Original Article

THE EFFECT OF CLASSICAL MUSIC THERAPY ON REDUCING STRESS LEVELS IN STUDENTS AHEAD OF EXAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCE OF HUSADA JOMBANG

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ABSTRACT

Background: Academic stress is stress caused by the tensions of academic factors that cause distortions in the individual's cognition and affect physical, emotional, and behavioral.

Objectives: The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of providing classical music therapy on reducing stress levels in students ahead of exams at the College of Health Science of Husada Jombang.

Methods: This study uses a pre-experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest design approach. In this study, a population of 117 respondents who experienced stress before the exam at the College of Health Science of Husada Jombang was obtained with a sample of 44 respondents, and a simple random sampling technique. The measurement tool uses an SLSI (student life stress inventory) questionnaire and is tested with the Wilcoxon signed rank test.

Results: The results of the study conducted on students before the exam with the level of stress at College of Health Science of Husada Jombang showed that the results of the Pre-test of classical music therapy were obtained Most of the moderate stress, namely 23 respondents (52.3%), while the results of the post-test of classical music therapy became almost all low stress, namely 36 respondents (81.8%). Based on the results of the statistical test using the Wilcoxon signed rank test, results were obtained with a significance value of p value = $0.000 < 0.05$, H0 rejected and H1 accepted, which means that there is an effect of providing classical music therapy on reducing stress levels in students ahead of the exam at the College of Health Science of Husada Jombang.

Conclusion: It can be concluded that classical music therapy is given to students before exams and is used as an alternative to reduce stress levels in students. It is hoped that by providing classical music therapy, it can be used to reduce stress levels for respondents and can research into mental health. Gain a deeper understanding of the effects of classical music therapy in reducing stress, as well as gain experience and references for further research.

Keywords: Classical Music Therapy, Students, Stress.

INTRODUCTION

Stress is the body's reaction in dealing with psychological or physical stress when the body feels threatened by its environment, where this situation is related to aspects of life. Stress can happen to anyone and has negative implications if it accumulates in an individual's life without proper solutions (Hasnawati, Usman, & Umar, 2023).

According to the data World Health Organization (WHO) in 2023, it said that 450 million people in the world have health disrupted due to stress. The young adult population is estimated at 150 million people, and 57% of the total population is suspected to experience stress due to the workload while pursuing education. The prevalence of students in the world who experience stress is 38% - 71%, while in Asia it is 39.6% - 61.3% (Ambarwati et al., 2022). The prevalence in Indonesia in 2023 shows that as many as 9.8% of people experience stress from aged 15 years and above experience mental and emotional disorders characterized by symptoms of anxiety and stress (Riskesdas, 2023). Based on data from the Indonesian Psychiatric Specialist Association from March 2020 – March 2022, out of 5,030 people, 71.7% experienced stress disorders. Data in East Java shows that student academic stress is 1.8%, moderate stress reaches 64.5%, low stress is 33.6%, and students who experience poor sleep quality by 90.3% (Avianti et al, 2021). Meanwhile, in East Java itself, 6.8% of the population experienced mental and emotional disorders (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023). In Jombang itself, the prevalence of people experiencing Mental Emotional Disorders is 6.82 % of the subjects analyzed (Riskesdas, 2023).

The results of the preliminary study at STIKes Husada Jombang, after conducting interviews with nursing study program students with a total of 25 students from semesters one, three, and five of the interview results, it was found that first-semester students had higher stress levels when approaching the exam. Students who experience stress can experience several symptoms, including sleep disturbances, headaches, anxiety, and even depression (Mulya et al., 2021). In addition, the most worrying impact is an inadequate and protracted stress response that causes severe depression and leads to actions that harm oneself physically and psychologically, such as depression and suicide (Aries et al., 2023)

Classical music therapy can be one of the non-pharmacological therapies that has a healing and improving effect on a person's cognitive abilities. Positive feelings, improved performance, improved cognitive function, and decreased stress, anxiety, and pain are all associated with classical music (Samer & Sharkiya, 2024)

Music therapy can be one of the non-pharmacological therapies that has a healing and improving effect on a person's cognitive abilities. Positive feelings, improved performance, improved cognitive function, and decreased stress, anxiety, and pain are all associated with music (Samer & Sharkiya, 2024). Music therapy can create a calmer mood and reduce the tension felt by the individual. Music therapy is also available and does not require a lot of money (Berek & Fouk, 2022).

METHODS

Study Design

This study uses a quantitative research methodology using a pre-experimental design.

Settings

The place of this research is at the College of Health Science of Husada Jombang. It was held for 1 week from February 3, 2025, to February 9, 2025, with 44 respondents.

Research Subject

The research population is students who experience stress at the College of Health Science of Husada Jombang. There are 117 students in the 1st semester who took the exam at the College of Health Science of Husada Jombang. This study uses a Probability Sampling technique, which is a random one that uses a lottery by writing down the student attendance number of each class, after which, in the lottery, the number that comes out will be the respondent. The research sample consisted of 44 respondents selected from the 1st semester students using the Issac and Michael formula.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study are: Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) related to the provision of classical music therapy (Kusuma, 2023) and questionnaires, Student-Life Stress Inventory (SLSI).

Intervention

The researcher explained to the respondents the purpose of the intervention and asked for approval. After getting approval, the researcher gave the intervention, namely classical music for 30 minutes every 1 time/day, every night, and listened to it for 1 week.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted at the College of Health Science of Husada Jombang over one week, from February 3 to February 9, 2025. The research participants consisted of 44 first-semester nursing students who met the inclusion criteria of experiencing stress before examinations. Respondents were selected using a simple random sampling technique. The researchers wrote each student's attendance number on a piece of paper and drew lots to determine the participants.

Before data collection began, participants were provided with an explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, and ethical considerations. After providing written informed consent, participants completed the Student-Life Stress Inventory (SLSI) questionnaire to measure their baseline stress levels (pre-test). The SLSI is a standardized instrument designed to assess academic stress and coping reactions among college students.

Following the pre-test, the intervention was administered in the form of classical music therapy. Respondents listened to classical music for 30 minutes each night for seven consecutive days under controlled conditions to minimize external distractions. After completing the intervention period, participants were again asked to fill out the same SLSI questionnaire to evaluate post-intervention stress levels (post-test).

All data were collected directly by the researchers with the assistance of trained student volunteers who monitored the intervention schedule and ensured adherence. The collected data were recorded, coded, and stored confidentially for subsequent analysis.

Data Analysis

This study will use Univariate and Bivariate analysis to analyze the data. The univariate analysis in this study includes age, gender, class, ethnicity, and last education. Bivariate analysis can ascertain the significance of the relationship between these two variables, as well as their strength and direction. This study used the Wilcoxon test for statistical analysis. The

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test is a nonparametric statistical hypothesis test used to compare two related entities to assess the difference between paired observations. The Wilcoxon statistical test is used to assess two variables with ordinal data or one variable with ordinal data whose p-value is less than or equal to α (0.05).

Ethical Considerations

This research has received an ethics test certification with the main researcher: Yana Talapessy, Number: 01002-KEPKSHJ, Title: "The Effect of Classical Music Therapy on Reducing Stress Levels in Students Ahead of the Exam at STIKes Husada Jombang

RESULTS

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents based on age, gender, class, ethnicity, and last education at the College of Health Science of Husada Jombang, 3 – 9 February.

Yes	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1	12 – 15 Years	0	0.0 %
2	16 – 18 Years	16	36.4 %
3	19 – 21 Years	28	63.6 %
	Total	44	100.0 %
No	**Gender**	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
1	Male - Male	11	25.0 %
2	Woman	33	75.0 %
	Total	44	100.0 %
No	**Class**	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
1	A	13	29.5 %
2	B	19	43.2 %
3	C	12	27.3 %
	Total	44	100.0 %
No	**Ethnic Group**	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
1	Java	5	11.4 %
2	Madura	9	20.5 %
3	East	30	68.2 %
	Total	44	100.0 %
No	**Final Education**	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
1	High School (IPS)	10	22.7 %
2	SMA (IPA)	11	25.0 %
3	SMK (HEALTH)	18	40.9 %
4	OTHER MAJOR SMK	5	11.4 %
	Total	44	100.0 %

Source: Primary Data 2025.

The table above shows that of the 44 respondents studied, the highest percentage of respondents were mostly 19 – 21 years old, namely 28 respondents (63.6%), almost half were 16 – 18 years old, namely 16 respondents (36.4%) and none were aged 12 – 15 years, 0 respondents (0%), then showed that of the 44 respondents who were studied, the highest

percentage of gender, most of them were women, namely 33 respondents (75.0%) and a small percentage of men, namely 11 respondents (25.0%). And it showed that of the 44 respondents who were studied, the highest percentage was almost half in class B, which was 19 respondents (43.2%), and almost half in class C, which was 12 respondents (27.3%). showed that of the 44 respondents studied, the highest percentage came from the Eastern tribe, namely 30 respondents (68.2%), and a small number came from the Javanese tribe, 5 respondents (11.4%). Then it showed that of the 44 respondents who were studied, the highest percentage experienced stress before the exam, almost half of the last education of vocational school (HEALTH), which was 18 respondents (40.9%), and a small part of the last education of vocational schools of other majors, namely 5 respondents (11.4%)

Table 2. Characteristics of Stress in Students Ahead of Exams, Before and After Classical Music Therapy.

No	Before	Stress Criteria	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1		Low Stress	13	29.5 %
2		Moderate Stress	23	52.3 %
3		High Stress	8	18.2 %
		Total	44	100.0 %

No	After	Stress Criteria	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1		Low Stress	36	81.8 %
2		Moderate Stress	7	15.9 %
3		High Stress	1	2.3 %
		Total	44	100.0 %

Source: Primary Data 2025.

The results of the study showed that of the 44 respondents who were studied, the highest percentage of respondents' stress criteria before classical music therapy was given: Most of the moderate stress was 23 respondents (52.3%), and a small percentage of high stress was 8 respondents (18.2%). Table 2 shows that of the 44 respondents studied, the highest percentage of respondents' stress criteria after classical music therapy was almost all low-stress, namely 36 respondents (81.8%), and a small proportion of high stress, namely 1 respondent (2.3%)

Table 3. Analysis of Research Results with the Wilcoxon Test of Classical Music Therapy for Reducing Stress Levels in Students Ahead of the Exam at the College of Health Science of Husada Jombang.

	Posttest - Pretest
Z	-5.654b
Asymp. Sign (2-tailed)	.000

Source: Primary Date 2025.

DISCUSSION

Stress Levels in Students Ahead of Exams Before Classical Music Therapy

The results of the study, Table 1, showed that of the 44 respondents who were studied, the highest percentage of respondents' stress criteria before being given classical music therapy was mostly Moderate Stress, namely 23 respondents (52.3%), and a small percentage of High Stress, namely 8 respondents (18.2%).

Stress has the greatest impact on the physical condition of students, such as feeling tired and weak, headaches, dizziness, or migraines, pain, body aches and muscle tension, and indigestion. The second impact caused by stress is the impact of emotions such as irritability, easy crying, bad mood, as well as sad, restlessness, worry, moodiness, and almost frustration. The third impact of stress is the behavioral impact, such as students feeling that their relationships with friends, family, and others are deteriorating. tend to be aloof and lazy to talk, meet, or interact with others, be quieter, not care about others and the surrounding environment, and become shy, insecure, shout for no reason, and do not do tasks optimally. The final impact that results from stress is cognitive impacts, such as often thinking, difficulty concentrating or focusing, both when doing tasks and when talking to others, as well as negative thinking, forgetfulness, and lack of attention (Musabiq & Karimah, 2021).

Stress has both negative and positive impacts on academic performance. The negative impact of stress increases can result in a decrease in academic achievement. Conversely, decreased stress can result in increased academic achievement. Stress can also affect learning ability. For example, if the student learning process is disrupted, the results obtained are certainly not as expected (Ambarwati et al., 2022). The teaching and learning process can also be hampered if students cannot adjust properly. Meanwhile, the positive impact is that it can increase creativity and self-development in students. The impact of stress felt by students varies from mild things, such as headaches and lack of appetite, feelings of tiredness, frustration, irritability, to the most fatal things, such as suicide (Musabiq & Karimah, 2021).

Based on facts and theories, there are similarities where most of the stress is caused by academic demands that are considered to be suppressing or caused by tension from academic factors, so that feelings of discomfort then affect physical, emotional, and behavioral factors.

According to Table 5.1, it shows that of the 44 respondents studied, the highest percentage of respondents was 19 – 21 years old, namely 28 respondents (63.6%), almost half were aged 16 – 18 years, 16 respondents (36.4%), and none were aged 12 – 15 years, namely 0 respondents (0%)

Students, as part of a group of individuals who are part of the goal of integrating nursing services, are a vulnerable group to experience homeostasis imbalances due to stress derived from academic life. The responsibilities and demands of academic life on students can be part of the stress that students usually experience. Students are classified as late teens with an age range of 19 – 21 years (Agustiani, 2022).

Stress in students ahead of exams in late adolescence 18-22 years old can vary depending on their life stages, namely adjusting to a new environment, adapting to campus life, new friends, study loads, assignments and exams that accumulate, managing time, making decisions on their own, building and maintaining relationships with friends and lecturers or meeting parents' expectations regarding academic achievement (Hartaji, 2022).

Based on facts and theories, there is a similarity where most of the respondents experience stress ahead of the exam, which is 19 - 21 years old, because students at this age are classified in the category of late adolescents who have several high demands, such as adjustment to a new environment, academic pressure, independence, social relationships, and parental expectations.

Stress Levels in Students Ahead of Exams After Being Given Classical Music Therapy

Table 2 shows that of the 44 respondents studied, the highest percentage of respondents' stress criteria after classical music therapy was almost all low-stress, namely 36 respondents (81.8%), and a small proportion of high stress, namely 1 respondent (2.3%)

The use of classical music therapy is determined by musical interventions with the intention of restoring, maintaining, improving emotional, physical, psychological, and health as well as spiritual well-being (Kusuma, 2023). Classical music therapy can involve creating music, singing, moving to the music, or listening to music. Classical music therapy is beneficial for patients suffering from stress, anxiety, developmental disabilities, mental health disorders, dementia, and pain (Abdul & Olii, 2021).

Based on the results of previous research, one of the efforts to overcome student academic stress is by providing special guidance in the form of social guidance, which aims to provide psychological and mental assistance to individuals who face pressure that can interfere with psychological and mental development, so that they need guidance to solve their problems. The social guidance that will be carried out is in the form of group guidance (Kurniawan et al., 2020)

Music therapy has a positive impact on overcoming anxiety and stress because it can activate cells in the client's limbic and autonomic nervous systems. Music is a harmonious air vibration that is captured by the auditory organs through the nerves in our body, and transmitted to the central nervous system (Djohan, 2021).

The effects resulting from cognitive stress include easy forgetting, uneasy thoughts, difficulty concentrating when doing tasks or talking to others, and negative thinking. The effects of physical stress include being easily tired, worried, often feeling dizzy, and experiencing sleep disturbances. The impact felt by college students from emotional stress is that they feel irritable when they feel stressed, are more sensitive, irritable, and often lonely. The smallest impact felt from behavioral stress is not caregiving, procrastinating work, breaking norms, and finding fault (Oktavia et al, 2021). Music therapy is one of the modalities of therapy consisting of continuous melody, rhythm, harmony, and timbre that have an effect on both physical and mental health. Listening to music can stimulate alpha waves in the brain that cause relaxation, reduce pain, as well as increase the secretion of endorphin, which provokes physiological responses such as decreased blood pressure and pulse rate (Osmanoğlu & Yilmaz, 2021).

According to Huang et al. (2021), the neutral and calm emotions induced by music can prevent increased anxiety. Music is associated with the occipital lobe, where the acoustic signals heard can increase the gamma band in the occipital lobe so that it evokes neutral emotions and calms it down, which can reduce stress.

Based on facts and theories, there is a friendship where students who experience stress before exams do classical music therapy almost entirely Low Stress which music therapy can reduce stress.

The Effect of Classical Music Therapy on Reducing Stress Levels in Students Ahead of Exams

Distributed Table 5.8 results Wilcoxon signed rank test in SPSS, with a significance value p value = 0.000 < 0.05, then it can be concluded that H_0 is rejected and H_1 accepted, which means that there is an Influence of Classical Music Therapy on Reducing Stress Levels in Students Ahead of Exams at the College of Health Science of Husada Jombang.

Music therapy has a positive impact on overcoming anxiety and stress because it can activate cells in the client's limbic and autonomic nervous systems. Music is a harmonious air vibration that is captured by the auditory organs through the nerves in our body, and transmitted to the central nervous system (Djohan, 2021). The human brain is divided into two hemispheres, namely the right and left hemispheres. The right hemisphere has been identified as the part that plays a role in appreciating music, and the left hemisphere, in most people, can process or change the frequency and intensity, both in music and words. Both the left and right hemispheres are equally necessary to perceive rhythm.

The frontal part of the brain, in addition to functioning as memory, also plays a role in rhythm and melody, while the other part of the brain deals with emotions and pleasure. When a person listens to classical music, the harmonization in beautiful classical music enters the ear in the form of sound (audio), vibrating the hair cells in the cochlea and then through the cochlear nerve to the brain and creating imagination in the right and left brains that has an impact in the form of comfort and changes in feelings. This change in feeling is because classical music can explain the left region of the cerebral cortex (Mindlin, 2021). Classical music that has a frequency category of alpha and theta of 5000-8000 Hz can stimulate the body and mind to relax, so that it stimulates the brain to produce serotonin and endorphin hormones, which cause the body to relax and make the heart rate stable (Murtisari et al., 2021).

Based on facts and theories, there are similarities where research has been conducted, any type of music therapy will be able to reduce stress levels, especially music that has a melody or soft tone, so as to make the mind more relaxed and reconcile feelings. One of the best music therapies that can be applied is classical music therapy, because the percentage of decrease in stress levels after being given classical music therapy is quite significant, especially in classical music therapy.

The solution to reduce stress ahead of exams is to listen to classical music when you are stressed or by planning well, avoiding procrastination, getting enough rest, communicating with others, and finding fun activities.

CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis showed that there was a positive relationship between the administration of classical music therapy and the reduction in stress levels measured using valid statistical methods. The results of the Wilcoxon signed rank test at SPSS, with a significance value of p value = 0.000 < 0.05, can be concluded that H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted, which means that there is an effect of providing classical music therapy on reducing stress levels in students ahead of the exam

at the College of Health Science of Husada Jombang.

SUGGESTION

This research can be used as a reference for educational institutions, especially the College of Health Science of Husada Jombang, to better understand non-pharmacological techniques by providing classical music therapy to reduce stress levels in students before the exam. Researchers are then expected to develop research by conducting scientific validation and reference for subsequent research with different problems and titles, as well as reducing mental health problems in students and providing non-pharmacological medicine knowledge about the administration of classical music therapy to reduce stress levels in students ahead of exams.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research used a pre-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design without a control group, which limits the ability to establish a causal relationship between classical music therapy and reduced stress levels. Second, the sample size was relatively small and limited to first-semester nursing students at a single institution, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to broader student populations or different educational settings. Third, the duration of the intervention—one week—may not have been sufficient to assess the long-term effects of classical music therapy on stress reduction. Additionally, the measurement relied solely on self-reported questionnaires (SLSI), which could introduce response bias. Finally, external factors such as individual mood, personal stressors, and environmental conditions during the intervention period may have influenced the outcomes.

Future studies should address these limitations by employing randomized controlled designs, larger and more diverse samples, longer intervention durations, and incorporating objective physiological measures of stress to strengthen the validity of the findings.

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