Interests, Barriers, Stress, and Resilience of High School Students: A Caring Christian Religious Education Teacher

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Abstract. This study identified the interests and barriers felt by students as an illustration of the concern of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers. This study aims to describe the level of stress and resilience of students, their preferred coping strategy, and the correlation of stress with student resilience. This research uses a quantitative approach with a nonexperimental design. A total of 147 respondents was sampled from the 700 teenage students population. The age range of students is 16 – 18. A survey questionnaire was used to investigate the stress and resilience scale of students, namely the Perceived Stress Scale which consists of 10 items (PSS-10), and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale which consists of 10 items (CDRS-10). The results from the descriptive analysis show that very few students have an interest in learning CRE and the highest barrier is self-confidence. The results from the descriptive analysis show that the level of stress that students feel is mostly in the middle category and the low category. The level of student resilience is mostly in the medium and high categories. The results of the correlation analysis show that stress is related to resilience where the direction of the correlationis negative. It means that the students who scored higher on PSS-10 is more likely to have difficulty or lower survival capacity (low endurance score). Therefore, to reduce the impact of stress so that the students have high resilience, coping strategy efforts by CRE teachers must be carried out with high concern, so that students can focus on interests and can face various barriers.

Keywords: Christian religious education; interest; barriers; stress; resilience

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1. Introduction

High school is a level of formal education that is often associated with risky behavior tendencies. A survey shows that the most important behavior to prevent among high school students is risky suicide behavior (Blakeslee et al., 2021). In general, high school students are in their teens or adolescent stage.. Adolescence is a crucial period in the development of human life—the transitional period between childhood to adulthood. Adolescence is a period of rapid growth in which career choices begin, and expectations from family and school also increase (Ritika & Kaur, 2018). According to Stanley Hall, adolescence is a period filled with storms and stress conditions, meaning that adolescence is a turbulent period filled with conflict and mood swings (Santrock, 2019). Adolescents are challenged to be able to overcome this turmoil in order to face the challenges of adulthood. The agitation that includes intense and frequent negative affect during this period can lead to increased rates of affective disorder, suicide, and accidental death throughout the lifetime (Casey et al., 2010). since high school students are at their adolescence stage, they prefer to enjoy life, consider themselves capable of self-control, value work and school, feel self-confident, express positive feelings towards their families, and feel they have the ability to cope with the pressures of life are not a picture of stormy and stressful teenage years (Santrock, 2019). This means that as teenagers they value school and can overcome the turmoil that occurs while participating in learning at school.

High school students spend more time thinking about their identity—who they are, what they are about, and where they are going. . School is the first and most important place of formal learning where competencies and abilities are formed. However, the school has become a commonplace in our lives, so we easily ignore its extraordinary role (Moradi et al., 2018). Schools can play an essential role in developing high school students identity (Verhoeven et al., 2019). In doing so, it become an environment that can influence the personality development of students, and the teacher has a vital role in this aspect.

Intense (positive) teacher-student integration is challenging in a complex education system. Interactions based on caring, trust, respect, influence, openness, and cooperation can promote student achievement, identity development, and a sense of school ownership and teacher accountability (Ibrahim & El Zataari, 2020). Teachers who care can encourage students to develop their identities. The identity development process impacts the formation of student welfare (Sharma & Chandiramani, 2021). Thus, teachers contribute to realizing the welfare of their students.

One of the subjects that aim to improve the welfare of students at school is the subject of Religious Education. Religious Education is a positive education that most schools implement (Waters, 2021). This goal is, of course, essential to be realized by teachers who teach religion. In Christianity, teachers who teach religious education seek that each student experiences a personal encounter with Christ and thus they obtain restoration and peace from God. Religious education helps or guides every student to have a spirituality that impacts others, therefore his life must be filled with the word of God as a basis and guideline to have an ever-changing life and change others and be a blessing to many. Seymour (2014)

emphasizes that the task of Christian religious education (CRE) is to teach people to live in a transformed community-building attitude as well as teach the legacy of faith, interpret it for the present, and guide believers to obedience.

To improve the welfare of students, the school and the teachers need to understand the interests of their students towards CRE. Research reports shows that interest in school tends to decline with age, especially during adolescence (Slot et al., 2020). In this regard, teachers should play as a caring teavher. A caring teacher is a teacher who knows the interests of his students.

Of course, in realizing well-being, some barriers can occur. Barriers to well-being must be identified and removed (Kern & Taylor, 2021). Ignoring barriers can further impact student achievement — teachers who care need first to identify their students' obstacles. Research shows that although teachers try their best, still their lecture-based teaching style is boring and rarely involves students in group work or considers their opinions (Ibrahim & El Zataari, 2020). In addition, UNICEF (2021) pointed out that 63.1% of youth aged 15-19 who were asked about barriers felt they had fewer opportunities to express their opinions. This means that today's youth have not received much social attention, including from teachers at school.

Furthermore, teachers can help students remove barriers appropriately and effectively. Barriers that cannot be removed or overcome can be stressful. Stress is related to resilience (Daniel et al., 2020). Therefore, focusing on resilience as a means to overcome all the obstacles students experience while at school may be the best way to achieve student welfare (Huppert & So, 2013).

The implementation of guidance and counselling services in high schools has been regulated in a Ministerial Regulation. Guidance and counselling (GC) teachers or professional counsellors should provide guidance and counselling services in high schools. However, the fact is that only a few schools still provide Guidance and Counselling activity or having a school counsellor. As such, stakeholders or school principals usually appoint CRE teachers as GC teachers. The appointed GC cannot meet the standards of guidance and counselling services because of their limited knowledge about guidance and counselling.. However, guidance and counselling services must still be provided to achieve the government's goal of helping students achieve optimal development and complete independence in personal, learning, social, and career aspects (Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Concerning Guidance and Counseling in Basic Education and Secondary Education, 2014). Therefore, CRE teachers are challenged to take the role of being a counselling teachers by applying concern for students who need guidance and counselling services.

In such situation, this study aims to identified the interests and barriers perceived by students as an image of CRE teachers' care. In addition, our study hypothesized a significant negative correlation between stress and resilience. The contributions of this study can provide data for stakeholders or school principals who aim to realize the implementation of guidance and counselling services in schools.

2. Literature Review

Interests

Interest is a robust motivational process that energizes learning, guides academic and career trajectories, and is essential for academic success (Harackiewicz et al., 2016). Interests related to things that are liked. Interest consists of two types, namely situational interest, and individual interest. Situational interest is a temporary reaction to highly stimulating factors in the immediate environment, while individual interest is a relatively long-term preference for a particular subject or activity (Palmer et al., 2017). Situational interest is a state of attention and psychological influence on a particular object or topic at a specific time - individual interest is an enduring tendency to re-engage over time (Harackiewicz et al., 2016).

Barriers

Barriers are boundaries or obstacles that prevent some action or access. Barriers are obstacles seen by students, known as perceived barriers. Glasgow (2008) defines perceived barriers as a person's estimate of the degree of challenge of social, personal, environmental, and economic barriers to a particular behavior or the desired goal status of that behavior. These barriers can come from within and from outside the individual. Barriers from within are called internal barriers, and barriers from outside are called external barriers. Clement (2016) explains that the two external barriers that can limit student study time are family and the economy, and the most crucial internal obstacle is motivation.

Stress

Stress in Latin comes from the verb "stringere" which means to draw tight, to press. In 1930, Hans Selye first borrowed the term "stress" from physics and interpreted it as the joint action of forces that occur in every part of the body (Chrousos et al., 1988). Stress is a state of balance or harmony that is threatened. The state of "balance" which is directly translated from the Greek "homeostasis" means "state of stability." Disturbing forces, or threats to homeostasis, are called "stressors," and " adaptive responses " are counteracting forces that rebuild." Stressors are physical, such as cold, heat, pain, or blood loss/injury, and emotional, such as psychological loss or uncertainty. The definition of perceived stress, according to Sheldon Cohen, stress is a feeling or thought about one's life that is uncontrollable and unpredictable, how often one has to deal with annoying hassles, how many changes have occurred in one's life, and belief in one's ability to deal with problems or difficulties (Cohen, 1994). Stress in high school refers to the pressure relevant to academic demands, such as high academic expectations from parents, teachers, or themselves (Williams et al., 2021).

Resilience

The word resilience comes from the Latin verb "resilire" which means to rebound or recoil. In Merriam-Webster, resilience is the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change. According to Connor-Davidson, resilience is defined as a personal quality that enables a person to thrive in the face of adversity (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Resilience is a mental or psychological strength source that can overcome stress and difficulties (Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021). Everyone is faced with various stressful situations that can harm their health

development. Meanwhile, some people can handle the pressure that comes their way, but others cannot. Teachers need to consider how a student can deal with stressful situations, how resilient the individual is, and whether they have defensive or coping reactions (Nečasová, 2021).

Caring Teachers

Teachers who do not care about their students may experience burnout or physical or mental exhaustion/saturation due to increased task demands (Alloh et al., 2019).It is natural because the work of the ministry requires more energy, time and thought. Therefore, CRE teachers need to have sufficient rest time and look back at the purpose of vocation as a CRE teacher. In that connection, once the work of the ministry (great commission) is carried out or carried out, the teacher of Christian religious education must do it diligently and be ready to face the difficulties or challenges that occur. Religious education is an effort to care for people whose lives need to know the savior and realize the significance of this life to others. Based on this, total devotion must always be done in order to reach students to experience a personal encounter with Christ. It is fundamental to teach students that the teaching work done is the same as for Christ, not for man (Colossians 3:23). As a result of the ministry work done (the effort to care for students), they will feel the presence of a CRE teacher as they expect the presence of helpers who are willing to hear their complaints, struggles and hopes. The teacher's concern is the realization that how important it is to treat or behave the teacher to the student rather than just being aware of what the student wants from the teacher (Zepke et al., 2014).

3. Methods

This work uses a quantitative approach with nonexperimental designs. Survey, and descriptive correlational was analysis used. Survey design provides a quantitative or numerical description of a population's trends, attitudes, or opinions by studying samples from that population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, some of the questions asked were about the interests and barriers experienced by students. In correlation design, we use correlation statistics to describe and measure the degree or relationship between two or more variables or a collection of scores (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The two variables that was correlated are the stress and resilience based on student perceptions.

Sampling and Data Collection

The population of this study was students at a public high school in North Sumatra Province, Indonesia, which consisted of 700 students. The convenience sampling method was used to obtained the research sample in which students who were selected as samples were willing to fill out the google form link distributed by CRE teachers who cared. The number of samples partivipated in this study was 147 high school students with 104 female students and 43 male students. The age range for adolescents is 16 – 18 years (Grades X, XI and XII).

The questions in the questionnaire consist of the basic information of the participants (full name, place of birth date, cellphone number, student identification number, class), interests (subjects and major after graduation), barriers (motivation, stress, depression, self-esteem, self-confidence, difficulty

expressing oneself, loss/grief, anxiety, trauma, parenting, disappointment, hopelessness, conflict with boyfriend, family pressure, difficulty adapting, loneliness, financial management, time management, relationship with God, bullying, anger, conflict with friends, and internet addiction), stress scale and resilience scale.

The stress scale used is the compiled Perceived Stress Scale consisting of 10 items (PSS-10) adapted from Cohen (1994).. The answer choices on this scale are Never, Almost Never, Sometimes, Fairly Often, and Very often. Meanwhile, the resilience scale used is the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale consisting of 10 items (CDRS-10) modified by several researchers (Aloba et al., 2016).. The answer choices on this scale are Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree. Both scales are professionally translated from original measurement tools into Indonesian so students can easily read them.

Statistical analysis
The collected data were processed and analyzed using the Excel and SPSS 24 version programs. The interest survey results and constraints are presented in frequencies and percentages (tables, bar charts, and pie charts). The normality test is presented in the form of a histogram, and the linearity test is presented in the form of a P-P plot. Hypothesis testing in this research used the Spearman correlation test.

4. Results
Student Interests
The results of a survey of students' interest in the subjects are shown in Figure 1-3 below.
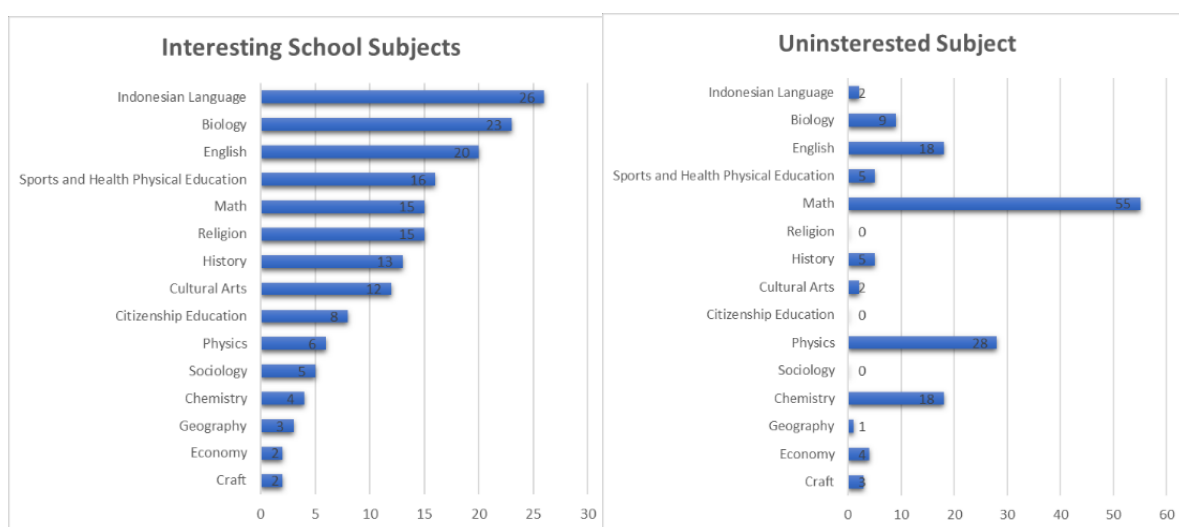

Figure 1: Interesting School Subjects

As shown in Figure 1, most students are interested in Indonesian (26 people) and Biology (23 people). Specifically for religious subjects, the number of students who liked religious subjects was only 15 out of 147 (10.2%). The subjects least interested were Mathematics (55 people) and Physics (28 people). Interest data regarding the desire to work or continue studying shows that 82% want to study,

and the remaining 18% said they want to work. The pie chart is shown in the image below.
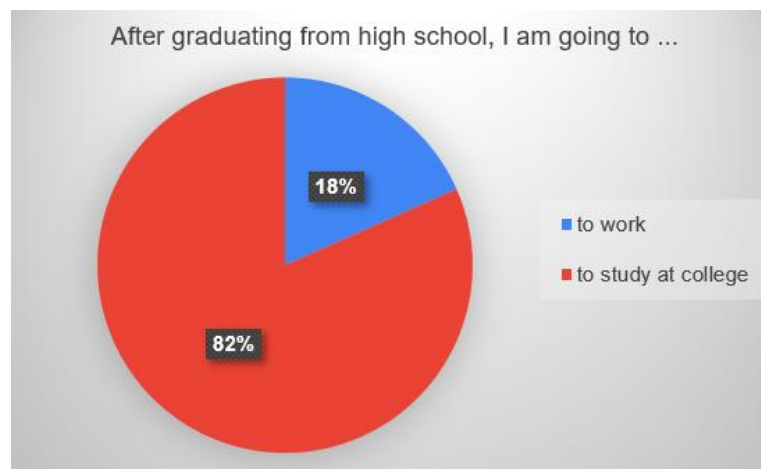

Figure 2. Students' interest after graduating from school

Furthermore, the interests of the majors chosen by students who want to study can be seen in the diagram below.
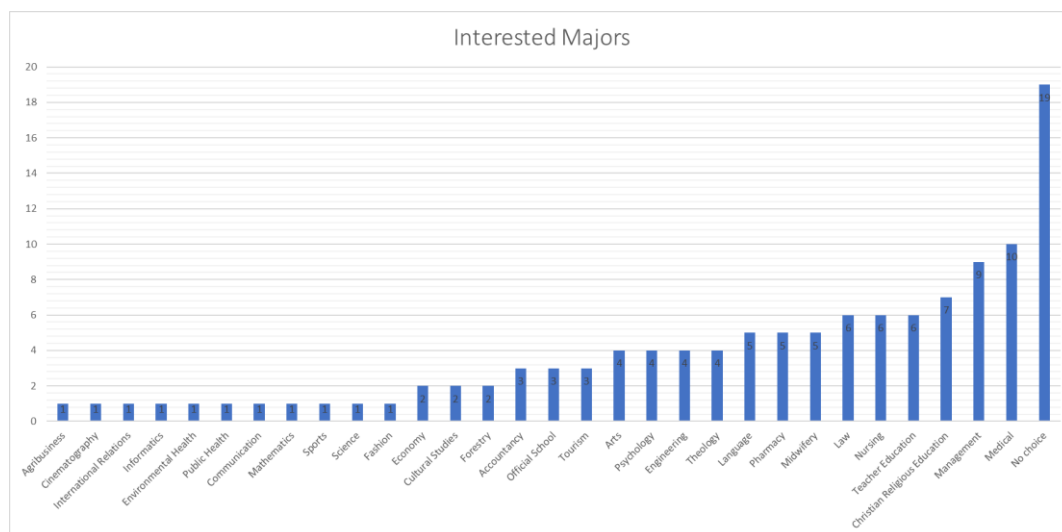

Figure 3. Student Interests in Majors Taken After High School Graduation.

The most popular major is Medicine (10 students). As many as 19 students have yet to learn what major they are interested in after graduating. Meanwhile, there are seven students interested in majoring in Christian Religious Education.

Student Barriers
Figure 4 shows that the barriers most perceived by students are barriers to self-confidence (80.27%), anxiety (71.43%), and difficulty expressing myself (68.03%). Other barriers experienced by more than half of the students questioned were barriers to motivation (62.59%), financial management (59.18%), disappointment (55.78%), anger (53.74%), time management (52 .38%), and relationship with God (51.70%).
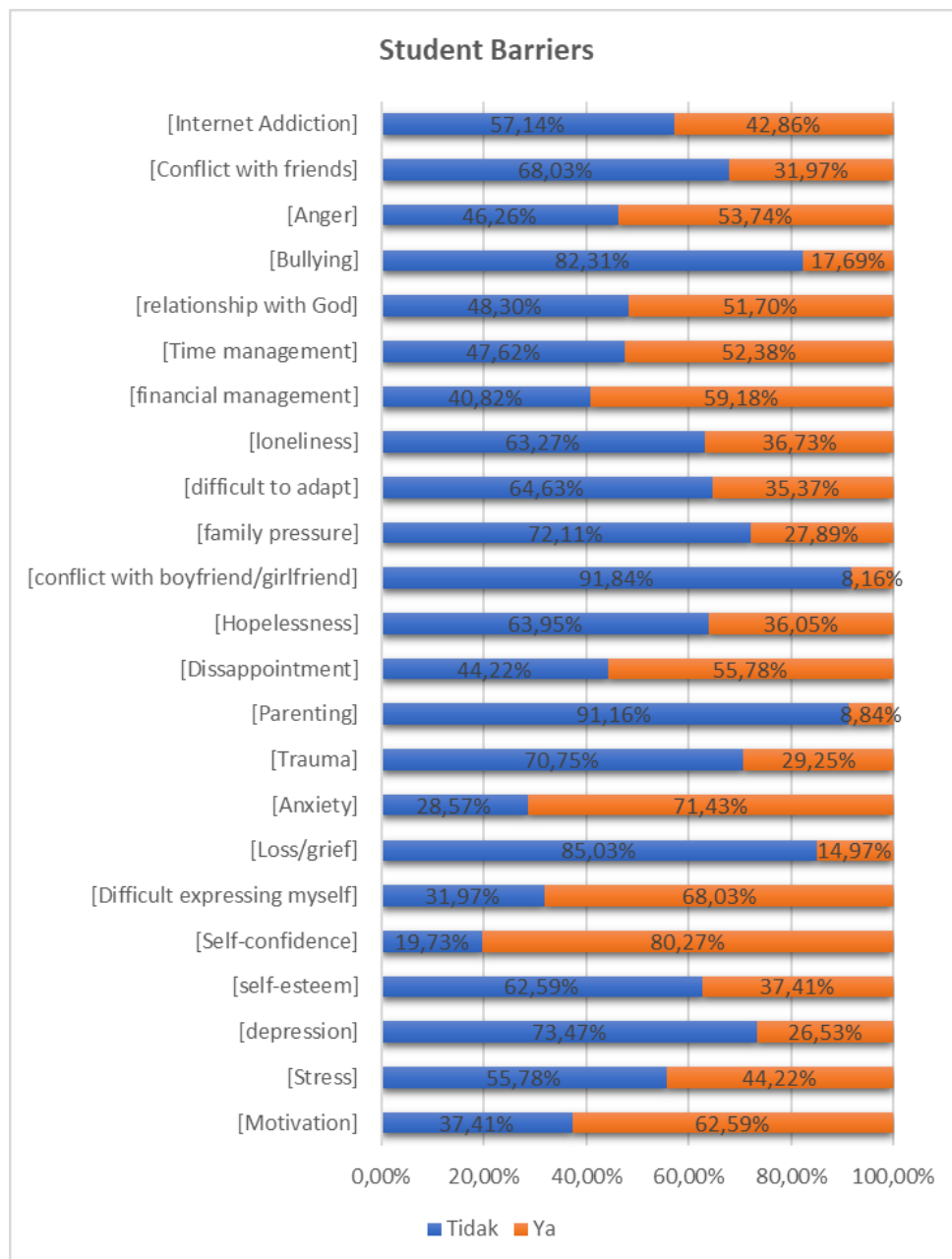
Figure 4. Perceived Barriers by Students

Validity and Reliability

The validity results on the resilience scale show that all items are declared valid or valid so that they can measure student resilience. The corrected item-total correlation coefficient range is 0.309 – 0.637, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.809. That is, this scale can be trusted or can reliably measure resilience.

Table 1. Corrected Item-Total Correlation Setiap Item CDRS-10

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Think of myself as a strong person when facing challenges	.447
Not easily discouraged by failure	.592
Stress makes me stronger.	.309
Deal with whatever comes my way	.605
Bounch back after illness or injury	.637
Able to handle unpleasant feelings	.450
Believe I can achieve goals despite obstacles	.482
See humorous side of things	.483
Adapt to change	.479
Under pressure I stay focused	.467

Cronbach's Alpha = 0.809

The results of the validity on the stress scale show that all items are declared valid or valid so that they can measure student stress. The corrected item-total correlation coefficient range is 0.275 – 0.652, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.797. That is, this scale can be trusted or can reliably measure stress (Table 2).

Table 2. Corrected Item-Total Correlation Setiap Item PSS-10

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	.478
In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	.652
In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?	.617
In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	.311
In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	.275
In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	.474
In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	.313
In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?	.459
In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	.487
In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	.600

Cronbach's Alpha = 0.797

Description and Categorization

Empirically, the minimum score for student resilience was 15, the maximum score was 50, and the mean for student resilience was 36.59, with SD = 6.27. Meanwhile,

the minimum stress score was 11, the maximum score was 50, and the mean for student stress was 29.72, SD = 6.38.

Table 3. Description of Students' Stress and Resilience Data

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
RESILIENCE	147	36.5918	6.27537	15.00	50.00
STRESS	147	29.7211	6.38361	11.00	50.00

Hypothetically, the mean and standard deviation of the two variables is the same, namely mean = 30 and SD = 6.67. Categorization of resilience and stress data is obtained by calculating the lower limit and upper limit of the score of each variable using the hypothetical mean and standard deviation, as shown in the table below.

Table 4. Categorization of Students' Stress and Resilience Data

Category	Resilience		Stress	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Low	3	2.04	23	15.65
Medium	80	54.42	110	74.83
High	64	43.54	14	9.52
Total	147	100	147	100

Table 4 shows that student resilience is mostly in the medium (54.42%) and high (43.54%) categories. Meanwhile, the stress perceived by students was mostly in the medium category (74.83%) and low category (15.65%).

Correlation between stress and resilience
The correlation table below shows that the value of the Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.393 with a Significance of 0.000. This means a negative and significant relationship exists between stress and resilience.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation and Significant Value

		RESILIENCE	STRESS
RESILIENCE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.393[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	147	147
STRESS	Pearson Correlation	-.393[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	147	147

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The scatterplot below shows that the negative relationship of the line starts from the top to bottom, indicating that a low level of resilience follows a high level of stress.
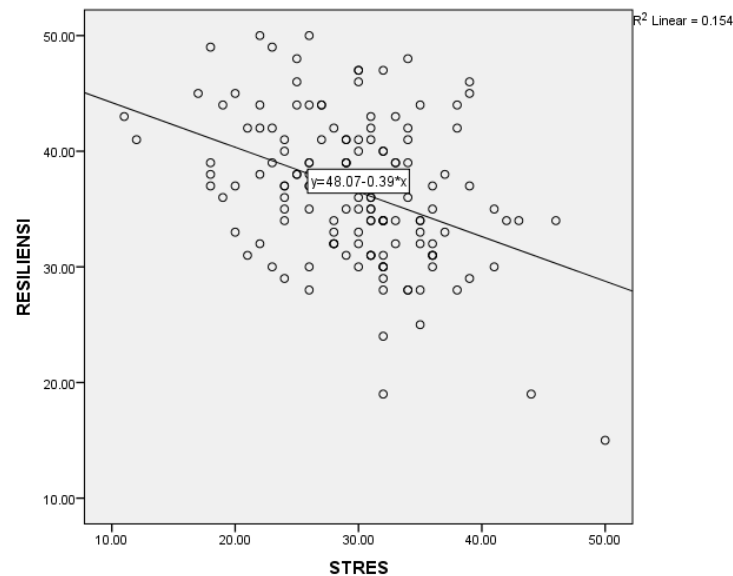
Figure 6. Scatterplot relationship between stress and resilience

5. Discussion

Christian religious subjects are usually of little interest to some students. Based on this research finding,around 10.2% of students are interested in studying Christianity compared to other subjects. The desire or interest in participating in religious studies is based on various factors. Religious lessons are seen as boring lessons because they constantly demand real changes in behavior. The demands of religious subject matter are also considered too heavy, because in addition to theory there are also reports of the practice of religious activities of students outside the school. Bjerkholt et al., (2020) explain that the ability of teachers in learning interactions can change previous experiences and attitudes towards lessons towards meaningful learning experiences, which means that students are interested in following the lesson. Students' interest in learning Christianity needs to be encouraged so that they can learn about God's words. Interest or attention to Christian studies helps students to better understand or master the content of the lesson more fully. Basically, when students are interested in learning, there will be active participation and learning becomes fun and meaningful for students. The interest in learning Christianity also leads students to the achievement of holistic learning outcomes (knowledge, values, and skills).

According to Renninger & Hidi (2020), the influence of interest on decision-making also has policy implications, such as courses being required in certain subjects (e.g., mathematics and physics). This means that through these findings, CRE teachers who care can propose to policymakers or school principals to organize Christianity courses. In addition, subject teachers can also vary their teaching methods so that students can become interested in learning other subjects. According to Harackiewicz et al. (2016), the four interest-increasing interventions are settings to get attention, contexts that arouse individual prior interest, problem-based learning, and increasing utility values. Research findings of Sakız et al., (2021), show that students' interest in studying at college is relatively high, but other students need to understand the importance of studying

at college because higher education is the primary source of development for individuals and countries

Students' interest in CRE majors of 7% indicates that there are still relatively few who are willing to be directly involved in doing CRE ministry as a profession. The department of CRE is a forum to equip people to become tools or instruments in the preaching of the gospel (great commission) in schools, churches, and other Christian institutions. The lack of interest in becoming a prospective teacher of CRE can be caused by feeling that they do not have talents in teaching. In addition, the profession as a teacher of CRE is considered unpromising in terms of life welfare. However, what has not yet been realized is that the profession of a CRE teacher is a noble duty mandated by God Himself (Matt.28:19-20), and God will always take care of those who serve Him with all their hearts, souls and all their minds. CRE teachers need to encourage students in CRE learning to have an interest also as CRE teachers by studying CRE at Theological Seminary. Nevertheless, the biggest motivation is how the student sees the integrity of life as an example for the student and then further convinces his commitment to be equipped as a prospective teacher of CRE. The integrity or conformity of CRE teachers builds students' confidence in teachers and religious subjects (Boiliu et al., 2021), including ultimately stimulating students to choose a CRE major.

The results show that students' most perceived obstacles are internal barriers, self-confidence, difficulty in expressing oneself, and motivation. According to Creed et al. (2004) , a lack of self-confidence or low motivation is the primary internal obstacle that impacts better career interest. In addition, anxiety, anger, and disappointment are high among students. These findings indicate that anxiety disorders are the most common psychological condition among young people and can contribute to a decline in social, academic, and family functioning, so appropriate treatment is needed, such as Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (Hudson et al., 2022). The third generation of cognitive-behavioral therapy, namely Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), is also believed to reduce the suffering associated with anger barriers (Tifft et al., 2022). Just as students feel disappointment, the inevitable disappointment at school can be an essential factor contributing to decreased motivation (Albalawi & Al-Hoorie, 2021). Thus, motivation is an essential internal barrier.

The high external barrier is the financial management which is in line with the research of Creed et al., (2004) that poverty is the main obstacle in determining student careers. Time management is also a reasonably high barrier among students. Effective time management is essential for all of us, both students and others, so time management training and automatic adaptive time management systems are the right choice for everyone to manage time more effectively (Khiat, 2019).

A barrier that many students also experience is the relationship with God. Student has not realized that a relationship with God is the most important thing in life. There is still the idea that the divine or Christian spirituality is separated from everyday life. Mullins (2022) suggests that in spiritual practice activities,

Christians have a desire to be close or loving relationship to God, and want to know God well. In fact, man cannot be separated from a relationship with God, wherever and at any time. The absence of an intimate relationship with God tends to make students often rely on themselves, and therefore are unaware of God's presence and power in every daily activity, including in relation to school studies. In this study, the hypothesis states that stress will predict student resilience. This hypothesis is supported by correlation analysis which reveals that stress is related to resilience where the direction of the relationship is negative. Students who scored higher on the PSS-10 measuring perceived stress were more likely to have difficulty surviving (low resilience score). This finding is in line with Stanley & Mettilda Buvaneswari's (2020) research findings revealed that stress levels negatively affect the manifestation of resilience. Recent research also supports a negative relationship between stress and resilience (Melguizo-Ibáñez et al., 2022). It should be noted that 14 students are in the high-stress category; this group needs to be identified and targeted for stress reduction strategies. Coping is an appropriate strategy for reducing stress (Ahmed et al., 2022). Coping is the thoughts and behaviors used to manage stressful internal and external situations. The obstacles faced by students can cause pressure or stress. Therefore, coping is a resilience mechanism that can minimize the impact of stress to be able to face all situations functionally. In addition, emotional intelligence is essential in determining life success and mental health because it affects an individual's ability to deal effectively with environmental pressures and demands (Moradi et al., 2018).

In that connection, CRE teachers can educate students through relevant learning, namely by applying an active and fun learning model, and that gives each learner the freedom to share his stories, testimonies, and faith experiences. Christian religious education will succeed in encouraging the enthusiasm of students to have survival and to actively enganged in learning process by using personal, interpersonal and intrapersonal methods. In addition, CRE must drive learners toward life change (Cardoza, 2019).

Previous research has shown that one of the right ways to show caring is to practice the power of dialogue (Rabin, 2020). Caring CRE teachers can work with a school counselor or psychologist to help students experiencing stress. Cooperation with universities with counsellors or pastoral counselling study programs not far from schools is also essential for schools that do not have school counsellors or psychologists.

6. Conclusion
Based on the findings and discussions, it shows that high school students had an interest in studies and continued to college, including CRE, and continued as a CRE major at Theological Seminary. This research also shows that there are obstacles faced or experienced by students in themselves that can hinder the achievement of their interests and then have an impact on stress and resilience. The most perceived concerns of students are internal barriers, self-confidence, difficulty in expressing themselves, and motivation, anxiety, anger, and disappointment. Meanwhile, high external impact is financial management. Time

management is also a high barrier among students. Another external obstacle, which many students also experience is the relationship with God. It should be noted that 14 students are in the high-stress category. These groups need to be identified and targeted for stress reduction strategies. The hypothesis of this study is that stress will predict student endurance, supported by correlation analysis it reveals that stress is related to resilience where the direction of the relationship is negative. Stress will occur when students experience obstacles in themselves so that coping needs to be done as an effort or resilience mechanism to minimize the impact of stress in order to be able to face all situations faced. CRE teachers have a central and strategic role to coping for students who face obstacles and even stress. These efforts can be made through learning, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

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