

Abstracts of Theses Approved for the PhD/MMed/MSc at the School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, Malaysia

INVESTIGATING THE LEVEL OF DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY AMONG MALAYSIAN OLDER ADULTS RESIDING IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

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Introduction: The rapid growth of Malaysia's elderly population poses significant physical and psychological challenges, as well as opportunities for long-term care (LTC) facilities in addressing physical, social, emotional and psychological needs.

Objective: This study aimed to study the differences in levels of depression and anxiety among Malaysian older adults in nursing homes, assisted living, and mixed-system facilities.

Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional study design was conducted, involving 50 elderly residents aged 65 and above from LTC facilities in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. Participants were screened based on age, duration of stay in LTC facilities, capacity to provide consent, physical and psychological disorders, and cognitive ability using the Montreal Cognitive Assessment. Then, the Beck Depression Inventory-II and the Beck Anxiety Inventory were administered.

Results: A multinomial logistic regression showed that participants from mixed-system facilities were not significantly more likely to experience lower levels of depression, $b = 19.84$, Wald's $\chi^2(1) = 0.00$, $p = 0.997$, and anxiety, $b = 0.26$, Wald's $\chi^2(1) = 0.08$, $p = 0.775$, compared to those in nursing homes or assisted living facilities. However, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance showed significant differences in the levels of depression and anxiety among residents across different types of LTC facilities, Wilks's $\Lambda = 0.67$, $F(4, 92) = 5.05$, $p = 0.001$.

Conclusion: The findings highlight the need for tailored interventions and integrated approaches to address the psychological needs of LTC residents. Despite limitations such as sample size and study design, future research may focus on longitudinal and qualitative methodologies to enhance understanding and improve mental health outcomes in LTC settings.

Supervisor:
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Co-supervisor:
Dr. Mohd Nasir Che Mohd Yusoff

THE DIFFERENCES IN SELECTIVE VISUAL ATTENTION IN ONE-TO-ONE ONLINE COMMUNICATION OF YOUNG ADULTS WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SOCIAL ANXIETY

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Introduction: Selective visual attention refers to the ability to focus on specific stimuli while ignoring others. Different patterns of visual attention often exhibit among individuals with social anxiety, which can affect their perception of social interactions and their responses to them.

Objectives: This study examined the differences in visual attention between low social anxiety and high social anxiety young adults in Malaysia using eye tracking apparatus.

Materials and Methods: Forty-nine participants were recruited via purposive sampling based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria required. Eye movements of the participants were tracked when the participants were engaged in a pre-recorded conversation video. Social anxiety levels among the participants were measured using Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS). Eye tracking apparatus was used to measure the parameters of visual attention in fixation count, total fixation duration, time to first fixation, first fixation duration, total duration of visit and visit count, between the low and high social anxiety groups. Independent sample t -test was used to analyse the differences of parameters in predefined area of interest (AOI), which included eye, nose, forehead and mouth regions of the face.

Results: The results from the study showed there was a significant difference in visual attention on the eye region between low and high social anxiety group during virtual social interaction. High social anxiety group exhibited significantly more fixation count, longer fixation duration and longer total visit duration on the eye region when compared with low social anxiety group. The results indicated that individuals with higher social anxiety exhibited more visual attention to the eye region which enabled them to detect potential threats in social interactions.

Conclusion: These findings validated the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant difference in selective visual attention between low and high social anxiety groups during online communication.

Supervisor:
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EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SELF-COMPASSION

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Introduction: The rapid development of social media platforms has raised the alarm bells about its negative impact on young adults' mental health condition over time. Despite the benefits of connectivity and sharing, social media usage is increasingly linked to serious psychological issues like existential anxiety. However, those who embrace self-kindness and understand that everyone has struggles might find a smoother path through their adulthood and develop low existential anxiety. Social media exposure (SME) is defined as the degree to which users engage with digital platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok); Existential Anxiety (EA) refer as a state of distress and unease when an individual contemplating about own life's meaning and the purpose; and self-compassion (SC) is defined as being kind and understanding towards ourselves.

Objectives: The general objective of the current study is to determine the relationship between SME and EA among young adults in Malaysia. Specifically, to determine the mediating role of SC in the relationship.

Materials and Methods: The present study employed the quantitative research method with cross-sectional research design. Purposive and Snowballing sampling method were utilising in the study. The materials involved participants informed consent form, demographic data form, Social Media Use Integration Scale (SMUIS), Existential Concern Questionnaire (ECQ), and the Self-compassion Scale (SCS). Statistical analysis of multiple linear regression by using PROCESS plug in SPSS version 25 was conducted.

Results: The mediation analysis supported the first hypothesis that SC significantly mediates the relationship between SME and EA among young adults in Malaysia (indirect effect $B = -0.052$, $SE = 0.16$, 95% CI $[-0.86, -0.22]$). Moreover, the result also showed that lower levels of SME and higher levels of SC were significantly associated with lower EA among young adults in Malaysia.

Conclusion: The current finding suggests that SC partially mediates the relationship between SME and EA, indicating that there are potential factors beyond SC, such as the nature of the content consumed on social media and the context of interaction might play a role in the relationship between SME and EA.

Supervisor:
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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE SYMPTOMS, INTOLERANCE OF UNCERTAINTY AND CYBERCHONDRIA AMONG YOUTHS IN MALAYSIA

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Introduction: Cyberchondria is a phenomenon where one repeatedly conducts online searches of health information in a compulsive manner in response to anxiety derived by uncertainties.

Objectives: The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between obsessive-compulsive symptoms, intolerance of uncertainty, and cyberchondria among youths in Malaysia.

Materials and Methods: An online cross-sectional survey was employed where data was collected from 150 participants recruited through convenient sampling to complete the Cyberchondria Severity Scale, Dimensional Obsessive-Compulsive Scale and Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale.

Results: Results found significant relationships between obsessive-compulsive symptoms, intolerance of uncertainty and cyberchondria ($p < 0.001$). Weak to moderate significant positive associations were found between the subscales of DOCS and CSS-12 ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$) and IUS-12 and CSS-12 ($r = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$). Lastly, a significant difference in the scores of cyberchondria was observed between individuals at risk of OCD and those who are not, where those at risk obtained a higher mean score of cyberchondria ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusion: Therefore, difficulties in tolerating uncertainties and compulsive behaviour predicted the tendency to repeatedly search for health information online which showed that cyberchondria is a phenomenon worth exploring among Malaysians.

Supervisor:
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VALIDATION OF THE MALAY TRANSLATED PRESCHOOL ANXIETY SCALE AMONG PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IN KOTA BHARU, KELANTAN

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Introduction: Anxiety disorders among children have been on the rise, affecting 6 to 31.9% of the global population. Early identification and intervention are crucial as anxiety symptoms in preschoolers can significantly impact their social, emotional, and cognitive development. The lack of validated measures for assessing anxiety among preschoolers in Malaysia hinders early detection and intervention efforts.

Objectives: This study aims to translate and validate the Preschool Anxiety Scale (PAS) into Malay (PAS-Malay) to assess anxiety symptoms among preschool-aged children in Malay-speaking populations. Additionally, it seeks to determine the reliability and convergent validity of PAS-Malay by comparing it with the established Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire – Malay Version (SDQ-Mal).

Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional study design was used, involving 161 parents/caregivers of preschool-aged children from Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The PAS was translated into Malay language following a rigorous process involving bilingual postgraduate students and was validated by six specialists in related fields. Data were collected using online questionnaires distributed through preschools and social media. Statistical analyses, including reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), were conducted to validate the PAS-Malay. Correlation analysis was used to assess convergent validity with SDQ-Mal.

Results: Reliability analysis indicated good internal consistency for PAS-Malay (Cronbach's alpha > 0.70). CFA showed acceptable factor loadings after removing poorly performing items, improving model fit indices (CFI = 0.710, TLI = 0.683, RMSEA = 0.100, SRMR = 0.085). Significant correlations between PAS-Malay and SDQ-Mal subscales confirmed convergent validity, indicating that PAS-Malay effectively identifies anxiety symptoms alongside other emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Conclusion: The PAS-Malay is a reliable and valid tool for assessing anxiety in Malay-speaking preschoolers, addressing a critical need for culturally appropriate measures. It supports early detection and intervention in both clinical and research settings, with future studies needed to enhance its robustness through larger samples and clinical testing.

Supervisor:

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Co-supervisor:

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THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF RESILIENCE AMONG WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV IN MALAYSIA: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Introduction: Living with HIV carries significant stigma, especially for women, who face numerous challenges beyond the medical implications of the condition. The stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV contribute to a sense of shame and can exacerbate physical health concerns, increasing their risk of developing mental health issues. Understanding how women living with HIV (WLHIV) in Malaysia conceptualise and experience resilience is crucial for developing effective support systems.

Objectives: The present study aimed to explore the lived experiences of resilience among WLHIV in Malaysia, identifying key factors that contribute to their resilience at individual, interpersonal, and community levels.

Materials and Methods: A qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach was used to understand how WLHIV makes sense of their experiences. Ten WLHIV were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted at the Community Healthcare Clinic (CHCC) or the Kuala Lumpur AIDS Support Services Society (KLASS). Interviews were conducted in English or Malay based on participant preference and complemented with field notes. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic analysis.

Results: Three major themes emerged from the data: 1) conceptualisation of resilience, 2) barriers to resilience, and 3) facilitators of resilience. Participants' conceptualisation of resilience varied but commonly included themes of acceptance, optimism, and strength. They navigate complex emotional landscapes, with resilience shaped by a combination of individual, interpersonal, and community-level factors. Barriers to resilience included psychological issues like depression and fear, interpersonal challenges like family problems and discrimination from healthcare workers, and societal stigma. Despite these barriers, women demonstrated resilience through various strategies such as acceptance, seeking social support, helping others, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Conclusion: The findings reveal that resilience among WLHIV in Malaysia is multifaceted, encompassing individual traits, interpersonal relationships, and community support. These insights can raise awareness about the challenges of living with HIV and assist mental health and medical professionals in tailoring interventions to meet both the physical and mental health needs of WLHIV. Addressing these factors is crucial for enhancing the resilience and overall well-being of this population.

Supervisor:

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EXPLORING THE PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG FAMILY CAREGIVERS OF DEMENTIA PATIENTS IN MALAYSIA

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Introduction: Asia is currently experiencing a rapid rise in dementia cases. The role of family caregivers is significant in providing the high demands of care and maintaining the quality of life (QoL) for dementia patients, but they are often disregarded. Hence, it is important to understand their experiences and needs so that negative outcomes such as abuse can be prevented, and effective support and care can be provided to improve the quality of care and overall QoL for both caregivers and dementia patients.

Objective: This study aimed to explore the psychosocial factors associated with good QoL among the family caregivers of dementia patients in Malaysia.

Methods and Materials: This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological research design. Seven family caregivers were selected using purposive sampling. A questionnaire was used to screen participants, and those with a good QoL were interviewed until data saturation was reached.

Results: Three themes found to be associated with family caregivers' QoL were the caregiving experience, coping strategies used, and support and intervention. Despite initial challenges due to a lack of knowledge and experience, caregivers can still maintain a good QoL through various psychosocial factors such as the adoption of various coping strategies and access to support and interventions.

Conclusion: This study emphasises the necessity of culturally sensitive and knowledge-based support interventions and the promotion of available community services to ensure family caregivers are well-equipped to manage their roles effectively and subsequently enhance their QoL.

Supervisor:
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EXPLORING THE ATTACHMENT STYLE AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN WITH 'DADDY ISSUES'

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Introduction: 'Daddy issues' are psychological and emotional problems that arise as a result of a problematic or absent father-daughter bond. These problems might include feelings of abandonment, rejection, or unmet needs.

Objectives: The purpose of this research was to investigate the attachment style and sexual behaviours of women who had fathers who were either physically or emotionally absent from their lives.

Materials and Methods: The research utilised a phenomenological qualitative design, and it consisted of conducting interviews with thirteen heterosexual women who had fathers who were either physically absent or emotionally unavailable. The acquired data was transcribed verbatim and then analysed through the Nvivo software using thematic analysis.

Results: It has been discovered that women who have 'daddy issues' tend to adopt an anxious attachment style as well as an avoidant attachment style. Regarding their sexual behaviour, it was discovered that some of them engaged in unsafe sexual conduct and have unique sexual preferences or kinks, while others have no history of sexual engagement and have suffered unwanted sexual behaviour.

Conclusion: The findings of this research may highlight the significant impact that a father plays in determining the attachment style and sexual behaviour of their biological daughter. The findings of this study may be beneficial to mental health practitioners, educators, and policymakers as by gaining a knowledge of how 'daddy issues' influence attachment styles and sexual behaviours, it is possible to formulate more effective therapies and support networks for persons who are affected by these difficulties. Therapeutic interventions that begin at an early age can help females who are experiencing 'daddy issues' develop healthier attachment styles and have more positive sexual experiences.

Supervisor:
Dr. Salami Mutiu Olagoke

UNDERSTANDING THE PERCEPTION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ON DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AS MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTION: PHOTOVOICE APPROACH

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Introduction: Digital Mental Health Interventions (DMHIs) are an emerging technology to provide alternative mental health support which holds the potential to cater to adolescents in Malaysia.

Objectives: The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the perspective and experience of secondary school students on the use of digital technology as a mental health intervention and its effect while also identifying the facilitators and barriers in the application of DMHIs among secondary school students.

Materials and Methods: This study used the photovoice methodology which is a participatory action research method that combines photography with grassroots social action. 17 secondary school students from an Islamic private school in Selangor were involved in this study. Participants were exposed to audio meditation, VR meditation and video games in three separate sessions and were followed by a focus group discussion to elicit their perspective and experience on using DMHIs.

Results: The study was able to identify positive experiences which include calmness experience, immersive experience, improved focus and self-rewarding activity. Another theme from the respondent's experience is negative experience which includes lack of personalisation and barriers to DMHI application. The study's focus on DMHIs aligns with the growing importance of technology in healthcare. The use of DMHIs are able to elicit positive experiences from participants although, improvements in accessibility to better quality technologies and taking into account better personalisation options may increase the potential of using DMHIs in improving adolescents' mental health.

Conclusion: Positive experiences from using DMHIs present the potential of DMHIs as an effective tool to enhance mental health support among adolescents in Malaysia. Although the barriers to using DMHIs identified in this study are worth addressing to optimise the effective implementation of DMHIs in secondary schools. This study expands the knowledge of the perception of secondary school students on the application of DHMIs to aid future advancements in digital health in Malaysia.

Supervisor:
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EXPRESSIVE DRAWING AND MANDALA COLOURING AS INTERVENTIONS FOR POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS SYMPTOMS AMONG BURMESE REFUGEE CHILDREN LIVING IN MALAYSIA

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Introduction: Refugee children across the globe are vulnerable to various pre-, peri- and post-migration stressors and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is prevalent at higher rates among this population than the general population.

Objectives: This study aimed to evaluate the effects of expressive drawing and mandala colouring on levels of Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms (PTSS) among Burmese refugee children across three community schools located within Klang Valley, Malaysia.

Materials and Method: 30 refugee children who were of Burmese origin or descent were recruited and then randomly allocated to either four consecutive daily sessions of expressive drawing (n = 10), four consecutive daily sessions of mandala colouring (n = 10) or in the control group that underwent class as usual (n = 10). All participants completed the Child Revised Impact of Events Scale-13 (CRIES-13) at the pre- and post-intervention stages.

Results: Findings from a two-way repeated measures ANOVA revealed that there was a significant decrease after the intervention in PTSS levels among the expressive drawing ($p < 0.001$) and mandala colouring groups ($p < 0.001$), with the expressive drawing group having a slightly bigger decrease albeit it being not statistically significant ($p = 1.000$). The control group showed a slight increase in PTSS levels however this was not statistically significant ($p = 0.077$).

Conclusion: The implications of these results are that both expressive drawing and mandala colouring contributed to the reduction in PTSS levels among the sample while those in the control group who were not exposed to either intervention experienced only a slight increase in PTSS levels which does not represent a significant difference. The results are in alignment with the findings of other studies which suggest that expressive arts have a positive impact towards reducing the severity of various psychopathologies.

Supervisor:
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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTROL, SELF-ESTEEM AND EMOTION REGULATION AMONG YOUTHS

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Introduction: The parental psychological control and self-esteem play a critical role in young adults' emotional regulatory strategies.

Objectives: This quantitative study explores the impact of parental psychological control and self-esteem on emotion regulation among emerging adults in Malaysia, addressing a gap in existing research. Specifically, the study examines the relationships between parental psychological control, self-esteem, and two types of emotion regulation: expressive suppression and cognitive reappraisal. The interaction effects of parental psychological control and self-esteem on emotion regulation are also assessed.

Materials and Methods: A sample of 212 youths aged 18 to 25 was recruited through convenience sampling. Data were collected using the Psychological Control Scale - Youth Self-Report (PCS-YSR), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), and analysed using Pearson's correlation and regression analysis in SPSS 27.

Results: The results indicate a positive correlation between parental psychological control and expressive suppression ($r = 0.161, p = 0.019$), but no significant correlation with cognitive reappraisal ($r = 0.049, p = 0.480$). Conversely, self-esteem was negatively correlated with expressive suppression ($r = -0.191, p = 0.005$) and positively correlated with cognitive reappraisal ($r = 0.213, p = 0.002$). Regression analysis showed that self-esteem and parental psychological control together explained 5.3% of the variance in expressive suppression, though only self-esteem predicted cognitive reappraisal. No significant interaction effects between parental psychological control and self-esteem were found to either form of emotion regulation.

Conclusion: The study offers valuable insights into how parental psychological control and self-esteem shape emotion regulation in youths, highlighting the potential risks of excessive psychological control in parenting. These findings can inform interventions by mental health professionals to promote emotional well-being in youths. Limitations and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

Supervisor:
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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTING STYLES, EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

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Introduction: This study examines the complex relationships between perceived parenting styles, emotional regulation strategies, and depressive symptoms among young adults in Malaysia, aiming to provide insights into how these factors influence mental health in a culturally diverse context.

Objectives: To explore the impact of parenting styles on emotional regulation strategies and their subsequent influence on depressive symptoms among young adults in Malaysia.

Materials and Methods: This cross-sectional survey study involved 205 young adults in Peninsular Malaysia (N = 205). The participants were required to complete three questionnaires; parental authority questionnaire (PAQ), emotional regulation questionnaire (ERQ), and beck depression inventory – second edition (BDI-II).

Results: The results revealed that authoritative positively correlates with higher use of cognitive reappraisal as an emotional regulation strategy ($r = 0.577, p < 0.01$) and this strategy users have minimal risk for depressive symptoms ($r = -0.213, p < 0.01$) while no significant results show that expressive suppression direct impact level of depressive symptoms ($r = 0.113, p > 0.01$). There we no significant correlations between the perceived parenting styles and depressive symptoms ($p > 0.01$).

Conclusion: This study showed that parenting styles significantly influence the emotional regulation strategies of young adults. Although no significant results were found regarding the impact of parenting styles on depressive symptoms, the strategies chosen by young adults to regulate their emotions still affect their mental health.

Supervisor:
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THE CHALLENGES FACED BY PARENTS AND THEIR EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS THEIR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

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Introduction: Understanding the challenges and expectations of parents with special needs children is crucial for developing effective parenting strategies and support systems.

Objectives: We aim to explore and identify the challenges these parents face and their expectations towards their children.

Materials and Methods: This existential phenomenological research involved 20 parents of children with special needs resided in Kuala Lumpur. One-to-one interviews were conducted in the participants' preferred language (between English, Malay or Mandarin), using online meeting platforms such as Google Meet and Zoom to ensure their comfort and convenience.

Results: Five key themes emerged from the challenges faced by parents: (1) Emotional Strain, (2) Caregiver Burnout, (3) Financial Difficulties, (4) Inadequacies in the Special Needs Support System, and (5) Lack of Public Awareness. Additionally, three themes were identified regarding parents'

expectations for their children: (1) Fostering Independence in the Future, (2) Facilitating Adaptation to Society, and (3) Promoting Physical and Mental Well-being.

Conclusion: This research underscores the necessity for tailored interventions and support systems to enhance the well-being of parents with special needs children and improve outcomes for their families.

Supervisor:

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ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF A SCHOOL-BASED POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY INTERVENTION ON ADOLESCENT WELL-BEING THROUGH GRATITUDE

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Introduction: The study is a positive psychology intervention that uses gratitude to enhance well-being. The aim is to assess the impact of conducting a psychological intervention in a school setting on the personal well-being of students. As adolescents spend a significant amount of time at school, the research explores using school-based interventions to cultivate positive mental health among youth. Positive psychology interventions are used as they are less intrusive focusing on building positive emotions rather than focusing on negative experiences.

Objectives: To examine the differences in scores of personal well-being among stateless children attending NGO schooling before and after four gratitude-drawing intervention sessions, To examine the differences in mood scores among stateless children attending NGO schooling before and after four gratitude-drawing intervention sessions.

Materials and Methods: The study was conducted at a non-governmental educational centre for stateless adolescents. Participants were aged between 12 and 15, and selected based on universal sampling. The study was conducted over four one hour sessions over two weeks. The instruments used were the Personal Wellbeing Index-SC (PWI-SC) and pre and post-intervention comparison on well-being while the Ottawa Mood was used to monitor participants' mood every week.

Results: The results from 30 participants were analysed using a paired sample *t*-test on two dimensions of the scale- Happiness with Life as a Whole and Personal Wellbeing Index. The results were not significant, $t(30) = -1.039$, $p = 0.154$ for Happiness with Life as a Whole and $t(30) = -0.922$, $p = 0.182$ for the Personal Wellbeing Index. The average mood scores from 24 participants on the Ottawa Mood Scale showed a slight increase at 5.9, 6.5, 6.54 and 7.2. A paired sampled *t*-test comparing the average scores from sessions 1 and 4 found a significant increase at $t(23) = -2.574$, $p = 0.017$.

Conclusion: While there was no significant increase in well-being, there was a significant increase in mood. The discussion section explains why and offers future directions of studies in the area of positive psychology.

Supervisor:

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MEDIATING EFFECT OF SOCIAL SUPPORT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COGNITIVE EMOTIONAL REGULATION STRATEGIES AND DEPRESSION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

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Introduction: Cognitive emotional regulation strategies play a critical role in determining life satisfaction and are essential for managing anxiety and depression. Deficiencies in effectively employing these strategies, coupled with inadequate social support, are often central to the development and persistence of depression.

Objectives: The purpose of the study is to investigate the mediating effect of social support on the relationship between cognitive emotional regulation strategies and depression among undergraduate students in Malaysia.

Materials and Methods: Participants were required to complete an online survey consisting of the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ). Data obtained were analysed using correlational and mediation analysis.

Results: Correlational analysis revealed that maladaptive strategies are significantly positively correlated with depression. Conversely, adaptive strategies, which are acceptance ($r = 0.229$), putting into perspective ($r = 0.237$), and positive reappraisal ($r = -0.124$), are significantly positive and negative correlates with depression. Mediation analysis revealed social support as a partial mediator of the relationship between the CER acceptance strategy ($B = 0.988$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) and the CER putting into perspective ($B = 1.080$, $p < 0.05$) with depression. There is also a significant negative correlation between social support and depression ($r = 0.259$), which suggests that lower levels of depression are linked to higher levels of perceived social support from family, significant other, and friends.

Conclusion: This study highlights the significance of adaptive CER strategies and social support in alleviating depression among undergraduates. Interventions aimed at enhancing these factors show potential for effectiveness. However, longitudinal studies are necessary to establish

causal relationships. Future research incorporating qualitative methods and cultural considerations could refine interventions, leading to improved mental health outcomes.

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HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR AND MENTAL HEALTH-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH GENERAL HEALTH CONDITION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN MALAYSIA: DETERMINING THE MODERATING ROLE OF GENDER

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Introduction: Mental health disorders are prevalent globally, affecting one in four individuals at some point in their lives. Among young adults in Malaysia, significant life transitions and societal stigma contribute to mental health challenges and reluctance to seek help.

Objective: This study examines the moderating role of gender on help-seeking behaviour and mental health-seeking

attitudes concerning to general health conditions among young Malaysian adults.

Methods and Materials: A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 195 young adults aged 18 to 35 years in Malaysia. Participants completed self-administered questionnaires, including the General Help-Seeking Behavior Questionnaire (GHSBQ), Mental Health-Seeking Attitude Scale (MHSAS), and General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ-12). Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and moderation analysis with the PROCESS macro in SPSS.

Results: Help-seeking behaviours for personal emotional problems ($r = 0.29, p < 0.01$) and suicidal thoughts ($r = 0.24, p < 0.01$) were positively associated with general health conditions. Mental health-seeking attitude was also positively correlated with general health condition ($r = 0.23, p < 0.01$). However, gender did not significantly moderate these relationships.

Conclusion: Help-seeking behaviour and positive mental health-seeking attitudes are associated with better general health conditions among Malaysian young adults, regardless of gender. These findings highlight the need for public health initiatives to promote mental health awareness, reduce stigma, and ensure accessible mental health services for all young adults. Encouraging proactive help-seeking behaviours and fostering supportive attitudes toward mental health can significantly improve young adults' overall well-being and mental health outcomes, providing them with the tools to navigate their developmental challenges and life transitions effectively.

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