenges for migrant students, not only academically but also socially, emotionally, and culturally. Students who study far from home must adjust to new learning systems, unfamiliar social environments, and cultural differences. They are no longer surrounded by the primary support systems of family and long-term friends from their hometowns. Such conditions increase the risk of experiencing loneliness and feelings of alienation (Ifadah & Tiara, 2025).

Although previous studies have examined homesickness and coping strategies, most research focuses on international students or general student populations, while limited attention has been given to domestic migrant students in regional Indonesian contexts such as Bengkulu. This



context is important because students in regional universities often come from diverse geographical and cultural backgrounds, creating unique adaptation dynamics that influence psychological well-being.

Self-efficacy, according to Albert Bandura (as cited in Alwisol, 2009), refers to an individual's belief in their ability to complete learning tasks and achieve predetermined goals within a specific time frame and expected outcome. Self-efficacy is associated with the level of confidence individuals have in their ability to perform academic activities and accomplish learning-related responsibilities. This confidence is often supported by awareness of the importance of education, personal values, and expectations regarding learning outcomes.

According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy consists of three main dimensions: magnitude, strength, and generality.

1. **Magnitude** refers to the perceived level of task difficulty an individual believes they can handle. This aspect influences behavioral choices when confronting tasks.
2. **Strength** refers to the degree of confidence individuals possess regarding their capabilities. Strong beliefs encourage persistence and resilience in achieving goals.
3. **Generality** refers to the extent to which self-efficacy beliefs apply across various situations or domains.

Bandura (1997) further suggested that self-efficacy is formed through several sources, one of which is mastery experience. Successful completion of tasks strengthens an individual's confidence in their abilities. Conversely, failure may weaken self-efficacy, especially when confidence has not yet been firmly established. Therefore, facing challenges through effort, persistence, and hard work can foster successful experiences that reinforce self-efficacy (Mahmudi & Suroso, 2014; Rustika, 2012).

Homesickness is a psychological condition commonly experienced by individuals living far from their place of origin. It manifests as longing for family, friends, and familiar surroundings. Homesickness is often accompanied by loneliness and discomfort in a new environment. Individuals experiencing homesickness may struggle to adapt to unfamiliar settings. Differences in atmosphere, culture, and habits can intensify feelings of longing. Among migrant students, homesickness frequently emerges during the early stages of university life. This occurs because students face significant changes in their daily routines, social environments, and academic demands. They are also required to adapt to new cultural norms and habits that may differ from those in their hometowns. Consequently, homesickness becomes a common experience among students living away from home (Nisa, Santi, & Ananta, 2023).

Homesickness not only reflects longing for home but also represents an individual's adjustment process to a new environment. Migrant students often leave behind their primary support systems, including family members and close friends. This separation may result in emotional distress. Being far from loved ones can reduce direct emotional support, leading to psychological discomfort. If prolonged, such conditions may negatively affect mental health. The consequences may include increased anxiety, loneliness, and difficulties regulating emotions. Homesickness can also reduce motivation and concentration in academic activities. Students may struggle to remain focused or enthusiastic in attending classes. Therefore, it is important for migrant students to effectively manage homesickness to maintain psychological well-being and academic performance (Afrilia & Siregar, 2024).



Homesickness among students pursuing education away from home is closely related to their ability to adapt to new surroundings. Adaptation involves not only personal adjustment but also social and cultural adaptation. Differences in culture, language, communication styles, and social environments may create discomfort for students. Such situations can make individuals feel unfamiliar with their surroundings and distant from familiar environments. These feelings of alienation may intensify longing for home and family. Without proper management, homesickness may become more severe. Therefore, adaptation skills are essential in managing environmental changes. Social support from peers, family, and the surrounding community also plays an important role in reducing homesickness. In addition, students need effective coping strategies to manage emotional pressure. Adaptation ability, social support, and coping strategies can help migrant students overcome homesickness more effectively (Savira & Widiasih, 2024).

Insecurity refers to a psychological condition characterized by feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and excessive worry about oneself. This condition often emerges from dissatisfaction with one's self-image, leading individuals to feel inferior, fearful, pessimistic, or incapable compared to others. Insecurity can also be understood as emotional discomfort accompanied by negative self-perceptions. Individuals experiencing insecurity frequently evaluate themselves as less capable or less worthy than others, resulting in emotions such as shame, fear, and anxiety. When persistent and unmanaged, insecurity may create psychological distress and negatively impact mental well-being (Abidah & Maryam, 2024).

Feelings of insecurity arise when individuals experience low self-confidence and perceive themselves as inadequate. In modern society, characterized by social demands and media influence, people are increasingly vulnerable to anxiety regarding others' judgments. According to Abraham Maslow, insecurity occurs when individuals perceive the world as a threatening place, generating fear, loneliness, and self-doubt. Individuals experiencing insecurity often feel dissatisfied with themselves, worry excessively, and develop negative thoughts about their abilities. These feelings may stem from internal factors such as low self-esteem or external factors such as rejection, failure, or social comparison (Devanti, 2025).

Coping refers to both visible and internal behaviors used by individuals to reduce or manage psychological tension when facing stressful situations. Coping strategies are efforts employed to handle conditions perceived as stressful, challenging, or overwhelming, especially when demands exceed personal resources. Individual coping resources influence the type of strategies used to solve problems. Therefore, different individuals may demonstrate varying coping mechanisms when responding to stressful circumstances.

According to Stuart and Sundeen (1991), there are two commonly used coping mechanisms. The first is problem-focused coping, also referred to as direct action coping, which aims to address the source of the problem directly. The second is emotion-focused coping, also known as palliative coping, which seeks to regulate or alleviate emotional responses to stressful situations.

Similarly, Lazarus explained that coping consists of cognitive and behavioral efforts used to manage psychological stress. Problem-focused coping involves actively resolving the source of stress, while emotion-focused coping aims to regulate emotional reactions caused by pressure or adversity. The coping strategy chosen by an individual depends on personal experiences, abilities, and available resources (Maryam, 2017; Andriyani, 2019).



METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design using field research to examine the adaptation processes of domestic migrant students in Bengkulu. The qualitative approach was selected to gain an in-depth understanding of students' lived experiences during their transition to a new academic and social environment, particularly in relation to psychological and social adjustment processes.

Participants

The participants consisted of seven domestic migrant students enrolled at a university in Bengkulu. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on specific inclusion criteria: (1) students enrolled in semesters 2 to 6, (2) students who were living away from their hometown without family accompaniment, and (3) students who had experienced at least one semester of adaptation in the new environment. Both male and female students from different regional backgrounds in Indonesia were included to ensure variation in experiences.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations. The interview guide focused on students' adaptation experiences, including their emotional responses, social adjustment processes, and strategies used to manage challenges during migration.

Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes and was conducted in a private setting to ensure participant comfort and confidentiality. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Non-participant observations were conducted in both academic and residential environments to capture students' daily interactions, behavioral adaptation, and social engagement within their new surroundings. Field notes were systematically recorded during observation sessions.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process followed several stages: data familiarization, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining final themes. Coding was conducted manually to identify recurring patterns related to adaptation experiences and coping behaviors among participants.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing interview data with observational findings. Member checking was conducted by returning summarized interpretations to participants for confirmation. Additionally, peer debriefing with fellow researchers was used to minimize researcher bias and strengthen analytical rigor.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval procedures were followed prior to data collection. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after they were informed about the purpose of the study, data confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Participant identities were anonymized throughout the research process to ensure privacy and confidentiality.



Table1. Results And Discussion

No	Respondents	Initial Feelings as a Migrant Student	Form of Homesickness /Insecurity	Adaptation Challenges	Coping Strategies
1	G R D	Happy but confused by the new environment	Homesickness, missing family, and feeling insecure	Differences in language or dialect	Contacting family and building friendships
2	A E M	Happy but sad because of being far from family	Homesickness and low self-confidence	Adapting to local accent and campus environment	Contacting family, keeping busy, and participating in campus activities
3	J P G S	Confused and afraid due to not having friends	Homesickness and insecurity	Language differences and social adaptation	Video calls with parents and spending time with friends
4	M L	Happy but sad due to separation from family	Homesickness and feeling insecure	Communication difficulties caused by language differences	Communicating with family and focusing on self-discipline
5	Y P A	Not yet able to adapt and feeling challenged	Homesickness due to first-time migration	Cultural differences and social environment	Learning to appreciate differences and adjusting oneself
6	S	Experiencing lifestyle changes	Pressure in managing independent living	Financial management and living expenses	Learning to manage finances and distinguish needs from wants
7	R M P	Excited but anxious about facing a new life	Lack of self-confidence as a regional student	Time management and social adaptation	Calling family, joining campus activities, and building relationships

Based on interviews with seven migrant students, the findings showed that early migration was marked by mixed emotional experiences such as excitement, anxiety, confusion, and fear of



adapting to a new environment. One participant expressed, *“I was happy but also anxious because I had to live far from my family for the first time”*. This illustrates the emotional transition experienced during initial adaptation.

Homesickness emerged as the dominant psychological condition, mainly characterized by longing for family and familiar environments. Another participant stated, *“I often miss my family, especially at night when I feel alone”*, showing how emotional distance becomes more pronounced in daily life in a new environment.

The study further identified that the most prominent form of homesickness involved longing for family members and the familiarity of the home environment. Several participants also reported feelings of insecurity, especially when adapting to new cultural contexts, unfamiliar regional languages, and increasingly competitive academic settings. Adaptation challenges extended beyond social adjustment and included difficulties in time management, establishing interpersonal relationships, and managing personal finances independently.

Despite these challenges, participants demonstrated various coping strategies to manage their emotional and psychological adjustment. The most frequently reported strategy was maintaining regular communication with family through phone calls or video calls, which may be interpreted as a form of digital kinship. Additionally, developing social networks within the university environment, engaging in academic and organizational activities, and maintaining a strong focus on educational goals served as adaptive mechanisms that supported self-efficacy and facilitated adjustment to the new environment.

The Role of Self-Efficacy in Homesickness

Self-efficacy can be understood as an individual’s belief in their ability to face challenges and solve various problems. For migrant students, self-efficacy plays an important role in the adjustment process to a new environment that differs from their place of origin. Students with high self-efficacy tend to have greater confidence in their abilities, are better able to regulate their emotions, and can adapt more easily to social environments and academic activities in a new setting. In contrast, students with low self-efficacy are more likely to experience difficulties in adaptation, making them more vulnerable to homesickness or intense feelings of longing for home and family.

Several studies have reported a negative relationship between self-efficacy and homesickness, suggesting that higher self-efficacy is generally associated with lower levels of homesickness among migrant students (Sondakh & Soetjningsih, 2018; Fatandi, Minarni, & Umar, 2025). However, findings from this qualitative study indicate a more complex pattern. Interview results show that some students with relatively high self-confidence still experienced strong homesickness. One participant stated, *“I still miss my family even when I try to stay confident,”* indicating that emotional attachment to family remains a dominant factor in the adaptation process.

This suggests that self-efficacy does not operate as a single or direct predictor of homesickness. Instead, it functions as one of several psychological resources that influence coping behavior and adaptation. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy shapes how individuals think, feel, and act in challenging situations, particularly through persistence and behavioral regulation.

Therefore, the findings of this study emphasize that homesickness among migrant students is shaped by multiple interacting factors, including self-efficacy, family attachment, and social support, rather than being determined by a single psychological construct alone (Abidah & Maryam, 2024; Savira & Widiasih, 2024).



Self-Efficacy and Insecurity

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to face challenges and solve problems. Among migrant students, self-efficacy plays an important role in the process of adapting to a new environment. Students with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident, capable of regulating their emotions, and better able to adjust to unfamiliar surroundings. In contrast, low self-efficacy may lead to difficulties in adaptation and increase the likelihood of experiencing homesickness. Several previous studies have identified a negative relationship between self-efficacy and homesickness, indicating that higher self-efficacy is associated with lower levels of homesickness. However, the findings of this study revealed that the relationship was not statistically significant. This suggests that homesickness among migrant students is influenced not only by self-efficacy but also by other contributing factors beyond the scope of this study (Fatandi, Minarni, & Umar, 2025).

Insecurity is a psychological condition commonly experienced when individuals feel uncertain about themselves. These feelings often arise from self-dissatisfaction or concerns regarding how they are perceived by others in their social environment. Insecurity can be understood as fear or anxiety triggered by environmental pressures and rooted in an individual's dissatisfaction with themselves. Such conditions may cause individuals to experience low self-confidence, heightened anxiety, and a tendency to compare themselves with others (Abidah & Maryam, 2024).

Adaptive Coping Strategies

Students frequently encounter various academic demands, including assignments, examinations, and pressure to achieve satisfactory academic performance. When these demands are not managed effectively, they may contribute to academic stress. Therefore, students require adaptive mechanisms to cope with such pressures, one of which involves the use of coping strategies. Coping strategies refer to individuals' efforts to adjust to and manage stressful situations. Within academic settings, these strategies assist students in regulating stress to prevent disruptions to the learning process. Furthermore, social support from peers, family, and the surrounding environment, as well as academic self-efficacy, plays a significant role in enhancing students' confidence in dealing with academic challenges, thereby contributing to better stress management (Andriyani, 2019).

Migrant students often face additional psychological pressures while adapting to life in a new environment. These pressures may include homesickness, academic stress, and challenges associated with adjusting to unfamiliar social conditions that differ from their place of origin. To cope with these difficulties, students commonly employ coping strategies as cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage emotional distress. Coping strategies are essential in maintaining psychological well-being during the adaptation process. Research conducted by Theresa, Satiadarma, and Uranus found that social support represents an effective coping mechanism in reducing homesickness. Students who are able to build supportive peer relationships and maintain communication with family members tend to experience lower levels of stress and demonstrate greater ease in adjusting to their new environment.

In addition to social support, religious coping has emerged as another strategy frequently utilized by students in managing psychological distress. Religious coping may be expressed through spiritual practices such as prayer, worship, and self-reflection. This approach enables individuals to



interpret life difficulties as part of personal growth and learning experiences. Through religious engagement, students may achieve emotional stability and improve their ability to regulate emotions. Previous studies have shown that students who practice religious coping tend to report lower levels of academic stress and stronger emotional regulation when facing academic challenges.

Research conducted by Faris Muda and colleagues further demonstrated that religious coping plays an important role in helping students manage psychological pressures throughout academic life. Religious practices may provide emotional comfort and strengthen resilience in dealing with educational demands. Through activities such as prayer, increased spiritual engagement, and self-reflection, students can obtain emotional support grounded in religious belief systems. This approach also contributes to improved self-confidence in confronting academic pressures. Moreover, students who adopt religious coping strategies tend to display greater emotional stability and are less susceptible to stress. They are also more capable of interpreting challenges as part of their learning process and personal development within both academic and everyday contexts (Muda et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that migrant students who recently arrived in Bengkulu without family or close friends experienced significant emotional challenges, including homesickness, loneliness, anxiety, and insecurity. These conditions primarily emerged due to separation from primary support systems and the need to adapt to new social and cultural environments. The findings indicate that adaptation improves gradually through social interaction, peer support, and active involvement in academic and campus activities. Students who are able to engage socially tend to show better emotional adjustment and reduced psychological distress over time.

Furthermore, self-efficacy and coping strategies play an important role in supporting emotional regulation during the adaptation process. However, these factors do not operate in isolation, but interact with social support and environmental conditions in shaping students' adjustment experiences. From a theoretical perspective, this study strengthens Bandura's self-efficacy theory by showing that confidence influences coping behavior, but does not fully determine emotional outcomes such as homesickness. Practically, the findings suggest that universities should strengthen student support systems through counseling services, peer-support programs, and structured orientation activities to facilitate migrant student adaptation.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed. First, migrant or out-of-town students are encouraged to improve their self-adjustment abilities by actively developing social relationships, participating in campus activities, and implementing positive coping strategies to better manage homesickness and feelings of insecurity. Second, higher education institutions are advised to provide supportive programs, such as counseling services, orientation programs, and student communities, to facilitate the adjustment process of migrant students. Third, future studies are recommended to explore additional factors that may influence homesickness and insecurity, including family support, economic conditions, and cultural background, while employing a wider range of research methods to produce more comprehensive and in-depth findings.



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