

INFORMATION OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Thesis title: Evaluation of a pilot intervention to improve mental health literacy for undergraduate students from Faculty of Sociology, University of Social Science and Humanity, Ha Noi
Major: Public Health
Code: 62.72.03.01
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1. Study objectives and participants:

* **Objectives:** 1/ Assessing the validity (face, content, construct) of the mental health literacy (MHL) instrument; 2/ Evaluating the pilot intervention to improve MHL of the undergraduate students from Faculty of Sociology, University of Social Science and Humanity, Ha Noi.

* **Participants:** Undergraduate students from Faculty of Sociology, University of Social Science and Humanity (USSH) (intervention group) and Faculty of Sociology, Academy of Journalism and Communication (AJC) (control group).

2. Study methods:

* **Design:** Pre-post intervention with control group, applying mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative, with 3 phases: Pre intervention, intervention, post intervention:

- Phase 1: Implementing a cross-sectional study to investigate MHL of the participants and assessing the validity of the instrument.
- Phase 2: Developing intervention materials/activities for the participants of the intervention group.
- Phase 3: Implementing the intervention and evaluating the pilot intervention program.

* **Time:** From January 2016 to February 2019:

- Phase 1: From October 2017 to May 2018.
- Phase 2: July-August 2018.
- Phase 3: December 2018 to February 2019.

* **Location:** Faculty of Sociology, USSH and AJC.

* **Sampling:**

- Phase 1: Quantitative: Choosing total 446 undergraduate students from year 1 to year 4 of USSH and 278 students of AJC. Qualitative: 4 focus group discussions (FGDs).
- Phase 2: Implementing intervention on students year 2 and year 3 of USSH.
- Phase 3: Quantitative: 215 students of USSH and 168 of AJC. Qualitative: 4 FGDs.

* **Data collection:**

Quantitative: Using a self-administrative questionnaire adapted from the Australian National Survey of MHL and Stigma, given permission by Anthony Jorm.

Qualitative: Applying FGD, convenient sampling.

* **Variables:**

Quantitative:

- MHL variables: Identification of anxiety disorder and depression symptoms and intention to support; Knowledge of people who can help; Knowledge of first-aid to support; Knowledge of mental health professional.

- Variables of communication activities to improve knowledge of anxiety and depression (pre intervention).
- Variables to evaluate intervention activities to improve knowledge of anxiety and depression (post intervention).
- Participants' demographic variables.

Qualitative:

- Participants' attitude toward people with mental health conditions.
- Associated factors (positive and negative) to help-seeking intentions.
- Appropriate communication materials to send mental health information to participants (pre intervention).
- Advantages/Disadvantages of intervention activities (post intervention).
- Experiences after the intervention (post intervention).

3. Main results:

3.1. Face validity, content validity, and construct validity of the instrument

- After piloting and adapting MHL instrument developed by Anthony Jorm et.al, a completed questionnaire had been produced for this study.
- The questionnaire included 43 questions, divided into 2 vignettes: 1/ Anxiety disorder vignette with a 20-year-old student named Linh; 2/ Depression vignette with a 20-year-old student named Hung; 32 questions, with same contents, covered MHL of anxiety disorder and depression; 11 questions covered information of anxiety disorder and depression and participants' demographic.

3.2. Results of the piloting intervention to improve MHL

- Two intervention activities, including organising workshop + distributing brochure, and installing the interactive app ShiningMind in cellphone were rated appropriate with the participants.
- Prevalence of participants who gave correct identification of anxiety disorder increased (29.2% pre intervention (pre-in) to 56.3% post intervention (post-in); $p < 0.001$) and the percentage of participants who gave correct identification of depression also increased (44.2% pre-in to 58.1% post-in; $p < 0.001$).
- Help-seeking intention decreased after post-in: anxiety disorder: 90.5% pre-in and 84.2% post-in; depression: 90.9% pre-in and 85.6% post-in.
- Participants had better knowledge of the role of mental health professional in supporting anxiety disorder and depression.
- Intervention had enhanced students' ability to identify anxiety disorder symptoms to 4.5 times post-in.
- Intervention had enhanced students' ability to identify depression symptoms to 3.2 times post-in.
- Intervention had improved participants' MHL of anxiety disorder to 5.3 times.
- Intervention had improved participants' MHL of depression to nearly 3 times.

4. Conclusions and recommendations:

Conclusions:

- The instrument used in this study had been proved to be validity and could be used in future studies on undergraduate students. It should be piloted before applying on other social groups.
- Intervention activities were appropriated with students and contributed in improving participants' ability to recognize symptoms as well as enhancing their MHL of anxiety disorder and depression.

Recommendations:

- Communication intervention should be implemented among undergraduate students of other major to build a “picture” of young people’s MHL of anxiety disorder and depression.
- Favourite communication activities of students/young people were out-class workshop and interactive app on mobile phone.
- For future studies: the two vignettes can be divided separately into different instruments to avoid a too long questionnaire; the survey can be carried out in other social groups to complete the “big picture” of Vietnamese MHL of anxiety disorder and depression.

NEW CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE THESIS:

This thesis is one of the first study in Vietnam implemented to describe students’ MHL of anxiety disorder and depression and carried out interventions to improve their MHL. Applied pre-post intervention with controlled group design, the study has provided reliable evidence of the intervention results.

Thesis’ author received permission from the author of the original instrument for adapting the tool in Vietnam. This instrument had been proved to be validity to use for this study and was recommended for future studies.

This thesis is also one of the first intervention study in Vietnam to improve MHL of anxiety disorder and depression for students. Results after intervention showed a positive change in MHL of the students.

Difference-in-Difference (DID) method had been used to evaluate the intervention. This is a quite new analyzing method to explore the defferences between intervention and control groups after the intervention. The approach removes biases in post-intervention period comparisons between the intervention and control group that could be the result from permanent differences between those groups, as well as biases from comparisons over time in the intervention group that could be the result of trends due to other causes of the outcome. Hence, the evaluation results were correct and could be references by other studies.