

## From Stress To Success: A Systematic Review of Integrative Psychoeducational Interventions for University Students

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Submitted: 2025-05-26. Revised: 2025-06-27. Accepted: 2025-06-30

**Abstrak.** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi efektivitas intervensi psikoedukasi dalam mereduksi stres akademik sekaligus meningkatkan kondisi *flourishing* pada mahasiswa. Menggunakan metode *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) dengan protokol PRISMA 2020, sepuluh artikel empiris relevan yang dipublikasikan antara tahun 2015 hingga 2024 dianalisis secara mendalam. Data dikumpulkan dari basis data bereputasi meliputi Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, dan Google Scholar. Analisis tematik digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi mekanisme intervensi dan dampaknya terhadap kesejahteraan mahasiswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa psikoedukasi berbasis *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy* (CBT) efektif dalam menurunkan simtom klinis stres, sementara intervensi berlandaskan model PERMA secara signifikan meningkatkan resiliensi dan pertumbuhan psikologis jangka panjang. Durasi intervensi antara 5 hingga 8 minggu teridentifikasi sebagai periode optimal untuk menghasilkan perubahan perilaku yang berkelanjutan. Temuan ini juga menyoroti peran penting digitalisasi layanan dan pendekatan multimodal dalam meningkatkan aksesibilitas serta mengurangi stigma kesehatan mental di kampus. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan pentingnya integrasi program psikoedukasi yang holistik ke dalam kurikulum perguruan tinggi guna menciptakan lingkungan akademik yang suportif bagi kesuksesan mahasiswa secara utuh.

**Abstract.** This study demonstrates that targeted psychoeducational interventions significantly reduce academic stress and enhance well-being among college students. Using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method and the PRISMA 2020 protocol, the research evaluates the outcomes and mechanisms of these interventions on students' academic flourishing. Analysis of ten recent empirical articles from 2015 to 2024, sourced from Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, and Google Scholar, underpins the findings. Thematic analysis reveals that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)-based psychoeducation is effective at lowering stress symptoms, while PERMA model-based interventions foster resilience and enduring psychological development. Interventions lasting 5 to 8 weeks are most effective at driving sustained behavioral change. Crucially, digitizing services and adopting multimodal approaches further increase accessibility and destigmatize mental health support. The evidence supports integrating holistic psychoeducational programs into higher education to build supportive academic environments that promote student success.

**Key word:** Psychoeducation; Academic Stress; Flourishing; PERMA Model; Students.

## INTRODUCTION

Academic stress is a major challenge threatening the mental health of students completing higher education. This phenomenon arises in response to intense academic demands, including piling up assignments, pressure to achieve optimal performance, rigorous exams, and repeated presentations, which contribute to increased anxiety and emotional exhaustion (Quincho, 2021). The prevalence of academic stress in Indonesia reaches 52.8%, with levels of moderate to severe severity, demonstrating the significant impact of academic stress on students' mental health (Sari et al., 2023). Over 40% of students report high levels of stress due to heavy academic workloads, exacerbated by social pressures such as isolation and interpersonal conflict (Knapstad et al., 2021).

The complexity of academic stress is increasingly apparent in first-year college students transitioning from high school to college. This group is more vulnerable to stress because they must adapt to a new environment while facing high family expectations (García-Martín et al., 2022). This transition creates multidimensional challenges, including adapting to cultural differences and educational systems, which often trigger emotional distress (Mastrokoukou et al., 2024). Changes in lifestyle, such as irregular sleep schedules and poor diet, are detrimental to students' mental health (Pinto et al., 2024). Students who struggle to manage their study time report higher levels of anxiety than those with effective time management (Rahman & Ahmed, 2023).

The Asian cultural context, particularly Indonesia, adds a unique dimension to students' academic stress. Peer competition and family expectations pose significant psychological pressures in cultures that emphasize academic achievement (Kim & Park, 2022). Unsupportive learning environments and a lack of academic guidance exacerbate stress (Li et al., 2023). Uncertainty about the future and pressure to succeed trigger anxiety and depression, creating a negative cycle that impacts academic performance and overall psychological well-being (Md. Fajlay Rabbi & Md. Sefatul Islam, 2024).

In the context of intervention, psychoeducation emerges as a prometheusian approach to addressing academic stress. Psychoeducation is a structured intervention that provides an in-depth understanding of stress and its management techniques, aimed at reducing its negative impacts and encouraging students to achieve psychological well-

being or thrive (Ahmad et al., 2022). Empirical evidence shows that psychoeducation increases individuals' self-efficacy in managing academic stress, changing their perception of stress from a challenge to a manageable one (Eraslan-Capan, 2016; Sari & Rahayu, 2022). Individuals with comprehensive knowledge of stress and its management strategies demonstrate higher levels of resilience and are more likely to thrive (Raharjo & Prahara, 2022).

The PERMA (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment) model offers a comprehensive framework for understanding multidimensional well-being. This model emphasizes that well-being is not simply the absence of stress, but rather involves important elements such as positive emotions, engagement, meaningful relationships, purpose in life, and achievement (Seligman, 2018). Research shows that each PERMA element is interconnected in shaping holistic well-being, with balance between the five dimensions being crucial (Butler & Kern, 2016). The PERMA model is applicable in higher education contexts to support students' mental health development (Allison et al., 2021; Kern et al., 2020). Students who fulfill all five PERMA elements thrive more than those who focus only on partial aspects, underscoring the importance of a holistic approach to developing student well-being (Sanaz Dorri & Aghaei, 2024). Recent systematic reviews on mindfulness-based psychoeducational interventions indicate consistent reductions in stress and anxiety; however, several studies report that these effects may not be sustained over time, underscoring the need for integrative and development-oriented well-being models (Febrianti & Fuadina, 2024).

The urgency of this research is underscored by current literature. Findings indicate that cognitive-behavioral (cbt) interventions reduce clinical stress symptoms. However, these approaches often do not support students' holistic development. Reviews of recent studies (e.g., dorri & aghaei, 2024; morton et al., 2017; hobbs et al., 2022) show that including elements of positive psychology, such as gratitude, engagement, and meaning in life, correlates more strongly with enhanced subjective well-being. Despite these findings, the literature reveals a disconnect: perma elements are often tested only partially or in fragmented intervention designs. No systematic synthesis has examined how integrating all five perma dimensions in a single psychoeducational protocol may

protect against academic stress. This systematic review, therefore, uses strict inclusion criteria to identify interventions spanning the holistic well-being spectrum. Its goal is to assess the effectiveness of integrating perma dimensions as a comprehensive solution for student mental health.

This study aims to identify and analyze the current literature on psychoeducational interventions grounded in the PERMA model, with a focus on their effectiveness in helping students manage academic stress and thrive. The research's novelty includes three contributions: the integration of all PERMA dimensions into a holistic intervention model, an analysis of the specific mechanisms contributing to student resilience, and an adaptation of the PERMA model in the Indonesian cultural context that contributes to the development of Southeast Asian student mental health theory.

## METHODS

This study used a systematic literature review approach following the PRISMA protocol to analyze psychoeducational interventions for college students. The scope of the study was limited to a review of scientific literature on the implementation and effectiveness of psychoeducational programs in higher education contexts.

The definition of terminology includes: (1) Psychoeducation as a structured intervention that integrates educational and therapeutic components to improve psychosocial functioning (Bauml et al., 2006); (2) Flourishing students as a condition of optimal well-being and happiness characterized by high academic engagement and psychological well-being (Schreiner, 2010).

A systematic literature search was conducted across four reputable databases: Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, and Google Scholar. The search encompassed articles published from 2015 to 2024. Boolean operators (AND/OR) were utilized to combine keywords aligned with the research focus on psychoeducation, students, and the PERMA model.

**Table 1. Summary of Database Search Strategy**

Database	Search Terms	Initial Results
Scopus	("psychoeducation" OR "psychoeducational intervention") AND ("university student" OR "college student") AND ("flourishing" OR "PERMA")	115

Web of Science	("psychoeducation") AND ("university student") AND ("well-being" OR "flourishing")	98
PubMed	("psychoeducation"[Mesh]) AND ("students"[Mesh]) AND ("resilience" OR "well-being")	82
Google Scholar	"psychoeducational intervention" AND "college student" AND "PERMA model"	150*
<b>Total</b>		<b>445</b>

PRISMA Selection Process and Flowchart. Of the 445 articles identified, 120 records were removed due to duplication. A total of 325 articles underwent title and abstract screening, of which 285 were excluded for failing to meet the population or intervention criteria. Of the 40 articles assessed in full (full-text assessment), 30 were excluded for the following reasons: adolescent population (n=12), non-psychoeducational intervention (n=10), and incomplete methodology (n=8). The final results determined 10 articles for analysis. Assessment of Methodological Quality (Risk of Bias) Study quality was independently assessed by the researchers using instruments from the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) for quantitative studies and the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) for qualitative studies. This assessment ensured that the synthesis was based on sound scientific evidence

**Table 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria (PICOS Framework)**

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Population	Undergraduate and postgraduate students	School students, non-student clinical populations
Intervention	Structured psychoeducational interventions based on CBT, PERMA, or Positive Psychology	Medical therapy, counseling without educational components
Outcome	Academic stress reduction, flourishing, resilience	Pure academic outcomes (e.g., GPA only)
Study Design	Empirical studies (RCTs, quasi-experimental, qualitative)	Reviews, editorials, books
Language	English and Indonesian	Other languages

**Table 3. Methodological Quality Assessment of Included Studies**

No	Author (Year)	Appraisal Tool	Score	Quality
1	Upsher et al. (2022)	JBI	10/11	High
2	Frazier et al. (2015)	JBI	11/13	High
3	Savell et al. (2024)	JBI	8/9	High
4	Morton et al. (2017)	JBI	7/9	Moderate
5	Ahmad et al. (2022)	JBI	9/11	High
6	Hobbs et al. (2022)	JBI	8/10	High
7	Dorri & Aghaei (2024)	JBI	12/13	High

8	Williams et al. (2024)	CASP	9/10	High
9	Elemo & Türküm (2019)	JKI	10/13	High
10	Sari & Rahayu (2022)	JKI	8/9	High

First, data were extracted into a structured form, capturing participant characteristics, intervention type (including identification of CBT/PERMA elements), and key findings. Second, Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, integrated with the PERMA framework, identified how the intervention promoted flourishing. Third, to ensure process validity, audit trails documented the process, and codes underwent cross-checking to support the dependability and confirmability of the research results.

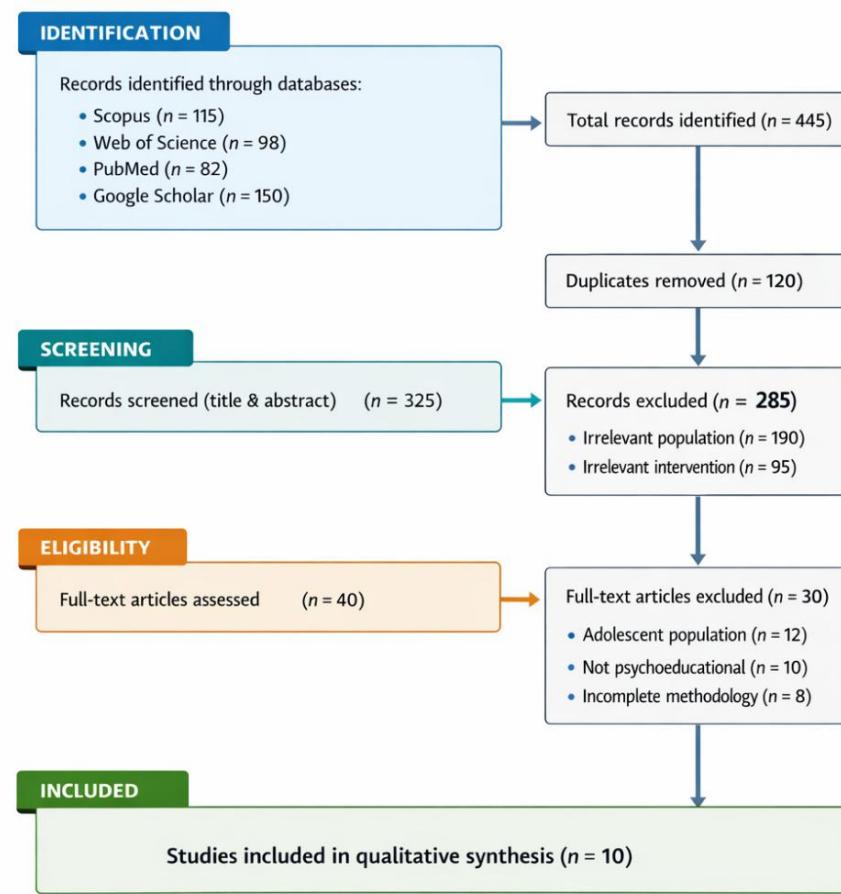


Table 1. Summary of Database Search Strategy

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Population	Undergraduate, and postgraduate students	Irrelevant population (n = 190)
Intervention	Structured psycho-educational interventions	Irrelevant intervention (n = 95)
Outcome	Academic stress reduction, flourishing, resilience	Flourishing (n = 102) (n = 8)

Picture 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**Table 4. Study Characteristics, Interventions, and Main Outcomes**

No.	Reference	Sample Characteristics	Type of Intervention	Main Outcomes
1	Upsher et al. (2022)	685 high-stress university students and 4,800 individuals from the general population	Curriculum-based interventions (CBT) – meta-analysis	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) was found to be the most effective approach for stress management compared to other methods.
2	Frazier et al. (2015)	115 university students	Online psychoeducational stress management program	Significant reduction in stress levels and improvement in adaptive coping strategies.
3	Savell et al. (2024)	66 students from a selective research university	Cognitive-behavioral-based psychoeducational course	Decreased academic stress and improved perceptions of mental health services.
4	Morton et al. (2017)	67 university students (mean age = 20.9 years)	Multimodal intervention (Positive Psychology and Lifestyle Medicine)	Reductions in depression (-28%), anxiety (-31%), and stress (-28%).
5	Ahmad et al. (2022)	University students (systematic review)	Psychoeducational stress management interventions	High effectiveness in reducing stress levels among university students.
6	Hobbs et al. (2022)	2,176 university students from multiple countries	Positive psychology interventions (gratitude, kindness, mindfulness)	Eighty-five percent of studies reported improvements in psychological well-being.
7	Dorri & Aghaei (2024)	University students	PERMA model-based educational intervention	Significant improvement in students' overall well-being.
8	Williams et al. (2024)	204 university students and 22 prototype participants	Psychoeducation, mindfulness, and dog-assisted interaction	Improvements in mood and calmness, along with reduced stress levels.
9	Elemo & Türküm (2019)	18 international university students	Cognitive-behavioral psychoeducational program (8 weeks)	Increased coping self-efficacy and long-term psychological adjustment.
10	Sari & Rahayu (2022)	Final-year university students	Psychoeducation and self-efficacy enhancement	Increased self-efficacy, which contributed to reduced academic stress.

## **Effectiveness of Psychoeducation**

Psychoeducation is a structured approach aimed at improving individuals' understanding of mental health conditions, with empirical evidence demonstrating significant effectiveness in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. *Cognitive behavioral therapy* (CBT) is a primary modality in psychoeducation that focuses on identifying and modifying negative thought patterns and maladaptive behaviors. Based on research by Upsher et al. (2022), CBT demonstrated superiority over other intervention methods, particularly in college students with high levels of stress.

The mechanism of CBT lies in its ability to help individuals understand the interconnections between thoughts, feelings, and actions, while providing practical strategies for coping with stressful situations. CBT is typically implemented in psychoeducational programs through individual or group modalities, with an optimal duration of 5-8 weeks. This timeframe has been shown to produce significant positive changes, with impacts that persist for up to 1 year after the program ends, demonstrating the remarkable sustainability of its therapeutic effects.

The evolution of digital technology has amplified the effectiveness of CBT through innovations in digital platforms. Apps like BCSzone enable virtual implementation of CBT, increasing accessibility for individuals who face geographic or temporal barriers to attending face-to-face sessions. Ghanbari et al. (2021) reported that the use of digital apps effectively reduced anxiety in women with breast cancer while increasing their *self-efficacy*. These findings indicate the adaptability of CBT across different contexts, both clinical and educational.

However, implementing CBT in psychoeducation faces substantial challenges, including the need for intensive training for facilitators and the need to adapt methods to local cultural contexts. Comprehensive research is needed to explore these factors and evaluate the long-term effectiveness of CBT in diverse settings.

## **Moderator Factors and Contextual Variables**

The complexity of moderating factors and the multidimensional environmental context fundamentally influences the success of psychoeducational interventions. Demographic variables such as age, gender, cultural background, and implementation

setting play a determinant role in intervention outcomes. Hobbs et al. (2022) identified that women demonstrate superior receptivity to psychoeducation compared to men, particularly in reducing anxiety and improving well-being.

The environmental context, particularly in educational settings, significantly influences the effectiveness of an intervention. Williams et al. (2024) demonstrated that implementing psychoeducation in higher education that integrated mindfulness elements and human-animal interactions significantly improved mood and reduced stress levels in students. Other environmental factors, such as the program's location (school, hospital, or community), the duration and intensity of the intervention, are also key determinants of program success and the sustainability of its benefits. Evidence from group-based psychoeducational interventions suggests that structured coping skills training, such as stress inoculation approaches, can enhance both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping, particularly in academic contexts where peer interaction is salient (Salsabilla et al., 2024).

Cultural dimensions play a crucial role as moderators in the design of culturally responsive interventions. Cultural norms and value systems influence individuals' perceptions of mental health and their acceptance of various interventions. Ghanbari et al. (2021) observed that technology-based applications were more widely accepted among tech-savvy urban populations than in rural communities. Social support and interpersonal relationships also moderated the intervention's effectiveness. Baourda et al. (2022) found that group-based psychoeducational programs demonstrated greater effectiveness in reducing anxiety in children and adolescents, where peer support during the intervention process created a sense of connectedness that supported mental health recovery.

Consideration of moderators and contextual variables enables the design of more personalized psychoeducational interventions that achieve optimal effectiveness and relevance. Further research is needed to explore the optimal use of these elements across different populations and intervention settings.

## Integration of Interventions in Educational Institutions

Educational institutions have a strategic role in promoting mental health by systematically integrating psychoeducational interventions. Comprehensive programs such as mindfulness training, social skills development, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)-based therapy can be integrated into the curriculum to help students manage stress, anxiety, and academic challenges. Williams et al. (2024) reported that a psychoeducational program combining human-animal interactions effectively improved mood and fostered calmness among students, resulting in significant reductions in stress levels.

An efficient integrative approach can include both group training and individual sessions within a campus setting. Savell et al. (2024) found that a 17-week CBT-based psychoeducational course successfully reduced students' academic stress while improving their perceptions of mental health services. Such programs could be delivered through university counseling centers or offered as electives to support optimal development of coping skills.

Technology integration plays a crucial role in supporting the implementation of mental health programs in educational settings. Mobile applications such as *BCSzone*, as discussed by Ghanbari et al. (2021), enable the flexible delivery of psychoeducational interventions, even outside of formal lecture hours. By providing 24/7 access, these applications not only facilitate the acquisition of psychoeducational materials but also help reduce the stigma associated with seeking psychological help.

Successful integration requires an inclusive approach that is responsive to students' specific needs. Educational institutions need to consider contextual factors, including sociocultural backgrounds and the academic pressures students face. Furthermore, designed programs must take into account institutional capacity, the availability of professional staff, and budget constraints.

In the long term, integrating psychoeducational interventions into educational institutions can create learning environments that support students' mental well-being. Comprehensive research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of various approaches and develop applicable intervention models across educational institutions, thereby

contributing to the sustainable promotion of mental health in academic settings.

## CONCLUSION

Based on a systematic review of ten selected studies, this research concludes that psychoeducational interventions effectively turn academic stress into student success. Key findings show that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is the fastest at reducing clinical symptoms of stress and anxiety. This effectiveness increases when it is combined with the PERMA Model, which better builds holistic resilience and helps students reach the flourishing stage.

Data synthesis shows that a 5 to 8 week intervention is best for stable behavioral change and sustained effects up to one year. Moderating factors like gender and environmental support matter, with female students being more receptive to psychoeducational materials. New approaches, such as digital platforms and multimodal options like human-animal interactions, also increase accessibility and reduce campus stigma.

The success of this intervention relies on improving students' self-efficacy for managing stress. Institutions should systematically integrate PERMA-based psychoeducational programs into curricula or counseling services. This step is vital for building a campus culture focused on both achievement and long-term well-being.

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