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Factors Associated with Mental Health Risk among Final-Year University Students: A Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract
Introduction: *Mental health among final-year university students has become a significant concern due to increasing academic pressure during thesis completion.* ***Objective:*** *This study aimed to analyze factors associated with the risk of mental health disorders among final-year students of the Primary School Teacher Education Program (PGSD), Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Jambi.* ***Methods:*** *A cross-sectional design was applied using total sampling of 203 students in semesters 7–14. The variables included academic stress, gender, organizational involvement, social media use, motivation, quality of supervisory relationship, and family economic status. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and analyzed using univariate analysis, chi-square tests for bivariate analysis, and logistic regression for multivariate analysis.* ***Results and Discussion:*** *The results showed that 51.7% of students were at risk of mental health disorders. Academic stress (POR=3.54; 95% CI=2.46–5.09), social media use (POR=1.74; 95% CI=1.30–2.34), motivation (POR=1.73; 95% CI=1.31–2.29), and quality of supervisory relationship (POR=1.57; 95% CI=1.20–2.07) were significantly associated with mental health risk. Gender, organizational involvement, and family economic status were not significantly associated. Academic stress was identified as the most dominant factor (aOR=13.75; 95% CI=6.46–29.27).* ***Conclusion:*** *Preventive efforts should prioritize academic stress management, responsible social media use, motivation enhancement, and improved supervision systems*

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Introduction

Mental health is a condition of psychological, emotional, and social well-being that allows individuals to develop their potential, manage stress, work productively, and contribute to their environment (UNICEF Indonesia, 2022). In the context of higher education, mental health plays an important role in supporting concentration, decision-making, problem-solving skills, and academic success (Chu, Liu, Takayanagi, Matsushita, & Kishimoto, 2022). Students with stable mental conditions tend to have better motivation to study and time management, while mental health disorders can trigger decreased academic performance, sleep disorders, emotional fatigue, and depression. Final year students are a group that is vulnerable to mental health disorders because they face high pressure in completing final projects. Research shows that students in the thesis preparation phase have higher levels of stress and anxiety than first-semester students (Chu et al., 2022). Academic burden, time management, revision demands, limited resources, and the dynamics of relationships with supervisors are complex sources of pressure (Afifah & Wardani, 2022). This situation is even more crucial because the majority of students are in the age range of late adolescence to early adulthood, a period with the peak incidence of mental disorders (Wilson, Deane, Ciarrochi, & Rickwood, 2016).

Globally, the WHO reports that one in seven adolescents aged 10–19 years has a mental disorder, contributing 15% to the total burden of disease in that age group (World Health Organization, 2022). In Indonesia, Riskesdas 2018 (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018) recorded a prevalence of depression of 6.2% in the age group of 15–24 years, while SKI 2023 reported a national prevalence of depression of 1.4% with the highest rate in the young age group of 2% (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023). Indonesia's National Adolescent Mental Health Survey shows that 34.9% of adolescents experience mental health problems and only 2.6% access professional services (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2022). This data shows a large gap between the need for and access to mental health services.

Studies in the student population show a higher prevalence of mental health problems. Suryanto's research (2022) reported that most students have poor to very poor mental health conditions. Study (Setyanto, 2023) found a proportion of mild to severe depression of 54.7% and high anxiety in 86.8% of students. In fact, the study of Azmul Idham et al. shows a high tendency to suicidal ideation in college students (Idham, Sumantri, & Rahayu, 2019). These findings underscore the urgency of student mental health research, especially in the final phase of the study. Various factors have been identified related to students' mental health, including psychological, biological, and socioeconomic factors (Prasetio & Triwahyuni, 2022). Academic stress is consistently reported as a major determinant, as task pressure, academic demands, and self-expectations are negatively correlated with psychological well-being (Córdova Olivera et al., 2023). Additionally, excessive social media use is associated with anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders (Yanti, Manik, Nisa, & Gannika, 2024); (Sa'diyah et al., 2022).

Motivational factors, the quality of relationships with supervisors, and social support also play a role in shaping students' mental resilience (Shirley, 2025). However, most previous studies have analyzed these factors partially, not simultaneously in a single comprehensive analytical model, especially in final year students in the context of thesis preparation. Primary School Teacher Education Program (PGSD), Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Jambi is a relevant context because based on historical data from 2018–2024, students Primary School Teacher Education Program

occupy the highest number of delays in the completion of final projects in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Jambi. This condition has implications for on-time graduation and study program accreditation indicators(National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT), 2023). Until now, there has been no special counseling service available at the study program level, so empirical mapping of risk factors is needed to support evidence-based interventions.

This research was carried out with an integrative approach that analyzed academic factors (academic stress), behavior (social media use), internal psychological factors (motivation), relational (quality of supervisor relationships), and socioeconomics in one logistic regression model. Where to see (1) focus on final year students in the thesis completion phase as a high-risk period; (2) identification of the most dominant factors through multivariate analysis; and (3) the specific context of the Primary School Teacher Education Program in regional universities that do not have a structured mental health service system. This study aims to analyze factors related to the risk of mental health disorders in final year students of the Primary School Teacher Education Program at the University of Jambi and identify the most dominant factors influencing it.

Methods

This study uses an analytical descriptive design with a cross-sectional approach. Data collection was carried out at the same time for all research variables without intervention on the subject. The research was carried out at the Primary School Teacher Education Program, University of Jambi, Teratai Village, Muara Bulian District, Batanghari Regency, in July-December 2025. The research population is all students Primary School Teacher Education Program who are completing the study (N=335). The sample size calculation uses the Isaac-Michael formula with a margin of error of 5%, so that a sample of at least 180 respondents is obtained (Scott, 2019). In the implementation of the research, the number of final semester students who met the criteria and was available was 203 people, so a total sampling of respondents who met the criteria was used. Inclusion criteria include: Primary School Teacher Education Program students in semesters 7–14, are in their final project, and are willing to become respondents by signing an informed consent. Exclusion criteria: inactive students, contracting a thesis at the same time as other courses, having a history of psychiatric treatment or drug consumption related to mental disorders, non-regular classes, students with disabilities that affect significant psychological/cognitive aspects, and foreign students.

The dependent variable was mental health, measured using the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21) and categorized based on median values (≥14 = disturbed; <14 = healthy). Independent variables included: academic stress (Student Academic Stress Scale / SASS; mean cut-off 15.38), gender, organizational participation, social media use (Social Media Addiction Scale; median cut-off 75), motivation (modified Academic Motivation Scale; median 44), quality of relationships with supervisors (AWAI-S; median cut-off 41), and family economy (based on the Jambi Province UMP Rp3,037,121). All instruments use an ordinal or nominal scale according to the characteristics of the variable. Data collection was carried out through an online questionnaire. The validity of the content was reviewed by a psychiatrist at the Jambi Provincial Hospital and minor editorial adjustments were made. Most of the instruments are standard questionnaires. To minimize selection and information bias, questionnaire links are distributed on a limited basis through official academic channels, accompanied by identity verification (NIM, semester, and contract status of thesis courses).

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 22, including univariate, bivariate (chi-square test), and multivariate (logistic regression) analyses with a significance level of 95% ($p<0.05$). All respondents provided *informed consent*) before filling out the questionnaire and guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity of the data. The research has obtained ethical approval from the Ethics Commission of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia with Number LB.02.06/2/1992/2025 dated November 18, 2025

Result and Discussion
1.   Results
Respondent Characteristics

The study involved 203 final year students. Most of them are the class of 2022 (73.9%) with the majority aged 21 (48.8%). Almost all respondents were Muslim (94.1%). The last education of parents generally graduated from high school/MA, both in father (43.8%) and mother (42.9%). Most fathers work as farmers/laborers (49.8%), while more than half of mothers are not working (52.7%). No data was found, because all respondents filled out a questionnaire completely through an online system that required the filling of each item before delivery.

Table 1
Overview of Final Student Mental Health Risks

Categories	Frequency	
	n	**%**
Risk of Mental Health Disorders		
At risk	105	51.7
Not at risk	98	48.3
Academic Stress Levels		
High	99	48.8
Low	104	51.2
Gender		
Female	174	85.7
Male	29	14.3
Organizational Participation		
Participating	52	25.6
Not participating	151	74.4
Social Media Addiction		
Addicted	104	51.2
Not addicted	99	48.8
Motivation		
Low	94	46.3
High	109	53.7
Supervisor Relationship Quality		
Poor	95	46.8
Good	108	53.2
Family Economic Status		
Low	77	37.9
High	126	62.1

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Univariate Analysis

As many as 51.7% of respondents are at risk of mental health disorders. The proportion of academic stress is high at 48.8%. The majority of respondents were female (85.7%) and did not follow the organization (74.4%). As many as 51.2% are classified as experiencing social media addiction. High motivation was possessed by 53.7% of respondents, while 53.2% rated the relationship with the supervisor in the good category. Most came from families with a high economy (62.1%) (Table 1).

Table 2
Analysis of Factors Affecting Final Student Mental Health Risk

Variable	Mental Health				BY (95% CI)	P-value
	At risk		Not at risk			
	n	%	n	%		
Academic Stress Levels						
High	81	81.82	18	18.18	3.54 (2.46-5.09)	**<0.0001***
Low	24	23.08	80	76.92		
Gender						
Famale	91	52.30	83	47.70	1.08 (0.72-1.62)	0.841
Male	14	48.28	15	51.72		
Organizational Participation						
Participating	23	44.23	29	55.77	0.81 (0.58-1.14)	0.274
Not participating	82	54.30	69	45.70		
Social Media Addiction						
Addicted	68	65.38	36	34.62	1.74 (1.30-2.34)	**<0.0001***
Not addicted	37	37.37	62	62.63		
Motivation						
Low	63	67.02	31	32.98	1.73 (1.31-2.29)	**<0.0001***
Height	42	38.53	67	61.47		
Supervisor Relationship Quality						
Poor	61	64.21	34	35.79	1.57 (1.20-2.07)	**0.001***
Good	44	40.74	64	59.26		
Family economics Status						
Low	40	51.95	37	48.05	1.00 (0.76-1.32)	1.000
High	65	51.59	61	48.41		

Description: ***Significant***

Bivariate Analysis

The results of the chi-square test showed that high academic stress was significantly associated with the risk of mental health disorders (POR=3.54; 95% CI: 2.46–5.09; p<0.001). Students with high academic stress are 3.5 times more likely to experience mental health disorders than those with low stress. Social media addiction (POR=1.74; 95% CI: 1.30–2.34; p<0.001), low motivation (POR=1.73; 95% CI: 1.31–2.29; p<0.001), and poor quality of the supervisory relationship (POR=1.57; 95% CI: 1.20–2.07; p=0.001) were also significantly associated. Gender, organizational participation, and family economics showed no meaningful relationship (p>0.05) (Table 2).

Multivariate Analysis

The results of the logistic regression showed that academic stress was the most dominant factor (aOR=13.75; 95% CI: 6.46–29.27; $p<0.001$). After controlling for other variables, students with high academic stress had a nearly 14 times greater risk of developing mental health disorders. The regression model had a Nagelkerke R^2 value of 48.20%, which means that the variables in the model were able to explain 48.2% of the variation in the risk of mental health disorders (Table 3).

Table 3
Logistic Regression Analysis of Factors Affecting Mental Health Risk

Variable	aOR	CI (95%)		p
		Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
Academic Stress Level	13.75	6.46	29.27	**0.000***
Gender	1.51	0.53	4.28	0.443
Organizational Participation	0.56	0.24	1.30	0.178
Social Media Addiction	2.43	1.19	4.97	**0.015***
Motivation Level	2.40	1.09	5.26	**0.029***
Supervisor Relationship Quality	0.99	0.44	2.23	0.975
Family economics Status	1.07	0.50	2.27	0.869
N observations	203			
2 Log Likelihood	190.04			
Nagelkerke R2	48.20%			

*Description: **Significant***

2. Discussion

Students are in the early adulthood phase (18–25 years) or emerging adulthood, which is an important transition period in the formation of identity and emotional stability (Maia Weli Dinda & Yolivia Irna Aviani, 2025) and (Anisya Tiara Shafiira & Fatma Nofriza, 2025). In this phase, individuals are more prone to experiencing mental health problems because they are facing complex psychosocial developmental demands. The characteristics of the respondents in the study, the majority of whom came from the educational background of middle-level parents and the informal employment sector, may influence perceptions of academic pressure and expectations of study success (Pascoe, Hetrick, & Parker, 2020). In addition, some students come from families with lower-middle economic conditions, which theoretically has the potential to increase the psychological burden due to financial stress (Fayyaza, Al-Jannah, Chairina, Naila Sabrina Alyannisa, & Damayant, 2025). However, in this study, economic factors were not proven to be significant, showing that academic pressure is more dominant than economic pressure.

This finding warrants critical examination, as the non-significance may reflect methodological limitations or specific sample characteristics rather than indicating that economic factors are substantively irrelevant. First, the variability of economic conditions within this sample was relatively limited — the majority of respondents came from a homogeneous lower-middle-income group, meaning that the range of variation between respondents was insufficiently wide to detect statistically meaningful differences. Second, the measurement of socioeconomic status in this study was relatively crude, relying solely on parental occupation reports without accounting for more sensitive dimensions such as actual household income, monthly expenditure, or asset ownership. Third, it is possible that economic pressure in this sample is mediated by academic stress

— that is, students experiencing financial hardship may express this through heightened academic stress, such that the direct effect of economic factors on mental health risk becomes undetectable as an independent pathway in the multivariate model. Accordingly, the findings suggest that academic pressure is more dominant than economic pressure in this model; however, this interpretation should not be generalized without further studies employing more comprehensive SES measurements and samples with greater economic variability

The prevalence of the risk of mental health disorders in final year students is relatively high. These results are consistent with global reports that college students have a higher prevalence of mental disorders than the general population of their age (Kaligis et al., 2021). Based on valid and reliable interpretation of DASS-21 (Hakim & Aristawati, 2023) and (Zhang, Peng, & Chen, 2024) These risks reflect the presence of symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression that have the potential to interfere with academic function and quality of life. These findings are in line with national and international research that states that the final phase of the study is the period with the highest risk due to academic pressure and future uncertainty (Rohmah & Mahrus, 2024), (Eisenberg, Hunt, Speer, & Zivin, 2011), and (Hannah Amelia et al., 2026).

Academic stress proved to be the most dominant factor associated with mental health risk (aOR=13.75). Theoretically, chronic academic stress can disrupt emotional regulation and increase susceptibility to psychological disorders (Liu, Chen, Chen, Liu, & Wang, 2023). These results are consistent with previous studies (Azizatunnisah & Ratna Yunita Setiyani Subardjo, 2024) and (Ardi, Handayani, Yendi, & Putriani, 2025) which mentioned academic pressure as the main predictor of mental disorders in students. The biological mechanism through activation of the HPA axis due to prolonged stress also reinforces these findings (McEwen, 2017) and (World Health Organization, 2022). While this biological mechanism is conceptually relevant, it should be emphasized that this study did not directly measure biological markers; The mechanistic link is therefore inferential in nature and should be interpreted as an explanatory framework consistent with the data, rather than as direct causal evidence. The implication is that institution-based stress management interventions are an urgent need (Auerbach et al., 2016).

Social media use is also significantly associated with mental health risks. The phenomenon of doomscrolling and social comparison can increase anxiety and feelings of helplessness (Winarko, 2024), (Pasenrigading, Nur, & Daud, 2025) and (Ramadhani & Purnamasari, 2025). These findings are in line with research (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020) which shows a relationship between the intensity of social media use and mental disorders. Similarly, low motivation has been shown to increase the risk of mental health disorders. Students with low motivation tend to have weaker mental resilience in the face of academic pressure (Septiani & Rohmadani, 2026), (Cahyani & Setiyani, 2024), and (Sulti, Andri, & Martafari, 2025).

The quality of the relationship with the supervisor was significant in bivariate analysis, but not in multivariate, suggesting the possibility of mediation by academic stress and motivation. The literature confirms that supportive supervisory relationships play a protective role (Mbanjwa, 2025) and (Amandus, Mawarni, Effendy, & Hasan-, 2018). Meanwhile, organizational participation did not show a significant relationship, likely due to the protective effect and the burden of roles that negate each other (Surury, Putri, Hamida, & Prastiwi, 2022) , (Muktar, Apriliyani, & Kurniawan, 2025), and (Wijaya & Pamungkas, 2020). The family's economic factors were also insignificant, in contrast to some other studies (Wulandari, Sabrina, Intan, Ariani, & Syam, 2025), but in line with

studies that state that intrapersonal factors are more dominant (Marssel Michael Sengkey et al., 2025). The consistent non-significance of economic factors across all stages of analysis — both bivariate and multivariate — reinforces the possibility that its effect is absorbed by intrapersonal variables such as academic stress and motivation within this sample. Nevertheless, future research should consider employing more diverse SES indicators, such as household expenditure, scholarship recipient status, or subjective perceptions of financial pressure, in order to more rigorously assess whether this non-significance is substantive in nature or represents a measurement artifact

The strength of this research lies in the use of standardized instruments (DASS-21), multivariate analysis to control confounding factors, and a focus on final year students who are vulnerable groups. However, the cross-sectional design limits the drawing of causal conclusions. The use of online questionnaires has the potential to cause response bias. In addition, research was carried out on one study program so generalizations are still limited. However, conceptually this research can be replicated in other study programs or colleges with similar characteristics to test the consistency of the findings. The operationalization of the economic variable — measured solely through parental occupation type without accounting for income, expenditure, or subjective perceptions of financial circumstances — should also be acknowledged as a methodological limitation that may affect the interpretation of the findings. Based on these findings, universities need to develop campus-based mental health promotive and preventive policies. Interventions can be in the form of stress management training, easily accessible counseling services, structured academic mentoring for final year students, and digital literacy to prevent social media addiction. The systemic approach is considered more effective than individual interventions alone in reducing the risk of mental health disorders of students.

Conclusion

Most final year students are at risk of mental health disorders. Significantly related factors were academic stress, social media use, motivation, and quality of relationships with supervisors in bivariate analysis. In the multivariate analysis, academic stress was the most dominant factor followed by social media use and motivation. Meanwhile, gender, participation in organizations, and family economics do not indicate meaningful relationships.

THANKS

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