Academic Hardiness And Social Support: Universitas Terbuka Student's Case

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Abstract

This study examines whether there are differences in academic hardiness between Indonesia Open University students who join Pokjar and those who do not join Pokjar. Pokjar is an abbreviation of "study group" which consists of a group of students and is managed by several administrators. Students who choose to take distance learning are scattered in different areas and do not meet each other in the same class. When problems occur related to the learning process, students ask questions and seek information through existing communication channels. Pokjar is a group of students who build commitment and mutual agreement to help each other and support each other smoothly and successfully study at the Indonesia Open University with or without the facilities of other parties. Pokjar management is needed to help provide administrative services and information about the Open University to students who need it. In the perspective of open and distance education, Pokjar can be positioned as a form of social support where students can convey all their problems to Pokjar, and Pokjar will help solve these problems to the University. This study uses an academic hardiness questionnaire which was compiled based on aspects of academic toughness by Benishek (2004) and modified by the researcher. The research sample was 705 Open University students from various study programs. After the difference test was conducted, it was found that there was a significant difference between students who attended Pokjar and students who did not take Pokjar. The average academic toughness score of students who joined Pokjar (Mean = 144.16) was higher than students who did not join Pokjar (Mean = 139.44). Research on social support for academic hardiness is often done, a new finding in this study is that in distance learning, social support can come from Pokjar. We carried out further investigations using FGDs and deep interviews to find out what kind of social support we received from the Pokjar. The type of social support felt by students when they joined the Pokjar was in the form of companionship support, namely support that includes the availability of groups to spend time together. This support causes a person to feel that he is part of a group where members can share with each other.

Keywords: Academic hardiness, companionship support, pokjar

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji apakah ada perbedaan academic hardiness antara mahasiswa Universitas Terbuka yang mengikuti Pokjar dan yang tidak mengikuti Pokjar. Pokjar adalah singkatan dari "kelompok belajar" yang terdiri dari sekelompok mahasiswa dan dikelola oleh beberapa pengurus. Siswa yang memilih untuk menempuh pembelajaran jarak jauh tersebar di wilayah yang berbeda dan tidak saling bertemu di kelas yang sama. Ketika terjadi permasalahan yang berkaitan dengan proses pembelajaran, siswa mengajukan pertanyaan dan mencari informasi melalui saluran komunikasi yang ada. Pokjar adalah kumpulan mahasiswa yang membangun komitmen dan kesepakatan bersama untuk saling membantu dan mendukung satu sama lain untuk kelancaran dan keberhasilan belajar di Universitas Terbuka dengan atau tanpa fasilitas pihak lain. Pengurus Pokjar diperlukan untuk membantu memberikan pelayanan administrasi dan informasi tentang Universitas Terbuka kepada mahasiswa yang membutuhkan. Dalam perspektif pendidikan terbuka dan jarak jauh, Pokjar dapat diposisikan sebagai bentuk dukungan sosial dimana mahasiswa dapat menyampaikan segala permasalahannya kepada Pokjar, dan Pokjar akan membantu menyelesaikan permasalahan tersebut ke Universitas. Penelitian ini menggunakan angket hardiness akademik yang disusun berdasarkan aspek ketangguhan akademik oleh Benishek (2004) dan dimodifikasi oleh peneliti. Sampel penelitian adalah 705 mahasiswa Universitas Terbuka dari berbagai program studi. Setelah dilakukan uji beda, diketahui bahwa terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan antara mahasiswa yang mengikuti Pokjar dan mahasiswa yang tidak mengikuti Pokjar. Nilai rata-rata ketangguhan akademik siswa yang mengikuti Pokjar (Mean = 144,16) lebih tinggi dibandingkan siswa yang

tidak mengikuti Pokjar (Mean = 139,44). Penelitian tentang dukungan sosial terhadap hardiness akademik sudah sering dilakukan, temuan baru dalam penelitian ini adalah bahwa pada pembelajaran jarak jauh, dukungan sosial dapat berasal dari Pokjar. Kami melakukan investigasi lebih lanjut dengan menggunakan FGD dan wawancara mendalam untuk mengetahui dukungan sosial seperti apa yang kami terima dari Pokjar. Jenis dukungan sosial yang dirasakan mahasiswa ketika bergabung dengan Pokjar berupa dukungan kekeluargaan, yaitu dukungan yang meliputi ketersediaan kelompok untuk menghabiskan waktu bersama. Dukungan ini menyebabkan seseorang merasa bahwa dirinya adalah bagian dari kelompok dimana anggota dapat saling berbagi

Kata kunci: Ketangguhan akademik, dukungan persahabatan, pokjar

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INTRODUCTION

Academic resilience has long been an issue in education. A student starts the lecture process with a goal, but along the way, students need toughness to complete their studies. Academic resilience is the dynamic ability of students to succeed in studies despite experiencing many disturbances or pressures and problems (Findik, 2016).

The Open University (UT) is the first State University to implement an open and distance learning system. The open learning system means that UT does not impose restrictions on age, year of diploma, study period, registration time, and frequency of taking exams (Tim, 2019). The term distance means that learning does not have to be done face-to-face, but uses media, both print media (modules) and non-prints (audio/video, computer/internet, radio broadcasts, and television) (Tim, 2019). The learning system implemented by UT opens the widest opportunity for the nation's children to be able to receive higher education, both people who have difficulty accessing educational facilities and people who have limited time to attend lectures on a regular basis.

Learning at UT applies an independent learning model, where students are required to be able to manage learning activities independently or without intensive guidance from lecturers. Independent learning can be done individually or in groups, both in study groups and in tutorial groups (Tim, 2019). To support student learning success, UT provides students with the option of being able to take online, offline, or blended study assistance (a combination of online and offline).

Students who have registered as new students at UT will be given the opportunity to choose the desired study assistance, namely online tutorials (tuton) and face-to-face tutorials (TTM). Online tutorials (tutons) are a type of fully online learning aid. Students who choose tuton will conduct online learning in virtual classrooms, starting from the provision of materials, discussions, assignments, and exams. Face-to-face Tutorial (TTM) is a learning aid in the form of face-to-face learning classes that will be guided by a tutor. As with ordinary lecture classes, TTM can be a place for discussion between fellow students in aspects related to teaching materials or others. The implementation of the TTM is handled by the local UPBJJ-UT assisted by the managers of study groups (pokjar) spread across cities/districts.

Implementing distance learning is not without obstacles, students who choose the independent learning model must have the ability to manage their learning both individually and in groups. Preliminary studies conducted by the author show that there are several obstacles in completing lectures with the independent learning model, including (1) less able to understand lecture material with online tutorial methods, (2) Difficulties in the learning process that cause students to experience demotivation. The Open University called registered students who did not continue the lecture process for various reasons as sleeping students. The percentage of non-active students at the Open University is 45%. This high enough number illustrates that there are unresolved obstacles in the learning process. In the research of Sheard and Goldy (2007), it is stated that academic success is influenced by internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include academic self-efficacy, setting educational goals, learning motivation, academic toughness, etc.

Resilience is a combination of an attitude of life consisting of courage and motivation to do something difficult or get through difficulties, a strategic undertaking to transform stressful situations from potential disasters into growth opportunities (Maddi 2006). Resilience is a set of beliefs held by a person regarding himself and his interactions with his environment, emphasizing the importance of involvement rather than isolation, control over powerlessness, and challenge rather than threat. Research has shown that hardiness is one of the factors influencing effective coping leading to good health and improved performance (Maddi 2005). Resilience has been conceptualized as consisting of three attitudes, namely commitment, control, and challenge. If someone is strong in commitment, they believe in staying involved with the events and people around them, no matter how stressful they are. For them, it was a waste of time to retreat into seclusion and isolation. If someone is strong in control, they want to continue to have an influence on the outcomes that are happening around them, no matter how difficult. According to them, it is a mistake to allow themselves to slip into helplessness and passivity. If they are strong in challenges, they see pressure as part of normal life and opportunities to learn, develop, and grow in wisdom (Maddi 2005, 2006). Toughness is the stage to survive under pressure (Maddi, 2006).

A tough person always tries to finish what he started no matter how difficult the road he has to go. In the higher education environment, learning resilience is proven by the consistency of students in the lecture process until they finally get graduation. Non-active students at the Open University consist of students who do not register their courses in the current semester (leave) and students who do not continue their course at the Open University. The number is quite large, it is interesting to study how the level of academic toughness of students with open and distance learning and what factors cause it.

Research on academic toughness has been widely carried out in higher education environments. One of them was carried out by Jannah, et al (2021) at Syiah Kuala University (USK). Jannah, et al (2021) examined the academic toughness of Bidikmisi students at USK and found that the academic toughness of Bidikmisi students was at a moderate level. Another research was

conducted by Wardani (2020) at Maranatha Christian University (UKM). The research subjects were 237 new students, while the aim of the study was to model the relationship between transformational coping, social support, and psychological well-being. Wardani (2020) states that the variables in his research are related, but academic toughness in the context of psychological well-being can be studied separately without involving the direct outcome, namely transformational coping and social support.

Research on academic resilience in open and distance learning settings has not been found by the authors. Therefore, this study is a new study of academic toughness with open and distance learning settings, where there are different characteristics in it.

METHOD

Research Design, Site, and Participant

The design of this research is exploratory research using a quantitative method approach involving 705 Open University students from various study programs and types of services.

Data Collection

Quantitative data was collected through an online questionnaire distributed by message to student communication groups. The questionnaire used in this study is an academic toughness questionnaire (Benishek, et al, 2004) with 3 aspects, namely commitment, control, and challenge. The total number of questions in the questionnaire is 35 items, but after testing the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument, 2 items are invalid (question number 7 "I experience severe disappointment every time I fail in one semester" and number 13 "When I get a bad score , I told the closest friend") so that the total questions that were used as the basis for data for further data processing were 33 items.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS software by performing deferential test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Normality Test

The normality test was conducted to test whether the resulting data were normally distributed or not. Normality test using one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Table 1. Normality test

	K-SZ	Sig.	Annotation
Academic Hardiness	0.910	0.324	Normal

Item Validity Test

The item validity test was conducted to find out which questions were valid and could be used to analyze research variables. The item validity test used the Pearson Correlation test.

Table 1. Uji validitas butir

Question	Pearson Correlation	Sig.	Annotation
1	.103**	0,006	Valid
2	.250**	0,000	Valid
3	.401**	0,000	Valid
4	.405**	0,000	Valid
5	.213**	0,000	Valid
6	.399**	0,000	Valid
7	0,056	0,138	Invalid
8	.523**	0,000	Valid
9	.349**	0,000	Valid
10	.418**	0,000	Valid
11	.479**	0,000	Valid
12	.433**	0,000	Valid
13	-0,067	0,074	Invalid
14	.216**	0,000	Valid
15	.446**	0,000	Valid
16	.562**	0,000	Valid
17	.537**	0,000	Valid
18	.470**	0,000	Valid
19	.211**	0,000	Valid
20	.337**	0,000	Valid
21	.349**	0,000	Valid
22	.613**	0,000	Valid
23	.506**	0,000	Valid
24	.605**	0,000	Valid
25	.449**	0,000	Valid
26	.547**	0,000	Valid
27	.475**	0,000	Valid
28	.511**	0,000	Valid
29	.547**	0,000	Valid
30	.520**	0,000	Valid
31	.553**	0,000	Valid
32	.277**	0,000	Valid
33	.422**	0,000	Valid
34	.376**	0,000	Valid
35	.419**	0,000	Valid

Based on the item validity test, there are 2 items that are invalid. The question items are excluded from the subsequent data processing. Of the 33 questions that were processed, the data represented three aspects of academic toughness to be measured.

Deferential Test

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji perbedaan ketangguhan akademik antara mahasiswa yang bergabung dengan pokjar dan yang tidak bergabung dengan pokjar. Berikut ini disajikan data:

Figure 1. Tingkat ketangguhan akademik mahasiswa berdasarkan ketergabungan dengan kelompok belajar

Figure 1 shows the average value of academic toughness of students who join working groups of 144.16 (number of respondents 572) and those who do not join working groups of 139.44 (number of respondents 133). After the different test, it was found that there was a difference in academic toughness between these two groups of students (Sig 0.001).

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, there are some conclusions of the study: 1) there is a significant difference in academic hardiness between students who join the pokjar and students who do not join the pokjar. 2) the type of social support received by students who join pokjar is companionship support, namely support that includes the availability of groups to spend time together. This support causes a person to feel that he is part of a group where members can share with each other.

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