

Stress Level of Nursing Students in Completing Final Project

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ABSTRACT

Background. The stress response can be experienced by anyone when something unpleasant, uncomfortable, or disturbing to someone's peace occurs. This is often experienced by some final-year students, who are required to be able to complete their final project (thesis) as a graduation requirement. Conditions felt by students such as feelings of anxiety, worry, lack of enthusiasm, excessive fatigue, feeling left behind by friends who are already at a faster stage, and difficulties in completing the final assignment (thesis) can cause a stress response. **Aim.** This study aim to identify the stress level of nursing students in the preparation of the final project.

Methods. A cross-sectional study was conducted using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) questionnaire. Data collection was carried out by filling out a questionnaire that consisted of 2 parts, namely demographic data and the stress level variable experienced by the respondent within the last month. The sample in this study was 131 students who were taking thesis courses. The sampling technique is total sampling.

Results. The results showed that 23 students were completing their final assignment (thesis) with low stress (17.6%), 106 respondents with moderate stress (80.9%), and 2 respondents with heavy stress (1.5%).

Conclusion. The majority of students who are completing their final project (thesis) experience moderate stress. This shows that they feel an inconvenience or a burden but must still complete their duties to achieve a bachelor's degree.

KEYWORDS

Final project, stress, student

INTRODUCTION

Conditions often affecting students' psychology are at the final level, where they must complete their final assignment to achieve a bachelor's degree. Normally, it takes four to a maximum of 7 years to get a bachelor's degree, in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the Minister of Research and Technology and Higher Education Regulation No. 44 of 2015. At this stage, students must be able to write and complete a thesis, a scientific paper or a final assignment that must be completed immediately (Ulansari & Sena, 2020).

There are goals and requirements to graduate on time, and they must be more mature

in thinking, acting, and behaving, which causes the difficulties they face to develop into negative emotions, ultimately leading to tension, depression, stress, and depression, which causes students to delay writing a thesis (Aryani, Umar, & Kasim, 2020).

Completion of the final assignment is not easy, of course, there are obstacles or difficulties that students feel, including difficulties in dealing with supervisors, difficulties in finding the right title, difficulties in understanding and writing proposal systematics or final project systematics, difficulties in finding literature or references

needed, difficulties in completing research methods and data analysis, difficulties in developing ideas into scientific language, and difficulties with the systematic standard of scientific writing that has been set. This can be a burden for students, make students uncomfortable, disrupt sleep patterns, and can also cause stress (Hastuti, Sukandar & Nurhayati, 2016).

The many existing factors cause a bad influence on the mental health that occurs in every individual, especially final-year students. Research conducted by Livana, Susanti, and Arisanti (2018) shows that most of the research results of student anxiety when writing a thesis is severe anxiety (51.5%). The results of another study on 53 students revealed that the level of student anxiety in preparing a thesis was that there were 5.7% of students who were in very severe criteria, 60.4% of students who were in severe criteria, and 33.9% of students who were in moderate criteria (Susilo & Eldawaty, 2021).

During the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia, learning methods changed from offline (offline) to online (online) to maintain distance in interactions. This change in learning methods has impacted changes in the education sector which has switched to online learning. System changes trigger the emergence of academic stress on students, which will impact their academic achievement. Research that has been conducted by Lubis, Ramadhani, and Rasyid (2021) to see

an overview of the level of academic stress experienced by students while carrying out online lectures shows that students experience the most academic stress in the medium category, namely 80 students (39.2%). There were 55 people (27%) in the high category of academic stress, 48 people (21%) in the low category, 14 people (6.9%) in the very high category, and 11 people (5.4%) in the very low category.

This is also in line with research conducted by Barani and Salamor, (2022) the majority of students feel moderate stress as many as 65 respondents (60%), and 24 respondents (25%) feel severe stress. The results of an initial study conducted on 7 (seven) final year students at the Faculty of Nursing, Syiah Kuala University who were preparing their final project (thesis), found that 6 out of 7 students felt feelings of anxiety, worry, not excited, excessive fatigue, felt left behind with friends who were already at a faster stage, and difficult to complete the final project (thesis).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This type of research is quantitative with a descriptive design. In conducting research using a cross-sectional study approach, namely data collection carried out on research subjects was not carried out repeatedly, but was only collected once, and measurements were carried out during the study. The population studied in this study were all 2019 class students in the 2022/2023

academic year who were taking thesis courses at the Faculty of Nursing, Syiah Kuala University, totaling 131 people.

Determining the number of samples in this study using the total sampling method, namely the entire population is the sample in the study. The sample is obtained by identifying students according to the criteria, namely 1) Students who are active in lectures, 2) Taking Thesis Subjects, 3) Willing to be respondents. Then contact the student concerned to ask for willingness to be a respondent. After the respondent agreed, the researcher sent the google research instrument form link

The variable studied in this study was the level of stress felt by students in the last one month during the thesis preparation stage. The instrument used in this study was the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) questionnaire developed by Cohen (1994) consisting of 10 question items. For the choice of answers use a Likert scale. The questionnaire consists of six negative questions, namely questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, and 10, and four positive questions, namely questions 4, 5, 7, and 8. A set of questionnaires consists of informed consent sheets, demographic data, and Perceived Stress Scale questionnaire (PSS-10).

Data analysis was in the form of a univariate on the stress level variable. On the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) instrument, each question item scored 0 to 4. A score of 0 is given to the answer never, a score of 1 is given to

the answer almost never, a score of 2 is given to the answer sometimes, a score of 3 is given to frequent answers, and a score of 4 is given to very often answers. The stress level variable is categorized into three categories: low stress if the score is 0-13, moderate stress if the score is 14-26, and severe stress if the score is 27-40.

Prior to collecting data, this study had passed the ethical test at the Faculty of Nursing at Syiah Kuala University. It was declared passed and obtained permission from the Ethics Committee with NO. 111080081122. Data collection was carried out for 4 days with the assistance of 2 enumerators who had shared perceptions with researchers regarding research instruments and data collection methods.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Demographic Data

In this study, demographic data was collected in the form of age, gender, and status of residence. Based on these general data, it was found that most respondents were 21 years old with a total of 90 people (68.7%). The majority of respondents were dominated by women, namely as many as 124 people (94.7%). Most of the respondents who are students have a status of residence, namely alone / boarding house with a total of 76 people (58.0%).

Table 1. Demographic Data (n=131)

No	Category	f	%
1	Age:		
	a. 20 years	19	14,5
	b. 21 years old	90	68,7
	c. 22 years old	20	15,3
	d. 23 years old	2	1,5
2	Status of Residence		
	a. Own / Boarding House	76	58,0
	b. Family	55	42,0

Stress Level

Table 2 Frequency Distribution of Stress Level (n=131)

No	Stress Level	f	%
1	Low Stress	23	17,6
2	Moderate stress	106	80,9
3	Severe stress	2	1,5
	Total	131	100,0

In variable stress levels using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) instrument and stress level categories, namely: low stress with a score of 0-13, moderate stress with a score of 14-26, and severe stress with a score of 27-40. At the stress level, it was found that most students who were completing their final project (thesis) at the Faculty of Nursing, Syiah Kuala University had a moderate stress level of 106 people (80.9%). In addition, it turned out that there were 2 respondents (1.5%) who experienced severe stress.

DISCUSSION

Stress is a condition experienced by a person caused by pressure or disorders originating from physical and psychological or psychological disorders, as well as other pressures originating from the surrounding

environment, where a person is difficult to deal with pressure and disturbances felt (Prasetya, 2021). Stress can be felt by someone in any age range, whether children, adolescents, adults, even the elderly. This psychological disorder is often experienced by groups of students, college students and (Gomathi et al., 2012). The group of students classified as early adulthood (usually aged 19 to 23 years) is prone to stress (Ratnaningtyas & Fitriani, 2019).

The study showed that from the age range of students classified as early adulthood, namely 20 to 23 years, the majority of them were at the age of 21 years, which was as many as 90 respondents (68.7%). According to Priscitadewi et al, (2022) early adulthood is an age where a person cannot control stress and emotions felt. The older you get, the greater the risk of experiencing stress that can be caused by many other precipitating factors.

Students in the tertiary education stage really need help in dealing with the academic pressure they have which can have a broad impact on their lives (Kumar & Jadaun, 2018). In addition, academic problems, social conditions, family, and health can also be a source of stress for students (Maykel, 2018). Yosep and Sutini (2014) explain that someone who is far from family or lacks motivation from family can cause a mental crisis. Research data shows that most students living in boarding houses/alone experience more stress than those living with

their families. Students who live in boarding houses/alone have low-stress levels of 14 people (10.6%), moderate stress of 60 people (45.8%), and severe stress of 2 people (1.5%). According to Sutjiato, Kandou, and Tucunan (2015), residence status can also be one of the triggering factors for student stress and can affect their feelings and activities. Students who live in boarding houses/alone are prone to experiencing loneliness, lack of motivation that can be obtained directly from the family/surrounding environment, being subjected to sometimes greater pressure/burden, and so on.

The results of research on stress levels in students who are preparing their thesis at the Faculty of Nursing at Syiah Kuala University showed that students with mild stress 23 respondents (17.6%), moderate stress 106 respondents (80.9%), and severe stress as many as 2 respondents (1.5%). This study's results align with Ambarwati, Pinilih, and Astuti (2017) research where most final-year students experienced a moderate stress level of 57.4%.

The stress that occurs can be influenced by internal factors, namely within the student, and external factors that come from outside such as solid lessons, demands for achievement from parents, and encouragement of status in social life so that they are recognized and seen by society (Adawiyah & Ni'matuzahroh, 2016). Based on data collected from internal factors, the respondents showed signs and symptoms of

stress, including 48 people (36.6%) often feeling annoyed, and 47 people (35.9%) often feeling unable to control important things in their lives. 60 people (45.8%) often feel nervous and stressed, 34 people (26.0%) often feel unable to cope with things that should be done, 38 people (38%) are often angry, and 42 people (32.1 %) feel that so many difficulties have piled up that they cannot be overcome.

On the other hand, stress can affect cognitive function disrupting behavior, thoughts, and moods if it occurs frequently and excessively (Ahmad et al., 2019). Sutjiato, Kandou & Tucunan (2015) explained that stress levels could increase and become severe due to internal and other external factors. Internal factors are such as the physical condition, motivation, and self-attitude of the students themselves, while external factors are such as academic demands/lecture assignments, course load, parental demands, economy, and the surrounding environment.

This is in line with research conducted by Yosep and Sutini (2014) which explains that various factors can cause students who experience stress. One of the factors causing stress is mental pressure based on pressure such as academic demands, namely the number of tasks, especially the preparation of final projects that must be completed by final-year students (Ratnaningtyas & Fitriani, 2019).

These factors can increase and aggravate stress levels into severe stress.

Student stress caused by academic demands, especially the completion of the final project, considers the task a burden, making it vulnerable to burnout/boredom. Burnout is a feeling of fatigue felt physically, emotionally, and mentally, caused by someone's involvement in demands for a long time, such as students who are completing their final assignments. Various studies have assessed the causes of stress in health professions students who can experience excessive stress from personal situations, academic challenges, and economic hardship, including increased tuition. These stressors may have implications on students' academic performance and mental health (Chisholm, Spivey, Jaeger, & Williams, 2017); Garber, Huston, & Breese, 2019; Maynor, Galvez-Peralta, Barrickman, Hanif, & Baugh, 2022).

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The design in this study using a cross-sectional approach can only measure one time, therefore, conclusions cannot be drawn as a consistent measurement result. In addition, how to measure using google forms can cause researchers not to be able to see the way or expression of respondents directly when answering.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of the study can be concluded that students in preparing their final assignments often

experience stress which can be caused by various triggers when the task is carried out. The majority of stress experienced by students who are preparing their thesis is moderate stress. It is hoped that educational institutions will be able to monitor and provide counseling to students who experience problems while preparing their final project.

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