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## Academic stress in students who participate actively in youth information and counseling (PIK-R) center program

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### Abstract

Adolescents are vulnerable to stress because they have not been able to handle problems properly, so it is causing stress. Generally, adolescents experience academic stress because most of their time is related to academic activities in their school. This study aimed to determine the academic stress of high school students participating in the Adolescents Information and Counseling Center program. This study is a descriptive study with 87 respondents. The instruments included a demographic questionnaire and Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents (ESSA). The result showed that most respondents are women (82.8%), and most of the respondents studied at Islamic Senior High School (51.7%). Furthermore, academic stress has a mean value of 47.8, with a standard deviation of 9.02. This shows that the respondents experienced academic stress. Based on the results of this study, the researcher suggested that students will be given knowledge and skills on managing stress and coping mechanisms.

**Keywords:** Adolescent, school environment, mental health, students

### 1. Introduction

Adolescence is a golden opportunity to shape good health behavior <sup>[1]</sup>. Adolescents will experience various conflicts and be vulnerable to mood changes and upheavals because adolescence is a period of storm and stress <sup>[2]</sup>. Several factors can cause stress experienced by adolescents. However, teenagers more often experience stress due to academic activities at school <sup>[3]</sup>. This is often known as academic stress.

Academic stress is a condition in which a person experiences pressure in academic activities in the form of perceptions of pressure and assessment of the causes of academic stress related to science and education <sup>[4]</sup>. The academic stressors that can occur in students include having to have achievements, having to study, homework assignments, not having achievements, confusion in setting school goals and majors, and not being ready when there is an examination <sup>[5]</sup>.

The results of previous studies conducted at several public high schools in Padang City showed that the majority of high school students (71.8%) experienced academic stress at the moderate level category <sup>[6]</sup>. Furthermore, another research <sup>[4]</sup> also found that most high school students have moderate levels of academic stress. Another study at a high school in Malang City showed the same results, where 82% of students experienced moderate stress <sup>[7]</sup>.

The academic stress experienced by students has an impact on their physical and psychological aspects of these students. Therefore, it is essential to prevent academic stress and reduce academic stress. One solution is participating in the Youth Information and Counseling Center (PIK-R) program. PIK-R is one of the platforms developed by the GenRe program, which is managed by and for youth to provide information and counseling services related to maturing the age of marriage, eight family functions, TRIAD KRR (sexuality, HIV and AIDS, and drugs), skills life, genre and advocacy skills, communication, information, and education <sup>[8]</sup>.

One of the PIK-R strategies is developing substance material for Youth PIK according to the dynamics of youth <sup>[8]</sup>. The material will be given to the youth. In addition, PIK-R also provides counseling for students who need to overcome their problems. Thus, students who

cannot overcome their problems and need counseling can get it directly from the PIK-R manager. Based on this, the authors are interested in seeing the academic stress experienced by high school students participating in the PIK-R program activities in their school environment.

**2. Materials and Methods**

This descriptive study was conducted at two high schools in two different subdistricts, which were selected based on the recommendation from the Office of Population Control, Family Planning, Women's Empowerment, and Child Protection of Aceh Besar District. These schools were recommended because the PIK-R program activities in each school were running actively.

The population of this study was all students from General Senior High School in Lhoknga and Islamic Senior High School in Sibreh, Aceh Besar, Aceh, Indonesia. While the number of samples was 87 students from the two schools with the criteria of (1) male and female students aged 15-19 years and (2) students participating in PIK-R program activities. Sampling was done randomly.

Data collection was carried out on 3 June 2022 at General Senior High School in Lhoknga and 11 June 2022 at and Islamic Senior High School in Sibreh. Questionnaires were given to students and filled out at home because there was an informed consent sheet signed by the parents of the students because some students were under 17 years old. The next day, the teacher collected the questionnaire, and

the research team took the completed questionnaire from the teacher.

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of a demographic data questionnaire and the Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents (ESSA). The demographic data questionnaire developed by the researcher included school name, gender, and residence status. Furthermore, the ESSA questionnaire was developed by Sun *et al.* (2011) with 16 positive statement items with a 5-Likert scale (strongly disagree to agree) with a score of 1-5 strongly.

Prior to data collection, this research was subjected to ethical trials at the research ethics committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Syiah Kuala. This research passed the ethical test on May 19, 2022, with the Ethical Clearance number 113002300322.

The statistical test used was descriptive analysis to describe demographic data and student academic stress. Demographic data were analyzed by using frequency and percentage. As for the analysis of academic stress, data used the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum scores for the analysis of academic stress.

**3. Results & Discussion**

The data analysis for demography showed that most respondents came from students at MAN 1 Sibreh (51.7%). However, the difference in the number of samples at the two schools was very slight. Furthermore, the majority of respondents were female students (82.8%). All respondents live with their parents.

**Table 1:** Demographic Data Distribution (n=87)

No	Variable	f	%
1.	<b>School</b>		
	General senior high school	42	48,3
	Islamic senior high school	45	51,7
2.	<b>Gender</b>		
	Female	72	82,8
	Male	15	17,2
3.	<b>Residence Status</b>		
	With Parents	87	100
	Dormitory	0	00,0

Based on table 2, the results of data analysis show that the average respondent's academic stress score is 47.8, which is above the minimum value. This shows that the respondents experienced academic stress.

**Table 2:** Academic Stress (n=87)

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Academic Stress	87	23	69	47.8	9.02

Stress is prone to occur in high school students because they are in a period of storm and stress. In this teenage period, they are still less able to deal effectively with problems that will cause stress. Stress increases when problems continue to grow and are not resolved.

Middle school students generally experience more stress from the school environment because they spend more time at school than on activities outside. The school environment in question includes communication between students and teachers, communication between students, learning, and learning assignments at school and home <sup>[9]</sup>. Stress experienced as a result of academic activities in the school environment is known as academic stress.

Students in this study also experienced academic stress. Previous study <sup>[10]</sup> supported this result that showed majority students had high academic stress among adolescent in senior high school. Another study also found that majority students of senior high school had high stress academic because of taking academics seriously <sup>[11]</sup>. Taking academic seriously is necessary for student in order to get high score of their subject. A study <sup>[12]</sup> stated that if students use most effort into school activities, their mental, physical and psychological health are put at risk.

Respondents actively participated in PIK-R activities. In the PIK-R program, PIK-R participants are given material that PIK-R managers have developed through youth dynamics <sup>[8]</sup>. The material provided aims to increase the knowledge and abilities of PIK-R participants. However, as PIK-R participants, respondents said they had not been given material about academic stress. Therefore, the authors assume that respondents experience academic stress because they lack the ability to prevent it and reduce it due to not having received material about it. Thus, it is essential to provide material about academic stress starting from symptoms and managing it to reduce it. This was proven in

research<sup>[4]</sup>, where there was a significant difference in the level of academic stress in students who were given stress management therapy before and after the intervention ( $p$ -value  $<0.01$ ). So, it can be concluded that students who can manage stress and reduce the academic stress that they experience.

The majority of respondents in this study were female (82.8%). Previous studies have shown that high school students who experience moderate academic stress have a sample that is dominated by females<sup>[6, 4]</sup>. Moreover, a study<sup>[13]</sup> found that female students had higher perceived academic stress compared to male students. Male and female students significantly differ in academic stress levels<sup>[14]</sup>. In that study, female students experienced higher levels of academic stress than males. Gender has different response toward stress because of role developmental and biological factors<sup>[15]</sup>. This can be due to the influence of estrogen, which causes female students to experience stress more quickly than males. In addition, male students tend to be more relaxed and oriented toward fun things when facing academic demands<sup>[16]</sup>.

#### 4. Conclusions

This study shows that students who take part in the PIK-R program experience academic stress. This may be due to the gender factor in which the number of samples is more dominated by female students than male students.

Therefore, in further research, it is hoped that there will be a balance in the number of samples between female and male students. In addition, future research can also focus on the factors that cause academic stress in students. Thus, the results can identify the factors that cause students to experience academic stress even though they have attended the PIK-R program.

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#### 6. Conflict of Interest

Not available

#### 7. Financial Support

Not available

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