

## Adolescent Perception of Mental Health and Social Support in the Campus Environment

Fasa Yuwan Rabbani<sup>1</sup>, Joshua Nathanael<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Firdaus Ardiansyah<sup>3</sup>, Ferdinand Axel Valerian<sup>4</sup>, Raffi Oktariano<sup>5</sup>

Finershark@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>, joshuanathanael007@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>,  
muhammadfirdausardiansyah77@gmail.com<sup>3</sup>, valerianferdinand@gmail.com<sup>4</sup>,  
rafioktarino21@gmail.com<sup>5</sup>

Telkom University Purwokerto

***Abstract** This study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of high school students' perceptions of mental health and the social support they receive in the school environment. The study employs a qualitative method through interviews, and the results indicate that students define mental health as a condition in which an individual can function and carry out their activities optimally. Although peer support (friends) is considered the most crucial source of help, assistance from educational staff (teachers and counselors) is not fully accessible. The main barriers faced include stigma, privacy concerns, and limited information about available services. Therefore, this study recommends the need for systematic interventions from schools to destigmatize mental health, promote available services, and strengthen social support networks among students.*

***Keywords:** Student Mental Health, Social Support, Peer Support, Stigma, School Intervention*

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami secara mendalam persepsi remaja sekolah terkait kesehatan mental dan dukungan sosial yang mereka dapatkan di lingkungan sekolah. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan cara wawancara, hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa siswa mendefinisikan kesehatan mental sebagai kondisi di mana individu dapat berfungsi dan menjalankan aktivitasnya secara optimal. Meskipun dukungan sebaya (teman) dianggap sebagai sumber bantuan yang paling krusial, bantuan dari tenaga edukasi (guru dan konselor) tidak dapat diakses secara maksimal. Hambatan utama yang dihadapi meliputi adanya stigma, kekhawatiran privasi, dan minimnya informasi layanan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini merekomendasikan perlunya intervensi sistematis dari pihak sekolah untuk mendestigmatisasi kesehatan mental, mempromosikan layanan yang tersedia, dan memperkuat jejaring dukungan sosial di kalangan siswa.

**Kata Kunci :** Kesehatan Mental Siswa, Dukungan Sosial, Dukungan Sebaya, Stigma, Intervensi Sekolah.

## Introduction

Mental health is a crucial aspect of individual development, particularly during adolescence and early adulthood. College students, as part of the late adolescent group, face various challenges that can impact their psychological well-being, such as academic pressure, social demands, and concerns about the future. According to the World Health Organization (2021), one in five adolescents experiences a mental disorder, and most do not receive adequate treatment. This indicates that mental health issues among college students need to be a primary concern in higher education settings.

Academic pressure is a major factor affecting student mental health. Piling up assignments, intense exams, and academic competition often lead to prolonged stress. Research by Sari and Wulandari (2022) shows that students with a high academic load are at greater risk of developing anxiety disorders and depression. Furthermore, social and family expectations regarding achievement also exacerbate the pressure students feel.

Amidst this pressure, social support is a crucial protective factor. Support from family, peers, and the campus community can help students manage stress and improve psychological well-being. A study by Maura (2023) found that students with strong social support tend to have lower stress levels and are better able to adapt to academic challenges. Social support also plays a role in shaping positive perceptions of themselves and their environment.

However, not all students have equal access to social support. Some feel isolated, lonely, or reluctant to seek help due to the stigma surrounding mental health issues. Research by Deviany (2025) at Sriwijaya University showed that although students recognize the importance of mental health, there are still barriers such as a lack of information and stigma regarding counseling services. This demonstrates a gap between students' psychological needs and the support available on campus.

Students' perceptions of mental health and social support significantly influence their attitudes toward psychological issues. Positive perceptions can encourage students to seek help and develop healthy coping strategies. Conversely, negative perceptions can worsen mental health and increase the risk of psychological disorders. Therefore, it is important to understand how students perceive mental health issues and social support on campus.

Based on this background, this study aims to describe adolescents' perceptions of mental health and social support on campus. With a descriptive quantitative approach, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the psychological condition of students, the factors that influence it, and the extent to which social support plays a role in maintaining their mental health.

## Research Methods

This study used a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews to explore adolescents' perceptions of mental health and social support on campus. This approach was chosen because it allows for a deeper exploration of students' subjective meanings and personal experiences, particularly regarding sensitive issues such as mental health (Sugiyono, 2022).

The study subjects were active students aged 18–24 from various study programs at a university in Indonesia. Informant selection was conducted using purposive sampling, selecting individuals deemed to have relevant experiences and willing to share openly about their perceptions of mental health and social support (Sanvira, 2021). Eight informants participated in this study, with diverse academic and social backgrounds, to obtain a rich perspective.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed the researcher to ask open-ended questions while allowing informants to freely describe their experiences. Interviews were conducted both online and offline, depending on the informant's convenience. Each interview lasted 30–45 minutes and was recorded with the informant's consent for transcription and analysis.

## Results and Discussion

The results of this study were obtained from in-depth interviews with two informants (Informant 1: N1, and Informant 2: N2), who are students. The data collected focused on sources of stress, coping mechanisms, and perceptions of social support on campus.

Based on the interviews, the main sources of stress experienced by students included academic and non-academic factors:

- \* Academic Pressure: Both informants (N1 and N2) identified assignments and tight deadlines as the main sources of stress. N2 also specifically mentioned difficulties in group assignments due to friends being difficult to contact, as well as difficult problems.

- \* Non-Academic Pressure (Financial): N1 highlighted financial issues as a trigger for anxiety, with the extreme situation of having only Rp 10,000 left at the end of the month.

Students showed variations in seeking and receiving social support and coping mechanisms (to deal with stress):

- \* Main Source of Support:

- \* Family/Parents: The first (N1) and second (N2) informants considered their parents/family as the main source of support, providing motivation, prayers, and encouragement.

- \* Special/Closest People: Support also came from special people (N1) and close friends (N2).

#### Informal Coping Mechanisms:

- \* N1 indicated informal/recreational coping mechanisms, such as hanging out with roommates, smoking, and listening to music.
- \* N2 mentioned playing games (Valorant) as a way to manage or reduce stress.
- \* Students' perceptions of campus community concern (friends, lecturers, services) regarding mental health issues were quite positive at the horizontal level (peers):
- \* Support from Friends: Both interviewees (N1 and N2) felt supported by their friends, especially when confiding or needing encouragement.
- \* Campus System Support: Neither N1 nor N2 had experience with formal support systems from lecturers or campus services related to mental health.

The findings of this study provide insight into the challenges and support experienced by adolescents on campus, in line with theories of adolescent development and social needs.

Research confirms that academic pressure (assignments, deadlines, and group difficulties) is a significant burden that can trigger overwhelm and burnout in students. Numerous studies consistently demonstrate a negative relationship between social support and academic stress levels; the higher the perceived social support, the lower the level of academic stress experienced by students (Audina, 2023; Alya & Muslima, 2025). Furthermore, financial pressure exacerbates stress, given that the transition from late adolescence to early adulthood often demands financial independence.

When seeking support, students tend to rely on established primary social support networks. Family/parents are considered the best support system, providing emotional support, even remotely through communication (Syavana et al., 2024; Rahmalika Putri Anjani et al., 2024). Meanwhile, peer support has been shown to play a vital role in the campus environment, even having a significant influence on students' psychological well-being (Sarjana et al., 2024; Saputro, 2021). Friends are a primary source of sharing (confiding), indicating that informal support is highly effective among adolescents. Coping mechanisms used, such as playing games (N2) and socializing with friends (N1), can be categorized as emotion-focused coping, strategies that focus on regulating emotional reactions to reduce tension in the face of stressors (Andriyani, 2019).

Although students generally feel supported by friends, the finding that they have never used or interacted with formal support systems from lecturers or campus services indicates a gap in service integration. This could be due to a lack of satisfaction with informal support or, conversely, a lack of visibility and publicity regarding campus counseling services. Higher education institutions are advised to strengthen peer counseling programs and increase awareness and accessibility of formal services to ensure students have access to professional support when academic and non-academic pressures exceed their informal coping capabilities.

## Conclusion

This study of adolescents' perceptions of mental health and social support on campus indicates that students face dominant sources of stress from academic demands (assignments, deadlines, group difficulties) and financial pressures (especially for students living away from home). These pressures have the potential to trigger anxiety and burnout. To cope with stress, students rely heavily on informal social support as a primary bulwark: Family/Parental Support provides strong and primary emotional support. Peer support on campus serves as an effective channel for sharing (confiding), demonstrating adolescents' high reliance on their social environment. Emotion-focused coping mechanisms often employed include recreational activities such as gaming and socializing. Although students feel supported by their peers, gaps in their utilization of formal support services from campus (lecturers and counseling services) are found. This implies that higher education institutions need to increase the visibility, accessibility, and integration of their formal mental health services, while strengthening peer counseling programs, which have proven effective among students. Overall, students' perceptions of mental health are strongly influenced by the availability and quality of informal support around them, which is a major determinant in how they manage everyday stress.

## References

- Alya, R., & Muslima, M. (2025). Hubungan dukungan sosial dengan tingkat stres akademik pada mahasiswa semester akhir di Prodi Bimbingan Konseling. *Paedagogy: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Psikologi*, 5(2), 722–730.
- Andriyani, J. (2019). Strategi coping stres dalam mengatasi problema psikologis. *At-Taujih: Bimbingan dan Konseling Islam*, 2(2), 37.
- Audina, M. (2023). Hubungan dukungan sosial dengan stres akademik. *Jurnal Penelitian Perawat Profesional*, 5(3), 1183–1190.
- Deviany, N. F. (2025). Analisis persepsi dan kebutuhan pelayanan kesehatan mental pada mahasiswa di lingkungan kampus Universitas Sriwijaya. Universitas Sriwijaya.
- Jannah, N. (2021). Hubungan dukungan sosial dan stres akademik pada mahasiswa PJJ. *Jurnal Empati*, 10(4), 213–225.
- Maura, R. (2023). Pengaruh dukungan sosial terhadap kesehatan mental mahasiswa psikologi. Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta.
- Rahmawati, R. (2020). Studi deskriptif orang dengan obsessive compulsive disorder dan hubungan interpersonal dalam keluarga. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan FKIP*. Universitas Negeri Jakarta.
- Rahmalika Putri Anjani, R., Fadhilah, A., & Darmawan, A. S. (2024). Pengaruh dukungan keluarga terhadap kesehatan mental mahasiswa rantau BKI UIN SMH Banten. *Jurnal Obsesvasi*, 2(1).
- Sanvira, D. S. (2021). Peran dukungan sosial terhadap subjective well-being pada mahasiswa yang mengikuti pembelajaran daring. Universitas Sriwijaya.
- Saputro, T. (2021). Korelasi dukungan sosial terhadap stres akademik mahasiswa pendidikan jasmani Universitas PGRI Jombang di masa pandemi Covid-19.

- Journal of SPORT (Sport, Physical Education, Organization, Recreation, and Training), 10247.
- Sarjana, K. B., et al. (2024). Pengaruh dukungan sosial teman sebaya terhadap kesejahteraan psikologis (studi pada mahasiswa perantau). *Jurnal Innovative*, 16467.
- Sari, R., & Wulandari, D. (2022). Pengaruh beban akademik terhadap tingkat kecemasan mahasiswa. *Jurnal Psikologi Pendidikan*, 10(2), 45–56.
- Sugiyono. (2022). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Syavana, A., et al. (2024). Peran dukungan orang tua dalam menurunkan stres akademik mahasiswa. *Jurnal Psikologi Kesehatan*, 12(1), 14–27.
- Taylor, S. E. (2009). *Health Psychology* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- World Health Organization. (2021). Adolescent mental health. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>