
Understanding mental health literacy through the dynamic interaction of personal factors, behavioural patterns, and environmental influences among the late adolescent's population in Malaysia: A mixed methods study protocol

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Abstract

Background: The rising prevalence of mental health issues among late adolescents in Malaysia is a pressing public health concern. The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) emphasis on the dynamic interaction of personal factors, behavioural patterns, and environmental influences, is highly effective in understanding the contributing factors of MHL.

Objective: This is merely a published protocol, not the findings of a future study aiming to determine the personal, behavioural, as well as environmental factors of MHL among the pre-university students or late adolescents in Malaysia.

Methods: This study will apply the convergent mixed methods study design, comprises three distinct phases: quantitative and qualitative study designs conducted concurrently, as well as integration of the findings from the two phases in phase three. Negeri Sembilan will be selected as the study location due to its strategic relevance in representing a cross-section of Malaysia's educational, demographic, socio-cultural landscape and a mix of urban and semi-urban settings, offering access to diverse adolescents' populations. This study will randomly recruit 350 pre-university students in the quantitative phase, and at least 15 purposively selected in the qualitative phase. A self-administered questionnaire will be used to quantitatively obtain information on MHL level as well as the personal, behavioural, as well as environmental factors. Qualitative data will be collected using in-depth interviews in phase two among those with low and high levels of MHL identified from the quantitative phase. Integration occurs at study design, method level, and later during interpretation and report writing.

Results: The conduction and integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings will provide a comprehensive understanding on the underlying factors contributing towards mental health literacy among the late adolescent's Malaysian, including the interaction between the personal factors, behavioural patterns, and environmental influences.

Conclusion: The concurrent mixed methods study approach should provide a corroborative finding and better understanding on the factors contributing towards MHL among the late adolescent's population in Malaysia.

Keywords: Social Cognitive Theory, Mental Health Literacy, Late adolescents, Malaysia