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Reducing Academic Burnout through Group Counseling Using Self-Management Techniques

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Abstract

Academic burnout is a psychological condition occurring when a student experiences extreme fatigue and exhaustion, ultimately leading to a decline in learning ability. This state arises from continuous, time-consuming engagement in academic activities that demand significant emotional investment. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of group counseling utilizing self-management techniques in reducing symptoms of academic burnout. A one-group pre-test and post-test design was employed, utilizing an academic burnout questionnaire to assess participants before and after the intervention. Non-parametric statistical analysis was conducted using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. The results, calculated using Microsoft Excel, yielded a Wilcoxon statistic (W) value of 0, which falls below the critical value of 4. The study demonstrates that group counseling incorporating self-management techniques is effective in reducing academic burnout symptoms among Grade X students at SMKN 3 Madiun.

Keywords: Academic Burout, Gruup Conselling, Self-Management.

INTRODUCTION

During their time at Vocational High School (SMK), students must balance mastering academic material with developing their interests and talents through extracurricular activities. While participating in school organizations can foster leadership and interpersonal skills, excessive involvement without proper oversight can deplete both physical and mental energy. This often

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leads to poor time management, ultimately triggering academic burnout—a state where a student's motivation to learn plummets due to an overwhelming accumulation of assignments.

This situation is clearly evident among 10th-grade Industrial Chemical Engineering students at SMKN 3 Madiun. Teacher reports indicate clear signs of emotional exhaustion, an indifferent or cynical attitude toward schoolwork, and a loss of academic self-confidence. Notably, the root cause lies not in the difficulty of the vocational chemistry curriculum, but rather in the students' inability to set priorities and manage their daily routines. In this context, group counseling is considered an appropriate intervention, while self-management techniques serve as a strategic tool for students to reorganize their approach to learning.

Perianto, Wibowo, and Mugiarso (2025) describe group counseling as a form of professional assistance that utilizes group dynamics to help resolve an individual's personal issues. More specifically, Komalasari (cited in Perianto et al., 2025) explains that self-management is a behavioral technique that encourages individuals to take a proactive approach to setting goals, monitoring their own progress, and reviewing their methods of operation. This foundation is supported by research conducted by Purwanti and Fitriasari (2022) and Rahmawati and Firman (2024), which emphasizes the importance of self-management skills in alleviating academic pressure.

Despite extensive research on self-efficacy and burnout (such as studies by Orpina & Prahara, 2019, and Prabowo et al., 2023), the application of self-management techniques among 10th-grade vocational high school (SMK) students—particularly those facing heavy practical workloads—requires further validation. This study aims to address this gap by examining the effectiveness of such interventions in significantly reducing academic burnout. Through this approach, the study seeks to identify practical solutions for school counselors to assist students during the transition period in vocational school, thereby helping to safeguard their mental health.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a single-group design featuring pre-test and post-test assessments. The pre-test was administered prior to the intervention, while the post-test was conducted afterward. This design was selected to facilitate a comparison of the sample's condition before and after the intervention. The study population consisted of 76 tenth-grade students specializing in Industrial Chemical Engineering at SMKN 3 Madiun. The sample comprised eight students identified via questionnaire as having a low level of academic performance. Purposive sampling was utilized, a technique in which subjects are selected based on specific criteria (Prisilia Rompas, 2013).

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Data collection was conducted in a systematic and organized manner to obtain accurate information regarding academic burnout levels during the pre-test and post-test phases. The primary instrument was an academic burnout measurement scale administered as a questionnaire. A Likert scale format was used, offering four response options: Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS). The use of four options was intended to eliminate neutral or undecided responses from the subjects. This scaling procedure was repeated for both the pre-test and post-test assessments.

The instrument employed in this study was an academic burnout scale that had undergone validation and reliability testing. Non-parametric statistical analysis was performed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. This non-parametric test was chosen due to the small sample size (n=8) and the study's objective: to determine whether a significant difference existed between two paired datasets—specifically, the pre-test and post-test scores regarding academic burnout.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Based on the data analysis from questionnaires completed by 76 Grade X Industrial Chemical Engineering students at SMKN 3 Madiun, eight students were found to be experiencing high levels of academic burnout, with data as follows:

Table 1. Frequency of Academic Burnout Pre-Test Data

Interval	Frequensi	Presentage	Information
>82	8	100%	Sangat Tinggi
71-82	0	0	Tinggi
59-70	0	0	Sedang
47-58	0	0	Rendah
< 47	0	0	Sangat Rendah
Total	8	100%	Sangat Tinggi

Group counseling using the self-management technique was administered to the eight students with high levels of academic burnout to reduce their burnout. A post-test was administered to these eight students following the intervention, yielding the following results:

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Table 2. Frequency of Academic Burnout Post-Test Data

Interval	Frequensi	Presentage	Infromation
>82	0	0	Sangat Tinggi
71-82	0	0	Tinggi
59-70	5	62.5%	Sedang
47-58	3	37.5%	Rendah
< 47	0	0	Sangat Rendah
Total	8	100%	Sangat Tinggi

A comparison of the pre-test and post-test results indicates a difference in academic burnout levels before and after the group counseling intervention using the self-management technique. This difference is also clearly illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1.
Comparison of pre-test and post-test frequencies

Based on the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test results, the calculated W value was 0 (see Appendix 7). With a sample size of 8 subjects and a significance level of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$), the critical value from the Wilcoxon distribution table is 4. Since the calculated W value (0) is lower than the table W value (4), the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted.

DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, it was discovered that group counseling services utilizing self-management techniques successfully improved academic conditions and reduced study-

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related fatigue among Grade X TKI students at SMKN 3 Madiun. This study aligns with the findings of Suryanti (2022), whose data analysis demonstrated that self-management training effectively reduced students' levels of academic burnout during online learning.

The study by Rahmawati & Firman (2024) indicates a significant negative relationship between self-management and students' academic burnout. These findings have implications for Guidance and Counseling services, specifically regarding the provision of information services, group counseling, and group guidance.

Academic burnout often hinders the educational process and diminishes the learning motivation of “santri” (Islamic boarding school students). Self-management techniques encompassing self-regulation, time management, and goal setting are expected to help students overcome this issue by fostering self-awareness and discipline. Research by Alfarado et al (2025) demonstrates that self-management techniques are effective in helping students become more organized and motivated in their studies, thereby enabling them to overcome the burnout that frequently arises during educational activities in “pesantren”. Research by Inur et al (2023) also demonstrates that group counseling techniques integrated into group counseling services can reduce academic burnout. The study indicates that the group atmosphere fostered during the sessions motivates members to improve their time management, thereby helping them avoid academic burnout.

Burnout is a condition characterized by physical and emotional exhaustion resulting from the heavy demands of schoolwork; an individual's level of burnout can be measured using a scale that encompasses emotional, physical, and cognitive exhaustion, as well as the loss of motivational memory. This situation has prompted many researchers to seek ways to help students avoid academic burnout. These research results supported by findings from Setyoisanti & Pravesti (2022) demonstrate that group counseling services utilizing self-management techniques are effective in reducing students' levels of academic burnout.

CONCLUSION

The study results indicate that group counseling services utilizing self-management techniques successfully improved academic conditions and reduced academic fatigue among Grade X TKI students at SMKN 3 Madiun. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test yielded a Wilcoxon statistic (W) of 0, which is below the critical value of 4, demonstrating that the observed difference is statistically significant. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in students' academic fatigue levels before and after receiving group counseling using self-management

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techniques.

Future researchers are encouraged to extend this study by employing broader and more in-depth experimental designs. Additionally, other variables such as parental social support or personal resilience should be considered to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that can alleviate academic fatigue. Finally, it is recommended that future researchers conduct periodic follow-ups to determine whether the positive benefits of this group counseling are sustained over the long term or require reinforcement after a certain period.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Alleviating students' academic burnout is crucial, and they require support from their social environment. In this regard, counselors can utilize group counseling employing self-management techniques as a solution to address the academic burnout faced by students.

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