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Learning difficulties related of health status of Moroccan students

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Abstract

This study is related to the Volubilis project "Moroccan and European students: a comparative approach", which aims to identify the challenges and expectations of Moroccan students. The purpose of this research was to provide data about the health status, the effects of communication disorders and learning difficulties on self-esteem and academic performances within students from the University Hassan II Mohammedia-Casablanca. 350 students belonging to the University Hassan II Mohammedia-Casablanca participated in the survey. The average age of students is 22 years and suffers no physical or mental disability. Our results indicate that the majority of students surveyed report having good health. However, a quarter of students report being affected by one or more communication disorders. Half of the students affected by a disorder report low self-esteem, more than a quarter of these students had a feeling of social rejection. The majority of these students say that they have faced difficulties to continue their studies, which suggests that communication disorders lead to a form of academic failure.

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Keywords: health, Learning difficulties, communication disorders, self-esteem, social rejection

1. Introduction

This survey was designed to indicate the health status of Moroccan students and identify the effects of disorders communication and learning difficulties on self-esteem and on academic performances.

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2. Method

a) Participants

The surveyed population consists of students from the third year of university. Our sample consisted of 350 students, representing several disciplines: letter, science and economy.

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<th></th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Economy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>58</td>
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No difference between male and female students at the faculty of letter, but the English discipline has more female students than male students (29.9% female, 18.9% male).

Regarding the faculty of science, male students are more in physics and chemistry. However biology has more female students than male students (2.3% male, 11.8% female). This may be due to the nature of discipline: biology requires more individual work (revision, attendance and TD ...) while the physics and chemistry involves less class time but abstraction which could attract students.

b) Measures

The questionnaire was organized in 7 themes. The analyze focuses on health in 5 areas: general health, health disorders, disorders impact, health practices and addictive behaviors.

c) Procedure

The survey was conducted in November 2011. The questionnaires were distributed to teachers in each discipline, after the questionnaires were distributed to students. The questionnaires were collected by the experimenter and made in March and December 2012.

d) Analysis

After data collection (June 2013), we used SPSS software for data processing and analysis. Our interest in this survey was focused on health theme and self-esteem. A question "How do you rate the state of your health" (on a scale from 0 “very bad health” to 6 “very good health”) gave us important information that can be represented as follow:
In this sample, 24.75% of students believe that the state of their health is bad, the 20.46% thinks that it is either fairly well or well, 54.42% said they had a very good health. Therefore, more than half of students have a positive view of their own health.

Students were asked about the different communication disorders and learning difficulties they were suffering from. The following chart shows the two main types of communication disorders discovered within students:

The results indicate that more than a quarter (47.4%) is affected by hearing impairment. Among the students affected by such disorders, 17% say they suffer serious problems, 44% think these problems are worrying and 38% consider these problems are not worrying.

44.8% of students are involved in voice disorders. Among students who report being affected by a voice disorder, more than a quarter consider it a worrying problem (41%) and 14% of serious problems. Almost half (44%) say that the voice problem is not worrying.

The following chart shows the two main types of learning difficulties discovered within students:
A quarter of surveyed students (45,1%) are affected by a form of stuttering. 39% say that the problem is not worrying, 33% consider it a worrying problem and 27% of serious problems. more than half of students with stuttering are concerned about this disorder.

54,9 % of students report being dyslexic. 42% of students reported being affected by dyslexia declared that the disorder is not worrisome whereas 34 % consider it as worrying and 23 % as serious. This is half of students with dyslexia who is concerned about this disorder.

Impact of communication disorders and learning difficulties on self-esteem

A question " Does this problem sound on: Your self-esteem? " asked students to evaluate the impact of communication disorders and learning difficulties on their self-esteem on a scale of 0-6 (0 being not at all impacted and 6 being very strongly impacted). 50.71% of students reported that their level of self- esteem is highly (values 4-6) influenced by their communication disorders and learning difficulties, they are 36.97% to say that their troubles have little or no influence (values 0-2) on their self-esteem.
The results indicate a negative impact of communication disorders and learning difficulties on the self-esteem ($F = 2.87; p <0.001$). It seems that stuttering have the greatest impact on self-esteem because when it appears alone or in combination with another disorder, students evaluate the average impact on their self-esteem at least 4. However students, affected by stuttering only evaluate the impact on their self-esteem at 4.18 (on a scale of 0-6), students affected by stuttering and hearing evaluate the impact at 4.56, students affected by stuttering and voice disorders evaluate the impact at 4.33 and finally student affected by dyslexia, voice disorders and hearing evaluate impact at 4.

**Impact of communication disorders and learning difficulties on academic achievement**

The results indicate that 69% of the students reported that communication disorders and learning difficulties constitute an obstacle to academic achievement. 66 students have combination of communication disorders and Learning difficulties. Students affected by 2 or 4 problems of communication disorders and learning difficulties report more than other students that the problem constitute an obstacle to the success of academic career. When students were affected by combination of communication disorders and Learning difficulties, if the problem was dyslexia or stuttering students think that they face more difficulties to succeed in their academic career.

**3. Conclusion**

The results of this survey show that there is a significant impact of dyslexia and stuttering on students’ self-esteem and academic success and that these communication disorders are frequent in the Moroccan higher education system.

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