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## **An overview of lecturers' and educational personnel mental health in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo**

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**Abstract**--Mental health plays a significant role in preparing a lecturer to perform teaching activities. A lecturer with mental illness may bring some trouble in classroom lessons or even influence students' mental state. The purpose of this study was to describe the overview of the mental health of the lecturers and educational personnel in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo. This research relied on a quantitative descriptive method to determine the mental health of human resources in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo. All 1,355 lecturers and educational personnel working in the site area were involved as the population; only 513 of which were selected as the sample using accidental sampling. Further, the research instrument was a questionnaire of Mental Health Inventory (MHI) 38 with univariate analysis. It was shown that out of all respondents, 23 respondents (4.5%) had psychological distress, implying that most educational personnel in the research area were in a mental health category of psychological well-being. It is expected that the Universitas Negeri Gorontalo can make a policy to maintain and improve the mental health of its employees, including educational personnel.

**Keywords**---educational personnel, mental health, teaching activities.

## **Introduction**

Being physically and mentally healthy is of importance to every human being. Nevertheless, mental health is often not taken as seriously as physical health, which is easier to identify and more concrete (Dumilah et al., 2018). One can reach a good quality of life if they take their mental health into account since life quality improvement is also affected by mental health improvement (Alviani, 2017). Mental health has been included in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Indonesia SDGs.

Studies on mental health are frequently interpreted as a negative feature, yet with the development of psychology, the positive feature of mental health has become a much-discussed topic. Mental health is crucial at every stage of life to actualize ideal well-being on the whole. It is estimated that one in four people suffers from one or more mental illnesses during their lifetime. Inappropriate and delayed treatment of mental illness will lead to a severe condition and eventually burden the family, community members, and the government (Ayuningtyas et al., 2018). Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) in 2018 revealed that 6.1% of Indonesian citizens, or 11 million people of the country's population, aged 15 years and older were depressed. The highest prevalence was in Central Sulawesi with 12.3%. (Noerhenritte, 2019). Meanwhile, Gorontalo occupied the second highest percentage of depression cases with 10.3% (Ministry of Health, 2019).

The increasing prevalence of mental health cases from year to year seems to have something to do with the awareness of how vital mental health is (Rahmadhani et al., 2020). The workplace is among the places that contribute significantly to an individual's mental health. Psychological distress generally occurs in the workplace, resulting in losses for individuals, employers, and community members (Birnbaum et al., 2010). As one of the educational institutions, a university requires resources that support the realization of an excellent education system, including lecturers and educational personnel. Mental health has become a fundamental aspect for a lecturer in preparing the lesson. A lecturer with a mental disorder may negatively impact the learning process and even students' mental state (Public Relation of Universitas Internasional Batam, 2021). Similarly, educational personnel also serve as an essential component at the faculty and university level (Ihsan, 2020). Educational personnel at higher-educational institutions is part of society that potentially experience mental illness caused by work demands. A study in Canada found that the level of work stress prevalence of university staff was two times higher than that of the general population (Anisah, 2020). In addition, educational personnel's mental health is also an interesting topic to examine since higher-educational institutions are in a more demanding situation (Rahmandani et al., 2021).

It was shown that 52% of lecturers at a faculty experienced a high level of stress due to their workload (Pertiwi et al., 2017). Another research indicated that work overload resulted in unideal performances (Hamukti et al., 2017). The same thing goes with educational personnel; a study by Rahmandani et al. (2021) on the

psychological distress of 178 educational personnel in one of the state universities with legal entity status (PTN-BH) suggested that 47 of them (26.4%) suffered from psychological distress at risk and the other 131 respondents had a normal level of psychological distress. The result signified that social dysfunction became the highest manifestation of the psychological distress experienced, followed by anxiety and depression.

A preliminary interview was done with five lecturers in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo; two from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, two from the Faculty of Economics, and one from the Faculty of Sports and Health. It was found from the interview that workload stress was dominantly experienced. Two interviewees stated that anxiety about accreditation preparation by some departments was also the case. The preliminary interview was also given to five educational personnel in the aforementioned university. They were pressured by their work and felt anxious if it was not completed by the given time. Consequently, such feelings of pressure and anxiety then lead to stress. Following the data regarding the mental health of lecturers and educational personnel, as well as the preliminary interview, a study entitled "An Overview of Lecturers' and educational personnel Mental Health in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo" was conducted.

## Method

This research was conducted at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo from March 1<sup>st</sup> to May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022. A quantitative design with a descriptive survey was employed. Further, the quota sampling technique was used, in which lecturers and educational personnel were involved as the sample. The research instrument was a questionnaire of Mental Health Inventory (MHI) 38 created by Veit and Ware in 1983. The MHI questionnaire consists of two dimensions: psychological well-being (14 questions) and psychological distress (24 questions). Psychological well-being comprises life satisfaction, emotional ties, and general positive affect subscales. Meanwhile, psychological distress encompasses anxiety, loss of behavioral/emotional control, and depression subscales.

## Results and Discussion

### Results

Presented below is the overview of the mental health of the lecturers and educational personnel in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo.

Table 1 Frequency Distribution of the Overview of the Mental Health of The Lecturers and Educational Personnel in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo

| No | Mental Health Inventory  | N   | %    |
|----|--------------------------|-----|------|
| 1  | Psychological Well-Being | 490 | 95.5 |
| 2  | Psychological Distress   | 23  | 4.5  |
|    | Total                    | 513 | 100  |

Primary Data Source, 2022

The above table illustrates the respondents' mental health; 490 respondents (95.5%) are in a state of psychological well-being, and 23 respondents (4.5%) experience psychological distress. This signifies that the majority of lecturers and educational personnel in the research area are in the mental health category of psychological well-being. The details of educational personnel's mental health according to the subscales of each category are provided in the following table.

Table 2 Details of the Mental Health Mental Health of The Lecturers and Educational Personnel based on Subscales

| No. | Scale                           | Subscale                                    | Percentage |
|-----|---------------------------------|---|------------|
| 1   | <i>Psychological Well-Being</i> | <i>Life Satisfaction</i>                    | 86.1%      |
|     |                                 | <i>General Positive Affect</i>              | 85.1%      |
|     |                                 | <i>Emotional Ties</i>                       | 86.5%      |
| 2   | <i>Psychological Distress</i>   | <i>Anxiety</i>                              | 14.0%      |
|     |                                 | <i>Loss of behavioral/emotional control</i> | 12.6%      |
|     |                                 | <i>Depression</i>                           | 9.7%       |

Primary Data Source, 2022

The table shows the frequency distribution of respondents' mental health in the psychological well-being category in each subscale, as follows; 86.1% for life satisfaction, 85.1% for general positive affect, and 86.5% for emotional ties. In contrast, there are 14.0% for anxiety, 12.6% for loss of behavioral/emotional control, and 9.7% for depression in the category of psychological distress.

## Discussion

### Discussion of the Overview of Lecturers and Educational Personnel's Mental Health in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo

The results have obtained the frequency distribution of the mental health of lecturers and educational personnel in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo with the following details: 490 people (95.5%) are in a psychological well-being state, and 23 people (4.5%) are in a psychological distress state. This also implies that the majority of lecturers and educational personnel (490 people) in the university mentioned previously are in the mental health category of psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being is not necessarily measured by the absence of distress and mental issues. Ryff & Keyes (1995) define psychological well-being as a condition when an individual experiences positive emotions towards oneself and others, as well as being able to make decisions and manage behaviors, to create an environment compatible with the needs, to have life purposes, to make life more meaningful, and to explore and develop oneself.

The psychological well-being experienced by most educational personnel in the site area is due to their ability to create and manage a comfortable work environment and their positive behaviors towards themselves and other people. Psychological well-being comprises life satisfaction, emotional ties, and general positive affect subscales. Life satisfaction generally means that a person feels free from tension and burden, delighted, cheerful, peaceful, tranquil, and grateful. Diener (in Mahanta & Aggarwal, 2013) also claims that life satisfaction relates to a person's actual experiences in life, e.g., in school or university, workplace, and family environment. As described by the respondents in the research questionnaire regarding the life satisfaction subscale, 86.1% of them admitted that they were happy and satisfied with their lives.

The general positive affect subscale refers to emotion and mood. Mood can be both positive and negative; it lasts longer than emotion, yet it is less intense than emotion. General positive affect in psychological well-being is when one is in a pleasant feeling due to a positive mind toward the future (Dianer, 2011). In this subscale, 85.1% of the respondents stated that during the past few months, they believed that their future would be full of great hope and promises. Additionally, the emotional ties subscale is conceptualized as a close emotional relationship between two people on the basis of affection, so that each person loves and feels loved and needed (Nurhadi, 2014), as depicted by 86.5% of respondents that they felt loved and needed.

The results have also discovered that 23 respondents (4.5%) suffer from psychological distress influenced by several factors, including the characteristics of the educational personnel. The respondents, on average, were aged 21-40 years and were mostly married. Although people aged 31-40 are predicted to be more mature and wiser, they will face challenges in finding a job, family matters, taking responsibility, and the like. Psychological distress, according to Nurhalimah (2016), shows signs and symptoms of anxiety, namely being worried, having a bad feeling about something, fearing of one's own mind, and being too sensitive. The respondents got tense, nervous, and easily startled. They were scared of being alone or in a crowd, experienced sleep disorders with weird dreams, difficulty concentrating, and forgetfulness. There were also somatic complaints, such as pain in muscles and spine, ringing or thumping hearing, shortness of breath, indigestion, lower urinary tract symptoms, or headache.

Matthews in Dewayani et al. (2011) argue that intrapersonal and situational factors influence psychological distress. On top of that, age, sex, marital status, and work experience are individual characteristics contributing to distress. Age relates to maturity; technically or psychologically, the older a person, the more mature s/he is in carrying out duties. Psychological distress encompasses anxiety, loss of behavioral/emotional control, and depression subscales. Nurhalimah (2016) points out that anxiety shows signs and symptoms of being worried, having a bad feeling about something, fearing one's mind, and being too sensitive. As depicted by 14.0% of respondents, they got nervous and anxious when dealing with unpredictable situations. Some respondents stated that the anxiety came from tight deadlines.

The behavioral/emotional control subscale refers to how an individual controls and adjusts to emotions. Emotional control can also be defined as emotional regulation. Shaffer in Anggraeni (2014) notes that emotional regulation includes the ability to control feeling, physiological reaction, emotion-related cognition, and emotion-related reaction. In the same tune, 12.6% of respondents wondered whether or not they had lost their minds or lost control over the way they spoke and thought. Besides, 17.1% of respondents admitted that they were extremely sad, so that nothing could please them.

The subscale of depression is conceptualized as how a person responds to the sadness, or even depression s/he goes through. Beck (1985) defines depression as feeling so stressed or down that life seems meaningless and hopeless. Accordingly, depression also includes affective, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral disorders. The definition is consistent with McDowell & Newel (1996) that depression is an abnormal state of the organism manifested by symptoms, e.g., decreased subjective mood, pessimism, and nihilism. As described by 9.7% of respondents, they were so depressed during the past few months.

### **Conclusion**

Awareness of mental health in the workplace, including among university educational personnel, is of great concern. A total of 23 educational personnel (4.5%) out of 513 respondents in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo experience psychological distress.

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