

# Analysis of Hardiness Mediation in the Implementation of Group Psychoeducation Therapy on the Tolerance Academic Distress of Final Year Students

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**Abstract.** This study aims to assess the existence of a mediating variable in the form of hardiness in the implementation of group psychoeducation therapy to increase tolerance for academic distress. The research method used was an experiment, a pretest-posttest control group design involving 16 final year students who were selected purposive sampling from 135 students. The results indicate that there is an indirect effect on the implementation of group psychoeducation therapy in increasing the tolerance for academic distress through hardiness as a positively related mediation. This effect was considered to be greater than the direct effect of the psychoeducation therapy group on tolerance for academic distress, although they were both positively related.

**Key words:** group psychoeducation; hardiness; distress tolerance academic.

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## INTRODUCTION

During the Covid-19 pandemic, stress was common. This is due to changes in lifestyle that are quite fast occurring (Muslim. 2020). For final year students, changing strategies in completing final assignments, theses, theses and dissertations is a need that must be resolved quickly (Argaheni. 2020). This is certainly not easy, apart from being faced with pressure to immediately complete studies, final year students also experience pressure in the form of worries about the Covid-19 virus. This is a condition that can push students into stressful situations.

Livana, P. H., Mubin, M. F., & Basthomi, Y. (2020). defines stress as a condition in which the pressure that is felt is incompatible with its ability to endure. In this condition, the body will have two reactions tendencies. When the body's reaction is positive, it is called eustres, if the opposite is called distress (Moawad, RA (2020). Final year students during the pandemic have at least 2 types of stressors (triggers for stress conditions) which are demands to maintain health and resolve studies as soon as possible. (Argaheni. 2020). This condition is referred to as academic stress. Research conducted by Charles., Strong., Burns., Bullerjahn., & Serafine. (2021) shows that, from anxiety to high levels of stress experienced by final year students caused by changes in the conditions

of research subjects quite rapidly.

The distress conditions experienced by students will have an impact on the student's ability to think well in completing the final project that is currently being worked on. Bardeen, Fergus and Orcut (2013) explain that distress tolerance is the true feeling or ability to tolerate emotional experiences and physical conflicts, such as negative affective conditions, physical discomfort, and others. Through tolerance to distress, individuals can develop a moderate degree of stress so that it has a good impact on improving performance, including in the academic field.

However, not all students are afford to do it. One of them is influenced by psychological factors, especially hardiness personality (Vagni., Maiorano., Giostra., & Pajardi. 2020;). This condition shows that hardiness is one of the keys for students to face academic stressors in their lives. In a study conducted by Ranney., Griffeth., & Jha. (2020) regarding the need for hardiness during a pandemic is very important. This is because, hardiness is able to help individuals adjust conditions quickly so that the anxiety and stress they experience can be handled immediately. Buheji., & Jahrami. (2020) also stated that hardiness becomes a buffer and a factor that can reduce stress in life (stressors) by improving strategies for adapting oneself.

Hardiness according to Kobasa, Maddi & Kahn (in Vagni., Maiorano., Giostra., & Pajardi. 2020) is a personality variable that serves as a resource to reject the negative consequences of adverse conditions. Hardy individuals will use transformational coping when facing stressful situations, namely changing their cognition and behavior (Kobasa and Maddi in Ranney., Griffith., & Jha. 2020). Kobasa (in Baber, H. 2020) said that cognitive is the basis for the development of hardiness personality. So to strengthen student academic distress tolerance through hardiness, an intervention strategy that is able to improve cognitive structures is needed.

group psychoeducation therapy (GPT) is a form of intervention that will be implemented.. Rajiah., & Saravanan. (2014) in the results of their research revealed that the psychoeducation therapy group was able to reduce the pressure on students and had an impact on increasing their academic scores. The use of GPT in counseling services allows students to learn what stress coping they can do when situations are stressful, so that students are able to think better when their level of calm increases. This will enable students to tolerate academic distress and increase life expectancy in the future (Melo-Carrillo., Van Oudenhove., & Lopez-Avila. 2012).

Psychoeducation therapy group, has a significant impact on reducing anxiety which can have an impact on depression. This is much better when compared to cognitive-based therapy given to clients with anxiety disorders (Wong., Yip., Mak., Mercer., Cheung., Ling., & Ma. 2016). We also found that psychoeducation may have additional beneficial effects on reducing depressive symptoms and improving mental health-related quality of life (Parikh., Zaretsky., Beaulieu., Yatham., Young., Patelis-Siotis., & Cervantes. 2012).

People who have a hardy personality will not easily experience stress. On the results of research conducted by Vagni., Maiorano., Giostra., & Pajardi. (2020) found that commitment was associated with high levels of stress, arousal, and distraction, whereas controls demonstrated a protective function. Stress and hardiness produced 37% and 17% variants of arousal and distraction, respectively. A mediation analysis has been conducted regarding hardiness in reducing the nature of stress. Vagni., Maiorano., Giostra., & Pajardi. (2020) stated that the mediating effect of hardiness traits and coping strategies was found to reduce the effect of stress on arousal by 15% and the effect on avoidance by 25%. Therefore, this study was conducted to test whether the mediating

effect of hardiness was also present in the implementation of group psychoeducation therapy in increasing the tolerance for academic distress in final year students.

## METHODS

The pretest-posttest control group research methodology was carried out in this study by involving two groups, namely the experimental and control groups. The intervention in the form of the psychoeducation therapy group was carried out in the experimental group, while the control group was given counseling services by university counselors. Proposive sampling technique in 135 final year students at Muri Suci University to then measure the level of hardiness and tolerance of academic distress they have. Research subjects who become criteria are those who have a low level of hardiness and tolerance for academic distress.

This measurement involves an instrument in the form of the Distress Tolerance Scale developed by Jeffrey S. Simons & Raluca M. Gaher (2005), and the Hardiness Scale developed by Bernardo Mareno-Jimenez, Alfredo Rodriguez-Munoz, Eva Garrosa Hernandez & Luis Manuel Blanco (2014). Each scale consists of 15 items. In this measuring instrument, the researcher performs equivalence by performing the back translation process, expert validation and then testing the instrument. The results of the instrument test, all items were declared valid (rxy hardiness scale: 0.423-0.633; rxy distress tolerance scale: 0.379-0.701) with alpha values of 0.843 (hardiness scale), and 0.889. (distress tolerance scale). The data obtained were analyzed using the bootstrapping technique (N = 5000).

From the results of these measurements, it was found that 16 students fit the criteria for this study. The next step, a random assessment process was carried out to divide students into 2 groups (control and experiment) to get the intervention as determined by the researcher. When the intervention process has been completed, it will be measured again using the same instrument.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The collected data (pretest-posttest) were tabulated and prepared before being analyzed. There were 16 students selected as research subjects with conditions of low levels of hardiness and tolerance for academic distress. After the intervention was completed in the experimental and control groups, the level of hardiness and tolerance for student academic distress changed. In

the control group 4 people were at moderate hardiness and tolerance levels, the remaining 4 were in conditions of high hardiness and tolerance. The experimental group had 4 people with a high level of hardiness and moderate tolerance, while the remaining 4 people were in conditions of high hardiness and tolerance (Table 1).

The data were analyzed with the 4th Bootstrap model. The results of the analysis showed that the psychoeducation therapy group had an impact on aspects of hardiness ( $F = 18,385$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and tolerance for academic distress ( $F = 9,047$ ,  $p$

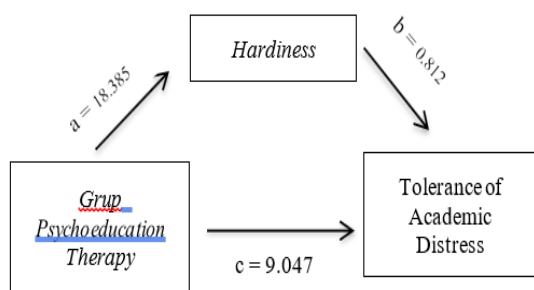
$< 0.01$ ) in final year students. This can be seen from the map of hardiness and tolerance for academic distress in the experimental group (hardiness,  $M = 69.4$ ,  $SD = 5.44$ ; tolerance for academic distress,  $M = 65.4$ ,  $SD = 4.46$ ) and the control group (hardiness,  $M = 56.6$ ,  $SD = 7.61$ ; tolerance of academic distress,  $M = 52$ ,  $SD = 6.29$ ). Besides. The results of this analysis also prove that hardiness has a significant relationship with student academic distress ( $R = 0.812$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) (Table 2).

**Tabel 1.** cross tabulation of pretest-posttest result

		Score Hardiness												
		Low						Medium				High		
		Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest		
		E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	
Distress Tolerance	lo	Pretest	E	8										
			K	8										
		Pretest	E											
			K											
	mediu	Pretest	E											
			K											
	Pretest	E												
		K												
hig	Pretest	E												
		K												
	Pretest	E												
		K												

Information: E =Esperimen Category , K = Control Category

The results of the bootstrapping analysis also showed the magnitude of the effect value given by the psychoeducation therapy group. The magnitude of the total effect value shown is shown in the pathways a, b and c ( $F = 23.975$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). while aspects Hardiness has a mediating role as a mediating variable between the psychoeducation therapy group on increasing tolerance for academic distress ( $14,928$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )



**Figure 1.** Bootstrapping analysis results ( $F = 23.975$  and  $c' = 14.928$  CI [0.181, 15.574])

The size of the results, it can be concluded that the psychoeducation therapy group is effective in increasing hardiness ( $F = 23.975$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and tolerance for academic distress ( $F = 23.975$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) final year students. A

positive relationship is also shown between hardiness and tolerance of final year student academic distress ( $R = 0.812$ .  $P < 0.01$ ). In addition, cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with stress inoculation training techniques is effective in providing an indirect impact on the tolerance of final year student academic distress through hardiness with a mediating effect magnitude of  $14.928$  (CI =  $0.181$ ,  $15.574$ ).

**Table 2.** Results of bootstrapping data analysis (N = 5000)

	Effect	P	Confidence interval (95%)	
			Upper limit	Lower limit
G – H (a)	18.385	< 0.01	12.382	22.674
H – TD (b)	0.812	< 0.01	0.178	0.963
G – TD (c)	9.047	< 0.01	4.792	13.303
Total Effect	23.975	< 0.01	18.787	26.782
Mediating effect	14.928	< 0.05	0.181	15.574

However, it is different from what was conveyed by Parikh, SV, Zaretsky, A., Beaulieu, S., Yatham, LN, Young, LT, Patelis-Siotis, I., ... & Cervantes, P. (2012), in the results of a study that tried to compare the effectiveness of group psychoeducation therapy services with other

cognition-oriented therapies (CBT). He stated that, psychoeducation therapy has a significant effect in reducing anxiety, depression and stress. However, the influence of cultural specifications in individuals is the biggest factor in reducing anxiety, stress and depression in individuals. The same thing was conveyed by Melo-Carrillo, A., Van Oudenhove, L., & Lopez-Avila, A. (2012). Yang said that, the effectiveness of psychoeducation therapy was short-term. Therefore, continuous therapy is a suggestion that must be done in Next research.

The results in this study are consistent with those conveyed by Melo-Carrillo, A., Van Oudenhove, L., & Lopez-Avila, A. (2012) and Rajiah, K., & Saravanan, C. 2014) that the purpose of psychoeducation is to provide clients with concrete tools to overcome difficulties in their lives and thereby enhance their ability to better manage problems. This is because academic stress is a normal event, every student will definitely experience this condition. Therefore, stressful conditions are not something that should be avoided. However, it must be used as an opportunity to get new strength for a better life. The skill of turning challenges into opportunities is something that is discussed in this study. Furthermore, in Wong, SYS, Yip, BHK, Mak, WWS, Mercer, S., Cheung, EYL, Ling, CYM, ... & Ma, HSW (2016) says that the purpose of psychoeducation is to provide information to patients. about their problems and thereby increasing understanding of their condition and increasing self- control over their own lives Parikh, SV, Zaretsky, A., Beaulieu, S., Yatham, LN, Young, LT, Patelis-Siotis, I., ... & Cervantes, P. (2012). The information obtained by students in psychoeducation therapy activities will provide students with an understanding of stress conditions and its various causes (stressors). When this understanding is obtained, students are able to design skills that they can use to tolerate the academic distress they have.

Apart from that, at The Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW, 1991) defines goals for groups in psycho-educational counseling as an attempt to "prevent educational and psychological disorders from occurring." Parikh, SV, Zaretsky, A., Beaulieu, S., Yatham, LN, Young, LT, Patelis-Siotis, I., ... & Cervantes, P. (2012). So, the purpose of doing this method is the same as the purpose of counseling in general, but the difference is that this method emphasizes education (understanding, information, or skills) on the

topic selected in a group. The conditions of understanding obtained in psychoeducation therapy are made more complex through the involvement of several people with similar conditions and being brought together in a group. Discussions that result in the emergence of group dynamics will be guided to lead to an outcome that can become skills for students in managing stress better (tolerating distress).

Some of the results of previous studies indicate that group psychoeducation therapy, has a significant impact on reducing anxiety which can have an impact on depression. This is much better when compared to cognitive-based therapy given to clients with anxiety disorders (Wong., Yip., Mak., Mercer., Cheung., Ling., & Ma. 2016). We also found that psychoeducation may have additional beneficial effects on reducing depressive symptoms and improving mental health-related quality of life (Parikh., Zaretsky., Beaulieu., Yatham., Young., Patelis-Siotis., & Cervantes. 2012).

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## CONCLUSION

Media analysis has been carried out in this study to test hardiness in the implementation of the psychoeducation therapy group to increase the tolerance for academic distress of final year students at Universitas Muria Kudus during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The results of this study have proven that, the psychoeducation therapy group is able to provide a greater mediating effect in increasing the ability to tolerate academic distress among

students through hardiness. This success rate is positive. Not only does it have an indirect effect, the psychoeducation therapy group also has a direct effect in increasing the ability to tolerate academic distress in the final grade students of Universitas Muria Kudus

The results obtained in the implementation of this treatment are based on the ability of students to understand the problems they experience, so as to be able to create an opportunity to turn pressure into learning for a better life. In this treatment, what is meant is a coping strategy that is used when a stressor comes into their life. The thing that is of concern in this study is the follow-up effort to avoid relapse (relapse).

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