



Mental Health And Its Relationship To Academic Achievement Among Female Expatriate Students

Ladjilat Youcef, University of Mascara (Algeria), youssef.ladjilat@univ-mascara.dz

Mokhtar Boufera, University of Mascara (Algeria), m.boufera@univ-mascara.dz

Zine El Abidine Elmagroud, University of Oran2 (Algeria), zinoumagroud@gmail.com

Received: 06/12/2023

Accepted: 21/10/2024

Published: 05/12/2024

Abstract:

The study aimed to reveal the level of mental health among female students from Western Sahara, as well as to identify the relationship between mental health and academic achievement. The study sample consisted of 17 female students from Western Sahara, who were subjected to the mental health scale. The data were statistically processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results showed that the level of mental health is high among female students from Western Sahara, as well as the presence of a direct correlation between mental health and academic achievement among female students from Western Sahara.

Keywords: Mental health; Academic achievement; Foreign students; Middle education.

Introduction

Arabs are considered one of the most migratory nationalities in the world due to the poverty, inequality and lack of equal opportunities they experience within their societies, in addition to the repercussions of political crises that created conflicts and wars that increased migration among various segments of society. According to the Secretariat of the World Health Organization (2017:2), 2015 estimates indicated the presence of 244 million international migrants in addition to 763 million internal migrants. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2015) also confirmed that the number of registered Syrian refugees actually reached more than 4 million refugees (Draji, 2016:19). The International Organization for Migration report for 2015 also indicated that the number of displaced persons had reached 3,276,000 displaced Iraqis (Abdul Kadhim, 2021:200).

According to the official website of the Ministry of Interior, Algeria received about 55,000 Syrian refugees in 2015, and about 160,000 refugees also live there. Sahrawis in the camps in the Tindouf region in southern Algeria, where the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees provides assistance to about 80,000 of them (Al-Radwan et al., 2021: 793), and despite the work of some countries to receive some migrants and arrivals in the best conditions, the increase in the number has affected the process of caring for these refugees, despite the

support of international organizations such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the Refugee Commission and humanitarian organizations, but we notice that there is special interest and priority in receiving vulnerable groups of refugees, as the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent works to protect vulnerable migrants to alleviate their suffering and seeks to achieve international obligations and fulfill them by the international community, and the International Committee works to help migrants to withstand and adapt to the new environment and provide material support and visit them in the detention facilities designated for them to assess their detention conditions and the treatment they receive, especially vulnerable groups such as the elderly, those suffering from health problems and minor children arriving without their families, as the latter group is considered one of the most interested groups in trying to provide them with the necessities of life such as food, health and shelter Education, and thus the refugee child of school age has become a priority for international organizations in order to obtain this right, and they have succeeded in integrating many children into the schools of the host country and trying to equalize them with the rest of the children.

According to the approximate statistics for the year 2015 conducted by some organizations, the number of Syrian children in Lebanon reached about 500 thousand students, of whom about 105 thousand students enrolled in public schools, about seven thousand in semi-free schools, and 40 thousand students in private education (Abdul Ahad, 2016: 32). The percentage of this category has increased globally, as UNICEF reported in its report that between 2016 and 2017 the number of refugee children in the world reached 3 million refugee children unaccompanied or separated from their families in 83 countries (Al-Radwan and Rizk Allah, 2020: 792).

Within the framework of the agreements concluded with international organizations, these countries are working to secure education for this category, as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF and UNESCO have worked in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Lebanon to provide afternoon education services through 90 schools in the first year, and 144 schools in the second year (Abdel Ahad, 2016:33), and the Permanent Mission of Algeria to the United Nations informed the General Secretariat in 2021 that the number of Sahrawi students who obtained various university degrees (bachelor's, master's, doctorate) reached 1297 students during the period from 2016 to 2021 within the framework of scholarships, and 325 Sahrawi students benefited in 2019 from scholarships for vocational training.

Algeria receives students coming from different countries of the Arab world and Africa and works to provide all the conditions for their schooling. Despite the fact that most of the incoming children have the opportunity to enroll in schools to complete their education, we find that some of them have found it difficult to adapt and adjust to the new environment due to the conflict of cultures, which made them vulnerable to disorders, poor mental health, a feeling of alienation, and the impact on their academic and scientific achievement. Hence, the need for research and identification of the level of mental health among incoming female students and linking it to academic achievement. Hence, the following question was raised:

-Is there a relationship between the level of mental health and academic achievement among incoming female students?

Study hypotheses:

- The level of mental health among female students is average.
- There is a correlation between the level of mental health and academic achievement among female students.

Study objectives:

- Identify the level of mental health among female students.
- Identify the relationship between the level of mental health and academic achievement among female students.

Study importance:

- Identifying the level of mental health is an important indicator for predicting psychological compatibility among this category of students.
- This study is considered one of the topics that educational institutions in general need to improve mental health and the possibility of achieving it.
- This study is a previous study by opening the field of research for other similar studies in the future.
- Strengthening the field of studies and research with a modern study in determining the level of mental health, especially at the Arab level.

Defining study terms:

Mental health: is the degree obtained by female students from Western Sahara through the scale used for this purpose.

Academic achievement: is the first semester averages for female students.

Female students: They are the female students who came from Western Sahara to continue their studies in middle and secondary education in Algerian educational institutions.

1-Theoretical framework**1-1-The concept of mental health:**

Miller (1973) defines mental health as the individual's ability to deal with the conflicts he faces in life and make the decision to end the conflict, and to harmonize the individual with himself and control the levels of anxiety and psychological disorders (Saleh, 2007:334).

The World Health Organization defined mental health as a state of physical, psychological and social comfort, and not merely the absence of apparent diseases (Al-Jammani, 1999:46)

While Abraham Maslow (1973) defines mental health as the ability of a person to achieve himself by satisfying his physical, psychological and social needs (Asfour and Nimr, 2009:229)

From the perspective of Al-Habit (1987), psychological health is the complete harmony between the various psychological functions with the ability to confront the psychological crises that occur to a person, and then the positive feeling of happiness and satisfaction (Al-Ahmad, 1999:14).

Freidman (1988) considers mental health as the individual's ability to adapt to daily changes and social interaction without engaging in inappropriate behaviors or feelings. Mental health is more than just the absence of psychological and mental disorders, and can be affected

by internal factors (the individual himself) or external factors (outside the individual's control, such as a biological disorder or organic disease (Al-Kiki and Abdullah, 2013: 283)

Al-Kafafi (1996) sees mental health as that state of balance and integration between the individual's psychological functions, which leads him to behave in a way that makes him accept himself and society accept him, and so that he feels a reasonable degree of satisfaction and sufficiency as a result (Al-Ibrahim, 2010: 306)

As for the World Health Organization (2009), it defined it as a state of physical, mental and social well-being, not just the absence of disease or disability (Abu Hassouna, 2018: 218)

As for Al-Jubouri (2014), he considers mental health as satisfaction with oneself and others and the extent of the individual's ability to psychologically and socially adapt with others by satisfying his needs in a way that does not conflict with the values, customs and traditions of society (Janjun, 2017:551).

As for Hilal (2016), he defines it as the ability of individuals to successfully deal with the variables of daily life, and social interaction with life, and mental health is a process much more than just the presence of psychological or mental disorders, and it is a process affected by many factors ranging from internal pressures to physical symptoms or functional disorders (Shahri and Hashemi, 2018:181)

Al-Buraikan (2020:144) considers mental health a positive state in which life is felt with mental and physical health in happiness, confidence, production and harmony with others.

1-2- Levels of mental health:

-The high level: They are the owners of a strong ego or normal behavior and good adaptation, and they are the individuals who understand and achieve themselves, and the percentage of this group is approximately 2.5% (they are on the farthest positive end of the dimension and the moderate curve).

-The above-average level: They are lower than the previous level, their behavior is normal and good, and their percentage is approximately 13.5%.

-The normal level (normal and average): They are in a middle position between high and low mental health, they have aspects of ability and aspects of weakness, one of which sometimes appears in place of the other at other times, and their percentage is approximately 6.8% in society (Boutros, 2008: 38).

-The below-average level: They are those who are below the normal level in mental health and are characterized by a degree of poor adaptation and unacceptable behavior, and they are the ones who fail to achieve themselves, and some types of non-severe deviations fall under this level, and their percentage is approximately 13.5%.

-Low level: They have the lowest degree of maladjustment, the highest behavioral disorder, they have complex problems, and they can become a danger to themselves or others, so they require isolation in special institutions, and their percentage is approximately 2.5% (Fadel and Saadoun, 2017: 92).

While Khoj (2010) classified the levels of mental health into three levels, which are:

-Ideal health: It is the ideal degree of integration of the physical, psychological, mental and social aspects, which is a difficult level to reach and is considered a goal for health programs.

-Positive health: In which the body's systems perform their role with high efficiency even if they face external influences.

-Medium health: In which the body's systems perform their role with high efficiency, but if they face external influences, they fall prey to disease (Khoj, 2010: 27).

1-3-Mental health criteria:

-Self-direction: The individual's self-report is based on this criterion. If the person is satisfied with his life to some extent and has no experiences that disturb his life, then we automatically know him as a normal person according to this criterion. On the other hand, individuals who suffer from frustration or fear, their feelings, thoughts, or actions are considered abnormal or require special treatment because there is a disorder in their personality.

- Social trend: This criterion adopts the viewpoint that every society has a specific culture and is governed by social behavioral standards that govern the interactions of individuals. Every culture and society also have their own taboos, and the individual must adhere to these standards in order to achieve normal behavior. If he deviates from them, he is considered an abnormal and deviant person. Also, the individual's strong commitment to the prevailing standards in society may make him unable to accept the changes occurring in his society (Al-Dahri, 2010:39).

- Idealistic trend: which considers the normal personality to be ideal or close to it, and that the abnormal personality is a deviation from the ideals. Therefore, the judgment on it is the extent to which the individual is close to or far from perfection.

- Statistical trend: in which the distribution of normal and abnormal occurs through deviation from the average, as most of the similarities between individuals are concentrated in the middle of this distribution.

- Medical trend: Some psychiatric theorists determine that abnormality is due to unconscious psychological conflicts and that normality is the absence of disorders (Al-Zubaidi, 2007:12)

1-4- Theories explaining mental health:

-Psychoanalytic theory:

Freud is one of the psychologists who most cared about explaining mental health, its disorders, and the causes of these disorders. He indicated that mental health is achieved when there is a balance between the three personality systems (the id, the ego, and the superego), such that understanding is achieved between the id and the ego in a logical manner that does not result in the ego resorting to repressing motives or adopting pathological defensive methods to resolve the conflict between the demands of the id and the demands of reality (Al-Kiki and Abdullah, 2013:285).

-Behavioral theory:

According to this theory, mental health can be subject to the laws of learning. If an individual acquires habits that suit the culture of his society, he is in sound mental health. If he fails to acquire habits that do not fit with what is known in society, his mental health will deteriorate (Shaya, 2018: 367).

-Existential theory:

Existentialism emphasizes that a healthy person is a person who is able to care about others on topics freely and clearly and maintain his independence at the same time. Clarity or sound frankness includes the ability to distance himself from others or reject them in a justified and conscious manner. The existential trend believes that mental health is represented in the most important points, the most important of which is that a person realizes the meaning of his existence, realizes his potential and capabilities, is free to achieve what he wants in the way he chooses, realizes his weaknesses and accepts them, and realizes the nature of life and its details (Jenjun, 2017, 555).

2-Method and tools:

-Study methodology: The current study aims to know the level of alienation among expatriate female students and academic achievement. The descriptive method is appropriate for the nature of this study.

-Study community: The current study included the original community consisting of 17 female students from Western Sahara who are studying at Sheikh Al-Mashrafi Middle School in the city of Ghris, Mascara Governorate.

-Description of the study tool: After reviewing the most important scales used to identify the level of mental health in previous studies, the researchers saw that it is more appropriate to use the Khalil (2006) mental health scale because of its high psychometric properties. The scale consists of thirty-three (33) paragraphs distributed with answer scores on a three-choice scale, which are (always, sometimes, never). The weights are as follows (1, 2, 3) in the case of a positive trend, while in the negative trend, the weights are as follows (3, 2, 1). Thus, the scores on the scale range from the lowest score, which is (33), to (99) as a maximum. This scale has high psychometric properties and was previously applied to the same sample in similar studies linked to other variables such as psychological alienation.

-Statistical methods used:

To process the data obtained in the primary study, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program was used, where a set of the following statistical methods were used:

-Percentage.

-Pearson's correlation coefficient.

" -T" test equation for the significance of differences for one sample.

3-Results and discussion:

-The first hypothesis: It stated that the level of mental health among Western Sahara students is average, and to verify its validity, the "T" test was used for one sample, and the table shows this:

Table No. (01) shows the level of mental health among expatriate students

Number of sample members	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Hypothetical mean	T value	Degree of freedom	Significance level

17	68.24	4.236	66	2,176	16	statistically significant
----	-------	-------	----	-------	----	---------------------------

It is clear from Table No. (01) that the value of the arithmetic mean was 68.24, while the value of the standard deviation was 4.236. When comparing the arithmetic mean with the hypothetical mean of the scale, which was 66, we see that the arithmetic mean is greater than the value of the hypothetical mean of the scale. By applying the “t” test for one sample, it was found to be statistically significant, which indicates that the level of mental health among expatriate female students is high.

This result can be explained by the fact that the Sahrawi female students had the ability to adapt to the new environment to which they arrived through their ability and desire to integrate and engage in the new social environment due to the closeness and similarity of the environment in terms of some social and religious customs and traditions and the language that is considered a means of communication, and their feeling of equality between them and the students of the host country, as well as the special care that Algeria provides, whether material or moral, to ensure their comfort, which made the female students feel safe, psychologically comfortable and reassured. In addition, they receive the same treatment from the educational staff, whether the administrative staff or even the teachers, and all these circumstances contributed to alleviating the burden of psychological alienation. If we go back to the interpretation of the various psychological theories of alienation, it occurs as a result of the individual’s inability to achieve himself, and since the female students coming from Western Sahara were able to impose and achieve themselves within Algerian society, they became safe from the feeling of alienation and they enjoy a good degree of psychological health.

The results of our study differed from the study of Janjun (2017) which concluded that the level of mental health among displaced students in middle and high schools was low, and differed from the study of Al-Adinat (2012) which concluded that there were high levels of psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression among Syrian children and adolescents in Jordan.

The second hypothesis: It stated that there is a correlation between the level of mental health and academic achievement, and to verify its validity, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used, and the table shows this:

Table No. (02) shows the correlation between the level of mental health and academic achievement

Statistical indicators Variables	Correlation coefficient	Significance level
Mental Health	*0,499	statistically significant
Academic Achievement		

* Significant at 0.05 significance level

Table No. (02) shows that the value of Pearson's correlation coefficient reached 0.499, which is a significant value at the 0.05 level, which means that there is a correlation between the level of mental health and academic achievement among expatriate students.

The result of the existence of a direct relationship between the level of mental health is explained by several factors, the most important of which is that the institution's management provides all the material and moral conditions within the institution, including health and psychological care, as well as providing material capabilities within the students' residence, as well as providing all the requirements of school tools such as books, and they are treated the same and there is no difference between them and local students, whether by the educational institution's management or inside the classroom by teachers, without regard to the differences in their gender and nationality. Since the students also had the ability to adapt, acclimatize and acquire the habits of the new environment to which they came and what it requires, they enjoy a high level of mental health, which is confirmed by the behavioral theory, which believes that acquiring appropriate and effective habits is evidence of success in adapting to oneself and society, which is the criterion for enjoying mental health.

4- Conclusion:

The results of the study showed high levels of mental health among female students coming from Western Sahara. Thus, the study has proven the integration of female students into the school community and the local environment, which is almost devoid of discrimination, marginalization, and favoritism, and its ability to accept others. The study also concluded that female students are able to achieve psychological and school compatibility. The study also concluded that there is a direct correlation between the level of mental health and academic achievement among female students coming from abroad.

In light of the results of the current study, the researchers propose the following:

-The need to pay attention to psychological care for female students coming from abroad to achieve psychological compatibility.

-The need to activate and intensify the work of the detection and follow-up units for public health to accompany female students coming from abroad with regard to the psychological aspect.

-The need for psychological care by guidance counselors by holding special sessions to follow up on female students coming from abroad.

References:

1. Al-Ibrahim Asmaa Badri (2010) Mental health among abused Jordanian women, Journal of the Islamic University of Gaza, Humanities Studies Series, 18(2), p. 306.
2. Abu Hassouna Nashat Mahmoud (2017) Psychological stress and its relationship to mental health among married female students at Irbid National University, International Journal of Research in Education and Psychology, University of Bahrain, 5(2), 314-346.
3. Al-Ahmad bin Abdullah Abdul Aziz (1999) The Road to Mental Health, 1st ed., Dar Al-Fadhila for Publishing and Distribution, Riyadh.
4. Al-Buraikan Abdullah Maha (2020) Art Therapy as an Approach to Mental Health, 1st ed., Dar Al-Arabiya for Science Publishers, Beirut.

5. Boutros Hafez Boutros (2008) *Adaptation and Mental Health of the Child*, 1st ed., Dar Al-Masirah, Amman.
6. Al-Jasmani Abdul Ali (1994) *Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence and its Basic Facts*, 2nd ed., Dar Al-Arabiya for Science, Beirut.
7. Janjun Hussein Zuhair Muhammad (2017) Psychological alienation and its relationship to mental health among displaced students in middle school, *Journal of the College of Basic Education for Educational and Human Sciences, University of Babylon*, (34), 549-870.
8. Khoj Asaad Hanan (2010) *Scientific principles of mental health, a special educational perspective*, 1st ed., Al-Rashd Library, Riyadh Publishers.
9. Al-Dahri Hassan Ahmed Saleh (2010) *Principles of mental health*, 2nd ed., Dar Wael Amman.
10. Daraji Ibrahim (2016) The Syrian exodus: When half of the people become displaced, *Al-Insani Magazine, International Committee of the Red Cross Egypt*, (60), 19-21.
11. Al-Radwan Muhammad Al-Raq, Rizq Allah Al-Arabi Bin Mahidi (2021) The role of the United Nations in protecting refugee children, *Journal of Judicial Efforts, University of Biskra*, (25), 778-798.
12. Al-Zubaidi Alwan Kamel (2007) *Studies in Mental Health*, 1st ed., Al-Wariq for Publishing and Distribution, Beirut.
13. Shaya Mohsen Rana (2018) School bullying behavior and its relationship to mental health among middle school students, *Journal of the College of Basic Education for Educational and Human Sciences, University of Babylon*, (40), 364-379.
14. Shahri Tawfiq and Hashemi Ahmed (2018) Mental health of university students, *Journal of Mediterranean Thought, Abu Bakr Belkaid University, Tlemcen*, (13), 177-191.
15. Saleh Muhammad Fatima (2007) Religious commitment and its relationship to mental health among students of the College of Islamic Sciences, *College of Islamic Sciences, University of Mosul, Journal of Education and Science*, 14(4), 329-359.
16. Tashtoush Abdullah Rami, Al-Gharabi Mustafa Saif Al-Din (2016) The level of psychological and social adaptation among students of the upper primary stage for Syrian refugees in Zaatari camp (Jordan) in light of some variables, *International Journal of Research in Education and Psychology, University of Bahrain*, 04(01), 140-165.
17. Abdul Ahad Manal (2016). "The right to education for half a million Syrian children is at stake." *Al-Insani Journal, International Committee of the Red Cross Egypt*, (60), 32-33.
18. Abdul Kadhim Mahdi Riyadh (2021) The role of the United Nations in the return of displaced persons in Iraq between restoring stability and sustainable solutions, *Wasit Journal of Humanities, University of Wasit, Iraq*, 17(47), 194-210.
19. Asfour Kholoud Rahim, Nimer Kazim Siham (2009) Difference in the function of the paragraph in the mental health scale, *Journal of Educational and Psychological Research, University of Baghdad*, (28), 227-255.
20. Fadhel Faiza, Saadoun Soumia (2017) Indicators of mental health among university students in light of a set of variables, Tlemcen University students as a model, *Al-Jami' Journal of Psychological Studies and Educational Sciences*, (5)1, 86-104.
21. Al-Kiki Mohsen Mahmoud, Abdullah Bashir Mahna (2013). "Mental health and its relationship to situational regret among distinguished male and female high school students in Mosul city, *Journal of Education and Science*, 20(1), 277-305.