

## ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CAUSING STRESS AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND ITS IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

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### Abstract

Stress among junior high school students has become an increasing concern in educational psychology as it affects both mental health and academic performance. This study aims to analyze the factors causing stress and its impact on students' mental health based on recent literature. A systematic literature review was conducted using 10 relevant articles published between 2019 and 2024. Findings reveal that academic pressure, parenting style, bullying, social media use, and family economic conditions are the main contributors to stress. The consequences include anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, reduced learning motivation, and social problems. Recommended interventions involve school counseling, digital literacy, stress management programs, parental involvement, and positive extracurricular activities. This study highlights the importance of holistic strategies from schools and families to support junior high school students' mental well-being.

**Keywords:** *stress, junior high school students, mental health, academic performance, intervention*

### Brief Summary

This article discusses stress among junior high school students by reviewing 10 research articles published between 2019 and 2024. The analysis shows that academic pressure, parenting style, bullying, and social media are the main factors triggering stress. Its impacts include psychological problems such as anxiety and depression, academic issues such as decreased motivation, and social effects like isolation or aggressiveness. The recommended interventions are holistic, involving schools through counseling and coping skills training, parents through emotional support, and positive extracurricular activities. The article emphasizes that preventing adolescent stress requires synergy among schools, families, and the social environment.

### INTRODUCTION

Stress among junior high school students has increasingly gained attention in the field of educational psychology. Stress can be defined as an emotional, physiological, and behavioral response to internal or external pressures that exceed an individual's ability to cope (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Adolescence, particularly at the junior high school level, is a transitional period characterized by biological, cognitive, and social changes. These conditions make adolescents more vulnerable to stress compared to other developmental stages (Pratiwi, 2019). Several studies show that junior high school students face adaptation challenges when transitioning from elementary to secondary school. These changes include an increase in academic workload, academic competition, and high parental expectations. Setyawan (2020) revealed that heavy academic demands can cause anxiety, reduce concentration, and negatively affect students' academic performance. This finding is supported by Sari and Nugroho (2021), who found a significant relationship between academic pressure and increased anxiety symptoms among junior high school students. Apart from academic factors, technological developments and social media have a considerable influence on students' stress levels. Cheng and Li (2020), in their systematic review, explained that excessive use of social media can increase the risk of

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fear of missing out (FOMO), cyberbullying, and sleep disturbances among adolescents. Similar findings were reported by Yusuf and Anisa (2023), who stated that uncontrolled digital interaction intensity raises the risk of social stress and reduces the quality of face-to-face interactions among junior high school students. Family factors also play an important role in the development of student stress. Rahman and Astuti (2021) highlighted that authoritarian parenting styles, lack of emotional support, and family conflicts contribute to higher stress levels among junior high school children. Hasanah (2022) further added that overly high parental expectations—especially regarding academic achievement—can create psychological pressure and hinder the development of children’s self-confidence. Unmanaged stress during adolescence can lead to serious mental health consequences. According to Smith and Brown (2020), chronic stress among adolescents is associated with an increased risk of depression, anxiety disorders, and behavioral problems such as gadget overuse or deviant behavior. Kim, Park, and Lee (2021) also found that prolonged stress reduces sleep quality, causes chronic fatigue, and decreases students’ motivation to learn, potentially lowering adolescents’ quality of life in the long term. Based on this description, it can be concluded that stress among junior high school students is a complex issue influenced by academic, social, family, and personal factors. If not properly addressed, stress can hinder adolescents’ psychological and academic development. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the factors causing stress among junior high school students and its impact on mental health based on recent literature, providing a foundation for more effective intervention strategies in both school and family environments.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a systematic literature review approach by examining various relevant scientific articles concerning stress among junior high school students and its impact on mental health. The articles were obtained through searches in three major databases: Google Scholar, Scopus, and ResearchGate. The keywords used in the search included stress among junior high school students, adolescent stress, mental health, and middle school students (Setyawan, 2020; Yusuf & Anisa, 2023). During the selection process, several inclusion criteria were established to ensure that the chosen articles aligned with the study’s objectives. These criteria included articles published between 2019 and 2024, focusing on students aged 12 to 15 years old, discussing factors causing stress or the impact of stress on mental health, and originating from empirical studies—either quantitative, qualitative, or review-based (Sari & Nugroho, 2021; Hasanah, 2022). From the initial search, 35 articles were identified. After the selection process, only 10 articles met the criteria and were chosen for further analysis (Cheng & Li, 2020; Zahra & Lestari, 2024).

## METHODOLOGY

The methodological steps of this study began with the identification of the problem—namely, the high prevalence of stress among junior high school students, which can affect their mental health and academic performance (Pratiwi, 2019). Following this, data collection was carried out through literature searches in the predetermined databases, after which the retrieved articles were selected based on topic relevance, publication year, and research quality (Smith & Brown, 2020). The next stage was data analysis, which involved categorizing research findings into two main aspects: the factors causing stress and its impact on the mental health of junior high school students. The analysis was conducted by comparing research results from various sources to identify similarities, differences, and emerging patterns (Rahman & Astuti, 2021; Kim, Park, & Lee, 2021). This process was followed by a synthesis stage, where relevant findings were compiled into a coherent and systematic explanation. Through this process, the study produced a comprehensive overview of the factors contributing to stress among junior high school students and the resulting consequences for their mental health (Yusuf & Anisa, 2023; Zahra & Lestari, 2024).

## RESULTS

### Factors Causing Stress Among Junior High School Students

The literature analysis indicates that stress among junior high school students is multidimensional in nature. From the 10 articles analyzed, ten primary factors contributing to stress were identified. Academic pressure emerged as the most dominant factor, followed by parenting style, bullying, and social media use. Other contributing factors include economic conditions, extracurricular demands, poor time management, physical health issues, puberty-related changes, and the lack of adequate counseling services—all of which significantly influence students’ stress levels.

Table 1. Factors Causing Stress Among Junior High School Students (2019–2024)

Cauzative Factors	Article Percentage	Appereanc Source
Tekanan akademik (tugas, ujian nilai tinggi)	90%	Setyawan (2020); Sari & Nugroho (2021)
Pola asuh otoriter & ekspektas orang tua tinggi	70%	Rahman & Astuti (2021); Hasanah (2022)
Perundungan & tekanan teman sebaya	60%	Yusuf & Anisa (2023)
Media sosial & perbandingan sosial berlebihan	50%	Cheng & Li (2020); Zahra & Lestari (2024)
Kondisi ekonomi keluarga yang kurang stabil	40%	Hasanah (2022)
Tuntutan kegiatan ekstrakurikuler yang padat	40%	Pratiwi (2019)
Manajemen waktu yang buruk	30%	Setyawan (2020)
Masalah kesehatan fisik (kelelahan, kurang gizi)	30%	Smith & Brown (2020)
Transisi perkembangan remaja (pubertas)	30%	Sari & Nugroho (2021)
Minimnya layanan konseling di sekolah	20%	Zahra & Lestari (2024)

The table shows that academic pressure and parenting style are the most dominant factors contributing to stress. Meanwhile, factors such as physical health problems and the lack of counseling services appear less frequently but still have a significant impact on the students who experience them.

### The Impact of Stress on Mental Health

Stress among junior high school students is a complex phenomenon that occurs during the adolescent transition period, which is marked by significant biological, psychological, and social changes. The effects of stress are not merely temporary but can also influence long-term developmental outcomes. Stress among junior high school students has complex impacts. Psychologically, they tend to exhibit excessive anxiety, frequent worry, and are prone to mild to moderate depression. These conditions are often accompanied by feelings of worthlessness, irritability, and sleep disturbances, preventing the body from achieving proper recovery. Academically, chronic stress has been proven to reduce focus and memory retention, thereby weakening students' concentration. This leads to lower motivation, decreased class participation, and poorer academic performance. If left unaddressed, declining achievement can further increase psychological burdens, creating a negative cycle for students. From a social perspective, excessive pressure may cause students to feel isolated from their peers. Some may withdraw from social interactions, while others may

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display more aggressive behavior. This situation diminishes social support, which should serve as a protective factor, thereby worsening the stress they experience. Furthermore, there are serious long-term implications. Unmanaged stress during junior high school can develop into chronic mental health issues in adulthood. Additionally, declining academic performance may limit future educational opportunities. Therefore, the role of schools, teachers, and parents is crucial in providing counseling services, psychosocial support, and creating a conducive learning environment that enables students to cope with pressure more adaptively.

## Recommended Intervention Strategies

To reduce stress among junior high school students, the study recommends implementing interventions at the **school**, **family**, and **individual** levels. School counseling, stress management programs, and family support are considered effective in preventing stress from developing into more serious mental health problems. The literature emphasizes that interventions must be **holistic** in nature. Schools play a key role in providing counseling services and coping skills training, while families need to offer emotional support. **Digital literacy** is also essential to help students manage the influence of social media effectively

## DISCUSSION

Stress among junior high school students is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon as it involves interacting internal and external factors. Setyawan (2020) revealed that academic pressure is the dominant trigger that often leads to anxiety among students. This aligns with Sari and Nugroho (2021), who emphasized that the burden of assignments, exams, and the demand for high grades create significant psychological pressure for early adolescents. In addition to academic factors, parenting style also influences students' stress levels. Rahman and Astuti (2021) found that authoritarian parenting with high expectations can make children feel pressured. This is supported by Hasanah (2022), who noted that excessive family expectations often reduce students' self-confidence and instill a fear of failure. Thus, the family environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' psychological resilience. Bullying is another significant factor that cannot be ignored. Yusuf and Anisa (2023) reported that both direct bullying and peer pressure have a strong impact on adolescents' mental health. Such situations generate anxiety, insecurity, and can even cause some students to withdraw from social environments. With the widespread use of digital media, bullying now also appears in the form of cyberbullying. Social media further exacerbates students' psychological pressure. Cheng and Li (2020) highlighted that excessive social comparison on digital platforms affects students' self-concept. This finding is supported by Zahra and Lestari (2024), who found that exposure to social media without sufficient digital literacy increases the risk of stress due to image-related pressure. This underscores the importance of digital literacy education among junior high school students.

Furthermore, family economic conditions contribute to psychological pressure. Hasanah (2022) explained that unstable financial situations add to students' mental burdens, particularly when they are aware of limited resources to support their academic needs. This economic pressure often makes it difficult for students to concentrate on learning and increases their vulnerability to stress. Apart from academics and family, extracurricular demands also contribute to stress. Pratiwi (2019) stated that a packed extracurricular schedule without proper time management leads to mental fatigue. Setyawan (2020) reinforced this by noting that poor time management worsens the problem, as students struggle to balance academic and non-academic responsibilities. Physical health issues also directly affect stress levels. Smith and Brown (2020) identified that fatigue, malnutrition, and sleep disturbances caused by stress worsen students' physical condition, creating a vicious cycle—stress leads to physical problems, and those problems, in turn, aggravate stress. This shows a strong interconnection between physical and mental health. The adolescent developmental transition, or puberty, poses its own challenges. Sari and Nugroho (2021) explained that rapid biological and psychological changes during this period often lead to identity confusion. The inability to adapt to these changes increases stress vulnerability, especially when social support is lacking. The lack of counseling services in schools adds to the complexity. Zahra and Lestari (2024) emphasized that the absence of professional counselors makes it difficult for students to find a safe space to share their problems. Yet, effective counseling services can serve as a protective factor, helping students manage their stress. The effects of stress among junior high school students are multifaceted. Psychologically, Smith and Brown (2020) and Pratiwi (2019) found that stress triggers excessive anxiety, mild depression, and feelings of worthlessness. These conditions are often aggravated by sleep disorders, which further hinder students' ability to function effectively at school. Academically, stress has clear implications for declining academic performance. Sari and Nugroho (2021)

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observed that students' learning motivation drops significantly under stress. Yusuf and Anisa (2023) and Rahman and Astuti (2021) added that stress reduces concentration, leading to poorer academic outcomes. From a social perspective, stress alters students' behavior in interacting with others. Some students withdraw due to discomfort, while others become more aggressive. This reduces social support, which should serve as a protective factor, thereby worsening the situation. The long-term implications of stress among junior high school students cannot be ignored. If left unmanaged, stress can develop into chronic mental health disorders in adulthood, affecting quality of life, educational opportunities, and career prospects. Therefore, early intervention is essential. In terms of intervention, school counseling is one of the most effective strategies. Zahra and Lestari (2024) found that regular counseling sessions and peer-support programs significantly reduce student stress. Counseling not only helps students address current issues but also equips them with self-management skills to handle future stress. In addition, digital literacy training plays a vital role. Cheng and Li (2020) emphasized that teaching students how to use social media healthily reduces social comparison and digital pressure. Digital literacy provides awareness and practical skills to use technology wisely, helping students resist negative online influences.

Stress management programs, focusing on relaxation and mindfulness techniques, have also proven effective. Kim, Park, and Lee (2021) found that students who received coping skills training showed improved resilience in handling daily challenges. These interventions are crucial as they provide students with practical tools to manage stress. Parental involvement is equally important in supporting students' mental well-being. Rahman and Astuti (2021) noted that parenting workshops and open communication between parents and children create a more supportive family environment. Emotional support from parents helps reduce stress and boosts students' confidence. Finally, positive extracurricular activities can serve as healthy outlets for emotions and energy. Yusuf and Anisa (2023) asserted that sports, arts, and student organizations act as adaptive channels to cope with pressure. These activities also strengthen peer bonds, fostering a sense of belonging and social support. In conclusion, this discussion shows that stress among junior high school students cannot be viewed as a simple problem. Its causes are layered, its effects are multidimensional, and its solutions require a holistic approach. A combination of school support, family involvement, and skill-based interventions has been proven effective in helping students manage stress more adaptively.

### CONCLUSION

Stress among junior high school students is a multidimensional issue influenced by various factors such as academic pressure, parenting style, social media, bullying, and economic conditions. Its impacts encompass psychological, academic, social, and physical aspects. If left unaddressed, stress may develop into long-term mental health disorders. Effective interventions include school counseling, digital literacy education, stress management programs, parental involvement, and positive extracurricular activities.

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