

EXPLORATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SLEEP QUALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: A STUDY OF PERCEPTION AND ITS IMPACT

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Abstract: This study aimed to investigate the effect of sleep quality on the mental health of university students, especially with regard to stress and anxiety levels. The results showed that poor sleep quality, especially sleeping less than six hours each night, was significantly associated with increased stress and anxiety. Students who experience sleep disturbances often feel anxious and depressed, which negatively impacts their concentration and academic productivity. Factors such as high academic pressure, the habit of using gadgets before bedtime, as well as unfavourable sleeping environment conditions also affect students' sleep quality. In contrast, those who slept enough with good sleep quality felt calmer and more able to cope with academic demands without feeling overwhelmed. Based on these findings, it is recommended that university students increase their awareness of the importance of quality sleep and adopt healthier sleep habits. The creation of a comfortable and supportive sleep environment, as well as avoiding bad habits such as using gadgets before bedtime, can contribute to improved sleep quality. Thus, maintaining good sleep quality can help university students reduce anxiety and stress, and support their overall mental well-being, which in turn can improve their academic performance and quality of life.

INTRODUCTION

Sleep is not only about physical rest, but also mental recovery and refreshment. Problems such as stress, anxiety and depression are often associated with poor sleep patterns (Arham, 2021). In rest and sleep conditions, the body carries out a recovery process to restore stamina to be in optimal condition. The need for adequate sleep is determined by the number of hours of sleep (quantity) and the depth of sleep (quality) (Lanyvati, 2001). Sleep disorders are a common health problem in the 21st century, especially in adolescents and early adults (Kusuma et al., 2022).

Dense student activities and large academic demands can lead to poor time management, so that the fulfillment of sleep time is not fulfilled and causes sleep deprivation (Kamila & Dainy, 2023). Quality sleep is very important for college students, as it can affect

their concentration, memory, and learning ability. Good sleep quality will have a positive impact on body health (Palayukan, 2020). Sleep quality consists of qualitative (depth, satisfaction) and quantitative (duration, sleep time) aspects (Silvia et al., 2020). The ideal sleep time for students is 7-8 hours a day (Bachtiar & Sebong, 2022).

Poor sleep quality can increase the risk of degenerative diseases, such as diabetes and cardiovascular, and have an impact on psychological conditions such as feeling easily disturbed and depressed (Tristianingsih & Handayani, 2021). In addition, poor sleep quality can also affect physical appearance, such as dark circles around the eyes, red conjunctiva, and face looks tired (Zurrahmi et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important for students to understand and manage their sleep quality in order to achieve optimal mental and physical well-being.

Sleep quality is an essential component that plays an important role in mental health, especially among college students. Students often face a variety of pressures, both from academic demands and complex social lives, that can disrupt their sleep patterns. Research shows that sleep deprivation can worsen mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety (Hirshkowitz et al., 2015; Dewald-Kaufmann et al., 2019). Lack of sleep is associated with an increased risk of anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems (Valerio et al., 2016). This condition demands serious attention, given the negative impact it can have on the overall well-being of students. Poor sleep quality can lead to an increased risk of degenerative diseases such as diabetes mellitus and cardiovascular, and have an impact on a person's psychological condition, such as feelings that are easily disturbed to the risk of depression (Tristianingsih & Handayani, 2021). Poor sleep quality can also affect physical appearance, one of which is dark circles around the eyes, the conjunctiva of the eyes becomes red, and the face looks tired (Zurrahmi et al., 2021).

Students at different levels of education often experience sleep disturbances due to various factors, including high academic loads, irregular lifestyles, and the use of electronic devices before going to bed (Hershner & Chervin, 2014). Research by Lund et al. (2010) showed that many college students do not get adequate amounts of sleep, which can lead to decreased academic performance and increased stress levels. Studies show that college students often perceive sleep deprivation as normal in the pursuit of academic achievement, unaware of the potential dangers that lurk behind the habit (Gaultney, 2016).

Furthermore, poor sleep quality has been linked to an increase in mental health symptoms, including anxiety and depression. A study by Orzech et al. (2016) confirmed that college students who experience sleep disorders tend to report more severe symptoms of

depression and anxiety compared to their peers who get enough sleep. This study shows the importance of good sleep quality as one of the factors that can contribute to better mental health among college students (Bowers & Moyer, 2020).

While previous research has provided valuable insights, there are still limitations in research that specifically explores students' personal perceptions and experiences of the relationship between sleep quality and mental health. This study aims to fill this gap by using a qualitative approach to understand more deeply how students perceive and experience these problems. By engaging students in in-depth discussions, the study is expected to explore factors that affect their sleep quality as well as their impact on mental health (Almojali et al., 2017).

As a first step in understanding this phenomenon, the study will explore students' personal experiences of sleep quality and how it contributes to their mental well-being. The findings from this study are expected to provide important insights into the importance of increasing awareness of sleep quality and ways to manage stress among college students (Karam & Alkhateeb, 2021). Studies have also shown a link between poor sleep quality and excessive use of social media (Levenson & Shensa, 2021).

The aim of this study was to describe students' experiences with sleep quality and its impact on their mental health. The study also aims to analyze factors that affect the quality of student sleep, as well as provide recommendations to increase awareness and healthy sleep practices among students. In addition, this study is expected to provide useful data for managers of educational institutions to create an environment that is more supportive of student mental health. By understanding students' perspectives in depth, this study is expected to contribute to efforts to improve students' mental well-being and promote healthy sleep practices in the long term.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach using structured interviews to investigate the relationship between sleep quality and mental health among IAIN Palangkaraya students. The main purpose of the interviews was to gather in-depth information regarding sleep habits, factors that affect sleep quality, as well as their impact on mental states, such as stress, anxiety, and fatigue. Participants were selected through a purposive sampling technique, with the criteria being students who had experienced sleep disturbances due to academic load or other factors. This selection aims to ensure that the data collected is relevant to the focus of the research, which is to understand how sleep quality can affect the mental health of students at IAIN

Palangkaraya. Interviews were conducted online using Google Forms, which allowed participants from different locations to participate. The list of interview questions was pre-drafted and covered the following topics:

1. How long is your average sleep duration each night?
2. How often do you experience sleep disturbances, such as difficulty falling asleep or waking up in the middle of the night?
3. Do you feel your sleep quality affects your mental state, such as stress or anxiety levels?
4. What factors do you think affect your sleep quality?
5. What measures have you tried to improve your sleep quality?

The data obtained from the interviews were analysed using a descriptive analysis approach to identify common patterns related to sleep quality and its impact on mental health. The findings from this analysis are expected to illustrate the relationship between sleep quality and students' mental state as well as the main factors that influence their sleep patterns at IAIN Palangkaraya. To maintain data reliability, the interview questionnaire was developed based on recent literature on sleep quality and mental health. Data validation was conducted by checking the consistency of participants' answers to relevant questions. This research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the importance of sleep quality in supporting students' mental health as well as provide practical recommendations to improve their mental wellbeing in the academic environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study focuses on exploring the relationship between sleep quality and mental health among students, particularly how inadequate sleep affects anxiety and stress levels. Based on interviews with 20 students from IAIN Palangkaraya, patterns were found showing a strong connection between their sleep quality and the mental state they experience. These findings provide valuable insights into how sleep quality influences students' psychological well-being.

Sleep Duration

Many students reported highly varying sleep durations, from those who sleep sufficiently to those who sleep very little. Most participants sleep less than six hours, while others sleep between seven to eight hours each night. For example, Participants 1 and 5 stated that they typically sleep around five to six hours each night, which is often associated with various sleep disturbances. On the other hand, participants like 6 and 8, who get longer sleep, feel more refreshed and have more energy to face their academic challenges. In general, those

who sleep less tend to feel more anxious and stressed, while those who get sufficient sleep report feeling calmer and better able to manage pressure.

This finding suggests that adequate sleep, around seven to eight hours per night, plays a crucial role in maintaining mental and emotional balance. In contrast, consistently getting less than six hours of sleep seems to correlate with increased stress and anxiety.

Sleep Disruptions

Most participants reported experiencing sleep disruptions, although at varying frequencies. For those who sleep less than six hours, disturbances like difficulty falling asleep and waking up in the middle of the night occur more often. This is typically triggered by psychological factors, such as anxiety over academic assignments, upcoming exams, or personal issues. Participants like 9 and 3 shared that they often wake up in the middle of the night or have trouble sleeping because they are preoccupied with thoughts about concerns such as unfinished homework or looming exam deadlines. This creates a constant sense of anxiety, worsening their sleep quality.

However, participants who sleep longer, such as 6 and 12, rarely experience significant sleep disruptions and feel that getting enough sleep provides them with the opportunity to wake up feeling better and ready to face their daily activities. This demonstrates that adequate sleep can help reduce sleep disruptions often triggered by anxiety and stress.

Impact of Sleep Quality on Mental Health

Most participants who sleep less than six hours reported negative effects on their mental health. For instance, Participants 1 and 5 mentioned that insufficient sleep often causes them to feel anxious and jittery in the morning, and at times they feel pressured. Other participants also shared that the lack of sleep made them feel extremely fatigued and unable to focus properly during academic activities. Staying up late or poor sleep only adds to their stress levels. This shows that poor sleep quality can exacerbate anxiety and stress, which in turn affects productivity and overall well-being.

In contrast, participants who had longer sleep durations, such as 6 and 8, felt that sufficient sleep positively impacted their mental health. They felt better prepared to handle daily activities and tended to be more composed in dealing with pressure. Adequate sleep seems to provide them with the emotional stability needed to stay focused and reduce stress. This suggests that sufficient sleep is essential for maintaining psychological stability and enhancing the quality of life for students.

Factors Affecting Sleep Quality

Several factors were frequently mentioned by participants as causes of sleep disturbances, including academic stress, overthinking, and using gadgets before bed. Most participants revealed that they often stay awake throughout the night due to worries about assignments or exams approaching. For example, Participants 3 and 7 stated that anxiety over assignment deadlines kept them awake until late at night. Additionally, using gadgets before bed was another significant factor that affected their sleep quality. Some participants shared that they often spent hours on their phones or watching videos late at night. These activities not only disrupted their sleep but also reduced melatonin production, the hormone that helps regulate sleep.

Another external factor that affects sleep quality is the physical environment, such as noise and room temperature. Participants who live in noisy or uncomfortable environments often reported sleep disturbances. For instance, Participants 4 and 8 felt that quality sleep could only be achieved in a quiet and dark room. External noise or an uncomfortable room temperature can cause sleep disruptions, directly impacting their mental health.

Measures Taken to Improve Sleep Quality

To improve their sleep quality, many participants began changing their pre-sleep habits. Some participants, like 1 and 5, started avoiding gadget use at least an hour before bed. They also tried not to dwell too much on unfinished tasks or exams. Others, like 7 and 5, began practicing light meditation or reading books to calm their minds before sleeping. Additionally, participants maintained a consistent sleep schedule and ensured their sleep environment was comfortable, with an ideal temperature and minimal light.

These efforts seemed to be quite effective in improving their sleep quality. Better sleep contributed to a reduction in stress and anxiety, helping them feel more refreshed in the morning. Establishing a regular sleep routine and avoiding factors that disrupt sleep became important steps in maintaining mental health.

Overall, this study shows that sleep quality plays a significant role in students' mental health. Students who get sufficient and undisturbed sleep report more stable mental conditions, while those who sleep less than six hours experience higher levels of anxiety and stress. Factors such as academic anxiety, gadget use before bed, and sleep environment conditions heavily influence sleep quality.

Measures such as avoiding gadgets before bed, maintaining a consistent sleep routine, and creating a comfortable sleep environment can help improve sleep quality and mental health.

Therefore, it is important for students to pay attention to their sleep quality as part of maintaining overall well-being, as it significantly impacts their ability to manage stress and achieve balance in their academic lives.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of this study show that poor sleep quality has a major impact on the mental health of university students, especially in relation to stress and anxiety levels. Students who sleep less than six hours each night tend to experience increased stress and anxiety, which affects their overall well-being. Several factors, such as a high academic load, the habit of using gadgets before bed, as well as unsupportive sleeping environment conditions, contribute to worsening their sleep quality. In contrast, students who get enough sleep feel calmer and are able to manage academic pressure better.

To address this issue, it is recommended that campuses provide programs that can help students manage time and stress, such as time management training and counselling services. In addition, campuses need to educate students about the importance of quality sleep and provide practical guidelines to achieve it, such as creating a healthy sleep routine and avoiding sleep disorders. With these measures, it is hoped that students can improve their sleep quality, which in turn will improve their mental health and academic performance.

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