

The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Mental Health of Students with Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

This study applied quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a deep understanding of the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health of students with disabilities in the faculty of education faculty, special education department, Universitas Negeri Surabaya with 117 respondents or students. This number consisted of 96 people (82%) and 21 men (18%). In terms of the semester level, the highest number of respondents was in the first semester with 53 people (45%), 37 people in the third semester (32%), 18 people in the fifth semester (15%), and nine people in the seventh semester (8%). Furthermore, for the domicile of the respondents, as many as 98 people (84%) live outside the city of Surabaya, and 19 people (16%) live in Surabaya. So that the results of the validity test of the anxiety instrument developed by Robert L. Spitzer, Janet B.W. Williams, Kurt Kroenke, (1999) who were then analyzed using SPSS version 23 showed that the value of $r_{table} = 0.17$ with $N = 120$ means that the instrument is declared valid because the value of $r_{count} > r_{table}$ or the probability value = $0.000 < 0.05$ and the value of Cronbach's Alpha = $0.784 > r_{table} = 0.177$ indicates a reliable instrument /. In conclusion, this anxiety instrument is very valid and reliable to determine the impact of the Covid 19 epidemic on the mental health of students with disabilities.

Keywords: Covid-19, Mental health, Students with disabilities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid 19 virus epidemic, which first appeared in Wuhan, China, quickly spread to almost all countries in the world, including Indonesia. The outbreak that first appeared in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 caused acute infectious pneumonia [1] and caused many deaths. Until May, the total number of cases of people infected with Covid 19 worldwide has reached 5 million cases with more than three hundred of thousand deaths [2]. In Indonesia, according to the official website of the Indonesian government, cases infected with Covid 19 also continue to show an increasing trend. Until mid-May 2019, there were 20 million and above positive cases of Covid 19 with 1.3 million deaths and over 5 thousand recovered [3].

There has been some misinformation about the virus among the public. Coronavirus 19 is an infectious disease caused by a virus that spreads very quickly. The Covid-19 outbreak has caused panic and mental stress for the public [4]. Stress is one of the problems in mental health that is closely related to the conditions

experienced due to the demands or interactions of individuals with their environment [5]. According to the IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) in 2020, the factors that caused misunderstanding and public concern during the COVID-19 pandemic were the fear of being infected with Covid 19, the increasing number of suspected positive cases and many deaths, as well as when the epidemic would end which cannot be predicted, coupled with myths and myths.

Public health specialists and government authorities employ a variety of measures, including social isolation, self-isolation, or quarantine, improving health facilities to manage disease, and requiring individuals to work from home [6]. The policy of social and physical distance from the public is consistent with the World Health Organization (WHO) pronouncement, which was made in 2019 [7][8]. To combat this unseen adversary, some governments have declared the shutdown of sports halls, museums, theatres, swimming pools, places of worship, and locations with big gatherings, including educational institutions [9].

According to preliminary information, only the elderly is afflicted, while children are less vulnerable to the illness. However, doctors documented just a few viral infections in children and adolescents [10]. In several countries, efforts to restrict the transmission of the COVID-19 virus among children and adults have resulted in the closure of schools, colleges, universities, and other educational institutions. Indonesia, for example, has a strategy of closing educational institutions throughout the country, including both schools and colleges or universities [11].

Higher education is one of the educational institutions that must also carry out the learning process at home. It turned out that when schools were closed, and the learning process was carried out at home, new problems emerged in the administration of education. The unpreparedness of educators and students to carry out online learning both from the aspect of limited mastery of technology, learning methods, learning evaluation models, limited understanding of the material becomes an obstacle to the learning process. Not to mention the funds needed to purchase quotas by both educators and students and weak signals because students live in remote areas that are not covered by the internet network. In final year students, it becomes more difficult to carry out thesis or thesis consultations. The field research process had to be delayed due to the social distancing and lockdown policies. All of these problems can confuse and affect the mental health of students. As a result, the widespread epidemic phenomenon affects physical health, with the most severe risk being death and causing psychological stress [12][13].

During the COVID-19 outbreak, mental health issues are becoming more prevalent by the day [14]. The psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the general population, patients, medical personnel, children, adults, and university students has been studied [15][16][17]. However, research on the effect of COVID-19 on pupils is still in its early stages. As a result, study into the impact of the Covid 19 epidemic on students' mental health is required. Based on this background, the researchers propose research on the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic with the aim of 1) analyzing the mental health conditions of students during the Covid 19 pandemic; 2) providing a theoretical basis for the provision of mental health services for students; 3) as the basis for the faculty's policy in providing welfare for all its students.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This research uses a survey approach, which in addition to quantitative data, is also equipped with qualitative data to obtain a deep understanding of the

emerging phenomena related to the impact of Covid 19. So the approach used is quantitative and qualitative.

2.2. Participants

This research involved students with disabilities majoring in special education, Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA).

2.3. Data Collection

This study used a research instrument consisting of a structured questionnaire package that asked demographic information, gender, regional origin, and parents' income, among other things. In addition, respondents were also asked to explain their cognition and preventive behaviour related to COVID-19 and the availability of social support.

This study uses the 7-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7) instrument to detect and determine anxiety disorders developed by Spitzer [18] in the Patient Health Questioner (PHQ) module. Respondents reported their symptoms using a 4-item Likert rating scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 3 (almost daily) so that the total score ranged from 0 to 21 [19]. Respondents took less than 3 minutes to complete GAD-7 [20]. The GAD-7 is the most widely used anxiety instrument in clinical practice and research due to its reliability and diagnostic efficiency. Moreover, has shown excellent internal consistency (Cronbach = 0.911). In addition to quantitative data, interviews and observations were also conducted to obtain in-depth data. FGD (Focus Group Discussions) was held four times.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data that has been collected is then analyzed with SPSS Version 23 for quantitative data using descriptive statistics. While qualitative data uses qualitative analysis by analyzing the data collected, then reduced and concluded.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents research data and results on students' mental health conditions as measured using an anxiety instrument developed by Robert L. Spitzer, Janet BW Williams, Kurt Kroenke [18] Sequentially, 1) the demographic profile of the respondents will be presented; 2) student anxiety level; 3) How do students overcome anxiety during the Covid 19 period. The anxiety instrument is then analyzed using SPSS Version 23. Then the results of the research findings can be explained as follows:

a. Student demographic characteristics

The research data showed that the number of respondents or students in this study was 117 people. The number consisted of 96 people (82%) and 21 men (18%). Judging from the semester level, the highest number of respondents was in the first semester with 53 people (45%), in the third semester with 37 people (32%), in the fifth semester with 18 people (15%), and in the seventh semester with nine people (8%). Furthermore, for the domicile of the respondents, 98 people (84%) live outside the city of Surabaya, and 19 people (16%) live in Surabaya.

b. Instrument Validity Test Results

The value of $r_{table} = 0.17$ with $N = 120$ means that the instrument is declared valid because the r_{hitung} value $> r_{table}$ or the probability value $= 0.000 < 0.05$.

c. Academic Anxiety Level Results

The Nervous Statement item explained that from 117 students, there were 4% who had a minimum level of academic anxiety, 38% a mild level of academic anxiety, 37% a moderate level of academic anxiety and 23% a severe level of academic anxiety.

- 1) The Uncontrol Statement item explained that out of 117 students, 7% had a minimum level of academic anxiety, 55% had mild academic anxiety, 29% had moderate academic anxiety, and 9% had severe academic anxiety.
- 2) The Very Anxious Statement item explained that from 117 students, there were 7% who had a minimum level of academic anxiety, 37% a mild level of academic anxiety, 38% a moderate level of academic anxiety and 18% a severe level of academic anxiety.
- 3) The Unrelaxed Statement item explained that of the 117 students, 14% had a minimum level of academic anxiety, 31% had mild academic anxiety, 32% had moderate academic anxiety, and 23% had severe academic anxiety.
- 4) The Anxiety Statement item explained that 29% of the 117 students had a minimum level of academic anxiety, 42% had mild

academic anxiety, 22% had moderate academic anxiety, and 7% had severe academic anxiety.

- 5) The item statement of irritability explains that from 117 students, as many as 20% have a minimum level of academic anxiety, 44% have a mild level of academic anxiety, 21% have a moderate level of academic anxiety, and 15% have a severe level of academic anxiety.
- 6) The Fear Statement item explained that out of 117 students, 2% had a minimum level of academic anxiety, 25% had a mild level of academic anxiety, 45% had a moderate level of academic anxiety, and 28% had a severe level of academic anxiety.

This study discusses the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the mental health of students majoring in special education, Faculty of Education, State University of Surabaya (UNESA). So that this research will be useful for (1) evaluating the condition of students during the Covid 19 pandemic; (2) providing a theoretical basis for intervention services for student psychological problems; and (3) as consideration for the development of faculty policy.

The importance of research findings for the development of science and public welfare, especially in the mission of knowing the mental health condition of students as measured using an anxiety instrument developed by Robert L. Spitzer, Janet BW Williams, Kurt Kroenke (1999), is that we can find out 1) the demographic profile of the respondents; 2) student anxiety level; 3) how do students deal with anxiety during the Covid 19 period. However, sometimes it is very difficult for researchers to achieve maximum research performance. This is due to, among other things: the research that was carried out partially was not fully integrated to all students affected by the covid epidemic, as well as the limited ability of researchers to conduct research and publish the results of their research in the form of scientific papers published in international journals.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of previous studies and discussions, the conclusion in this study is in the form of an anxiety instrument developed by Robert L. Spitzer, Janet BW Williams, Kurt Kroenke [18] to determine the mental health condition of students majoring in special education, Faculty of Education,

State University of Surabaya (UNESA). The results of the instrument validity test using SPSS version 23 show that the r table value = 0.17 with $N = 120$ means that the instrument is declared valid because the r count $>$ r table or probability value = $0.000 <$ 0.05 and Cronbach's Alpha value = $0.784 >$ r table = 0.177 indicating a reliable instrument. These results are based on the number of respondents or students in this study, as many as 117 people. The number consisted of 96 people (82%) and 21 men (18%). Judging from the semester level, the highest number of respondents was in the first semester with 53 people (45%), in the third semester with 37 people (32%), in the fifth semester with 18 people (15%), and in the seventh semester with nine people (8%). Furthermore, for the domicile of the respondents, 98 people (84%) live outside the city of Surabaya, and 19 people (16%) live in Surabaya. So that based on the data from this research, it can later become a reference for evaluating the condition of students during the covid 19 pandemic, providing a theoretical basis for intervention services for student psychological problems and as a consideration for the development of faculty policies.

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