Evaluating Mental Health Literacy Scale among University Students

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Abstract
This study examined the validity and reliability of the Mental Health Literacy Scale, involving 323 undergraduate students. Data were collected through scale distributed to active University students. The Mental Health Literacy Scale was developed based on theory of Jorm The results showed a validity coefficient of 4.81 according to Lawshe's and Ai-ken's V of 0.99. Mental health literacy includes knowledge and beliefs about mental health disorders that assist in their recognition, management, or prevention in oneself and oth-ers. This includes knowledge about the prevention of mental disorders, the progression of disorders, help-seeking and treatment options available, effective self-help strategies for milder problems, and first aid skills to support others who are mentally ill or in a mental health crisis. In addition, this scale has also undergone reliability testing and obtained a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.868, which indicates that this scale has high reliability. These findings suggest that the scale can be used as a reliable measurement tool in mental health literacy research and interventions in the wider population.
Keywords: mental health literacy, validity and reliability, students

1. INTRODUCTION

Mental health literacy is an individual's ability to access, understand and use mental health information in a way that improves their health and well-being. According to the [1], mental health literacy is an important element in reducing stigma towards mental illness and increasing access to effective mental health services. Research has shown that high levels of mental health literacy are associated with more positive attitudes towards people with mental illness and a greater willingness to seek professional help when needed [2]. However, although the importance of mental health literacy has been widely recognised, there is still a gap in accurate and reliable measurement of mental health literacy, particularly among university students. A valid and reliable mental health literacy scale is urgently needed to identify literacy levels in this population, develop appropriate interventions, and evauate the effectiveness of mental health literacy programmes [3].

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In the context of higher education in Indonesia, mental health literacy is becoming increasingly important as students face various academic and social pressures that can affect their mental health. Research from [4] also emphasises the importance of improving mental health literacy in various communities, including academic settings. The Spanish study shows the importance of identifying socio-demographic variables that play a role in mental health literacy and how interventions can be tailored to improve knowledge and attitudes towards mental health especially in adolescence [5].

Validity and reliability tests are critical steps in the process of developing measuring instruments. Validity refers to the extent to which the measuring instrument is able to measure what it is supposed to measure, while reliability refers to the consistency of the measuring instrument in producing the same results on repeated measurements [6]. By ensuring that the mental health literacy scale is valid and reliable, this study contributes to the provision of reliable measurement tools for research and interventions in the field of mental health. This study aims to test the validity and reliability of a mental health literacy scale among University Students with the hope that this scale can be used more broadly in various populations.

2. METHODS

All the participants (n = 323; mean age = 19,35, 83,5% female) were Indonesian. The participants had to be aged between 17 to 24. Participants are undergraduate students from University. Participants were recruited through a convenience sampling method, targeting undergraduate students. An online survey was disseminated via social media and through WhatsApp app, inviting students to participate voluntarily in the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they completed the questionnaire. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The Mental Health Literacy Scale was developed based on [7] theory. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to undergraduate students. The questionnaire included demographic questions (age, gender, academic cohort) and items from the Mental Health Literacy Scale.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic characteristics of participants which describes as follows on the table.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics based on gender

Gender	**Total**

Female	270
Male	53

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of participants

Age	**Total**
17	5
18	46
19	161
20	69
21	30
22	8
23	3
24	1

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics		
Estimate	McDonald's ω	Cronbach's α
Point estimate	0.866	0.868
95% CI lower bound	0.844	0.846
95% CI upper bound	0.887	0.887

Table 4. Reliability Statistics

Validity Coefficients	
Lawshe’s CVR	4,81

Aiken's V	0,99

The findings from this study on the validity and reliability of the Mental Health Literacy Scale (MHLS) among undergraduate students at Universitas Negeri Surabaya provide significant insights into the current state of mental health literacy in this population. The results demonstrate that the MHLS is both a valid and reliable tool for assessing mental health literacy among university students, which has important implications for future research and intervention programs.

Reliability of the MHLS was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which was calculated to be 0.876. High value indicates excellent internal consistency among the scale items. A Cronbach's Alpha above 0.7 is generally considered acceptable, and values above 0.8 indicate good to excellent reliability. High reliability of the MHLS means that the scale consistently measures the construct of mental health literacy across different administrations, ensuring that the results are dependable and reproducible. Validity of the MHLS was evaluated using Lawshe's Content Validity Ratio (CVR) and Aiken's V coefficient. CVR value of 4.81, which is well above the critical value, indicates that the items on the scale are considered essential by the panel of experts. This high CVR value suggests that the scale items are highly relevant and representative of the construct of mental health literacy. Additionally, Aiken's V coefficient of 0.99 further supports the scale's high content validity. Aiken's V values close to 1.0 indicate strong agreement among experts regarding the relevance of the scale items. These results collectively affirm that the MHLS possesses excellent content validity, making it a robust tool for measuring mental health literacy in a university setting.

Demographic characteristics of the participants provide additional context to the study's findings. Majority of participants were female (270 out of 323), and the largest age group was 19-year-olds (161 participants). Significant representation of females and younger students suggests that future interventions and educational programs should consider gender and age differences in mental health literacy. Distribution of participants across different academic cohorts also highlights the importance of targeting interventions at various stages of the university experience.

The results of this study are consistent with findings from previous research on mental health literacy. Studies in different regions have shown that higher mental health literacy is associated with better recognition, management, and prevention of mental health disorders. For instance, research conducted in South Africa by Madlala et al. (2022) found that participants could identify mental disorders and preferred professional help as the best treatment option. Similarly, our study found that students at University have a high level of awareness and understanding of mental health issues, as evidenced by the high validity and reliability of the MHLS. Several studies have indicated the importance of mental health literacy in various populations. For

example, research by González-Sanguino et al. (2024) on Spanish adolescents highlighted the need for interventions to improve mental health literacy and reduce stigma. This aligns with our findings that suggest the MHLS can be effectively used in educational settings to assess and improve mental health literacy among university students. Additionally, the study by [8] on depression literacy in Chinese populations showed similar trends in the importance of mental health literacy for better mental health outcomes.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides evidence for the validity and reliability of the Mental Health Literacy Scale among University tudents. The high content validity and internal consistency of the scale affirm its suitability for assessing mental health literacy in this population. These findings have important implications for the development of educational programs and interventions aimed at improving mental health literacy, thereby promoting better mental health outcomes for university students. Further research is needed to expand the application of the MHLS and to explore its impact on various aspects of students' mental health and well-being.

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