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Impact of depression on the academic performance of international students in Udayana University



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ABSTRACT

Background: Depression is a mental disorder that affects an individual's mood and emotion. Depression is very common among the students. In this study, the impact of depression, especially on the academic performance of students who are abroad, studies along with the risk factors of depression.

Aim: The study aims to know the relationship between depression and the academic performances of international students studying abroad.

Method: In this analytic study, a cross sectional method was being used. This method is being used to analyze the relationship between the factors that influence the academic performance and also to

investigate the relationship between depression and academic performance of the students.

Result: As for the residence factor, the student who was lived alone performed better in academic. For the method of study factor, the student who conducts independent learning performs well in academic whereas for the factor back to Malaysia in a year, the students who go back to Malaysia less than or twice a year performs better in their academic. As for the family support factor, students who have good family support obtain good results in academic performance, but for factor family financial support, students with inadequate financial support obtain good results in their academic.

Keywords: depression, academic performance, learning program

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INTRODUCTION

Depression is a serious mental disorder that gives lots of negative impact on an individual's life.¹ Major Depressive Episode (MDE) has reported that 121 million people suffer around the world suffer from the depression, but today 350 million people suffer from depression according to the World Mental Health Survey.² Some research has shown that major depressive disorder is twice as common in female (12.0%) as in male (6.6%).³ People suffering from depression means merely it affects their daily activity in life like eating, sleeping, working, relationship and how a person thinks about himself/herself. Untreated depression will cause a person to feel fatigued, hopeless, lose concentration and also demotivated which will reduce their interest in the daily activities and work.¹ Depression is a reaction to stress. The frequent and uncontrolled stress can lead to depression. Stress may affect a student's physical and psychological well-being if it is not adequately managed.

Regarding psychology, it is a mental state or emotional strain or tensed.⁴ Mostly, the student who studies abroad undergoes chronic stress that leads to depression which eventually influences their academic performances. Depression is ubiquitous among students. Research shows that forty billion students in the US suffer from depression.⁵ Recent analysis also has been demonstrated that the

Middle East and North African student have the highest rate of depression in the world according to researchers at Australia's University of Queensland.⁶ Impact of depression among students are decreasing in academic performances, make no friend, lose concentration, spend less time, lack of interest in activities and gain or loss weight due to change in appetite. Especially students who study abroad can easily get depressed.

Within the 2013 OECD annual education report, statistics have shown that there are already around 4.3 million tertiary level students studying outside their home country and more to increase every upcoming year.⁷ Moreover, research has shown that students of Asian-American have a higher rate of suicidal thoughts than 'White' college due to depression.⁸ This may happen due to the culture shock of being in a different country. Academic performances of students can be observed and measured as it is related to the depression's impact.⁹ This study is important to know the level of depression and the factors that direct distress in student studying abroad that can influence their academic performances.¹

There are students from Malaysia studying in a few universities in Indonesia. Majority students from Malaysia take up medicine course in Indonesia. There is an article (April 29, 2015)

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shows that around 1,300 international students are studying in Universitas Padjajaran (UNPAD), Bandung since the year 2000 and most of the students are from Malaysia. The article also states that higher education observer and Professor of the Bandung Institute of Technology, Satriyo Soemantri Brodjonegoro says that the presence of international students is the recognition towards higher education in the international community. But then their admissions should be through the correct and tight selection process in order to give better impact on higher education intellectual dynamics. Therefore this shows that the performances of international students are still low. So far the academic achievements of Malaysian students in Indonesia are not good enough compared to the Indonesian students. Malaysian students could not adapt to their culture. Thus, their academic performance is low. But there are not many types of research carried out yet regarding the relationship between depression and academic achievement among them in Indonesia

yet to thoroughly proof these statement.¹⁰ Students which shows depressive symptoms has claimed low academic accomplishments.⁹ This relationship has not been further access yet. This depression cases should be diagnosed in student and must be treated.

METHODS

The study was an analytic cross-sectional study carried out at Udayana University, Denpasar Bali in early July 2017. The subject used in this survey is Malaysian students. The batches involved 70 students as from 2014, 2015 and 2016, respectively. Depression is well-known by using the diagnostic tool for depression, namely DSM-V by the American Psychiatric Association in the past seven days. According to T-scores interpretation, the students will be categorized into none depression and depression categories. Residential based on whether students are staying alone or together with friends currently. Method of studying is whether the students conduct a group study or independent learning. How often they go back is based on how many times the students go back to Malaysia in a year (more than twice, less than or twice). The first language is a person's native language that the students use commonly in campus (English or Bahasa Indonesia). Academic performance is measured based on students previous semester CGPA is based on their achievement in the prior examination of the semester. The score above 3.0 is good and below 3.0 is poor. Family support is known based on whether student's parents pressure them regarding on their studies that is whether the parents give pressure during examination (score = yes (0), no (1)) and whether in daily conversation with the parents does the parents' consent about student studies (score= yes (1), no (0)). If the score is two then it is a good family support but if score less than 2 it is bad family support. Family financial status is known based on whether their monthly money is enough for their expenses (score = yes (1), no (0)) and also whether the students get their pocket money on time (score = yes (1), no (0)). If the score is 2 then it is a good family financial support but if score less than 2 it is a bad family financial support.

RESULTS

This study should be explained based on the characteristics of the sample that is the residential, method of studying, how often they go back to Malaysia, language, family support, family financial support, diagnostic tool of depression that is DSM-V by the American Psychiatric Association in the past seven days and academic performance.

Table 1 Characteristics of respondent

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Residential		
Living alone	5	7.1
Living together with friends	65	92.9
Method of studying		
Sometimes study alone	19	27.1
Always study alone	51	72.9
Back to Malaysia in a year		
More than twice	26	37.1
Less than twice	44	62.9
Language		
English	49	70.0
Bahasa Indonesia	21	30.0
Family support		
Bad	36	51.4
Good	34	48.6
Family financial support		
Bad	6	8.6
Good	64	91.4
Depression		
None	28	40.0
Mild	20	28.6
Moderate	20	28.6
Severe	2	2.8
Academic performance		
Good >3.0	49	70.0
Poor <3.0	21	30.0

Table 2 Relationship between impacts of depression on the academic performance

Academic Performance	Good		Poor		p
	N	%	N	%	
Residence					
Living alone	4	80.0	1	20.0	1.000
Living with friends	45	69.2	20	30.8	
Method of study					
Group study	12	63.2	7	36.8	0.446
Independent learning	37	72.5	14	27.5	
Back to Malaysia in a year					
>2	17	65.4	9	34.6	0.690
≤ 2	32	72.7	12	27.3	
Language					
English	35	71.4	14	28.6	0.690
Indonesia	14	66.7	7	33.3	
Family support					
Good	26	76.5	8	23.5	0.251
Bad	23	63.9	13	36.1	
Family financial support					
Good	44	68.8	20	31.2	0.661
Bad	5	83.3	1	16.7	
Depression					
None depressed	18	64.3	10	35.7	0.394
Depressed	31	73.8	11	26.2	

The majority of Malaysian students are living together with their friends (92.9%). As from the results, the majority student prefers to study alone (72.9%). Most students go back to Malaysia less than or twice in a year (62.9%). Besides, most students use the English language as their native language in campus (70.0%). They get bad family support (51.4%). They got proper financial support from their family (91.4%). Depression is divided into four categories that are none, mild, moderate and severe depression and majority students fall into none depression category (40.0%). In addition, their performance were good in academic (70.0%).

Relationship between impacts of depression on the academic performance

Table 2 showed the majority of students who lived alone performs better in academic (80.0%) than the ones that live with friends. Based on the chi-square test, the expected value is less than 5 for more than 50% of cells. Therefore, the Fisher test will be used for the interpretation. The p-value = 1.000 which means it is more than 0.05 (1.000 > 0.05). Therefore, Ho will be accepted, and Ha will be rejected. It

showed that the risk factor residential does not affect the academic performances.

Based on the results above, majority of students who study alone obtain good results (72.5%) than the one that conducts group study. The risk factor method of analyzing based on the chi-square test is the p-value = 0.446. Therefore, Ho will be accepted, and Ha will be rejected. It showed that the risk factor method of studying does not affect the academic performances.

Most students who go back to Malaysia less than or twice in a year obtains a good result (72.7%) than the ones that go back to Malaysia more than twice in a year. Based on the chi-square test the p-value = 0.517 which Ho will be accepted, and Ha will be rejected. It showed that the risk factor going back to Malaysia in a year does not affect the academic performances. They who use the English language as their native language in campus have a good academic result (71.4%) than the one that uses Indonesian language (p = 0.690). It showed that the risk factor language does not affect the academic performances.

Most students with good family support perform better in academic (76.5%) than the ones with low-income family support (p=0.251). Furthermore, inadequate financial support component obtains good results (83.3%) than the students with proper financial support from family (p=0.661). They who are depressed obtain good results in academic (73.8%) than students who are not depressed (p=0.394). Those showed that depression did not have an impact on the academic performance of the Malaysian students.

DISCUSSION

The risk factors do not have impact on the academic performances of Malaysia students in Udayana University. Even though, researchers have shown that international students who study in U.S colleges face top 5 problems that were lack of English proficiency, inadequate financial resources, difficulties in social adjustment, problems in daily living and also loneliness or homesickness.¹¹ Even though there was no significant association based on the study carried out in Udayana University, but the risk factors mentioned above do influence the academic performance of the students. There are students who perform well in their academic, but at the same time, the bad risk factors that are inadequate family support and lousy family support made the academic performance poorer. There is another research conducted in 2011 where the study was proven there is a negative relationship between depression and academic achievement of

students which means the higher the depression among students, the lower their level of success.¹² There was a study done in India university where the lower achievers in academic have a higher level of depression that more top scorers.¹³

The results show that the Malaysian students with depression performance better in their academic than students with none depression. Thus, that depression does not have impact on the academic achievements of the students in a negative way due to an insufficient amount of sample size obtain from Udayana University that was only 70 Malaysian students from batch 2014, 2015 and 2016 who participated in this study whereas more than 100 samples conducted the previous research. Besides, not all the students had severe depression some of them were in mild or moderate categories maybe that is why didn't influence their academic in a lousy way plus some of the students may use their depression as a motivator to excel well in academic.

CONCLUSION

Majority of the Malaysian students studying at Udayana University does not have depression and their academic performance are good. There is no relationship between the impacts of depression and academic achievement of Malaysia students in Udayana University.

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