

The Relationship Between Social Support and Academic Stress Among Students in The Yogyakarta Region

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Abstract

A preliminary study from several universities in Yogyakarta found that 54.2% of students are often at risk of experiencing stress. The presence of social support is expected to reduce the level of academic stress experienced by students. This research contributes to raising awareness and gaining further support from universities to address the stress faced by students. This research was conducted in Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia, with 236 students as respondents, using the Slovin formula (significance level $\alpha=5\%$). The validity testing technique used by the researcher is the Bivariate Pearson correlation (Pearson Product-Moment). The results show that the stress experienced by students falls into the moderate to severe category, while the social support they receive is categorized as low. Bivariate analysis reveals that the determining factor influencing the increase in academic stress is social support ($p\text{-value}=0.000$, $RP=6.041$). This research found a significant relationship between low social support and high levels of academic stress. Universities need to strengthen their social support programs, including counseling services and support groups, to provide a holistic approach to assisting students in managing academic stress.

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1. Introduction

Students are at a high risk of experiencing stress (Agusmar et al., 2019; Merry & Mamahit, 2020). Stress is a physical or psychological stimulus that impairs an individual's adaptive capabilities and triggers coping reactions (Baluwa et al., 2021). Academic stress is a common type of stress experienced by students (Merry & Mamahit, 2020). Academic stress arises from high expectations, excessive information, academic pressure, unrealistic ambitions, limited opportunities, and intense competition (Khoiri Oktavia et al., 2019).

According to Lubis et al (2021), stress is a significant element influencing outcomes in the learning process. A clear contributing factor to the high levels of stress experienced by students (periodically) is the examination period at the end of each semester, which creates stressful situations in real life (Wunsch et al., 2021). Academic stress experienced by students has a substantial impact on their learning performance. Furthermore, academic

pressure is not only dependent on internal factors such as self-belief, perseverance, optimism, achievement motivation, and procrastination tendencies but can also be influenced by external factors such as social support (Yusuf & Yusuf, 2020).

According to research conducted by (Fadliah et al., 2022), there is a positive relationship between social support and academic stress levels. Therefore, it can be interpreted that if a student receives good social support, it can increase the level of academic stress they experience. On the other hand, other research indicates a significant and inverse relationship between social support and academic stress levels among students participating in distance learning. This means that the higher the social support, the lower the academic stress experienced by these students (Jannah & Widodo2, 2021). Additionally, research conducted by Hidayat & Darmawanti (2022) shows a correlation coefficient value of

0.842 and a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). From these results, it can be concluded that there is a correlation between social support and academic stress.

Social support is typically a component of such services and has been broadly defined as the provision of assistance, comfort, or resources to individuals to help them cope with stress (Wawrzynski et al., 2021). Social support can be obtained from various sources, such as life partners, family members, close friends, and community organizations (Susilaningrum & Wijono, 2023). However, previous research data shows that the majority of students in the Yogyakarta Special Region experience low levels of social support, with a percentage of 54.2%. Therefore, this factor contributes to the emergence of academic stress in the Yogyakarta Special Region (Al Hourri et al., 2023).

This study involves several educational institutions in the Yogyakarta Special Region, unlike previous research that only focused on one educational institution. This research contributes to expanding the scope of respondents and obtaining diverse data. It aims to provide a more detailed explanation of the analysis results regarding the relationship between social support and academic stress among students. Given that previous studies have shown significant differences in results, this research is expected to offer updated information on the matter.

2. Method

The data collection process was conducted during the semester break, so the reachable population was in the Yogyakarta Special Region. This population includes academic staff from each university and consists of 612 students. The number of respondents determined for the sample is 236, according to calculations using the Slovin formula with a significance level of $\alpha=5\%$ (Santoso, 2023).

In this study, respondents' academic stress was measured using the Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents (ESSA), which contains 16 items with five latent variables: pressure to study, workload, worry about grades, self-expectation, and despair (Moustaka et al., 2023). This research method uses a 5-point Likert response scale, where respondents rate from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Higher scores reflect higher levels of stress (Pranatawijaya et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, social support in this study was measured using the Oslo Social Support Scale (OSSS-3), which consists of three self-reported questions. These questions cover the number of trusted people, the perceived level of care from others, and the quality of social relationships, with an emphasis on the availability of assistance in daily life. The internal reliability of this scale is

considered adequate, evidenced by an alpha value of 0.640 (Zhang et al., 2024).

The researchers used validity testing techniques by applying Bivariate Pearson correlation. This analysis involves correlating individual scores on each item with the total score. The total score of each item is referred to as the total score. If there is a significant correlation between the question items and the total score, then these items are considered valid in supporting the research objectives. Validity is indicated if the calculated correlation value (r calculated) \geq the table correlation value (r table) in a two-sided test with a significance level of 0.05 (Miftahul Janna & Pembimbing, 2021).

After determining the minimum sample size for the study, the researchers collected data by directly approaching potential respondents. They were then personally asked if they were willing to become respondents and to complete the provided forms in full.

The collected data will be processed in two stages of analysis. The first stage involves single-variable analysis to understand the overall picture of each variable. Subsequently, a multivariable analysis will be conducted to determine the relationship between the independent factor of social support and academic stress. The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Respati University Yogyakarta approved this study, based on ethical clearance number: 0137.3/FIKES/PL/VII/2023.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents in this study are female and come from non-health research programs with an average respondent age of 20.52 years. The majority of respondents in this study are female. Based on statistical data from Higher Education in Indonesia in 2020 by the Ministry of Education and Culture's Higher Education database, it is stated that the majority of students in Indonesia are female, accounting for 56.10%, while the percentage of male students is 43.90% (Handini et al., 2020). Academic stress among females is higher than academic stress among males. This is consistent with the findings of research (Jannah & Widodo, 2021), which states that female students tend to be more emotionally sensitive in facing certain situations.

Table 2 shows that the level of stress among students in the Special Region of Yogyakarta is evenly distributed across moderate and severe stress categories. The percentage of students experiencing severe stress is slightly higher than those experiencing moderate stress. This study concludes that students experience moderate and severe levels of stress, with the percentage of students experiencing severe stress slightly higher

than those experiencing moderate stress. This aligns with previous research indicating that students experience moderate to severe levels of academic stress, with 80 students (39.2%)

experiencing moderate stress and 55 students (27%) experiencing severe stress (Lubis et al., 2021).

Table 1. Characteristics of Research Respondents by Gender, Study Programme, and Age, (n=236)

Indikator		n	%	
Gender	Male	78	33.05	
	Female	158	69.95	
Study Programme	Health	94	39.83	
	Non-Health	142	60.17	
		Mean	SD	Min-Max
Age		20.52	1.825	18-38

Moderate and severe stress levels are in stages III and IV of stress. Moderate stressors can cause symptoms such as fatigue, irritability, difficulty resting, sensitivity, and restlessness; this condition falls under stage III of stress. Meanwhile, severe stress is a chronic condition that can last for several weeks, where individual perception significantly declines and often requires a lot of guidance. This condition falls under stage IV of stress. (Rahmawati et al., 2019) Severe academic stress will have negative impacts on students, especially on their academic performance. This is consistent with research Lubis et al. (2021), where stress can lead to difficulties in concentration, obstacles in remembering and understanding material, a tendency to procrastinate tasks, as well as negative self-perception and perceptions of their surroundings. Moreover, stress can also lead to feelings of anxiety, irritability, and even frustration.

Table 2. Univariate Analysis of Academic Stress among Students in the Special Region of Yogyakarta 2023, n=236 respondents

Variable	Academic Stress	
Category	f	%
Mild Stress	28	11.9
Moderate Stress	80	33.9
Severe Stress	86	36.4
Very Severe Stress	42	17.8
Total	236	100

This research should serve as a warning for universities to be more aware that their students experience levels of stress exceeding mild stress levels. Mild stress, which essentially constitutes beneficial day-to-day stress responses for student

development, differs from moderate to severe stress levels that can threaten students' mental and physical health (Kurnia & Ramadhani, 2021) This study was conducted during the semester break, and the Educational Scale for Endolence questionnaire did not emphasize the relevance of stress during that period. Therefore, further investigation is needed to understand why students' stress levels remain high in the moderate to severe category when they are on semester break.

Meanwhile, in Table 3, social support is predominantly in the low category (40.3%). The social support possessed by students is mostly categorized as low, at 40.3%. This aligns with previous research indicating that the majority of social support received by students in the Special Region of Yogyakarta falls into the low category, reaching 54.2% (Al Hourri et al., 2023). Muthmainah (2022) state that social support encompasses feelings of comfort, care, self-esteem, or assistance received by an individual from others or groups. Low social support is often associated with higher levels of depression and stress, as well as lower levels of life satisfaction (Muthmainah, 2022) The presence of weak social support can have an impact on maladaptive behavior in children or increase the risk of future criminality.

Table 3. Univariate Analysis of Social Support Among Students in the Special Region of Yogyakarta 2023, n=236 respondents

Variable	Social Support	
Category	f	%
Low	95	40.3
Medium	77	32.6
High	64	27.1
Total	236	100

In Table 4, it can be observed that there is a significant relationship between social support and

academic stress with a significance level of 0.018 (<0.05). Further analysis reveals that students with low social support experience higher levels of severe stress compared to those with moderate

(41%) and high (32.8%) social support. This implies that as social support increases, the percentage of severe stress decreases.

Table 4. Bivariate Analysis of Social Support with Academic Stress among Students in the Special Region

Variable	Academic Stress								Total	Sig.	
	Mild Stress		Moderate Stress		Severe Stress		Very Severe Stress				
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Social Support											
Low	13	13.7	24	25.3	39	41	19	20	95	40.3	.018
Medium	9	11.7	25	32.5	26	33.8	17	22	77	32.6	
High	6	9.4	31	48.4	21	32.8	6	9.4	64	27.1	
Total	28	11.8	80	33.8	86	36.4	42	17.7	236	100	

Based on the explanation above, there is a significant relationship between social support and academic stress. This is in line with previous research which stated that social support and academic stress have a significant relationship with a significance level of 0.002 (Anadita, 2021). Students can experience academic stress due to various factors, such as heavy workload, stressful exam periods, expectations from those around them, perceptions of personal abilities, and competition with peers (Fadliah et al., 2022). Academic-related stress can be mitigated through active strategies such as effective time management, involvement in recreational activities, and social support (Anaman-Torgbor et al., 2021). Students show varying responses in coping with academic stress. Social support from those around them is often relied upon by students to cope with academic stress. Social support is expected to reduce the level of stress experienced by students (Fadliah et al., 2022)

Students who receive social support can also develop self-confidence, receive assistance in problem-solving, and improve academic achievement in the school environment. in Anadita (2021). From the results of this research, it can be concluded that one strategy to reduce stress levels is by discussing the issues faced, seeking assistance in problem-solving, and seeking support from individuals who have experienced similar situations.

However, this is contingent upon the high level of social support possessed by students. Social support encompasses the presence, availability, care, and affection from reliable individuals. Social support from the surrounding environment plays a crucial role in assisting students to achieve optimal learning outcomes (Salmon et al., n.d.) This condition may change if students do not receive adequate social support, as

in such situations, the level of stress experienced by students tends to increase. The specific role of support from family, friends, and other significant individuals is vital in influencing students' academic stress. Research findings indicate that family support significantly helps in reducing the academic stress experienced by students. Additionally, social support is believed to function as a stress buffer and a driving force for enhancing resilience and survival abilities in students, making it important to maintain its balance (Ibda & Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, 2023). This is consistent with previous research findings that indicate the lower the level of social support received, the higher the level of academic stress faced by students

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

From this research, it can be concluded that students in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province experience significant levels of academic stress, especially during semester breaks. The majority of students reported low levels of social support, which has the potential for negative impacts on mental health and academic performance. This study underscores the importance of the role of social support in reducing academic stress levels.

Universities need to strengthen their social support programs, including counseling services and support groups, to provide a holistic approach in assisting students in managing academic stress. Additionally, universities can organize special counseling sessions during semester breaks, focusing on stress management strategies and information about available support resources. This aims to help students cope with the potential increase in stress during those periods.

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