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EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY
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(IJEPC)**www.ijepe.com**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND
LEARNING MOTIVATION OF PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS AT
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This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)**Abstract:**

Learning motivation is a factor that directly affects the progress and learning outcomes of students. Students with high academic motivation often achieve good academic results and vice versa. Students' learning motivation is affected by many different factors, including mental health problems. The article presents research results on mental health and learning motivation of psychology students, Van Lang University. Research results on a sample of 164 first-year to fourth-year students indicated that psychology students currently have mental health problems, the rate of students experiencing stress is 81.1%, anxiety is 72.6% and depression is 59.8%; Students' learning motivation is only at a good average level. Mental health problems were positively correlated with learning motivation and could explain 9.3% of the variation in student motivation. These results showed that schools, lecturers, etc. need to care and support students to solve mental health problems, contributing to enhance their learning motivation.

Keywords:

Relationship, Mental Health, Learning Motivation, Psychology Student, Van Lang University.

Introduction

Learning activities at university of students in general and students of psychology in particular are professional learning activities, with the main goal of equipping and training professional knowledge, skills and attitudes to become skilled workers, meet the requirements of the labor market and contribute to the development of society. To study effectively at university, it is required that students have foundational knowledge, have clear goals, have appropriate plans

and study methods, especially need to have strong learning motivation (Tuan, 2017, 2020). Learning motivation is understood as an internal factor that promotes learning activities, regulates attitudes towards learning, thereby determining student learning outcomes. Students with strong learning motivation are often interested in learning, willing, active and diligent in carrying out learning tasks, so they often achieve high results in learning. In contrast, students with weak learning motivation often have no interest in learning, are passive in learning, and have low academic performance (Spratt *et al.*, 2002; Cole, 2004; Rowold, 2007; Huitt, 2011; Tin & Loan, 2011; Tai *et al.*, 2016; Hung *et al.*, 2020).

Learning activities in university are complex activities, in the learning process, students face many different difficulties and challenges (Pittman & Richmond, 2008; Sotardi & Brogt, 2016; Chalapatia *et al.*, 2008). 2018). These difficulties and challenges can affect the mental health of students. Many studies have shown that a large number of students suffer from stress (Quynh & Huyen, 2010; Luong & Trang, 2013; Nhu, 2015; Thuan *et al.*, 2020), anxiety disorders (Hien, 2018; Hang *et al.*, 2019), depression (Binh, 2015; Oanh & Tuong, 2021; Hien *et al.*, 2021; Quynh & Bac, 2021), or all three problems: stress, anxiety, depression (Thuan, 2011; Trang, 2012; Tuyen *et al.*, 2020).

Mental health of students is related to many different subjective and objective factors such as psychophysiological characteristics of age, factors from family, school and society (Phuong, 2007; Van, 2014; Anh *et al.*, 2017). Mental health problems can cause difficulties in daily life, reduce motivation and academic performance, and can even lead to school dropouts, suicide, breaking the law (Eisenberg, 2009; Anbari *et al.*, 2013; Edraki *et al.*, 2016; Mirhosseini *et al.*, 2021). Schools, educational institutions, need someone to provide psychological support for learners and the facilitator needs counseling skills to be able to provide effective support (Anthony, 1993; Egan, 1994).

There have been many different studies on mental health and student's learning motivation, but there have been no studies on psychology students, especially psychology students of Van Lang University. We conducted this study to contribute to fill the gap and focus on proving the following hypotheses:

H1. Psychology students, Van Lang University currently have mental health problems such as stress, anxiety and depression.

H2. Student's learning motivation is not high, at average level.

H3. Mental health is correlated with students' learning motivation, which is one of the factors that have an impact on student's learning motivation.

Methodology And Tools

Sample

The study was carried out on a sample of 164 psychology students who were randomly selected through an online survey, including: 43 men, 121 women; 59 1st year students, 30 2nd year students, 43 3rd year students and 32 4th year students.

Measures

The mental health status of students is measured through the DASS-21 scale, which includes 21 items that are specific manifestations of 3 mental health problems: Stress, Anxiety and

Depression. Performance is measured by student self-assessment on a scale of 0-3: 0 - Doesn't look right to me at all; 1- True to me partly, or sometimes only; 2 - True to me most, or most of the time, is true; 3 - Absolutely true for me, or most of the time true. The DASS-21 scale has been standardized and used by many researchers on Vietnamese students (Thuan, 2011; Van, 2014; Hang *et al.*, 2019; Quynh, 2020). The analysis results show that the scales have good reliability: Cronbach's Alpha of the Depression scale is 0.91, Cronbach's Alpha of the Stress scale is 0.89; Cronbach's Alpha of the Anxiety scale is 0.85.

Learning motivation is measured through a scale we designed ourselves, the scale includes 4 observed variables and is measured through students' self-assessment with 4 levels: 0 - None; 1 - Occasionally; 2 - Quite often; 3 - Very often. Statistical analysis shows that the scale has a good reliability coefficient, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.85, no item of the scale has Cronbach's Alpha < 0.50.

Data Analysis

The survey results were processed by the statistical software SPSS 20.0. The statistics used include:

Descriptive statistics: calculate the mean score (M), standard deviation (SD), percentage (%) of the scales: mental health, learning motivation, thereby assessing the level of mental health, learning motivation.

For the learning motivation scale, the research results are processed in two directions: The first direction: Calculating the overall mean score (M) of the whole sample, the learning motivation in general is assessed on 4 levels based on M: $M < 0.75$: Very low; $0.75 \leq M < 1.50$: Below average; $1.50 \leq M < 2.25$: Above average; $M \geq 2.25$: High level. The higher the mean, the stronger the student's learning motivation. The second direction: Calculating the mean score (M) of each student participating in the survey, students with $M > M + SD$ have high learning motivation, students with $M - SD \leq M \leq M + SD$ have average learning motivation, and students with $M < M - SD$ have low learning motivation.

For the mental health scale. Scores for depression, anxiety, and stress are calculated by adding up the scores for the component manifestations, then multiplying by a factor of 2, and are evaluated on a 5-level scale:

Levels	Depression (D)	Anxiety (A)	Stress (S)
Nomal	0 – 9	0 – 7	0 – 14
Mild	10 – 13	8 – 9	15 – 18
Moderate	14 – 20	10 – 14	19 – 25
Severe	21 – 27	15 – 19	26 – 33
Very severe	≥ 28	≥ 20	≥ 34

Inferential statistics: correlation and regression analysis were used to analyze the relationship between mental health and student's learning motivation.

Results And Discussion

Surveying the current state of mental health and learning motivation of students majoring in Psychology at Van Lang University, we obtained the following results:

Table 1. Frequency and Level of Stress, Anxiety and Depression Among Students

Levels	Stress n (%)	Anxiety n (%)	Depression n (%)
Nomal	31 (18.9)	45 (27.4)	66 (40.2)
Mild	22 (13.4)	12 (7.3)	26 (15.9)
Moderate	40 (24.4)	48 (29.3)	35 (21.3)
Severe	33 (23.2)	15 (9.1)	16 (9.8)
Very severe	38 (5.3)	44 (26.8)	21 (12.8)
Total:	164(100)	164(100)	164(100)

Source: Survey results in August 2022

The survey results in table 1 showed that:

Regarding stress: 18.9% of the students had no stress, 81.1% had different levels of stress: 13.4% was mild, 24.4% was moderate, 23.2% was severe, 5.3% was very severe.

Regarding anxiety disorders: 72.6% of students have this problem: 7.3% in mild, 29.3% in moderate, 9.1% in severe, 26.8% in very severe.

About depression: 59.8% of students have depression at different levels: 15.9% in mild, 21.3% in moderate, 9.8% in severe, 12.8% in very severe.

The data above showed that the percentage of psychology students with mental health problems is quite high. Among the three issues surveyed, the percentage of students experiencing stress was the highest (81.1%), followed by anxiety disorders (72.6%) and finally depression (59.8%). In particular, the percentage of students with severe and very severe problems is quite high: typically, 26.8% of students have very severe anxiety disorders, 12.8% have very severe depression. This shows that it is urgent to implement mental health care activities for students majoring in psychology.

Table 2. Correlation between Stress, Anxiety and Depression of Students

	Stress	Anxiety	Depression
Stress	1	0.81**	0.78**
Anxiety	0.81**	1	0.74**
Depression	0.78**	0.74**	1

*Note: ** với $p < 0.001$

Source: Survey results in August 2022

The analysis results in table 2 showed that students' stress, anxiety and depression are positively correlated with each other quite closely (correlation coefficient $r = 0.74-0.81$), in which stress and anxiety have a positive correlation. The strongest correlation, with $r=0.81$ ($p < 0.001$), followed by the correlation between stress and depression with $r=0.78$ ($p < 0.001$), the correlation between anxiety and depression with $r=0.74$ ($p < 0.001$). This result indicates that, when one of the three problems of stress, anxiety or depression changes, it will lead to the change of the other two problems in the direction of increasing or decreasing. This also means, when one of the three issues is well controlled, it will contribute to controlling the other two.

Table 3. Learning Motivation of Psychology Students in the Whole Sample

Oder	Expressions	M	SD	Rank
1	I feel comfortable in the learning process	1.60	.77	2
2	I am excited to participate in classroom learning activities and self-study at home	1.38	.82	4
3	I am always ready for classes and self-study at home	1.54	.79	3
4	I work hard in my studies to get good results	2.00	.86	1
Total:		1.63	.68	

* *Note:* the lowest score is 0, the highest is 3; The higher the mean (M), the stronger the motivation.

Source: Survey results in August 2022

In general, the data in table 3 showed that the learning motivation of psychology students is above average (M = 1.63/3.0, SD = .68). Of the four specific expressions, "I work hard in my studies to get good results" is expressed at the highest mean (M = 2.00/3.0, SD = .86), the remaining three expressions are above and below average (M from 1.38 to 1.60, SD from .77 to .82).

Considering each individual object in the research sample, students' learning motivation is distributed as follows:

Table 4. Learning Motivation of Psychology Students by Individual

Levels	Number	%
Low	16	9.8
Medium	129	78.7
High	19	11.6
Total:	164	100

Source: Survey results in August 2022

The data in table 4 showed that the number of students with a medium level of motivation to study makes up the majority (78.7%), the number of students with a high level of motivation to study is very low (only 11.6%), besides that, there are also 9.8% of students with very low motivation to study. These are very interesting numbers.

Table 5. Student's Learning Motivation by Gender and School Year

		M	SD	Comparative test, <i>p</i>
Gender	Male	1.74	.72	T-Test $P=0.203>0.05$
	Female	1.59	.66	
School year	First year	1.65	.68	Anova Test $P=0.727>0.05$
	Second year	1.64	.64	
	Third year	1.53	.69	
	Fourth year	1.63	.68	

Source: Survey results in August 2022

The results of the analysis of learning motivation of psychology students by gender and school year in table 5 showed that there is no statistically significant difference (T Test, $p>0.05$, Anova Test, $p>0.05$). This means that the learning motivation between male and female students, first-year students and second-year, third-year and fourth-year students is the same.

Table 6. Relationship between Mental Health and Student's Learning Motivation

	r	R ²
Mental health problems (Stress, Anxiety, Depression)	0.304*	0.093**

* Note: * với $p<0.05$, ** với $p<0.001$

Source: Survey results in August 2022

The analysis data in table 6 showed that the mental health of psychology students in the sample is positively correlated with the student's learning motivation, the correlation level is not high, the correlation coefficient (*r*) is 0.304 ($p<0.05$),

The research results in table 6 also showed that mental health problems have the ability to predict/explain 9.3% of changes in student's learning motivation. Although this number is not large, it showed that mental health problems have an influence/impact on the learning motivation of psychology students. This also means that taking good care of the mental health of psychology students is meaningful in contributing to their motivation to study.

Conclusion

From the research results presented above, we draw the following conclusions:

The three research hypotheses that we set out initially were correct. Students majoring in Psychology, Van Lang University currently have mental health problems: Stress, Depression and Anxiety. The percentage of students with these problems at severe and very severe levels is quite high (Stress is 28.5%, Anxiety is 35.9%, Depression is 22.6%). Mental health issues are strongly correlated with each other and are correlated with student's learning motivation. Mental health problems predicted 9.3% change in student's learning motivation. These results

showed that it is necessary to care and support students to solve mental health problems, contributing to enhancing their learning motivation.

To support mental health care for psychology students in particular and students of Van Lang University in general, lecturers, departments, specialized faculties and functional units in the school need to carry out a set of various measures such as: effective implementation of psychological counseling activities for students; organize specialized training courses on mental health care for students; develop a model for early detection and intervention of mental health problems for students in the school; develop playgrounds and clubs for students; organize scientific and reasonable training activities; ...

Besides our study, it is necessary to carry out other studies in order to more fully discover the factors that affect students' learning motivation, thereby taking appropriate measures to improve motivation. study of students majoring in psychology.

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