

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Basic Concept of Stress

1. Definition of Stress

Stress is the inability to cope with extraordinary demands that are perceived as threatening to well-being, both from within and from outside the individual. Demands originating from within and outside the individual that are perceived as threatening, dangerous, and challenging to the well-being of their life will cause feelings of tension. Events and incidents that are perceived as a stressful condition are considered a stressor.

2. Factors That Influence Stress

Stress can be influenced by various factors, including individual characteristics and the circumstances faced in daily life. These factors can influence how a person perceives, responds to, and copes with stress. Factors related to stress levels include individual characteristics, age, and gender.

a. Age

According to research Mbiriri, (2022), Research results show that younger students (18–25 years old) have higher stress levels than students aged 26 and over. This is explained by the possibility that older individuals have more experience and the ability to use behavioral, cognitive, and emotional strategies to deal with stressful situations. With increasing age, individuals may have more effective coping resources, enabling them to better handle stress.

b. Gender

Gender is also related to perceived stress levels. A study by Mbiriri, 2022 showed that 86% of female students experienced perceived stress, while 55% of male students did. Thus, female students in the study showed higher levels of stress than male students. This difference may be related to the source of the stress they face, with women more likely to experience stress related to the number of

courses, time management, and interpersonal relationships, while men were more likely to experience stress related to academic demands and financial pressures.

3. Stress Mechanism

Stress can occur due to pressure or a burden that cannot be overcome. The nervous system is affected by stress, which originates from both internal and external sources. These stress factors cause the body's glands and hormones, especially the brain, to become active. The sympathetic nervous system can be activated by the interaction of hormones and glands, which can increase heart rate, reduce appetite, and regulate sweat production.(Adryana et al., 2020).

4. Impact of Stress

Based on the literature review, the impact of stress on individuals can be categorized into three main parts, namely:

a. Physiological Impact

- 1) Increased levels of the hormone cortisol.
- 2) There are disturbances in sleep patterns and the digestive system.
- 3) Weakened immune system function(Sarafino & Smith, 2021).

b. Psychological Impact

- 1) The emergence of feelings of anxiety and depression.
- 2) Reduced ability to concentrate and motivation.
- 3) A state of extreme fatigue or burnout(APA, 2023).

c. Behavioral Impact

- 1) Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- 2) Distancing oneself from social interaction.
- 3) Increasing use of addictive substances(Nevid et al., 2021).

5. Types of Stress

Types of stress can be distinguished based on certain criteria that reflect differences in sources, duration and individual responses to stressors.

a. According to (Sarafino & Smith, 2021) Stress can be categorized into several types based on its characteristics, duration, and implications for the individual.

1) Acute stress is a short-term reaction to temporary demands or pressures, such as when facing an exam or presentation. This type of stress is generally adaptive and can motivate individuals to overcome challenges.

2) Chronic stress occurs when a person experiences ongoing exposure to stressors over a long period of time, such as unresolved family conflict or persistent work demands. Chronic stress has the potential to have significant negative impacts on physical and mental health, including an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, anxiety disorders, and depression. (APA, 2023).

b. Stress can also be differentiated based on its impact into eustress and distress.

1) Eustress refers to positive, motivating stress, such as the feeling of enthusiasm when starting a new project or facing a challenge that can improve performance.

2) Distress is negative stress that can interfere with an individual's functioning and well-being, such as feelings of excessive anxiety or being overwhelmed. (Nevid et al., 2021).

6. Definition of academic stress

Academic stress is a condition that affects a person's mind and body, resulting from the pressures, demands, and burdens inherent in higher education. This concept is explained through the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which states that stress does not come solely from external sources but arises from interactions between a person and their environment. This interaction is perceived as burdensome or exceeding a person's ability to cope. (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2021).

In the context of healthcare students, this definition is expanded to consider the specific characteristics of the healthcare vocational education

environment in this situation. Academic events such as exams or assignment deadlines can be stressors, but they will only have a stressful effect if an individual perceives them as threatening or challenging beyond their adaptive capabilities.(Wolf et al., 2021).

The operational definition of academic stress refers to three main elements:

- a. an individual's subjective perception of an academic load that exceeds normal capacity.
- b. perception of inadequate resources, especially of a temporal nature, to meet academic demands.
- c. the perception of a gap between expectations of academic achievement, both internal and external, and the reality of actual performance (Misra & Castillo, 2004; cited again in(Chen et al., 2023).

Academic stress in this group is defined as "a multifaceted psychophysiological distress condition arising from the interaction between the demands of a busy curriculum, situational pressures in the clinical environment, and the major professional responsibilities inherent in the process of self-transformation."(Labrague et al., 2021).

7. Causes and Factors of Academic Stress

Recent research identifies the sources of academic stress in nursing students as an ecological phenomenon that results from the interaction of various factors, including:

- a. Academic-Institutional Factors:
 - 1) Curriculum Load: A dense and complex curriculum that demands mastery of material at a high volume and speed is a major stress trigger.(Salamonson et al., 2021).
 - 2) Evaluation System: Pressure to achieve high scores in exams, OSCEs (Objective Structured Clinical Examinations), and other forms of assessment. Fear of failure and anxiety about grades are dominant.(García-Izquierdo et al., 2022).

- 3) Learning Methods: Transition and adaptation to hybrid or online learning post-pandemic, which demands high levels of independence and digital literacy.(Bennett et al., 2022).
 - 4) Scientific Writing: The pressures of writing a thesis, case report, or other final assignment, including the relationship with the supervisor(Chen et al., 2023).
- b. Clinical Practice Factors:
- 1) Responsibility to Patients: Fear of making mistakes that could jeopardize patient safety is the most significant stressor in the clinic.(Labrague et al., 2021).
 - 2) Interpersonal Relationships in the Clinic: Interactions with preceptors, senior nurses, doctors, and other healthcare professionals can sometimes be unsupportive or even intimidating.(Melincavage, 2021).
 - 3) Emotional Experiences in the Clinic: Facing patient suffering, death, and dying, and delivering bad news trigger severe emotional distress(Naylor et al., 2023).
 - 4) Theory-Practice Gap: Conflict that arises when reality on the ground does not align with the theory learned in class.(Wolf et al., 2021).
- c. Personal and Social Factors:
- 1) Time Management: Difficulty balancing academic/clinical demands with personal, social, and family life(Gunnell et al., 2021).
 - 2) Financial Stress: The need to work part-time to finance studies adds to the burden and reduces rest time.(Şahan, 2023).
 - 3) Social Support: Lack of social support from peers, family, or partners can exacerbate the impact of academic stress.(Travagin et al., 2021).
 - 4) Expectations: Pressure from parents and family to succeed and achieve high grades to meet parental expectations.(Neff et al., 2023).
- d. Transition and Career Factors:

- 1) Future Uncertainty: Concerns about job prospects, job competition, and readiness to enter the workforce after graduation(Friis et al., 2023).
- 2) Competency Test: Preparation and pressure to pass national competency tests such as UKOM(Tambunan, 2023).
- 3) Role Transition: The transition from student to independent nursing professional creates role anxiety.(James & Rimes, 2022).

8. Impact and Consequences of Academic Stress

Chronic and poorly managed academic stress has the potential to have negative, holistic, and interrelated impacts.

a. Psychological and Emotional Impact:

- 1) Mental Health Disorders: Increased prevalence of symptoms of anxiety, depression, and academic burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and decreased personal accomplishment.(Naylor et al., 2023).
- 2) Cognitive Impairment: Impaired concentration, memory impairment, and difficulty in clinical decision-making(Sæle et al., 2021).
- 3) Emotional Regulation Dysfunction: Increased emotional dysregulation, irritability, and emotional lability(Pascoe et al., 2021).

b. Academic and Performance Impact:

- 1) Decrease in Academic Achievement: Decrease in Grade Point Average (GPA) due to impaired concentration and learning motivation(Gunnell et al., 2021).
- 2) Maladaptive Behavior: Increased tendency towards academic procrastination, absenteeism, and, in severe cases, academic dishonesty(Bennett et al., 2022).
- 3) Attrition Intention: Prolonged stress is a strong predictor of students considering dropping out of college.(Wolf et al., 2021).

c. Physical and Somatic Impacts:

- 1) Somatic Complaints: The presence of health complaints such as tension headaches, gastrointestinal disorders (e.g., stomach ache or

irritable bowel syndrome), musculoskeletal pain (back and neck), and skin disorders(Şahan, 2023).

- 2) Sleep Disorders: Insomnia, poor sleep quality, and excessive daytime sleepiness further impair cognitive function.(Pascoe et al., 2021).
- 3) Decreased Immunity: Increased susceptibility to infection due to the chronic influence of stress hormones (cortisol) on the immune system.(Labrague et al., 2021).

d. Social and Professional Impact:

- 1) Social Withdrawal: The tendency to avoid social interactions with peers and family, leading to feelings of loneliness and social isolation.(Travagin et al., 2021).
- 2) Decreased Quality of Care: In the context of clinical practice, stress can impair therapeutic judgment and communication, and increase the risk of medical errors, potentially compromising patient safety.(Melincavage, 2021).
- 3) Interpersonal Conflict: Increased potential for conflict with classmates, faculty, and staff in the clinical environment due to high levels of irritability and frustration.(García-Izquierdo et al., 2022).

9. Academic Stress Measurement Tool

In measuring academic stress levels, there are many measuring tools that can be used, such as the Academic Stress Scale (ASS) by Gadzella, B. M (1991), Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PASS) by Bedewy & Gabriel (2015), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) by Cohen & Williamson (1988), Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS) by Syd Lovibond & Peter Lovibond (1995), Academic Stress Questionnaire (ASQ) by Lindop, E (1989).

In this study, researchers used the Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PASS) measuring instrument, the PASS scale is an instrument developed by Bedewy & Gabriel (2015)The PASS instrument is designed to measure students' subjective perceptions of stressful stimuli and

demands emanating from the academic environment. Unlike instruments that focus on an inventory of potential stress-inducing events, the PASS emphasizes the individual's cognitive evaluation of those events. Interindividual variations in assessing identical stimuli can result in differences in perceived stress levels, and the PASS serves to reduce this subjective disparity.

The PASS scale consists of 18 items classified into three main aspects, namely:

- a. Academic expectations: Relating to the pressure experienced by students from internal and external sources such as the environment, family and educational institutions.
- b. Faculty work and examinations: Students' perceptions of the demands of the course as being too difficult, such as the amount of material to be studied, the complexity of assessments, and the time required to complete assignments, as well as the high level of difficulty of examinations.
- c. Student academic self-perception: How students evaluate their own abilities to meet academic demands.

The following PASS form consists of 18 questions (13 favorable, 5 unfavorable) which are assessed on a 5-point Likert scale, starting from Strongly Disagree (STS) getting a score of 1, Disagree (TS) getting a score of 2, Neutral (N) getting a score of 3, Agree (S) getting a score of 4, Strongly Agree (SS) getting a score of 5. Higher scores indicate higher levels of academic stress. The Perceptions of Academic Stress Scale (PASS) developed by (Bedewy & Gabriel, 2015) has been proven valid and reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 in the original version. The results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) test show three main factors, namely academic load, exam pressure, and confidence in completing assignments, with a KMO value of 0.746 and Cronbach's Alpha of 0.942, which indicates that this instrument is valid and reliable for measuring students' academic stress.

Table 2.1 Score Categorization

Categorization	Scoring Criteria
Low	18-41
Currently	42-65
Heavy	66-90

10. Handling and Prevention

According to recent research, managing academic stress among nursing students requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach, involving individual-based interventions, institutional interventions, and approaches supported by research evidence.

a. Individual-Based Interventions

1) Stress Management Training and Coping Strategy Development

Intervention programs that focus on strengthening adaptive coping skills, including problem-focused and emotion-focused coping, have been shown to be effective in mitigating the impact of academic stress. Implementation includes time management training, realistic goal setting, and the application of relaxation techniques.(García-Izquierdo et al., 2022).

2) Journal writing intervention or journaling intervention is an expressive writing intervention about sources of stress and techniques for expressing feelings and thoughts poured out through writing.

3) Developing Self-Compassion Capacity: Self-compassion training programs, such as Self Compassion Training(SCT), play a role in reducing self-criticism and increasing psychological resilience.(Neff et al., 2023)reported that this intervention was effective in reducing levels of academic stress and anxiety.

4) Psychological Counseling and Support Services: Accessibility to psychological counseling and support services on campus is a key factor in managing academic stress. Individual and group counseling

provide a safe space for emotional expression and the development of personalized coping strategies.(Bennett et al., 2022).

b. Institution-Based Interventions

- 1) Curriculum Modifications and Academic Load Adjustments: Educational institutions need to evaluate and adjust their curriculum structures to ensure that academic demands remain realistic and proportionate. Integrating flexible learning and reducing the academic load can reduce psychological stress on students.(Salamonson et al., 2021).
- 2) Strengthening Academic Support Systems: Mentoring programs, academic advising, and peer support groups play a role in helping students navigate academic challenges. Support from professors, academic advisors, and peers has been shown to increase feelings of connectedness and reduce social isolation.(Travagin et al., 2021).
- 3) Creating a Supportive Clinical Environment: Clinical practice environments need to be designed to minimize stressors, including through improving the quality of supervision, clarifying expectations, and reducing non-essential workload. Research by(Melincavage, 2021)showed that support from preceptors and clinical staff significantly reduced students' anxiety levels.
- 4) Mental Health and Stress Awareness Education: Institutions can host workshops and seminars focused on mental health, burnout prevention, and identifying early signs of stress. This type of education enables students to proactively identify and manage stress.(Şahan, 2023).

c. Technology and Digital-Based Interventions

- 1) Mental Health and Stress Management Apps: Utilizing mobile apps that provide mindfulness exercises, mood tracking, and relaxation techniques can be an easily accessible tool for everyday stress management.(Bennett et al., 2022)found that apps like Headspace

and Calm were effective in reducing stress symptoms in college students.

- 2) Online Counseling Platform: Online counseling (e-counseling) services offer students greater accessibility to psychological support without the constraints of distance and time. Studies show that online interventions can be an effective alternative to conventional counseling.(Friis et al., 2023).

d. Holistic and Preventive Approach

- 1) Encourage a Healthy Lifestyle: Maintain a balance between academic and personal life through physical activity, adequate nutrition, and adequate sleep.(Gunnell et al., 2021)emphasized that regular exercise and good sleep patterns significantly reduce the impact of academic stress.
- 2) Developing Resilience and a Growth Mindset: Programs that focus on developing resilience and a growth mindset help students view challenges as learning opportunities, rather than threats. This approach increases adaptive capacity and resilience to stress.(James & Rimes, 2022).

B. The Concept of Journaling Therapy

1. Understanding

Journaling therapy is where a person periodically writes about emotional experiences and deep thoughts related to a stressful issue. The goal is to organize seemingly random experiences, reduce avoidance of feelings, and help them understand and find new meaning in those experiences. This approach is based on the paradigm of expressive writing.(Pennebaker, 1997), which focuses on the process of transforming unstructured emotional experiences into clear stories, which ultimately helps reduce the physical and mental stress caused by strong feelings.

Journaling has also been integrated into special psychotherapy with the aim of treating certain mental disorders (PTSD, depression, etc.) through Journaling therapy, patients are able to reflect emotions, thoughts, and feelings about unpleasant or traumatic events into personal writing.(Rusdi, 2024).

2. Journaling Therapy Procedure

Journal therapy can be implemented as a technique by asking students to document their various sources of stress, emotional responses, and coping strategies. Research conducted bySuryaman et al., (2024)A study conducted with a sample of vocational high school guidance and counseling teachers in Bogor Regency confirmed the effectiveness of this technique. The results showed that participants who engaged in journaling therapy four times a week experienced a statistically significant reduction in stress scores. This finding aligns with research byAmalia et al., (2022)which concluded that journaling is an effective, economical, and easy-to-implement independent intervention to reduce students' anxiety levels in the context of their thesis writing. The Journaling Therapy procedure is divided into three main stages. The first stage is the preparation phase, which includes participant preparation, affirmation of the principles of confidentiality and freedom of expression, and implementation of a pre-test using research instruments. The second stage is the implementation phase, in which the experimental group engaged in expressive writing activities four times a week, for a week (Suryaman et al., 2024). In each session, participants were instructed to explore their deepest sources of stress, cognitive domains, and emotional experiences related to academic pressure.(Pennebaker, 1997)in a conducive and private setting. The third phase is the evaluation phase, which includes administering a final measurement and a follow-up measurement one week after the intervention ends to test the significance of ongoing effects. All participant written data is guaranteed confidentiality through an anonymization process, accompanied by

ethical procedures that provide psychological support mechanisms if needed.

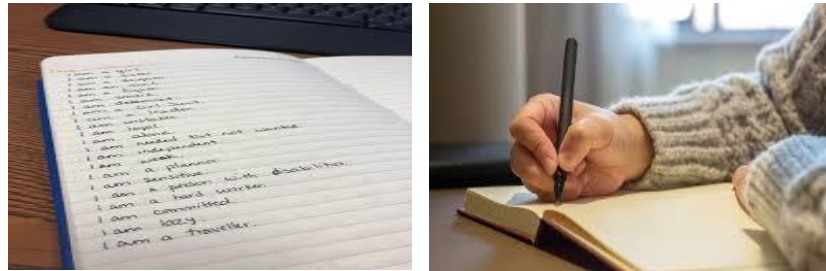


Figure 2.1 Journaling Therapy

3. The Effect of Journaling Therapy on Academic Stress

Research conducted by Suryaman et al., (2024) showed that journaling interventions carried out four times a week for a week significantly reduced stress scores in a sample of Vocational High School Guidance and Counseling Teachers in Bogor Regency. Similar findings were reported by (Amalia et al., 2022) which confirms the effectiveness of journaling in reducing anxiety and excessive worry associated with the thesis writing process. This effectiveness is primarily due to the journaling technique's ability to help students map problems more systematically and identify alternative solutions using a structured approach.

A study by (Bennett et al., 2022) revealed that gratitude journaling practices contributed to improved psychological well-being and decreased depressive symptoms among college students during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Labrague et al., 2021) reported that reflective journaling was effective in reducing burnout and increasing resilience in a nursing student population.

C. The Concept of Self Compassion Training

1. Understanding Self-Compassion Training

Self-Compassion Training is a psychological concept first created by (Neff, 2003). This concept describes a person's ability to care for themselves, especially when facing difficulties or failure. Its main

characteristics are having a good attitude, understanding oneself, and providing emotional support. This concept consists of three main elements that are dynamically interrelated.:

- a. **Self-Kindness vs. Self-Judgment:** The self-kindness component refers to the tendency to be warm and understanding toward oneself when faced with shortcomings or failures, rather than to torment oneself with harsh and destructive criticism. This aspect includes the awareness that imperfection is inherent in the human condition and the ability to respond to it with gentleness and patience.(Neff et al., 2023).
 - b. **Common Humanity vs. Isolation:** Common humanity involves the perception that experiences of suffering, failure, and feelings of inadequacy are a universal part of human life, not a condition unique to each individual. This perspective serves to reduce feelings of isolation by connecting the subjective experiences of individuals to the collective reality of humanity at large.(Neff et al., 2021).
 - c. **Mindfulness vs. Over-Identification:** Mindfulness, in the realm of self-compassion, is defined as the ability to maintain a balanced awareness of painful emotions without falling into over-identification. This approach allows one to observe negative thoughts and feelings with an open and clear attitude, without being overwhelmed or overwhelmed by their intensity.(Neff & Germer, 2019).
2. **Self Compassion Training Procedure**

Self-Compassion Training(SCT) is a structured and systematic psychological intervention designed to increase an individual's ability to respond to personal suffering with compassion, understanding, and support, rather than through critical responses or avoidance behaviors.(Neff & Germer, 2018).

Theoretically, this approach is based on three components introduced by(Neff, 2003)includes:

- a. self-kindness, which is the ability to be gentle and understanding with oneself in difficult situations;

- b. common humanity, namely the view that suffering and imperfection are part of the universal human condition
- c. mindfulness, which is a balanced awareness of negative emotions without falling into over-identification or judgment.

In practice, SCT interventions often refer to the Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) program developed by (Neff & Germer, 2019). This program combines mindfulness training with a variety of specific self-compassion practices within the standard curriculum. Operationally, SCT is typically conducted in a group format consisting of four sessions, each approximately 60 minutes long. Each session includes elements of Self-Compassion Psychoeducation, Self-Kindness Training, Common Humanity Training, and Mindfulness Self-Compassion. (Hidayati et al., 2024).

3. The Effect of Self-Compassion Training on Academic Stress

Academic stress is a psychological condition that arises due to the demands and pressures of the academic environment, which can have a negative impact on students' mental health and academic achievement. (Pascoe et al., 2020) In this context, Self-Compassion Training (SCT) presents itself as an effective psychological intervention to reduce the impact of academic stress through an approach that fosters self-compassion. According to (Neff, 2021), students with high levels of Self Compassion Training tend to be better able to manage various academic demands, resulting in lower levels of stress.

The underlying mechanisms of SCT's effect in reducing academic stress include improved emotion regulation and reduced tendencies toward perfectionism. A study by Syafitri, (2024) showed that participants who participated in SCT for 4 days experienced a significant decrease in academic stress levels, which was partially mediated by the influence of self-compassion on mental health in high school students. Furthermore, this intervention also helped students develop healthier mindsets in

responding to academic failure, thereby reducing anxiety and excessive stress.(Kılıç & Yıldırım, 2024).

Recent empirical support also strengthens the effectiveness of SCT in academic contexts. A meta-analysis conducted by(Zhang et al., 2023)A review of 25 randomized controlled trials (RCTs) reported that a Self-Compassion Training intervention resulted in a significant effect in reducing academic stress ($g = -0.68$), with a stronger effect in a population of college students experiencing high levels of stress. A study by(Kemper et al., 2022)further strengthens these findings by showing that SCT not only reduces stress but also increases learning motivation and academic resilience.

D. The Effect of Journaling Therapy and Self-Compassion Training on Academic Stress

Journaling Therapy is a psychological intervention based on the theory of expressive writing first introduced by Pennebaker (1997). In this approach, writing is seen as a means of emotional expression and cognitive processing, allowing individuals to reorganize previously unstructured emotional experiences. A study by(Baikie & Wilhelm, 2022)explains that the writing process can reduce physiological activation due to emotional stress through cognitive restructuring and breaking down negative thoughts.

Research conducted bySuryaman et al., (2024)showed that a four-week journaling intervention for one week significantly reduced stress scores in a sample of vocational high school guidance and counseling teachers in Bogor Regency. This finding is supported by a study(Amalia et al., 2022), which identified that journaling helped final-year students achieve clarity of thought and reduce anxiety during the final project writing process. Overall, scientific evidence suggests that journaling contributes to stress reduction by increasing emotional expression, identifying the source of problems, and strengthening self-awareness.

Self-Compassion Training developed based on the concept of self-compassion put forward by (Neff, 2003), which consists of three core components: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. These three components play a role in helping individuals develop a more adaptive perspective on academic stress by reducing self-criticism and increasing emotional regulation. A study by (Neff et al., 2021) emphasized that students with high levels of self-compassion are less likely to fall into perfectionism and are better able to accept their limitations when faced with academic demands. A study by Syafitri, (2024) showed that participants who participated in SCT for 4 days experienced a significant reduction in academic stress levels. A meta-analysis conducted by (Zhang et al., 2023) of 25 randomized controlled trials reported a large effect size ($g = -0.68$), indicating consistent effectiveness of SCT in reducing academic stress in college students.

So in this study, the researcher wants to know the effect of Journaling therapy and Self Compassion Training which will be carried out four times a week and Journaling Therapy will be carried out for 15 minutes per session for one week and Self Compassion Training will be carried out four times a week, and each session will last for 15 minutes.

A. Basic Concepts of Benson Therapy

1. Understanding Benson Therapy

Benson Relaxation, also known as “Benson's Relaxation Response,” is a psychophysical relaxation technique created by Dr. Herbert Benson, a renowned cardiologist from Harvard Medical School, conducted several studies in the 1970s on the effects of meditation and relaxation on the human body and discovered that regular relaxation practice can trigger a state of deep calm that he called the “relaxation response.” (Benson, 1975).

Benson Relaxation Therapy can be explained operationally as a psychophysical intervention method that aims to create a state of deep relaxation by activating the parasympathetic nervous system through a

combination of regular diaphragmatic breathing and focusing attention on neutral objects or words. (Benson & Klipper, 1976).

2. Benson Therapy Procedure

The Benson Relaxation Technique consists of four main components that must be present to effectively induce a relaxation response. (Peterson et al., 2018):

a. Relaxation Stimulus (Relaxation Cue)

A relaxation stimulus is a sound, word, phrase, noise, or sensation repeated to focus attention. This stimulus acts as an anchor, helping the mind disengage from worries and stressful thoughts. Examples of commonly used stimuli include:

- 1) Words like "relax", "relax", "calm"
- 2) Phrases like "I'm relaxed" or "everything is fine"

b. Relaxed Body Posture (Passive Relaxation Posture)

The body position can be sitting in a chair with a straight back or lying down in a comfortable position. This position should allow the entire body to relax without tension, with muscles gradually relaxing. No special meditation position like the lotus position is necessary; what matters is comfort and relaxation.

c. Emptying of the Mind (Empty Mind)

Mind emptying, or "mind blankness," is a passive state in which individuals allow thoughts to come without judging or trying to control them. This approach differs from concentration meditation, which actively attempts to maintain focus on a single object. In Benson's technique, thoughts are allowed to flow like passing clouds across the sky, without emotional involvement.

d. Relaxed Mental Position (Passive Attitude)

A relaxed mental state involves a passive attitude or acceptance of the relaxation process. Individuals should not strive for relaxation, but rather allow the process to unfold naturally. If distracting thoughts arise,

individuals simply acknowledge their presence and gently return attention to the relaxation stimulus without self-criticism.



Figure 2.2 Benson Therapy

3. The Effect of Benson Therapy on Academic Stress

Benson Relaxation Therapy works through an intervention approach aimed at addressing academic stress. This model encompasses several interconnected pathways. First, a physiological pathway involves activating the parasympathetic nervous system and suppressing stress. Second, a cognitive pathway offers psychological distance from repetitive and anxious thoughts. Third, a behavioral pathway supports emotional regulation skills.(Peterson et al., 2020).

A study by(Manzoni et al., 2021)Through systematic observation, they found that relaxation interventions, such as the Benson Technique, lead to significant changes in physiological markers of stress. This study, which included an analysis of 87 studies, showed that practicing relaxation consistently was associated with reduced cortisol (the stress hormone), systolic and diastolic blood pressure, and resting heart rate. These results support the physiological role of the Benson Therapy in reducing the physiological burden associated with stress in academia.

A study in the Journal of Education and Health Promotion showed that reducing anxiety leads to improved sleep quality. Students who struggle with anxiety often suffer from sleep problems, which in turn improves overall academic performance.

B. Theoretical Framework

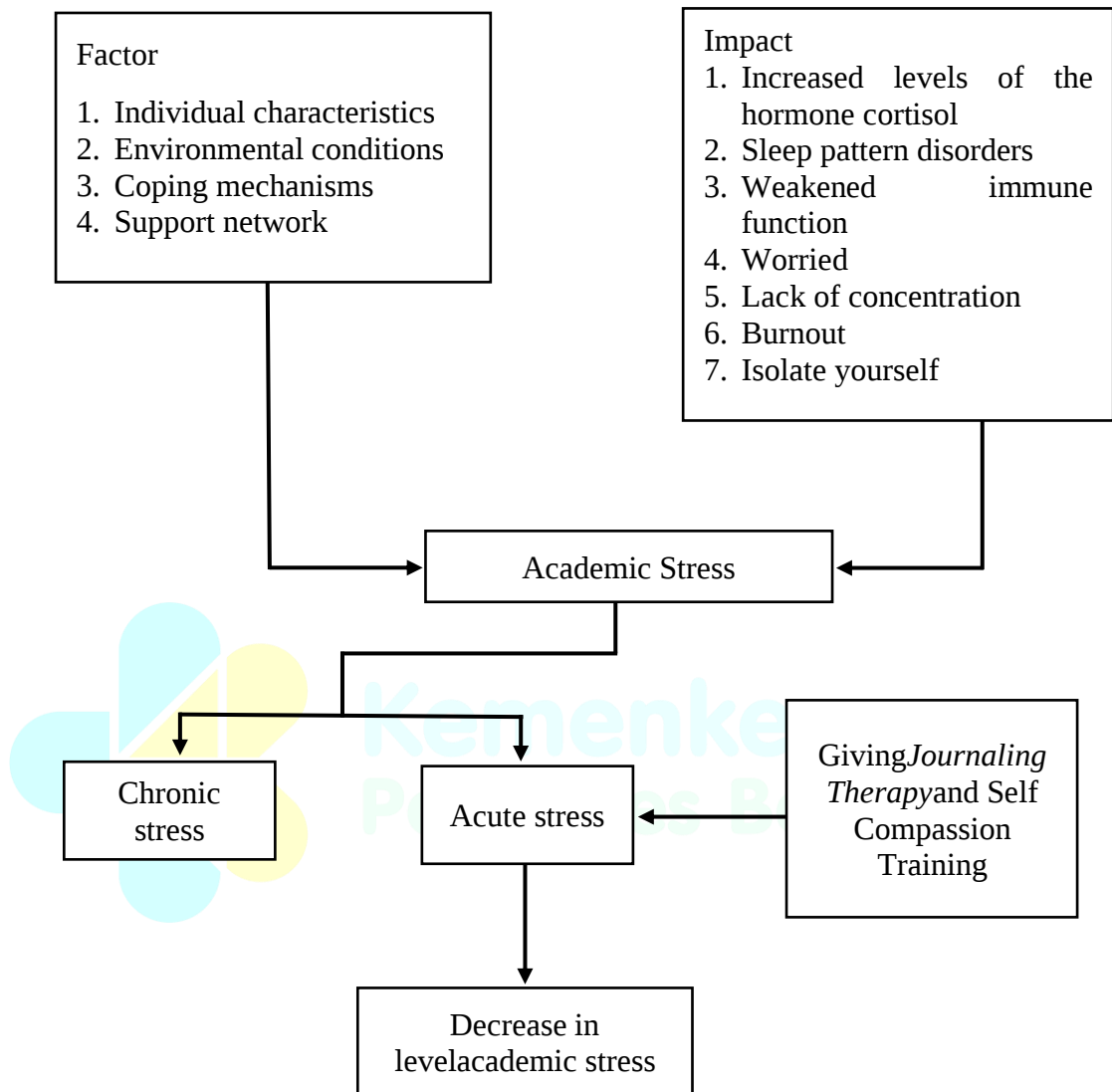


Chart 2.1 Theoretical Framework

Source : (Sarafino & Smith, 2021)

