

## **The Relation Between Psychological Distress and mental help seeking intention of Adolescents: The Mediating Role of Mental Health Literacy**

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### **BACKGROUND:**

In recent years, adolescent mental health has become a matter of urgency problems in the field of global public health, which has become widespread public and professional concerns. There are many cases of adolescents experiencing mental problems including anxiety, depression, psychological stress, and suicide. Most adolescents with mental health problems don't seek help mental health. Many adolescents believe that seeking psychological help is a sign of weakness and failure. As a result of this self-stigmatization, they are increasingly afraid to reveal their problems and concerns to professional psychologists and little more willing to seek mental health services. One of the predisposing factors that influences help seeking mental health is a lack of knowledge about mental health. Our hypothesis 1. There is a correlation among the research variables, hypothesis 2. MHL would mediate the relationship between PD and MHSI.

### **OBJECTIVE:**

The aim of this study was to first test whether Mental Health Literacy (MHL) would mediate the relationship between Psychological Distress (PD) and Mental help seeking intention (MHSI).

### **METHOD:**

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was given by the Board of Psychology Faculty Ethical Com. The study was conducted on 792 people, ages 12 to 18 years. The instruments used include the Mental Health Literacy Questionnaire – Short Version (MHLq-sv), General Help-Seeking Questionnaire, and Kessler Psychological Distress Scale. Pearson's correlations were used to examine the relationships between the variables of this study (MHL, PD, MHS). For the mediation model, Mental Health Literacy (MHL) was the mediator between PD as the independent variable and MHSI as the dependent variable. The PROCESS Macro for SPSS was used for the mediation analysis.

### **RESULT:**

There is a negative correlation between Psychological Distress and Help Seeking Behavior, and there is a relationship between MHL and MHSI, but there is no significant relationship between PD and MHL. Meanwhile, MHL does not play a mediating role in the relationship between PD and MHSI, LLCI=0.0361 and ULCI 0.02163. However, the third dimension of MHL, namely help-seeking and first aid skills, has a significant mediating role between PD and MHSI,  $r = 0,1578$   $p < 0,05$ , LLCI -0,1073 and ULCI -0,0125.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The relationship between PD and MHSI was not mediated by MHL, this means that teenagers who are experiencing PD are directly seeking help, without mental health literacy. Although the third dimension of MHL, namely Help-seeking and first aid skills, has a significant mediating role between PD and MHSI. The results of this research provide the benefit of the need for mental health literacy among teenagers who experience distress so that they ask for help from the right person or professional and with the right solution.

Keywords: mental health literacy; mental help seeking Intention; psychological distress