What Causes Anxiety in Emerging Adulthood? : A Sytematic Review

Nadhila Annifa Ichsan[1], Miqdad Ihkamuddin[2], Ni'matuzahroh[3]

[123]Muhammadiyah University of Malang, Master of Science Psychology, Indonesia

Abstract:
Emerging adulthood is the transition phase from adolescence to adulthood, starting from the age of 18-29 years. At this age, many individuals experience anxiety caused by past experiences. Existing anxiety can affect an individual's mood, thoughts and behavior. This systematic review examines 14 international journals selected from the Scopus database regarding factors causing anxiety in emerging adulthood. If individuals in this phase know the factors that influence anxiety, they can take preventive action to avoid anxiety occurring in themselves. The results found that factors causing anxiety in emerging adulthood include: self-esteem, parenting patterns and bad experiences as children. These findings provide recommendations for conducting further and specific systematic review research and are expected to be a consideration for preventive actions before and during the emerging adulthood phase.

Keywords: *Anxiety, Emerging Adulthood, Early Adulthood, Student*.

Introduction

Early adulthood is a transition period from adolescence to adulthood. If we look at the age division, early adulthood starts from the age of 18 years to 40 years, but the transitional age from adolescence to adulthood is from the age of 18 years to 29 years which is called emerging adulthood [1]. During this period, individuals become more productive in the world of education, career or romantic relationships. According to [2] exploration and change in determining life's possibilities to make permanent choices in love, work and worldview are fundamental characteristics of this developmental period. Because this period is a transition period from adolescence to adulthood, individuals in this period tend not to have stability. The possibility of going with the flow of their environment makes them try new things and adopt positive and negative habits.

The developmental tasks of young adults include choosing a life partner, achieving social roles, taking responsibility, achieving emotional independence, and learning to build a home life [3]. The many changes that occur can affect the lives of individuals who are in early adulthood. Changes are not only in habits, lifestyle and so on, but there can also be changes in their mental state. As with individuals who are in the emerging adulthood phase, on average at this age they have the status of students, they tend to be required to adapt quickly. Some individuals who are unable to adapt can experience stress, where the stress they experience can have an impact on their motivation and psychological well-being [4]. Apart from that, those in this phase can experience anxiety. The anxiety experienced is not only general anxiety but there are also more specific ones such as social anxiety and anxiety related to their health [5] [7].

Anxiety is an emotional state characterized by feelings of worry, nervousness, or fear about the possibility of something bad happening [8]. This can occur when individuals feel unable to overcome or deal with difficult situations, thereby creating uncertainty and worry in their minds [9]. Anxiety is also a form of psychological response to stress or threats faced by individuals. This response can involve physical manifestations, such as increased heart rate, rapid breathing, and sensations of anxiety. In the emerging adulthood phase, especially for students, anxiety can occur due to many factors, some of which include the use of social media, academic procrastination and environmental influences such as peers [10] [11] [12]. General anxiety is anxiety that often occurs, which can generally be caused by many things as explained in the previous paragraph. Apart from general anxiety, social anxiety can be caused by many factors as well. One of them is the parenting style of parents when they were children. Higher maternal Challenging Parental

Behavior (CPB) can predict lower symptoms of early adulthood social anxiety disorder [13].

Anxiety experienced by individuals in the emerging adulthood phase can have an impact on daily life. For students, anxiety can have an impact on their academic achievement, the higher the level of anxiety, the lower the learning achievement [14]. Apart from that, anxiety can have an impact on physical health, people with high levels of anxiety tend to have a higher chance of experiencing [15]. For this reason, anxiety in the emerging adulthood phase is a topic worthy of further discussion. Based on the explanation above, anxiety during emerging adulthood can be caused by many factors. On the other hand, the impact of anxiety experienced can disrupt individuals who are at this time in their daily lives. There are many studies that discuss factors that can be predictors of anxiety during emerging adulthood. However, a single study only provided a few results, so the researcher synthesized a number of research findings using a systematic review approach and presented them in the form of an actionable message. Systematic review is a research method used to identify, evaluate and interpret research results [16].

Methodology

The review process in this research begins with creating research questions. Created using the SPIDER formulation (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, design, Evaluation, Research Type) with reference to systematic questions, the author formulated research questions. The research question in this review is, what are the predictors of anxiety in early adulthood? The predictors in question are anything that can influence the occurrence of anxiety in emerging adulthood. The author continues the research process by designing search keywords in the database. After getting the terms from the research question, continue the search with the terms found, namely anxiety and emerging adulthood. The author then enters the existing keywords into the database. Using Scopus as a database. After several articles were collected, the author checked for duplication using the Mendeley and AI Rayyan applications. The final step is for the author to filter the title and abstract, and continue with the entire manuscript with the help of MI as the second author. After selecting 416 journals, there were 14 journals that met the criteria, namely variables that can influence anxiety in emerging adulthood. Only articles that specifically discuss anxiety in emerging adulthood were included in this study.
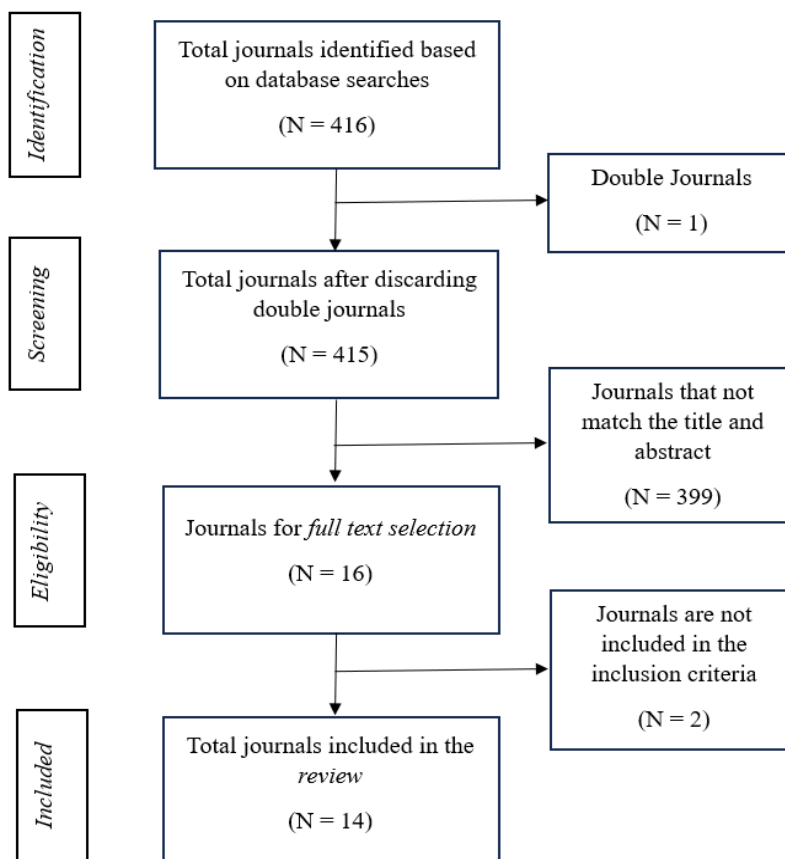

Figure 1: PRISMA graph of article selection flow

The flow of journal selection can be seen through the prism graph in Figure 1. The researcher determines the boundaries in reviewing journals by 1) Journal content discussing variables that are predictors of anxiety in emerging adulthood, 2) Journal publication year from 2013-2024, 3) English language journals, 4) Type of quantitative or experimental research. There are several criteria for journals that will not be selected, namely 1) Journals that discuss predictors of anxiety but the subject is not emerging adulthood, 2) do not use English, 3) Articles in book form, meta-analysis, and research without methods that are not clearly described.

Result

After carrying out the review process which has been described through the prism table above. Researchers found 14 journals that met the previously created inclusion question criteria, namely what types of anxiety and factors that predict the occurrence of anxiety in the emerging adulthood phase. The following is a table of characteristics of the 14 journals found.

Table 1: Research characteristic

No	Source	Research methods	Country	Subject	Number of subjects	Subject Age
1	(Traino et al., 2023b)	Quantitative	Midwestern America	College Students	121	18-24 years old
2	(Németh & Bernath, 2022b)	Quantitative	Hungary	College Students	487	18-25 years old
3	(Jiao et al., 2024)	Quantitative	Southeastern America	College Students	287	18-29
4	(Peltz et al., 2017)	Quantitative	United States of America	College Students	283	18-29
5	(Shevenell & Meteyer, 2018)	Quantitative	New England	College Students	106	18-24
6	(Rahmadina et al., 2020)	Quantitative	Indonesia	College Students	332	18-25
7	(Metcalf et al., 2017)	Quantitative and experimental	Northeastern America	College Students	366	18-25
8	(Luo et al., 2023)	Quantitative	Southwest China	College Students	1661	18-29
9	(Fu & Wang, 2022)	Quantitative	China	General public	522	18-25
10	(Chan et al., 2023)	Quantitative	United Kingdom	College Students and the general public	190	18-25
11	(Saragosa-Harris et al., 2023)	Quantitative and experimental	United States of America	College Students	142	18-19
12	(Smout et al., 2020)	Quantitative	Australia	College Students	442	18-25
13	(Goger et al., 2020)	Quantitative	California, Western United States	College Students	125	18-25
14	(Cermakova et al., 2022)	Quantitative	Czech	Participants of the Czech arm of the European Longitudinal Study of Pregnancy and Childhood	54	23-24

14 studies conducted from 2017-2024, it was found that 12 of them used quantitative methods and the other 2 were quantitative experiments. The research sites are spread across various countries, 6 studies in the United States, 2 in the United Kingdom, 2 in China, 1 in Hungary, 1 in Indonesia, 1 in Australia and 1 in the Czech Republic. From the findings it can be seen that in general individuals who are in the emerging adulthood phase with an age range of 18-29 are students, 12 of the 14 journals take subjects with student status and the rest are the general public and the general public with certain criteria, namely participants from a study about pregnancy and children.

This systematic review aims to see what predictors of anxiety occur in the emerging adulthood phase with the hope that the findings from each journal can be a consideration for every reader. The following table lists the findings for predictors of anxiety.

Table 2: List of predictors of anxiety in emerging adulthood

No	Author	Types of anxiety	Anxiety predictor
1	(Traino et al., 2023b)	Health anxiety	Adverse childhood experiences
2	(Németh & Bernath, 2022b)	Anxiety	Global self-esteem and contingent self-esteem
3	(Jiao et al., 2024)	Social anxiety	Overparenting and emotion regulation
4	(Peltz et al., 2017)	Anxiety	Sleep quality and restedness
5	(Shevenell & Meteyer, 2018)	Anxiety	Feminine gender role orientation (feminism)
6	(Rahmadina et al., 2020)	Anxiety	Self-esteem and materialism
7	(Metcalf et al., 2017)	Anxiety	Experiencing parental cancer during childhood and parental survival status
8	(Luo et al., 2023)	Social physical anxiety	Digital media dependency, self-exploration, and instability
9	(Fu & Wang, 2022)	Anxiety	The risk perception of COVID-19 and the emotional state of oneself
10	(Chan et al., 2023)	Social anxiety disorder	Maternal challenging parental behavior(CPB)
11	(Saragosa-Harris et al., 2023)	Anxiety	Self-reported ambiguity tolerance
12	(Smout et al., 2020)	Social anxiety and anxiety	Challenging Parental Behavior(CPB).
13	(Goger et al., 2020)	Anxiety	Maternal psychological control and emotion regulation
14	(Cermakova et al., 2022)	Anxiety	Higher cognitive ability in adolescents

After going through the selection process, 14 journals were found according to the predetermined criteria. There are 9 studies that discuss anxiety in general, 1 of which is based on the COVID-19 pandemic, 3 studies discuss social anxiety, 1 study discusses social physical anxiety and 1 study discusses health anxiety. From these findings it can be seen that there are quite a lot of things that can predict the occurrence of anxiety in the emerging adulthood phase.

In general, anxiety can be a predictor global self-esteem and contingent self-esteem, sleep quality and restedness, feminine gender role orientation (feminism), self-esteem and materialism, experiencing parental cancer during childhood and parental survival status, the risk perception of covid-19 and the emotional state of oneself, self-reported ambiguity tolerance, maternal psychological control and emotion regulation, and higher cognitive ability in adolescents. Meanwhile, there are similar predictors of social anxiety and anxiety in general, namely challenging parental behavior (CPB), one journal states that maternal CPB plays

a role in the occurrence of social anxiety in emerging adulthood. Apart from CPB, overparenting and emotion regulation are predictors of social anxiety in emerging adulthood. Next is social physical anxiety, where this type of anxiety is part of social anxiety but focuses more on the physical anxiety experienced by sufferers. Those who are dependent on social media, enjoy self-exploration activities and experience instability within themselves can suffer from this type of anxiety. In the emerging adulthood phase, anxiety about health can occur in those who suffer from chronic diseases and had adverse experiences when they were children related to events they experienced while suffering from these chronic diseases.

The factors that cause anxiety in the emerging adulthood phase can be categorized into internal factors and external factors. Internal factors that cause anxiety in the emerging adulthood phase include self-esteem, emotion regulation, and higher cognitive ability in adolescents. Meanwhile, external factors that cause anxiety in the emerging adulthood phase include the individual's immediate environment, such as parenting patterns, having parents who suffered from cancer when the individual was in the childhood phase, and bad or detrimental experiences as children can also occur. be an external factor in the occurrence of anxiety in the emerging adulthood phase.

Discussion

In the emerging adulthood phase, individuals are often faced with a number of pressures and challenges that have the potential to trigger anxiety. The process of transitioning into the world of work, being financially responsible, and the expectation of achieving a level of success both personally and professionally, can be factors that place a significant psychological burden. Anxiety conditions at this stage tend to manifest in the form of generalized anxiety disorder and social anxiety disorder, which negatively affect the individual's ability to adapt to change and manage their social interactions. High levels of expectations of oneself and worries about the future as well as bad experiences in the past emerge as the main triggers in dealing with anxiety during this critical time period.

In the emerging adulthood phase, anxiety is the most common disorder encountered [22]. Anxiety refers to a condition of discomfort experienced by individuals, characterized by feelings of fear, worry and restlessness. Significant anxiety can have a detrimental impact on individuals, as it can lead to traumatic experiences when faced with the same situations that trigger anxiety. The impact can damage the individual's personality, making them very sensitive and often complain, and have difficulty concentrating [30].

As said before anxiety has a detrimental impact on individuals. These detrimental impacts can be prevented if the individual knows what factors can be predictors of anxiety. Today's digital media is very massive and the endless amount of information provided can be one of the predictors of increasing anxiety in individuals who are in young adulthood. Digital media dependence is positively correlated with social physical anxiety [24]. Social physical anxiety refers to anxiety that arises in individuals from concerns about other people's judgments about their physical appearance. Apart from that, sleep quality can also be a predictor of increasing anxiety. Poor sleep quality makes anxiety levels higher [20].

The systematic review that has been carried out seeks to answer the research question, namely looking for variables that can be predictors of anxiety in emerging adulthood. It can be seen in the table that has been presented that there are many variables that can cause anxiety in emerging adulthood. The results of the research above show that these variables can be the cause of anxiety during emerging adulthood. Research results also show that anxiety has various types with different causes. From 9 studies on general anxiety, there are quite a lot of variables that can influence it, such as sleep quality, self-esteem and parenting patterns. Apart from that, parenting patterns are also said to be a predictor of social anxiety. The parenting style that is a predictor of general anxiety and social anxiety is challenging parental behavior (CPB). Apart from CPB, overparenting applied by parents to their children can predict social anxiety in the emerging adulthood phase [19].

It is known that anxiety that occurs during emerging adulthood is not just anxiety in general. Anxiety can occur in various ways. Such as health anxiety and social anxiety. The emerging adulthood phase which experiences many changes tends to be more prone to experiencing anxiety. For this reason, having knowledge of what things can cause anxiety is something that needs to be paid attention to. If viewed from Erickson's theory, the period of psychosocial development crisis experienced in early adulthood is Intimacy VS Isolation. In this phase, individuals are forming long-term relationships with other people. If a person has not successfully completed the previous stages and has not developed a strong self-identity, they will

not be able to form healthy intimate relationships with others. Individuals who have difficulty building these types of relationships are likely to face feelings of loneliness and depression. Individuals who experience difficulty in forming intimate relationships with other people tend to feel lonely, because there is no interaction with other people. This can cause loneliness, where loneliness itself has an impact on individuals who experience anxiety [31]

For students Those who are in this phase, experiencing anxiety can be detrimental to their daily life. Students as individuals who are undergoing a learning process, from an academic perspective, the anxiety experienced by students can have an impact on their academic achievement [32] [33]. Students who experience anxiety tend to have difficulty concentrating and remembering information which has an impact on reducing their academic achievement. Apart from having an impact on mental health, the anxiety experienced by students can also have an impact on their physical health. It is reported that high anxiety has an effect on GERD (a disease related to the stomach) [34]. With this quite detrimental impact, it is hoped that the results of this research can be of concern and consideration for readers, especially those in the emerging adulthood phase.

Conclusion

Anxiety is an emotional state characterized by feelings of worry, nervousness, or fear about the possibility of something bad happening. Anxiety has various types and several types of anxiety can occur during emerging adulthood. Various internal and external factors can be predictors of anxiety during this period, including self-esteem, challenging parental behavior and digital media dependency. The results of this systematic review provide information that anxiety in the emerging adulthood phase can be caused by many factors. It is hoped that this research can help individuals realize or prevent anxiety from occurring within themselves so that it does not interfere with the individual's own development process.

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