



Hanging Out as a Meaningful Occupation

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Abstract

Background: College students undergo a developmental transition from adolescence to adulthood, which can be challenging and make them more vulnerable to mental health problems.

Objective: The purpose of this study is to determine the benefits of hanging out as a meaningful leisure occupation to deal with stress in college students and how hanging out can improve the mental health and well-being of college students.

Methods: A qualitative phenomenological approach was applied. Data were collected using Focused Group Discussion with eight students who hanging out regularly 1-2 times a week.

Results: There were two themes identified in this study: The first theme is hanging out meaningful leisure occupation with three sub-themes namely students' perception of hanging out, hanging out as leisure among students, and benefits of hanging out as a meaningful leisure occupation. the second theme was the impact of hanging out on students with two sub-themes namely the impact of hanging out on student mental health and the impact of hanging out on student well-being.

Conclusion: Hanging out provides many benefits for students, especially to reduce academic stress, and hanging out can have a positive impact on students' mental health and well-being.

Keywords: Hanging out; Leisure; Meaningful Occupation; Mental Health; Well-Being

Introduction

Every year, millions of students enroll in colleges and universities to obtain a degree, which they hope will lead to the achievement of their desired career and a fulfilling life. Although attending college is a new phase for most individuals and their families, this period can be stressful for some students due to the transitional nature of campus life. Sources of stress include academics, loneliness, finding a job, family, life goals, social stress, and physiology. Stress, especially academic stress, can drain the student's subjective level of well-being and lead to decreased grades and decreases in grades [1]. Many researchers have studied student general

stress, which refers to psychological stress based on a particular environment [2], but a lack of attention is given to academic stress as a result of lectures. Student academic stress refers to factors in the academic environment such as lectures, group projects, and organizational involvement, as well as perceptions, attitudes, and behavior toward academic demands.

Generally, stressors come from academic burdens, classroom environments, faculty interactions, illness, and emotional anxieties outside the classroom. Often, these high-pressure lifestyles can lead to higher levels of stress. In addition, students undergo a developmental transition

from adolescence to adulthood, which can be challenging and make them more susceptible to mental health problems [3]. According to the Spring 2019 Health Assessment by the American College of Health Association, 34.2% of undergraduate students have shown that the main obstacle to learning is stress, with 45.3% having stress above average, which may indicate someone is more susceptible to certain diseases and accidents. This stressful environment makes students vulnerable to mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicide [4].

To reduce the level of stress, students will use coping strategies that fit their condition. Coping has been defined as the mental and behavioral processes that individuals use to manage stressful situations, internally and externally [5]. Regarding coping, researchers have set coping strategies into different categories, namely adaptive vs. maladaptive; active vs. passive; and positive vs. negative; focusing on problems vs. focusing on emotions [6]. Active coping refers to ways that aim to cope with problems and find comfort and social support, while passive coping deviates from social backing, such as self-imposed social isolation. When faced with stress and the associated causes of stress, using this coffee mechanism is crucial [7]. Self-distraction can be considered an effective coping mechanism among students. One of the coping methods that students often use to relieve the stress they experience is by going out of the house and gathering with friends' which activity is often referred to as Hanging out.

Hanging out is one of the leisure occupations because hanging out is commonly done when free time. As is well known, leisure activities can maintain and improve mental health. For students who suffer from class stress, leisure activities are needed to reduce stress, maintain student mental health, improve student resilience, and improve student well-being. Well-being or well-being relates to positive and negative influences, satisfaction with life, quality of life, happiness, personal growth and development, abilities, self-acceptance, positive relationships, and autonomy [8]. Currently, research on the relationship between Leisure and Well-Being has begun to be developed to analyze the benefits of Leisure activities to life satisfaction and their impact on society [9,10]. As to the outcome, leisure activities such as playing music and singing [9], visiting museums or tourist sites [11], as well as participating in art or sporting communities can improve mental health, contentment, and self-esteem [12].

There is a variety of hanging out activities that students often do, such as visiting tourist sites, telling stories with friends, picnics, playing games together, reading books together, traveling around the city, and so on. All of that is part of the leisure activity that is the student's coping method to cope with stress. Leisure is an important occupation because

leisure activities can give new skills cultivate self-esteem and, a sense of meaning, and enhance social connectedness, all of which can maintain mental health and increase resilience. Leisure can also serve as a stress deterrent, suggesting that such activities can be a method of coping with challenges in a healthy way [13]. Therefore, it can be indicated that hanging out is a meaningful leisure occupation.

As for the meaning or meaning of occupation, the human relationship with work for health is the basis of work science [14]. Participation in Meaningful Occupation can give individuals a sense of purpose in their lives. Wilcock AA, [14] describes the need for a focused and balanced occupation, not only in self-care, productivity, and leisure, but also in one's abilities and interests, as well as in their physical, social, and mental needs. A more explicit focus on the dimensions of meaning and value in different occupations [15], will ensure that the relevance of meaningful outcomes is not lost in occupational therapy practice. Furthermore, understanding meaning allows occupational therapists to analyze which occupations are chosen for specific therapeutic purposes.

Hanging out as a leisure activity can provide many benefits to students. Hanging outs can consist of various kinds of activities that are done together during your free time such as picnics, city trips, pissing, chatting, reading books together, telling experiences, and so on. Hanging out can serve as a preventive and therapeutic intervention in combating mental distress and promote physical and mental health as well as improved well-being in students. A previous study entitled "Walking as a Meaningful Leisure Occupation: The Implications for Occupational Therapy" conducted by Wensley R, et al. [16], investigated the benefits of walking activity as a meaningful recreational occupation on the mental health and well-being of individuals. In the study, the results found that participants stated how and why walking was meaningful to them; the four main themes were social connections, well-being, connections with nature, and achievement of challenges. These findings suggest that occupational therapists can use occupations of walking relaxed in interventions and that there is room for occupational therapy perspectives in health promotion. Therefore, this research is aimed at finding out the benefits of Hanging out as a meaningful leisure occupation to cope with student stress and how Hanging out can improve student mental health as well as well-being.

Method

Participant

A total of eight active students who hang out routinely 1-2 times a week are recruited through purposive sampling techniques [16]. In qualitative studies, samples

that are relatively small and deliberately selected can be used, to increase the depth (as opposed to its breadth) of understanding. Purposive sampling is used to select the most likely respondents to generate relevant and useful

information and is a way to identify and select cases that will use limited resource research effectively. The inclusion criteria are students who are active in their institution and have a Hanging out intensity at least 1-2 times a week.

| Respondent | Gender | City | Age, Yr. | School |
|------------|--------|-----------|----------|--------------------|
| R1 | Female | Ponorogo | 21 | University Student |
| R2 | Female | Brebes | 21 | University Student |
| R3 | Female | Bandung | 21 | University Student |
| R4 | Female | Semarang | 20 | College Student |
| R5 | Female | Klaten | 21 | College Student |
| R6 | Female | Padang | 21 | University Student |
| R7 | Female | Purworejo | 21 | College Student |
| R8 | Female | Padang | 21 | University Student |

Data Collection

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a technique in which a researcher gathers a group of individuals to discuss a particular topic, which aims to draw from complex personal experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of participants through moderate interaction. Focus group discussions are sometimes seen as identical to interviews, especially semi-structured "one-to-one" and "group interviews" interviews. In guided group discussions, researchers take on the role of "facilitators" or "moderators". In this setting, the researchers facilitate or moderate the group discussion between participants and not between researchers and participants. The main methods of data collection during targeted group discussions include audio and tape recording, recording, and observation of participants. In this study, FGD was conducted by four people who acted as a moderator, and facilitators, recording results and guiding discussions.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis as an independent qualitative descriptive approach is primarily described as "a method to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) in data" [17]. The method has also been introduced as a qualitatively descriptive method that gives the core skills to researchers to perform many other forms of qualitative analysis. It has been suggested that thematic analysis, as a flexible and useful research tool, provides rich and detailed, yet complex, data reports [17]. The thematic analysis involves searching and identifying red threads that are widespread throughout interviews or series of interviews. Thematic analysis provides purely qualitative, detailed, and nuanced data reports [17].

The first step is initial coding which involves creating multiple category codes without limiting the number of

codes. At this stage, researchers create a list of emerging ideas, draw a relationship diagram, and identify keywords that respondents often use as indicators of important themes. The second stage involves focused coding in which researchers remove, combine, or divide the encoding categories identified in the first step. Attention should be directed to the recurring ideas and broader themes that link these codes. This process can produce quantitative results to draw comparisons across focus groups, group dynamics, individual participants, or participants' statements. After performing the data coding process, the researcher performs a presentation of the data submitted in the form of a narrative, so that the data presented for the preparation of the analysis appears more clear, detailed, and understandable.

Studi Rigor

The method used to ensure the validity and rehabilitation of data in this study is by using the member-checking method. This examination involves returning the findings to the participants and asking them (in writing or an interview) about the accuracy of the report. The researchers asked participants about many aspects of the study such as whether the description was complete and realistic, whether the theme was accurate to include, and whether the interpretation was fair and representative. Then, the participants will re-check whether the data interpreted has been correct or not.

Result

Based on the data analysis of eight respondents, there are two themes related to Hanging out as a Meaningful Leisure Occupation, as follows: (1) Hanging out is a meaningful leisure occupation and (2) the impact of Hanging out on student mental health and well-being. This section

will describe themes along with their sub-themes and will include important statement statements from participants in

support of existing themes.

| Theme | Sub-Theme |
|---|---|
| 1. Hanging Out as a Meaningful Leisure Occupation | 1. Students' Perception of Hanging out |
| | 2. Hanging out as Leisure among Students |
| | 3. Benefits of Hanging Out as a Meaningful Leisure Occupation |
| 2. The Impact of Hanging Out on Students' | 1. The Impact of Hanging out on student mental health |
| | 2. The Impact of Hanging out on student well-being |

Hanging Out as a Meaningful Leisure Occupation

Students' Perception of Hanging Out: Students' perception of hanging out can be interpreted as playing activities with peers among teenagers to adults. Hanging out has a different perception and meaning for each person because hanging out consists of a variety of activities done with others and can be aimed at comforting, removing tiredness, distracting yourself from work, and so on. One respondent expressed, "...I think hanging out is itself an activity to fill up free time continuously can also be used to gather the same friends including socialization as well." (R8). Hanging out can be done both indoors and outdoors. After discussing with the students, the same conclusion was reached that hanging out has benefits for students to fill up their spare time, such as filling up their free time, entertainment, reducing stress, adding to relationships, and so on. Therefore, student perceive hanging out as an activity out of residence done to fill out their leisure time and can provide a variety of benefits for them.

Hanging out as Leisure among Students: Hanging out can be categorized as a leisure occupation because hanging out is made to fill up free time and eliminate boredom. Students also expressed different opinions about Hanging out as Leisure. Some students stated that hanging out are activity of gathering with friends in a café to talk, interact, and communicate. Then, another respondent said that hanging out is going out with other people and filled with a variety of leisure activities such as playing games, traveling around the city, and going to tourist attractions together. Some students hang out by going to the library with friends to read together. One respondent commented, "...Hanging out itself is... what it's called... an activity that I use to fill my free time with friends to just gather in a café or somewhere else." (R6). Based on the findings, hanging out can be categorized as a leisure occupation, because someone does this activity in their free time while doing hobbies with others. Hanging out existence can be a variety of activities such as cooking, reading together, walking together, going on tours together, and so on.

The Benefit of Hanging out as a Meaningful Leisure Occupation: Hanging out is a Leisure Occupation that has

many benefits. After discussing with the respondents about the meaning of hanging out for them, it was found that many benefits hanging out can offer, including reducing satiety, removing boredom, reducing the burden of the mind, eliminating fatigue, relaxing the body, relieving the feeling of loneliness, giving self-satisfaction, increasing learning motivation, helping to complete tasks, comforting themselves, as a means of sharing and giving thanks to others. There are many other benefits of hanging out as a meaningful leisure occupation because the benefits obtained also depend on the meaning and perception of a person hanging out. One respondent commented, "...ee... if I think I can get rid of that boredom, if we're still sad if it's fun, you can lose the trouble, too..." (R2). Based on the results that have been found, it is concluded that hanging out has many benefits for someone depending on the meaning and purpose of that person when doing hanging out activities as their leisure occupation.

The Impact of Hanging out on Student Mental Health and Well-Being

The Impact of Hanging out on Student Mental Health: As is well known, students are vulnerable to academic stress, therefore students need to have coping strategies to cope with it. Generally, based on trends among young people today, hanging out is one of their most popular activities as a coping strategies. Based on the results of the interviews, it is known that respondents hang out for 1-2 times a week to eliminate satiety, relieve boredom and relieve loneliness because when hanging out they can gather with their friends and do a lot of things like chatting, telling stories, chewing, eating together while enjoying visiting family or friend so that they can relieve the stress they experience. One respondent stated, "... Hanging out is one of the ways to reduce stress because the college assignment continues as well as the hanging out time, we can share the same friends or discuss college assignments as well."

Respondents also said that during hanging out they feel fresh and refreshed, the burden of mind is gone, reducing sadness, and hanging out can be entertaining when in a lot of trouble. Not only that, but some students also that hanging

out can boost their mood and motivation for learning, exchanging thoughts on tasks so that they can complete tasks with friends. Therefore, based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that hanging out has a positive impact on students because it can relieve stress, increase happiness, improve relationships with others, eliminate loneliness, and prevent depression in students.

The Impact of Hanging out on Student Well-being

Based on the findings, it is known that hanging out can improve student well-being. The students that they felt life satisfaction after hanging out because after hanging out, the majority of respondents said they felt satisfied and relieved. One respondent expressed, "It's also a pleasure to meet friends and not be alone..." (R4) Besides, students also report that they can get close to their peers when hanging out. Then, when they hang out, students can do their hobbies with peers like cooking hunting, playing games, shopping in malls, and so on. Therefore, based on the findings it has been concluded that hanging out can improve student well-being.

Discussion

Hanging out as a Meaningful Leisure Occupation

Student Perception of Hanging Out: Hanging out are activities out of residence and gathering with friends to get rid of saturation. It is part of the evolutionary process toward autonomy and maturity, which makes a positive contribution to emotional and social functioning. Hanging outs are also referred to as unstructured socializing, which refers to situations where peers are present, authority figures are absent, and there is no structured activity. As the results of the research suggest Hanging out makes them feel freer.

Hanging out is the activity of socializing with others, which is something that we do to get the satisfaction that comes from being with others [18]. Socializing is how we build, nurture, and deepen relationships because without interacting with others we will not get the social contact that is essential to our well-being [18]. Therefore, hanging out is much sought after by young people because through hanging out they can improve their well-being by socializing with others.

Hanging out as Leisure among Students

Leisure activities can include relaxed recreational activities such as reading or handicrafts, active recreation such as walks to sightseeing and entertainment sites, and socializing activities like visiting friends and family. Leisure activities are important to adolescent development, as

well as the way a person spends their free time and their emotional and behavioral development. It's in line with the procurement that the students are doing hanging out that contains passive recreational activities like reading books together. Besides, they also do active recreation like walks with friends to tourist sites, malls, and cafes. Then, during the Hanging out, students also socialize by chatting with their friends. Hanging out as a leisure activity can be adapted according to the interests and preferences of the person doing it.

Benefits of Hanging out as a Meaningful Leisure Occupation

Meaningful occupation is the core construction that underpins occupational therapy practice. This profession is historically based on the assumption that Occupation is essential to basic well-being [19]. This basic premise is based on evidence from research that shows that participation in meaningful occupations, including leisure, generally leads to an increased sense of well-being [19]. Occupational therapists have stated that meaningless occupations are not therapeutic [20]. According to Csikszentmihalyi [21], meaningful occupation results in optimum satisfaction and happiness in life [20].

Ikiugu MN, et al., [20], also stated that meaningful occupation has some specific characteristics or characteristics that distinguish it from ordinary occupation activity. Meaningful occupation is an occupation that gives meaning to an experience in a sense of control. Based on this theory, meaningful occupation is characterized by occupational identity, which is a combined feeling of who a person is and what he wants to be as an occupational being, derived from the history of occupational participation. So, a meaningful occupation can give a meaningful identity as an occupational being, can connect a person with others, help a person express himself and his competence, and have a broader connectivity of himself.

Based on the results of the study, it was found that many students experience satiety or boredom. Boredom is a feeling of low passion and negative emotion associated with a negative attitude toward an action [22]. Boredom is a useful emotional defense that can protect a person from feeling meaningless. Boredom causes unpleasant feelings that limit effective involvement in a task. Boredom can lead to a decrease in physical activity, cause one's self-doubt, cause a sense of self-satisfaction, and change the sense of time [23]. Pekrun R, et al. [24] linked the feeling of student boredom to academic learning, classroom teaching, and success. A recent study shows a positive link between social isolation and boredom [25]. Thus, minimal social interaction affects mental and psychological well-being, leading to different

levels of negative mental stress [26]. Other negative effects of this phenomenon include depression, eating disorders, and aggression. In short, boredom leads to unpleasant experiences and unwanted emotions that affect the daily lives of students and cause stress.

Leisure has proven to play an important role in the stress management process [13]. Hanging out can be a meaningful leisure occupation because hanging out has meaning as one of the coping strategies for students to adapt to academic stress during college. Hanging out are social activity with peers. As is well known, in line with the hormonal and biological changes associated with puberty, adolescence is a period of profound psychological and social transformation. During adolescence, the social world and peer interaction became increasingly important [27]. Compared to children (aged <10 years), adolescents spend more time with peers than with their families and form more complex peer relationships [28]. The importance of obtaining social consent from peers increases and peer influence increases in adolescence [29-31]. Indeed, adolescents are more sensitive to acceptance, rejection, and consent from peers than children or adults [32,33]. This reorientation towards peers facilitates the development of young people into self-reliant adults, enabling them to cultivate a more complete sense of social identity and, at the same time build a stronger affiliation with their peer group [34]. At the same time, cognitive abilities such as self-reference processing [35], executive control [36], and mentalization, increased in adolescence, enable young people to better understand other people's thoughts and take the perspective of others [36]. The development of high-level cognitive processes gives adolescents mental machines to reflect on themselves and others and to navigate social networks that start as unstable and less reciprocal and gradually become more subtle and reciprocated during adolescence [37]. In short, the conclusion is that hanging out as a meaningful leisure occupation provides many benefits to students, especially in reducing the academic stress experienced.

The Impact of Hanging out on Student

The Impact of Hanging out on Student Mental Health: Studies have shown that the majority of students are vulnerable to academic stress. Psychological stress refers to an emotion, mood, or unpleasant feeling that affects a person's work [38]. In addition, psychological stress is also associated with students' negative views of their surroundings and shapes the way they react to others. Han H, et al. [39] have studied the relationship between distance education and interactive education and its impact on the psychological stress of academics.

As is well known, the transition period from adolescence

to adulthood is also a very vulnerable period to mental health problems, with 75% of adults who have experienced mental health issues reporting that they first experience symptoms before the age of 24 [40]. There is evidence that peer problems, peer rejection, negotiation, and loneliness are risk factors for developing affective conditions such as adolescent depression [40].

The teaching environment affects the psychology of students, especially those who are far from their families [41]. It has been proven that the lack of pleasure in the classroom significantly contributes to the level of psychological stress of students [42]. On the contrary, high-quality peer relationships seem to protect against mental health problems and strengthen student resilience [43]. Therefore, widespread changes in the social environment, such as a reduction in face-to-face social contact with peers, have a major influence on brain development and academic behavior [27].

Hanging out can be a form of social support or social duo for students. Social support generally refers to functions performed for individuals by significant other people (including family members, relatives, and friends) and people from broader relationships (including neighbors, classmates, and colleagues) [44]. In recent decades, the relationship between social support and mental health has been well documented, with social support playing a beneficial role in determining psychological well-being [45]. In addition, social support prevents the harmful impact of normative and non-normative stress exposure on physical and mental health.

Two main models explain the role of social support in mental health [46]. The first model, known as the Stress Buffering Model, suggests that stress buffering occurs when social support protects (i.e. welcomes) people from the harmful effects of stress - adequate social support will balance or moderate the impact of stress on health. For example, Barrera JM, [47] showed that the relationship between stress and stress was higher in people with low social support compared to people with high social support. The second model is known as the Main Effect Model. This model states that social support has a generally beneficial effect on people, regardless of their experience during stressful events. Many documented relationships between perceived support and mental health are more consistent with the primary effect model than with the stress suppressant model [48]. It is important to note that the two models are not mutually exclusive; however, they can help explain the influence of specific aspects of social relations on psychological health [44]. Thus, it can be concluded that hanging out as a meaningful leisure occupation can be a social support that has a positive impact on the mental health of students.

The Impact of Hanging out on Student Well-being

Based on the results of this study, some indications hanging out can improve student life satisfaction and well-being. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [49], well-being is simply defined as life satisfaction. Other definitions of well-being include the presence of positive emotions and mood, the absence of negative emotions, and positive fulfillment and functioning [50]. A sense of well-being is fundamental to a person's overall health, enabling them to successfully overcome difficulties and their goals [49]. One aspect of well-being is having a positive and proper coffee mechanism to manage stress.

Coping is defined as a process that constantly changes a person's cognitive efforts and behavior to manage certain external or internal demands that are judged to be burdening or exceeding the resources of the person [51,52]. A coping strategy is a specific effort, both behavioral and psychological, used by an individual to master, reduce, minimize, or tolerate stressful events [51]. One study of occupational therapy students identified that the use of coping strategies can be like talking about problems with friends, finding friends, learning more energetically, and looking for entertainment [53]. Other research identified sleeping, talking to friends, listening to music, playing with pets, and watching movies as coping strategies [54]. Soja J, et al. [54] also found that coping strategies used by occupational therapy students included relaxing, sleeping, talking to friends, listening to music, and a hot bath. Lack of strategies to improve their well-being can lead to fatigue and cynicism when enrolled in academic programs and will impact exhaustion in the third year of practice [55].

Another study conceptualizes student well-being as consisting of subjective happiness, life orientation, absence of depression, and life satisfaction [56]. Not surprisingly, the presence of anxiety and depression has a negative relationship with all the positive aspects of well-being. Subjective happiness, life orientation, life satisfaction, and the absence of depression contribute to overall well-being [57].

Hanging outs are gathering and socializing activities with peers and have meaning. Studies using a wide range of methodological approaches, ranging from sampling experiences and daily records to day reconstruction methods, all led to the same finding: people enjoy socializing [58].

Hanging out can enhance well-being through social relationships. Previous literature has explained that strong social relationships are a fundamental source of human

motivation and one of the most important determinants of well-being [59]. This is evident from the various theories of Well-Being, which generally state that social relations are an important component of well-being.

Research on different types of relationships also consistently shows that positive social interactions contribute to one's well-being. Close relationships such as relationships between spouses, romantic partners, families, and friends positively predict individual well-being. Studies suggest that married people are generally happier, healthier, and live longer than unmarried people [60]. Family relationships were found to correlate with a person's subjective well-being throughout his or her life, both for babies, children, and adults [61]. Finally, frequent contact with friends seems to directly affect subjective well-being [62].

Social and family support has been identified as the primary environmental resource for successful adaptation and growth during, and after, a range of stressful contexts, ranging from life crises such as disease, divorce, and sorrow to major events such as natural disasters and war [63]. During difficult times, relationships can play a more important role in well-being than in normal times, as they are thought to reduce the negative impact of stressful events [46]. It proves that hanging out also has a positive impact on one's well-being through the social interactions that are in it [64].

Limitation of the Study

Although the results of this study show positive benefits, this study also has shortcomings, namely a small sample, and more in-depth research is needed. In addition, more specific research is needed for certain other groups such as employees, workers, parents, and possibly adolescents who tend to be vulnerable to stress.

Implication for Occupational Therapy Practice

This study provides positive benefits for the occupational therapist profession in that hang-out activities have a positive impact on students to increase happiness and well-being. Occupational therapists need to provide various safe and interesting leisure activity ideas to students so that students have good mental health which will reduce academic stress during their studies.

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