

Mindfulness Training to Lower Anxiety in New College Students

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Abstrak

Kecemasan merupakan hal yang wajar dialami oleh setiap manusia sehingga diharapkan setiap individu memiliki kemampuan mindfulness untuk mengurangi kecemasan yang akan dihadapi. Pentingnya mindfulness untuk mengurangi kecemasan pada mahasiswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas pengaruh mindfulness untuk menurunkan kecemasan pada mahasiswa baru. Desain penelitian yang digunakan adalah pretest-posttest test control group design. Subyek penelitian adalah 26 mahasiswa baru yang dibagi menjadi 2 kelompok yaitu 13 mahasiswa kelompok eksperimen dan 13 mahasiswa kelompok kontrol. Hasil analisis menggunakan uji Wilcoxon yang membandingkan skor kesiapan kerja pada kelompok eksperimen antara sebelum dan sesudah pelatihan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan nilai $Z = -3,185$, $p = 0,000$ ($p < 0,05$) artinya ada perbedaan skor kecemasan sebelum dan sesudah diberikan perlakuan mindfulness training, sehingga terjadi penurunan tingkat kecemasan yang signifikan setelah diberikan perlakuan pelatihan mindfulness. Hasil analisis menggunakan hasil Mann-Whitney U Test diperoleh hasil statistik (Z) = -3,619 dengan nilai signifikansi (2-tailed) = 0,000 ($p < 0,05$), artinya ada perbedaan taraf kecemasan antara kelompok eksperimen yang diberi perlakuan berupa pelatihan mindfulness dan kelompok kontrol yang tidak diberi perlakuan berupa pelatihan mindfulness.

Kata kunci: Kecemasan, Mindfulness, Mahasiswa Baru.

Abstract

Anxiety is normal for every human being so that it is expected that every individual has the ability of mindfulness to reduce the anxiety that will be faced. Importance of mindfulness to reduce anxiety in college students. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the influence of mindfulness to reduce anxiety in new students. The research design used was a pretest-posttest test control group design. The research subjects were 26 new college students who were divided into 2 groups, namely 13 students in the experimental group and 13 students in the control group. The results of the analysis used the Wilcoxon test which compared the work readiness scores in the experimental group between before and after the training. The result showed a value of $Z = -3.185$, $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$) meaning that there was a difference in anxiety scores before and after being given the mindfulness training treatment, so there was a decrease in the level of significant anxiety after being given mindfulness training treatment. The results of the analysis using the results of the Mann-Whitney U Test obtained statistical results (Z) = -3.619 with a significance value (2-tailed) = 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), meaning that there was a difference in the level of anxiety between the experimental group that was given treatment in the form of mindfulness training and the control group that was not given treatment in the form of mindfulness training.

Keywords: Anxiety, Mindfulness, New College Students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is a problem for everyone and can appear at any time in adults, adolescents, or schoolchildren. There are many types of anxiety, namely anxiety when it has done something wrong or evil, anxiety when seeing and knowing self-threatening dangers, as well as anxiety whose causes are not clear (Collins, 2020; Mukholil, 2018). When a person feels anxious, then he will feel uncomfortable, afraid, or may have a hunch that a disaster is imminent, which in fact they themselves do not understand why the threatening feeling can be felt (Amam et al., 2019; Diferiansyah et al., 2016). Anxiety about the academic environment is called academic anxiety (Collins, 2020; Shandy & Khoirunnisa, 2021). According to previous study anxiety about college has a negative impact on the self-adjustment of new students (Arslan et al., 2022). Based on previous findings students with high levels of academic anxiety have difficulty adjusting to their environment (Cho et al.,

2021). In line with the results of a study conducted by the *American College Health Association* which found that 25.9% and 31.9% of students reported experiencing anxiety and stress. Problems often felt by new college students after making the transition from high school to college can cause academic anxiety. The problem is that the learning system is different from the previous school, high standards, and the application of strict discipline (Morrison et al., 2014; Richards & Martin, 2012; Shandy & Khoirunnisa, 2021). Excessive anxiety can have negative consequences such as personal social dysfunction, which prevents students from reaching their full potential and adapting to their environment. Another consequence that arises is continuous psychological pressure, a drastic decrease in concentration and attention so that students get poor scores on their learning outcomes (Cheong et al., 2021; Kartika, 2020; Leffler et al., 2016).

Anxiety can be reduced by medication and psychotherapy. So far, several publications have stated that mindfulness therapy is an effective way to overcome and reduce anxiety (Dyah & Fourianalistyawati, 2020; Romadhoni & Widiatie, 2020; Tang & Braver, 2020). Training assumes that individuals have more positive or true than negative or false. According to previous study meditation can be done by thinking positively, giving an affirmative message to oneself simultaneously by thinking about difficult and negative thoughts, which visualizes through positive scenes and along with debilitating negative images, as well as taking a deep breath simultaneously (Romadhoni & Widiatie, 2020). Positive thinking, affirmation messages for oneself along with thinking about difficult and negative thoughts, as well as deep breath simultaneously are concepts that become a set of *mindfulness* training techniques, namely *visual imagery*, *deep breathing*, and *self-talk* (talking to oneself) (Johnson & Park, 2020; Karagöz, 2021). Through these three techniques, a person can speed up to control or maximize his psychological state (Qolbi et al., 2019; Yuan, 2021).

Based on the above explanation *mindfulness* is very useful to reduce anxiety. *Mindfulness* is also very beneficial in everyday life when experiencing anxiety. Research conducted by previous study explains that *mindfulness* training has been shown to be able to reduce the level of anxiety in an individual (Rinera & Retnowati, 2020). This is in accordance with research conducted that saying that *mindfulness* training can reduce anxiety levels in students (Rohmatun & Maryatun, 2022). Researchers who want to research have a variable tied to anxiety with the phenomenon of new college students experiencing anxiety when starting lectures after previously going to online school and then returning offline again during the covid-19 pandemic. Anxiety is normal for every human being so that it is expected that every individual has the ability of mindfulness to reduce the anxiety that will be faced, therefore in our opinion, it is important to conduct research on anxiety in new students to find out the effectiveness of mindfulness training. The background of the above problems has exposed the importance of mindfulness to reduce anxiety in college students. Based on this background, researchers are interested in conducting a study with aims to analyze the effectiveness of the influence of mindfulness to reduce anxiety in new students.

2. METHODS

This type of research is quantitative experiment. Type of experimental research is a research method used to find the influence of certain treatments on others under controlled conditions (Anggraini et al., 2021). This study uses experimental design types in the form of *pretest* and *posttest* with the aim of simplifying the steps to be carried out in the research. *Pretest* and *posttest* are designs that provide a comparison between tests given at the beginning and tests given at the end. This study was divided into two groups, namely the control group and the experimental group. Subjects were grouped into experimental groups and control groups by conducting *screenings* which also became pretests using the freshman

anxiety scale. The number of samples in this study was 13 students who had anxiety scale *pretest* scores with high, medium, and low levels. Then, the 13 students will be divided into two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group is the group to be treated, while the control group is the group that is not given any treatment by the researcher. Which is an experimental group consisting of 13 new college students who fall into the high and medium categories. As for the control group which also consists of 13 students who fall into the medium and low categories. As for the samples in this experimental study is show in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Number of Research Samples

No	Group Name	Frequency
1	Experimental Group	13
2	Control Group	13
Total		26

In this study, the data collection method used was research measuring tool in the form of a Likert type scale. The research measuring instrument used in this study is the anxiety scale developed with a reliability value of 0.903 which means reliable ([Baltaci & Hamarta, 2013](#)). This scale consists of 30 items after a trial was conducted to measure anxiety in students. The Likert scale is a scale used to measure the perception, attitude or opinion of a person or group regarding an event or social phenomenon. The Likert type measurement scale has two properties, namely favorable which is *favorable* which is in favor of statements and *unfavorable* which is not in favor of statements. There are two forms of questions on the Likert scale, namely the positive question form to measure the positive scale, and the negative question form to measure the negative scale. Positive questions are scored 4, 3, 2, and 1, while negative question forms are scored 1, 2, 3, 4.

The data analysis technique in this study used the *non-parametric Wilcoxon signed rank test* because the subjects numbered less than 30 subjects. This technique was also carried out to test the hypothesis of this study, which was to look at differences in anxiety levels in the experimental group before and after being given treatment in the form of *mindfulness training*. Then the researchers used the *independent sample test* to see comparisons in the *posttest* results among the experimental groups that were treated. Researchers performed calculations on these two techniques with the help of SPSS (*Statistical Package for Social Science*) Software version 26.0 for windows.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Analysis of the distribution descriptive test and histogram was carried out to obtain a demographic picture of the subject and descriptive of the research variables, namely, to reduce anxiety in new college students through *mindfulness training*. This was done to find out the difference in anxiety levels before and after being given treatment in the form of *mindfulness training* in new students of Mulawarman University. The pretest given to the study subjects serves to determine the level of anxiety before being given treatment in the form of *mindfulness training* as show in [Table 2](#).

Based on [Table 2](#), there are differences in *the results of pre-test and posttest* scores in the experimental group after being given mindfulness training treatment, namely all subjects or 13 subjects experienced a decrease in anxiety to become new college students after being given treatment in the form of *mindfulness training*. Data summary and classification of control group anxiety levels is show in [Table 3](#).

Table 2. Data Summary and Classification of Anxiety Levels of the Experimental Group

No.	Subject	Pre-test	Classification	Post-test	Classification	Status
1	ACA	68	Keep	66	Low	Decreased
2	IS	66	Low	66	Low	Keep
3	ASAZ	73	Keep	73	Keep	Keep
4	APS	79	Keep	80	Keep	Keep
5	AGS	70	Keep	72	Keep	Keep
6	TO	65	Low	64	Low	Keep
7	AAA	90	High	92	High	Keep
8	BW	76	Keep	74	Keep	Keep
9	CVV	69	Keep	69	Keep	Keep
10	OF	69	Keep	69	Keep	Keep
11	DAY	81	Keep	79	Keep	Keep
12	EJA	60	Low	60	Low	Keep
13	HAS	73	Keep	74	Keep	Keep

Table 3. Data Summary and Classification of Control Group Anxiety Levels

No.	Subject	Pre-test	Classification	Post-test	Classification	Status
1	ANA	96	High	48	Very Low	Decreased
2	WOULD	86	High	59	Low	Decreased
3	B.R.	101	Very High	52	Very Low	Decreased
4	DSI	93	Tall	62	Low	Decreased
5	ERA	108	Very High	71	Keep	Decreased
6	FSN	91	High	54	Low	Decreased
7	JELG	91	High	71	Keep	Decreased
8	.MDF	103	Very High	51	Very Low	Decreased
9	OT	97	High	41	Very Low	Decreased
10	PWS	102	Very High	61	Low	Decreased
11	RSP	89	High	54	Low	Decreased
12	TMB	88	High	57	Low	Decreased
13	WCS	88	High	57	Low	Decreased

Based on [Table 3](#), it can be seen that there was no difference in the results of *pretest* and *posttest* scores in the control group who were not given treatment in the form of *mindfulness* training, where it was known that as many as 12 subjects in the control group did not experience an increase in anxiety during their time as a freshman but remained and as many as one subject experienced an increase in anxiety during their time as a freshman. Before conducting further data analysis in the hypothesis test, it is necessary to first conduct an assumption test consisting of a normality test and a linearity test.

Normality Test

The normality test aims to see the deviation of the observed frequency under study from the theoretical frequency. It was carried out by comparing the probability of *Shapiro Wilk* with a value of 0.05. The rule used is if the value of Sig or $p > 0.05$ then the data distribution is normal, on the other hand, if $p < 0.05$ then the data distribution is abnormal. The result of normality test is show in [Table 4](#).

Table 4. Normality Test Results

Group	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Itself.
Experiment	0.933	13	0.369
Control	0.955	13	0.673

Based on Table 4 show the results of the normality of the distribution of anxiety variables in the experimental group produced a value of $p = 0.369$ ($p > 0.05$) and in the control group it produced a value of $p = 0.673$ ($p > 0.05$). The test results based on the rules showed that the distribution of anxiety variable items in the experimental group and the control group was declared normal.

Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test aims to test both samples so that they can find out whether they have the same variant but do not have differences between one sample and the other. In this study, homogeneity between the low group and the high group was tested to make it known that the data of the two groups varied the same. The homogeneity test rule is that variable data is considered homogeneous if the sig or p value > 0.05 . Calculations using the *Levine's* test method of homogeneity test results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Homogeneity Test Results

<i>Levine's Test for Equality of Variance</i>	
Itself	Information
0.948	Homogeneous

Based on the results in Table 5, the calculation results show the values in the experimental group and the control group $p = 0.948$ ($p > 0.05$). Test results based on rules show that variable data is declared homogeneous. After the assumption test was carried out, the researcher conducted a hypothesis test using non-parametric analysis. Wilcoxon test results on *pretest* and *posttest* scores in the experimental group and control group obtained results as show in Table 6.

Table 6. Wilcoxon Pretest-posttest Anxiety Test Results in Experimental Groups and Control Groups

Group	Z value	Itself	Mean		Information
			Pretest	Posttest	
Experiment	-3.185	0.001	0.00	7.00	Significant
Control	-0.289	0.773	5.00	4.00	Insignificant

Based on Table 6, it can be known that in the *pretest* and *posttest* scores in the experimental group obtained statistical results of the count (Z) = -3.185 with significance values (2-tailed) = 0.001 ($p < 0.05$). This shows that H_1 is accepted and H_0 is rejected which means that there is a difference in anxiety scores before and after being given treatment in the form of mindfulness training so that there is a significant decrease in anxiety levels after being given treatment in the form of *mindfulness* training.

In the pre-test and *posttest* scores in the control group, statistical results were obtained calculated (Z) = -0.289 with significance values (2-tailed) = 0.773 ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that H_{-1} was rejected and H_0 was accepted which means there was no significant difference

in anxiety scores in the control group that was not given *mindfulness* training. The second hypothesis in the study was to determine the difference in anxiety levels in subjects after the posttest was given treatment in the form of *mindfulness* training, namely the experimental group and the *posttest* control group that was not given treatment. The result of the Mann-Whitney Test is show in Table 7.

Table 7. Result of the Mann-Whitney U Anxiety Test in the Experimental Group and Control Group

Group	With	Itself	Information
Experiment-Control	-3.619	0.000	Significant

Based on Table 7, in the *posttest* scores in the experimental group and the control group obtained calculated statistical results (Z)=-3,619 with significance values (2-tailed) = 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This shows that H1 -accepted and H0 are rejected, which means that there is a difference in anxiety levels between the experimental group that was given the treatment in the form of mindfulness training and the control group that was not given treatment in the form of *mindfulness* training.

Discussion

The hypothesis in this research was to find out the difference in anxiety levels between before and after *mindfulness* training in the freshman experimental group. Based on the results of hypothesis analysis using the Wilcoxon test, a statistical result of counting (Z) = -0.289 with significance values (2-tailed) = 0.773 ($p > 0.05$) was obtained. That shows that H1 is accepted and H0 is rejected which means that there is a difference in anxiety scores before and after *mindfulness* training. So, there is a significant decrease in anxiety after being given mindfulness training. The increase in mean scores can be seen from the mean *pretest* value = 0.00 and the mean *posttest* = 7.00. This means that *mindfulness* training has proven to be effective for lowering anxiety in new college students. This is like the results obtained between *pretest* and *posttest* in the control group obtained calculated statistical results (Z) = -0.289 with significance values (2-tailed) = 0.773 ($p > 0.05$). This shows that the control group that was not given treatment in the form of *mindfulness* training had differences in the level of anxiety scores before (*pretest*) and after (*posttest*). This is supported by the results of research conducted that explaining that there is an influence between *mindfulness* and anxiety (Jha et al., 2007; Yurliani et al., 2020).

The college level certainly brings many changes to new students and requires them to be able to adapt and adjust to their new environment, so that new students tend to experience relatively high levels of anxiety. This fear makes students afraid of the results they have achieved and everything bad about the performance or tasks they have done (Berry et al., 2020; Li et al., 2018; Novitria & Khoirunnisa, 2022). Therefore, *mindfulness* training is needed to reduce anxiety in new college students. Based on research explained that *Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction* (MBSR) Training can reduce anxiety in late adolescents with new student status at the Faculty of Animal Science UGM (Rinera & Retnowati, 2020). This means that by doing *mindfulness* training, it will be able to reduce or reduce the anxiety that new students have. In addition, the results of this study are also in accordance with experimental research which evaluated the effectiveness and feasibility of mindfulness training to improve the health and well-being of new students, the results of the study showed that student satisfaction increased significantly, and the variables of depression and anxiety decreased significantly (Dvořáková et al., 2017). Anxiety according to previous study can be caused by internal and external factors (Sentana, 2016). Internal factors are caused by not having confidence in one's own abilities, while external factors are caused by threats,

conflicts, circumvention, fears, and unmet needs that a person feels. This explanation can be interpreted to mean that a person can be said to be anxious if he feels unconfident, threatened, is experiencing conflict, circumvention, fear, and has unmet needs. Whereas according to previous study individual anxiety is caused by several things such as excessive social demands, although the person is unable or unable to meet those demands, personal performance demands that are too high for his abilities for example perfectionist tendencies, feelings of inferiority, individual incompetence, confrontation with difficult situations, negative thought patterns and perceptions of situations and oneself (Novitria & Khoirunnisa, 2022). Some of the efforts that are often made by a person in overcoming problems include telling their friends or parents about fears and problems (emotional-focused coping) experienced, doing problem-focused *coping*, being alone and harboring feelings, or running away (*avoidance*) to other activities (Brewer et al., 2013; Greenberg et al., 2019; Rinera & Retnowati, 2020). Students who are unable to overcome their anxiety by harboring feelings or escaping (*avoidance*) to other activities can cause an increase in anxiety, severe, even psychosomatic.

The second hypothesis in this study was to determine the difference in the level of academic stress in subjects after (post-test) treatment in the form of *mindfulness* training, namely the experimental group and the post-test control group were not given treatment. Based on the results of hypothesis analysis using the *Mann -Whitney u test*, the post-test score in the experimental and control group obtained results with significance values (2-tailed) = 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This shows that H1 is accepted and H0 is rejected which means that there is a difference in anxiety levels between the experimental group that was given mindfulness training and the control group that was not given mindfulness training. This means that *mindfulness* training has proven to be effective for reducing anxiety in new college students. This is supported by the results of research conducted by previous study *mindfulness* training is very useful for reducing anxiety levels in new students (Rinera & Retnowati, 2020).

New college students are particularly prone to anxiety and depression. Psychosocial stressors became one of his influences. Psychological stressors are a condition that causes changes in a person's life so that the person is forced to adapt or overcome the stressors that arise. Changes in the learning environment are also one of the triggering factors for anxiety and depression in students. Plus, adjustments to new places sometimes clash with different cultures, customs, and norm systems (Moore et al., 2020; Setiyani, 2018; Wu et al., 2022). Students who have just taken lectures will experience anxiety because they must adjust to the surrounding environment. The impact of anxiety felt by students such as difficulty in socializing, personal, and there is a decrease in academic performance in new students (Agnes & Mathew, 2019; Oetomo et al., 2019). New college students are faced with a change in the environment. The changes experienced require students to be able to accept and adjust to the changes experienced and must make social adjustments to their environment. But there is one technique that can be used in helping to reduce anxiety in new college students such as *doing mindfulness*. *Mindfulness* is considered to have a positive influence on the life and psychological development of students. New students who have a habit of *mindfulness* will find it easier to control impulsive behavior and be able to reduce negative emotional reactions when faced with difficult situations (Bauer et al., 2020; Eby et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2020). There are several things that need to be improved so that the implementation of further research can provide more optimal results, including students are expected to be able to understand mindfulness therapy and apply mindfulness therapy to daily life. So that when there is no direction from the researcher, the subject can carry out mindfulness therapy independently or individually. Researchers also expect that after this mindfulness therapy training, the anxiety that often appears in new college students will decrease or decrease. Research on anxiety and mindfulness involving new students can still

be developed with different methods and trainings. It is also possible to develop research with different subject characteristics such as pregnant women, final college students or high school students. Researchers can then also carry out the data collection process using different techniques according to the research objectives.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and discussion that has been carried out in this study, it can be concluded as follows there were differences in anxiety levels between before and after mindfulness training treatment in the experimental group and there was a difference between the experimental group that was given the treatment in the form of mindfulness training and the control group that was not given treatment in the form of mindfulness training. Moreover, mindfulness training is effective in reducing anxiety in new college students. The limitations in this study were not being able to gather many subjects to attend the training due to limited training time and many participants were unable to take part in this training due to other agendas.

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