

THE IMPACT OF MENTAL DISORDERS ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the world, many students are diagnosed with mental disorders during their journey of education. This article is intended to gain better understanding of the impact of mental disorders on educational outcomes in students. This study uses qualitative methods in which the researcher will conduct semi-structured interviews to understand the meaning given by the respondents on this issue. The results show that mental disorders among students are heavily connected with the pressure they face throughout their educational journey. Educators are accustomed to think about a variety of factors known to affect students' educational outcomes. One important contributor to educational outcomes that educators may not regularly consider is the mental health of the students.

Keywords: Mental disorders, educational outcomes, students, emotions

ABSTRAK

Di seluruh dunia, ramai pelajar disahkan mengalami gangguan mental di sepanjang pengajian mereka. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang kesan gangguan mental terhadap hasil pendidikan dalam kalangan pelajar. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif di mana pengkaji akan menjalankan temu bual separa berstruktur bagi memahami maksud yang diberikan oleh responden terhadap isu ini. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa gangguan mental dalam kalangan pelajar berkait dengan tekanan yang mereka hadapi sepanjang perjalanan pengajian mereka. Pendidik perlu memikirkan pelbagai faktor yang diketahui dapat mempengaruhi pengajian pelajar. Satu penyumbang penting kepada pengajian yang mungkin tidak selalu dipertimbangkan oleh pendidik ialah kesihatan mental pelajar.

Kata Kunci: Gangguan mental, hasil pendidikan, pelajar, emosi

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, mental health of students has taken considerable attention worldwide due to dramatic upward trend in suicide. Student life can be stressful and for some students it may cause mental disorders. Besides being major public health challenge, mental disorders can influence educational outcomes. Today's younger generation represents the largest group of students in history. The transition from primary, secondary and tertiary education involves major changes in several areas such as social and emotional. This transition period can cause relational challenges that some students experience as stressful.

Mental disorders are a condition that impacts a young person's thinking, emotions and mood such that it interferes with his or her daily functioning at home and school. Approximately one in six school-aged students experiences impairments in life functioning due to a mental disorder and the number of young people experiencing mental disorders increases as young people grow older. The most prevalent mental disorders in school-aged young people include obsessive-compulsive disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), behavioral, bipolar disorder, impulse disorder, anxiety or depression and oppositional defiance disorder.

Mental disorders among students have negative impact on their educational outcomes and interpersonal relationships. Students with mental disorders are at risk for schooling and they may have increased difficulties primarily with academic achievement in school. Frequent feelings of mental

disorders exhibit school difficulties including poor academic achievement. Schooling is a central part of all of childhood, with the educational path starting at an early age.

When left untreated or under treated, coping with the pain of mental disorders can contribute to self-harm, including thought of suicide, which is now the second leading cause death for young people aged 10-24. Outside of the young person's home, schools are the most likely place where mental health concerns will be detected. Students spend most of their day at school interacting with several adults and friends, all of whom can be empowered to help connect those suffering from mental health concerns to early intervention and treatment support.

Mental disorders among students may have an important influence on academic achievement, which in turn have lifelong consequences for employment, income and other outcomes.

Some of the signs of mental disorders among students are:

- Withdrawing from others
- Having very low energy
- Appearing Disheveled
- Losing interest in hobbies and other activities
- Trouble concentrating
- Becoming easily irritated or angered
- Changing eating or sleeping patterns
- Crying a lot

Coping with mental disorders concerns negatively impacts student's ability to meet the many demands of school, including cognitive demands for learning, social and emotional demands for making friends and behaving according to school rule norms and expectations, and physical demands for being active throughout the school day.

1.1 Research Objectives

This study was conducted to achieve several objectives, namely:

1. To identify mental disorders faced by students
2. To study the relationship between mental disorders encountered and educational outcomes.

1.2 Research Questions

This study was conducted to achieve several questions, namely:

1. What are the mental disorders faced by students?
2. What is the relationship between mental disorders encountered and educational outcomes?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are proportion of students who experience their student life as mentally stressful (Nedregard and Olsen, 2014). This trend may suggest that students experience this period increasingly demanding and for some of them it may be a direct cause of mental disorders (Nerdrum et al., 2009).

Associations of student's mental disorders with subsequent educational attainment have been examined in both cross-sectional and prospective studies (Fletcher, 2008). Results have been inconsistent, with the majority of studies (Johnson JG, 1999), finding significant gross associations of student's mental disorders with low levels of educational attainment and some finding that significant gross associations are explained by childhood adversities that preceded onset of the disorders (Miech RA, 1999).

Deighton et al. (2018) found support for the effect of poor academic performance on subsequent internalizing problems in middle childhood. Several population-based studies investigated the effect of mental disorders on academic performance in students.

Students' ability to handle emotional stress during their studies was found to be an important factor in preventing academic delay and dropout (Storrie et al., 2010). Other studies have reported that students have a number of concerns with their studies, with expectations about performing and also report financial insecurities (Stewart-Brown et al., 2000).

On the other hand, several population-based studies investigated the effect of mental health on academic performance in children and adolescents. In a longitudinal study, Fletcher showed that adolescent depression was linked to years of schooling, controlling for psychiatric comorbidity and sociodemographic factors (Fletcher, 2010). In a study on 800 children followed from age 6 to 18, externalizing but not internalizing problems predicted poor academic performance (Van der Ende J et al, 2016).

In sum, previous research shows that mental health problems predict academic performance from middle childhood and up to adulthood. Results seem, however, to vary by the type of mental health problems and assessments of whether mental health problems as early as pre-school age predict educational outcomes have not yet been done. Further studies are therefore warranted.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The structure of this study is phenomenological research using semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face to get feedback and information from respondents on the subject matter being studied. Qualitative phenomenological analysis explores concepts and provides additional insights into the subject matter studied that may not be possible through quantitative studies. Meanwhile, the use of structured semi-structured interviews is intended to facilitate the development of research and research of the group. As a result, during the interview, researcher was able to identify the impact of mental disorders on student's educational outcomes. In this study, data are classified according to the theme based on the topics studied.

3.1 Research Sampling

This study is qualitative in nature and statistical generalization is not the aim of this study. Therefore, probability sampling was not used in this study; instead, non-probability sampling was used for the purpose of selecting samples for this study. Non-probability sampling is relevant to this study since the study was conducted to make findings on what was happening in the life of the students who are diagnosed with mental disorders and their educational outcomes rather than to answer questions such as "how much" and "how often" as in quantitative studies (Honigmann, 1982).

Therefore, the most appropriate sampling strategy used in this study is objective sampling (Patton, 2002). Purposive / purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to find, understand, and get an idea of the subject of the study. Therefore, it is important for this study to select a sample that will help to understand the subject being studied (Merriam, 2009). According to Patton (2002), the logic and power of sampling is based on a case study that provides more information with in-depth information. Therefore, selection criteria are important in selecting respondents for studies that use this purpose (LeCompte & Presissle, 1993).

The sampling used in this study was conducted using snowball sampling technique to obtain sample of respondents. Snowball sampling (also known as chain or network sampling) is the most commonly used form of sampling (Merriam, 2009). This technique involved finding some of the key respondents who easily met the criteria set out to participate in the study and then asked the respondent to introduce the researcher with other individuals who were potential respondents in the study.

This snowball sampling technique is useful for populations that are difficult to reach or identify individuals who meet sampling requirements or conditions but these populations know each other and are interrelated (Bernard, 2006). This method generates a sample of studies through referrals by those who share or know others who have the characteristics required of a study (Handcock & Gile, 2011). Thus, the

study sample will become larger when the information from the new sample can be identified to meet the specified sampling criteria (Patton, 2002).

In this study, the snowball sampling process was conducted by identifying several students who met the criteria set out in the study as a preliminary sample, or also known as 'seed starting' (Shafie, 2010). This identification process requires researchers to obtain information from sources such as the Social Welfare Department, General Hospital, schools as well as local information from the public. The next step is to request a sample of the sample to identify other individuals who meet the criteria presented in this study and potentially respond.

In this study, the number of samples was final when no new individual was proposed that was not mentioned in the previous wave and fulfilled the respondents' criteria set out in this study.

3.2 Participants

This research with qualitative approach provides a great opportunity to hear the voice of the respondents. The respondents of this study were students in primary and secondary government school. 20 students consist of 10 females and 10 males aged between 10-15 years old from different level of class responded to open-ended survey questions.

3.3 Instrument

To meet the objectives of the current research, an open-ended questionnaire was designed which offers the respondents the opportunity to express their feelings and relying on their own experience. The questionnaire consists three section namely the demographics of the respondents, the dissertation information and the responses of 13 questions provided by the respondents based on the semi-structured interviews conducted on the respondents. All the instruments that assess the student's health and well-being, family situation, lifestyle, issues specific to studying as well as physical and mental health were all charted in the questionnaire with a particular emphasis on psycho social issues.

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted from 10th November 2021 to 21st November 2021. Each interview session took approximately 2 hours. All respondents were expected to provide information, feedback and ideas to the questions asked. To facilitate the interview session and data collection, voice recorders were also used. While conducting research, ethical issues were taken into consideration by maintaining respondents' confidentiality and giving them assurance that the data collected would be used only for research purposes.

To analyze the qualitative data, the thematic analysis method was adopted for analyzing the respondents' responses. The volume of data collected was reduced, identified and grouped into categories. The thematic analysis method was adopted to gain a meaningful understanding of the respondents' perspectives and points of view as well as to gain a deep insight into the participants' impact of mental disorders on their educational outcomes.

4.0 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The present research qualitatively synthesized the results of the study which examined the impact of mental disorders on student's educational outcomes. The results of the research confirmed that there is a significant negative impact of mental disorders on educational outcomes. The identified themes were grouped into four themes that were discussed below.

4.1 Learning and Educational Outcomes

Coping with the impact of mental illness through the developmental transitions of childhood and adolescence can interfere with the cognitive processes required for classroom learning. Over time, these cognitive processes can affect educational outcomes.

Majority of the respondents described they have:

- Difficulty controlling attention during learning tasks.
- Trouble persevering during challenging academic tasks.
- Trouble recalling academic information.
- Slowed problem solving.
- Having trouble completing homework.
- Reductions in standardized achievement test scores.
- Lower grades

4.2 Friendships and Behavior

The behavior of young people experiencing mental health concerns may interfere with learning and making friends at school.

Majority of the respondents described they have:

- Frequent absences from school due to illness and school avoidance.
- Trouble making or maintaining friendships.
- Low energy for physical activities including sports and other recreation.

4.3 School Completion

Over time, as young people experience the progression of untreated or undertreated mental disorders, barriers to school completion become more difficult to surmount.

Majority of the respondents described they have:

- Difficulty following school routines and norms, resulting in suspension and expulsion.
- Course credit deficiencies over time.
- More chances of reducing high school graduation rates.

4.4 High School Academic Pursuits

The transition from primary to secondary requires social skills and executive functioning skills that can be reduced or impaired when young people are coping with mental disorders.

Majority of the respondents described they have:

- Difficulty completing homework.
- Difficulty managing life demands.
- Interference with school's attendance and completion.

Mental disorders may create many obstacles to students not just in their daily life routine but also in their schooling academically. Mental disorders risks have long term and complex interactions with educational outcomes. Mental disorders issue among students not only cause pain and distress, but they also influence negatively their potential for success in school. More and more students face mental disorders and their behaviors and attitude lead to feelings of anxiety or depression. The impact of mental disorders negatively influence the educational outcomes primarily and as a result of it, many students drop out of school. Mental disorders also make students face with a decline in their educational outcomes which in turn results in school absence, poor grades and even repeating a grade in school. Those students reporting high level of mental disorders are more likely to perceive themselves as less academically competent and they display low academic achievement in school.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This research, as expected, confirmed that there is a negative impact of mental disorders on student's educational outcomes. It also indicated that mental health of students is very important for schooling because it has a potential to influence academic achievement positively or negatively. Therefore, it is deemed crucial for students to have a strong mental health to perform better academically in school which in turn have lifelong consequences for stable life and future.

When school leaders commit time and resources to address the mental disorders of the young people they serve, the entire school community benefits. When students thrive, school communities thrive. Academic, social and emotional outcomes of students are improved in schools with positive school climates, adequate mental and behavioral health supports.

Key strategies for addressing mental disorders in schools:

1. Promote Mental Wellness

- Encourage school staff to implement evidence-based and developmentally-matched prevention curricula in the general education setting, including social-emotional learning.
- Encourage mental wellness and improve awareness of mental health concerns among school members and family members by hosting regular social marketing campaigns.

2. Build Awareness of Indicators of Mental Health Concerns

Promote the mental health by reducing stigma associated with mental illness, to enhance the ability of educators to appropriately identify students in need of mental health supports and to improve help-seeking and referrals by students and the families.

3. Intervene Early with Coordinated Supports

- Improve school mental health referral systems.
- Improve the coordination of mental health support across general education and special

education.

- Build codified relationships with local mental health service providers
- Coordinate school-community mental health partnerships with other supportive, youth-serving sector including law enforcement, juvenile justice and health care.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author confirms there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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