

Hardiness, Social Support, and Academic Stress of Students Working on Bachelor's Thesis during the Pandemic

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Abstract

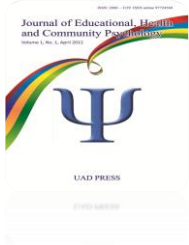
One of the mandatory requirements for obtaining a bachelor's degree is completing a bachelor's thesis. The current COVID-19 pandemic, on the other hand, creates several pressures that cause students to fall behind on their thesis completion. This study aimed to determine how hardiness and social support affect students' ability to cope with academic stress while writing their bachelor's thesis during a pandemic. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect the data. The total research sample consisted of 207 students from a public university in Indonesia working on their thesis during the pandemic. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to analyze the data. This study found that hardiness and social support all significantly negatively impact academic stress. The greater the students' hardiness and social support, the less academic stress they will experience. The findings also show that the primary source of stress for students writing their thesis is a lack of academic support, which has implications for the need to design a suitable support system mechanism so that thesis writing can be completed on time.

Keywords: Academic Stress, Academic Support, Bachelor's Thesis Writing, *Hardiness*, Pandemic COVID-19, Social Support

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Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning is considered the most effective learning model (Hasanah et al., 2020). Almost all learning activities (e.g., classes, exams, practical lessons, supervisory meetings, thesis, and dissertations) are completed online. However, a survey by *Lembaga Survei Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting* (2020) revealed that 92% of Indonesian students experienced many challenges from online learning during the pandemic. Difficulties in understanding lessons and completing final research projects online increased the pressure and stress on students (Azizah &



Satwika, 2020; Gillett-Swan, 2017; Hilmiatussadiyah, 2020; Livana et al., 2020; Octasya & Munawaroh, 2021). Most studies consistently concluded that college students' academic stress has increased after the COVID-19 pandemic emerged (Barseli et al., 2020; Lubis et al., 2021; Son et al., 2020; von Keyserlingk et al., 2021).

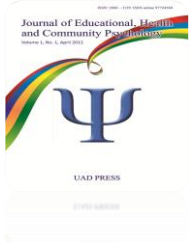
The Indonesian Ministry of Health (2020) described stress as a physical and emotional reaction that a person experiences due to changes in the environment which forces them to adapt. The American Psychological Association (2019) explained that stress is a normal reaction to everyday stress. However, it could change into a disorder when it continuously disrupts a person's daily functioning. Emotional (psychic/mental) and physical disturbances caused by persisting loads that exceed the capacity of a person's abilities could be an obstacle to carrying out various activities (Suharsono & Anwar, 2020). Stress that occurs in the world of education is known as academic stress. Academic stress is stress caused by the amount of pressure in academic matters that exceed the individual's ability and ultimately burdens the individual (Hasanah et al., 2020; Yusuf & Yusuf, 2020). Prolonged academic stress often becomes an obstacle to various individual activities, potentially causing emotional (psychological/mental) and physical disturbances. Alimah & Khoirunnisa (2021) explained that students who tend to experience academic stress during the COVID-19 pandemic are final-semester students preparing a thesis. This is because the thesis is a mandatory requirement for obtaining a bachelor's degree and demands independent student work. However, in the process, the COVID-19 pandemic caused students to be more anxious, worried and confused when completing their thesis (Azizah & Satwika, 2020; Nurcahyo & Valentina, 2020).

One of the biggest obstacles for final semester students writing their thesis is the existence of social distancing policies, namely Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) and Enforcement of Restrictions on Community Activities (PPKM). This government policy causes students who are preparing their thesis to be constrained when conducting field studies or collecting research data. For example, research that will be carried out by students at schools will become increasingly difficult due to limited access during this pandemic (Permatasari et al., 2020; Vrichasti et al., 2020). In addition to limited access to research data collection, the ineffectiveness of conducting online consultation with lecturers hinders students (Azizah & Satwika, 2020). Barriers like this have an impact on the

completion of a student thesis and are prone to causing students to feel depressed and stressed (Alimah & Khoirunnisa, 2021). Stress management is critical for final students to avoid long-term academic stress (Sawitri & Wideasavitri, 2021; Sujadi, 2015).

Important factors that can help individuals in managing academic stress are called protective factors. A protective factor is a person's trait or context that can change an outcome for the better in a given situation (Masten & Reed in Chung, 2008). In other words, protective factors could lessen the effect of a stressor (Colman et al., 2014). Chung (2008) describes the protective factors in students into two kinds, namely individual characteristics (protective factors originating from within the individual) and environmental characteristics (protective factors originating from outside or the environment). This is in line with the transactional stress theory, which explains that a person's characteristics and environment play a major role in determining how a person applies effective coping strategies to deal with stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984:184).

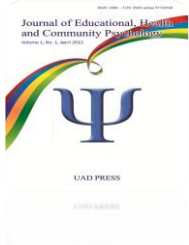
One of the protective factors in managing stress is in the form of personal resources (individual characteristics) (Capone et al., 2020; Kalaitzaki, 2021; López et al., 2020). One of the individual characteristics that has received much attention from researchers is hardiness (Yusuf & Yusuf, 2020). Hardiness is an individual's personality characteristic of remaining strong and more resistant in the face of existing pressures (Vagni et al., 2020). The higher a person's hardiness, the greater their endurance in facing obstacles, so they are less likely to experience academic stress (Abdollahi et al., 2020; Kamtsios & Karagiannopoulou, 2015). Therefore, when students have high hardiness, they will be better able to survive in the face of various obstacles when completing the thesis, so they have a low level of academic stress (Anggawati & Satwika, 2021). On the other hand, students with low hardiness will be more fragile. They may have difficulty surviving due to various obstacles during thesis preparation, causing high academic stress. Abdollahi et al. (2020) investigated this phenomenon in a sample of students during online learning. Similar research has been done by Oktavia et al. (2019) in a face-to-face class setting. The results of the two studies show that hardiness significantly negatively affects academic stress.



In addition to protective factors that come from within, there are also protective factors that come from one of them is social support. Kugbey et al. (2015) and Yildirim et al. (2017) describe that social support has been recognized as a protective factor in dealing with stress among college students. Social support is the help a person receives from other people, such as family and friends. Social support makes individuals feel not alone in stressful situations and capable of dealing with difficult situations (Rahadiansyah & Chusairi, 2021). Awareness of social support around us can motivate individuals to complete their thesis even in the face of the current pandemic (Astuti & Hartati, 2013; Nurcahyo & Valentina, 2020). Conversely, low social support will make a person feel alone in facing various difficulties while working on a thesis, and they tend to experience higher academic stress (Aza et al., 2019). Ernawati & Rusmawati (2015), Kugbey et al. (2015), and Nugroho et al. (2019) have explored this topic before. The three studies found that social support was a predictor of academic stress.

In transactional stress theory, when someone faces a stressor, they will perform a cognitive assessment to evaluate their internal and external resources. Both internal (hardiness) and external (social support) resources will help individuals respond to stressors by eliciting actions that help them cope with stress. This adaptive behavior is called a coping strategy (stress management strategy) (Sujadi, 2015). After implementing a coping strategy, stress can progress to an adaptation phase (reduced stress) or a fatigue phase (increased stress). If the coping strategy cannot overcome the stressor, the individual will enter the fatigue phase, where stress will increase. However, if the coping strategy successfully overcame the stressor, the individual is said to be able to adapt (Gaol, 2016; Maryam, 2017). Thus, theoretically, internal and external resources (such as hardiness and social support) appear to act as strong protective factors in influencing the effects of stressor-induced stress (Pearlin, 1989).

Most studies in Indonesia currently only focus on describing the level of academic stress of students who are writing their thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is still a limited number of studies that address the theme of academic stress management seen from the protective factors in students writing their thesis (e.g., Azizah & Satwika, 2020). In addition, research in Indonesia related to academic stress during the pandemic is still limited. Angelica & Tambunan (2021) and Lazarevic &



Bentz (2021) recommend further research on academic stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of protective factors that can help reduce academic stress on students writing a thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic. The formulation of the problem in this study is 'Do hardiness and social support have a negative effect on the academic stress of students who are writing their thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic?'

Theoretically, this research is used to test the applicability of Transactional Stress Theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984:184), which states that cognitive assessment of internal and external resources possessed (such as hardiness and social support) can reduce the stress experienced by a person and lead to psychological well-being. Stress depends on how a person evaluates and adapts to the situation. Practically, this research is expected to provide knowledge related to final students' academic stress levels. This research is also expected to be able to provide information to students and higher education institutions regarding the efforts that need to be made to prevent or reduce academic stress on final students. Education is a holistic effort to build students' physical, mental, and social well-being. Academic stress is part of mental health that needs to be considered because mental health will affect students in achieving their learning goals.

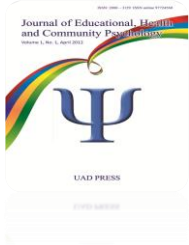
Method

Respondents

Respondents in this study were students of the Accounting Department at a public university in East Java, Indonesia. The university was chosen because, based on the data, 89.9% of students have worked on their thesis for more than two semesters, and until this research was conducted, they had not been able to complete their thesis.

Study design

This research is quantitative research, explaining the causal relationship between events. In this study, there are two independent variables (i.e., hardiness (X1) & social support (X2)) and one dependent (i.e., academic stress (Y)). Three hypotheses were formulated in this study, namely: (1) there is a significant negative effect of hardiness on academic stress (H1), (2) there is a significant negative effect



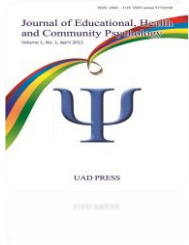
of social support on academic stress (H2), and (3) there is a significant negative effect of hardiness and social support to academic stress simultaneously (together) (H3).

Measurement

Academic stress referred to in this study is stress caused by pressures during the thesis preparation process. Measurement of academic stress variables using a student-life stress inventory questionnaire developed by Gadzella (1994) and modified by adding the necessary context, namely the preparation of the thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two indicators measure academic stress: 1) academic stressors and 2) reactions to academic stressors. The questionnaire consists of 17 statements with the results of the validity test of $r_{\text{count}} 0.494-0.859 \geq r_{\text{table}}$ and the reliability results of $r_{\text{alpha}} 0.936 \geq r_{\text{table}}$. Examples of statements submitted include 1) During this pandemic, I found it difficult to collect data for my thesis; 2) I felt pressured to do my thesis during the pandemic, and 3) Uncertainty during the pandemic made me even more anxious about working on my thesis.

Hardiness refers to the individual personality characteristics of students who remain strong and more resistant in the face of pressures during the thesis process. Hardiness was measured using the questionnaire by Kobasa (1979), which was modified by adding context and making necessary adjustments related to the thesis preparation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hardiness measurement consists of three indicators: 1) Commitment, 2) Controls, and 3) Challenges. The questionnaire consists of 11 statements with the results of the validity test of $r_{\text{arithmetic}} 0.389-0.811 \geq r_{\text{table}}$ and reliability results $r_{\text{alpha}} 0.887 \geq r_{\text{table}}$. Examples of items submitted include 1) Even though my thesis has been revised several times, I always work hard; 2) When I find it difficult to find literature, I will not be discouraged; and 3) I am not afraid to face challenges.

Social support in this research is the support that students get from outside parties, such as family and friends, both verbally and non-verbally, during the thesis process. The measurement of social support adapts a questionnaire developed by House (in Smet, 1994:136). It is modified by adding context and making necessary adjustments related to the thesis preparation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The measuring instrument consists of four indicators: 1) Emotional support, 2) Award support, 3) Instrumental support, and 4) Informative support. The questionnaire consists of 12



statements with the results of the validity test of r arithmetic $0.570-0.932 \geq r$ table and reliability results r alpha $0.928 \geq r$ table. Examples of the items submitted include: 1) My parents show concern for the problems I experienced while working on my thesis during this pandemic; 2) Friends always give positive expressions to whatever I do in my thesis work; and 3) My friends always help me in finding references/literature when I have trouble finding them. The questionnaire also consists of open-ended questions about the dominant factors that students perceive made them stressed while writing a thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected using a questionnaire distributed via a google form. After the data was collected, the data were analyzed using SPSS 26 software. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to determine the mean, frequency, and standard deviation. Meanwhile, at the level of inferential statistics, multiple regression analysis was used to identify the effect of hardiness and social support on academic stress.

Result

Data were collected from 207 respondents who had responded to the questionnaire. Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the majority of respondents were women ($n= 160, 77.3\%$). Respondents were undergraduate students in Accounting Education (65.7%) and Accounting (34.3%). The average study period for a bachelor's degree program (SI) is eight semesters. However, all of the respondents in this study exceeded the standard study period. Namely, 48.3% of students are taking semester 9, while other students are taking semester 11 (38.7%) and semester 13 (13%).

Table 1
Distribution of Research Respondents

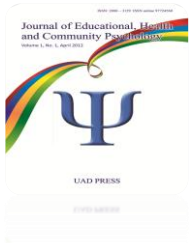
| | | n | % |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----|------|
| Sex | Male | 47 | 22.7 |
| | Female | 160 | 77.3 |
| | Total | 207 | 100 |
| Study Program | Bachelor of Accounting Education | 136 | 65.7 |
| | Bachelor of Accounting | 71 | 34.3 |
| | Total | 207 | 100 |
| Semester | 9 | 100 | 48.3 |
| | 11 | 80 | 38.7 |
| | 13 | 27 | 13.0 |
| | Total | 207 | 100 |

Table 2 shows the results of descriptive statistics for all variables. Table 2 shows a tendency that the longer a student's study duration, the higher the academic stress. The average academic stress of semester 13 students is the highest compared to the average academic stress of semester 9 and 11 students. This is inversely proportional to the data on variables X1-X2. The mean of hardiness (X1) and social support (X2) showed a decreasing trend. The longer a student's study duration, the lower the level of hardiness and social support.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics results (scale 1-5) (n = 207)

| Variables | Hardiness (X2) | | Social Support (X3) | | Academic Stress (Y) | |
|-----------|----------------|------|---------------------|------|---------------------|------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Semester | | | | | | |
| 9 | 3.78 | 0.89 | 3.76 | 0.89 | 3.98 | 0.37 |
| 11 | 3.72 | 0.85 | 3.69 | 0.93 | 4.10 | 0.37 |
| 13 | 2.75 | 0.93 | 2.92 | 0.95 | 4.30 | 0.36 |
| Average | 3.62 | 0.94 | 3.62 | 0.95 | 4.07 | 0.38 |

Table 3 shows the findings from the multiple linear regression analysis. Table 3 depicts that the hardiness variable (X1) and social support variable (X2) have a significant negative effect on the academic stress of students working on theses ($p < 0.05$). Thus, H1 and H2 are accepted. Simultaneously, the two independent variables (X1 and X2) showed a significant effect simultaneously



on students' academic stress ($p < 0.05$). The R Square of 0.365 indicates that the variables X1 and X2 simultaneously affect academic stress by 36.5%.

Table 3

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Findings

| Variables | B | t | Sig. (1-tailed) |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------|
| <i>Intercept</i> | 5.020 | | |
| <i>Hardiness (X1)</i> | -0.153 | -4.192 | 0.000 |
| <i>Social Support (X2)</i> | -0.109 | -3.017 | 0.003 |
| F = 58.731 | | | 0.000 |
| R Square = 0.365 | | | |

In addition to the questionnaire in the form of closed questions, the researcher also provided an additional open question to find out in more detail what factors were the most dominant that made students feel stressed while writing their thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results are shown in Table 4. Not all respondents filled out this open-ended question. From a total of 207 respondents, only 145 respondents wrote down their perspectives. Based on table 4, according to respondents, the most dominant factor that causes academic stress in writing a thesis during the pandemic is the lack of academic support to complete their thesis. Most respondents (43%) stated that there was a lack of academic support from lecturers, and 24% of respondents admitted that they lacked academic support from institutions to complete their thesis, for example, in terms of literature and literacy upskills in writing scientific papers. Interestingly, only 14% of respondents admitted that the difficulty in completing their thesis was due to their personal characteristics, and another 12% of respondents stated that they lacked social support from friends and family.

Table 4

Open-ended Analysis Results

| Factors | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Lack of Academic Support: | | |
| • From lecturers (difficult to contact, slow response, minimal supervision) | 63 | 43% |
| • From institution (difficulty in literature and understanding literature, literacy in writing scientific papers is lacking) | 35 | 24% |
| Personal characteristics (lack of resistance to pressure, procrastination, lack of motivation, overthinking) | 20 | 14% |
| Lack of social support (family and friends) | 17 | 12% |
| Others | 10 | 7% |
| Total | 145 | 100% |

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that hardiness affects the academic stress of students writing their thesis during this pandemic. The results of this study are consistent with previous research conducted by Abdollahi et al. (2020) and Oktavia et al. (2019), who explained that hardiness had a significant negative effect on academic stress. Hardiness is an individual's personality characteristic of remaining strong and more resistant in the face of existing pressures (Vagni et al., 2020). Hardiness serves to help individuals have reasonable self-restraint so that they always rise in every problem they face or when what happens does not go as planned. The COVID-19 pandemic, which creates various kinds of pressure in the preparation of theses, has made the COVID-19 pandemic a source of stress for students who are writing their theses (Nurchahyo & Valentina, 2020). Thus, a high resilience attitude is required while writing a thesis during this COVID-19 pandemic.

A high level of hardiness can provide courage and motivation to do hard work in various stressful situations, turning it into an opportunity for growth (Kamtsios & Karagiannopoulou, 2015). Hardiness could make individuals stronger and more resistant in the face of pressure, allowing students to always rise under any circumstances. This will help students avoid maladaptive or deviant behavior, such as procrastinating on thesis work, which will hinder the completion of the thesis and prolong stress (Bartone & Bowles, 2020; Hasel et al., 2011). This is in line with previous studies by Abdollahi et al. (2020) and Oktavia et al. (2019). They explain that students with high hardiness characteristics will be more resilient and stronger in maintaining their performance, making them less likely to

experience academic stress. That statement suggests there is a role between students' hardiness on academic stress when working on a thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic. High hardiness makes students more resilient, stronger, and more enthusiastic and always rises when facing stressors or problems when completing a thesis, reducing academic stress in writing a thesis during this pandemic (Azizah & Satwika, 2020). This is evidence that hardiness can be a protective factor that protects individuals from the effects of stress (Abdollahi et al., 2020; Hasel et al., 2011; Kamtsios & Karagiannopoulou, 2015), including the academic stress of students who are working on their thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another finding in this study is that social support affects the academic stress of students writing their thesis during this pandemic. These results are also in line with previous studies conducted by Ernawati & Rusmawati (2015), Kugbey et al. (2015), and Nugroho et al. (2019), who found that social support had a significant adverse effect on academic stress. Social support is one form of assistance received by individuals from others, both from individuals and groups (Rahadiansyah & Chusairi, 2021). Previous finding by Ernawati & Rusmawati (2015) describes that social support affects how a person adjusts to his current environment. The current pandemic conditions make students feel isolated and alone, especially when they have to write a thesis during this COVID-19 pandemic amid their families (Nurcahyo & Valentina, 2020). Thus, social support will help students adjust to the current online education method, which requires students to write a thesis in a family environment.

Social support from family and peers is also very much needed to deal with negative feelings due to the pressures of having to do thesis preparation during this pandemic. The social support provided will make students feel comfortable and supported, improving their self-esteem and ability to control complex situations (Astuti & Hartati, 2013; Rahadiansyah & Chusairi, 2021). Previous studies by Kugbey et al. (2015) and Nugroho et al. (2019) supports this, explaining that the social support students have is not only related to psychological well-being but also the overall academic performance of students. However, this study's results differ from the latest study by Rahadiansyah & Chusairi (2021), which states that social support does not affect student stress while writing a thesis. This different result is probably because Rahadiansyah & Chusairi (2021) only examines peer social support while this study examines social support from peers and family. The high social support

that students get during the thesis writing process will increase students' positive emotions (Alimah & Khoirunnisa, 2021). These positive emotions will later help students reduce negative feelings from pressure during the thesis writing process during the pandemic. As an implication, students' academic stress during thesis preparation can decrease along with the amount of social support they receive. That is, social support can be said to be one of the protective factors in individuals who can withstand and reduce the negative effects of academic stress (Alsubaie et al., 2019; Astuti & Hartati, 2013; Coyle et al., 2017; Steese et al., 2006; Yildirim et al., 2017), including the academic stress of students who are working on their thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic.

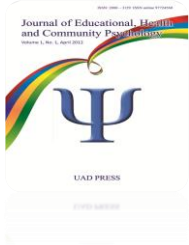
The results of the open-ended question analysis show that the lack of academic support from lecturers and institutions is the most dominant stressor (67%) when working on a thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is higher than the personal characteristics factor (hardiness) of 14% and the lack of support from friends and family (social support) of 12%, which are protective factors discussed in the study. Thus, this may be why although students' hardiness and social support are in the high category, the academic stress felt by students is also high.

Students perceive hardiness and social support as factors that are not dominant in causing academic stress in thesis work. That is, even though students have good personal characteristics and social support, if direct academic support from supervisors and institutions is lacking, students will still experience delays in completing their thesis, resulting in endless academic stress. This is in line with the research results by Julianti & Yulia (2015), who explained that academic support from lecturers, such as intensive communication between students and supervisors, had a significant negative relationship with academic stress. Academic support is different from social support. Academic support is a component of support universities provide to students to adapt to academic demands in higher education, including overcoming the lack of student academic skills in writing a thesis (Aryaningtyas, 2018; Zongozzi et al., 2019).

The replacement of the thesis guidance mechanism from face-to-face to online is one of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic (Azizah & Satwika, 2020; Permatasari et al., 2020). Guidance/consultation with lecturers online is not as intense as when meeting face to face, further hampering the process

of preparing a student thesis (Azizah & Satwika, 2020). Karyanah (2016) explained that the success or failure of a student in completing his thesis depends not only on the student's commitment but the supervisor and institution also play a role in the success or failure of a student in completing his thesis. The lack of academic support from this lecturer can also be the root of the problem of students' lack of competence in carrying out scientific writing activities, and writing scientific papers such as theses requires well-written communication competence. Unfortunately, this written communication competence is often missed in accounting classes (Irafahmi, 2019, 2021; Irafahmi, Williams, & Kerr, 2021). In addition to requiring written communication competence, writing scientific papers also requires critical thinking skills. Critical thinking skills are higher-order thinking skills, which include the ability to evaluate and synthesize information to make relevant decisions. The development of critical thinking skills also needs to be improved during accounting learning in universities. Research shows that accounting textbooks in Indonesia pay little attention to aspects of critical thinking, especially the components of learning objectives, materials, and practice questions (Irafahmi, Nuris, Zahroh, & Nagari, 2018). The lack of academic support from institutions related to the development of written communication competence and critical thinking skills since the learning process in the early years of lectures and exacerbated by the lack of academic support from lecturers when students take theses is the potential trigger for students' incompetence in completing their thesis.

Lazarus & Folkman (1984:182) state that many aspects need to be considered in understanding stress. Often only certain aspects are emphasized without regard to other aspects. Lazarus & Folkman (1984:189) explained that in dealing with stress, collective intervention is needed from several aspects rather than intervention from the individual side. This is because many problems are rooted in organizational, social, and economic roots that cannot be contained and changed by good personal characteristics alone (good individual stress management only). Therefore, failure to cope with stress (stress that is still high) does not always reflect individual shortcomings; in the true sense, they may represent a failure of a social system in which the individual is entangled in it (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984:189).



Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis and discussions that previous researchers have presented, it can be concluded that self-protective factors, namely hardiness, and external protective factors, namely social support, have a significant negative effect on students' academic stress who are writing thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors act as protective factors that will help reduce the academic stress of students writing a thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, it can be seen that the leading cause of stress for students who are currently preparing their thesis is the lack of academic support.

The implications of the results of this study are as follows. First, since hardiness is very important to reduce academic stress, each student needs to design commitment and control over the events that occur to create stronger self-restraint, for example, by making a regular schedule for working on the thesis, not giving up when faced with various obstacles, and consistently compiling the thesis in earnest. The implication for other parties, such as lecturers, peers, and parents, is that they can create a supportive environment for students so that when students feel difficulties and despair, they believe that the people around them will always be there and always help them. Thus, a supportive environment is expected to be one of the efforts to increase student resilience. Institutions can also provide counseling services to improve students' mental resilience from various existing pressures.

Second, social support is critical to reduce academic stress, so family and friends must consistently create support for students taking their thesis. For example, giving attention, care, and encouragement with positive sentences, taking the time to hear their complaints, and providing advice or input they need. Third, hardiness and social support are not the sole determinants of academic stress. Academic support also plays a role, which has implications for the need to design a suitable support system mechanism from lecturers and institutions so that thesis writing during the pandemic can be completed on time. For example, lecturers need to always pay attention to the progress of students' thesis, provide regular and quality feedback, provide motivation and relevant advice for students. University institutions need to create a more systematic and integrative online guidance system that can reduce the lack of intensity of teacher-student guidance. In addition, institutions can

also improve students' written communication competence through various training on writing scientific papers that are carried out regularly.

The limitation of this research is that the data collection was carried out using only a questionnaire and an open question. Thus, there is a possibility that respondents' answers have not been explored in depth. In addition, this study was conducted using a sample of students from one university, so the study results are difficult to generalize to other populations. Recommendations for further research are expected to be able to add academic support variables to the academic stress management model. In addition, further research can use a qualitative study design in order to explore more deeply the causal factors and factors that can reduce academic stress experienced by students in the preparation of theses and are expected to use other populations so that the results of research related to this topic become more diverse.

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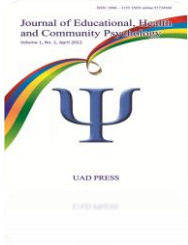
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