An Analysis of University Students' Academic Hardiness: Its Implication on Academic Achievement

Permata Sari, Idriani Idris, Ilham Khairi Siregar

Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Gorontalo, Indonesia
permata@ung.ac.id

Abstract: Academic hardiness is crucial for students as it aids in coping with stress, improving academic performance, and fostering mental resilience. This study aimed to describe the level of academic hardiness among Gorontalo State University students as a basis for formulating programs by the Academic Services Unit. This descriptive study involved 136 students who were recruited using simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using an academic hardiness scale with a reliability level of 0.880. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency and central tendency calculations through IBM SPSS 22. The research result showed $M=93.96$ and $SD=13.494$. It also demonstrated that 92 students fell into the high category, 42 students into the moderate category, and 2 students into the low category. The results of this research provide a foundation for identifying students potentially in need of additional support in terms of academic hardiness and planning suitable interventions to be carried out by the Academic Services Unit at Gorontalo State University.
Keywords: Academic Hardiness; Academic Achievement; Self-control

Introduction

The current landscape of higher education in Indonesia is confronted with various challenges and dynamic changes. Within this educational ecosystem, students play a pivotal role and need to possess a high level of academic hardiness to succeed in the increasingly complex and evolving academic environment. Academic hardiness encompasses commitment, self-control, and the ability to confront challenges as key factors in achieving students' academic success (Bédard Thom et al., 2021; Melati & Setyowati, 2023; Saputra & Suarya, 2019).

In this context, academic hardiness is of paramount importance to students as it assists them in coping with pressure, enhancing academic performance, and developing mental resilience (Saputra & Suarya, 2019; Trigueros et al., 2020). Furthermore, academic hardiness also enables students to become more self-reliant in their learning, improve problem-solving skills, boost self-confidence, and prepare for the professional world (Peters & Romero, 2019; Tchamyou et al., 2019). These capabilities also foster lifelong learning motivation, making it a valuable skill that can be continuously developed throughout higher education.

Research conducted by Sari & Zaharuddin (2023) indicates that senior-level students who are actively involved in organizations and part-time work fail to meet the commitment and self-control aspects of their primary student obligations, thus necessitating direct interventions for self-control. Another study suggests that students in the Medical Profession program exhibit high levels of academic hardiness, with the belief that they can handle academic demands during clinical placements by managing behavior and regulating emotions as part of the learning process, no matter how challenging (Rifandi & Usri, 2023). Yet another study reveals that prospective mathematics teachers fall within the moderate category of academic hardiness, with some students exhibiting low levels. Consequently, interventions

from Counseling and Guidance services, both digital and non-digital, are required to enhance academic hardiness, including psychological aspects (Utami & Sari, 2023). The academic hardiness of students plays a crucial role in determining their ability to confront and overcome academic demands. Understanding and developing academic hardiness are pivotal factors in improving the quality of higher education and assisting students in achieving better academic performance.

Therefore, educational institutions, including Gorontalo State University (UNG), should consider supporting students in developing their academic resilience through appropriate support programs. Several factors driving research on the academic hardiness of UNG students include global changes in higher education, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which has shifted the paradigm of teaching and learning, as well as the increasingly competitive academic landscape (Ahmad et al., 2020; Burt et al., 2023; Mareta et al., 2023).

As a university committed to producing competitive and outstanding students, UNG needs to assess the extent to which students have developed academic hardiness. With this understanding, tailored academic support programs based on the level of academic hardiness can help students achieve better academic performance while reducing levels of stress and burnout. Furthermore, research on the level of academic hardiness can provide better insights into the challenges faced by UNG students, including mental health issues, financial concerns, or other personal problems. With a better understanding of these factors, the Academic Services Unit can develop support programs that better align with students' needs. Therefore, this research aims to assess the level of academic hardiness in UNG students as a foundation for optimizing their development and abilities and aligning the services offered by the UNG Academic Services Unit with the students' needs.

Method

This survey study aimed to depict the level of academic hardiness among Gorontalo State University students. One hundred and thirty-six students were recruited as participants using a random sampling technique. Data were garnered using an academic hardiness scale developed based on the aspects of academic hardiness, including self-commitment, self-control, and resilience, as proposed by Kobasa (1979). Prior to validation, the questionnaire contained 39 statements, which were subsequently reduced to 30 statements after validation, demonstrating a reliability of 0.880, indicating the instrument's suitability for measuring students' academic hardiness.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency calculations to examine mean values, proportions, and central tendency, performed using IBM SPSS 22.

Result and Discussion

This study involved 136 students who willingly completed the academic hardiness scale. It was found that the academic hardiness of Gorontalo State University students falls into the high category (M=93.96, SD=13.494). Academic hardiness scores are grouped into three categories: low (30-60), moderate (61-90), and high (91-120). The level of academic hardiness among Gorontalo State University students is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Academic hardiness among UNG students

Category	N	%
Low	2	1.5
Moderate	42	30.8
High	92	67.7

Based on Table 1, 67.7% participants (n=92) were found to have a high level of academic. Meanwhile, the moderate category accounts for 30.8%, or 42 students, while the low category constitutes 1.5%, with only 2 students.

This study aimed to depict the level of academic hardiness among Gorontalo State University students. The majority of students, representing 67.7%, fall within the high category in terms of academic hardiness. This indicates that most students possess the ability to effectively overcome academic challenges and exhibit strong commitment and self-control in fulfilling their responsibilities as students. Strong self-control assists students in efficient time management (Gunawan & Syakinah, 2022; Zhao et al., 2021), including the ability to create effective study schedules, avoid procrastination, and meet assignment and project deadlines. Students with strong self-control tend to better cope with academic stress (Indria et al., 2019; P. Sari et al., 2020). They can avoid excessive anxiety, manage anxious feelings, and remain composed in challenging situations.

High academic hardiness levels in students have positive implications, including good academic performance, resilience to stress, commitment to education, high learning motivation, efficient time management, skill development, and an overall more positive educational experience (Abdollahi et al., 2020; Putri & Sawitri, 2018). Students with high academic hardiness tend to achieve higher levels of success, overcome academic obstacles more effectively, and feel motivated and confident in reaching their goals (Azizah & Satwika, 2021; Pramesta & Dewi, 2021). Therefore, the development of high academic hardiness among students is a crucial factor in enhancing success and the overall higher education experience.

However, it is important to note that there are some students, although in smaller numbers, who fall into the moderate (30.8%) and low (1.5%) categories of academic hardiness. This indicates that there are a proportion of students who may face difficulties in managing academic pressures, maintaining their commitment to education, or exercising self-control in academic tasks and responsibilities.

The level of academic hardiness in the moderate category among students can be influenced by various factors. Academic hardiness is a concept encompassing commitment, self-control, and the ability to confront challenges, and its level may vary from one individual to another. Students who are new to the college environment may not yet have sufficient experience in dealing with academic pressures or challenges (Wiyono & Indreswari, 2023). This can result in a moderate level of academic hardiness, which may develop over time with experience.

Some students may have a low level of commitment to their academic goals, which can reduce their level of academic hardiness. When individuals are less certain or motivated to achieve their academic goals, they tend to have lower academic hardiness (Azizah &

Satwika, 2021; Cheng et al., 2019). Low levels of academic hardiness in students have significant implications for their academic performance and well-being.

Students with low academic hardiness tend to have poor academic performance, are more susceptible to academic stress, and may be less committed to their education (Kurnia & Ramadhani, 2021; Li & Carroll, 2020). They may also experience low learning motivation and struggle with behavior and time management. However, it is important to remember that academic hardiness can be enhanced through appropriate support, interventions, and efforts, thus aiding students who initially have low levels of academic hardiness in overcoming academic challenges and achieving success in higher education.

Although the percentage is small, the finding that some students at Gorontalo State University have low levels of academic hardiness aligns with previous studies that have also identified students with academic hardiness issues. Studies by Puspita & Kumalasari (2022) indicate that students with low academic hardiness may be vulnerable to academic stress and poor performance. The results of this research, which show the existence of students with low academic hardiness, also reflect findings by (Yuningsih & Nugraha, 2023), who suggest that appropriate interventions can help students improve their academic hardiness. Therefore, the results of this study provide a strong foundation for the university to plan suitable support programs and interventions.

Students who initially fall into the moderate or low academic hardiness categories still have the potential to improve through their experiences, support, and their own efforts (Darmadji, 2022). Interventions, academic support, and counseling can also help them develop higher academic hardiness. Therefore, optimal services are needed at the academic services unit at Gorontalo State University.

In providing counseling services to students, universities should not only cater to those in the low and moderate categories. Even though, on average, students already have high levels of academic hardiness, they still require counseling services. One approach is to provide motivation through workshops, whether in a classical format or group sessions. By offering motivation to students with varying levels of academic hardiness, students can develop effectively (Azizah & Satwika, 2021).

Conclusions and Suggestions

The study results indicate that, on average, students at Gorontalo State University possess a high level of academic hardiness. Understanding and developing academic hardiness are crucial aspects in enhancing the academic performance and overall experience of students at Gorontalo State University. The findings from this research serve as a foundation for identifying students who may potentially require additional assistance in terms of academic hardiness and planning suitable interventions that can be carried out by the Academic Services Unit at Gorontalo State University. The Academic Services Unit at Gorontalo State University can offer counseling services to students in both group and individual settings, provide self-management training for students, conduct successful learning seminars, and introduce new students to the services provided by the Academic Services Counseling Unit.

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