

## University Students and Their Concerns: Prevalence and Degree of Severity

Jenny Lukito Setiawan

Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Ciputra, Surabaya

e-mail: jennysetiawan@ciputra.ac.id

**Abstract.** Since undergraduates are moving from adolescence to young adulthood, they face many changes in this transitional period. It is argued that they still need support to “grow” and cope with all the “unbearable” stresses. The aim of this study is to assess the prevalence and degree of severity of students’ concerns during their university career. Participants ( $N = 1,279$ ) were students from two universities, who volunteered to complete self-administered questionnaires. Results reveal that academic-related problems were the most widely experienced and the most serious concerns for students, compared to other areas. With regard to the prevalence of concerns, problems related to academic, self, depression and mood change, romantic relationships, welfare, other relationships, anxiety, loss, and transitions, were experienced by more than 50% of students participating in the study. Detailed findings, implications of results, and the recommendation for improving the quality of university students life are further discussed.

Keywords: prevalence, degree of severity, career.

**Abstrak.** Karena mahasiswa S-1 adalah remaja yang menuju dewasa muda, mereka menghadapi banyak perubahan dalam masa transisi ini. Diasumsikan bahwa mereka masih membutuhkan dukungan untuk “tumbuh” dan mengatasi berbagai stres yang berat. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menilai prevalensi dan beratnya keprihatinan mahasiswa selama masa studinya. Partisipan penelitian ini ( $N = 1,279$ ) adalah mahasiswa dua perguruan tinggi, yang bersedia mengisi kuesioner tentang pribadinya. Hasil mengungkapkan bahwa masalah terkait-akademik merupakan yang paling banyak dialami dan paling serius bagi para mahasiswa, dibandingkan hal lain. Menyangkut prevalensi keprihatinan, masalah terkait-akademik, pribadi, depresi dan perubahan suasana hati, hubungan romantis, kesejahteraan, hubungan lain, kecemasan, kehilangan, dan peralihan, dialami oleh lebih dari 50% partisipan. Diba-has lebih lanjut temuan rinci, implikasi hasil, dan rekomendasi perbaikan kualitas kehidupan mahasiswa.

Kata kunci: angka kejadian, derajat keparahan, karier

Wittenberg (2001) points out that being at university can be a “time of growth” but can also involve “unbearable” stresses. This is true since undergraduate students are in a transitional period in their life. They move from adolescence to young adulthood, which makes them face many changes in their lives. Brown and Ralph (1999) also assert that although students may experience eustress or positive stress which can help to promote personal growth, they have the potential to experience dis-

tress. Therefore it is argued that supports should be provided for undergraduate students in order to help them move through their transitional period and achieve growth.

However, the support given to university students cannot be effective without understanding the common problems they encounter during their university career. Several studies (for instance Cook et al., 1984; Carney, Peterson, & Moberg, 1990; Grayson, Clarke, & Miller, 1995; Rudowicz & Au, 2001) have been conducted to investigate problems experienced by students. Carney et al. (1990) conducted a survey amongst students and faculty members in a university in the Midwest of the USA to discover their perceptions of common problems amongst students. It was found that both students and faculty ranked self-support finances, career indecision/job

---

This paper has been presented at the International Conference on Improving the Quality of Human Life: Multidisciplinary Approach on Strategic Relevance for Urban Issues, on September 6-7, 2007 in Surabaya.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jenny Lukito Setiawan, Ph.D., Waterpark Boulevard, Citra-Raya, Surabaya 60219.