
THE BALANCE BETWEEN ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES AND MENTAL HEALTH IN HIGH SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Azizah Choirunisa¹, Bilqiis Keisha Rizki Lubis¹, Cahaya Nafila¹, Fadilla Dwi
Ramadhani¹, Maiza Rafifa Sari Daulay¹

¹SMAS Unggulan Al Azhar Medan, Indonesia.

*Corresponding author, email: azizahchoirunisa041@gmail.com

Abstract

Adolescents at the high school level today often experience high academic pressure. The large demands faced by adolescents today make their inability to adapt to these demands which causes adolescents to experience mental health disorders. Based on Law Number 18 of 2014 concerning Mental Health, it is stated that Mental Health Efforts are every activity aimed at realizing the optimal degree of mental health for each individual, family, and community through promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative services that are implemented in an integrated, sustainable, and comprehensive manner by the government, local government, or community. Therefore, the balance between academic activities and student health is a significant challenge that requires an integrated solution. Research techniques include the use of relevant scientific and academic databases, development of search strategies, establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria, and implementation of thorough literature search and selection procedures. Optimizing the balance between academic activities and mental well-being of secondary school students is an important determining factor in improving their overall health and academic performance.

Keywords: Academic Activities, Mental Health, Adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Who isn't familiar with the fast-paced and chaotic lives of today's high school students? They are faced with increasingly high academic expectations. The fierce competition to get into the college of their choice, the expectation of perfect academic performance, and the seemingly endless amount of coursework. On the other hand, children also have to deal with social influences from their peers, expectations to present an attractive image on social media, and the physiological and psychological transformations that occur during puberty.

Given such circumstances, it is not surprising that a large number of high school students feel overwhelmed and struggle to manage various aspects of their lives. This study was initiated by the author's major concern over the increasing prevalence of stress, anxiety and sleep problems among adolescents. The significance of this phenomenon should not be underestimated, as it can have lasting consequences on the physical and mental well-being of adolescents, hindering their capacity to achieve normal growth and development.

The main objective of this study is to shed light on the difficulties faced by high school adolescents in effectively managing their academic activities along with their physical and emotional well-being. What factors affect adolescents' life balance? Furthermore, what solutions can be provided to help adolescents overcome these obstacles? By understanding the complexity of this issue, it is hoped that this research can enhance the creation of efficient intervention programs aimed at improving adolescents' emotional and psychological well-being. Furthermore, this research is expected to be a valuable resource for policy makers, educators, parents, and adolescents themselves, with the aim of establishing an atmosphere that is more conducive to adolescents' intellectual and personal development.

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Further research on the impact of life imbalance on adolescents is needed. Overemphasis on academic success among adolescents sometimes leads to neglect of the need for adequate relaxation, physical exercise and social relationships. As a result, this can result in a variety of health problems, including persistent fatigue, sleep disorders, compromised immune systems, and psychological disorders such as melancholy and anxiety. Conversely, over-socialization or involvement in recreational activities among teenagers can negatively impact their academic performance. They may experience challenges in maintaining focus on studying, completing homework fully, and understanding classroom lectures.

It is important to remember that life balance is not fixed, but fluid. The dynamic nature of adolescents' demands and priorities requires them to acquire adaptation skills to accommodate various circumstances. The purpose of this study is to provide a more thorough understanding of the dynamics of life balance among high school adolescents and to propose elements that can assist adolescents in achieving better balance. As such, this study is expected to provide a substantial addition to efforts aimed at improving adolescents' quality of life and equipping them to face future obstacles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The balance between academic activities and mental well-being of secondary school students has emerged as an important subject in many educational and health research studies. Adolescence is a very important developmental stage characterized by physiological, psychological and sociological changes. Adolescents during this stage usually have significant academic expectations that can affect their physical and mental health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adolescents need sufficient assistance to achieve a balance between academic obligations and personal well-being to avoid more severe health problems in the future (WHO, 2020).

Academic stress is a major determinant affecting the psychological well-being of secondary school students. Adolescents often experience immense pressure from their educational environment, family and society to achieve outstanding academic performance. Such tensions can lead to tension, worry and hopelessness, thus affecting their overall well-being and scholastic achievement. According to Wahidah (2019), Some people view stress as a threat to be avoided when they are in a stressful situation or mood. For some people, stress is an exciting task. Something that seems dangerous can be turned into a task that can be faced head-on and completed with passion and energy by using the right emotional resources. Lee et al. (2023) found that significant academic stress can impair adolescents' emotional well-being and play a role in the development of mental illnesses including anxiety and depression. Numerous studies have also shown that excessive academic stress can result in decreased motivation to learn and increased susceptibility to burnout among adolescents (Kim et al., 2023). To reduce the adverse impact of excessive academic stress on adolescents' mental health, it is important to utilize appropriate stress management strategies.

Adolescents' physical well-being is also affected by excessive intellectual demands. A large number of adolescents neglect time for physical activity in favor of fulfilling academic responsibilities, resulting in decreased physical fitness. Engaging in physical exercise is essential for maintaining cardiovascular health, achieving desired body weight, and significantly reducing the likelihood of developing chronic diseases in the future (Viner et al., 2021). Despite this, findings show that the majority of adolescents fail to meet the World Health Organization (WHO) guideline of 60 minutes of daily physical exercise (WHO, 2020). Lack of engagement in physical exercise adversely affects physical and emotional well-being. A study conducted by Felez-Nobrega et al. (2020) showed that adolescents who lack physical activity are more prone to anxiety disorders and depression. Therefore, it is crucial to manage the balance between physical exercise and academics to improve adolescents' general well-being. A major obstacle in achieving a balance between academic engagement and well-being for adolescent students in secondary schools is the high expectations imposed by many stakeholders, such as parents, educators and the social environment.

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The priority of achieving outstanding academic performance often takes precedence over the importance of maintaining good physical and mental well-being. Furthermore, inadequate time management and the absence of coping mechanisms exacerbate this pathology (Ganesan et al., 2022). Many studies have shown that adolescents with good time management skills and good stress management tend to achieve a more optimal balance between academic activities and well-being (Kim et al., 2023). However, the absence of support from the surrounding environment often hinders the achievement of this balance.

Achieving a harmonious balance between academic pursuits and successful physical and mental well-being requires synchronized efforts from multiple stakeholders. School institutions have the capacity to deliver teaching initiatives that prioritize the importance of mental and physical well-being, while also providing students with time management and coping skills. Research conducted by Lee et al. (2023) showed that school-based intervention programs targeting mental health can effectively reduce stress and anxiety levels in adolescents.

Furthermore, parental support plays an important role in helping adolescents deal effectively with academic stress. Parents should provide constructive encouragement and create a supportive atmosphere for their children to maintain a harmonious balance between academic and other activities that promote good health (Ganesan et al., 2022). Family and community-based interventions have also shown efficacy in improving the general well-being of adolescents. Optimizing the balance between academic activities and the physical and mental well-being of high school students is an important determinant in improving their overall health and academic performance. The adverse impact of excessive academic pressure on adolescents' emotional and physical well-being requires the implementation of comprehensive treatments to achieve this.

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to investigate and assess the balance between academic activities and the physical and mental well-being of senior high school students. Using a literature review approach, this research highlights the obstacles faced by adolescents in achieving this balance and proposes solutions that can be applied. According to Widiarsa (2019), a literature review is a brief overview of articles from journals, books, and other sources that explain ideas and information from historical and contemporary sources. According to Mahanu (2021), a literature review systematically organizes literature into relevant subjects and documents needed for research. The choice of a literature review as a research approach is based on its ability to allow the researcher to collect, evaluate and combine information from relevant sources, thus offering a thorough understanding of the subject matter under consideration. According to Sarwono (2010), for this literature review, data was collected by conducting a literature search that included books, scientific journal articles, research reports, and publications from international health organizations. The selection of these literature materials was based on their relevance to the research objectives and their reliability. This novel approach to literature analysis enabled the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the constraints and solutions in achieving a balance between academic activities and the physical and mental well-being of high school students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The literature review here suggests that academic stress is a major determinant of high school students' mental well-being. Recent research shows that adolescents who experience significant academic stress are more likely to exhibit higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms compared to their peers who face fewer academic demands. Regarding the findings of Ganesan et al. (2022), students who experience persistent academic stress are more prone to sleep disturbances, reduced motivation, and social isolation. Furthermore, this study suggests that the absence of physical exercise is an issue of concern among the high school student population. Adolescents who prioritize academic activities usually ignore the requirement to engage in physical activity, thus

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adversely affecting their physical well-being. A study conducted by Viner et al. (2021) revealed that inadequate engagement in physical exercise can increase adolescents' vulnerability to obesity, cardiovascular disease and posture problems. The Effect of Unbalanced Workload on Academic Achievement Furthermore, the imbalance between academic activities and health not only affects physical and mental well-being, but also has a direct influence on academic achievement. Emerging research has shown that adolescents who lack a balance between studying and resting are likely to experience decreased focus, fatigue, and ultimately lower academic performance. These findings suggest that inadequate physical and mental health not only jeopardizes the overall well-being of adolescents, but also hinders their academic performance.

Achieving Balance: An Analysis of Challenges In high school adolescents, the main obstacles in achieving a balance between academic activities and physical and mental well-being are the influence of social pressure and demanding academic standards. A large number of adolescents experience a recurring pattern where they are forced to engage in constant studying to meet the demands of their parents and professors. However, this responsibility is often at the expense of their own well-being. Research conducted by Lee et al. (2023) revealed that adolescents who experience significant academic stress often experience feelings of anxiety and depression, thus affecting their mental well-being.

Strategies to Achieve Balance To overcome these barriers, initiatives from many stakeholders are needed. First and foremost, schools can take an important role in providing health education programs that underscore the need to maintain a harmonious balance between academic pursuits and physical well-being. These programs include stress management, coping skills training, and promotion of physical exercise among students. Furthermore, it is important to motivate parents to help their children achieve a harmonious balance between academic activities and other activities that enhance personal well-being (Smith & Brown, 2023).

Evaluation of Time Management Strategies and Development of Coping Skills Equipping adolescents with efficient time management skills and coping mechanisms is an important approach to effectively handle academic stress. Kim et al. (2023) found that students with effective time management skills can handle academic pressure more effectively and maintain a harmonious balance between their academic activities and personal goals. Furthermore, the implementation of coping training that specifically targets the management of stress and anxiety can effectively reduce the adverse effects of academic stress in adolescents..

CLOSING

According to the findings of the literature study, it can be concluded that the balance between academic activities and mental well-being is an important determinant of secondary school students' well-being and academic achievement. The main obstacles in achieving this balance are the enormous academic demands and the lack of focus on physical well-being. Nevertheless, by implementing appropriate measures such as health education programs in educational institutions, strong parental support, and the development of time management and coping skills, adolescents can achieve a more optimal balance between their academic activities and well-being.

An optimal balance between academic activities and mental well-being not only improves their overall well-being but also leads to superior academic performance. Therefore, it is imperative for educational institutions, families and communities to collaborate to build a conducive atmosphere that promotes this balance.

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