

The Role of Islamic Reality Therapy Intervention to Reduce the Academic Burnout of High-School Students

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The Role of Islamic Reality Therapy Intervention to Reduce the Academic Burnout of High-School Students

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Abstract: Academic burnout is one of the academic stressors that adolescents often experience. Academic burnout without intervention may affect students' psychological state and learning achievement. This study aims to reduce students' academic burnout through Islamic reality therapy group guidance services. The research subjects consisted of 12 students of class XI who had pretest scores of academic burnout in the high category. The research method used is classroom action research with two cycles. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistical techniques. The preliminary study results showed that students have an average academic burnout score of 49.17, classified as the high category. In the first cycle, the average student's academic burnout score is reduced by 7.83 points to 41.33 compared to the preliminary result. In the second cycle, the average academic burnout score decreased by 1.83 points to 39.5 compared to the former cycle's average score. This shows that Islamic reality therapy has been shown to reduce students' academic burnout.

Keywords: academic burnout, Islamic reality therapy, adolescent





A. Introduction

Researchers from many countries have conducted extensive studies on matters of primary concern to individuals in the adolescent age group. Among these are school adaptations (DuBois et al. 1994; Slicker 1998; Yu 2010), academic performance (Adsul and Kamble 2008; Harper and Marshall 1991), confidence (Sonnak and Towell 2001; Want and Kleitman 2006), peer relationships (Cheng et al. 2010; Davis-Sacks et al. 1985; Watanabe 2010), family issues (Demo and Acock 1996; Jime nez et al. 2009), as well as drug abuse (Anderson and Henry 1994; Henry et al. 2009; Sobal 1987; Stark et al. 1989). Particularly in Asia, several similar problems, such as academic performance, academic demands, and academic stress, are known to be the main concerns of adolescents in this eastern hemisphere (Huan et al., 2008).

Researchers from many countries have conducted extensive studies on matters of primary concern to individuals in the adolescent age group. Among these are school adaptations (DuBois et al. 1994; Slicker 1998; Yu 2010), academic performance (Adsul and Kamble 2008; Harper and Marshall 1991), confidence (Sonnak and Towell 2001; Want and Kleitman 2006), peer relationships (Cheng et al. 2010; Davis-Sacks et al. 1985; Watanabe 2010), family issues (Demo and Acock 1996; Jime nez et al. 2009), as well as drug abuse (Anderson and Henry 1994; Henry et al. 2009; Sobal 1987; Stark et al. 1989). Particularly in Asia, several similar problems, such as academic performance, academic demands, and academic stress, are known to be the main concerns of adolescents in this eastern hemisphere (Huan et al., 2008).

Schaufeli and Peeters (2000) refer to the factors causing academic stress in adolescents as academic stressors, while each individual's reaction in dealing with these stressors is called *a strain* (demand). Among the *strains* that many students experience during their studies at school is academic burnout. Some researchers attribute the emergence of this academic burnout to the lack of compatibility between the student's schoolwork resources (e.g., social support, motivation, coping strategies) and the expectation of success (for example, the expectations of students or others, such as teachers, peers, and parents) in a school environment (Salanova et al., 2009; Yang, 2004).

Academic burnout left without intervention affects students' psychological state and learning achievement. A person who experiences academic burnout feels tired when completing various academic demands, shows a cynical and callous attitude toward the school environment, and develops a sense of incompetence as a student (McCarthy et al., 1990; Meier & Schmeck, 1985). Therefore, appropriate intervention is needed for adolescents who experience this academic burnout so that it can be reduced, and they can achieve their best academic performance at school.

Reality therapy is one of the intervention options that can be delivered to students to reduce their academic burnout. This is because the therapeutic model could be applied in various settings, including schools (Jusoh et al., 2011). Reality therapy helps students be more aware of their behaviors and gain a better self-understanding (Shafie et al., 2019). This therapeutic model has also proven effective in dealing with various problems of students in school, including problems related to academic motivation (Mulawarman et al., 2018).

The main concept of reality therapy resembles certain Islamic concepts. Jusoh & Ahmad (2009) argued that there are similarities and differences between reality therapy



and views based on Islamic perspectives. For example, refer to Glasser (2000), if an individual makes

a decision with personal responsibility, changes occur for that person. This is similar to the Islamic teachings of Allah's decree, which can be found in Surah al-Muddaththir verse 38: *"Everyone is accountable for their actions."* Thus, counselors can use reality therapy and modify this contiguous therapy based on cultural values, needs, and the client's expression style (Wubbolding et al., 1998).

This study aimed as a responsive effort to reduce the level of students' academic burnout by using Islamic reality therapy group guidance intervention. Through this therapeutic approach, students are facilitated to identify the root causes of their negative learning behaviors. Students are also assisted in finding the source of their academic motivation (Hanif, 2013) to lower their academic burnout level and boost their academic achievements.

B. Research Method

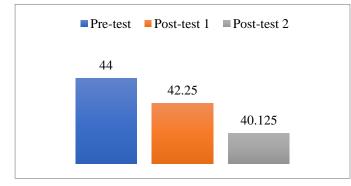
The research method of classroom action research was chosen because the Islamic reality therapy group guidance intervention is delivered by the guidance and counseling teachers as an inclusive service. The treatment aims to reduce students' academic burnout and will be delivered in two cycles.

The participants of this study are first-grade students at an Islamic private school in Yogyakarta. They were recruited through a purposive sampling technique, namely by selecting eight students who had academic burnout scores above the median (>36) based on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; α =.89) instrument. The MBI instrument has 15 items and measures three dimensions of academic burnout: emotional exhaustion (5 items), cynicism (4 items), and academic inefficacy (6 items). A higher score on these dimensions indicates a higher level of academic burnout.

Data analysis was used to test the research hypothesis, specifically whether the Islamic reality therapy group guidance intervention could reduce students' academic burnout. A descriptive statistical analysis is implemented to compare the academic burnout scores before and after interventions.

C. Result and Discussion

The Islamic reality therapy group guidance interventions were carried out over two cycles for eight research participants. The result shows that the intervention is proven to reduce students' academic burnout, as can be seen in the following chart.



Picture 1. Comparison Chart of Students' Academic Burnout Scores



In the first cycle, the average student's academic burnout score is decreased by 1.75 points compared to the pretest condition and found to be statistically significant (sig. = .021 or *p*-value < .05). Meanwhile, after the implementation of cycle II, the average student's academic burnout score was recorded at 2,125 points lower than the average score in *post-test* I.

The Islamic reality therapy group guidance with WDEP (*Wants, Doing, Evaluating,* and *Planning*) technique can be an effective treatment option to reduce student's academic burnout because it aims to increase students' awareness toward their behaviors and help them to achieve better self-understanding (Shafie et al., 2019). In the first intervention cycle, for instance, students are reinforced to implement the *wants and doing* components. The objective of the want component is to remind the students of their initial objectives before entering the school. They are also encouraged to harmonize their objectives with the Islamic concept of seeking knowledge. As narrated by **Abu Hurairah** the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "*Whoever takes a path upon which to obtain knowledge, Allah makes the path to Paradise easy for him*" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi: 2646). Furthermore, in the *doing* component, students are asked to write down things that have been done while studying at school. They are taught about one of the Islamic teachings that intentions must be parallel. Wrong intentions, although the way is right, are considered wrong in Islam, whereas right intentions also are considered wrong if the way is incorrect (Jusoh & Ahmad, 2009).

In the second cycle of intervention, students are directed to apply the evaluating and planning components of the WDEP technique. In the evaluating component, students are asked to evaluate whether the doing component has been on the right track so far to achieve their wants or objectives. This component is immensely by the Islamic concept of *muhasabah* or self-reflection stated in the Holy Qur'an surah Al Hasyr verse 18.

"O believers, fear Allah and let everyone pay attention to what he has done for tomorrow (the hereafter), and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Examining what you do".

According to Ahmad (2018), the verse emphasizes the importance of good planning by humanity for all worldly deeds to obtain eternal salvation. To live a meaningful life and avoid being losers, humans must reflect on and pay attention to everything they do to benefit the future by setting goals and objectives. *Muhasabah* itself is defined as an effort to help people become more aware of themselves through introspection and self-understanding to be able to regulate and control themselves in the hopes of improving (Uasni, Uyun, Annatagia, 2019).

Furthermore, students who feel that there are still many discrepancies between their wants and doings are then asked to formulate a planning component: re-plan the steps for achieving their wants. For instance, one of the participants stated that one of his biggest motivations for entering the school where he is currently studying is to enter a prestigious university like his previous alumni. However, this student still admitted that he often felt too lazy to study and was late in completing the school assignments.

Through the reality therapy intervention procedure, students are expected to increase their awareness of the real condition of their academic performances. As the originator of reality therapy, Glasser also emphasized that individuals/counselees should be encouraged to understand that they are the only ones responsible for making life choices more effective (Wubbolding, 2010). By formulating more effective measures,



individuals/students are expected to be more excited to achieve their academic targets so that their academic burnout level will be reduced.

D. Conclusion

The Islamic reality therapy-based interventions have proven to be effective in reducing student academic burnout. The intervention is given by implementing the WDEP technique (Wants—Doing—Evaluating—Planning) and divided into two cycles of action. In the first cycle of action, students were asked to identify the components of wanting and doing, while the components of evaluating and planning were analyzed in the second cycle of action.

Although the research has shown a promising result in reducing student academic burnout, the scores are still above the median or within the high category level. Therefore, school counselors must cooperate with university researchers for further development. Other approaches, such as the emotional-based or the strengthening self-efficacy interventions, could also be experimented with to reduce student academic burnout.



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