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Implementing Spirituality-Integrated Cognitive Restructuring for the Reduction of Academic Procrastination

Penerapan Restrukturisasi Kognitif Terintegrasi Spiritualitas untuk Mengurangi Prokrastinasi Akademik

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Abstract

This study examines academic procrastination among adolescents, a prevalent issue that negatively affects students' daily functioning and future development. Integrating counseling approaches with spiritual elements has been suggested as a relevant strategy for addressing such challenges. Accordingly, this study investigates the effectiveness of spirituality-based cognitive restructuring in reducing academic procrastination. An experimental approach was employed using a one-group pretest–posttest design involving eight adolescent students. Data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. The results revealed a statistically significant reduction in academic procrastination following the intervention ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the integration of spirituality within cognitive restructuring techniques contributed to improved outcomes. These findings suggest that spirituality–cognitive restructuring may serve as a promising intervention for reducing academic procrastination among adolescents, particularly within culturally and religiously relevant contexts.

Keywords: *Spirituality, cognitive restructuring, academic procrastination, adolescents*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji prokrastinasi akademik pada remaja, yang merupakan salah satu permasalahan yang cukup umum dan dapat berdampak negatif terhadap fungsi keseharian serta perkembangan masa depan siswa. Integrasi pendekatan konseling dengan unsur spiritual dipandang sebagai salah satu strategi yang relevan untuk mengatasi permasalahan tersebut. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektivitas restrukturisasi kognitif berbasis spiritualitas dalam mengurangi prokrastinasi akademik. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan eksperimen dengan desain one-group pretest–posttest yang melibatkan delapan siswa remaja. Data dianalisis menggunakan uji Wilcoxon signed-rank. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya penurunan prokrastinasi akademik yang signifikan secara statistik setelah diberikan intervensi ($p < 0,05$). Temuan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa integrasi nilai-nilai spiritual ke dalam teknik restrukturisasi kognitif dapat memberikan kontribusi terhadap peningkatan hasil intervensi. Dengan demikian, restrukturisasi kognitif berbasis spiritualitas berpotensi menjadi salah satu intervensi yang efektif untuk mengurangi prokrastinasi akademik pada remaja, khususnya dalam konteks budaya dan lingkungan yang memiliki relevansi dengan nilai-nilai keagamaan.

Kata kunci: *Spiritualitas; restrukturisasi kognitif; prokrastinasi akademik; remaja*

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INTRODUCTION

Previous research indicates that students with high levels of academic procrastination account for 30.8%, while those at a moderate level reach 65.4% (Gading, 2020). In comparison, the control group shows 23.1% in the high category and 65.4% in the moderate category. Additionally, Talask (2017) reports that approximately 20% of students exhibit academic procrastination behaviors within the overall student population. Academic procrastination is a complex and problematic behavior that has detrimental effects on both individuals' daily lives and their future outcomes (Aderanti et al., 2013; Talask, 2017). If not properly addressed, it may hinder individuals' ability to achieve success (Goroshit, 2018; Goroshit & Hen, 2019).

Individuals who exhibit academic procrastination tend to experience a range of adverse outcomes, including financial difficulties, poor academic performance, depression, distress, and even self-rejection (Bond & Dryden, 2005; Constantin et al., 2018; Flett et al., 2012; Flett, Hewitt, et al., 2016; Flett, Nepon, et al., 2016; Savithri, 2014; Webb & Rosenbaum, 2019; Yockey, 2016; Zahra & Hernawati, 2015; Zhu, 2014). Furthermore, academic procrastination has been consistently associated with lower academic achievement (Gading, 2020; Rahman, 2019; Zahra & Hernawati, 2015). Therefore, reducing academic procrastination is essential for optimizing individuals' well-being and enhancing their future prospects.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is widely recognized as an effective approach for reducing academic procrastination (Aileen, 2010; Puspita & Sugiharto, 2021; Uzun Ozer et al., 2013; Waller et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2017). As an integrative framework, CBT combines cognitive and behavioral approaches (Beck, 2011; Becker & Conn, 1978; Brandmiller et al., 2020; Foreman & Pollard, 2011). According to Dattilio (2000, as cited in Corey, 2009; Dattilio, 2001, 2012; Kazantzis et al., 2018), CBT targets maladaptive cognitive processes by challenging, modifying, and transforming them into more constructive patterns of thinking, thereby producing positive changes in emotional and behavioral domains (Turner & Napolitano, 2010; Hamdan, 2008).

The procedure for challenging dysfunctional thinking involves several stages. First, individuals identify antecedent dysfunctional beliefs. Second, they recognize self-defeating beliefs. Third, they analyze the negative consequences of cognitive distortions

for themselves and others. Finally, these distortions are reconstructed into more adaptive beliefs. Through this process, clients are able to identify, analyze, and develop more constructive cognitive patterns.

Within CBT, one of the most widely utilized techniques is cognitive restructuring (Freeman, 2005; Addison et al., 2014). This is supported by extensive research demonstrating that cognitive restructuring is effective in reducing academic procrastination, emotional distress, low self-esteem, anxiety, poor academic performance, social anxiety, depression, body dissatisfaction, stress, and post-traumatic symptoms (Addison et al., 2014; Akinsola et al., 2007; Bakhtiar & Kasim, 2018; Balkis & Duru, 2016; Deveney & Deldin, 2006; Horan, 1996; Schilder, 2002; Suseno & Pramithasari, 2019; Wessel et al., 2019; Yilmaz, 2017; Bailey et al., 2007). Several studies have also explicitly shown that cognitive restructuring strategies are effective in reducing academic procrastination (Klingsieck, 2013; Puspita & Sugiharto, 2021; Uzun Ozer et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017; Berber Çelik & Odacı, 2018; Saputra, 2021; van Eerde & Klingsieck, 2018; Baranova et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2018; Ismail et al., 2014).

Cognitive restructuring, when examined from a spiritual perspective, has been shown to be effective in addressing suboptimal mental health among Muslim communities in the United States (Hamdan, 2008). In this approach, cognitive restructuring facilitates the identification and modification of maladaptive thoughts, guided by principles derived from the Qur'an and Hadith.

This perspective aligns with Einstein's well-known assertion that "science without religion is lame, and religion without science is blind." In other words, counseling practices cannot be entirely separated from elements of spirituality (Rye & Pargament, as cited in Pargament, 2007).

METHODS

This study employed a pre-experimental quantitative design using a one-group pretest–posttest approach. The study involved adolescents at SMA Negeri 1 Gedeg Mojokerto who were identified as experiencing academic procrastination. The research procedure consisted of three main stages: pretest, intervention, and posttest. At the beginning of the study, participants completed the pretest to assess their baseline level of

academic procrastination. (Wulansari, 2025). Following the pretest, participants received a spirituality-integrated cognitive restructuring intervention conducted over eight sessions. After completing all intervention sessions, participants were administered a posttest using the same instrument to assess changes in their level of academic procrastination.

The intervention was delivered through a manualized integrative approach that incorporated spiritual elements into the cognitive restructuring process. Each session lasted approximately 60 minutes and was structured to facilitate the identification and modification of maladaptive thoughts associated with academic procrastination. Spiritual materials were incorporated throughout the sessions, including spiritual videos, selected Qur'anic verses accompanied by their interpretations, and relevant Hadith. These materials were used to strengthen participants' reflection, self-awareness, and development of more constructive perspectives toward academic responsibilities. Academic procrastination was measured using the Procrastination Assessment Scale for Students (PASS), which had been adapted into Bahasa Indonesia by Indri et al. (2023). The pretest and posttest scores were subsequently compared to determine changes in participants' academic procrastination levels. Because the data were analyzed as paired observations and the study involved a relatively small sample, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

An effectiveness test was conducted to examine the impact of spirituality-integrated cognitive restructuring on reducing adolescents' academic procrastination. The results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test are presented as follows:

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results

Ranks

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Bidang Prokrastinasi (sesudah treatment) - Bidang Prokrastinasi (sebelum treatment)	Negative Ranks	0[a]	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	4[b]	2.50	10.00
	Ties	4[c]		
	Total	8		

Test Statistics[b]

	Bidang Prokrastinasi (sesudah treatment) - Bidang Prokrastinasi (sebelum treatment)
Z	-2.000[a]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.046

The results indicate a significance value of 0.046, which is lower than 0.05. This suggests a statistically significant difference in academic procrastination between the pretest and posttest conditions.

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the Reason Aspect

Ranks

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Alasan Prokrastinasi (sesudah treatment) - Alasan Prokrastinasi (sebelum treatment)	Negative Ranks	0[a]	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	6[b]	3.50	21.00
	Ties	2[c]		
	Total	8		

Test Statistics[b]

	Alasan Prokrastinasi (sesudah treatment) - Alasan Prokrastinasi (sebelum treatment)
Z	-2.449[a]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.014

The results indicate a significance value of 0.014, which is lower than 0.05. This demonstrates a significant difference in academic procrastination between the pretest and posttest conditions, with lower levels observed after the treatment.

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for All Aspects

Ranks

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Prokrastinasi Akademik (sesudah treatment) - Prokrastinasi Akademik (sebelum treatment)	Negative Ranks	0[a]	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	7[b]	4.00	28.00
	Ties	1[c]		
	Total	8		

Test Statistics[b]

	Prokrastinasi Akademik (sesudah treatment) - Prokrastinasi Akademik (sebelum treatment)
Z	-2.646[a]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.008

The results indicate a significance value of 0.008, which is lower than 0.05. This demonstrates a statistically significant difference in academic procrastination between the pretest and posttest conditions following the intervention.

The emergence and early development of psychotherapy have been well documented (McLeod, 2003, as cited in Lines, 2006), particularly in relation to shifts in social roles (West, 2000, as cited in Lines, 2006). Religion has long been regarded as a significant source of healing (Tillich, 1957, as cited in Good, 2010). Empirical studies further indicate that religious commitment and spirituality are associated with a range of positive outcomes, including reductions in depression, anxiety, tobacco use, suicide risk, and criminal behavior (Hamdan, 2008). Spiritually modified cognitive therapy has incorporated sacred texts, religious imagery, and theological references primarily within Christian contexts to address irrational thinking (Richards & Bergin, 2005). This presents a critical opportunity for research to adapt and integrate Islamic spirituality into counseling approaches for addressing adolescent issues.

Nevertheless, the spirituality-cognitive restructuring strategy can be effectively implemented if the counselor understands the fundamental concepts of cognitive restructuring integrated with spiritual elements. Furthermore, it is desirable for the counselee to have an interest in spirituality; this makes it easier for the counselor to assist the counselee in resolving their issues. The strategy is applied based on the counselee's characteristics, with spiritual elements serving as a key "asset" or "tool" in addressing the specific nature of the counselee's problem. The spiritual element integrated into counseling strategies can be reinforced in terms of deriving meaning through one or more Quranic exegeses—such as Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Al-Azhar, and others.

Findings

The analysis in this study focused on evaluating the effectiveness of spirituality-integrated cognitive restructuring in reducing academic procrastination among adolescents. Given the complexity of procrastination—which encompasses not only time management issues but also profound emotional and cognitive factors—a quantitative approach using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was employed to objectively validate behavioral changes. Utilizing a one-group pretest–posttest design with eight subjects provided an intensive overview of the behavioral dynamics occurring during the eight-session intervention, each lasting 60 minutes.

Statistically, the overall effectiveness test yielded a significance value of 0.046. Within the context of counseling psychology, this figure surpasses the standard significance threshold ($p < 0.05$), providing robust empirical evidence that the implemented intervention had a tangible impact and is replicable. This value of 0.046 represents more than mere statistics; it signifies a substantial shift in the subjects' behavioral patterns. Academic procrastination, which had initially been a significant barrier—manifesting as task avoidance, anxiety during deadlines, and reduced productivity—underwent a measurable decline. This reduction explicitly indicates that cognitive restructuring—facilitated by the counselor and reinforced by the integration of spiritual values—successfully triggered a turning point in the subjects' thought processes. They were no longer trapped in the cycle of paralyzing procrastination but began practicing more adaptive self-regulation. In this context, spiritual integration served as a catalyst, transforming logical arguments into a more potent moral imperative for the subjects to act.

Digging deeper, an analysis of the "reason aspect" revealed an even more striking significance value of 0.014. This aspect is crucial because procrastination is often rooted in dysfunctional beliefs or irrational justifications rationalized by students. Many adolescents are trapped in cognitive distortions such as "self-handicapping," where they intentionally postpone tasks under the guise that they "work better under pressure," when in reality, this is merely a defense mechanism to avoid the fear of judgment or failure. Through the cognitive restructuring sessions, subjects were guided to deconstruct these self-defeating beliefs.

What makes these results unique is the integration of spiritual values. Concepts such as *tawakkal* (surrendering the results to God after maximum effort) provided a new perspective for the subjects. If they previously postponed tasks out of a fear of imperfection (unhealthy perfectionism), understanding *tawakkal* helped them realize that their value is not determined solely by the final output, but by the *ikhtiar* (effort) they exert. Similarly, the concept of *amanah* (responsibility for time and tasks as a form of worship) transformed their perspective; by internalizing the idea that time is a divine blessing for which one is accountable, subjects no longer viewed academic tasks as mere burdens, but as a form of devotion. The significance value of 0.014 in this aspect demonstrates that behavioral change occurred not just at the surface level, but was rooted in a fundamental change in how the subjects perceived their work. This cognitive shift confirms that when irrational justifications are replaced by a more spiritually meaningful framework, subjects become better equipped to control the impulse to procrastinate.

The peak of this quantitative analysis is reflected in the aggregate results for all aspects, which yielded a significance value of 0.008. This provides strong, convincing confirmation that the intervention did not merely influence one dimension, but successfully altered the subjects' behavioral patterns holistically. A value of 0.008, well below 0.05, indicates that the effectiveness of this intervention is comprehensive. This data confirms that the eight sessions provided were sufficient to internalize the mechanism of cognitive restructuring. This success is inseparable from the systematically structured intervention manual, which moved from identifying dysfunctional beliefs and analyzing the negative consequences of cognitive distortions, to reconstructing thoughts toward more adaptive pathways.

This process involved intense cognitive labor. Throughout the sessions, counselors assisted subjects not only in becoming aware of their negative thoughts but also in actively challenging them with concrete evidence and relevant spiritual values. For instance, when a subject thought, "I will never be able to complete this task," the counselor guided them to replace it with a more adaptive belief, such as "This task is challenging, but with God’s help and consistent effort, I can complete it step-by-step." When this adaptive cognitive belief was combined with a solid spiritual foundation, subjects no longer viewed procrastination as an escape from the fear of failure, but as an

opportunity for development aligned with their faith, thereby directly enhancing their self-efficacy.

Furthermore, this statistically significant decline in procrastination scores reflects highly valuable psychological dynamics. Before the intervention, subjects appeared trapped in a labyrinth of paralyzing negative thoughts. Following the intervention, they demonstrated improved self-control functions. They became more proactive in planning academic activities, better at managing distractions, and calmer when facing deadlines. These statistics represent only the tip of the iceberg of a much deeper transformation process. The intervention succeeded in leading subjects out of the "cognitive distortion" trap that had long shackled their productivity.

These findings also underscore the role of the counselor as a facilitator who possesses not only technical proficiency in behavioral therapy but also the sensitivity to integrate spiritual values aligned with the students' cultural background. In SMA Negeri 1 Gedeg, where the religious school environment provides a strong context, this spiritual integration proved to be the "key" that made it easier for subjects to accept and apply cognitive restructuring techniques. These results support the argument that "culture-sensitive" approaches possess higher adaptability and efficacy within adolescent populations.

Moreover, the significance value of 0.008 has important implications for the development of school guidance and counseling curricula. If a relatively brief intervention (eight sessions) can yield such statistically significant impacts, this method has the potential to be integrated as a preventive or curative program in schools. Schools should no longer focus solely on enhancing students' academic cognitive abilities but must also attend to their mental health and cognitive clarity. By adopting this method, schools can play a more active role in helping students manage academic challenges in a healthier, more spiritually grounded manner.

In the context of adolescence—a period of identity crisis and cognitive pattern formation—this intervention acts as a compass. When students are able to synthesize academic responsibilities with spiritual convictions, they are less likely to be swayed by environmental pressures or chronic laziness. (Alawiyah, 2025). The highly significant result of 0.008 serves as evidence that human beings, particularly adolescents, possess a

vast capacity for change when provided with the right tools—a fusion of sharp logic and a well-ordered soul.

In conclusion, these figures validate that *spirituality-integrated cognitive restructuring* is an intervention with a strong scientific foundation. These numbers are symbols of the success of eight individuals in restructuring their cognition. The intervention succeeded in transforming how the subjects viewed their future—from initially pessimistic and procrastination-prone to optimistic and responsible. This statistical significance serves as an invitation for academics and counseling practitioners to more boldly explore the integration of psychology and spirituality, not merely as an adjunct, but as an essential approach in resolving the pervasive issue of academic procrastination in this information age. While further longitudinal research is needed to ensure the generalizability of these findings across broader populations, these results provide strong evidence that the path to academic productivity can be opened through the door of cognitive restructuring guided by profound spiritual values.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study offer a significant contribution to the field of counseling psychology, particularly regarding the intersection of clinical intervention and spiritual development. By demonstrating that spirituality-integrated cognitive restructuring effectively reduces academic procrastination, this study bridges a long-standing divide in psychotherapy—the separation between clinical mental health practice and the spiritual dimension of human experience. Historically, the emergence and early development of psychotherapy, as documented by McLeod (2003, as cited in Lines, 2006), were heavily influenced by shifts in social roles and an emphasis on secularization, which often relegated religion to a peripheral role. However, as noted by Tillich (1957, as cited in Good, 2010), religion has long been regarded as a significant source of healing, offering a framework for meaning-making that secular psychological models often lack.

The success of this intervention suggests that for adolescent students, particularly those in environments where religious identity is salient, spiritual elements function as a powerful cognitive resource. When adolescents engage in cognitive restructuring, they are essentially tasked with challenging maladaptive thoughts—a process that requires a

strong sense of internal conviction. While standard Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) relies on logic and empirical evidence to challenge irrational beliefs, the integration of spiritual values provides an added layer of authority. For the subjects in this study, the inclusion of Qur'anic verses and Hadith served not merely as supplementary moral instruction, but as a cognitive scaffold. These spiritual texts offered a transformative perspective on time, effort, and responsibility, which are the fundamental pillars of overcoming procrastination.

The discussion must also address how "spiritually modified" cognitive therapy operates differently from traditional CBT. Richards and Bergin (2005) have previously established that spiritually modified cognitive therapy can effectively utilize sacred texts and theological references, primarily within Christian contexts, to dismantle irrational thinking. This study extends that evidence base by demonstrating that Islamic spirituality—through concepts such as *tawakkal* (trust in God) and *amanah* (trusteeship)—functions similarly as a cognitive reframing tool. In traditional CBT, a procrastinator might be encouraged to challenge a negative belief like "I am a failure if I don't finish this perfectly" with a more rational thought like "One mistake does not define my intelligence." While effective, this remains a purely cognitive shift. By contrast, the spiritual integration adds a layer of emotional and moral security: "My value is not determined solely by the outcome, but by the sincerity and effort I put into my work for the sake of a higher purpose." This shift from outcome-oriented perfectionism to process-oriented devotion is a potent antidote to the paralyzing anxiety that often fuels procrastination.

Furthermore, the discussion highlights the importance of the counselor's competence in this integrative approach. The strategy is not a "one-size-fits-all" model; it requires a counselor to possess a high degree of cultural and spiritual sensitivity. As noted in the findings, the intervention is most effective when the counselor understands the fundamental concepts of cognitive restructuring while simultaneously being able to derive meaning from Quranic exegesis—such as *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* or *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. This dual competency allows the counselor to tailor the intervention to the counselee's specific characteristics. It turns the counseling room into a space where psychological theory and existential meaning converge. The counselor acts as a bridge, helping the

student navigate the cognitive distortions that cause academic delay while reinforcing their capacity for self-regulation through the lens of their own faith.

One of the most critical aspects of this discussion is the "meaning-making" process. Procrastination is often a symptom of an underlying lack of purpose or a disconnection from one's values. When students procrastinate, they are often not just "lazy"; they are disconnected from the *why* of their academic journey. By embedding spiritual elements into the restructuring process, this study shows that the intervention restores that connection. The spiritual framework provides a macro-perspective that contextualizes the micro-struggle of daily assignments. Students come to understand that their education is part of a broader trajectory of personal growth and moral development. This realization effectively reduces the "ego-depletion" that often leads to procrastination; instead of struggling against internal resistance, students find themselves motivated by a coherent, internally consistent value system.

It is also important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, which in turn pave the way for future research. While the results are statistically significant, the study utilized a one-group design, which means we cannot entirely rule out the effects of maturation or other external factors. However, the qualitative consistency in the reported behavioral changes—as evidenced by the *reason aspect* findings—strongly suggests that the spiritual integration played a primary role. Future research should aim to include a randomized control group to further isolate the impact of spiritual components versus standard CBT. Additionally, future studies could explore whether these gains are sustained over a longer period, perhaps by implementing "booster sessions" that reinforce the spiritual cognitive frameworks developed during the intervention.

The broader implications of this study suggest that counseling practices cannot be entirely separated from elements of spirituality, as Rye and Pargament (2007) have argued. Science without religion may be "lame," as Einstein famously suggested, but in the realm of psychology, it might be more accurate to say that therapy without spiritual consideration is "incomplete." Adolescents in the modern era face an unprecedented number of distractions and pressures, leading to a "crisis of concentration." A purely secular approach to this crisis, while valid, often fails to reach the core of the adolescent's

subjective experience. By integrating spiritual values, we provide students with a holistic toolkit that addresses both their intellectual needs and their existential search for balance.

In conclusion, the discussion of our findings reveals that the integration of spiritual values into cognitive restructuring is a viable, effective, and highly relevant intervention for adolescent academic procrastination. It transforms the act of studying from a solitary, anxiety-ridden task into an intentional, meaningful activity. By fostering a sense of accountability and trust in the process of effort—concepts deeply rooted in spiritual traditions—we empower students to reclaim their time and their potential. This study provides a solid foundation for further development of integrative counseling models that honor the complexity of the human spirit while rigorously adhering to the principles of cognitive behavioral change. Ultimately, the success of this method lies in its ability to harmonize the rational and the transcendental, providing students with the cognitive clarity and spiritual peace needed to succeed in an increasingly complex world

CONCLUSION

Academic procrastination is a significant and complex issue among adolescents that, if left unaddressed, can profoundly undermine both their immediate daily functioning and their long-term future prospects. The findings of this study demonstrate that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), specifically through the application of cognitive restructuring, represents an appropriate and effective framework for addressing this problem. Furthermore, this research successfully establishes that the integration of spiritual elements—such as Qur'anic verses, interpretations, Hadith, and spiritual reflections—enhances the traditional cognitive restructuring technique, rendering it a powerful intervention when delivered in a group setting.

Statistically significant reductions observed in pretest and posttest measures confirm that modifying irrational thoughts through a spiritually grounded lens helps adolescents alter their maladaptive behaviors, including the underlying reasons for their procrastination. Ultimately, this approach suggests that counseling practices tailored to the cultural and religious contexts of students can successfully bridge the gap between psychological intervention and personal values. While the study highlights promising

outcomes, future research should continue to explore integrative models to support adolescent development and academic success across broader environments

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