Omega Graduate School

Dissertation Research Prospectus (Pre-Proposal)

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Problem Statement

The problem anxiety and stress disorders affected the mental wellbeing of young persons during Covid-19 lockdown (Tadesse et al. 2020, p.1).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to explore mental health struggles of young persons 18 to 24 years in Trinidad and Tobago persisting after COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.

Background of the Problem

The Coronavirus first appeared in Wuhan, China, in late 2019. However, by the first six weeks of 2020, the virus had spread rapidly from China to several other countries in East Asia and the United States of America (Hadi et al., 2020, p. 1). This continuous spread led the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) on January 30, 2020, to declare the COVID-19 virus a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern” under the International Health Regulations (HR) (2005) (WHO, 2020 para.1). As the situation grew worse, the Director General declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (Hadi et al., 2020, p.1).

This COVID-19 virus was described as the most infectious disease in the last century after the Spanish Flu epidemic (Chowdory, p. 163). This dreaded disease was widespread, affected citizens’ health, and caused the death of approximately two (2) million persons worldwide (Klinglhofer et al., 2021, p.1).

Various Governments put containment measures in place to prevent the spread among their citizenry. One of these measures was establishing lockdowns. However, this measure forced residents to remain home from attending school and work, preventing them from socializing as they usually did (Sampogna et al., 2021, p.2). Literature showed a relationship between lockdowns and mental health and that the 15-to-24-year age group is most vulnerable (Mc Gorry et al., 2022, p.61). This awareness led this student to study the relationship between Depression, Anxiety, and Stress of young persons 18 to 24 years old in Trinidad and Tobago during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

Significance

This study will contribute to a gap in the research of 18 to 24-year-old young persons' of Trinidad and Tobago by identifying factors related to mental health struggles among persisting after the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown based on the research questions.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do 18-24 year olds describe their experiences during the COVID-19 lockdowns in Trinidad and Tobago?

RQ2: What mental health struggles do 18-24 year olds experience persisting after the COVID-19 lockdowns in Trinidad and Tobago?

RQ3: What spiritual resources are 18-24 year olds utilizing to address persisting mental health struggles after the COVID-19 lockdowns in Trinidad and Tobago?

Research Methodology

This study will utilize a qualitative methodology and a Basic Qualitative Research Design to explore the mental health struggles of young people 18 to 24 years old persisting after the Covid-19 lockdowns in Trinidad and Tobago.

Theoretical /Conceptual Framework

The Biopsychosocial theories of mental illness frame this study because the Bio Psychosocial theory guides us in understanding that a person’s genetic makeup, that is, how they manage their thoughts, feelings and behaviors, as well as their social environment can have an impact on their mental health (Cooper, Tatlow-Golden, pp. 214-218). According to Armstrong and Summers (2020), "biological, psychological, and social factors are all central to every mental illness" (p. 82).

Mental illness has been the main obstacle to the health, wellness, and productivity of young persons worldwide (McGorry et al., 2022, para.1). This includes the age group 18 to 25 year-olds on which we are focusing our study. McGorry et al. posited that their data showed that 50% of mental disorders occur before age 15 and 75% by age 25. They also asserted that 50% of this age group is affected by age 25.

Depression, Anxiety, and Behavioral disorders are among the leading causes of illness and disability among adolescents (WHO, 2021, para.1). Some emotional conditions prevalent among young persons are Anxiety and Depression. The most pervasive is Anxiety. The World Health Organization (WHO) posited that 3.6% of 10 to 14-year-olds and 4.6% of 15 to 19-year-olds experience an anxiety disorder (WHO, 2021, para. 7). These disorders can hinder a student's performance at school. Depression can even lead to suicide if not dealt with early.

According to the World Health Organization Report (2022), "Adversity is one of the most influential and detrimental risks to mental health” (p. 22). Adversity can come in different forms, such as poverty, sexual abuse, physical abuse, and even the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organization Report (2022) stated, “At any one time, a diverse set of individual, social, and structural factors may combine to protect or undermine our mental and shift our position on the mental health continuum” (p.14). This pandemic did just that. Research on the Covid-19 Pandemic lockdown has shown that it has undermined young persons’ mental health. McGorry et al. (2022) stated that young people have had worse mental health experiences since the Covid-19 pandemic; 75% reported that their mental health was worse than before. This data has heightened my interest in pursuing this study.

Instrumentation

This study will utilize a semi-structured interview protocol.

Research Design

Population and Sampling

The target population for this study will be 18 to 24-year-old young persons from the First Church of the Open Bible, San Fernando, Trinidad and Tobago.

Data Analysis

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