

The Analysis of Student’s Exam Anxiety and Its Effects on Psychological Reaction

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Abstract: Exams are a common activity at school, and students commonly experience anxiety related to exams. This study attempts to provide a general understanding of exam anxiety. This kind of study use quantitative descriptive research techniques and a test anxiety questionnaire as a tool for gathering data. The study's participants were SMAN 13 Padang students. Simple random sampling was used to select the subjects. This study combines descriptive analysis with data analysis tools. The findings of this study suggest that exam anxiety has a variety of manifestations. Each aspect has a different percentage; the emotional reaction aspect, which is the largest, falls into the high category, with a percentage of 38.9%; the cognitive reaction aspect, which is the highest, has a percentage of 53.7%; and the physiological reaction aspect, which is the largest, falls into the medium category, with a percentage of 37.9%. These findings suggest that many respondents struggle with exam anxiety. In order for attempts to combat and avoid exam anxiety, Counselling Guidance Teachers and Counsellors will use this research as information.

Keywords: Student anxiety, psychological reaction, student’s exam

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Introduction

Anxiety is a term that is often heard in everyday life. The sensation of anxiety is almost felt and experienced by everyone, it's just that each person has a different level and how they respond to the presence of this feeling. While some people are able to control it, this feeling frequently controls them, causing them to drown in it. Many people have come across someone who has overcome anxiety and gone on to achieve success in life. On the other hand, a lot of people experience instability (stress), which includes not being able to get over their own anxiety (Mukholil, 2018). Anxiety about exams is part of the academic stress that often occurs in students which has an effect on test scores, confusion in completing homework and fatigue following extended study time at school (Karneli, Ardimen, Netrawati, 2019). Anxiety in students arises because of a feeling of being threatened in something that is not yet clear. Students who experience anxiety are caused by the gap between what students expect and the reality that happens to students related to academic problems (Permana, Harahap, & Astuti, 2017).

School exams are one of the government's ways to improve the quality of Indonesian education. Wafiq (Sugiono, 2022) states that the School Examination is an activity to measure the achievement of student competencies carried out by the education unit to gain recognition for learning achievement and is one of the graduation requirements from the education unit. School exams can be said to be a frightening "bogey", this is because in school exams the material tested is much more than during the national exam. The current

national exam results are no longer a determinant of student graduation in taking the final exam. Schools will have 100% authority in determining student graduation (Sari, Mudjiran, & Alizamar, 2017).

Cases of anxiety are currently often found in schools, anxiety that occurs in students or that is experienced by students makes some students have low achievement. Anxiety often affects adolescents as stated by Andrew and Engler who stated that anxiety is a weak condition experienced by individuals that afflicts 1 out of every 75 people in the world and the most frequently affected are adolescents from the age range of 15 to 24 years (William, Donna, & Kristine, 2001). In addition, based on a study conducted by Siregar on 78 students at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Huda Singosari Malang using the Taylor Minnesota Scale which shows that most students experience anxiety, the results of the presentation are only 19.2% of students who experience low levels of anxiety (Siregar, 2013).

The level of anxiety experienced with moderate intensity still has a reasonable value. Anxiety with a reasonable intensity can be considered to have a positive value as motivation, but if the intensity is very strong and negative, it will actually cause harm and can disrupt the physical and psychological state of the individual concerned (Taufik, Rukman, & Suratmi 2017). Excessive anxiety can negatively impact a student's academic life by lowering their motivation, coping mechanisms, learning techniques, self-perceptions of their health, and ability to concentrate. Lewis (Mukhlis, hamid., & Koentjoro. 2015) (Mukhlis, hamid., & Koentjoro. 2015). In addition, Calhoun & Acocella (Safaria & Saputra, 2009) explain the reactions that arise as a result of anxiety, there are three things, the first is an emotional reaction, usually a reaction related to perceptions such as feelings of sadness or tension, the second is a cognitive reaction which is usually characterized by feelings of fear and worries that make it difficult for someone who experiences it to solve problems. The consequences that arise include contractions of the stomach muscles and other digestive organs, excess gastric juice secretion, faster heart rate, tense muscles, active sweat glands, and so on (Mukhlis & Koentjoro, 2015).

Method

This research is a type of descriptive research with quantitative methods. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of anxiety in facing exams with the study population of SMAN 13 Padang students. The sample used in this study amounted to 298 students. Sampling in this study used a random sampling technique and even this study used an anxiety instrument for exams with five categories of answers, namely always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never, which were arranged according to the conditions of the students in the field.

Results

Description of Data Task aversiveness (X_2)

Anxiety is an emotional state characterized by physiological arousal, an unpleasant feeling of tension, and worry that something bad will happen (Nevid, Rathus, & Greene, 2005). Anxiety itself can also have physical characteristics such as cold fingers, faster heartbeat, cold sweats, dizziness, decreased appetite, poor sleep, chest tightness and also mental in nature such as fear of feeling overwritten by danger, unable to focus, insecure, wanting to escape the reality. Sundari (Firia, Neviyarni, Netrawati & Yeni, 2005).

Distinguishing between rational and irrational beliefs is an important matter because according to REBT, irrational beliefs cause disturbing emotions, such as depression, excessive anxiety, guilt and anger, and adverse behavioral reactions such as aggression, withdrawal, and impulsiveness (Marlina, Ningsih, Fikry & Fransiska, 2022).

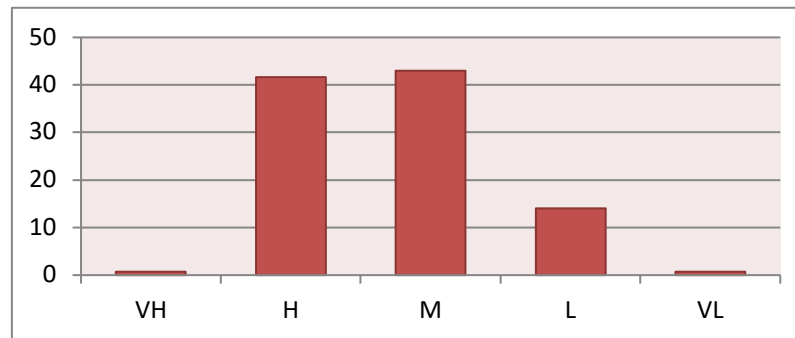
Students with high anxiety levels do not do as well as those with low anxiety levels. That is because students with high anxiety tend to feel worried, anxious, and have difficulty concentrating. On the other hand, low-level anxiety can spur someone to do a better job, Ruffer (Agustiar and Asmi 2010). The aspects used in this study used three aspects of anxiety according to Calhoun and Acocella, namely aspects of emotional reactions, cognitive reactions and physiological reactions. Emotional reactions, namely the components of anxiety related to individual perceptions of the psychological effects of anxiety, Cognitive reactions, namely fear and worry that affect the ability to think clearly, while Physiological reactions, namely the reactions displayed by the body to sources of fear and worry (Safaria & Saputra, 2009).

The results of the instrument analysis of exam anxiety in adolescents are specified into 5 categories in terms of the characteristics of exam anxiety which are shown in the following table.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Examination Anxiety

No	Categories	Intervals	F	%
1	Very High	139-165	2	0,7
2	High	112-138	124	41,6
3	Medium	85-111	128	43,0
4	Low	58-84	42	14,1
5	Very Low	31-57	2	0,7
Total			298	100,00

In table 1, data on exam anxiety is generally in the medium category, namely 128 students with an achievement percentage of 43.0%, then there are teenagers who have exam anxiety in the low category, namely 42 students with an achievement percentage of 14.1%, then there are also teenagers who are in the category of high exam anxiety with an achievement percentage of 124 students with an achievement percentage of 41.6%, and in the very high and very low categories there are 2 students each with an achievement percentage by 0.7%. Based on the results of data analysis, a detailed description of student exam anxiety is as follows.

**Figure 2.** Category of Anxiety in Facing Exams

We can see that there are still quite a lot of students at SMAN 13 Padang who experience exam anxiety. This is in line with the results of interviews that the researchers conducted with the Counselor/Counselor Teacher at a school in Padang City, it was found that at that school there were some students who were anxious when facing exams, especially students who usually won the class. Students feel anxious because they are afraid that their grades will drop or not be able to maintain their grades, so that a feeling of anxiety arises that makes students feel sick to the point of sweating, always wanting to go to the bathroom and some even pass gas in public places. This situation is in accordance with research from Solehah that the fear of failing in exams is considered a threat to students which triggers anxiety (Solehah, 2012).

If this is allowed it will have a negative impact on student academic results. In accordance with research conducted by Saroson and friends which shows that students who experience high academic anxiety will not be able to perform better than students who have low levels of anxiety (Rahman, Nursalam, & Tahir, 2015). Then as previously explained that anxiety has three aspects, namely emotional reactions, cognitive reactions, and physiological reactions Calhoun and Acocella (Safaria & Saputra, 2009).

From these results it can be interpreted that the level of anxiety in facing exams in adolescents is partly in the high category, especially in the emotional and cognitive reaction aspects, but in the cognitive reaction aspect it has a moderate percentage among other aspects. These results are in accordance with those expressed by Rana & Mahmood (2010) which revealed that anxiety will affect students' cognitive and affective, which causes a decrease in learning achievement.

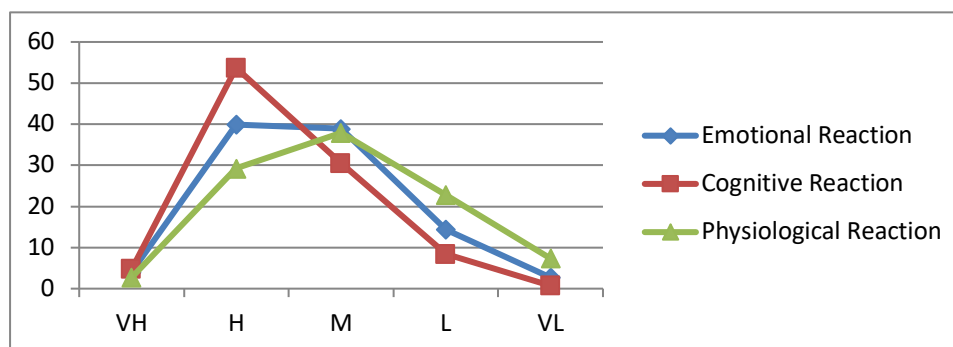


Figure 2. Aspects of Anxiety in Facing Exams

From the data described above, we can see that quite a number of students experience exam anxiety, which in turn allows for a spike in each category of exam anxiety and has a negative impact on students such as disrupting the exam process and will affect exam results later. Therefore there is a need for a way to prevent anxiety in facing this test by providing counseling services with existing approaches, such as the REBT approach. This approach can help individuals realize that they can live more rationally and more productively, or it can be said that REBT REBT teaches individuals to correct thinking mistakes in order to be able to reduce unexpected emotions (Siahaan, Neviyarni, Karneli, & Netrawati, 2020).

Conclusion

The explanation above is the collection of data obtained from SMAN 13 Padang. Based on the aspects of anxiety experienced by students, which is in the high category lies in the cognitive reaction aspect. It is hoped that Counselor Guidance Teachers at school can prevent and overcome anxiety about exams, especially for teenagers by providing an understanding of the impact of anxiety on exams so as to minimize the occurrence of unwanted things.

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