

# Mental Health Status of Selected College Students in Iloilo City\*

by

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In recent years, educators have become increasingly concerned with the problem of improving college teaching. However, little attention has been given to the mental health of the college student as he performs under varying learning situations.

It was the purpose of this investigation to ascertain the mental health status of selected college students. The problem evolved from the null hypothesis advanced that no significant difference exists between the mental health status of college students in the present study and the college students in the norms group. It was further speculated that no difference exists

in the mental health of selected college students when they were classified according to (1) type of school attended, (2) academic achievement, and (3) chronological age. Academic achievement was determined through the students' grade-point averages for two consecutive semesters immediately before the instrument was administered. Chronological age was based on the report on promotions every end of the school year.

Of the 306 participants, one hundred or 32.68 per cent were college students from an exclusive convent school while 206 or 67.32 per cent were college students from a govern-

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ment teacher-training institution. When grouped according to academic achievement, seventy-seven or the lower 25 per cent of all the participants were classified as the low-achieving group, and seventy-six or the upper 25 per cent were classified as the high-achieving group. The middle 153 or 50 per cent between these two extreme groups were classified as the average-achieving group.

When classified according to age groups, 105 or 49.02 per cent whose ages ranged from 17.25 to 20.25 composed the younger group while 156 or 50.98 per cent whose ages ranged from 20.75 to 39.25 composed the older group.

The Mental Health Analysis, Secondary Series, was administered to the selected college students at the end of the school year 1972-1973. The percentile scores were grouped and assigned descriptive equivalents. Percentile scores from 0-30 were considered low, 40-60, average, and seventy and above, high. The median for each mental health category, namely: Behavioral Immaturity, Emotional Instability, Feelings of Inadequacy, Physical Defects, Nervous Manifestations (all mental health liabilities) and Close Personal Relationships, Inter-Personal Skills, Social Participation, Satisfying Work and Recreation, Adequate Outlook and Goals (all mental health assets) was computed. The median test

was applied by solving the chi-square value in a fourfold contingency table to ascertain the significance of differences among the obtained medians of the different groups compared. Only those at the .05 level were accepted as significant differences.

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The participants in the present study taken as an entire group were found to have significantly more mental health difficulties than the norms group especially along Mental Health Liabilities, Behavioral Immaturity, Emotional Instability, Feelings of Inadequacy, and Nervous Manifestations, except in Physical Defects where no marked difference was found to exist.

No significant difference was found to exist between the participants of the present study and the norms group in Mental Health Assets except in Social Participation. Along this mental health asset it was found that the participants in the present group were significantly better in Social Participation than the norms group.

As a whole, the norms group had better mental health than the participants of the present study.

When participants were classified according to type of school attended, students from the teacher-training institution were found to have significantly more mental

health difficulties than the convent school students especially in mental health liabilities such as Feelings of Inadequacy, Physical Defects, and Nervous Manifestations, except in Behavioral Immaturity and Emotional Instability where no true difference was found to exist.

No significant difference existed between the students from the convent school and teacher-training institutions in mental health assets, Inter-Personal Skills and Social Participation except in Close Personal Relationships, and Adequate Outlook and Goals where convent school students were significantly better than students from the teacher-training institution. It was found that students from the teacher-training institution were significantly better in Satisfying Work and Recreation than convent school students.

As a whole, convent school students had better mental health than students from the teacher-training institution.

When participants were classified according to academic achievement, low achievers were found to have significantly more mental health difficulties than the high achievers in all mental health liabilities, Behavioral Immaturity, Emotional Instability, Feelings of Inadequacy, Physical Defects, and Nervous Manifestations.

No significant difference existed between the younger students and the older students in mental health assets, Inter-Personal Skills, Satisfying Work and Recreation, and Adequate Outlook and Goals, except in Close Personal Relationships and Social Participation where older students were found significantly better than the younger students.

As a whole, the older students had better mental health than the younger students.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the present study revealed that the participants generally had mental health difficulties identified as Behavioral Immaturity, Emotional Instability, Feelings of Inadequacy, and Nervous Manifestations. It is recommended, therefore, that a positive program for mental health be given due emphasis in the school's total educational program. A systematic program of guidance must be organized or maintained to offer services such as orientation and information service, testing, individual inventory service, counseling service, placement, and follow-up.

Courses in mental hygiene should be included in the college curriculum. An adequate program for social and recreational activities must be organized to improve fur-

ther the mental health of college students.

Since mental health disorders may be attributed to the home, it is strongly recommended that preventive measures begin at home.

For further study the following are recommended:

1. More studies on the influence of other factors such as position in the family, family size, body types and location of residence upon mental health.

2. A comparative study of mental health of teachers and administrators.

3. A study of the influence of mental health as measured by a standardized test, on teaching efficiency as measured by teachers' performance ratings.

4. Individual case study reports of students found with extraordinarily low and extraordinarily high mental health scores as revealed by the Mental Health Analysis for guidance and counseling purposes. □