

MINDFULNESS PRACTICE AS AN ACADEMIC STRESS COPING STRATEGY AMONG STUDENT ORGANIZATION ACTIVISTS

Magfirah Calista Putri^{1a*}, Dhevy Puswiartika^{2b}, Ikhlas Rasido^{3c}, Yusran Diny^{4d}

^{1,2,3,4} Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tadulako University, Palu 94119, Indonesia

E-mail: magfirahcalistaputri@gmail.com

(*) Corresponding Author
magfirahcalistaputri@gmail.com

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 28-07-2026

Revised : 24-08-2026

Accepted : 02-10-2026

KEYWORDS

mindfulness;
academic stress;
coping strategy;
student organization activists;
qualitative study;

ABSTRACT

University students who are actively involved in campus organizations often carry a dual role that exposes them to elevated academic stress, arising from the simultaneous demands of coursework and organizational responsibilities. Left unmanaged, this condition can affect students' physical, psychological, and social well-being. *Mindfulness*, understood as an emotion-focused *coping* strategy grounded in present-moment awareness without judgment, is regarded as a promising approach for helping students regulate this stress in a healthy way. This study aims to (1) identify the forms of stress experienced by students who are active in campus organizations, (2) describe the *mindfulness* practices they apply as a *coping* strategy for academic stress, and (3) explore the cognitive and affective changes they experience after practicing *mindfulness*. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, involving eight student informants selected through purposive sampling from three student organizations at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tadulako University. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation, and were analyzed through a phenomenological procedure comprising description, reduction, essence, and intentionality. The findings are expected to enrich the empirical literature on Guidance and Counseling interventions and to provide practical guidance for school and university counselors in designing accessible, evidence-based strategies to help students manage academic stress.

This is an open access article under the CC-BY-SA license.



INTRODUCTION

Stress is a psychological condition widely experienced by individuals in everyday life. In essence, it is a bodily reaction that arises when a person faces pressures, demands, or situations perceived to exceed their capacity, reflecting an imbalance between the pressure received and the individual's ability to cope with it. Stress can range from mild to severe, with impacts ranging from physical disturbances to serious psychological problems (Alimardani & Yusuf, 2020). Stress can also be understood as a psychological and physiological response that arises when a person faces demands that exceed their own capacity (Nursadrina et al., 2025). Data from the World Health Organization (WHO) (2024) indicate that around 20-35% of university students experience mental health disturbances such as stress, anxiety, and depression, conditions influenced by academic pressure, workload, financial problems, and social relationships. Prolonged stress can lower learning concentration, academic achievement, and students' psychological well-being.

Academic stress refers to the pressure that emerges in relation to the educational process, caused by academic stressors, that is, pressures arising from monotony during the learning process, such as the pressure of continuing to a

higher level of education, low learning motivation, and anxiety when facing examinations (Ambarwati et al., 2019). A previous study examining the relationship between organizational activeness and stress levels among medical students at Universitas Islam Sultan Agung found a relationship between the two variables, with students who were highly active in organizations largely falling into the high-stress category (Fauzi & Pahlevi, 2020). University students are therefore a group closely associated with academic stress, indicating that this issue deserves further examination.

University students are individuals who study at institutions of higher education, whether universities, institutes, or academies, and are formally enrolled as such; they are expected to possess strong intellectual capacity, a high volume of study hours and reading, and stronger analytical skill compared to secondary school students (Supartono et al., 2023). Beyond classroom learning, students are expected to demonstrate good moral character and a commitment to contributing positively to society, and campus organizations serve as one vehicle for developing these capacities (Alhababy, 2016, as cited in Muktar et al., 2025). Entering higher education itself involves a demanding transition that requires adjustment to a new environment (Simatupang & Widjaja, 2021).

During their studies, many students choose to broaden their experience beyond the lecture hall by joining campus organizations, positioning themselves as agents of change through student bodies and institutions. An organization is a forum that brings together a group of people who work together toward a common goal (Duha, 2018, as cited in Lestari & Kurniawati, 2023), and within campus life it becomes a space for students to develop soft skills through positive activities (Sargih et al., 2015, as cited in Lestari & Kurniawati, 2023). Many students choose to join organizations such as student executive boards (BEM), student representative councils (DPM), student activity units (UKM), and study-program student associations (HIMA), primarily to build soft skills, leadership, and broader social networks. Active involvement in organizations is one of the factors known to be associated with the stress experienced by students (Sari, 2019, as cited in Nurhariza & Karimah, 2023), functioning as a vehicle for academic and personal development in terms of social behavior, insight, thinking patterns, and leadership (Kemendikbud, 2013, as cited in Nurhariza & Karimah, 2023).

The dual involvement, or double burden, carried by students who are active in organizations often triggers academic stress, compounded by organizational responsibilities that must be carried simultaneously. Many students struggle to balance academic demands with other aspects of their lives, which ultimately affects their psychological well-being (Wahyuni, 2022, as cited in Khairunnisa & Dewi, 2025). Poorly managed academic stress can produce negative consequences, including declining learning motivation and, in more severe cases, deteriorating academic achievement; similarly, unmanaged organizational responsibility can produce burnout that leads a person to withdraw from their duties. This condition can be detrimental to students both academically and in terms of their personal development within the organization, underlining the need for an appropriate coping strategy that allows students to manage stress adaptively while balancing academic obligations and organizational roles.

Coping is often understood as a way of solving problems, but it more precisely refers to efforts made to deal with pressure-laden demands (Siswanto et al., 2007, as cited in Saihu, 2021). Coping also refers to the effort a person makes to address, reduce, or tolerate threats that burden their feelings and can generate stress (Syamsu et al., 2005, as cited in Saihu, 2021). Andriyani (2019) defines coping strategy as the effort or strategy an individual uses to face problems or protect themselves from the psychological pressures generated by various social experiences. In line with this notion of coping as a strategy for managing psychological pressure, mindfulness can be viewed as a form of coping that helps individuals manage stress; here, mindfulness is not merely a breathing exercise or an attention-focusing technique, but also a way of living and thinking that reflects one's relationship with oneself and with one's emotional dynamics. Through mindfulness practice, individuals learn to be more accepting of themselves (self-compassion), to increase cognitive flexibility, and to cultivate the capacity to remain present in the current moment without becoming absorbed in past emotional narratives or anxious about the future (Periana & Fridari, 2025).

Mindfulness is the attention an individual gives to their experience, accompanied by a process of accepting that experience (Nasidah & Surawan, 2025). In simple terms, mindfulness trains the mind to be in a state of full awareness, fully present in what one is currently doing. Mindfulness also helps individuals recognize and manage their emotions in a more conscious and profound manner (Patabang et al., 2026). In an academic context, students who practice mindfulness tend to be better able to manage stress and improve the effectiveness of their learning, because mindfulness helps them avoid becoming trapped in overthinking and excessive anxiety about assignments and examinations. With full awareness of what they are facing, students can more easily devise strategies to complete academic tasks more effectively. Although various approaches exist for coping with academic stress, mindfulness offers a relatively simple method that can be applied in everyday life, through techniques such as mindfulness meditation and breathing exercises (Khairunnisa &

Dewi, 2025). Deep breathing techniques have been shown to reduce anxiety responses by stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system (Rasido et al., 2026).

Field observation revealed that many students appeared withdrawn, frequently daydreamed, and had difficulty concentrating due to stress stemming from academic pressure and organizational responsibility. This impression was reinforced by brief interviews the researcher conducted with five active student-organization administrators, who reported experiencing academic stress from sources such as misunderstandings with lecturers, accumulating assignments, final grades that did not match the effort invested, and overlapping assignment deadlines, as well as organizational stress from dealing with people of widely differing character, organizational activities that clashed with assignment deadlines, and the burden of completing an organization's accountability report during a general assembly or change of leadership. Symptoms they reported experiencing during stress included anxiety, restlessness, preoccupation, mental clutter, irritability, overthinking, a tendency to panic, and being easily fatigued. From these same interviews it emerged that the five student activists had already used several mindfulness-related techniques as a coping strategy, such as deep breathing repeated several times until calm, taking a moment of stillness, and calling a parent to talk through what had just happened; however, because these techniques were not applied consistently, their benefit for managing academic stress had not yet been fully felt.

Based on the description above, it is clear that organizational activity brings many benefits for students, but it also imposes a double burden on students as both academic individuals and active organizational members. This study is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors that trigger academic stress among students involved in campus organizations, while also explaining the role of mindfulness as an effective strategy for managing that pressure. In doing so, the study addresses not only the problem of academic stress itself but also offers an understanding of healthy approaches to facing the various demands students encounter.

The study by Khairunisa and Dewi (2025), titled "The Effect of Mindfulness on Academic Stress among Generation Z Students in Malang, East Java," found that mindfulness helps students face stress through several key mechanisms: increased self-awareness of thoughts and emotions, acceptance of academic pressure without excessive emotional reactivity, and more adaptive emotion management. Building on this, the present study focuses more specifically on examining the practice of mindfulness as an academic-stress coping strategy among students who are active in campus organizations. This focus offers a new perspective on how students manage stress amid the complex demands of academic life and organizational activity, and on how mindfulness is applied to maintain emotional balance, learning concentration, and adaptive capacity in the face of the various pressures they experience. In addition, this study examines students' experiences after practicing mindfulness, both in terms of thoughts and feelings, in order to provide a deeper understanding of the role of mindfulness in students' lives.

This study was conducted at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tadulako University, Palu, Central Sulawesi, chosen because it has a relatively high level of student participation in organizations, consistent with its larger student population compared to several other faculties. The study focuses on three study-program student associations: the Guidance and Counseling Student Association (HIMABIKON), the Indonesian Language and Literature Student Association (IKAMABASTRA), and the Civic Education Student Association (HIMA PPKN MORALITY). HIMABIKON was selected because students in the Guidance and Counseling program are considered to already possess a fairly good understanding of mindfulness, stress coping, and various mindfulness techniques, given the close relationship between the field of Guidance and Counseling and Psychology (Santoso et al., 2026). IKAMABASTRA and HIMA PPKN MORALITY were selected based on field evidence showing that both associations are known to be active, both in terms of member involvement and the implementation of work programs, and both have produced cadres capable of leading at a wider scope, indicating sound cadre management and active program implementation that make the three associations appropriate research sites.

The urgency of this study lies in the importance of understanding the practice of mindfulness as an academic-stress coping strategy among student organization activists, a group especially vulnerable to simultaneous academic and non-academic pressure. This study is expected to serve as a source of information and reference for developing effective stress-management efforts for university students. Specifically, this study aims to (1) identify the forms of stress experienced by students who are active in organizations, (2) understand the mindfulness practices applied by student organization activists as a coping strategy in facing academic stress, and (3) determine the cognitive and affective changes experienced by student organization activists after practicing mindfulness as a coping strategy.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach. According to Safarudin et al. (2023), qualitative research focuses on the natural observation and understanding of social phenomena by presenting data descriptively and interpretatively, aiming to provide an in-depth picture of situations and events within their context. Similarly, Putri et al. (2024) note that a qualitative descriptive approach is used to explore, describe, and explain a social phenomenon empirically and contextually. This method was considered appropriate because the study sought to explore and understand in depth how students apply mindfulness as a coping strategy in facing both academic and organizational stress.

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tadulako University, Palu, Central Sulawesi, the faculty with the largest number of students at the university and a correspondingly high level of student participation in organizations at both the study-program and faculty levels. The research focused on three study-program student associations, namely HIMABIKON, IKAMABASTRA, and HIMA PPKN MORALITY, and was planned to take place from May 2026 onward.

The subjects of a qualitative study are the parties from whom the researcher obtains and collects data, with sources of data including individuals, groups, documents, and situations related to the problem under investigation (Wijaya et al., 2025). In this study, data were obtained from informants who were active organizational members, determined through purposive sampling, a technique used to obtain informants matching criteria set by the researcher (Asrulla et al., 2023). The study involved eight student informants meeting the following criteria: (1) actively enrolled students at Tadulako University; (2) actively involved in a student organization at either the university or faculty level; (3) having been part of the organization for approximately two periods of leadership; (4) having experienced or currently experiencing academic stress; (5) having experience practicing mindfulness; (6) able to describe their experience of going through academic stress; and (7) willing to serve as an informant, to participate actively in the interview, and to provide information honestly and openly.

In this study, mindfulness refers to an awareness practice carried out by students who are active in organizations when facing academic pressure, reflected in their ability to consciously recognize their thoughts, feelings, and condition when responding to pressure more calmly. It was examined through indicators such as awareness of present experience, non-judgmental acceptance, awareness of thoughts and emotions, and the ability to manage responses to stress, explored through in-depth interviews and interpreted on a low-moderate-high scoring continuum.

Because qualitative research designs are inherently dynamic and not rigidly fixed from the outset, the design used here served as a flexible initial guide capable of adjusting to field realities (Oktariyani et al., 2025). Even so, the researcher established a clear research focus directed at understanding the experience of student organization activists in practicing mindfulness as a coping strategy for academic and non-academic stress, so that the research process would remain directed while still able to capture the subjective meaning of students' experience in depth. Informant determination followed a phenomenological logic, in which informants are treated not merely as sources of factual data but as subjects who articulate lived experience, including emotional responses, personal meaning, and the psychological dynamics accompanying the phenomenon under study (Nasir et al., 2023).

Data were collected directly in the field through four techniques identified by Zahroh et al. (2025) as central to qualitative inquiry, namely participatory observation, in-depth interview, documentation, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD); in this study, observation, in-depth semi-structured interview, and documentation were used. Observation involved direct fieldwork to capture the contextual reality of the phenomenon under study (L. A. Putri et al., 2025). The semi-structured interview combined structured and unstructured elements, using a pre-prepared interview guide that could be adapted to informants' responses (Waruwu, 2024). Documentation involved records and materials relevant to the research problem, such as field notes and photographic archives (L. A. Putri et al., 2025).

Data quality was assessed continuously throughout the process of collection, processing, and analysis, following the three main stages identified by Miles and Huberman (in Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024): data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data analysis itself followed a phenomenological procedure comprising four stages, namely description, reduction, essence, and intentionality, consistent with Creswell's (2014, as cited in Sina, 2024) view of qualitative methodology as an approach aimed at understanding phenomena from participants' own perspective, with a focus on meaning and context. To ensure the accuracy of the data, triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained through interviews, observation, and documentation, as well as comparing information across different informants, in order to minimize researcher subjectivity, strengthen data validity, and support a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings on the practice of mindfulness as an academic-stress coping strategy among student organization activists, based on in-depth interviews with eight active members of HIMABIKON, IKAMABASTRA, and HIMA PPKN MORALITY. The findings are organized into three parts: (1) the forms of stress experienced by student organization activists, (2) the mindfulness practices they apply as a coping strategy, and (3) the cognitive and affective changes they experience after practicing mindfulness, followed by a discussion relating these findings to relevant theory and prior empirical studies.

Result

Forms of Stress Experienced by Student Organization Activists

Interviews with the eight informants identified three broad categories of stress experienced by student organization activists: academic stress, organizational stress, and physical, psychological, and social stress. Academic stress included overlapping assignment deadlines and pressure to achieve strong final grades; organizational stress included difficulty managing time and pressure from within the organization's leadership structure; and physical, psychological, and social stress included the simultaneous burden of academic and organizational demands, fatigue even without exertion, and overthinking.

Academic Stress

Several informants described this pressure directly:

"What makes me quite stressed is the pressure of assignment deadlines that come one after another" (AS).

"The challenge I feel most is when several assignments arrive at the same time and have to be finished quickly; at that point it feels quite heavy" (AA).

"When lecture assignments have overlapping deadlines, that is when I really feel stressed and confused, especially since there are also association duties on the other side" (I).

"PPKN often conducts field visits over quite long distances, and that becomes its own source of pressure on top of academic assignment deadlines" (MR).

"Sometimes it becomes tiring on its own, especially when academic assignments are at their busiest" (CC).

These accounts indicate that the most consistent source of academic stress for organizationally active students is the clustering of assignment deadlines close together, compounded by pressure to maintain or improve final grades. The obligation to submit work on time and the desire to achieve satisfying academic results emerge as two persistent, mutually reinforcing sources of pressure and anxiety.

Organizational Stress

"When running organizational activities alongside ongoing academic work, there are both pluses and minuses. The plus is I learn to divide my time between the two, but the minus is that things sometimes get neglected, because we cannot give 100 percent to two different things at once" (FJ).

"Sometimes it is also hard to divide our time; on one side there are administrative responsibilities for activities we must finish, and on the other side we are still attending lectures" (R).

"As the head of the association I have to manage my time between coursework, meetings, and organizational activities. Time management and the demands that must be completed simultaneously are what trigger my stress" (MR).

"For me the main factor that triggers my stress is difficulty managing my time, because there are so many demands from both lectures and the organization" (AA).

Beyond scheduling conflicts, several informants also described pressure originating from within the organization itself, including expectations from senior members and the responsibility of maintaining cohesion among fellow administrators with differing personalities. Taken together, these accounts show that organizational stress arises primarily from the difficulty of balancing academic and organizational schedules and from internal leadership dynamics, both of which are intensified by the volume of formal and informal activities, such as leadership meetings, inter-body coordination, program preparation, and organizational paperwork.

Physical, Psychological, and Social Stress

"Academic and organizational demands quite affect my mental condition; physically I feel tired and lack sleep, and mentally I am more often anxious and excessively overthinking because I am afraid I cannot complete all my responsibilities well" (AS).

"Sometimes I get dizzy, have trouble sleeping, keep thinking about things, and feel like my body is truly tired even though I have not done much yet" (I).

"I once experienced weight loss because of the stress I was going through; even eating felt like a struggle since I kept thinking about things and had no appetite or trouble sleeping" (R).

"I feel there has been an emotional change in myself, because whenever academic and organizational activities clash, my emotions suddenly spike without me realizing it" (FJ).

"I once had to be hospitalized because I was in the middle of running an activity" (CC).

These accounts indicate that the stress experienced by student organization activists is multidimensional, affecting physical, psychological, and social aspects of well-being simultaneously. Physically, it commonly manifests as prolonged fatigue, disrupted sleep, and declining physical condition; psychologically, as persistent anxiety and preoccupation with multiple simultaneous responsibilities; and socially, as reduced time and energy for interaction with friends and the wider environment outside campus and organizational life. This double burden does not press on a single dimension of well-being but ripples outward across all of them at once, underscoring the need for an accessible and adaptive coping response.

Mindfulness Practices Applied as a Coping Strategy for Academic Stress

In-depth interviews further revealed that the mindfulness practices applied by student organization activists in daily life are neither rigid nor time-consuming, but flexible enough to fit around their busy schedules. These practices include conscious breathing exercises, present-moment awareness, and brief meditation.

"For focusing on my breath, that is one of the techniques I use, along with taking time alone and journaling or writing, which helps me stay emotionally steady and focused" (A).

"When I am stressed I sometimes like to sit alone at home, breathe in deeply through my nose, hold it for a few seconds, and breathe out through my mouth. After focusing on my breathing, it feels like all the burden comes out" (CC).

"Sometimes I step back a few paces to calm my mind, a kind of brief meditation, and observe the situation around me without getting carried away, then step forward again to face both things" (FJ).

"What I do is journaling; when I am stressed and do not know who to talk to, I end up writing, usually about the restlessness I am feeling" (R).

"Usually I focus on my breathing, trying to be more aware of myself, and just sitting quietly for a few minutes also helps quite a lot; I also occasionally do journaling to reduce the burden on my mind" (MR).

"When I feel stressed and my body feels really tired, what I usually do at home is sit on the porch just looking at the sky, and I especially like it when a gentle breeze comes and I look at the plants around me, it makes me feel calm" (I).

Across these accounts, informants consistently described applying mindfulness deliberately as a strategy for coping with academic stress. The most common forms include conscious breathing exercises, directing attention toward one's immediate surroundings to regain focus, brief meditation, and momentarily withdrawing from a crowd to understand one's own feelings without judgment. These practices require no special setting and can be carried out at almost any time, including immediately after receiving pressure from the surrounding environment. Through these practices, informants reported feeling calmer, more focused, and less prone to becoming trapped in excessive anxiety, indicating that mindfulness functions as an effective and accessible coping strategy that helps student organization activists carry out their academic obligations in a more controlled manner despite ongoing busyness and pressure.

Cognitive and Affective Changes After Practicing Mindfulness

Regular mindfulness practice was found to produce tangible changes in both the cognitive dimension (patterns of thought and ways of viewing situations) and the affective dimension (feelings and emotional states) for all participants, functioning as the central mechanism that helped them manage the dual pressure of academic and organizational demands.

Cognitive Changes

"After practicing mindfulness, I feel I no longer panic easily, and it has helped a lot so I am no longer carried away by negative thoughts" (I).

"After I applied mindfulness, I feel more able to control myself and I do not panic as easily anymore" (AA).

"My mind feels calmer and more organized after doing mindfulness practice, and it also helps me become more aware of negative thoughts without immediately being swept up in them, so I can recognize when I am anxious and calm myself down" (AS).

"After applying mindfulness I feel I no longer panic easily, I can control overthinking better, and my thoughts are more organized than before" (MR).

Overall, informants described a marked increase in their ability to focus and concentrate, along with a shift in how they interpreted pressure, from viewing it purely as an unbearable burden toward viewing it as a manageable challenge that could even contribute to their own growth.

Affective Changes

"After I withdrew for a while without anyone around me, I was able to remind myself that this is already the process I chose, both in the organization and in my studies" (A).

"Usually when my thoughts are chaotic, I try to calm myself by sitting alone for around 30 minutes to an hour, staying still, breathing and focusing on my breath, and after that I feel more relaxed" (R).

"After applying mindfulness I feel calmer and no longer anxious, and I can control my emotions better; it really helps me not get too absorbed in negative thoughts" (MR).

"After applying it regularly, I feel calmer, my emotions have lessened, and I can control them better; it really helps me not get angry so easily" (I).

These accounts indicate that regular mindfulness practice produced a visible shift toward a more stable mood, reduced anxiety, restlessness, and inner tension previously triggered by the accumulation of academic and organizational obligations, together with a greater capacity to remain calm under pressure, to avoid overreacting emotionally, and to accept limitations and circumstances with greater equanimity.

DISCUSSION

Forms of Stress Experienced by Student Organization Activists

The findings show that student organization activists experience multiple forms of stress originating from both academic and organizational demands. This stress is not confined to academic pressures such as accumulating deadlines, the demand to maintain a strong cumulative grade point average, and examination preparation, but also stems from organizational activity, including difficulty allocating time to leadership responsibilities, pressure from senior members, and internal organizational conflict. These pressures subsequently affect students' physical, psychological, and social well-being, producing fatigue, sleep deprivation, anxiety, overthinking, and a decline in the quality of social relationships.

These findings indicate that student organization activists are managing a dual role, that of a student with academic obligations and that of an organizational administrator expected to carry out agreed work programs. When both sets of demands arise simultaneously, many students struggle to allocate their available resources, particularly time, energy, and attention, a condition that intensifies academic stress when not offset by adequate self-management skills. This is consistent with Wahyuni (2022, as cited in Khairunisa & Dewi, 2025), who states that the double burden carried by organizationally active students is often a trigger for academic stress, since organizational responsibilities borne simultaneously with academic ones make it difficult for students to balance academic demands with other aspects of life, ultimately affecting their psychological well-being. In the present study, informants likewise perceived academic and organizational burdens as frequently coinciding, limiting their capacity to manage time, energy, and emotion, and giving rise to a range of physical and psychological stress responses.

The findings further indicate that difficulty in time management is a dominant factor triggering stress; nearly all informants reported that clashing schedules among lectures, assignments, organizational meetings, and work programs produced considerable pressure, suggesting that time-management competence is an important skill for organizationally active students to develop. Beyond academic performance, stress was also found to affect students' overall well-being, both physically and psychologically. Recurring symptoms such as prolonged fatigue, sleep disturbance, irritability, overthinking, and diminished motivation indicate that stress has begun to affect students' mental health, underscoring that the stress experienced by organizationally active students is multidimensional in nature, simultaneously touching the academic, organizational, physical, emotional, and social domains of their lives.

Mindfulness as a Coping Strategy in Facing Academic Stress

The findings show that all informants applied mindfulness practice as a coping strategy for facing academic stress, in relatively simple forms such as conscious breathing (mindful breathing), brief meditation, sitting in silence, mindfully observing one's surroundings, and journaling as a medium for expressing thoughts and feelings. These practices were carried out flexibly according to each student's circumstances, without requiring a special place or dedicated time.

This finding indicates that mindfulness is a coping strategy that is relatively easy for students to apply, even amid dense academic and organizational schedules. The practice allows students to pause momentarily from the demands they are facing so that their attention can return to what is happening in the present (present moment awareness). Through this

process, students become less absorbed in unfinished tasks or worries about organizational responsibilities, allowing the pressure they feel to gradually ease.

This result is consistent with the concept of mindfulness introduced by Jon Kabat-Zinn, widely regarded as a pioneer in the field, and with the study by Sari et al. (2025), which defines mindfulness as the capacity to be fully present and aware of the current moment without judgment (non-judgmental awareness). When students direct their attention to their breath, bodily sensations, or their surrounding environment, their focus shifts away from negative thoughts toward the experience unfolding in the present, a shift in attention that helps reduce anxiety and strengthens the ability to remain calm under various forms of pressure.

Based on these findings, mindfulness can be understood as an effective coping alternative for student organization activists, precisely because it is easy to practice and requires neither extended time nor special facilities, allowing it to be applied whenever academic or organizational pressure begins to be felt. This flexibility positions mindfulness as a relevant strategy for helping students maintain balance among academic demands, organizational activity, and psychological health.

Cognitive and Affective Changes Following Mindfulness Practice

Cognitive Changes

The findings show that regular mindfulness practice produced significant change in the cognitive dimension of organizationally active students. Informants reported becoming better able to focus their attention, concentrate more effectively, feel less panic under pressure, and manage negative thoughts and overthinking more effectively. They also began to view academic and organizational demands as manageable challenges rather than burdens to be avoided.

This finding suggests that mindfulness contributes to improved cognitive regulation. Before practicing mindfulness, most informants reported thinking about multiple responsibilities simultaneously, which made their attention easily divided and prioritization difficult. After becoming accustomed to regular practice, they became better able to direct their focus toward the task at hand, resulting in more structured thinking and improved decision-making.

Viewed through the lens of coping theory, this change can be explained through the concept of cognitive reappraisal, the capacity to reinterpret a stress-inducing situation so that it is perceived more positively and realistically. Through mindfulness practice, students learn to notice the presence of negative thoughts and emotions without needing to react to or be carried away by them immediately. This awareness allows them to evaluate situations more objectively and to select more appropriate responses when facing academic and organizational demands.

Affective Changes

Beyond cognitive change, the findings also show that mindfulness produced significant affective change among informants. Nearly all reported becoming calmer, better able to regulate their emotions, less prone to anger, more accepting of circumstances, and experiencing reduced anxiety after consistently practicing mindfulness.

This finding indicates that mindfulness contributes to improved emotion regulation. Before practicing mindfulness, students tended to react emotionally when facing academic and organizational pressure; after consistent practice, they were able to create a pause before reacting, making their emotional responses more controlled. This is consistent with Periana and Fridari (2025), who found that mindfulness plays a significant role in supporting emotion regulation across various populations, particularly students, not only by increasing emotional awareness and reducing anxiety but also by encouraging the use of more adaptive emotion-regulation strategies, thereby helping individuals manage emotional responses more effectively.

Within psychological literature, the capacity to manage emotion is considered an important indicator of psychological well-being; individuals with good emotion regulation tend to display a healthier psychological profile, are better able to face pressure-laden situations in a healthy manner, and tend to be calmer, more responsive, and more reflective (Periana & Fridari, 2025). The affective change identified in this study therefore suggests that mindfulness not only helps reduce momentary stress but also supports students' longer-term mental health.

Accordingly, mindfulness practice can be categorized as a form of emotion-focused coping. Rather than directly eliminating the source of stress, this strategy helps individuals manage their emotional responses so that they can face problems more adaptively. The emergence of an accepting attitude (acceptance) toward the conditions being faced further indicates that students begin to develop self-acceptance regarding their own limitations, an attitude that helps them fulfill academic and organizational obligations without being continually shadowed by excessive guilt or anxiety.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that student organization activists carrying a dual role as both learners and organizational administrators face multiple sources of academic stress, including the demand to complete coursework, the need to divide time between academic and organizational activities, organizational responsibility itself, and pressure to maintain academic achievement.

The findings indicate that mindfulness practice serves as one coping strategy that helps students manage this academic stress. Through full awareness of present experience without excessive judgment (present moment awareness), students become better able to recognize their emotions, manage negative thoughts, and respond to academic pressure more adaptively. Mindfulness practice takes various forms, including breathing exercises, self-reflection, brief meditation, focusing on the task currently at hand, and allowing oneself time to rest.

In addition, applying mindfulness was found to have a positive impact on students' psychological condition. Students became calmer under pressure, better able to control anxiety, more able to concentrate while studying, and wiser in setting priorities between academic and organizational obligations. Mindfulness thus functions not only as a strategy for reducing stress but also as a means of strengthening self-regulation and psychological well-being.

Overall, mindfulness practice proved to be an effective coping strategy that helps student organization activists face the various academic and non-academic demands they encounter, with its success shaped by the consistency of practice, individual self-awareness, and the support of the surrounding environment. Given the limited number of informants and the bounded scope of the study, these findings should be interpreted with appropriate caution regarding generalizability; nevertheless, they offer a useful foundation for counselors and future researchers seeking to expand this line of inquiry through larger and more diverse samples, additional research sites, or a mixed-methods design that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to produce a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of mindfulness as an academic-stress coping strategy.

REFERENCES

- Alimardani, F., & Yusuf, A. (2020). Hubungan antara kecemasan dan stres dengan kesejahteraan psikologis pada individu dewasa muda. *Jurnal Psikologi Terapan*, 8(2), 123-135.
- Ambarwati, P. D., Pinilih, S. S., & Astuti, R. T. (2019). Gambaran tingkat stres mahasiswa. *Jurnal Keperawatan Jiwa*, 5(1), 40-47.
- Andriyani, J. (2019). Strategi coping stres dalam mengatasi problema psikologis. *At-Taujih: Bimbingan dan Konseling Islam*, 2(2), 37-55.
- Asrullah, Nasrullah, Ismail, Suryani, & Ramadhani, R. (2023). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. CV. Rizmedia Pustaka Indonesia.
- Azzahra, S. F., Victoriana, E., & Megarini, M. Y. (2023). Mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR) terhadap penurunan burnout pada perawat. *JIP (Jurnal Intervensi Psikologi)*, 15(1), 63-82.
- Fauzi, A. A., & Pahlevi, T. (2020). Analisis hubungan keaktifan berorganisasi terhadap hasil prestasi akademik mahasiswa Fakultas Ekonomi Universitas Negeri Surabaya. *Jurnal Pendidikan Administrasi Perkantoran (JPAP)*, 8(3), 449-457.
- Khairunnisa, L., & Dewi, D. K. (2025). Pengaruh mindfulness terhadap stres akademik pada mahasiswa generasi Z di Kota Malang, Jawa Timur. *Jurnal Dinamika Sosial dan Sains*, 2(1), 423-427.
- Lestari, R. Y., & Kurniawati, T. (2023). Peranan organisasi kemahasiswaan dalam pengembangan soft skill mahasiswa (studi kasus mahasiswa Fakultas Ekonomi Universitas Negeri Padang). *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 7(2), 17955-17962.
- Mukhtar, Z., Apriliyani, I., & Kurniawan, W. E. (2025). Hubungan keaktifan berorganisasi dengan tingkat stres pada mahasiswa. *Jurnal Penelitian Perawat Profesional*, 7(1), 241-248.
- Nasir, A., Nurjana, N., Shah, K., Sirodj, R. A., & Afgani, M. W. (2023). Pendekatan fenomenologi dalam penelitian kualitatif. *Innovative: Journal of Social Science Research*, 3(5), 4445-4451.
- Nurhariza, F., & Karimah, A. (2023). Persepsi mahasiswa tentang stres akademik dan dampaknya pada motivasi belajar mahasiswa semester 5 Bimbingan Penyuluhan Islam UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. *Tarbiyah: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*, 2(2), 188-195.
- Oktariyani, Y., Safitri, S., & Fitriani, Y. (2025). Desain penelitian kualitatif dan kuantitatif dalam konteks pendidikan: Tinjauan metodologis dan aplikasi. *Indonesian Research Journal on Education*, 5.

- Patabang, J. A., Puswiartika, D., Rasido, I., & Hasan, H. The Effects of Dispositional Mindfulness and Social Support on Academic Stress Among Students in the Guidance and Counseling Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tadulako University. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 10(4), 526-541.
- Periana, W., & Fridari, I. G. A. D. (2025). Peran mindfulness dalam regulasi emosi: Sebuah tinjauan literatur. *Jurnal Psikologi*.
- Putri, L. A., Maghfira, A., Esy, M. L., Rahmawati, S. S., & Fitria, R. (2025). Observasi perkembangan tradisi ngabuburit di kalangan generasi muda. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Budaya Indonesia*, 3(1), 63-72.
- Rasido, S., Puswiartika, D., Rasido, I., & Hasan, H. (2026). Effectiveness of Group Counseling with Mindful Breathing Technique in Reducing Student Anxiety. *Journal of General Education and Humanities*, 5(1), 2011–2024.
- Sari, P. I. R., Sulityowati, R. A., Eldi, N. A., Wakita, M. I., & Intan, S. P. (2025). Kajian literatur tentang pengaruh mindfulness terhadap pengurangan stres akademik pada mahasiswa. *HUMANITIS: Jurnal Homaniora, Sosial dan Bisnis*, 3(1), 201-210.
- Saihu, M. (2021). Strategi coping stress mahasiswa dalam penulisan skripsi. *Alim: Journal of Islamic Education*, 3(1).
- Simatupang, E. P. C., & Widjaja, Y. (2021). Hubungan persepsi mahasiswa tentang lingkungan pembelajaran dengan kejadian burnout di Fakultas Kedokteran Universitas Tarumanagara tahap akademik. *Tarumanagara Medical Journal*, 3(2), 291-303.
- Supartono, S., Sukardi, S., Santoso, L. H., & Darmadi, E. A. (2023). Dampak kuliah sambil bekerja terhadap aktifitas belajar mahasiswa di Politeknik Tri Mitra Karya Mandiri. *IKRA-ITH Humaniora: Jurnal Sosial dan Humaniora*, 7(1), 1-8.
- Waruwu, M. (2024). Pendekatan penelitian kualitatif: Wawancara mendalam sebagai teknik pengumpulan data. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*.
- Wijaya, F. R., Lubis, F. A. R., Siregar, M. N. S., & Batubara, A. A. F. (2025). Sumber data, subjek penelitian, dan isu terkait. *Jurnal Edukatif*, 3(2), 271-276.
- Zahroh, N. I., Nasution, L. A., Tazqia, A. D., Faiha, H. A. I., & Nurhayati, D. (2025). Strategi pengumpulan data dalam penelitian kualitatif: Teknik, tantangan dan solusinya. *Tarbiyatul Ilmu: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan*, 3(6), 107-118.