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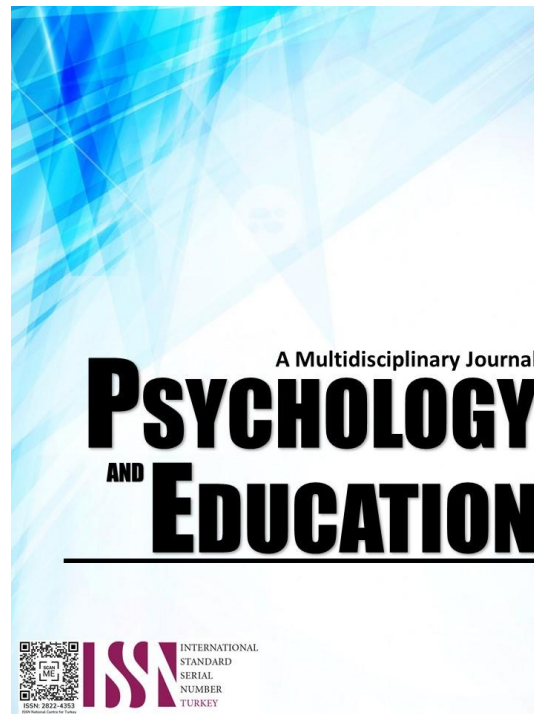
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Mental Health and Academic Motivation Among Graduating College Students: A Correlational Study

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Abstract

This study investigates the significant relationship between mental health and academic motivation among graduating students. Thus, the study employed a correlational design to determine if there is a significant relationship between mental health and academic motivation among 150 graduating college students. Hence, the Mental Health Inventory 38 (MHI-38) and Academic Motivation Scale (AMS-C28) were employed to measure the study variables. Moreover, statistical analysis reveals that the r coefficient of 0.35 indicates a low positive correlation between the variables. The p -value of 0.00, which is less than 0.05, leads to the decision to reject the null hypothesis.

Keywords: *mental health, academic motivation, graduating college students, correlational study, Philippines*

Introduction

The educational system has undergone a substantial change recently toward a blended learning strategy that mixes in-person and online instruction. Due to its capacity to combine the best elements of traditional and online learning formats, blended learning, also known as hybrid education, has been increasing in popularity (Gagnon et al., 2020). According to the study, traditional classroom learning was preferable to online learning in terms of student learning outcomes. It also demonstrates that conventional learning is associated with high student satisfaction (Hong, 2020). However, fully implementing face-to-face learning does not guarantee the safety of students, making the blended type of learning the best option.

Despite recognizing the orderly organization and management of online teaching, teachers and students concur that online courses harm the overall quality of education. Students exhibit a greater propensity to feel stressed and anxious during the deployment of online learning. (Wang & Zhao, 2020). A prior study asserted that distant learning negatively impacted students' learning, engagement, and mental health. Students' academic motivation and engagement, personal scheduling, teacher communication, and elevated stress and anxiety are among the most common problems learners encounter (Petillion & McNeil, 2020). Students demonstrated a lower or inferior level of academic motivation during the lockdown, and their class participation decreased as remote learning was insufficient for both students' psychological demands and academic satisfaction (Zaccoletti et al., 2020). In line with the transition, students believe that not

having enough communication from teachers and classmates is one of the greatest difficulties in this learning setup. (Robinson, 2020). Distance learning also hinders students' social interaction because it limits access to physical contact. And since distance learning depends on contactless education, students miss out on the importance of social and interpersonal skills. (Kelvin, 2021). Additionally, a study shows that students in distance learning tend to induce antisocial behavior, leading to loneliness and isolation (Teng et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the hybrid learning strategy was first used at several educational levels, including higher education, and it is now even more significant in the post-pandemic era (Park, 2021). Blended learning is defined as a legitimate design strategy that mixes the benefits of in-person and online learning to meet learning objectives (Bansig, 2021). According to a study of student preferences, blended learning is the way of the future in education (Gridina et al., 2021). However, to use mixed learning effectively, precise planning and design option evaluation is required (Bruggeman et al., 2022). Despite its challenges, blended learning can provide students with a flexible and effective learning environment (Jiang, 2023).

The educational environment and financial situation have become more difficult because of the COVID-19 pandemic (Bayrak., 2020). As a result, many students must face hardship to seek higher education. The uncertainty around the economy is having a significant negative impact on their studies and their health. It was suggested that public support should be enhanced to reduce students' academic challenges and address the health problems brought on by economic stress

(Tsurugano et al., 2021). The stress of graduating, finding a job, and paying off debt can affect a student's mental health. In addition, many graduating students frequently struggle to make ends meet and afford their education, with many of them suffering from low income, low financial literacy, high debt levels, and compulsive spending tendencies, as well as experiencing mental health issues. According to the study, Deng et al. (2021) showed that the prevalence of mental health-related problems among graduating students was significantly higher compared to pre-pandemic prevalence in similar populations.

In addition, many graduating students might not have the necessary skills to handle the job market pressure, especially if they have little or no professional experience. Employers might favor applicants with experience, making it challenging for recent graduates to get employment. Due to their inexperience, they may find competing with individuals with more experience challenging, which could prolong their quest for employment. Furthermore, Okoro et al. (2023) high demands, pressure, and the competitive and evaluative nature of graduate school place great stress on graduate students, which may exacerbate stress and susceptibility. In line with this, Graduate students frequently balance additional obligations like supervision, teaching, or research support. Thus, academic and coursework challenges, financial demands, worry, and a lack of work-life balance are all stressors generated by the combined effort of various professions, leading to burnout, exhaustion, despair, and physical health difficulties.

According to research by Bmn (2022), a strong correlation exists between mental health and academic motivation. A student's general well-being or mental health can influence their motivation, concentration capacity, and social relationships. Van (2023) also discovered a connection between students' mental health problems and their motivation for their learning pursuits. A further study by Hussein (2021) investigates mental health as a mediator of the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic motivation, and it turns out that mental health was related to both variables. However, Anderson (2021) shows conflict as the study found that mental health and extrinsic and intrinsic motivation types have no significance. Similar to Karabulut et al. (2021) that states mental health cannot affect academic motivation but instead, it can somehow serve as students' motivation or inspiration to succeed in their individual academic goals.

Moreover, this study investigates the significant

relationship between mental health and academic motivation among graduating students. Thus, it will serve as a basis for crafting a program or interventions to support and address mental health concerns and promote student well-being. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following question:

- Is there a significant relationship between mental health and academic motivation among graduating college students?

Literature Review

It may be difficult for students to concentrate, focus, or recall what they have learned if they show symptoms of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, or stress, due to feeling overworked or unmotivated by their academic commitments. As a result, a growing body of research has explored the relationship between mental health and academic motivation.

Mahdavi et al. (2023) conducted a study to examine any connections between mental health, achievement motivation, and academic achievement. According to the study, a significant relationship exists between mental health, achievement motivation, and academic achievement. This suggests that students with a healthy mental health status are more likely to be academically motivated. According to Khairudin and Mahmud (2022), a student's mental health directly affects their academic performance since it impacts their motivation, primary focus, and social interactions.

In line with this, Bmn (2022) found that mental illness can affect students' motivation, focus, and social connections, which are crucial components of their academic achievement. Mental self-care education improves students' mental health and academic motivation. (Zarimoghadam et al., 2021). According to Florescu (2023), the amount of academic motivation is positively correlated with the state of physical health and inversely correlated with the intensity of negative dysfunctional emotions. Van (2023) suggests that mental health issues positively affect learning motivation. As a result, schools, lecturers, and other stakeholders should help students address their mental health issues to improve their learning motivation.

According to a Malaysian study, mental health among university students was significantly associated with positive psychological variables such as academic engagement, motivation, self-compassion, and well-being (Kotera & Ting, 2021). Examining the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health and motivation of

university students, it was discovered that there is a connection between mental health problems and academic motivation. This study showed that while depression and anxiety are low among university students during the pandemic, motivation levels are high (Anjum et al., 2021). Furthermore, Fives, Lone, and Nolan (2022) revealed that intrinsic motivation and deep learning approaches were positively associated with mental well-being.

However, a study by Anderson (2021) stated that mental health is not significantly correlated with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation types. In addition, according to the findings, a direct inverse relationship between regulated motivation and psychological well-being was found in Ozer and Schwartz's study (2020). Karabulut et al. (2021) also stated that some mental health issues, such as high levels of stress, somehow serve as students' motivation or inspiration to succeed in their individual academic goals.

Methodology

This study employed a correlational design to determine if there is a significant relationship between mental health and the academic motivation of graduating students. Thus, the respondents were 150 graduating college students and should satisfy the following requirements for inclusion: (1) be enrolled in college during the academic year 2022–2023, and (2) be expected to graduate this academic year. Additionally, the respondents will be determined by using a purposive sampling approach.

Furthermore, the Mental Health Inventory 38 (MHI-38) and Academic Motivation Scale (AMS-C28) will be employed to measure the respondents' mental health and academic motivation. Google Forms and Facebook will be used to distribute the questions to collect and serve a larger pool of respondents. The permission request from the researcher is included in the survey questionnaire, along with brief and understandable instructions on how respondents may respond to the following questions. Respondents will be given adequate time to complete the questionnaire for accurate responses. Following this procedure, the researcher will collect all questionnaires for further data analysis to provide the research output and conclusions.

Moreover, ethical considerations were strictly observed, and the Pearson correlation coefficient was utilized to compute the relationship between the variables.

Results and Discussion

This study investigates the relationship between mental health and academic motivation among graduating college students. Specifically, it sought to test the following claim:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between mental health and academic motivation among graduating college students.

The relationship between the mental health and academic motivation of the study's respondents is shown in Table 1. The r coefficient of 0.35 indicates a low positive correlation between the variables. The p -value of 0.00, which is less than 0.05, leads to the decision to reject the null hypothesis. Hence, a significant relationship exists between mental health and academic motivation among graduating college students. Moreover, these findings were supported by the study of Mahdavi et al. (2023) that there is a relationship between mental health and academic motivation.

Table 1. *Test of Significant Relationship of Mental Health and Academic Motivation Among Graduating College Students*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Mental Health and Academic Motivation</i>	0.35	0.00	Reject H_0	Significant

Conclusion

This study examines the relationship between mental health and academic motivation among graduating college students. The statistical analysis reveals a significant relationship between the respondents' mental health and academic motivation. Thus, this suggests that having good mental health among students might help them be well-motivated.

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