

Terrace Philosophy Book Reading Therapy Towards Academic Anxiety in Students

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the large number of students today who experience academic problems. These problems can cause feelings of anxiety in academics. This is because in the learning process students are usually required to be able to complete lecture assignments on time and receive pressure from parents or people around them regarding academics. Based on previous research, it is said that the therapy of reading core philosophy books can reduce stress and reduce anxiety in students. The aim of this research is to determine the effectiveness of reading therapy on academic anxiety in students. This research uses a qualitative phenomenological approach. In this research, sampling used purposive sampling. Data collection techniques used observation and interview methods. The research subject was a 19 years old female student who admitted that she had academic problems which made her often feel anxious. Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation conducted by researchers regarding the application of reading therapy using the Teras Philosophy book to overcome anxiety in students, it is stated that reading therapy from the Teras Philosophy book has effective results in changing a student's attitude or anxiety.

Keywords: academic anxiety, student, reading therapy, teras philosophy book, bibliotherapy

Introduction

As time goes by, education is becoming an increasingly important thing to pay attention to because quality individuals are created through the important role of education (Azizy, et al. 2019). Success in the scope of education is often associated with successful academic achievements. Academic achievement is a criterion used to assess a student's success in the educational process (Ahmad & Bruinsma in Khalaila, 2014). However, in reality not all students can achieve good academic achievements. There are previous studies (Wahyudi, 2015) which prove that there are students who have poor academic achievements. Therefore, the university environment needs to create conditions that are comfortable, enjoyable and not boring. This is because when campus conditions are unpleasant, stressful and boring, it will result in students having negative reactions, such as feelings of anxiety, stress, boredom, feeling isolated, lonely and depressed. This condition can have an impact on individual assessments of the campus and reduce student achievement (Azyz, et al. 2019).

A spring 2023 American College Health Association (ACHA) national survey of more than 55,000 undergraduate students revealed that some of the most frequently diagnosed mental health conditions were anxiety and depression. In this ACHA survey, more than a third of students (36%) had been diagnosed with anxiety (Bryant & Lyss. 2024). Academic problems can be a major cause of stress among students. This is because students have the desire to get high grades and excessive anxiety in participating in the learning process in lectures. If students' adjustment or adaptation to the

learning process or academic activities has problems, it can increase academic stress in students (Rosyidah et al., 2020)

Reading Therapy or Bibliotherapy

Reading therapy is often referred to as bibliotherapy. The word Bibliotherapy comes from Greek, namely *biblos* means book and *therapy* means psychological assistance. Therefore bibliotherapy can be defined as the use of books to help solve problems (Solikin, 2015). Bibliotherapy is an activity using age-appropriate books in medical therapy and is usually followed by discussions on life problem topics appropriate to the conditions at that time (Oppenheimer, 2010). Bibliotherapy uses books as therapy or stimulus to support children's health in the development process, aimed at diverting problems such as emotional inability to use words, anxiety, lack of passion for life or laziness (Purnamasari, et al. 2023).

This bibliotherapy method has been considered a cost effective treatment since World War I and II. According to Schectman (2009), there are many soldiers who return from the battlefield experiencing post-traumatic disorders. Since then, this bibliotherapy method has been expanded and can now be used by all professions, all age groups and special populations. Bibliotherapy is also used by school counselors, social workers, health nurses, teachers, and librarians.

In this bibliotherapy process, someone who is experiencing problems is asked to read books that are helpful and motivating to speed up healing (Solikin, 2015). The bibliotherapy procedure consists of three stages, namely identification, catharsis, and deep insight (Supartini, 2004). In identification, students identify themselves with the events in the book, both real and fictional. If the recommended reading material is correct, then the client will experience the same event as himself. In catharsis, students will be emotionally involved in the story and channel their pent-up emotions (through discussion). Apart from following discussions, it is possible for students who have difficulty expressing their feelings verbally using other methods such as writing and so on. In the insight section, students realize that the problems they face can be solved. Student problems are likely to be found in books so that when solving problems by considering the steps in the book.

According to Supartini (2004), the application of bibliotherapy or reading therapy can be done by (1) identifying student needs through observation and talking to relevant students about their life records, (2) adapting students to appropriate reading materials, (3) deciding on the time schedule. , session, as well as how the session is introduced to students, (4) designing follow-up activities after reading such as discussion or writing. (5) motivating students with introductory activities such as asking main questions and starting to discuss the reading material and summarizing what happened periodically in detail, (6) giving students a break of a few minutes so they can reflect on the reading material, (7) accompanying students end therapy through discussion.

The reading material used in bibliotherapy must be appropriate to the student's level of reading ability and comprehension and the writing must be interesting. When choosing a book, it must be adjusted to the student's age. The reading theme must be in accordance with the identified needs of the client (Suparyo, 2010). Broadly speaking, reading material can be divided into two types, namely didactic and imaginative. Didactic reading materials facilitate a change in the individual through a more cognitive, educational and instructional self-understanding. The material is how a new behavior must be formed or eliminated, how to overcome problems, relaxation and meditation. The theme of

imaginative or creative reading refers to the presentation of human behavior in a dramatic way, for example novels, short stories, poetry and plays (Suparyo, 2010).

Teras Philosophy Book

The book *Teras Philosophy* by Henry Manampiring, published in 2019, tells about one of the teachings of ancient Greco-Roman philosophy which can help readers control negative emotions and form a tough mentality in facing life's problems in today's millennial generation. The book also explains how to apply it in everyday life (Hermanto et al. 2023). The book "*Filosofi Teras*" is a book that in 2019 received the Book of the Year award from the Indonesian Publishers Association (Utami et al. 2024).

This book, which became a mega best seller, is an interpretation of the ancient Greco-Roman school of philosophy promoted by a philosopher named Marcus Aurelius who followed Stoic philosophy when he was a political and war leader in Germania (Tampubolon, 2023). In the opinion of Fajrin (2022) stoicism is a philosophical school that has a big influence and is easy for everyone to apply to make life better. Stoicism or core philosophy itself is an ancient Greek philosophy that explains how to control negative emotions and form a strong mentality to face life's problems (Manampiring, 2019). It can be concluded that stoicism is an ancient Greek philosophy that is applied by many people with the aim of changing themselves for the better.

The *Teras Philosophy* book also explains the precedence of Malorum and SWOT analysis, where the world is full of uncertain and sometimes unexpected things. Therefore, in the philosophy of Stoicism there is a technique called *premeditatio malorum*, which is a technique that instills in the mind an unpleasant situation or condition. This means that followers of the Stoicism philosophy always develop awareness that in their daily lives they will encounter unpleasant things that might happen, such as difficulties, bad news, and so on. The aim is that when unpleasant things happen, they will not be surprised because their mental awareness has awakened (Ghazali, 2023).

The book *Teras Philosophy* by Henry Manampiring is a teaching that can be applied by anyone regardless of the reader's different religious, cultural and racial backgrounds (Henry Manampiring, 2019). Core philosophy books can help students overcome academic anxiety. This can happen because the core philosophy book by Henry Manampiring raises the theme of mental training with drug-free therapy that suits the personality types of young people today. This core philosophy book also contains the results of interviews with experts and practitioners from various relevant fields, such as Dr. Andri, SpKJ, FAOM., who is a psychiatrist specializing in psychosomatic medicine (Limbong & Asbari, 2024).

Academic Anxiety

Academic anxiety is a psychological problem that is often experienced by students. Academic anxiety is related to feelings of anxiety regarding the dangers that will come from the environment of academic institutions. This refers to disruption of thought patterns, physiological responses and behavior due to feelings of worry about poor performance when academic assignments are given (Ottens, 1991). Academic anxiety is a special situation that refers to the condition of anxiety experienced during the study process and can interfere with academic performance (Vitasari, et al. 2010).

Based on several previous studies, the types of anxiety that can occur in the scope of education include test anxiety, static anxiety, social anxiety, and so on (Kusumastuti, 2020). Anxiety itself was introduced by Sigmund Freud in the early 1990s. Freud stated that anxiety is a danger signal that a person shows as a response to the perception of physical pain or danger. Anxiety often develops over the long term.

Peplau (2004) explains the classification of anxiety levels into four levels, namely mild anxiety, moderate anxiety, severe anxiety, and panic attacks. In mild anxiety, individuals feel motivated to increase their learning capacity and solve problems efficiently while stimulating the creation of innovation and creativity. At a moderate level of anxiety, this can result in a person only being able to focus their attention on the things they are focused on and experiencing a narrowing of the quality of perception. However, individuals who experience moderate anxiety are still able to carry out tasks with the direction of others. In severe anxiety, individuals tend to focus on detailed and specific things, but individuals will experience difficulty in maintaining optimal concentration. In panic attacks, individuals tend to be unable to take any action even though they receive instructions or direction from other people.

According to Nevid, Rathus and Grenee (2005), one of the factors that can cause anxiety is the cognitive factor in the individual, which is the way of thinking in playing the role of anxiety. According to Wijaya (2020), in general, distinguishing between normal anxiety and deviant anxiety is a little difficult. It is not uncommon for normal anxiety to trigger the emergence of deviant anxiety. There are three general causes of anxiety from these two types of anxiety. First, heredity or innateness is the initial hypothesis because it cannot be denied that this factor can make a certain contribution to triggering anxiety. Second, the environment is a place that is related to external factors and the conditions that surround it to shape an individual's personality and shape how to respond to various different conditions.

It includes things such as physical growth conditions and thought patterns, family and social problems, developmental problems, crisis, traumatic factors, and clashes or problems experienced by individuals in their life, feelings of guilt and fear of punishment, and feelings of weak to understand the puzzle of his existence and feel stupid in facing life and feel that he has lost the meaning and purpose of life. Third, namely personal. These personal factors should not be underestimated in studies discussing anxiety. Problems within the individual are not responsible for their own response to anxiety. Sometimes most people respond to one condition with many things. Academic problems can be a major cause of stress among students. This is because students have the desire to get high grades and excessive anxiety in participating in the learning process in lectures. If students' adjustment or adaptation to the learning process or academic activities has problems, it can increase academic stress in students (Rosyidah et al., 2020).

Academic anxiety can give rise to various symptoms, as stated by O'Connor (2008), such as dizziness, nausea or stomach ache, sweaty palms, flushed face, headaches, increased voice pitch when speaking, negative thoughts about failure to complete assignments, doubts about one's own abilities, and fear when speaking in public, to teachers or lecturers. This feeling is an unpleasant emotional condition for the individual who experiences it.

Academic anxiety consists of several components or aspects described by Calhoun and Acocella (Sobur, 2003), who divide it into three reactions: emotional reactions, cognitive reactions,

and physiological reactions. Emotional reactions are components of anxiety that are related to individual perception and influence psychological conditions such as feelings of anxiety, tension and sadness. Cognitive reactions are reactions that can trigger fear or worry in individuals, affect the ability to think clearly, and hinder individuals from solving problems and dealing with the demands around them. Physiological reactions are the body's response to a source of anxiety, involving the nervous system which controls the body's muscles and glands, causing physical reactions such as the heart beating faster and harder, breathing faster, and blood pressure increasing. According to Hurlock (Aristawati et al., 2020), academic anxiety experienced by students can be influenced by various factors such as age, gender, health status, experience, and level of stressors. Hooda and Saini (2017) previously explained several factors that can trigger academic anxiety in students, including past experiences related to lessons, perceptions about class load, time management skills, family problems, and beliefs that can shape self-concept as a reaction to situations. which triggers anxiety. Based on this explanation, gender is one of the factors that can determine the level of academic anxiety in students. Academic anxiety is influenced by five factors: age, gender, health status, experience, and the size of the stressor. In students, certain situations can cause different levels of academic anxiety, so there are differences in levels of academic anxiety based on gender. Female students tend to have higher levels of academic anxiety compared to male students. Various studies also show that women more often experience higher levels of anxiety and worry than men (Rapee et al., 2009).

Method

This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to determine students' anxiety levels. Qualitative research is research whose aim is to understand a phenomenon experienced by research subjects starting from behavior, motivation, perception and holistic actions (Moleong, 2017). Phenomenology is a research design used to understand and reveal a social problem that is distinctive and unique (Herdiansyah, 2015). Data was collected through interviews, observation and documentation. The main instrument in this research is the researcher himself because the researcher went into the field by conducting interviews and observations. The data source used is a primary data source that comes directly from the source. In this research, sampling used purposive sampling. The criteria for participants in this research were female or male students aged 18-19 years who felt academic anxiety. Based on predetermined criteria, there was 1 female student subject aged 19 years with a form of academic anxiety which always made her anxious about her education and daily life. Furthermore, this research uses data collection techniques using interviews, observation and documentation. The interviews conducted in this research were semi-structured interviews with research subjects. The documentation study used in this research is in the form of photos and audio records of research subjects during the interview. The data collection techniques used in this research were in-depth interviews and observation.

Results

Subjects in this study reported that their activities included academic activities such as attending lectures and helping their mothers in carrying out household tasks. The subject expressed interest in reading books. Currently, the subject is busy with assignment preparation and studying for the exam which will be held soon. The subject expressed his concerns regarding his academic assessment, including concerns about the possibility of a decrease in grades compared to the previous semester, as well as the client's concerns about the increasing complexity of lecture material over time. He often feels anxious before presenting at lectures. Subjects also often suddenly experience a blank mind while the presentation is in progress. In addition, subjects felt stressed when receiving many assignments with short deadlines for submission. The subject also admitted that he experienced pressure due to the expectations of his surrounding environment regarding academics, and felt underestimated by those closest to him regarding his academic achievements. This makes the subject try hard to prove that he is not who they think he is. The subject also experienced confusion in determining his future due to the choice of college major that did not suit his interests. Therefore, the subject still feels uncertain about his future. The subject also admitted that he had doubts about his personal potential in completing his studies. Often subjects tend to divert their negative thoughts by watching Korean dramas or reading books, as a strategy to overcome the anxiety and stress that often arise.

After conducting interviews and observations of the subject, the researcher introduced reading therapy or bibliotherapy to the subject. The researcher also provided a brief explanation of the book "Filosofi Teras" which will be used as bibliotherapy media in this research. In addition, the researcher provided a brochure containing further information regarding reading therapy in the book "Terrace Philosophy" with the aim of helping subjects understand the reading therapy process in more depth. After conducting interviews and observations of the subject, the researcher introduced reading therapy or bibliotherapy to the subject. The researcher also provided a brief explanation of the book "Filosofi Teras" which will be used as bibliotherapy media in this research. In addition, the researcher provided a brochure containing further information regarding reading therapy in the book "Terrace Philosophy" with the aim of helping subjects understand the reading therapy process in more depth. After going through a reading therapy session, the subject revealed that he experienced an increase in self-confidence and courage, as well as a change in attitude that was more assertive, which was previously influenced by academic anxiety. Initially, the subject experienced anxiety and blankness of mind when presenting. However, after applying reading therapy using the book "Terrace Philosophy", the subject showed increased courage in facing lecture presentations. In addition, the subject admitted that he began to be able to overcome academic pressure from his environment and demonstrated the ability to direct his thinking towards a more positive mindset than before.

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation conducted by researchers regarding the application of reading therapy using the Teras Philosophy book to reduce anxiety in students, it is stated that reading the Teras Philosophy book has effective results in changing a student's attitude or anxiety. This is in line with previous research conducted by Wijaya (2020) which concluded that an Islamic counseling approach using bibliotherapy techniques in dealing with student anxiety can help individuals learn to develop the potential of students at MA NW Apitaik. This is

because the bibliotherapy technique is a technique that is able to provide enlightenment to the individual who applies it. Furthermore, previous research conducted by Hartinah (2024) showed that using the Teras Philosophy book as a bibliotherapy medium was quite effective for recovering from academic stress and anxiety at 64.8%, while the Teras Philosophy book as a bibliotherapy media was effective for recovering from anxiety at 71.6%. % of students. Therefore, the book Teras Philosophy as a bibliotherapy medium can be used as an alternative reading to maintain the mental health of Diponegoro University students class of 2019. Apart from that, research from (Schrank and Engels, 1981) also reveals considerable empirical support that the use of bibliotherapy techniques can have an impact positive attitude, assertiveness, reducing anxiety and self-development.

Discussion

Pardeck (1994) explains reading therapy or bibliotherapy as a therapeutic approach that uses books to help individuals overcome personal problems. Books are selected specifically for their relevance to the problems facing the individual, and the reading process is guided by a trained professional to maximize its therapeutic benefits. The efforts made in this reading therapy are (1) selecting the right book. In this context, the book "Terrace Philosophy" was chosen because its contents can provide practical guidance in managing emotions and anxiety. (2) Subjects were asked to read one chapter of the selected book every day for one week. A regular schedule helps create a calming routine and facilitates consistency in therapy. (3) Subjects are encouraged to find a comfortable and quiet place to read, so that they can focus and absorb the contents of the book without distractions. (4) During reading, subjects are encouraged to reflect on the contents of the book and apply relevant concepts to everyday life. Helps manage anxiety more effectively. (5) After the reading period, the researcher conducted another interview to evaluate the changes the subject felt regarding academic anxiety. This discussion also helps subjects to articulate new feelings and understandings they gain from reading books. (6) Researchers provide emotional support and feedback to subjects during and after the reading therapy period. This activity is important to motivate the subject and strengthen the effectiveness of the therapy. (7) Researchers monitor changes in the subject's anxiety levels from the beginning to the end of the therapy period. This is done to assess the extent to which reading therapy helps reduce academic anxiety. By using bibliotherapy, subjects not only gain new knowledge but also practical tools to manage their academic anxiety. These efforts aim to create a therapeutic reading experience and support the subject's emotional well-being.

For one week, subjects were asked to read a terrace philosophy book for 30 minutes every day. Based on in-depth interviews conducted before and after this period, the subject's experience can be analyzed regarding the changes the subject feels in academic anxiety. Subjects reported that reading core philosophy books helped subjects feel calmer in dealing with academic pressure. In the interview, the subject stated, "Every time I start reading, I feel my mind become calmer. This book gave me a new perspective on how to deal with the stress and pressure I experienced in college." This book also helps subjects understand and manage their emotions better and feel better prepared to face academic challenges. Subjects also reported that they often reflected on the contents of the book and tried to apply the concepts they read to their daily lives. Overall, the subjects' experience in reading the book "Core Philosophy" for one week showed a positive impact on their academic anxiety.

Subjects feel calmer, able to divert academic thoughts and pressure, increase self-understanding, and reduce stress levels. This experience shows the great potential of bibliotherapy as a tool to help students manage academic anxiety more effectively.

Through the application of this therapy, subjects can experience changes in the way they understand and overcome academic anxiety. Reading core philosophy books can encourage subjects to reflect and understand themselves and the reasons behind the academic anxiety they experience. In addition, the subject learns that he or she has the ability to manage their own thoughts and emotions which is an important step in overcoming anxiety. However, keep in mind that the effects of this therapy can vary between individuals. The aim of using bibliotherapy techniques with students is to help them overcome various problems they face in college life, such as difficulties adjusting, stress, anxiety, and other social-emotional problems. By reading the Teras Philosophy book, students can gain new insight and understanding about themselves, their surrounding environment, and learn techniques to overcome the problems they face. Students often experience stress and anxiety due to academic, social and environmental demands.

Core philosophy books contain many Stoicism principles which, although originating from ancient Greek traditions, can be widely applied in various cultural contexts including Indonesia. In Indonesian culture, which highly values the values of inner calm, patience and acceptance, the philosophy of Stoicism can find a strong resonance. Many of the teachings in this book encourage understanding and acceptance of circumstances, which can help Indonesian students to overcome the academic pressure they face. Although reading levels in Indonesia still need to be improved, there are ongoing efforts by the government and various organizations to encourage reading habits among students. This research can show how reading the right books can be an effective tool in improving students' mental well-being, and how this can be integrated into educational programs. The subject of this research has a personal interest in the topics discussed in core philosophy books. This interest helps the subject to be more emotionally and cognitively involved with the material being read. Successful reading therapy must take individual preferences into account to ensure that the material selected is relevant and interesting to the reader.

The subjects' high levels of academic anxiety provided an effective backdrop for viewing the changes that occurred during therapy. The subjects' experiences with academic stress make them appropriate candidates for evaluating the effectiveness of reading therapy in the context of academic anxiety. The subjects in this study felt the effective benefits of reading therapy because they discovered the meaning and practical application of Stoicism concepts in their daily lives. This response can be greatly influenced by personality, level of openness to new experiences, and desire to find solutions to the problems faced. Subjects who are emotionally involved with the material they read are more likely to experience positive changes.

Cultural and individual contexts play an important role in the effectiveness of core philosophy reading therapy for academic anxiety. Understanding the Indonesian cultural background and individual factors that influence the subject's experiences can help in designing and implementing more effective and relevant reading therapy strategies. This research shows that by choosing the right books and considering cultural context and individual characteristics, reading therapy can be a powerful tool for reducing academic anxiety among college students.

By reading appropriate reading material, they can gain new understanding and skills that can help them reduce stress and anxiety. Students who have social-emotional problems can use bibliotherapy to gain new insights about themselves and emotional and social skills (Maghfur, 2018). Reading materials such as books that discuss empathy, emotion management, and social skills can help them understand and overcome their social-emotional problems. Many students have difficulty finding motivation and inspiration to learn and develop themselves (Sandi and Kamal, 2022). By reading inspirational reading material, they can gain new ideas and motivation to achieve their goals. Bibliotherapy can also help improve students' reading and writing skills.

Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that reading therapy or bibliotherapy of philosophical books is effective in overcoming academic anxiety in students. In addition, this research supports the idea that therapeutic reading of core philosophy books has the potential to be an effective intervention. Through a deeper understanding of themselves and a more open mind, students begin to be able to overcome the academic anxiety they experience and begin to view the future more positively. However, further research is needed to fully understand the effects of this therapy and how its implementation can be optimized so that the benefits are maximum for students who experience academic anxiety. Academic anxiety is often experienced by students due to psychological pressure, which can affect learning activities, resulting in student learning outcomes being poor or even unfavorable. One way that can be done to overcome academic anxiety is by doing book reading therapy or bibliotherapy. One of the books that can be used as a bibliotherapy medium is the book on core philosophy by Henry Manampiring. This core philosophy book reading therapy is effective for overcoming academic anxiety in students.

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