International Journal of **Human Sciences Research**

MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS AT RISK OF HIGH SCHOOL DROPPING OUT

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Abstract: Dropping out of high school, especially at ``*Universidad de Guadalajara*``, is a global problem that affects students during the complex stage of adolescence. During this period of physical and emotional changes, students face academic pressures and crucial decisions about their future, which can result in mental health problems and, in some cases, the interruption of their education, to address this concern, a quantitative research that evaluated the mental health of students at risk of dropping out of their studies and related factors, the survey used covered seven categories of mental health, the results revealed that many of these students experience high levels of stress and anxiety, which impacts negatively their emotional well-being and academic performance. In addition, the lack of social support and communication contributes to their feeling of isolation, problems such as sleep disorders, changes in diet, fatigue and lack of energy are also common. Additionally, they face challenges in the school environment, these findings underscore the need for early intervention and providing comprehensive support to improve well-being and retain these students in school.
Keywords: Tutoring, dropout, mental health.

INTRODUCTION

School dropout at the high school level is a problem of concern throughout the world. In Mexico, specifically at ``Universidad de Guadalajara``, it is observed that some students at the Vocational School present significant risks of dropping out, which can have a negative impact. In their academic and professional future, dropping out not only represents a loss of educational opportunities for students, but can also be related to unaddressed mental health issues.

Adolescence is a stage of life characterized by significant changes both physically and emotionally. High school students face an

increase in academic demands and pressures related to their performance, making decisions about their future, and adaptation. In a constantly evolving social environment, these challenges can lead to stress, anxiety and other mental health problems, which, in some cases, can contribute to the decision to leave education.

The mental health of students is a crucial factor for their academic success and general well-being, understanding the factors that affect the mental health of students at risk of dropping out is essential to developing effective interventions that can help these young people overcome the obstacles they face. face and complete their upper secondary education, which is why we must ask ourselves: What is the mental health situation of adolescent high school students at ``Universidad de Guadalajara``, who are at risk of dropping out, and how these mental health factors are relate to their decision to drop out of education? The answer to this generative question allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges these young people face and will guide the development of support and prevention strategies to reduce dropout rates and promote their well-being.

OBJECTIVE

Assess the mental health of students at risk of dropping out of high school and identify factors to guide prevention actions and support for academic and emotional well-being.

DEVELOPMENT

Dropping out of school at the high school level is a problem of concern worldwide, with negative consequences for the academic and professional future of students, as evidenced in a study cited by Rumberger (2011). In the specific context, it is observed that some Vocational School students present significant risks of dropping out, which could negatively

impact their academic and professional future (García, 2015). Adolescence is a stage of life characterized by significant changes, both physical and emotional, and high school students face an increase in academic demands and pressures related to their performance, making decisions about their future, and adapting to an environment. constantly evolving society (Steinberg, 2014). These challenges can lead to stress, anxiety and other mental health issues, which, in some cases, can contribute to the decision to leave education. Students' mental health is a crucial factor in their academic success and overall well-being, as supports the World Health Organization report (WHO, 2019), which indicates a close relationship between the mental health of adolescents, their academic performance and their quality of life, therefore, it is essential to understand the factors that affect health mental health of students at risk of dropping out of high school to develop effective interventions, the main objective of this research is to evaluate the mental health of students at risk of dropping out of high school, with the purpose of providing a solid basis to guide the implementation of tutorial actions and strategies of school dropout prevention, thus promoting their academic and emotional well-being in the educational environment, the theoretical support of this research covers various areas of knowledge, from the understanding of school dropout as a global problem with negative consequences to the importance of mental health of students, going through the challenges of adolescence and the effectiveness of tutorial actions as preventive strategies.

Ultimately, this research seeks to understand the mental health of students at risk of dropping out of high school, identifying risk factors and developing strategies. school dropout prevention to promote their academic and emotional well-being on their path to higher secondary education.

This study focused on the evaluation of mental health factors among adolescent students at risk of dropping out of school in the upper secondary education system of ``Universidad de Guadalajara``; To carry out this research, a quantitative and descriptive approach was adopted, based on previous methodologies that examine factors related to emotional well-being and school dropout (Kessler et al., 2005; Demyttenaere et al., 2004). We sought to identify the factors that contribute to dropout and their relationship with mental health problems, such as stress, anxiety and depression (Alam et al., 2019).

The target population included students between 15 and 18 years old from various high schools at ``Universidad de Guadalajara``. This population was selected because it is a group in which the risk of dropping out of school is notable, in order to understand the factors related to mental health that can influence the decision to leave school (Jiménez & Rodríguez, 2019; Rumberger, 2011).

To collect data, a structured questionnaire was used, which was designed to evaluate various aspects of mental health; The questionnaire covered topics such as stress, anxiety, depression, social support, personal relationships, sleep, physical changes and other factors that affect emotional well-being (Arnett, 2005; García & Martínez, 2020). In addition, questions were included about the relationship with the school environment and global mental health. To obtain a complete picture of the psychological state of the students, the survey was administered in person at schools, following a protocol that guaranteed privacy and confidentiality. of participants who were given clear instructions for completing the questionnaire and assistance was offered in case of questions or concerns. The process also included measures to minimize bias and ensure the accuracy of the data collected (Smith, 2017).

Once collected, the data were subjected to statistical analysis to identify relevant patterns, correlations and trends, descriptive analysis was used to summarize the responses and correlation analysis was used to explore the relationships between different variables. These methods allowed us to identify the most significant factors related to mental health and school dropout (Demyttenaere et al., 2004). In addition to data analysis, continuous monitoring of the participants was carried out to evaluate the evolution of their mental health.

Over time, this monitoring helped identify changes in students' emotional well-being and detect emerging trends in relation to dropping out of school (WHO, 2019).

Research on the well-being of students at risk of high school dropout is essential to address the multiple dimensions of the problem and propose effective solutions. Through this research, we have identified several key factors that contribute to stress and anxiety among students, which which has a significant impact on their thoughts and attitudes towards school.

Stress and anxiety are common symptoms in the students surveyed. This emotional discomfort can be directly related to academic pressures, family expectations and difficulties in interacting with peers and teachers. Tension can lead to persistent thoughts of dropping out of school., which in turn creates a vicious cycle of stress and hopelessness.

The lack of communication in personal relationships amplifies the feeling of isolation and stress among students. Poor communication can affect the quality of relationships with friends and family, limiting the natural support system they must have. Students who lack these meaningful connections may have difficulty expressing their emotions and seeking support when they need it.

Concern about sleep and pace of life is another critical area, students often have busy schedules, with extracurricular activities and academic pressure, which affects their sleep patterns and, consequently, their general well-being, inadequate sleep can exacerbate mental health problems and reduce students' ability to concentrate and perform in school.

Changes in physical fitness and eating habits are also important aspects that affect mental health, increased fatigue can be linked to lack of sleep and poor diet, influencing academic performance and participation in school. school, these physical and nutritional factors have a ripple effect on students' energy and enthusiasm.

Students have diverse opinions about the support they receive from teachers and school administration as some perceive a hostile school environment, where academic pressure is overwhelming and loneliness is common, other students report a lack of connection with their teachers, which which can contribute to a feeling of alienation and less participation in school activities that underline the importance of providing comprehensive support to improve the well-being and school retention of at-risk students, this implies a joint effort between educational institutions, teachers, counselors and the community at large to address these issues from multiple angles as it requires careful attention and personalized solutions that address both the academic and emotional needs of students.

DISCUSSION

The results of this research highlight the urgency of addressing the emotional well-being and mental health of students at risk of dropping out. The evidence obtained reveals that stress and anxiety are prevalent factors among these students, with multiple causes, from academic pressure to lack of communication and emotional support, these findings are aligned with previous research identifying an increase in mental health problems among adolescents and young adults (Kessler et al., 2005; Demyttenaere et al., 2004), the study demonstrated While personal relationships and a sense of belonging are critical to students' mental health, participants who reported having strong ties with family and friends tended to show lower levels of stress and anxiety, underscoring the importance of promoting healthy relationships within of the school environment and we can find in the existing literature, which highlights the importance of support networks and effective communication for emotional well-being (Borges et al., 2008).

Likewise, the results show that sleep and the pace of life play a critical role in the mental health of students; inadequate sleep, derived from academic pressure and extracurricular activities, is related to high levels of fatigue and stress, these findings align with studies that indicate the impact of sleep on academic performance and general well-being (Arnett, 2005; Alam et al., 2019), another relevant finding is the students' perception of school support and the relationship with students. teachers, it is observed that a significant part of students feel that they do not receive the necessary support to deal with their emotional problems, which can increase the feeling of isolation and school dropout (Jiménez & Rodríguez, 2019).

This highlights the need for educational institutions to implement emotional support and counseling strategies to help students face these challenges, to address these problems, a holistic approach is recommended that includes mentoring programs, extracurricular activities to encourage social development and emotional, and counseling services for students. These approaches can help create a more inclusive and supportive school environment, thereby facilitating school

retention and promoting emotional well-being (WHO, 2019).

This research provides a clear view of the challenges faced by students at risk of dropping out and highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to address their emotional well-being. The results can be used by educational institutions to design policies and programs that promote mental health. and create a more positive school environment, as these strategies are implemented, it is expected to see a reduction in dropout rates and an increase in the overall well-being of students, contributing to their personal and academic growth.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this research highlight the importance of a proactive approach to address the academic and emotional well-being of students at risk of dropping out, the proposed strategies offer educational institutions a framework to create a supportive environment that helps students overcome the emotional and academic barriers that may lead them to drop out of school.

Implementing regular workshops on stress management techniques is essential to equip students with practical tools to cope with daily stresses since these activities, such as meditation, deep breathing and time management, can reduce anxiety and stress, allowing students to better concentrate on their studies, likewise, effective communication skills and conflict resolution can improve relationships between classmates and teachers, strengthening the sense of community and belonging.

Physical wellness programs and support groups can contribute to the balance between students' mental and physical health by offering a safe space to share experiences, build resilience and develop social-emotional skills, while at the same time, classroom work can be a catalyst to encourage active student participation in school activities, helping them find a sense of purpose and commitment.

Teachers play a critical role in this process, getting to know students on a personal level can improve communication and allow for better individualized support. By encouraging open communication, teachers can identify emotional and academic problems early and provide appropriate resources for their solution, they can also promote group work, which encourages collaboration and the development of interpersonal skills, and support time management, helping helps students balance their academic and personal responsibilities, however, the most critical aspect is to be alert for signs that a student is experiencing emotional or academic difficulties.

Teachers must be trained to identify these signs and take steps to provide support or refer students to appropriate resources, such as school counselors or mental health services. This research highlights that the approach to addressing dropout must be holistic, focused In both emotional well-being and academic achievement, with a combination of support programs, classroom strategies, and an inclusive school environment, educational institutions can reduce dropout rates and create a space where all students have the opportunity to thrive., this not only benefits students, but also the community in general, promoting a stronger and more promising future for all.

CONCLUSION

For students to acquire skills to cope with daily stresses, likewise, developing effective communication and conflict resolution skills can improve relationships between students and teachers, creating a sense of community and belonging, which is essential to prevent school dropouts.

Additionally, promoting physical activity and providing emotional support through dedicated initiatives can help students maintain a balance between their mental and physical health. Support groups are safe spaces where students can share experiences and foster resilience. In this context, the role of teachers is crucial in detecting emotional or academic problems early, encouraging open communication and getting to know students at a level. Staff, teachers can provide individualized support and refer students to specialized resources, such as school counselors or mental health services, when necessary.

Another effective strategy to strengthen interpersonal skills and collaboration between students is to encourage group work in the classroom. This approach can create a more inclusive and participatory school environment, reducing the tendency to drop out of school.

To achieve this, it is essential to train the student. school staff to identify signs of emotional and academic problems and take proactive measures to address these situations, in addition, it is important that the school environment is inclusive and welcoming for all students, which involves implementing policies that support emotional and academic well-being and actions concrete measures to prevent harassment and discrimination, the success of these strategies can have a significant impact, not only on the well-being of students, but also on the community at large, in a holistic approach that balances emotional well-being with academic performance can help reduce dropout rates and promote a brighter future for all.

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