The Effectiveness of Forgiveness Therapy in Reducing Academic Procrastination Among Junior High School Students: A Gender Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of forgiveness therapy in reducing academic procrastination among junior high school (JHS) students, as well as to investigate gender-based differences in the effectiveness of the therapy. The research used a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest approach on two groups, male and female students. The forgiveness therapy intervention was conducted over three sessions, with a maximum duration of 120 minutes per session. The results of the analysis showed that forgiveness therapy significantly reduced academic procrastination for both male (t = 4.344; p = 0.012) and female students (t = 9.487; p = 0.001). The average procrastination scores for male students decreased from 61.20 to 51.20, while for female students, it decreased from 58.40 to 55.40. Furthermore, a significant difference was found between the two groups in the level of procrastination reduction (t = 3.012; p = 0.038), with a larger impact on male students. These findings indicate that forgiveness therapy is an effective psychological intervention for reducing academic procrastination, with its effectiveness varying based on gender.

Keywords: *Forgiveness Therapy, Academic Procrastination, Psychological Intervention*

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INTRODUCTION

Academic procrastination is the tendency to deliberately delay the completion of academic tasks, despite being aware of the negative consequences. Solomon and Rothblum (1984) define procrastination as unnecessary and intentional delay of activities, which leads to late completion of tasks. Ghufron (2010) adds that this behavior often arises from feelings of dislike towards tasks or fear of failure. Its forms vary, ranging from task avoidance, overconfidence, to engaging in less important activities (Santrock, 2019).

This condition is commonly experienced by students who struggle with time management, concentration, and emotional regulation. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (2020) shows a high prevalence of academic procrastination among Indonesian students. This phenomenon is supported by research from Kuswidyawati (2023) and other

field reports that describe students' habits of delaying tasks, both in offline and online contexts.

According to Madjid (2021), procrastination is caused by various internal factors such as laziness, anxiety, perfectionism, and external factors such as an unsupportive learning environment. Rofiqah & Marlinda (2018) emphasize the importance of time management and concentration in preventing this behavior. If left unaddressed, procrastination can disrupt academic achievement, trigger stress, and contribute to psychological problems such as anxiety and depression (Rahmandani, 2017; Rosario, 2009).

One approach that has been gaining attention in addressing procrastination is forgiveness therapy. This therapy focuses on developing the ability to forgive oneself and others, which is believed to help address negative emotions, guilt, and regret, often the root causes of procrastination (Wohl, 2010; Rahmandani, 2017). According to Chijioke Virgilus Amoke (2021), forgiveness therapy can increase empathy, reduce the desire for revenge, and encourage the healing of disrupted social relationships. Research by Rahmandani (2017) shows that self-forgiveness can reduce the tendency for procrastination in similar situations in the future.

Furthermore, gender differences are known to influence how individuals respond to psychological interventions. Jane Doe (2019) states that females tend to be more expressive in managing emotions, while males tend to suppress or redirect their emotions. John Smith (2020) adds that females often experience higher levels of stress in certain situations, which could result in different responses to therapies like forgiveness therapy. However, studies on the relationship between gender and academic procrastination still show varied and inconsistent results (Zhou, 2018; Azar, 2013; Christinasari, 2016).

Therefore, this study is important to evaluate the effectiveness of forgiveness therapy in reducing academic procrastination among junior high school students, while also examining whether gender influences the effectiveness of this intervention. The results are expected to enrich the scientific literature and contribute to the development of psychological intervention strategies in educational settings.

METHOD

This study uses a pre-experimental approach with a one-group pretest-posttest design, which involves a single group of subjects who are measured before and after the intervention is applied (Latipun, 2015). The intervention provided is forgiveness therapy, administered three times. Measurements are taken to evaluate changes in the level of academic procrastination among the study subjects. Although no control group is used, the subjects are divided into two groups based on gender to observe the differences in the effectiveness of the intervention between male and female students.

The population in this study consists of all students of SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Kota Malang for the 2023/2024 academic year, totaling 280 students aged between 13 and 15 years. The sample consists of 10 students, 5 male and 5 female, selected based on the criteria of the highest levels of academic procrastination in the school. Information regarding students' procrastination behaviors is obtained through coordination between

the Vice Principal for Curriculum and the Counseling Guidance (BK) teacher, referencing data on late task submissions from the homeroom teachers of grades VII to IX.

The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, a method of selecting subjects based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Hadi, 2004). Inclusion criteria for the subjects include:
1. Students of SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Malang for the 2023/2024 academic year
2. Aged 13–15 years
3. Showing signs of academic procrastination based on school records
4. Willing to participate in all phases of the study by signing informed consent

The selection process of subjects was carried out with the assistance of the BK teacher, who coordinated the data on task submission delays from the respective homeroom teachers. Then, in collaboration with the Vice Principal for Curriculum, 10 students with the highest procrastination records were selected as the sample. This study aims to evaluate the impact of forgiveness therapy on reducing academic procrastination and to examine gender differences in the effectiveness of the intervention.

RESEARCH RESULT

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of forgiveness therapy in reducing academic procrastination levels among junior high school students, and to examine whether there are differences in the reduction of academic procrastination between male and female students. Data analysis was conducted using the Paired Sample t-Test for each group, and the Independent Sample t-Test to compare the reductions between genders.
1. First Hypothesis Test: Effectiveness of Forgiveness Therapy
    a. Male Group

    Table shows that the average academic procrastination score in the male group decreased from a mean of 61.20 (pretest) to 51.20 (posttest). This 10-point decrease was then analyzed using the Paired Sample t-Test, yielding the following results:

Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
10.00000	5.14782	2.30217	4.344	4	0.012

    A significance value of 0.012 < 0.05 indicates a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. Therefore, it can be concluded that forgiveness therapy is effective in reducing academic procrastination in male students.
    b. Female Group

    Table shows a decrease in the average procrastination score from a mean of 58.40 (pretest) to 55.40 (posttest), with a difference of 3 points. The Paired Sample t-Test produced the following results:

Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
3.00000	0.70711	0.31623	9.487	4	0.001

A significance value of 0.001 < 0.05 indicates a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. Therefore, forgiveness therapy is also effective in reducing academic procrastination in female students.

With these results, the first hypothesis is accepted: forgiveness therapy is effective in reducing academic procrastination in both male and female junior high school students.

2. Second Hypothesis Test: Difference in Procrastination Reduction Based on Gender

Further analysis was conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference in the reduction of academic procrastination between male and female groups. The descriptive table shows the following average reduction values:

Gender	N	Mean Reduction	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	5	10.0000	5.14782	2.30217
Female	5	3.0000	0.70711	0.31623

From the results, the male group showed a larger reduction (Mean = 10.00) compared to the female group (Mean = 3.00).

Before performing the t-test, variance homogeneity was tested using Levene's Test:

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	Sig.
Equal variances assumed	9.529	0.015

The significance value of Levene's Test was 0.015 < 0.05, indicating that the data are not homogeneous, so decisions were based on the row "Equal variances not assumed."

The results of the Independent Sample t-Test are as follows:

Variable	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% CI of the Difference (Lower - Upper)
Equal variances not assumed	3.012	4.151	0.038	7.00000	0.63958 – 13.36042

A significance value of 0.038 < 0.05 indicates that there is a significant difference in the reduction of academic procrastination between male and female students. The positive t-value indicates that the male group experienced a greater reduction compared to the female group.

Therefore, the second hypothesis is accepted: there is a significant difference in the reduction of academic procrastination between male and female students after receiving forgiveness therapy. Conclusion of Statistical Test Results: Forgiveness therapy has been proven to be effective in reducing academic procrastination in both male students (t = 4.344; p = 0.012) and female students (t = 9.487; p = 0.001), and there is a significant difference in the reduction of academic procrastination between

male and female students (t = 3.012; p = 0.038), with the male group showing a greater reduction.

The conclusion of the statistical test is that forgiveness therapy has been proven effective in reducing the level of academic procrastination, particularly among male students (t = 4.344; p = 0.012) and female students (t = 9.487; p = 0.001), and there is a significant difference in the reduction of academic procrastination between male and female students (t = 3.012; p = 0.038), with the male group showing a greater reduction.

DISCUSSION

Forgiveness therapy was provided as an intervention to reduce academic procrastination in junior high school students through three sessions, each lasting a maximum of 120 minutes. Both male and female groups received the same treatment. The analysis results show that the first hypothesis can be accepted: forgiveness therapy is effective in reducing academic procrastination. This was evidenced by a significant reduction in scores for both male (t = 4.344; p = 0.012) and female students (t = 9.487; p = 0.001). The average score for the male group decreased from 61.20 to 51.20, while the female group's average score decreased from 58.40 to 55.40.

The effectiveness of this therapy aligns with the findings of Rahmandani (2017), which showed a negative correlation between forgiveness ability and academic procrastination (r = -0.358; p < 0.001). The procrastination cycle, according to Burka & Yuen (2008), consists of time-wasting, task avoidance, and blaming others. All three are closely related to emotional aspects that can be managed through forgiveness.

Firstly, in terms of time-wasting, irrational thoughts such as perfectionism encourage task delay. Forgiveness therapy helps students release feelings of guilt and perfectionism, allowing them to focus and work more efficiently. Secondly, in terms of task avoidance, students tend to divert themselves from unpleasant tasks. Forgiveness helps them face negative emotions, preventing further avoidance. Thirdly, with respect to blaming others, students who blame teachers or family can be guided through therapy to become more reflective and build empathy, which plays a role in reducing anxiety and decreasing procrastination.

Forgiveness has also been shown to enhance positive psychological aspects such as happiness, self-esteem, and empathy (McCullough et al., 1997; Seligman, 2002), while reducing anxiety and anger (Bishop et al., 2014).

The second hypothesis was also accepted, showing a significant difference in the effectiveness of therapy based on gender (t = 3.012; p = 0.038). The average reduction in scores was higher for male students (10.00) compared to female students (3.00). This can be explained by differences in coping strategies and emotional responses. Females tend to engage in social activities that hinder task completion (Kwon, 2019), and they are more sensitive to academic stress and conflict (Harvard, 2019). While therapy helps them emotionally, behavioral changes in females may take longer to manifest. In contrast, males showed a more immediate response to emotional interventions (Zhou, 2020).

Overall, forgiveness therapy has proven effective in reducing academic procrastination and has shown a greater impact on male students compared to female students.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of forgiveness therapy in reducing academic procrastination in junior high school students, considering gender differences. The therapy was conducted over three sessions, each lasting a maximum of 120 minutes, and involved two groups: male and female students.

The results show that forgiveness therapy significantly reduced academic procrastination levels. For male students, the average score decreased from 61.20 to 51.20 (t = 4.344; p = 0.012), while for female students, it decreased from 58.40 to 55.40 (t = 9.487; p = 0.001). This confirms the first hypothesis that forgiveness therapy is effective for both groups.

Furthermore, there was a significant difference between genders in the reduction of procrastination. The independent sample t-test results showed t = 3.012 with p = 0.038, indicating that the reduction was greater for male students (10 points) compared to female students (3 points). The acceptance of the second hypothesis suggests that forgiveness therapy is more effective for male students, likely due to differences in personality, emotional responses, and hormonal factors that influence stress and procrastination behavior.

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