DEPRESSION ANXIETY STRESS AMONG GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA DURING THE MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER (MCO)

Noorsyakina Binti Simin¹, Che Zarrina Sa'ari², Sharifah Basirah Syed Muhsin³, Mohd. Hakimie Bin Zainal Abidin⁴, Nurul Suzaina Binti Joli⁵

¹Jabatan Akidah Dan Pemikiran Islam, Akademi Pengajian Islam, Universiti Malaya. noorsyakina@ukm.edu.my
²Jabatan Akidah Dan Pemikiran Islam, Akademi Pengajian Islam, Universiti Malaya.
³Jabatan Akidah Dan Pemikiran Islam, Akademi Pengajian Islam, Universiti Malaya.
⁴Pusat Geniusepermata Negara, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
⁵Pusat Geniusepermata Negara, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Received: 09.04.2020 Revised: 16.05.2020 Accepted: 07.06.2020

Abstract

Purpose: This paper aims to examine the level of depression, anxiety, and stress among gifted and talented students in Malaysia during the MCO due to the 2019 Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Methodology: The participants of this study involved 112 students (47 male and 65 female) who were selected using random sampling. They completed a 21-item version of the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scales (DASS). Results: The findings of this study showed there was a significant difference in depression, anxiety, and stress. Also, the result showed that gifted and talented students had high depression and anxiety, whereas moderate in stress level. These findings show, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has caused the depression, anxiety, and stress to the gifted and talented students in Malaysia. The findings of this research provided the fundamental basis to be used in the future for their psychological well-being considerations.

Keywords: Gifted and Talented, Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Psychological Well-being.

© 2020 by Advance Scientific Research. This is an open-access article under the CC BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.11.111

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 pandemic has affected people globally since the end of 2019. This pandemic started in Wuhan China and globally spread around the world. Based on the data, over 3 million people around the world are affected by this virus and the United States of America records the highest infected numbers. Because of that reason, Malaysia implemented the MCO starting from 18th March 2020 to prevent this virus from spreading rapidly to society. MCO causes all schools to close and all students unable to attend school as usual including the gifted and talented students. This COVID-19 crisis is generating stress throughout the population and poses a challenge to psychological well-being.

Gifted and Talented Students

Gifted and talented students just like other students experience some psychological issues. Gifted children are more advanced than other children of their chronological age. Along with their asynchrony, they are sensitive, perfectionist, require reflective thinking, moral issues affect them more deeply and at an earlier age than their peers. According to Coleman and Cross (2005), Vantassell-Basha (1990) gifted learners learned at a very fast pace, require less repetition or practice to master assigned material and think or process more deeply, which later warranting greater educational challenge. Kazimierz Dabrowski’s Theory of Emotional Development by Dąbrowski and Piechow (1977) discussed the five “overexcitabilities” (psychomotor, sensual, intellectual, imaginational, and emotional). This is an attempt to clarify the intensities of the gifted students and to build an understanding of themselves. Silverman (1993) mentioned the positive energy enables the gifted to become their best selves.

Depression Anxiety Stress

There are various definitions of depression, anxiety and stress from diverse field of knowledge. American Psychological Association (APA) describes depression is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects emotion and behavior. Spielberger (1976) defined anxiety as a process that involve the feeling of tension, threat and worried thought. Stress according to Baum (1990) is a negative emotional experience accompanied by predictable biochemical, physiological, and behavioral changes that are directed toward adaptation either by manipulating the situation to alter the stressor or by accommodating its effects.

Gifted and talented students go through the transitional period from childhood to adulthood and can affect of emotional instability (Sugar, 1968). Gardner and Bell (1999) feelings of low self-worth or guilt and a reduced ability to enjoy life that involves the body, mood, and thought that affects the way a person does ordinary activities. Morawska & Sanders (2009) reported reasons such as extreme and unrealistic expectations of parents and teachers, their intense concerns, discordance between the child’s ability and teaching, difficulties in peer relationships, difficulty in understanding by the social environment, suggest that behavioral and emotional problems may occur more frequently in this group.

Also, in the gifted group; psychological problems such as inadequacy in learning (Pfeiffer, 2009), high test anxiety and general anxiety level (Beer, 1991), somatization (Onckelen, Bouiaert, & Burette, 2006), lack of self-confidence accompanied by depressive symptoms, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder were also found to accompany more frequently.

Therefore, it is important to assess gifted children in many dimensions such as psychological well-being, academic field, self-perception, social skills, emotional and mental health.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

This study involves the participants from gifted school in Malaysia. The participants involved 112 students (47 male and 65 female). The age of the participants is 12 years old to 17 years old. All the participants are from different backgrounds and different family income.
DEPRESSION ANXIETY STRESS AMONG GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA DURING THE MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER (MCO)

Instrument

Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS)

The brief 21-item version of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) is a self-report measure of one-week state negative effect, developed with the specific aim of achieving maximal differentiation between the affective syndromes of depression, anxiety, and tension/stress. Respondents indicate the extent to which they experienced each of the symptoms depicted in the items during the previous week on a 4-point Likert-type scale between 0 (Did not apply to me at all) and 3 (Applied to me very much, or most of the time). The 21-item version was developed by selecting the highest loading items from each scale of the original 42-item version of the DASS, while also aiming to retain coverage of the full symptom content of each of the three affective states (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). The factor structure of the DASS-21 is stable, and its scales possess good convergent and discriminate validity and high internal consistency in clinical and nonclinical samples and different ethnic groups in adults.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Data

This study was conducted on a sample of 112 of gifted and talented students. Respondents demography can be seen in Figures 1, 2 and 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (Years Old)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio Economic Status (Ses)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B40 (Less Than Rm 4,360/month)</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M40 (Between Rm 4,361 - Rm 9,619/month)</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Level of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Mild</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Severe</th>
<th>Extreme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Level of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress among Gifted and Talented Students in Malaysia during MCO

Based on figure 4, most of the gifted students rated their stress (50%), depression (43.8%) and anxiety (39.3%) as a normal level. While, finding show that there is a serious concern amount in extreme level of anxiety (22.3%), depression (20.5%) and stress (7.1%) among gifted and talented students.

Differences between Depression Anxiety Stress

The differences between depression anxiety stress data in this study involve the subscales of DASS are presented in table 3. As you see in the table, there are three variables are depression, anxiety, and stress are show the detail.
Based on table 2, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare stress, depression and anxiety variables for gender males and females. Based on the result with t(-1.922) and sig = 0.06 (p >0.05) , meaning that there was no significant difference in stress variables for males and females. There was a significant difference in depression and anxiety variables for male and female with t(-2.59) and sig=0.01(p<0.05) for depression and t(-2.44) and sig=0.02(p<0.05) for anxiety variable.

The results of t-test analyses are consistent with previous findings significantly different from depression, anxiety, and stress (Wahed & Hassan, 2017). It means less satisfied individuals are more likely to report higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress.

Research data are needed to develop evidence-driven strategies to confront psychological impact during COVID-19 such as depression, anxiety and stress. This finding provides some the fundamental basis to be used in the future for their psychological well-being considerations such as implications for school administrators to support their gifted and talented students during the outbreaks.

REFERENCES