

Intervention strategies and counseling approaches for school-based academic stress management

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Suggested Citation:

Saputra, N.M.A. & Ramli, M. (2024). Intervention strategies and counseling approaches for school-based academic stress management. *Global Journal of Guidance and Counseling in Schools: Current Perspectives*, 14(1), 12-18. <https://doi.org/10.18844/gjgc.v14i1.9320>

Received from September 02, 2023; revised from February 15, 2024; accepted from March 20, 2024.

Selection and peer review under the responsibility of Assoc Prof. Dr. Nur Demirbas Celik, Alanya Alaadin Keykubat University, Turkey

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Abstract

The response of an individual when facing something can be classified as a form of stress; if it occurs in students who experience symptoms caused by academic activities that can cause stress, this can be classified as a form of academic stress. Counselors must provide intervention services to help kids manage their academic stress because this issue cannot be left untreated. This research aims to determine and analyze the approaches and techniques used in handling academic stress experienced by students. The method for carrying out this research is a literature review which is an activity of collecting, reading, studying, and researching the research topic. Data collection was assisted by the Publish or Perish 7 application with library sources via Google School, Science Direct, and the open-access journal directory. The results of the study show that the implementation of the intervention is carried out through individual counseling and group counseling services.

Keywords: Academic stress; counseling approaches; counseling techniques; students.

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1. Introduction

Counseling is one of the applied sciences which in its implementation is always closely related to humans and all aspects of life. In the process of implementing counseling, there are several approaches and one of them is solution-focused counseling. Counseling that focuses on solutions is a part of the postmodern counseling paradigm model which is based on the view that humans have optimistic characteristics so that they can find and create solutions that improve their lives. Solution-focused counseling has proven effective and efficient to be able to help solve the problems experienced by the counselee (Arofah et al., 2018; Nugroho et al., 2018; Ramli et al., 2019). In addition, the time needed in the counseling process tends to be short (Edelman, 2003; Fatimah et al., 2019), however, current conditions indicate that most of the implementation of counseling services by counselors is still like convection or face-to-face so that it is not by today's developments.

The COVID-19 pandemic conditions have resulted in very significant changes and impacts on students, especially in the implementation of learning (Harahap et al., 2020). This condition has resulted in the emergence of new problems that should not have existed during the implementation of learning before the Covid-19 pandemic. One of the reasons for the increase in problems faced by students is the lack of preparation of students in transitioning from face-to-face to online learning or learning from home (Onyema et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2022).

The problem faced by students during the current learning change period which shows increasing levels of improvement is academic stress. Students experience conditions of academic stress due to the transition process from offline to online learning (Maqableh & Alia, 2021). Academic stress is a condition where an individual is unable to face academic demands and considers it a nuisance (Mulya & Indrawati, 2016; Siregar & Putri, 2020). The change in the implementation of online learning causes the academic stress experienced by students to increase because the implementation of the learning process has changed (Barseli et al., 2020; Damayanti & Masitoh, 2020; Manuel et al., 2021).

The current conditions also give rise to students responding to symptoms of academic stress because the transition from online to face-to-face learning is limited, this is because students feel comfortable and have adapted to implementing more flexible online learning. Research results regarding data regarding the description of high school students' academic stress during the COVID-19 pandemic show that 81% of 450 high school students from all over Indonesia experienced high academic stress. On the other hand, Muslim (2020), stated that the results of research on the academic stress of high school students showed that 46% of 115 high school students experienced high academic stress. Based on the studies that have been conducted, it can be identified that the academic stress experienced by students is caused by (1) system changes; (2) not knowing how to reduce academic stress; and (3) adaptation to learning management.

Based on these conditions, assistance from guidance and counseling teachers is needed to help students overcome problems related to the academic stress they are experiencing. The role of guidance and counseling teachers in this case is to provide intervention through counseling services to help overcome academic stress in students. However, in implementing services, appropriate and effective counseling approaches and techniques are needed to help students. So, in carrying out this research the aim is to analyze counseling approaches and techniques that have been implemented and are effective in helping students overcome problems related to academic stress.

2. Methods

This research uses a literature review research method, which is a series of activities carried out to study a topic. Carrying out a literature review includes (1) determining the topic of the study; (2) looking for library sources; (3) selecting library sources; (4) reading library sources; (5) reviewing and analyzing library sources; and (6) decision making. Each stage in research using the literature review method refers to the topic being studied.

Collecting library sources using the help of the Publish or Perish 7 application with library sources via Google School, Science Direct, and open-access journal directories. Keywords used in collecting library sources include academic stress, academic stress counseling, handling, and students with library source criteria in the form of articles discussing handling academic stress in students as well as articles published from 2019-2021. Based on the collection of library sources, 11 articles were found that met the criteria regarding handling academic stress in students. Data analysis was carried out using a descriptive method based on facts based on the results of the literature review that had been carried out.

3. Result

The results of a search for literature related to academic stress by the criteria set by the researchers resulted in 11 articles discussing the implementation of interventions using counseling approaches and techniques. The literature results that have been obtained are in Table 1.

Table 1

List of study results on handling academic stress

Name, Year	Settings	Technique/Approach
Damayanti & Masitoh, 2020	-	Coping strategies
Safithry & Dewi, 2020	Group counseling	Expressive writing therapy
Andriati & Hidayati, 2020	Group counseling	Self-control techniques
Mardianti & Dharmayana, 2020	Group counseling	Self-instruction technique
Ningtias et al., 2019	Group counseling	Stress inoculation training
Christina & Setyoningrum, 2019	Group counseling	Expressive writing techniques
Putrikita & Sari, 2020	Group counseling	-
Fatimah et al., 2019	Group counseling	Cognitive behavioral therapy
Karneli et al., 2019	Group counseling	Cognitive behavioral modification of time management techniques
Juliawati et al., 2019	Group counseling	Relaxation meditation technique

4. Discussion

Academic stress is a condition where a person experiences an inability to achieve academically (Manuel et al., 2021; Kristensen et al., 2023). This inability is usually displayed in the form of negative

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responses both emotionally, mentally, and behaviorally by students. If this condition is not handled properly, it will have a huge influence or disruption on the continuity of student learning (Edelman, 2003). One form of disturbance caused by academic stress is that students will not develop in terms of understanding and competence because every time a student undertakes or faces an academic-related activity that is feared, a negative response will emerge.

Negative responses caused by academic stress require ongoing assistance so special services are needed to handle them. Counselors in this context have the responsibility to provide special services or assistance to students who experience academic stress (Zamroni et al., 2018). One of these services is provided in the form of counseling services to reduce the response caused by academic stress experienced by students when carrying out academic activities which are the cause.

One of these services is provided in the form of counseling services to reduce the response caused by academic stress experienced by students when carrying out academic activities which are the cause (García-Ros et al., 2023; Hensley et al., 2022; Luo et al., 2020; Rahe & Jansen, 2021; Zhu et al., 2021). Academic stress makes a huge contribution to individual failure in implementing the learning process to achieve learning success (Liu & Lu, 2011; McCloskey & Scielzo, 2015; Ningtias et al., 2019). The causes of academic stress vary depending on the individual and external factors that cause it (Meyer & Stutts, 2024). As in recent years, academic stress was experienced by students due to changes in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic (Çarkit, 2024; Clabaugh et al., 2021; El-Khodary et al., 2021; Rudd et al., 2023; Yeo & Lee, 2017). In this condition, students experience academic stress due to changes in the learning environment.

The implementation of counseling services provided to students in the context of providing counseling services for academic stress tends to use counseling with a group approach (Andriati & Hidayati, 2021; Safithry & Dewi 2020; Damayanti & Masitoh, 2020; Fatimah et al., 2019; Mardianti & Dharmayana, 2020; Ningtias et al., 2019). The choice of a group approach is based on the needs and effectiveness of the services required by students by paying attention to the similarities in the problems they face so that they can be solved together (Corey, 2012; Gladding, 2016). Apart from that, the use of groups can give different impressions or experiences to group members because each group member has different experiences and ways of dealing with academic stress so this can help and increase the knowledge of other members in dealing with academic stress.

Handling academic stress with counseling services requires the right approach and techniques so that it can overcome the academic stress experienced by students. The counseling approach that is widely used in dealing with academic stress in students is cognitive behavioral counseling by changing the irrational thoughts experienced by students who experience academic stress (Andriati & Hidayati, 2021; Damayanti & Masitoh, 2020; Mardianti & Dharmayana, 2020; Ningtias et al., 2019). The cognitive behavioral approach helps students to change thought patterns, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, and wrong relationships between situations and their habits in responding to problems (Sharf, 2012).

The cognitive behavioral approach has several techniques that can be used to treat or effectively reduce academic stress experienced by students, including cognitive restructuring techniques (Ningtias et al., 2019); coping strategies (Damayanti & Masitoh, 2020); self-control (Andriati & Hidayati, 2021); self-instruction techniques (Mardianti & Dharmayana, 2020); time management (Karneli et al., 2019); relaxation with meditation techniques (Juliawati et al., 2019). Apart from that, there are several techniques from approaches other than cognitive behavioral counseling that can be used to reduce

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students' academic stress, namely expressive writing techniques (Safithry & Dewi, 2020; Christiana & Setyoningrum, 2019) and Stress inoculation training (Ningtias et al., 2019).

5. Conclusion

The use of counseling approaches and techniques in the implementation of services to reduce academic stress in students is carried out according to the conditions and needs of the students. Apart from that, counselors need to pay attention to other aspects such as when the academic stress symptom response appears, what causes it, and how students' self-defense mechanisms overcome these problems. These considerations become a reference in implementing interventions to obtain optimal results in providing services to reduce academic stress in students.

Handling academic stress requires special approaches and techniques to optimally reduce the academic stress experienced by students. Based on the literature review that has been carried out, it shows that the approach used is cognitive behavior therapy. Meanwhile, the techniques used include cognitive restructuring techniques; coping strategies; self-control; self-instruction techniques; time management; and relaxation with meditation techniques. Apart from that, there are several techniques from approaches other than cognitive behavioral counseling that can be used to reduce students' academic stress, namely expressive techniques and stress inoculation training.

Acknowledgments: Acknowledgments are expressed to LPPM, Universitas Negeri Malang, which has invested in this research. In addition, the authors would like to thank the guidance and counseling teachers who have been involved in the implementation of this research.

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