

Research Article

Adversity Quotient and Academic Stress in College Students

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Abstract.

Academic stress is something that cannot be avoided by students, especially college students. Academic stress can occur when someone is unable to adapt to the environment and friends, feels pressured by the excessive amount of assignments, and is pressured by the expectations given by parents or lecturers. Academic stress is a factor in the form of adversity quotient or a person's ability to survive in the face of pressure or difficult circumstances that can be used to avoid, face, and reduce the level of academic stress. The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of adversity quotient on academic stress in students. The method in this study is a phenomenological qualitative method by collecting data through semi-structured interviews which are then analysed with the literature review that has been obtained. The results of this study indicate that students with academic stress can relieve their academic stress if they also have adversity quotient in themselves such as self-control, endurance, responsibility, and understanding the range of self in solving problems then the academic stress they have can be avoided, faced, and reduced.

Keywords: adversity quotient, academic stress, college students

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1. Introduction

Students are students who have completed high school education who then continue their higher education at academics, institutes, and universities. The Secretariat of the Directorate General of Higher Education explains that student-level learners in Indonesia are in the age range of 18-24 years [1]. In this age range where students who are college students also experience various problems both from themselves and the environment. One of the problems caused by the environment experienced by students is academic stress. Academic stress is a situation faced by students when they face pressure and demands in undergoing the learning process. Academic stress is also a person's inability to deal with changing circumstances related to tasks, activities, and other academic burdens originating from oneself, parents, or lecturers [2].

Based on the IPSOS Global survey related to the Health Service Monitor conducted in 31 countries, it shows that mental health is ranked first as the most concerned health

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problem, including stress problems [3]. Stress is something that cannot be avoided for students, especially university students. Stress can occur due to academic and non-academic factors, stress with academic factors can be referred to as academic stress which can stem from adaptation difficulties, a large task load, relationships between friends, and expectations from parents and teachers or lecturers [4]. The American Psychological Association conducted a survey related to stress which showed the results that a large part of the population, namely adults who are undergoing college, experience stress due to the learning process. This shows that academic stress is a problem that is starting to be experienced by many students and efforts are needed to improve the quality of learning [5].

As for the phenomenon that occurs due to academic stress, there is a suicide case experienced by a 5th semester student at a private university in Yogyakarta, where after the police investigated the case it was suspected that the student committed suicide due to the college stress he experienced [6]. Based on the news, a state university student in Palembang, South Sumatra died of suicide by jumping from the third floor of a mall, which after being investigated by the Palembang Police, based on the family's confession, the motive for the 22-year-old student to commit suicide was because he had not finished studying, which had entered semester 10 [7]. In addition, there was a case of a female student committing suicide by jumping from the 12th floor of a building at Brawijaya University who was suspected of having mental disorders in the form of depression, the student also left a will before committing suicide [8].

Based on the above phenomenon, there are other factors of academic stress that can make academic stress higher or lower, namely a person's ability to survive or adversity quotient [9]. A person's ability to maintain his life related to how to overcome the problems and challenges of life that he experiences is called adversity quotient [10]. A person can overcome academic stress when they have resilience and ways to overcome the problems they face. This is supported based on Hardiyanti's research on the effect of adversity quotient on academic stress in students which shows that adversity quotient has a big influence where individuals with good adversity quotient will cause their academic stress to decrease [11]. Another study by Solikhah related to the adversity quotient with academic stress showed the results that the higher the adversity quotient a person has, the lower the academic stress they have [12]. In addition, in another study related to the adversity quotient and academic stress in students, someone who has an adversity quotient will have an influence on reducing academic stress [13].

Based on some of these studies, academic stress is very important to be studied in order to see the extent to which students are able to master the tasks given to them, know the extent of their strength in dealing with pressure and as a preventive tool that is useful to prevent depression and even suicide that often occurs due to the demands or unpreparedness of students facing assignments, exams, and final assignments. Therefore, further study is needed regarding the effect of adversity quotient on academic stress in students.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Academic Stress

Sarafino and Smith reveal the definition of stress based on Lazarus & Folkman as a condition or situation in which interactions and adjustments can cause a person to feel incongruence regarding demands related to physical, psychological, and social systems owned by a person [14]. In addition, according to Santrock, stress is a response owned by a person related to events and situations (stressors) that are felt by someone threatening themselves that are not in accordance with one's coping capacity [15]. Selye in King, defined stress by the damage received by a person's body caused by the demands placed on the person's body [9].

The stress experienced by someone caused by academic factors is called academic stress. Fisher explains that academic stress is a change and transition of circumstances that can occur in life which often has a relationship with tasks, activities, and academic pressure in the form of expectations of parents and teachers or lecturers [2]. Fisher further explains that academic stress is a change that occurs in emotional, physical, behavioural, and cognitive states as a reaction to academic stressors [2]. There are factors that cause academic stress namely, (1) many tasks, (2) little time, (3) competition, (4) deadlines, (5) academic responsibilities and expectations [2]. In addition to the causative factors, there are also psychological factors that can reduce academic stress namely, (1) Stress Coping, (2) Resilience, (3) Emotional Intelligence, (4) Self-Efficacy, (5) Social Support, (6) Adversity Quotient [9, 16].

2.2. Adversity Quotient

Adversity Quotient has a definition that is an intelligence or ability that a person has in survival related to problems and how a person overcomes life's challenges [10]. Adversity Quotient is also a combination of IQ and EQ, related to how to increase intelligence and manage emotions to be able to face a problem [17]. The definition of adversity quotient can also be understood through three forms of adversity quotient according to Stoltz, namely, (1) New knowledge, which is a concept in understanding and developing aspects of success, (2) Comparison, is an indicator to determine the extent to which a person can react in the face of unhappiness, and (3) Self-Readiness, is a tool that can be used in improving a person's response to adversity [10].

Based on the three forms of adversity quotient, Stoltz argues that these three forms are strong elements for a person to be able to achieve success [10]. So that a negative thing experienced by a person can be predicted as well as lowered by the presence of motivation, empowerment, creativity, happiness, enthusiasm, satisfaction, mental health, and endurance. In addition, with these elements, a person will also be able to take the right action when facing a problem. In addition to these three forms, adversity quotient also has 4 dimensions in its formation which include, (1) Control is a positive individual quality that affects the control of reactions that occur in the face of difficult conditions, (2) Origin and Ownership is the ability to restrain emotions to minimise the consequences that will occur, (3) Reach is the ability to reach and control problems so as not to expand to other problems, and (4) Endurance, the ability to understand and face problems then create thoughts diligently and courageously in overcoming and solving problems [10].

3. Method

This research uses a phenomenological qualitative method. Research with qualitative methods is research that describes in depth based on the point of view of individuals or participants [18]. Meanwhile, phenomenological qualitative research is an approach that has the aim of understanding a phenomenon that is felt and owned by individuals personally in a situation [19]. The data in this study were obtained through a process of literature review and semi-structured interviews with undergraduate students with characteristics aged 18-25 years, and are currently studying > 3 semesters. The data that has been obtained is then analysed based on personal individual experiences of

the phenomenon of academic stress and describes how the role of adversity quotient on academic stress in students.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Academic Stress

Based on the results of interviews with 3 subjects, namely Subjects 1, 2, and 3, it shows that they experience academic stress. The academic stress experienced by subjects 1, 2, and 3 was found based on the information they had conveyed about the many tasks they got, the completion of tasks that were not on time, competition in the learning process, and grades that were not as expected. The three subjects also conveyed their information regarding feelings of pressure, worry, and fatigue due to academic tasks while undergoing lectures. The following data is related to the three student subjects who participated in this study

TABLE 1: List of Research Subjects.

Subject	Initials	Age	Semester
Sub1	T	21	6
Sub2	N	20	6
Sub3	A	20	8

Based on information from the three subjects, the academic stress they experience stems from the many assignments they get. Subject 1 explained that he felt that in the semester he was currently taking there were courses with heavy assignments, such as writing reports, and making articles for the final project with the same collection time at the end of the semester. There are unfulfilled expectations related to grades, family expectations and feeling depressed when getting questions from lecturers during lecture activities.

“Actually, I can follow the lectures, but when I found out that there were many subjects that had to make reports, it became a bit overwhelming and I was also confused about where to start writing the report, because there were eeehm almost all the subjects had assignments to make reports or articles and then the data came together” (T. Sub1).

“I myself am like yaudah this is my effort, I get this much, oh it’s in accordance with my efforts but sometimes there are extended family members who ask my ip and then

compare it with their children who are my age, then I, who was originally ordinary, became concerned and tired myself “ (T. Sub1).

“For example, when I get a lecturer who I think is a killer like that, well it becomes my own overthinking, especially if later I become the target of the lecturer, asked questions or what in this killer lecturer, it becomes my own overthinking before entering the course, he must have been like what will I do today with this lecturer like that” (T. Sub1).

Subject 2, based on information from the interview results, felt burdened by lecture assignments. There are many assignments that make reports, mini research, and journals that are not well organised. Subject 2 also often collected assignments beyond the deadline set by the lecturer . Subject 2, based on his information in the interview, was worried about grades that were not as expected.

“The 6th semester is already what, starting especially this is approaching the final semester, so there are starting to be a lot of assignments that must be done to face later for the final project such as to make projects, continue to make papers as well, not to mention later there is mini research and research that must require going to the field as well, now this is what makes college hard for me, sis, because a lot of report assignments and going to the field for mini research is difficult for time” (N. Sub2).

“Actually, it’s not only this semester, the previous semester was like yesterday, the fifth semester was also like that, there were also some assignments that were late because yes, because I was confused about dividing the time and then there were many other assignments so it was like working on it was also tight on the deadline, so like that.” (N. Sub2)

“Yes, there are concerns about the grades, because collecting assignments is sometimes not on time like that. The IP that is not 3 was once in what semester? I forget if not, the point is that once the IP did not reach 3. Because yes, because the collection was too much, then I went to college like I lacked enthusiasm or what is the term, it was difficult. Difficulty dividing time, so that’s what it is.” (N. Sub2)

Based on the results of the interview with subject 3 in his statement, the subject explained that semester 8 was the toughest semester related to thesis work. In addition, subject 3 also feels insecure about the Ip he has and often compares with his friends. The expectation of subject 3’s parents to graduate on time turned out to be a burden for the subject.

“Lecture assignments at the beginning of the semester can still be followed, but the upper semesters are very burdened by the assignments because there are more and more subjects so there are also many assignments but when compared to the final semester, ouch, there are no subjects but making a thesis is just the same, it turns out to be heavy, not yet revised, nervous about meeting lecturers, difficult to find theories” (A. Sub3).

“I feel like that, it’s more like comparing how come he has higher grades than me even though I might feel like I’ve studied well, I’m more active in class.”

(A. Sub3)

“Expectations that must be completed on time are also very heavy, we also cannot predict whether the lectures can be on time or not, the factors are also not from ourselves but external factors also exist whether it is the supervisor who is difficult to meet and so on, there are also many other factors, especially the family always asks when the graduation will be” (A. Sub3).

Based on some information provided by the three subjects, it was found that all subjects felt the burden of having many academic assignments in various forms, such as reports, articles, and mini research. The simultaneous collection of assignments based on the subject’s statement is also a burden because of the difficulty in dividing the time to do it. In addition, expectations related to good grades and the immediate completion of college both from oneself and family also make a burden for the subjects. As well as competition related to comparing grades with friends which makes the subject burdened. This is in accordance with the definition of academic stress by Fisher that academic stress is a change and transition of circumstances that can occur in life which often has a relationship with tasks, activities, and academic pressure in the form of expectations of parents and teachers or lecturers [2]. Based on the explanation of the three subjects, it is also in accordance with the factors that cause academic stress (1) many tasks, (2) little time, (3) competition, (4) deadlines, (5) academic responsibilities and expectations [2]. In addition, continuous academic stress also has a negative impact on students in the form of concentration difficulties, memory impairment, and a declining grade point average [20]. It turns out that high academic stress can also result in a person’s ability to maintain or solve problems being low [12].

4.2. Adversity Quotient

The findings based on the interview results show that the three subjects experienced academic stress. However, through in-depth interviews the three subjects also showed that they have an adversity quotient or resilience in dealing with problems, burdens, or demands that they have. The adversity quotient that they described in the interview results included the control they exercised over time after getting a lot of assignments at one time, then the existence of responsibility by continuing to complete and submit assignments despite deadlines, being able to control themselves and having the endurance to improve grades that were not as expected in the following semester.

Subject 1 was able to deal with his problems in the form of the many assignments he got, grades that were not as expected and compared by the family, feeling burdened and overthinking when the lecturer asked the subject many questions.

“It can be done by instalments of the actual assignment, but if I have already collected it past the dateline, I usually do this, confirm to the lecturer, what is the solution to the lecturer, well, if the assignment is still accepted by the lecturer, then thank God, if for example it is not possible to ask the lecturer again, sir or madam, how can I complete this assignment or maybe you can replace it with a new assignment so that this assignment is still fulfilled like that” (T. Sub1).

“The grade is not appropriate, I usually deal with it in the next semester if not then in the value of other courses so at least the value is not It’s a note that if for example the grade still passes but the grade is not what I want, then I definitely like to handle it in other courses so we optimise it in other courses if not then in the next semester like that” (T. Sub1).

Based on the results of the interview, subject 2 also has an adversity quotient in dealing with problems he has such as many assignments that make reports, mini research, and journals that are not well organised. Subject 2 also often collects assignments beyond the deadline set by the lecturer.

“Yes, at least before the deadline, we should do a little bit so that when the deadline comes, we won’t be too overwhelmed, so when the assignment is given, it should be done immediately. But sometimes because we have divided concentration, we want to do the assignment but we concentrate on something else, that’s usually what happens” (N. Sub2).

“assignments must be done on time and then as much as possible each course is followed properly, seriously, right? The problem is that yesterday when the IP dropped, I felt like I lacked motivation to go to college, just came.” (N. Sub2)

In subject 3 there is an adversity quotient based on the results of the interview. The subject is able and has the resilience to fix the problems he has. The problem is in the form of writing a thesis which turns out to be difficult for the subject, family expectations asking for certainty of graduating from college, and the burden of comparing the efforts and grades of other colleagues.

“But for the expectations of parents related to timely thesis assignments, which I am still trying to do, sometimes it also motivates me when I am lazy to do my thesis. Remember how my parents worked, paid for me to be able to go to college and so on” (A. Sub3).

“Sometimes, I myself am also not able to manage my time well. So as much as possible, sometimes I work on assignments that are tight, like deadline day 2, day 1, I can only think about what the assignment should be like, but thank God, even though sometimes I work close to the deadline, the assignment is completed on time.” (A. Sub3)

Adversity Quotient based on some information from the interview results which show that there is control by managing time better, making installments so that tasks do not pile up, remembering the reasons for starting college, studying harder to improve grades that are not as expected. This is in accordance with the definition of Adversity Quotient, which is an intelligence or ability that a person has in survival related to problems and how a person overcomes life's challenges [10]. Adversity Quotient based on the explanation above is in accordance with the definition of adversity quotient from Yoga which is a combination of IQ and EQ, related to how to increase intelligence and manage emotions to be able to face a problem encountered [17]. Research by Fahmawati, et.al, revealed that someone who has a good adversity quotient will easily reduce the burden or problems being faced [13]. In addition, in another study from Hardiyanti regarding the effect of an adversity quotient on academic stress in students, it shows that an adversity quotient has a big influence, which means that individuals with a good adversity quotient will cause their academic stress to decrease [11].

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