

The Effect of Mindfulness Techniques on Reducing Anxiety Symptoms in New Students

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ABSTRACT

One of the most serious challenges faced by new students in higher education is anxiety. Mindfulness meditation is one type of therapy that can be used to combat anxiety. Mindfulness is a way of regulating emotions by training oneself to think well and maintain focus through daily activities and meditation. This research is an experimental research with one group pretest-posttest design. The data collection stage uses the HARS questionnaire which is given before and after the intervention. Based on the results of this study, it shows that the intervention provided by the researcher was effective in reducing the anxiety levels of the study participants. The conduct of this research intervention shows the importance of utilizing and applying mindfulness techniques as a tool in managing and relieving anxiety.

Introduction

One of the serious challenges that many new college students face is anxiety. Excessive anxiety can affect the student's mental well-being and affect his academic achievement. Santrock (2003) revealed that new students are a transition period from students to students and have some positive aspects, including students feeling more mature, more exploring different lifestyles and values, enjoying freedom from parental supervision, and more intellectually challenged by having academic tasks, but not excluding the possibility of students also experiencing anxiety.

The role of being a student has its own challenges, among which students are considered to be more mature and more responsible than before, so students are required to be able to behave more independently. There are differences in education models in Preventive Schools and colleges, such as curricula and learning systems, discipline, and relationships between students and lecturers (Zubir, 2012). In the first year of school, students are faced with a variety of problems, both academic problems, social adaptation problems, campus environmental problems, and changes in the learning system that require students to be able to learn independently, to the rise of conflicts, where students whose condition is still in the stage of adaptation to their new role, but on the one hand students are required to be capable of completing tasks (Nurhayati, 2011).

According to Barlow and Duran (2014) in Santoso and Rinaldi (2022), anxiety is characterized by the negative emotional symptoms and physical tension a person feels when anticipating possible future dangers or accidents. A person with a high anxiety trait feels more threatened by a situation than a person who has a low anxieties trait. Anxiety is a tendency to react with anxiety about the perceived danger of the environment. This is in line with the view put forward by Wahyuni et al., (2022) which states that since anxiety can have a negative impact on a person, it is necessary to take nursing measures to lower a person's level of anxieties. Anxiety toward academics is caused by fear and anxiety about a particular situation, so that students are afraid of the results they have achieved, especially of what is wrong with the values or tasks they have completed (Novitria dan Khoirunnisa, 2022).

Regarding non-pharmacology, a lot of research has been done recently on complementary approaches to treating anxiety. Several techniques have been used as stand-alone nursing nurses to address the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of patients. These techniques include progressive relaxation, deep breathing exercises, meditation, laughter therapy, guided imagination, and music therapy (Siregar et al., 2022). Mindfulness meditation is one type of therapy that can be used to fight anxiety.

Mindfulness is a way to regulate emotions by training yourself to think well and stay focused through daily activities and meditation. According to Rahman, mindfulness is the activity of focusing attention on a goal without judging and avoiding situations that are beyond your control. Through mindfulness stress management, people can cope with stress and anxiety. It's because through mindfulness therapy, through meditation, or by focusing your mind when you're active, one learns to raise awareness of emotions and negative thoughts (Langelo dkk, 2021).

According to Stinson et al (2020), mindfulness training is also associated with improved well-being, reduced psychological stress, increased empathy, and compassion. It also improves immunological function. Stinson et al (2020) also explain that anxiety is also defined as “subjective feelings of fear, nervousness, and worry.” They distinguish two types of anxieties: conditional anxiet , which is characterized as a temporary emotional state that includes a subjective feeling of tension and worry accompanied by increased activity of the autonomous nervous system, whose intensity often varies.

Mindfulness techniques that have a positive effect on individual mental health, especially in someone who is experiencing anxiety. The symptoms of an individual experiencing anxiety may decrease when performing Islamic spiritual indfulness interventions. Individuals are able to regain a sense of inner well-being and mental wellbeing that will have a positive impact on the physiological body. The calm of mind trained with consciousness can have a positive effect on the physiological health of the body (Meidiana, 2019).

Dyah & Fourianalistyawati (2018), state that there are five aspects of mindfulness, namely:

1. Acting with awareness, that is, someone does something consciously. The opposite of that dimension is autopilot, where individuals are used to doing everything automatically, without paying particular attention to what they do.
2. Describing, that is, that can explain what a person feels or thinks .
3. Observing, is when an individual observes what happens both externally and internally (inside the body).
4. Non-reactivity to inner experience, it is realizing that thoughts and feelings come and go and that the individual does not need to get lost in those thoughts and emotions .
5. Non-judgment of inner experience, that is, the individual does not judge or judge what he feels, including sensations and emotions.

Therefore, this article aims to investigate the effectiveness of mindfulness techniques in reducing the symptoms of anxiety in new students. By understanding more deeply about the effects of the technique, it is hoped that this article will make a valuable contribution in efforts to develop effective mental health interventions among new students.

Method

This research is an experimental study with design one group pretest-posttest. In one-group pretest-posttest design, dependent variables are measured as groups before (pretest) and after (posttest) treatment (William & Hita, 2019) . The independent variable of this study is the mindfulness technique, and the dependent variable in this research is the symptom of anxiety. The instrument used on the anxiety variable is the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HARS) developed by Max Hamilton in 1956 with 14 items. The population in this study is new students from various institutions. The sample on this study consisted of 15 new students.

The stage of data collection using the HARS questionnaire given before and after the intervention. This research uses quantitative methods. According to Musianto (2002), quantitative method is research that uses measurements, calculations, formulas, and certainty of numerical data in planning, processing, forming hypotheses, methods, data analysis, and drawing conclusions. (Waruwu, 2023). The data analysis techniques used in this study are descriptive statistics, normality tests, and wilcoxon signed rank tests, to see effectiveness on mindfulness techniques.

Results and Discussion

Based on the results of this study, it shows that the interventions given by the researchers are effective in reducing the level of anxiety of the study participants. This research intervention demonstrates the importance of using and applying mindfulness techniques as a tool in managing and alleviating anxiety, especially for new students who often feel anxious in their new environment.

In literature reviews, mindfulness meditation gets positive assessments and is recognized to have significant benefits in reducing levels of anxiety. This technique helps individuals to focus more on the moment and reduce the thoughts that can trigger anxiety.

Prominent researchers such as Ernst & D'Mello (2020) also confirm this view. They argue that mindfulness meditation has been shown to help alleviate anxiety and symptoms of depression. Furthermore, based on an analysis by Blum, dkk (2021), Mindfulness Meditation has great potential to be an effective intervention to help new students with anxieties. (Sari, 2023) .

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Anxiety Pretest	16.00	15	9.688	2.501
	Anxiety Posttest	11.33	15	8.583	2.216

In this study, the results of descriptive statistical tests showed that there was a significant difference between the pretest and the posttest of anxiety. The pretest obtained an average alarm value of 16.00, the standard deviation value of 9.688, and the standard error average of 2.501. The posttest resulted in an alarm score rate of 11.33, the normal deviation rate of 8.583, and the average standard error rate of 2.216. The results of the analysis showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups with a value of $t(14) = 3.50$, $p < 0.05$. Significant t values indicated that the difference in anxiety before and after the test was not caused by a coincidence, but was the result of the intervention carried out. These results show that the intervention succeeded in reducing the level of anxiety of the participants.

Descriptive statistics are also known as the approach to gathering and presenting data in a sensible way, also called (Walpole, 1995). By using sample or population data, descriptive stats serve to characterize or provide an overview of the subject being studied. (Sugiyono, 2007).

Table 2. *Normality test*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Anxiety Pretest	.132	15	.200*	.918	15	.179
Anxiety Posttest	.136	15	.200*	.921	15	.196

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The results of the normality test showed that both groups of data (anxiety pretest and anxiety posttest) had near-normal distribution, as demonstrated by the Kolmogorov-

Smirnov statistical values (0.132 for pretests and 0.136 for posttests) and Shapiro-Wilk (0.918 for pretes and 0.921 for posttest), as well as p values > 0.05 in both normality tests did not indicate sufficient evidence to reject the assumption that the data came from the normal distribution.

The normality test is to "examine free variable data (X) and tied variable (Y) data on the regression equation resulting" (Sunyoto & Danang, 2016). In addition, Santoso & Singgih (2017) says that the purpose of the normality test is to find out whether the data spread resembles or deviates from the normal spread, i.e. the bell-shaped data spreads. The normality test is to find out whether the residual value in the regression model follows the normal distribution or not (Lasanuda, 2017-2020).

Table 3. *Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test*

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Anxiety Posttest – Anxiety Pretest	Negative Ranks	13 ^a	7.00	91.00
	Positive Ranks	0 ^b	.00	.00
	Ties	2 ^c		
	Total	15		

- a. Anxiety Posttest < Anxiety Pretest
- b. Anxiety Posttest > Anxiety Pretest
- c. Anxiety Posttest = Anxiety Pretest

The results of the wilcoxon signed rank test showed that there was a significant difference between anxiety posttest and a pre-anxiety test ($\chi^2(2) = 13.56, p < 0.05$). The rating analysis revealed 13 negative rating scores, with an average rating of 7.00, which suggests that posttest emergency scores tend to be lower than pretests. No positive ranking scores were found, and there were two cases that had similar values between posttest and pretest. These results show that interventions have a significant impact in reducing the level of anxiety of participants.

Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test is a nonparametric test to measure the significance of differences between two groups of data that are pairs of ordinal scale or interval but are distributed abnormally. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test is an alternative test to a pairing t-test or t-paried test when it does not meet the normality assumption. This test is also known as the Wilcoxon Match Pair Test (Subandriyo & Budi, 2020).

Conclusion

The conclusions of this study show that the interventions given by the researchers are effective in reducing the level of anxiety of the study participants. This research intervention demonstrates the importance of using and applying mindfulness techniques as a tool in managing and alleviating anxiety. Anxiety is a major problem among students

around the world. Based on the description above, interventions are needed to deal with anxiety in new students, and now mindfulness is beginning to be developed to cope with anxiousness. Mindfulness is a way to regulate emotions by training yourself to think well and stay focused through daily activities and meditation. The aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of mindfulness techniques in reducing anxiety symptoms in new students. Furthermore, it is expected that this research will make a valuable contribution to efforts to develop effective mental health interventions among new students.

As regards advice for future researchers, it is expected to be able to increase the number of subjects of further research, as well as to conduct research face-to-face and try to use various methods of research to obtain more varied results. Also, it's important to always maintain ethics in research, such as keeping the privacy and confidentiality of the subject of research and ensuring that the research does not pose risk or harm to the subject.

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