

The Impact of Academic Stress on the Psychological Well-being of Fourth-Semester Students in the Islamic Counseling and Guidance (BPI) Program at IAIN Curup

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Abstract

In this era of globalization, increasingly competitive higher education brings various academic challenges for university students, including heavy workloads and pressure to achieve high achievements. This research aims to explore the impact of academic stress on the psychological well-being of university students in the fourth semester of the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program (BPI) at IAIN Curup. A survey method using a questionnaire was used to measure the level of academic stress and psychological well-being of 26 university students. The results showed that 15% of university students experienced low stress, 65% moderate stress, and 20% high stress. High academic stress was positively correlated with symptoms of anxiety ($r = 0.48, p < 0.01$) and depression ($r = 0.52, p < 0.01$). Factors such as good time management ($r = -0.42, p < 0.01$) and strong social support ($r = -0.38, p < 0.01$) play an important role in reducing stress levels. Relaxation techniques and coping training provided by universities are effective in reducing academic stress and improving university students' psychological well-being. These findings emphasize the importance of support programs in educational institutions to help university students overcome academic stress and improve their psychological well-being.

INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization, higher education is becoming increasingly competitive and demanding (Warsah dkk., 2021). University students are faced with a variety of academic challenges, including heavy workloads, pressure to achieve high grades (Narayanti dkk., 2024), and demands to complete their studies within the specified time (Jones dkk., 2021). These conditions often lead to academic stress, which is defined as a psychological and emotional response that arises when academic demands exceed an individual's ability to cope (Chacón-Cuberos dkk., 2021).

Academic stress not only affects university students' academic performance, but also their overall psychological well-being (Morales-Rodríguez dkk., 2020). Symptoms of academic stress can include anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and a range of other mental health issues (Zhang dkk., 2022). Deng et al in their study showed that poorly

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managed academic stress can have a long-term impact on mental health, reduce quality of life, and even increase the risk of dropping out of studies (Deng dkk., 2022).

University university students are a group that is vulnerable to academic stress because they are in transition from adolescent to adult life, where they must develop self-management skills and face various social and academic pressures (Sethi, 2023). In addition, social support from family, friends, and educational institutions plays an important role in helping university students cope with academic stress. However, not all university students have sufficient access or use these support resources effectively (Humaira, 2023).

This research aims to examine the impact of academic stress on the psychological well-being of fourth-semester BPI students at IAIN Curup. By understanding the relationship between academic stress and various aspects of mental health, this study is expected to provide deeper insights into the factors influencing students' psychological well-being. Additionally, this research also aims to identify strategies that can be utilized by students and educational institutions to reduce academic stress and enhance psychological well-being.

Specifically, this study will investigate four main aspects. First, the level of academic stress experienced by students. Second, the relationship between academic stress and psychological symptoms such as anxiety and depression. Third, the factors influencing the level of academic stress and psychological well-being, including social support and time management skills. And finally, strategies that can be implemented to reduce academic stress and enhance students' psychological well-being.

Through this research, it is hoped that a clearer picture of the impact of academic stress and how students can be supported to overcome the academic challenges they face will be obtained. The results of this research can also provide a basis for the development of intervention programs aimed at improving students' psychological well-being, enabling them to achieve their academic and personal potential optimally.

Academic stress is defined as the stress experienced by individuals when academic demands exceed their capacity to cope with them (Wuthrich dkk., 2020). The causes of academic stress vary and may include excessive task loads, limited time to complete tasks, pressure to high academic achievement, and uncertainty about the future of a career (Saeed dkk., 2020). A study by (Gallardo-Lolandes dkk., 2020) found that poor time management and lack of social support also contributed significantly to academic stress levels.

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Academic stress has a significant impact on the psychological well-being of university students (Yusoff dkk., 2021). Academic stress can cause a variety of mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders (Zhu dkk., 2021). For example, (Zhang dkk., 2022) found that university students with high levels of academic stress were more likely to experience symptoms of anxiety and depression. Furthermore, research by (Mahardhani dkk., 2020) showed that academic stress was linked to lower quality of life and overall mental health.

Stress and self-adjustment theories, such as the Cognitive Assessment Model of “*Lazarus and Folkman*”, explain how individuals evaluate and respond to stress (Obbarius dkk., 2021). According to this theory, the stress response depends on the individual's assessment of the stressful situation and their ability to cope with it. (secondary appraisal) (Ulyantika & Hayati, 2024). University students who feel they have sufficient resources and strategies to cope with academic demands tend to experience lower levels of stress and better psychological well-being (Sharifabad dkk., 2020).

Social support is one of the important factors that can reduce the negative impact of academic stress (de la Fuente dkk., 2020). Research by (Kurnia & Ramadhani, 2021) shows that university students who receive strong social support from family, friends, and educational institutions have lower levels of stress and better psychological well-being. Social support can provide a sense of security and increase self-confidence in the face of academic stress (Ramadanti & Herdi, 2021).

Stress management strategies, such as relaxation techniques, time management, and coping skills development, can help university students cope with academic stress (Marais dkk., 2020). Bessie et al suggested that training in time management skills and relaxation techniques can significantly reduce academic stress levels (Bessie dkk., 2024). In addition, an intervention program that focuses on developing coping skills can improve the psychological well-being of university students (Seppälä dkk., 2020).

Educational institutions can play an important role in reducing academic stress through a variety of programmes and policies (Högberg, 2024). For example, the provision of counselling services, welfare programs, and stress management skills training can help university students cope with academic stress (Wu dkk., 2020). Research by (Muliani dkk., 2024) suggests that intervention programmes are designed to improve coping skills and effective social support in reducing academic stress and improving the psychological well-being of university students.

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Thus, from some previous research and Library studies suggest that academic stress is a significant issue that affects the psychological well-being of university students. Various factors, including academic burden, time management, and social support, contribute to the level of academic stress. In addition, stress management strategies and interventions from educational institutions can help reduce the negative impact of academic stress. Further research is needed to identify the most effective interventions and to understand how individual and environmental factors interact in affecting the psychological well-being of university students.

METHOD

The study uses a quantitative approach to survey design to investigate the level of academic stress and its impact on the psychological well-being of university students. Involving 26 university students of the fourth semester of the Islamic Studies Program of Counselling and Discipline at IAIN Curup, the purposive sampling approach is used for samples selection. Data is collected through structured questionnaires that measure academic stress levels and psychological well-being. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis is used to explain the distribution of academic stress, identify the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being, as well as the factors that influence academic stress. The results provide insight into the factors that contribute to academic stress and effective stress management strategies for university students (Kusumastuti dkk., 2020).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study collected data from 26 fourth-semester students in the BPI program at IAIN Curup. The data were analyzed to identify the levels of academic stress, its impact on psychological well-being, and the factors influencing the levels of academic stress.

The level of academic stress among university students is divided into three categories. Four of the college students experience a low level of akademik stress, representing 15% of the sample. The majority, 17 universities students, are in the category of moderate academic stress, reaching 65% of the total sample, while five universities, or 20% of the overall sample experience a high level of educational stress.

Academic stress has a significant impact on the psychological condition of university students. First, there is a significant positive correlation between the level of academic

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stress and anxiety ($r = 0.48, p < 0.01$). This means that the higher the academic level of stress, the higher are the levels of anxieties experienced by university students. Second, academic stress is also positively correlated with depression ($r=0.52, p<0.01$). This suggests that increased academic levels of stress tend to be followed by increased levels of depression.

Several factors have been found to influence the level of academic stress. First, there is a negative correlation between good time management and academic stress levels ($r = -0.42, p < 0.01$). This suggests that university students who are able to manage time well tend to experience lower academic stress. Secondly, strong social support also correlates negatively with academic levels of stress ($r= -0.38, p < 0.01$). In addition, excessive workloads are also a significant factor that can increase academic stress in university students. Lastly, the pressure to high academic achievement is also a significant factor in increasing academic stress.

There are several strategies that can be used to manage academic stress. First, the use of relaxation techniques has a significant negative correlation with the level of academic stress ($r = -0.30, p < 0.01$). This shows that relaxation techniques can help reduce academic stress felt by university students. Second, training in coping skills and stress management was positively correlated with improving the psychological well-being of university students ($r = 0.25, p < 0.01$). This suggests that this training can be effective in improving the psychological well-being of university students by helping them deal with academic stress more effectively.

The results of interviews with homebase lecturers show that intervention programs designed to support students' psychological well-being, such as counseling services and stress management workshops, have helped reduce academic stress levels. University students who utilize this service report improvements in their ability to manage academic stress.

This research found that academic stress had a significant impact on the psychological well-being of university students in the fourth semester of the BPI Study Program at IAIN Curup. High levels of academic stress are associated with increased symptoms of anxiety and depression. Factors such as time management, social support, and workload play an important role in determining academic stress levels. Stress management strategies and interventions from educational institutions can help reduce the

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negative impact of academic stress and improve the psychological well-being of university students.

The findings underline the importance of developing support programmes in educational institutions to help university students cope with academic stress and better psychological well-being. Further research is needed to explore more effective intervention strategies and to understand how individual and environmental factors interact in affecting the psychological welfare of college students.

The results of this research show that the majority of fourth semester BPI study program university students at IAIN Curup experience moderate to high levels of academic stress. These findings are consistent with previous research showing that academic pressure is one of the main factors influencing the psychological well-being of university students (Saeed dkk., 2020). The high prevalence of academic stress among university students underscores the need for effective interventions to manage stress and improve psychological well-being (Seppälä dkk., 2020).

This study found that academic stress is closely associated with increased symptoms of anxiety and depression. Students with high levels of academic stress reported higher levels of anxiety and depression compared to students experiencing low or moderate levels of academic stress (Ihsan, 2024). These findings are consistent with the cognitive appraisal theory proposed by Lazarus and Folkman in the research by Sharifabad et al., which states that the way individuals assess and cope with stress significantly affects their psychological well-being (Sharifabad dkk., 2020).

Several factors that influence academic stress levels were identified in this study. Good time management skills and strong social support from family, friends, and educational institutions have been shown to be associated with lower levels of academic stress (Vian & Matulessy, 2024). This suggests that the ability to manage time and adequate social support are important protective factors that can help reduce the negative impact of academic stress (Abrori & Ali, 2023).

University students who used relaxation techniques, as well as training in coping skills and stress management, reported lower levels of academic stress. This suggests that effective stress management strategies can help university students cope with academic pressure (Sinaga & Puspitasari, 2023). Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to provide programs that help university students develop these skills.

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The results of interviews with counselors and academic staff indicate that intervention programs designed to support the psychological well-being of university students, such as counseling services and stress management workshops, have helped reduce academic stress levels. University students who utilize these services report improvements in their ability to manage academic stress, which in turn improves their psychological well-being.

Although this study provides important insights into the impact of academic stress on the psychological well-being of university students, there are some limitations to bear in mind. First, the relatively small sample size (26 university students) may not be sufficiently representative of a wider population. Secondly, the research is cross-sectional, so it can't determine a direct causal relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being. Longitudinal research is needed to understand the dynamics of these relationships more comprehensively. In addition, data collected using self-reporting questionnaires may be susceptible to respondent bias.

The analysis indicates that academic stress is a critical issue affecting the psychological well-being of fourth-semester students in the BPI program at IAIN Curup. The findings highlight the importance of social support, time management skills, and intervention from educational institutions in helping students cope with academic stress. With greater attention and ongoing efforts to develop effective support programs, it is hoped that students' psychological well-being can be enhanced, enabling them to achieve their academic and personal potential optimally.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the levels of academic stress among fourth-semester students in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling (BPI) program at IAIN Curup vary, with the majority experiencing moderate to high stress levels. High academic stress has been shown to have a significant negative impact on students' psychological well-being, leading to increased symptoms of anxiety and depression. Factors such as effective time management and strong social support play a crucial role in reducing academic stress levels.

The findings emphasize the importance of developing support programs within educational institutions to help students manage academic stress. Such programs could include time management skill training, enhancing social support from family, friends, and the institution, as well as providing counseling services focused on coping strategies and

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relaxation techniques. Additionally, universities might consider adjusting the academic workload to better match students' capacities.

This study also opens avenues for further development, including longitudinal studies to evaluate changes in academic stress levels and students' psychological well-being over time. Future research could expand the sample to include students from various programs and different semesters, and explore more specific interventions that effectively reduce academic stress and enhance psychological well-being. These findings are expected to serve as a foundation for educational institutions to design and implement more holistic policies and programs supporting students' psychological well-being.

Further research is needed to explore more effective interventions for reducing academic stress and improving students' psychological well-being. Studies should also examine how individual factors, such as personality and coping styles, influence responses to academic stress. Moreover, in-depth and qualitative research can provide richer insights into students' experiences in coping with academic pressure. Studies with larger samples and longitudinal methods can offer a better understanding of the causal relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being.

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