THE CORRELATION OF SELF-EFFICACY AND PEER SUPPORT TOWARDS ANXIETY PRECEDING FINAL EXAMINATIONS FACED BY 9TH GRADERS IN YOGYAKARTA

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this research paper is to show that Final examination pressure causes anxiety in all students, including students of a private middle school in Yogyakarta. The anxiety of students facing the final examinations is directly related to self-efficacy and peer support.

Methodology: This study uses scales to determine anxiety levels preceding final exams, self-efficacy levels, and peer support levels. These scales will be filled in with data given by 9th grade students of LI Private Junior High. The research subjects consisted of 234 9th grade students enrolled in one of Yogyakarta’s private middle schools.

Results: Based on the results, this research shows that Self-efficacy and peer support both combined have a significant relation to the anxiety preceding final exams faced by 9th grade students of ‘LI’ private middle school in Yogyakarta with F = 10.644 and a significance level of 0.000 (p<0.01).

Implications: Therefore, peer support has an effect on anxiety only when applied in tandem with self-efficacy.

Keywords: Final Examination, Anxiety, Self-efficacy, Peer Support, Scales and Data

INTRODUCTION

Final examinations aim to observe and assess the competence of students on a national scale after they have been taught by their teachers in a formal education setting. A rising issue is the concern that many students may not graduate due to rising grade standards that must be fulfilled in order to graduate.

Final exams that can determine who graduates and who does not often causes anxiety. A high level of anxiety causes fear, which often results into psychological and mental effects for students, even for those who prepared beforehand. According to (Alhudaya, T. 2012; Tabatabaei, F., Karahroudi, M. M., & Bagheri, M. 2014) Due to high pressure when facing final exams, students often find that they cannot answer the questions that they usually can answer. This causes further stress and anxiety for students.

Students perceive final exams as a stage that must be passed in order to continue to the next stage. They often feel that in order to avoid repeating a grade or a class, failure cannot be an option. This is what often causes stress for students, which eventually leads to anxiety. Almost all students feel a certain degree of anxiety before or during their final exams. Anxiety is an individual emotion often linked to feeling of being threatened, usually by a threat that is unclear. Anxiety in mild intensities may be used as motivation and have a positive effect, but anxiety in high intensities cause negative effects and may cause damage and/or disturb the physical and psychological condition of the individual .(Agustiar & Asmi, 2010; Soleymani et al., 2014)

Exam-related anxiety affects students in almost all subjects that evaluate and grade student’s capabilities and achievements. According to Kartono (1992), anxiety is a temporary feeling that is overshadowed by a fear of the uncertain or unreal. These uncertain feelings create uncertain images inside the student’s minds, such as picturing themselves failing the test.

Ultimately, the students start feeling anxious which leads to more stress. According to Line, Lin and Wang (2009), academic factors such as exams, grades, teaching methods, curriculum, workload, and academic competition are the main sources of stress.

The anxiety of facing final exams is also faced by one of Yogyakarta’s private middle schools, which will be further referred to as LI Private Junior High. In facing the final exams, students are demanded to reach the minimum grade level that has already been pre-determined. Since 2003, the minimum grade level has consistently risen, forcing students to work harder in order to achieve it. These tests will determine whether students will go to the next grade and even
determine whether students will graduate from the junior high. Students often face the highest level of anxiety before and during their final exams.

The most complex anxiety for students of LI Private Junior High is felt by the 9th grade students. This is due to the fact that final exams for 9th grade students determine whether or not they will graduate from junior high or not. Anxiety that is often felt by the students is the fear that their grades will fail to achieve the determined passing grade, leading to being held back and not graduating.

A method often used in LI Private Junior High when facing final exams is by practicing problem sets. The school hopes that practicing working on problem sets in all subjects will mean that students will be prepared to face their final exams.

During an observation conducted on November 21st 2016 at LI Private Junior High, a teacher revealed that students often work on problem sets from as early as 7th grade. This is done in order to accustom students to the final exam problems. When working on exam problems during midterm exams and final exams, some students experience falling grades. One possible cause of these failing grades may be because of pressure felt by students who worry that they won’t be able to do well on the exam. This unnecessary worrying often causes students to fail to do well during the actual exam.

Anxiety is defined as an individual’s subjective experience that cannot be directly observed and is an emotional condition with no specific object. Anxiety happens as a result of a threat to self-esteem, which is a fundamental part of the human existence. (Stewart, I., Barnes-Holmes, D., Barnes-Holmes, Y., Bond, F. W., & Hayes, S. C. 2006) According to Nevid, Rathus, and Green (2007), anxiety is influenced by emotional and cognitive factors such as over-predicting fear, self-defeating and irrational beliefs, over-sensitivity to threats, and sensitivity to anxiety. One factor that affects anxiety is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief that someone can control the situation they face and achieve positive results. Self-efficacy has a huge effect on behavior. (Santrock, J.W. 2007; Matandare, 2018) High levels of self-efficacy will be shown in behavior that is more persistent, less anxious, and less feelings of duress when facing stressful situations. (Myers G, D.2013) Self-efficacy acts as a self-perception on how well an individual can function in certain situations.

Self-efficacy is related with the belief that one’s self has the capability to do the expected action in certain situations. Self-efficacy can be obtained, altered, increased and decreased through one or a combination of factors, which are performance experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and arousing emotions. Performance experiences are achievements that have been achieved in the past, vicarious experiences are obtained through social models, and social persuasion is related to the trust to the individual persuading and the realistic nature of what is being persuaded. (Alwisol. 2009). Based on research conducted by (Riani, W.S & Rozali, Y.A. 2014), there is a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy with anxiety during presentations conducted by students of Esa Unggul University. Students with high levels of self-efficacy outnumbered the students with lower levels of self-efficacy, and there were more students with lower levels of anxiety compared to students with high levels of anxiety. Studies done by (Waqiati, H.A., Hardjajani, T., and Nugroho, A. A. 2013) showed that there was a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and work-related anxiety in people with disabilities. Studies done by (Ahangi and Sharaf, 2013; Aadejei, T. 2018) also showed that self-efficacy played a role in academic achievement.

Another factor that also contributes to anxiety is the social support factor. (House, J.S. 1981) Explained social support as an individual’s perception towards potential support from their surroundings. Social support refers to the pleasure felt as a response to the feelings of care and aid happening within a close relationship. During the teenage years, peer groups have a very important role in personal development, both emotionally and socially. (Buhrmester, D. 1996) stated that peer groups are the source for affection, sympathy, and understanding. They also function as a moral compass, experimental lab, and an autonomous setting free from parents. According to Robinson quoted by (Papalia, D.E., Olds, S.W., & Feldman, R.D. 2008), the involvement of teenagers with peer groups, besides being an important emotional support during the transition years, peer groups also become a source of pressure for teenagers. This shows the strong role peer support plays in development during the teenage years.

Research conducted by (Puspitasari, Y.P., Abidin, Z., and Dian R.S. 2010) showed a negative relationship between peer support and anxiety preceding National Examinations (UN) in 12th grade students studying at SMA Negeri 1 Surakarta. As students gained more social support from their peers, their pre-UN anxiety decreased. Conversely, if students had less social support from their peers, their levels of anxiety increased.

Based on the background above, we can formulate the problem in this study, which is: Is there a relationship between self-efficacy and peer support with anxiety preceding final examinations in 9th grade students of LI Private Junior High Yogyakarta.
RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses scales to determine anxiety levels preceding final exams, self-efficacy levels, and peer support levels. These scales will be filled in with data given by 9th grade students of LI Private Junior High.

Items available on the scale are favorable and unfavorable. The favorable item is for statements that support the aspect in question and the unfavorable item are for statements that do not support the aspect in question. The assessment of both statements can be found in the following table.

Data analysis used non-parametric Spearman analysis to determine the relation of independent variables, which are self-efficacy (X1) and peer support (X2), with the dependent variable which is anxiety preceding final exams (Y). Calculation of data was conducted with SPSS for Windows 18.0.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Results

The description of the data calculation results showed the mean (average) of each scale. The anxiety levels preceding final exams scale had 20 items with scores ranging from 1 to 4. Based on the range of the scale, the ideal score ranged from 20 to 80. The mean of anxiety levels preceding final exams was equal to a value of 47,22 with a standard deviation of 5,5. The self-efficacy scale had 24 items, with an ideal score range of 24 – 96. The mean of the self-efficacy scale was equal to a value of 66,66 with a standard deviation of 4,7. The peer support scale had 22 items with an ideal score range of 22 – 88. The mean of the peer support scale was equal to a value of 64,60 with a standard deviation of 5,4.

Tabel 1. Descriptive Statistic

| Variable                      | Minimum | Maximum | Mean     | Std. Deviation | N  |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|----------------|----|
| Predicted Value               | 40,2666 | 51,7418 | 47,2179  | 1,59940        | 234|
| Residual                      | -19,2796 | 11,99224 | .00000  | 5,26868        | 234|
| Std. Predicted Value          | -4,346  | 2,828   | .000     | 1,000          | 234|
| Std. Residual                 | -3,644  | 2,266   | .000     | .996           | 234|

a. Dependent Variable: Anxiety

Tabel 2. Normality Test

| Variable                                      | Test Statistic | Sig(p) |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| Self-efficacy, Peer Support and Anxiety       | 0,030          | 0,200  |

Tabel 3. Linearity Test

| Variable                              | (F) Linearity | (F) Dev. From Linearity | Sig(p) |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|--------|
| Self-efficacy and Anxiety             | 18,178        | 0,801                   | 0,000 (p<0,05) |
| Variable                              | (F) Linearity | (F) Dev. From Linearity | Sig(p) |
| Peer Support and Anxiety              | 0,761         | 0,951                   | 0,384 (p>0,05) |

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is conducted to find the relation between independent variables (self-efficacy and peer support) and dependent variables (anxiety preceding final exams). Based on requirement testing using normality tests and linearity, it was found that the variables of anxiety, self-efficacy, and peer support were distributed normally.

Based on that, hypothesis testing was conducted with SPSS 18.0. The results of the data calculation can be seen in the following table.

Tabel 4. Model summary

| Model Summary | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---------------|---|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Model 1       | .290 | .084    | .076              | 5,29144                    |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Peer Support, self efficacy

b. Dependent Variable: anxiety

Tabel 5. Correlation

| No   | Variable          | (r) | Sig (p) |
|------|-------------------|-----|---------|
| 1    | Sel-efficacy and Anxiety | -0.262 | 0.000 (p<0,01) |
| 2    | Peer Support and Anxiety | 0.977 | 0.977 (p>0,05) |
Anxiety is an individual’s subjective perspective that cannot be observed directly and is an emotional condition with no specific object. Anxiety happens due to feelings of being threatened. Anxiety is influenced by cognitive and emotional factors, such as over-predicting fear, uncertain beliefs, etc. To suppress high levels of anxiety, a stimulus is required to predict fear, uncertain beliefs, etc. To suppress high levels of anxiety, a stimulus is required to predict fear, uncertain beliefs, etc. To suppress high levels of anxiety, anxiety is influenced by cognitive and emotional factors, such as over-predicting fear, uncertain beliefs, etc. To suppress high levels of anxiety, a stimulus is required to reduce anxiety, one of which is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the confidence an individual has towards their capability to face and/or solve a task, achieve a goal, and overcome obstacles to achieve results in certain conditions.

Research by (Wardhani, D., 2015) also showed a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety felt when facing thesis exams. The levels of self-efficacy fall into the category of high self-efficacy with an empirical mean of 85,30 and a hypothetical mean score of 67,5. The anxiety levels when facing thesis exams fell into the category of
moderate anxiety levels with an empirical mean of 74.65 and a hypothetical mean score of 70. The effective contribution of self-efficacy towards anxiety preceding thesis exams equaled 14.97%, with the other 85.03% being the influence of other variables.

A study by (Anwar, Astrid, I. D. (2009)) on the relation of self-efficacy and public speaking related anxiety experienced by students studying in North Sumatera University’s Faculty of Psychology. The results of the study showed that there was a negative relationship between self-efficacy and public speaking related anxiety, which meant that the higher self-efficacy levels a student had, the lower their public speaking related anxiety would be, and vice versa. Research conducted by (Mardhatillah, H. 2015; Romero, Juan Bautista Abello, and Claudio Mancilla. 2018) showed that there was a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety due to speaking in a foreign language. Higher levels of self-efficacy of new students meant lower levels of anxiety due to speaking in a foreign language, and vice versa. Levels of self-efficacy for new students of Nahdhatul Muslimat Islamic Boarding School were moderate and the levels of anxiety due to speaking in a foreign language were also moderate. Self-efficacy is one factor that can affect anxiety due to speaking in a foreign language.

Another study conducted by (Shkillaku, R. 2013) showed a significant difference between self-efficacy in males and females, but no difference in academic performance. Significant relationships were also found between student’s self-efficacy and academic performance. In this study, peer support had no effect on anxiety. Peer support is defined as support given by peers within the same age group that can be in the form of information, instrumental support, emotions, etc, resulting in an individual feeling loved, cared for, revered, and respected. Friends that are involved with their peers play an important role as an emotional support that is crucial during teenage transitional years.

Peer support gives no direct contribution to the increase or decrease of anxiety in students when facing final exams. This statement is supported by Jannah’s research on the topic of anxiety related to future careers in terms of self-concept and social support found in final year students in UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. The results of this study show that social support has no effect on anxiety related to future careers, with only self-concept having an effect with an effective contribution of 12.8%. The other 88.8% are effects from other variables.

The results of the study show that peer support has an effect on anxiety only when applied in tandem with self-efficacy. This is corroborated by research conducted by (Pamungkas, E.A. 2015; Jenaabadi & Issazadegan, 2014) on the topic of social support and anxiety related to future careers in students of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta’s Faculty of Social Science and Humaniora found a significant negative relationship between social support and anxiety related to future careers. The effect social support has on anxiety related to future careers has a R Square (R²) equal to 0.123 or 12.3%. Meanwhile, the effect of the source of support on anxiety related to future careers has a R Square (R²) equal to 0.124 or 12.4%. Support that comes from parental figures is proven to have a very significant effect on anxiety related to future careers. This is due to parental support having a significance level of 0.001 (p<0.05). Meanwhile, peer support has been proven to have no significance towards anxiety related to future careers in students of UIN Sunan Kalijaga. This is due to peer support having a significance level of 0.211 (p>0.05).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and the discussion, we can conclude that there is no negative nor significant relationship between self-efficacy and peer support in tandem and anxiety preceding final exams. There is a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety preceding final exams. There is no negative relationship between peer support and anxiety preceding final exams.

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