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Investigation the Association of Low Academic Achievement with Student Loneliness

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Abstract. Low academic achievement is a common challenge among students and can be influenced by emotional and social factors. Loneliness, as a negative emotional experience, may hinder students' engagement and academic performance. This study aims to examine the relationship between low academic achievement and students' loneliness. This research employed a quantitative correlational design. A random sampling technique was employed to select 141 junior high school students, with the sample size determined using Slovin's formula. Data were collected using rating scales, namely a low academic achievement scale and a loneliness scale. The results indicate a statistically significant relationship between low academic achievement and student loneliness. The regression analysis further suggests that academic achievement is an important factor associated with variations in students' loneliness experiences, with lower academic performance being linked to higher levels of loneliness. These findings highlight the importance of integrating academic and psychosocial support in educational settings. Targered interventions, such as structured school counseling programs, peer support groups, and social skills training are recommended to reduce loneliness while improving their academic engagement and performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement is the outcome of learning accompanied by changes in students, and is expressed in the form of numbers, symbols, or descriptive statements as measurement tools to assess students' success in meeting established standards (Angelia & Raid, 2023). Academic achievement is a performance outcome that indicates the extent to which students can attain specific goals, which are the focus of activities within the school environment. (Steinmayr et al, 2015). Bayar & Karaduman (2021) explain that achieving the desired academic achievement requires the involvement of school administration, teachers, and students; to focus on achievement, students must be motivated and willing to attain the established goals.

Students' academic achievement can be attained through various indicators, including grades, examination scores, performance evaluations, learning abilities, and subject-specific standards. (Al Rawashdeh et al., 2021). Idorenyin (2024) defines academic achievement as an evaluation of instructional exercises provided to students to generate feedback on the attainment of learning objectives, offering an objective assessment of the level of success or failure. Students with low academic achievement are typically influenced by several factors. Suleiman (2023) states that there are two main factors influence students' academic achievement, namely internal and external factors, internal factors include learning skills, psychological aspects, parental influence, and learning motivation, whereas external factors comprise teachers, school-related factors, peers, environmental conditions, and socio-cultural influences.

A commonly encountered factor among students is internal psychological conditions within the individual, such as feelings of loneliness and sleep quality. Neyazi et al. (2024) report that poor sleep quality and loneliness experienced during adolescence can disrupt executive functioning in the prefrontal cortex, leading to declines in learning ability, academic achievement, and learning motivation. Mulkhan et al. (2022) state that students who lack learning motivation tend to obtain low grades and show a low level of goal attainment. However, one of the key factors contributing to low academic achievement among students is the feeling of loneliness.

Feelings of loneliness can occur in anyone, including students across various levels of education, as explained by Rosenstreich and Margalit (2015), loneliness can affect individuals of different ages and social statuses and may arise from diverse sources. This view is further supported by the findings of Barreto et al. (2021), which indicate that loneliness is more prevalent during adolescence than at other stages of life. Nikmanesh et al. (2015) argue that adolescence represents the peak period of loneliness, as such feelings may stem from negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, and fear of being unloved. Loneliness among students commonly arises from limited social interaction, mental health difficulties, social media addiction, or unsupportive school environments.

Loneliness can be understood as an aversive psychological state that occurs when individuals perceive a discrepancy between their desired and actual social relationships, particularly when the need for close and intimate connections is not adequately fulfilled (Peplau & Perlman, 1982). Students who experience loneliness tend to withdraw from social and academic school activities due to feelings of fear and anxiety. Preece et al., (2021) identify loneliness as a risk factor for mental disorders and mental health problems, including pronounced anxiety and fear. Anxiety and loneliness are among the most commonly experienced mental health issues among students (Gazmararian et al, 2021).

Loneliness and anxiety are identifiable sources of distress regardless of social isolation or distant educational environments (Palgi et al, 2020). Individuals experiencing loneliness tend to spend more time using social media. According to Murat Kirik (2015) found that one of the factors contributing to social media addiction among adolescents is the feeling of loneliness.

Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that academic achievement is influenced not only by cognitive factors and the educational environment but is also closely related to students' psychological conditions. Loneliness experienced by students has the potential to reduce learning motivation and increase the risk of mental

health problems, which ultimately contributes to low academic achievement. Therefore, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between loneliness and academic achievement in order to provide both theoretical and empirical foundations for interventions that support students' psychological well-being and academic success.

METHOD

Research Design.

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between loneliness and low academic achievement among junior high school students.

Participants

The participants consisted of 141 students selected through a non-probability sampling technique. All participants were active junior high school students.

Instruments

Data were collected using two psychological scales developed in a Likert format. The Academic Achievement Scale was developed based on three dimensions: learning performance, management of academic demands, and social adjustment. The scale demonstrated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.867. The Loneliness Scale was constructed based on three dimensions: personality, social, and depression aspects. This scale showed excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.912.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted by administering the Academic Achievement Scale and Loneliness Scale to the selected participants. Participants completed the questionnaires voluntarily according to the provided instructions.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics to obtain the mean and standard deviation. Prior to hypothesis testing, assumption tests, including normality and linearity tests, were conducted. The relationship between loneliness and academic achievement was examined using Pearson's product–moment correlation and simple linear regression analysis with a significance level of 0.05.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Low academic achievement data were obtained from the completion of a research questionnaire consisting of 28 statement items that had been tested for validity and reliability. The descriptive statistics for low academic achievement showed a maximum score of 104, a minimum score of 61, a mean of 81.78, and a standard deviation of 13.13. The processed descriptive statistical data were then grouped into categories based on the interval and score obtained. Students with low academic achievement in the high category were 33 with a percentage of 23.4%, in the moderate category were 75 students with a percentage of 53.2%, and in the low category were 33 students with a percentage of 23.4%.

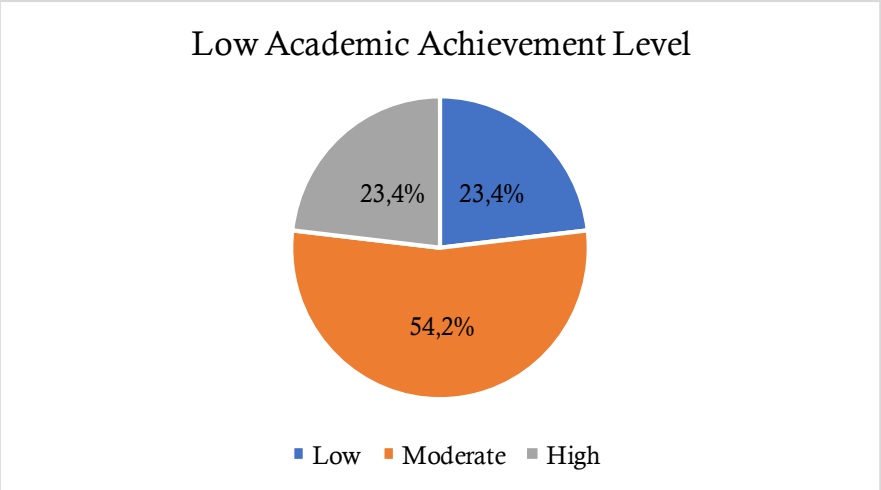


Figure 1. Distribution of Student by Academic Achievement Level

Low academic achievement in the learning performance aspect was found in 16 students in the high category with a percentage of 11.3%, 108 students in the moderate category with a percentage of 76.26%, and 17 students in the low category with a percentage of 12.1%. The obtained mean (M) of 35.48 falls within the interval $35.48 \leq X < 38.18$, indicating a moderate category. Thus, it can be concluded that low academic achievement in the learning performance aspect is in the moderate category with a percentage of 76.26%.

Low academic achievement in the management of academic demands aspect was found in 15 students in the high category with a percentage of 10.6%, 105 students in the moderate category with a percentage of 74.5%, and 21 students in the low category with a percentage of 14.9%. The obtained mean (M) of 23.22 falls within the interval $20.60 \leq X < 23.22$, indicating a moderate category. Thus, it can be concluded that students' low academic achievement in the management of academic demands aspect is in the moderate category with a percentage of 74.5%.

Low academic achievement in the social adjustment aspect was found in 0 students in the high category with a percentage of 0%, 113 students in the moderate category with a percentage of 80.1%, and 28 students in the low category with a percentage of 19.9%. The obtained mean (M) of 57.84 falls within the interval $27.33 \leq X < 57.84$, indicating a moderate category. Thus, it can be concluded that students' low academic achievement in the social adjustment aspect is in the moderate category with a percentage of 80.1%.

Loneliness data of students, which served as the dependent variable in this study, were obtained from a research questionnaire consisting of 23 statement items that had been tested for validity and reliability. Based on the collected data, students' loneliness scores ranged from a highest score of 66 to a lowest score of 22. The obtained mean was 40.38, the median was 41.00, and the standard deviation was 12.12. Subjects in this study exhibited loneliness in the high category totaling 22 students with a percentage of 15.6%, loneliness in the moderate category totaling 90 students with a percentage of 63.8%, and loneliness in the low category totaling 29 students with a percentage of 20.6%.

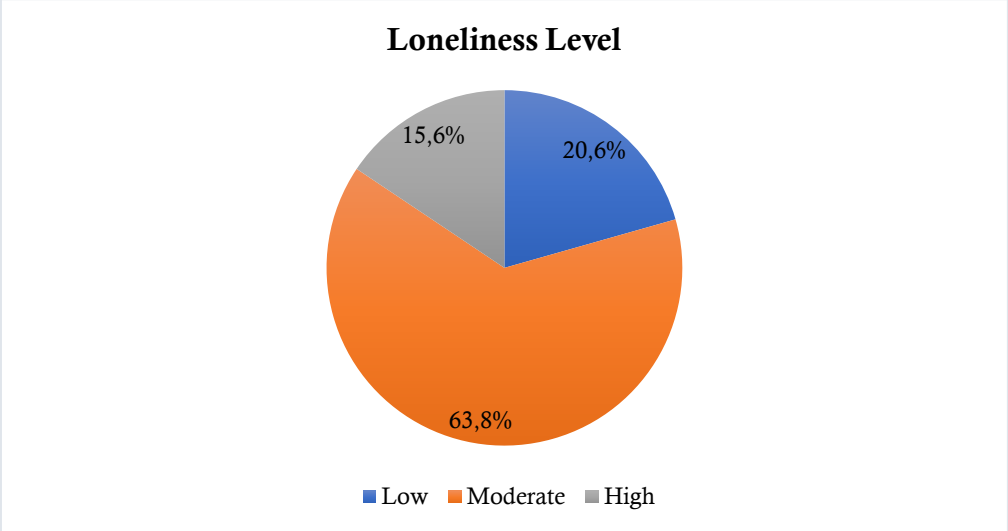


Figure 1.2 Distribution of Student by loneliness Level

Based on the obtained mean (M) of 52.7, which falls within the interval $28.36 \leq X < 52.7$, it is classified in the moderate category. Therefore, from the diagram it can be concluded that the subjects in this study overall experienced loneliness in the moderate category, totaling 90 students with a percentage of 63.8%.

Based on the results of the normality test, the significance value was $0.200 > 0.05$.

Since the calculated significance exceeded 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted, indicating that the data were normally distributed. The linearity test between students' low academic achievement and feelings of loneliness yielded an F value for linearity of 46.99 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating that the relationship was linear and statistically significant.

Simple linear regression is used to measure the magnitude of the effect of one independent variable (X) on a dependent variable (Y). Decision-making is based on whether the significance value is < 0.05, indicating that variable X influences variable Y. In contrast, when the significance value exceeds 0.05, the independent variable (X) does not significantly influence the dependent variable (Y).

Table 1. Output Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	.508[a]	.258	.253	10.485

Based on the model summary output, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.508 and the coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.258, which implies that variable X accounts for 25.8% of the variance in variable Y, while the remaining 74.2% is explained by other factors.

Table 2. Results of Regression Coefficient Analysis for Low Academic Achievement

Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1	(Constant)	2.029	5.586		.363	.717
	low academic achievement	.469	.067	.508	6.952	<,001

As shown in the table, the constant (a) is 2.029 and the regression coefficient for low academic achievement is 0.469. It can be interpreted that the constant of 2,029 shows that the consistency value of the loneliness variable is 2,029. Meanwhile, the X coefficient of 0.469 indicates that every 1% increase in low academic achievement increase the loneliness value by 0.469. he results above indicate that low academic achievement among students has an effect on their feelings of loneliness.

The obtained regression coefficient is positive; therefore, it can be stated that the direction of the effect of variable X on Y is positive. A positive direction indicates that the higher the students' low academic achievement, the higher their loneliness. Furthermore, decision-making in the simple linear regression test, as shown in the coefficients table, yielded a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that that students' low academic achievement (X) affects loneliness (Y).

Based on the correlation coefficient (r_{xy}), the correlation between students' low academic achievement (X) and loneliness (Y) is 0.508. This indicates that the obtained r value (0.508) is greater than the r table value (0.164). Thus, Ha is accepted, leading to the conclusion that there is a significant positive relationship between students' low academic achievement (X) and loneliness (Y). This positive relationship means that the higher the students' low academic achievement, the higher their loneliness, and vice versa. The

correlation result also shows that the influence of variable X on variable Y falls within the moderate category.

Discussion

Low academic achievement refers to students' academic performance falling below the expected average in subject areas, as it is influenced by individual, family, social, and academic factors, and consequently results in repeated experiences of failure although students have the ability to achieve optimal academic performance, (Al-Zoubi & Younes, 2015). According to Jahan & Ali (2020) low academic achievement plays an important role in students' academic lives, as academic performance determines students' progress, students' achievement, and level of success, yet various factors interact integrally within the learning process.

Low academic achievement among students is highly influential in the learning process, as students with low academic achievement are more likely to experience mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, and a tendency to withdraw socially. This findings supports the view of Arianto et al (2023) who reported that lower academic achievement among students is associated with higher levels of mental health difficulties, whereas higher academic achievement corresponds to lower levels of mental health issues among students. Another view proposed by Jefferson et al. (2023) indicates that psychological factors, particularly loneliness, influence students' low academic achievement, as loneliness can affect social interaction, self-esteem, and relationships with others, and students who experience learning difficulties may show decreased learning motivation and feel isolated from their peers.

A study conducted by Firdaus Umar et al (2023) found that students with higher learning performance or motivation are more likely to attain greater academic achievement than those with lower motivation. However, in contrast with Firdaus Umar et al (2023) findings, participants in the present research perceived that low academic achievement negatively influence students' learning performance, as students experiencing academic difficulties were associated with reduced ability to keep up with lessons and increased level of stress, which may disrupts students' ability to learn effectively.

The view is reinforced by Gibran & Wiyono (2022) who report that increased stress is often associated with decreased academic achievement, whereas reduced stress contributes to improved academic achievement. moreover, low academic achievement can trigger heightened stress among students, as it is frequently linked to feelings of anxiety, frustration, and low self-confidence that lead students to become quiet, socially withdrawn, and prone to loneliness.

Within students' learning processes, adequate learning support is necessary to ensure the continuity of learning activities so that students are be able to develop the desired academic competencies. Based on the findings of Yanto (2024), academic achievement is the outcome of students' learning processes, resulting in changes in academic ability, knowledge, comprehension, application, analytical skills, and evaluation. Students who successfully meet learning demands will demonstrate good academic achievement in accordance with their abilities and potential.

The previous explanation is in accordance with the research conducted by Motoh (2022) which highlight that academic achievement refers to the abilities acquired by students after undergoing learning experiences, furthermore, academic achievement serves as a key factor in developing academic competence and effective learning processes. Thus, the fulfilment of students' learning demands is crucial for their optimal growth and the achievement of desired educational objectives.

Inadequate social adaptation, r maladjustment within the school environment, may adversely affect students' academic achievement. This is because effective social adaptation will support students in establishing positive relationships with teachers and peers that may increase learning motivation and concentration. According to the descriptive analysis results, social adaptation falls within the moderate category.

The present findings are consistent with Abdullah Yunus & Gita Erwilya (2021) who reported that social adaptation contributes positively to students' academic achievement, with higher social adaptation corresponding

to higher academic achievement. In academic contexts, students' social adaptation represents the capacities required to attain personal satisfaction with academic demands, demonstrate responsibility and competence in completing academic tasks, engage in classroom learning activities, and to understand the material presented.

Bu'ulolo & Laia (2023) further elaborate that students' self-adjustment is related to their academic achievement, indicating that students capable of adaptive functioning can navigate novel environmental demands in order to attain greater academic results. Students' adaptation also significantly contributes to academic achievement, as supportive and positive social environments enhance students' motivation and learning engagement, whereas adverse and unsupportive environments may constrain students' academic development and performance.

Loneliness among students is a significant problem and can potentially affect students' mental health, academic achievement, and social well-being. Loneliness can occur due to a lack of social interaction, difficulties in socializing, and environmental changes. Based on the descriptive research results, students' loneliness is in the moderate category. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research conducted by Gabriela et al (2023) who reported that loneliness among high school students in Jakarta was 65.6% at a moderate level and 12.8% at a high level, affecting students aged 10–18 years. Another study conducted by Sahrah and Panjaitan (2021) found that 81.67% of students experienced loneliness in the moderate category on the cognitive aspect.

The findings of this study suggest that students' loneliness arises from multiple interrelated factors, encompassing both internal and external aspects. During this period, students are more sensitive to social acceptance and strongly influenced by peer relationship. They frequently report lacking close friendships, experiencing peer exclusion, or having communication difficulties, which contribute to feelings of isolation and being misunderstood. Furthermore, academic pressure, parental expectations, and social media use may intensify feelings of worthlessness and alienation. These findings accord with Ainunsiah et al. (2023), who define loneliness as a mental and emotional state marked by isolation and insufficient meaningful interpersonal relationships.

Students' loneliness results in feelings of isolation, a lack of meaningful social connections, and dissatisfaction with the quality of their interpersonal relationships. Loneliness is an emotional condition that arises when students perceive a discrepancy between the social relationships they expect and the social relationships they actually have. During adolescence, loneliness becomes a relatively significant issue because, at this stage, the need to be accepted, to have close friends, and to experience social connectedness increases. Students who experience loneliness are influenced by internal and external factors, among which a key internal factor is the perceived discrepancy between the anticipated intensity of social relationships and the reality of their lived social experiences (Sari & Hidayati, 2015). The findings reported by Pitman et al (2018) indicates loneliness experienced by students may contribute to health disturbances, affecting both physical and mental health, mental health disorders can affect individuals at any age, those aged 16–24 years are particularly vulnerable to such conditions.

Feelings of loneliness experienced by students can trigger the emergence of mental disorders, as adolescence represents a critical stage of emotional and social development. Students who perceive themselves as isolated, lacking close peer relationships, or misunderstood may experience significant psychological strain. Prolonged exposure to these feelings can foster low self-worth and decreased motivation for social engagement and academic participation. Consistent with Richardson et al (2017) loneliness has been shown to predict anxiety, stress, depression, and overall mental health vulnerability, as individuals experiencing loneliness are more inclined to appraise their social environment as threatening.

In accordance with Jefferson et al (2023) bahwa *lonliness* menyebabkan pncapaian akademik yang rendah melalui kognisi negatif terkait lonliness, loneliness may reduce self-esteem, meaning that individuals' sense of competence across various domains is affected, which ultimately

impacts academic performance. Loneliness is also associated with poor sleep quality, which serves as another potential mediator linking loneliness and low academic achievement.

Santrock (2021) argued that failure in academic achievement can lead to decreased self-esteem and social isolation, thereby triggering feelings of loneliness. Students with low academic achievement may feel left behind by their peers, experience social rejection, or lack sufficient emotional support from their surroundings. Persistent academic difficulties may cause emotional distress that culminates in loneliness, particularly during adolescence. Loneliness in adolescence is described as a subjective perception of a discrepancy between desired relationships and the actual quality of social relationships in friendships (Negara et al., 2023).

Low academic achievement among students experiencing loneliness indicates that the lower their academic performance, the higher the level of loneliness they tend to perceive. Students with poor academic outcomes are more likely to experience diminished self-confidence and feelings of social alienation, particularly within school environments that strongly emphasize academic success. Failure to meet certain academic standards may lead students to feel rejected or undervalued by their peers, thereby intensifying their sense of loneliness. Social pressure to achieve academically often causes low-achieving students to feel ashamed or inferior, which may prompt them to withdraw from social interactions.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study indicates that low academic achievement is associated with increased feelings of loneliness among students. Limited ability to manage academic demands, demonstrate optimal academic performance, and adapt socially has the potential to affect students' psychological condition, particularly in the form of feelings of alienation and a lack of social connectedness. This suggests that academic and emotional aspects cannot be separated in students' development.

These findings emphasize the importance of paying attention to students' psychological well-being within the educational context. Efforts to improve academic achievement should not only focus on instructional strategies, but also be accompanied by adequate social and emotional support. Therefore, comprehensive interventions involving school counselors, schools, and the social environment are expected to help minimize the risk of loneliness while supporting the optimization of students' academic development.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Luky Kurniawan: contributed to the conceptualization, research design, interpretation of findings, and manuscript drafting, **Novita Dwi Wulandari:** contributed to the conceptualization, research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of finsings, and manuscript drafting. **Natri Sutanti:** contributed to the review of the manuscript, academic input, and final manuscript refinement. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Declaration of competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper

Declaration of the use of AI

During the preparation of this work the authors used Grammarly for proof reading and spell checking. The authors reviewed and edited the content as necessary and took full responsibility for the content of the publication.content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication**.**

Ethical approval statement

Ethical approval for this research was obtained Institute of Research and Community Service, Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta on June, 27, 2025. All participants were involved voluntarily and have signed an informed consent form.

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