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Exploration of Students' Perceptions of The Role of Family in Academic Achievement

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Abstract

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. This research explores students' perceptions of the role of family in academic achievement, with a focus on the dynamics between perceived support and stress. Through a qualitative approach, data is collected from in-depth interviews with students from various backgrounds. The research results show that family support, in the form of moral encouragement and financial assistance, greatly influences students' academic motivation. However, in certain situations, such as high expectations or comparisons with siblings, this support can turn into stressful pressure. College students often feel caught between the desire to meet family expectations and the need to pursue their personal goals. This research also identified that the role of the family not only impacts motivation, but also the mental health of students. By understanding the complexity of this relationship, it is hoped that it can provide insight for parents and educators in creating a supportive environment without causing excessive pressure. It is hoped that these findings can become a reference in developing more effective intervention strategies to support students' academic well-being.

Keywords: family support, pressure, motivation, stress, academic achievement.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi persepsi mahasiswa terhadap peran keluarga dalam pencapaian akademik, dengan fokus pada dinamika antara dukungan dan tekanan yang dirasakan. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan dari wawancara mendalam dengan mahasiswa dari berbagai latar belakang. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dukungan keluarga, yang berupa dorongan moral dan bantuan finansial, sangat memengaruhi motivasi akademik mahasiswa. Namun, dalam situasi tertentu, seperti ekspektasi yang tinggi atau perbandingan dengan saudara, dukungan tersebut dapat berubah menjadi tekanan yang menimbulkan stres. Mahasiswa sering kali merasa terjebak antara keinginan untuk memenuhi harapan keluarga dan kebutuhan untuk mengejar tujuan pribadi mereka. Penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi bahwa peran keluarga tidak hanya berdampak pada motivasi, tetapi juga pada kesehatan mental mahasiswa. Dengan memahami kompleksitas hubungan ini, diharapkan dapat memberikan wawasan bagi orang tua dan pendidik dalam menciptakan lingkungan yang mendukung tanpa menimbulkan tekanan berlebihan. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat menjadi acuan dalam pengembangan strategi intervensi yang lebih efektif untuk mendukung kesejahteraan akademik mahasiswa.

Kata kunci: dukungan keluarga, tekanan, motivasi, stres, pencapaian akademik.

Introduction

Higher education is an important stage in an individual's life, where students are expected to not only master academic knowledge, but also develop the social and emotional skills necessary to contribute to society. In this context, the role of family is very crucial in supporting students' academic achievements. Families that provide emotional support, motivation, and material resources can create an environment conducive for students to learn and grow. Strong family support can boost student confidence, which in turn contributes to better academic performance. This shows that students' perceptions of the role of family in their education are very important to understand.

However, this perception is not always positive, and is often influenced by a variety of factors, including socioeconomic background and family dynamics. Santrock emphasizes that families involved in their children's education can help create positive values related to education, which contribute to higher academic achievement. Therefore, it is important to explore how students view their family's role in the learning process, as well as how support or pressure from family can affect their motivation and academic outcomes. This research aims to provide a deeper insight into students' perceptions of the role of the family, as well as its implications for the development of more effective support strategies in the context of higher education.

Students' academic achievement is not only influenced by individual factors, but also by the social environment, especially family roles. Reality shows that many students face challenges related to family support in their education. A study by Johnson et al. (2024) revealed that college students from less supportive family backgrounds often have difficulty achieving their academic goals. This is due to the lack of communication and understanding between students and family members regarding the importance of higher education. In this context, students' perceptions of family roles are very important to understand, as they can affect their motivation and academic performance.

On the other hand, research also shows that college students who feel supported by family tend to have higher levels of academic satisfaction and are better able to cope with the stress associated with academic demands. According to research by Lee and Kim (2024), emotional and material support from family can serve as a buffer against the academic pressures faced by college students. As such, it is important to explore how students perceive their family's role in academic achievement, as well as how these realities can influence more effective educational strategies. This research aims to provide deeper insight into these dynamics and their implications for the development of more inclusive education policies.

A student's academic achievement is the result of a complex interaction between a variety of factors, including individuals, institutions, and social environments. One of the important elements of this social environment is the family, which often serves as the main source of support for students. Indications that the role of family affects academic achievement can be seen from various studies that show that students who feel supported by family tend to have higher motivation and better academic results. A study by Martinez et al. (2024) found that emotional and material support from family contributes significantly to a student's academic success, especially in the face of challenges associated with higher education.

However, not all students feel the same support from their families. Some students may experience pressure from family to achieve certain standards, which can negatively impact their mental health and academic performance. Research by Thompson and Garcia (2024) shows that college students who come from demanding family backgrounds often experience higher anxiety and stress, which in turn can interfere with their learning process. This indication shows the importance of understanding how students' perceptions of family roles can vary and affect their academic achievement.

By understanding these indications, this study aims to explore students' perceptions of the role of family in their academic achievement. This research will identify the factors that influence these perceptions, as well as how these perceptions can contribute to more effective support strategies in the context of higher education. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and families in an effort to improve students' academic achievement.

The role of family in students' academic achievement plays an important role as a source of emotional support, motivation, and practical help. However, in reality, not all families are able to provide optimal support due to various obstacles such as busyness, low knowledge about higher education needs, and limited resources. Therefore, it is necessary to find effective solutions to optimize the role of families in supporting students' academic achievements. One of the solutions that is widely suggested is to improve communication and family involvement through education and training programs that can help families understand the needs of students more deeply and how to provide appropriate support.

In addition, another important solution is the development of institutional policies that encourage collaboration between families and universities in the educational process. According to Epstein (2024), the school-family-community partnership model is a strategic approach to strengthen the role of families so that they not only support emotionally but also actively participate in the formation of a conducive learning environment. In addition, Santrock (2024) suggested strengthening counseling and mentoring services on campus that also involve families as part of the student support system. By integrating these various solutions, it is hoped that the role of the family can be more optimal in supporting students' academic achievements.

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was chosen to explore and deeply understand students' perceptions of the role of family in academic achievement, focusing on the support and pressure they experience. This research was carried out at the State Islamic University (UIN) Syahada, PadangSidempuan, from March to May 2025. The research subjects consisted of 15 UIN Syahada students who were selected using purposive sampling techniques. The criteria for selecting respondents were active students who had experience related to support and pressure from their families in an academic context. Data were collected through in-depth interviews using semi-structured interview guidelines. These interview guidelines include open-ended questions designed to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and views on the role of family in academic achievement. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded with the respondent's permission to ensure the accuracy of the data. The researcher prepared interview guidelines and scheduled a meeting with the respondents. With this research method, it is hoped that a deep understanding of students' perceptions of the role of family in their academic achievement can be obtained.

Results and Discussion

The relative analysis in this research yielded several themes, namely:

Table 1. Analysis of themes

| Theme | Subtheme | Description |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. The Meaning of Family Support | a. Support motivation | As Students interpret family support as encouragement in learning, both through advice, attention, and motivation from parents. |
| | b. Support as a responsibility | a Family support is also interpreted as a mandate and responsibility to study earnestly in order to repay the family's trust. |
| | c. Support as a form of life change | a Some students said that family support encourages them to live more independently and responsibly, especially in the dormitory environment. |
| 2. Form of Family Support | a. Financial support | The most common support is in the form of tuition financing, pocket money, and living necessities during studies. |
| | b. Emotional support | In the form of words of encouragement, prayer, and the presence of parents as a 'support system'. |

| | | | |
|--|----------------|--|---|
| | | c. Inspirational support | A parent's past story that motivates students to be better than previous generations. |
| 3. Family Support Stability | Support | a. Consistent support | Most students stated that their family support had not changed since the beginning of their studies. |
| | | b. Fluctuating support | There are also those who experience a decrease in enthusiasm due to changes in the form of support or high family expectations. |
| 4. Support Pressure | vs. | a. Support is not a pressure | The majority felt that parental support was not suppressing, but rather motivating. |
| | | b. Support that could potentially be a pressure | Some college students feel pressured when parents have high expectations or when facing difficult assignments. |
| 5. Strategies for Coping with Academic Stress | | a. Focus on goals | Students try to stay motivated by remembering the goals of college and support from their families. |
| | | b. Communication with family | Some students choose to share stories or ask for advice from families when they feel depressed. |
| 6. Ideal Family Support | | a. A combination of motivation and financial aid | Students expect ideal support in the form of enthusiasm and balanced financial assistance. |
| | | b. Uninhibited support | Students want support that gives them room to grow without excessive pressure. |

1. The student's view interprets the form of support provided by the family in their academic studies.

Students interpret family support as a form of attention that provides a sense of security, enthusiasm, and responsibility in undergoing academic studies. The most meaningful support felt by students is not only in the form of material, but rather emotional communication, trust, and prayers from parents. One participant said, "Mamak always says, if there is a problem on campus, just tell the story, don't hide it. It makes me feel heard and appreciated." (P6). Another participant added, "My father often asks me how to go to college, even if it's only through WA, but it's enough to make me feel supported." (P1). In addition, family prayers and hopes are spiritual strengthening, as P9 said, "I believe my mother's prayer makes me strong to study away from home." P12 also said, "My family doesn't know much about campus, but they believe I can. That's what makes me excited." This was also emphasized by P3, "I feel responsible because my parents have worked hard to find money for me to go to college."

These findings are in line with the concept of perceived social support (Zimet et al., 1988) which shows that the perception of support from the family is positively correlated with the resilience and psychological well-being of students. It is also in line with the findings of Cutrona and Russell (1990) who explain that emotional support from the family can be a stress buffer in the academic environment.

Students interpret family support as an emotional and spiritual foundation that gives strength, not just material help. Trust, consistent communication, and parental attention are key elements in strengthening the meaning of such support in the context of academic studies.

2. Students feel that in this situation family support turns into pressure on students.

Family support can turn into pressure when family expectations are too high, inflexible, or delivered repeatedly without considering the student's emotional and academic state. P2 said, "*My mother calls every week, asks for grades. If there is a drop in value, it is immediately said that they are not focused.*" Likewise with P7, "*I feel depressed because my family always compares me to my brother who used to always laude.*" The same thing was experienced by P11, "*My father asked me when I would graduate, even though I was still doing my thesis.*" P15 revealed,

"I didn't dare to talk about the difficulties of studying because I was afraid of being said to be lazy." P8 adds, "Sometimes parents insist on the major or the goal they want, not the one I am interested in."

This situation shows a shift in support to pressure when communication is not open and expectations are unrealistic. The theory of *self-determination* (Deci & Ryan, 2000) states that external pressures that force individuals to meet demands without autonomy can inhibit intrinsic motivation and increase stress. Research by Yıldırım (2019) also shows that too much family pressure can trigger academic anxiety and burnout. Family support turns into pressure when students feel they are not given space to fail, are forced to meet expectations, or feel compared. This reduces psychological security and creates stress that actually hinders academic achievement.

3. Can the role of family affect students' motivation or stress in achieving academic achievement?

Family roles have proven to be ambivalent; on the one hand it can strengthen motivation, but on the other hand it can increase stress if it is not aligned with the student's condition. Students like P5 revealed, *"When I was down because of bad grades, my family said it was okay, the important thing was to keep the spirits up. That keeps me motivated."* On the other hand, P4 stated, *"I often have stomach aches during exams because I keep thinking about my parents' expectations so that I can get a high GPA."* P13 said, *"My motivation to study is really because I don't want to waste the hard work of my parents who sell in the market."* Meanwhile, P10 added, *"Sometimes my motivation goes up when I see my younger siblings, I want to be an example for them."* However, P14 argued, *"The pressure from my family to finish college quickly actually makes me anxious and difficult to concentrate."*

The role of the family that fosters motivation more often appears when the relationship is based on trust and acceptance (Wentzel, 1998), while stress tends to increase when expectations are not in line with the actual capacity or condition of the student. Research by Talsma et al. (2021) also shows that academic motivation is stronger when supported by a supportive and non-repressive family environment. The role of family contributes greatly in shaping students' academic motivation. However, if support turns into demands without empathy, families can actually become a source of pressure that interferes with students' academic performance and mental health.

Conclusion

This research has revealed the complexity of the relationship between family support and the pressure felt by students in the context of academic achievement. The support provided by families, both in the form of emotional encouragement and practical assistance, has been shown to have a significant positive impact on students' motivation and academic success. However, situations where such support turns into pressure, such as when family expectations are too high or when students feel compared to siblings or friends, can lead to stress that interferes with their learning process and mental health. College students tend to interpret family support as an important source of motivation, but they also realize that the line between support and pressure is very thin. Therefore, it is important for families to understand the needs and aspirations of individual students, as well as create open communication to avoid feelings of distress. These findings emphasize the need for a more sensitive approach to supporting students, where parents and educators must collaborate to create a supportive environment without creating an undue burden. Thus, this research provides valuable insights for the development of intervention strategies that can improve students' academic well-being and help them reach their full potential.

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