

Analysis of learning anxiety among senior high school students

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Abstract

Learning is the primary task of every student. However, there are many factors responsible for the success or failure such as anxiety, which is the unpleasant feeling of worry, concern, and fear. Therefore this study aims to measure students' anxiety levels in learning and determine efforts to overcome this condition. This is a quantitative descriptive study, with data collected from 192 students using anxiety instruments. The results showed that most students' anxiety levels were in the normal category; this is because the majority chooses to confide in their close friends.

Keywords: Learning anxiety, counseling, student.

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Introduction

Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to early adulthood (Copeland et al., 2013). It comprises of various types of biological, cognitive, social, and emotional changes (Friedman et al., 2016; Network, 2005). In addition, subjects become more complex and specific as children transition into adolescence in senior high schools, compared to kindergarten, elementary, and junior schools (Efrila, 2020). At this stage, unresolved problems and pressures experienced by students cause anxiety (Khasanah, 2019).

According to Cranney, Leman, Fergus, & Rowatt (2018), anxiety is not pathological because it can be a source of strong motivation (Corey, 2015). Low anxiety is a positive effect on student learning performance and tends to increase learning motivation (Howard, 2020; Yang & Quadir, 2018). In principle, anxiety is essential as it increases motivation and helps students achieve their set goals. Yanti, Erlamsyah, Zikra, & Ardi (2013), stated that low-level academic anxiety tends to arouse students' enthusiasm to study. However, when anxiety is high, it leads to various physical and psychological disturbances.

Anxiety is a manifestation of mixed emotional processes, which occurs when students experience feelings of stress, frustration, and inner conflict (Palitz & Kendall, 2020). It is also an unpleasant condition that includes fear, tension, worry, and confusion. Ifdil et al. (2019) stated that anxiety is one's feelings of fear or tension in dealing with learning problems. Anxious students think of learning as something that is not fun. According to Petrowski, Buehrer, Niedling, & Schmalbach (2020) the symptoms of anxiety are reviewed through three, namely psychological components, such as nervousness, tension, insecurity, fear, and shock; physiological such as palpitations and cold sweat on the palms (Meriyati, Shaulita, & Turnip, 2018); and social, which is associated with environmental factors in the form of behavior (attitude) and disturbance, and seclusion (Chardon, Janicke, Carmody, & Dumont-Driscoll, 2016).

Many factors trigger the emergence of anxiety in students; these include: 1) high learning achievement outlined by the curriculum; 2) non-conducive learning climate; 3) assigning a lot of tasks; and

4) a strict and unfair assessment system (Megawanti, 2015). According to Kusmaryono & Ulia (2020), anxiety is also due to the unfriendly, fierce, rude, and less competent teachers' attitude towards students. The application of strict school discipline that prioritizes punishment, poor climate condition, and limited learning facilities and infrastructures, also trigger anxiety in students (Lestari, Latief, & Widiastuti, 2013). Estonanto & Dio (2019) stated that parents' expectation of children's abilities is also a contributing factor (Orji & Oko, 2018; Stoet, Bailey, Moore, & Geary, 2016).

The high intensity of learning anxiety creates various adverse effects on physical and psychological health. It also tends to affect their academics, thereby leading to low motivation, poor learning strategies, low self-esteem, negative self-evaluation, difficulty concentrating, and poor health perceptions (Mukhlis, Triaristina, Wahyudi, Kameliwati, & Putri, 2020; Ramos et al., 2002). The high level of student anxiety has a negative impact on learning (Chanda & Guha, 2018; Cooper & Brownell, 2020; Downing, Cooper, Cala, Gin, & Brownell, 2020), academic competition, self-confidence, self-acceptance, and self-concept (Anderson, 1999; Shabrina & Rachmawati, 2019).

When students experience problems, their psychology tends to respond in accordance with the brain. These thoughts influence decisions and how to tackle problems (Idris & Idris, 2019). Therefore, during such situations, efforts such as coping anxiety tend to have a positive influence on the individual and improve their ability to solve problems, regulate emotions, think more positively and accept oneself (Mukminina & Abidin, 2020; Simpson, Lincoln, & Ohannessian, 2020). Aysan, Thompson, & Hamarat (2001), and Kumaraswamy (2013), stated that anxiety is strengthened until it is resolved. Therefore, this study aims to measure and analyze students' anxiety levels in learning and the efforts made to overcome this condition. Also, the efforts made by students, school personnel, and parents also play a role in directing their anxiety to be positive. Similarly, school counselors can make various preventive and curative efforts through various services to prevent or overcome anxiety in students.

Method

This is a quantitative descriptive study, with data collected from 192 students by measuring their anxiety aspects and efforts to overcome this condition. The aspects of anxiety measured are the frequency of participation, unpleasant communication experiences, self-avoidance, self-control, and self-expression. A total of 75 instrument items were appropriate to use because they were tested valid and reliable. In addition, the percentage formula was used for data analysis.

Results and Discussions

Figure 1 shows the learning anxiety of high school students in Seberang Ulu 2018/2019 academic year. The highest is in the normal category at 53.13% and with a frequency of 102 students. This is followed by a moderate category of 46.88% with a frequency of 90 students, and there is none in the weight category.

According to Figure 1, most high school students' learning anxiety in Seberang Ulu is in the normal category. This is in accordance with their frequency of participation, unpleasant communication experiences, self-avoidance, self-control, and self-statements are presented in table 1.

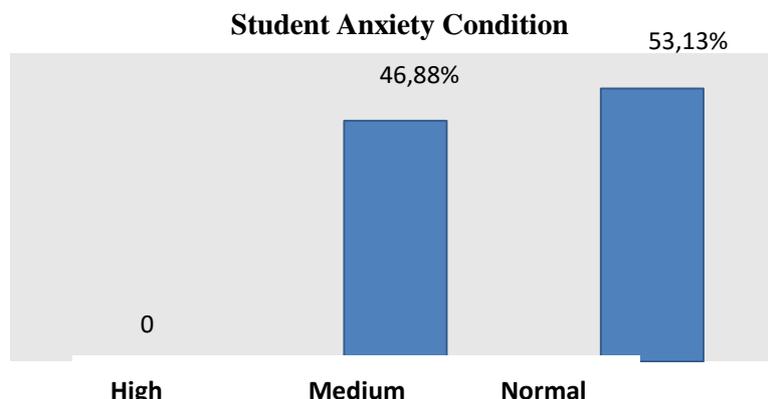


Figure 1: Student learning anxiety level

Table 1 shows that the highest anxiety frequency is in the normal category, with 110 students at 57.29%. The unpleasant communication aspect is in the medium category, with a frequency of 113 at 58.85%. Regarding self-avoidance, it is in the normal category, with a frequency of 116 students at 60.42%. The highest aspect of student self-control anxiety is the normal category with a 98 at 51.04% frequency. In accordance with self-statement, students' anxiety was highest in the normal category, with a frequency of 116 at 60.42%. When viewed from the weight category, the aspect of self-statement has the highest frequency of 7, while the unpleasant communication experience aspect is 5. The self-control aspect is 3 at a frequency of 2 students, and self-avoidance aspect of one.

Table 1: Aspects of frequency of student anxiety participation

Aspects	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Participation Frequency	High	2	1.04
	Medium	80	41.67
	Normal	110	57.29
Unpleasant Communication Experience	High	5	2.60
	Medium	113	58.85
	Normal	74	38.54
Self-Avoidance	High	1	0.52
	Medium	75	39.06
	Normal	116	60.42
Self-Control	High	3	1.56
	Medium	91	47.40
	Normal	98	51.04
Self-Statement	High	7	3.65
	Medium	69	35.94
	Normal	116	60.42

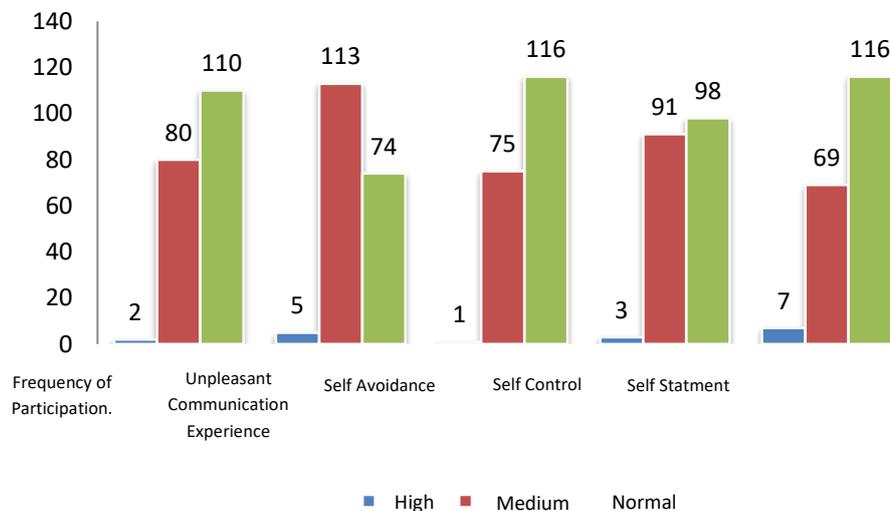


Figure 2: Conditions of student learning anxiety based on anxiety aspects

Figure 2 showed that from the five aspects, four had the highest anxiety and in the normal category. Furthermore, the frequency of participation, self-avoidance, self-control, and self-expression are also in the normal category. The aspect with the highest anxiety of 113 students is unpleasant communication experience. When viewed from the category of severe anxiety, self-statements, and unpleasant communication experiences, a high frequency of 7 and 5 students experience severe anxiety in these aspects.

Based on the efforts made in overcoming learning anxiety, it is found that the highest choice is choosing to confide in close friends, as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Efforts made by students in overcoming learning anxiety

Efforts made by students	Frequency	Percentage
Confide in with close friends	22	11,45 %
Ask a lot	20	10,41%
Listen to songs	19	9,89%
Confide with parents	18	9,37%
Repeat the subject matter	17	8,85%
Prayer	17	8,85%
Make a study plan	17	8,85%
Confide with a boyfriend	13	6,77%
Join group study	12	6,25%
Watching TV	12	6,25%
Come to school counselor	10	5,20%
Set playtime	8	4,16%
Confide in brother	7	3,64%
Play at the mall	7	3,64%
Exercise	7	3,64%
Play station	6	3,25%
Confide in the homeroom teacher	4	2,08%
Smoke	4	2,08%
Pour it out by writing	3	1,56%
Playing the guitar	3	1,56%
Staying up late	2	1,04%
Total	192	100%

Table 2 shows that the efforts made in overcoming their anxiety based on the 5 highest frequencies are as follows: 22 (11.45%) chose to confide in their close friends, 20 (10.41%) chose to ask questions, 19 (9.89%) listened to songs, 18 (9.37%) confided in parents, 17 (8.85%) repeated the subject, while 10 (5.20%) met the school counselor.

The result showed that student anxiety in learning is in the normal category at 53.13%, with a frequency of 102. It is also in the moderate category of 46.88%, with a frequency of 90 students, with none in the weight category. This shows that the level of anxiety is still in the reasonable category and tends to motivate them to learn. Normal and moderate anxiety levels encourage learning, while high anxiety levels interfere with it (Daharnis et al., 2019). Elliott stated that low-level anxiety has a positive effect on student learning performance, while at a high level, it disrupts and worsens their behavior (Elliot & McGregor, 1999).

Under normal or moderate conditions, anxiety is not pathological, because it can be a powerful motivational force. Yanti et al. (2013) stated that anxiety results from an awareness of responsibility. Student's learning anxiety determines their motivation in school (Alizamar et al., 2019; Corey, 2015). In principle, anxiety is important and tends to increase students' motivation in achieving their set goals. According to behavioral theory, when students are unable to control anxiety through rational ways, the ego relies on unrealistic ways (Cohen & Kaplan, 2020). However, when they are able to overcome the symptoms, these feelings become a source of motivation, and the tense experienced is an incentive to carry out an activity.

Most student anxiety is in the normal and moderate category where the four aspects with the highest conditions are aspects of self-avoidance, self-control aspects, and self-expression. One aspect of the highest student anxiety is in the medium category, with a frequency of 113 students on unpleasant communication experience. However, 18 students experienced anxiety in the heavy category on the aspect of self-statement with the highest frequency with 7 students. Unpleasant communication self-control, frequency of participation, and self-avoidance were experienced by 5, 2, 3, and 1 person.

Anxiety is a person's feelings in the form of fear or tension in dealing with learning (Ifdil et al., 2019; Simpson et al., 2020). Students with anxiety analyze learning as a boring activity. This feeling arises because of several factors derived from personal experiences related to the teacher or taunts of friends. This leads to a negative influence on students and decreases their academic achievement (Cohen & Kaplan, 2020; Elliot & McGregor, 1999).

Anxiety is a useful stimulus used to solve problems (Yanti et al., 2013). The frequency of students that decided to reduce their anxiety by choosing to vent with close friends is 22 students at a percentage of 11.45%. When students experience problems, psychology responds accordingly and influences the way they think and make decisions. Furthermore, students feel anxiety, when given workload that exceeds their capability (O'Rourke, Halpern, & Vaysman, 2020). However, assuming they can control this anxiety condition, it strengthens and helps to resolve problems (Mukminina & Abidin, 2020). However, cases of severe anxiety need to acquire handlers from experts such as school counselors. Therefore, preventive efforts are needed for school counselors to optimize guidance and counseling services (Hutagaol, 2020). Some of these efforts include counseling and extra-curricular activities (Ifdil, Hariko, Bariyyah, Zola, & Amalianita, 2020; Wijaya, 2020). This means the availability of professional counselors in schools is absolutely needed.

Conclusion

Based on the study, it can be concluded that the anxiety of senior high school students in Seberang Ulu Palembang is in the normal category. In addition, the frequency of participation, self-avoidance, self-control, and self-expression are normal. However, one aspect of the medium category is an unpleasant communication experience. Students tend to confide in close friends to overcome anxiety, and this has the highest frequency. In conclusion, parents and school counselors play a role in directing student anxiety to be positive with curative efforts to prevent and overcome this condition and enable development.

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