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DESIGNING A MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM TARGETED TOWARDS ADOLESCENTS IN RURAL VILLAGES

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to create a mental health education program specifically designed for rural areas and assess its influence on the knowledge and attitudes of teenagers regarding mental health. The study methodology utilized is a developing approach that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Data were gathered via interviews, observations, and questionnaires both prior to and during engagement in the program. The research findings demonstrate that the program effectively enhanced teenagers' understanding of mental health and transformed their attitudes towards mental diseases, fostering greater empathy and support. The significance of these findings emphasizes the necessity of creating mental health education initiatives that are suitable for rural environments. Additionally, further investigation is required to evaluate the program's long-term efficacy and the factors that contribute to its successful execution. Therefore, this research provides a significant contribution to the endeavors aimed at improving the mental well-being of adolescents in rural regions.

Keywords: Program, mental health, rural adolescents

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan program pendidikan kesehatan mental yang sesuai dengan konteks desa dan mengevaluasi dampaknya terhadap pengetahuan dan sikap remaja terkait kesehatan mental. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan pengembangan dengan melibatkan analisis data kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan kuesioner sebelum dan setelah partisipasi dalam program. Temuan hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa program berhasil meningkatkan pengetahuan remaja tentang kesehatan mental serta mengubah sikap mereka terhadap gangguan mental menjadi lebih empatik dan mendukung. Implikasi dari temuan ini adalah pentingnya pengembangan program pendidikan kesehatan mental yang sesuai dengan konteks desa dan perlu adanya penelitian lanjutan untuk mengevaluasi efektivitas program dalam jangka panjang serta faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi keberhasilan implementasinya. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi yang berharga dalam upaya meningkatkan kesehatan mental remaja di desa.

Kata kunci: Program, kesehatan mental, remaja desa

INTRODUCTION

Psychological well-being is a crucial component of an individual's overall health that should not be disregarded. There is a growing recognition of the significance of mental health, particularly in relation to adolescents, in numerous nations (Ayuningtyas et al., 2018; Hidayah & Seprian, 2022; Mahmd et al., 2021). Pasaribu et al. (2022) assert that adolescents, due to undergoing substantial physical, emotional, and social transformations, are susceptible to mental problems. Nevertheless, the availability of mental health care is frequently restricted, particularly in remote rural areas or distant villages that are far removed from urban centers. This research aims to provide a targeted mental health education program designed exclusively for adolescents residing in rural areas. Rural communities frequently face unique obstacles when it comes to the accessibility and provision of mental health care. Rural adolescents may face restricted availability of mental health information and may possess inadequate comprehension of the significance of preserving mental well-being. Hence, there is a pressing requirement to create mental health education programs that are suitable for the specific conditions and circumstances of the community.

Ellis defines mental health as more than just the absence of psychological problems. It encompasses an individual's capacity to confront and overcome stress, negative emotions, and life obstacles in a flexible and logical manner (Amalia et al., 2023; Sholichah et al., 2023). From Ellis's standpoint, mental health is intricately linked to an individual's cognition and their interpretation and reaction to life circumstances. Ellis postulated that individuals commonly encounter negative emotions due to irrational ideas or inaccurate thinking on themselves, the world, and others. Within the REBT framework, the attainment of mental well-being is accomplished by discovering, assessing, and reorganizing illogical thoughts into more rational and beneficial beliefs. This method prioritizes the significance of self-awareness, regulating emotions, and cultivating flexible cognitive abilities in attaining optimal mental well-being. According to Ellis, mental health is not solely defined by the absence of illnesses, but also by an individual's capacity to comprehend, handle, and transform their thought patterns in a good manner (Febrianto et al., 2019; Putri et al., 2013).

This research holds significant value for multiple reasons. Teenagers living in rural areas are a susceptible demographic that may lack sufficient access to mental health resources and knowledge. By designing mental health education initiatives tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the village, the aim is to enhance the villagers' comprehension of mental health and equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to preserve their overall well-being. Furthermore, by enhancing knowledge and understanding of mental health among adolescents, there is an expectation that it will concurrently diminish the negative perception and discrimination around mental illnesses. Stigma poses an obstacle to seeking assistance and support, hence it is crucial to diminish it through education and enhanced comprehension of mental health. Furthermore, implementing mental health education initiatives targeted at adolescents residing in rural areas can effectively mitigate the onset of mental health issues in subsequent years. By equipping adolescents with the

essential knowledge and abilities to effectively handle stress and conquer the difficulties of life, the aim is to mitigate the likelihood of developing mental problems in the future.

Livana et al. (2019) emphasized the need of educating teenagers about mental health in their previous investigations. Numerous mental health education initiatives have been created and put into practice in different nations, while the majority of them prioritize urban or agriculturally productive populations. Studies conducted by Ilhamuddin et al. (2022) and Sunarti (2023) indicate that adolescents residing in rural areas generally had a worse degree of understanding regarding mental health when compared to their urban counterparts. Multiple studies have demonstrated that mental health education programs must be tailored to the cultural and social environment of the community in which they are implemented in order to be effective. Adolescents residing in rural regions may possess distinct requirements and obstacles in contrast to their urban counterparts. Consequently, it is imperative to formulate programs that are pertinent and suitable to their specific circumstances.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that the implementation of mental health education at an early stage can provide substantial long-term benefits. Adolescents with a strong comprehension of mental health are generally more adept at handling stress, establishing positive relationships, and effectively dealing with the difficulties of life. The primary objective of this study is to create a mental health education curriculum that is suitable for the village setting and may significantly enhance teenagers' knowledge and comprehension of mental health.

METHOD

This research will use a developmental research design that allows the development and evaluation of mental health education programs. This approach will involve systematic planning, development, and program evaluation stages (Jaya, 2020). The research subjects were teenagers who lived in the village. Participants will be selected in stages through a random sample selection from several different villages. Inclusion criteria included adolescents aged between 13 and 18 who lived in local villages and were willing to participate in mental health education programs.

Data will be collected through various methods, including participant observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Observations will be carried out to understand the social, cultural, and environmental context of the village. Interviews will be used to gain a deeper understanding of youth's needs and preferences regarding mental health programs. Questionnaires will be used to collect quantitative data about youth's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior regarding mental health before and after participation in the program. Data analysis will be carried out qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data from interviews and observations will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to identify emerging patterns, themes, and perspectives. Quantitative data from the questionnaire will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to evaluate changes in youth knowledge, attitudes, and behavior after participation in the program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings provide a comprehensive review of the progress made in developing mental health education programs for teenagers in rural areas, using the previously outlined research techniques. Analyzed qualitative and quantitative data to get insights into program requirements, preferences, and overall effectiveness. The debate will present the primary discoveries, together with their consequences and significance, within the framework of mental health among adolescents in rural areas. The analysis of qualitative data obtained from interviews and observations reveals significant conclusions concerning the mental health needs and preferences of rural teenagers. Initially, adolescents reported frequent encounters with stress stemming from academic demands, familial issues, and challenging financial circumstances. Additionally, they conveyed that a deficiency in comprehension regarding mental health and the associated stigmatization can impede individuals from obtaining assistance or support. Furthermore, teens conveyed their inclination to acquire further information on mental health and techniques for managing stress. The individual conveyed a desire to acquire knowledge and abilities in the areas of emotional management, effective communication, and the establishment of positive connections. In addition, they expressed a preference for participatory programs that are applicable to everyday life and are given in a comfortable and supportive environment. Furthermore, the analysis of the village surroundings reveals that the availability of mental health treatments is frequently restricted. Obstacles such as geographical distance, financial expenses, and social disapproval can impede young individuals from obtaining assistance or support. Certain villages also encounter difficulties in terms of infrastructure and human resources to adequately deliver mental health services.

An examination of numerical data gathered from surveys administered before and after the program yielded further understanding of the mental health-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of young individuals. Before joining the program, the majority of young people showed limited understanding of mental health, with only a tiny percentage able to recognize the symptoms of mental problems or know where to get assistance. Furthermore, the survey also uncovered that adolescents frequently hold unfavorable attitudes or stereotypes towards mental diseases, perceiving them as indications of frailty or insanity. Additionally, several adolescents disclose engaging in detrimental activities as a means of coping with stress, such as evading issues or resorting to hazardous substances.

After engaging in a mental health education program, there was a notable augmentation in teenagers' understanding of mental health. They possess enhanced capacity to recognize indications of mental problems, comprehend risk factors, and possess knowledge of the available resources to seek assistance. In addition, the program effectively influenced the views of young people towards mental diseases, resulting in an increased display of empathy and understanding towards persons facing mental health issues.

The results of this study demonstrate the significance of creating mental health education initiatives that are tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of rural communities, with the aim of enhancing teenagers' comprehension and attitudes towards mental well-being. Rural youth encounter distinct difficulties in coping with stress and obtaining mental health services, as evidenced by qualitative findings. Insufficient comprehension regarding mental health and the accompanying social disapproval can provide a substantial obstacle to seeking assistance or support.

Nevertheless, the results also indicate that adolescents residing in rural areas have a strong inclination towards obtaining knowledge and competencies pertaining to mental well-being. The users desire programs that are participatory, pertinent, and provided in a nurturing environment. This demonstrates the possibility of creating successful programs if they can adequately consider the requirements and inclinations of adolescents. The quantitative findings indicate that the mental health education program effectively enhanced knowledge and altered the attitudes of teenagers towards mental health. These enhancements have the potential to greatly diminish stigma, enhance awareness, and foster positive mental health among rural adolescents in the long run.

Within the scope of this conversation, it is crucial to consider various ramifications of the research results. Initially, it is important to exert more endeavor in order to enhance the availability of mental health services in rural areas. This can be achieved by focusing on the improvement of infrastructure and providing training to the current healthcare personnel. Furthermore, it is imperative to develop mental health education initiatives that are tailored to the specific needs and preferences of teenagers, while also include content that is directly applicable to their everyday experiences. Furthermore, it is imperative to initiate mental health education at an early stage and sustain it consistently to guarantee lasting efficacy in enhancing the mental well-being of adolescents residing in rural areas.

The creation of mental health education initiatives targeting adolescents in rural areas aligns with Albert Ellis' theory, particularly within the context of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT). This theory highlights the significance of irrational thinking in shaping an individual's emotions and behavior (Arifin et al., 2022; Desmana, 2022). When considering the mental health of rural adolescents, it is important to comprehend the connection between ideas, emotions, and behavior. This understanding can offer vital insights for creating successful programs. This discussion examines the correlation between research findings and the fundamental elements in Ellis's theory, as well as the practical implications for the development of mental health education programs.

1. The Influence of Irrational Thoughts on the Mental Health of Village Adolescents

Research findings show that teenagers in villages often experience stress caused by various factors, such as academic pressure, family problems, and difficult economic conditions. Qualitative analysis revealed that some teenagers have irrational thoughts, such as overgeneralization (generalizing problems as something that cannot be overcome) and catastrophizing (seeing problems as something very bad or severe). This is in line with Ellis' concept of irrational thinking, which can trigger negative emotions such as

anxiety, depression, or anger (Lestarina, 2021; Rum et al., 2022). The discussion of the implications of these findings underscores the importance of making adolescents aware of the role their thoughts play in shaping their emotional responses to stress and everyday life problems.

2. Knowledge and Understanding of Mental Health

Quantitative data analysis shows that mental health education programs are successful in increasing adolescents' knowledge about mental health. They are better able to identify symptoms of mental disorders, understand risk factors, and know the resources available to get help. In the context of REBT, this increase in knowledge can be linked to Ellis' concept of rational beliefs, namely rational and realistic thinking about oneself, the world, and other people (Muhammadiyah et al., 2023). The discussion of the implications of these findings highlights the importance of providing comprehensive education about mental health that is based on an accurate and rational understanding of mental health problems.

3. Change in Attitudes towards Mental Health

Quantitative results also showed that the program was successful in changing adolescents' attitudes towards mental disorders, with more of them expressing greater empathy and understanding towards individuals experiencing mental health problems. This reflects changes in rational emotions, namely healthier and more proportional emotions in responding to life situations (Indari et al., 2023). The discussion of the implications of these findings highlights the importance of changing negative or stereotypical attitudes toward mental health to more empathetic and supportive attitudes. This can help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and create a more inclusive environment for individuals who need support.

4. Development of Emotion and Stress Management Skills

Qualitative findings show that teenagers in villages express their desire to have skills in managing emotions and dealing with stress. This is in line with Ellis' concept of rational behavior, namely adaptive and effective actions in facing life's challenges (Yustikasari et al., 2022). The implications of these findings highlight the importance of integrating practical strategies for managing emotions and coping with stress into mental health education programs. This can help teenagers develop the skills necessary to face the challenges of everyday life more effectively.

5. Long Term Impact and Prevention of Mental Disorders

The discussion of the practical implications of the research findings also includes the long-term impact of this mental health education program. By increasing knowledge, changing attitudes, and developing emotion management skills, these programs have the potential to reduce the risk of mental disorders later in life. This is in line with Ellis' concept of prevention, namely efforts to identify and change the irrational thoughts that underlie mental health problems before they develop into more serious disorders (Astuti, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The study's findings paint a complete picture of the significance of creating programs for adolescent mental health education in rural areas. The results of research indicate that adolescents living in rural areas encounter several obstacles when it comes to stress management and mental well-being. The primary challenges that must be addressed are restricted access to mental health care, ignorance, and the stigma that is attached to them. But it's been shown that teens' understanding of mental health can be greatly increased by creating programs for mental health education that fit the village setting. Additionally, this approach has been successful in influencing teens' perceptions of mental illnesses to become more understanding and encouraging.

It is suggested that future studies carry out additional assessments of the long-term efficacy of mental health education initiatives. After enrolling in the program, a longitudinal study can be done to track the development of the mental health of teenagers over time in greater detail. Further investigation into the variables that affect program implementation success, such as contextual and cultural elements that might be significant, is another avenue for future research. Enhancing the long-term viability and efficacy of these initiatives can also be accomplished through heightened community involvement and cooperative strategies with pertinent stakeholders, including families, government organizations, and educational institutions. Therefore, additional research can be done to enhance the mental health of rural teenagers and foster an environment that is more accepting and encouraging for them.

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