

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY AND MENTAL HEALTH STATUS IN RIAU UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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### **Abstract**

*Mental health literacy is an important thing to learn overcome, because with health literacy, a person can understand the causes of mental disorders and understand the vulnerabilities and risks of various health problems that may happen. Mental health literacy is knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes about mental health that aims to help self and others in recognizing mental health problems. This study explores the relationship between mental health literacy with mental health status in Riau University students. This research is a quantitative study using descriptive correlation method with cross-sectional approach. The research sample involved to 400 respondents who were selected based on inclusion criteria using proportional random sampling technique. The questionnaires used were Mental Health Knowledge Questionnaire and Self Reporting Questioner 29. The analysis used was chi-square test analysis. Analysis results showed that 325 respondents had high health literacy (81.3%) and 319 respondents had negative mental health status (79.3%). Statistical test results show there is no significant relationship between mental health literacy and mental health status in students with p value (0.563) > alpha (0.05). However, a correlation was found between gender and mental health literacy. Mental health literacy does not have a meaningful relationship with mental health status in college students. It is expected for educational institutions to further enhance guidance and counseling facilities as a platform for sharing experiences and developing positive self-efficacy.*

**Key words:** Mental health, Mental health literacy, Mental health status, University students

### **INTRODUCTION**

Mental health is a concern of many people across various areas of study ilmu (Asri et al., 2021). Nowadays, mental health problems are still increasing and as a developing country, Indonesia also faces challenges regarding mental disorders encountered by its population (Asri et al., 2021). According to data from the Riset Kesehatan Dasar (Rskesdas), the average number of cases of mental problems in Indonesia is in the severe category, reaching 6.7%, which means that there are 6 to 7 people out of every 1,000 Indonesians who experience mental health problems. Meanwhile, the prevalence of depression reached 6.1% and the incidence of mental disorders was 9.8%. The prevalence of Riau Province in cases of severe mental problems reached 6.06%, and the prevalence of depression reached 6.63%, and the prevalence of mental disorders reached 10.45% (Kemenkes, 2018).

Mental health is defined as the optimal condition of all components of a human's development, including physical and psychological. In other words, mental health includes efforts to cope

with stress, the ability to adapt, how to interact with others, and relates to decision-making (Fakhriyani, 2019). Mental health is different for everyone and changes in every stage of their life. Mental health can be defined as a condition where our mind is at peace, where we can feel calm in our daily lives and appreciate others around us (Kemenkes, 2018).

The incidence of mental health problems also happens to college students. MacKean in Mayangsari, et al.'s research (2020) states that on average, students suffer from various mental health problems such as: anxiety, psychosis, depression, addiction, suicide risk, psychiatric drug abuse, and other chronic psychiatric disorders. The most common mental health problem with a prevalence rate of 6.2% among college students is depression (Kemenkes, 2018).

College students range in age from 17-24 years old and are included in late adolescence (adolescence: 10-20 years old) to early adulthood (early adulthood: 20s and 30s) (Santrock, 2003). This age range is a period with unstable psychological conditions, along with the appearance of conflicts and various demands and mood swings, if someone in this period is unable to control himself against the problems he may experience, it can cause mental health problems to have an impact on his overall health condition (Suryanto & Nada, 2021).

A survey among 67,000 students from 100 colleges in the United States, revealed that 1 in 5 students indicated having thoughts of suicide, and 9% of them had made suicide attempts, and as many as 20% had committed self-harm (Liu et al., 2019). This condition is reinforced by the results of a study that revealed as many as 30.5% of students from various universities in Bandung suffered from depression, where 20% of them had suicidal thoughts, and even 6% of them had attempted suicide (Susanti, 2019).

Furthermore, the average age of students is at an active stage in human life, which allows students to try many things in finding out more information. Compared to professionals, they prefer sources of information from online media, friends, and family. This condition is related to how high mental health literacy is, there is a lower chance of mental disorders if they have confidence, knowledge, and the ability to maintain optimal health conditions (Fuady et al., 2019).

Students with low levels of mental health literacy are generally vulnerable to mental health problems (Degan et al., 2019). According to the World Health Organization, health literacy is the achievement of a level of knowledge, personal ability, and confidence in taking action to improve personal and community health by changing lifestyles and living conditions. Meanwhile, mental health literacy is knowledge about mental health, including knowledge about the effectiveness of treatment, how to seek help, awareness, and attitudes that have an effect in reducing stigma and improving personal attitudes and behaviors related to mental health (Kartikasari & Ariana, 2019).

Health literacy is important for students to have for their mental health. Health literacy is something that is important to master, because with health literacy, students can understand the causes of health problems experienced and know the extent of vulnerability and risk of various

health problems that may occur (Ann-Marie Lynch & Vinceroy Franklin, 2019). Everyone's mental health is different and dynamic, students with various demands, problems, and pressures make them must be able to maintain mental health in good condition. In this situation, not all students are able to overcome their problems, leading to disruption of mental health. Even news of mental health disorders in students often occur and in the worst cases lead to suicide. This is closely related to mental health literacy which includes how students know their mental state, and their ability to solve their problems, as well as their desire to improve the mental health of themselves and those around them. Based on this phenomenon, the researchers formulated the problem of whether there is a relationship between mental health literacy and mental health status in Riau University students.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research was quantitative, the research method was descriptive correlation with a cross sectional approach. In this study, variable measurements were taken at one specific moment, which means that the measurement of each subject's variables was carried out only once at the time of measurement (Adiputra et al., 2021).

In this research, the population is 30,175 undergraduate students of Riau University (PDDikti, 2022). To determine the number of samples in this study using the Slovin formula with the result of 400 respondents, the authors adopted a probability technique, specifically the proportional random sampling method. This technique involves taking samples from the population randomly without regard to levels in the research population (Sugiyono, 2019).

The measuring instrument used in this research is the Mental Health Knowledge Questionnaire (MHKQ) by Wang (2013) and translated into Indonesian by Widyana (2019) which was created to assess the level of individual mental health literacy. The MHKQ questionnaire uses a Guttman scale with "Yes" and "No" answer options for each question. Each "Yes" answer is scored 1 and "No" is scored 0. Whereas questions number 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 13, and 14 are reverse scored questions. The second measurement instrument is the Self Reporting Questioner 29 (SRQ-29) created by the World Health Organization. The questionnaire consists of 29 questions related to problems that may have been bothersome during the past 30 days. The SRQ-29 uses a Guttman scale with "Yes" and "No" answer options for each question. Each "Yes" answer is scored 1 and "No" is scored 0. Data were processed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 20 with the Chi-Square statistical test with a significant level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

## RESEARCH RESULT

In this research, three categories of data were obtained, which are demographic data, mental health literacy, and mental health status.

Table 1. Total participants based on demographic characteristics

Characteristics respondents	of Frequency	Percentase (%)
1. Age		
17	8	2
18	92	23
19	102	25.5
20	118	29.5
21	48	12
22	28	7
23	4	1
Total	400	100
2. Gender		
Male	111	27.8
Female	289	72.3
Total	400	100
3. Faculty		
FAPERTA	40	10
FAPERIKA	38	9.5
FMIPA	34	8.5
FKp	11	2.8
FK	8	2
FH	19	4.8
FISIP	62	15.5
FEB	54	13.5
FT	44	11
FKIP	90	22.5
Total	400	100

### Demographic Data

The results of processing demographic data indicate that the majority of respondents are 20 years old (29.5%) and the majority of respondents are female (72.3%), while based on the sample distribution formula, the most respondents are FKIP (22.5%).

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents Based on Mental Health Literacy

Characteristics of Mental Health Literacy	Frequency	Percentase (%)
High	325	81.3
Moderate	75	18.8
Low	0	0
Total	400	100

### Mental Health Literacy

Table (2) shows that out of a total of 400 respondents, the majority of respondents' mental health literacy was in the high category with 325 (81.3%) respondents.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents Based on Mental Health Status

Mental Health Status	Frequency	Percentase (%)
Normal	81	20.3
Troubled	319	79.3
Total	400	100

### Mental Health Status

Table (3) shows that the majority of respondents based on mental health status were in the troubled category with 319 (79.3%) respondents.

Table 4. Relationship Between Mental Health Literacy and Mental Health Status

Mental Literacy	Health	Mental Health Status		Total		Odd Ratio	P Value
		Normal N	Troubled %	n	%		
High		64	19.7	261	80.3	325	100
Moderate		17	22.7	58	77.3	75	100
Total		81	20.2	319	79.8	400	100

### Relationship Between Mental Health Literacy and Mental Health Status

Analysis Of The Relationship Between Mental Health Literacy And Mental Health Status Table (4) shows the results of the analysis of the relationship between mental health literacy and mental health status in Riau University students, it was found that there were 64 (19.7%) respondents had high mental health literacy with normal / good mental health status, and 261 (80.3%) respondents had high health literacy with problematic health status. Whereas as many as 17 (22.7%) respondents had moderate health literacy with normal / good health status, and as many as 58 (77.3%) respondents had moderate mental health literacy with troubled health status. The results of statistical tests using Chi Square analysis obtained a p value of 0.563 or  $\alpha 0.005$ , it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between mental health literacy and mental health status in Riau University students.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Respondent Characteristics

#### a. Age

Based on the results of the study, the overall age range of respondents was 17-23 years old, with the highest number aged 20 years as many as 118 (29.5%) person. Undergraduate regular education students are usually between 17 and 24 years old, this age is included in the late adolescence to early adulthood stage, according to Erikson's theory in late adolescence the main developmental task is the search for self-identity. Failure to undergo self-identity exploration can result in self-isolation. Then, the next stage is young adulthood which starts around the age of 20. Developmental tasks in this

period involve forming intimate relationships, commitment, and sometimes creating a family. However, Erikson's theory is often updated and adapted to social, cultural, and statistical changes in society over time (Arini, 2021). Jeffery Jensen Arnett in 2006 introduced the term "emerging adulthood" which refers to the transitional phase between adolescence and young adulthood, generally occurring in the age range of 18 to 29 years (Arnett, 2006). The characteristic that defines individuals in the emerging adulthood stage is the ability to make decisions independently, while on the other hand, they are still financially dependent on their parents (Arini, 2021).

This research is in line with research conducted by Nazira, et al. (2022) on mental health literacy in students in Banda Aceh, in their research the age range of respondents was 17-26 years with the majority aged 17-21 years (67.2%), the age level and education are closely related to the level of mental health literacy. Several existing studies reveal that mental health literacy is a problem that is often found in individuals when seeking professional support services. This issue arises due to cultural gaps and ways of communicating between individuals with mental illness and professionals.

#### **b. Gender**

Based on the results of the research, it was found that the majority of respondents are female, totaling 289 (72.3%) person, while males amounted to 111 (27.8%) person, this gender ratio is in accordance with the ratio of all Riau University students, namely 18,883 females and 11,292 males. The results also showed that female students had a higher level of mental health literacy as many as 243 (84.1%) students, while for mental health status, male students had a higher mental health status as many as 29 (26.1%) students.

This research is in line with the research of Nazira et al., (2022) on mental health literacy in students in Banda Aceh, in this study the majority of respondents were female (73%), besides that the level of mental health literacy also showed that females had a higher level of health literacy as many as 236 (92.2%) people. Differences in mental health literacy levels between male and female were also discussed in a study conducted by Fatahya and Abidin (2022) which stated that female tended to have a higher level of literacy in terms of mental health compared to male. Females have better knowledge in identifying symptoms and handling mental health problems (Fatahya & Abidin, 2022). On the other hand, males often see mental health in the context of stigma that is common in society. One factor associated with mental health literacy in males is their attitude towards help-seeking, which often tends to be negative. This is due to the male tendency to avoid talking about experiences that cause stress and pain, which is influenced by cultural norms of masculinity and stigma. Cultures often expect that men should show strength, restrain their emotions, and be independent.

#### **c. Faculty**

The results showed that all faculties at Riau University had a high percentage of literacy levels, in line with the research of Permana et al., (2023), the findings in the study

showed that students, as research subjects, had a high level of mental health literacy. A contributing factor is higher educational qualifications, which provide greater access to information related to mental health.

According to the findings of research conducted by Mayangsari et al., (2020) showed that there was no significant difference in mental health literacy based on the education sector. This finding is in line with the results of a study conducted at Riau University, where there were no significant differences in mental health literacy of the various faculties. This is in line with the results of this study where there was no significant difference in the mental health literacy of each faculty at Riau University. According to the researcher's assumption, at this time with various facilities in accessing information about mental health, students from various faculties can easily find the information they want to improve their mental health literacy.

However, in contradiction to the results of research conducted by Kristina, Mardea, Ramadhani, and Aliyah (2020), which showed that students who take study programs in the health sector tend to have higher levels of mental health literacy than non-health students. Another study conducted by Miles et al., (2020) also supports similar findings, namely that students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields have lower levels of health literacy and are a group that requires further attention in this regard.

#### **d. Mental Health Literacy**

Based on the results of the research, the majority of respondents' mental health literacy was in the high category with a total of 325 (81.3%) respondents. Mental health literacy is considered important from several perspectives. This includes an understanding of how to maintain and preserve good mental health, knowledge of mental disorders and how to treat them, reducing stigma associated with mental health problems, and increasing willingness to seek help related to mental health (Permana et al., 2023).

In line with research by Ibrahim, Supriyati, and Fuad (2023) which states that the percentage of mental health literacy in students at Gadjah Mada University is classified as good with a total of 63.9%. In addition, research conducted by Fuady et al. (2019) with student respondents from various universities in Indonesia stated the results that the majority of respondents had a high level of mental health literacy with a percentage of 54.1%. Likewise, research by Permana et al., (2023) found that most nursing student respondents had high health literacy with a percentage of 64.4%. Most students are active users of social media, so they easily access information about mental health, besides that there are many seminars, workshops or training activities or scientific activities that are widely followed about mental health. Students who have access to social media platforms that provide information about mental health tend to have a better understanding of the symptoms and ways to cope with mental disorders, and reduce the stigma associated with mental health problems. They are also more aware of how to access mental health services provided by professionals.

#### e. Mental Health Status

From the results of the research, it was found that the majority of respondents based on mental health status were in the troubled category with a total of 319 (79.3%) respondents. Meanwhile, from the categorization based on SRQ-29, of all respondents with indications of problematic mental health status, 236 (74%) people showed indications of mental emotional disorders, as many as 2 (0.6%) people showed indications of psychoactive drugs, as many as 191 (59.9%) people with indications of psychotic disorders, and 275 (68.8%) people with indications of PTSD disorders. In line with the results of research by Setyanto et al., (2023) with the Taylor Minnesota Anxiety Scale measuring instrument showed similar results, with 179 (86.8%) students experiencing high anxiety. Some of these research findings indicate that screening is an urgent need for early detection to quickly determine the mental health status of students. The results showed unexpected findings because more than half of the respondents fell into the depression and anxiety categories, so this needs attention for the management of these mental problems.

Research conducted by Mayangsari et al., (2020) with similar respondent characteristics, revealed similar results where 51% of all respondents indicated low health status. In line with the research findings from Cahyani et al., (2021) regarding mental health literacy in final year students, the results showed that 92 respondents, or 57.1% of the total sample, showed indications of emotional mental health problems. The emotional disturbances experienced by these students seem to be influenced by various factors, including academic pressures such as the increasing difficulty of the subject matter, the greater number of assignments, as well as pressures from inside and outside the campus environment, and workloads that are too heavy. These problems can arise from various sources, whether from the campus environment, the off-campus environment, or even from individual factors themselves.

### 2. Bivariate Analysis

Chi-square statistical test results showed that there was no significant relationship between mental health literacy and mental health status in Riau University students. The p-value was 0.563, which was higher than the  $\alpha$  significance level of 0.005. In line with the results of Fatahya & Abidin, (2022) study, these findings indicate that mental health literacy does not significantly impact mental health status. In this case, the effect of mental health literacy on mental health status needs to be mediated by other factors, such as access to health information and health behaviors. The importance of using various sources of information to obtain relevant mental health information, as well as an individual's ability to analyze, compare and review information from various sources, aims to help individuals understand more comprehensively about mental health. A previous research conducted by Ramadhani (2021) on mental health literacy among students majoring in health in the Special Region of Yogyakarta showed that there was no significant relationship between mental health literacy and mental health status.

However, findings from a research conducted by Mayangsari et al., (2020) showed a significant negative correlation between mental health literacy and mental health status, meaning that the higher the level of health literacy, the lower the likelihood of indications of mental health problems. Students who have a high level of mental health literacy tend to have adequate knowledge to manage their health well and have the ability and confidence to take good care of their health, including their mental health. As a result, they are more active in maintaining their health, including mental health.

The importance of mental health literacy applies not only to individuals with mental illness, but also to families, mental health professionals, and communities who may not have adequate knowledge about mental health issues (Compton, Hankerson-Dyson & Broussard, 2011). Despite the high mental health literacy of university students, the significant number of those experiencing mental health problems suggests that the application of health literacy has not been fully successful in addressing their mental health problems.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of research on the relationship between mental health literacy and mental health status in Riau University students, it is known that the majority of respondents are female with a total of 289 people (72.3%), and the majority of respondents aged 20 as many as 118 people (29.5%). The mental health literacy picture of respondents was in the high category with a total of 325 (81.3%) respondents and a moderate category of 75 (18.8%) respondents.

Mental health status in Riau University students showed that 319 (79.3%) people were in the troubled category and 81 (20.3%) people were in the good/normal category. The results of the chi-square test obtained a p value of 0.563 or  $> \alpha 0.005$ , it can be concluded that  $H_0$  is accepted which means that there is no significant relationship between mental health literacy and mental health status in Riau University students.

A limitation of this study is the inclusion of a sample with very diverse characteristics. Future research should consider using a more defined and focused sample and include more variables related to mental health literacy.

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