



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

FACULTY OF COMMERCE, HUMAN SCIENCES AND EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGES

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SECOND OPPORTUNITY EXAMINATION QUESTION PAPER		
EXAMINER(S)	Ms T. Kanime Mr C. Gwasira Ms Y. Lyamine Mr E. Shilemba Ms R. Ndengu	Ms M. Simon Ms M. Hashoongo Dr P. Midzi Mr V. Enkali Ms E. Limwena
MODERATOR:	Dr S. Ashikuti	

INSTRUCTIONS
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Answer ALL the questions.2. Write clearly and neatly.3. Number the answers clearly.4. Check instructions for each question carefully.

THIS QUESTION PAPER CONSISTS OF 12 PAGES (Including this front page)

QUESTION 1: ACADEMIC READING

[20 marks]

Read the following research article and answer the questions below. The original article has been adapted for assessment purposes.

Mental health, coping strategies, and social support among international students at a Canadian university

Delaram Baghoori, MSc and Mary Roberts, PhD

Department of occupational therapy, faculty of rehabilitation medicine, college of Health Sciences, University of Alberta, Canada

A Introduction

Mental health has become a growing concern in higher education. The **transition** from secondary to post-secondary education can be challenging for students due to the new academic environment, changes in social supports and role identities, living apart from family, and increased workload. Difficulty in transitioning to a new environment can cause students to experience mental health issues such as distress, anxiety, life imbalance, isolation, and being overwhelmed.³ In addition to negatively affecting the quality of life, physical health, and well-being of university students, mental health issues also have a detrimental impact on academic achievements, sometimes causing students to leave their studies prior to completing their degree.⁴ Depression and anxiety among students have been associated with increased alcohol consumption, smoking, withdrawal from the program, and suicide.^{5,6} Therefore, investigating student mental health status and factors associated with mental health problems has become a significant focus in post-secondary education research.

B Factors influencing mental health of international students

Although the number of **international** students has been increasing significantly, their mental health status has received little attention. Previous research has focused on the lived experiences of international students, help-seeking behaviours, and psychological distress. Multiple studies on students' help-seeking behaviours have been conducted in the United States and Australia.¹¹⁻¹³ These studies found that international students' various cultural values and beliefs are often in conflict with the concept of mental health in their destination country. As a result, international students are hesitant to seek help from university counselling services. Instead, they prefer to seek help from family members, close friends, or relatives.^{11,14} Many international students believe that seeking psychological help is a sign of weakness and failure. Due to this self-stigmatization, they are more fearful of disclosing their problems and concerns to professional psychologists and are less willing to seek mental health services.^{12,14-17} Researchers investigating psychological distress among international students reported that poorer physical health, less social support, less religious involvement and **spirituality**, and negative attitudes toward seeking professional help were associated with greater levels of psychological distress.

C Beyond the general stressors that **post-secondary** students experience, being an international student in a new university with a new educational system as well as a new culture could have a significant impact on the mental health status of international students during their transition. The factors influencing the mental health of international students can

be categorized into biological, psychological, and social. Interactions among these factors could impact on individuals' health status.²⁰ Biological factors influencing mental health include physical health status, genetic vulnerabilities, immune system function and any other factors related to the physical elements of the body that affect and determine health.²⁰ Psychological and personal factors include personality traits, attitudes, **emotions** and any other factors related to the mind. Social factors influencing student mental health involve background culture, gender, marital status and any other factors related to the environment.

D Conceptualizing mental health in this study

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (p. 12).⁴⁰ This definition highlights three main components: (1) well-being, (2) effective functioning of an individual, and (3) effective functioning for a community. Mental health can also be defined based on the absence or presence of mental illness. Mental illness refers to a wide range of mental health conditions, which significantly affect a person's mood, thinking, and behavior. Mental illnesses can result from biological, developmental, psychosocial, and/or environmental factors and are associated with distress and/or problematic functioning in social, work, or family activities.⁴¹ This study was carried out during early COVID-19 pandemic (March–May 2020). For Canadian higher education, it was a dramatic moment when the pandemic forced universities to move in-person classes to remote delivery in March 2020. The shift to virtual learning became the default through 2020–2021. We all understand that epidemics can carry a **double whammy**: Not only do they cause physical distress, but **they** also impact mental health. The COVID-19 outbreak, which is ongoing, reflects this tendency—having unleashed a wave of fear and distress. Because of unprecedented educational and social disruption, many students experience a decline in mental health. Factors such as the lack of contact with peers, the decreased structure of daily life, concerns about missing important life events have contributed to increased anxiety and depression.⁴³ Given the limited understanding of the mental health status of international students, and a discrepancy in the literature regarding **their** various usage of coping strategies and different levels of social support, this study aimed to identify the mental health status and factors associated with mental health problems of international students in a Canadian university, and investigate the impact of coping skills and social support factors on their mental health. The research questions were: (1) What is the mental health of international students? (2) Do coping skills and social support predict international students' mental health and subjective well-being status?

E Methods

This cross-sectional study employed a survey method to explore the mental health status of international students currently studying at a large Canadian research university during the winter and spring 2020 semesters. This study also examined coping style and level of social support as predictors of the target population's mental health level. The inclusion criteria were international students registered in a full-time or part-time, graduate or undergraduate program at the university on a study permit. Local Canadian students and permanent residents in Canada were excluded. Recruitment information was sent to all international students through the campus e-newsletters and international student Facebook pages. Students interested in participating clicked the study link to access the anonymous online survey. The study was approved by the University Research Ethics Board. The online survey consisted of demographic questions involving age, gender, marital status, country of origin, length of stay in Canada, faculty of study, and degree level. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS®)⁶¹ version 27.0 was used for analysis. The mean scores and standard deviation were calculated.

F Results and Discussion

The total number of students who completed the survey was 338. Approximately 8,000 international students were studying at the university during the winter and spring 2020 semesters. Four percent (338 students) successfully completed the survey. The sample represented international students from 53 countries. In this study, we investigated the mental health status of international students studying at a Canadian university. Based Keyes's Dual Continuum Model of Mental Health and Mental Illness, 76% of international students were located in the quadrant of optimal mental health without any previous diagnosis/treatment of any mental disorders. On the other hand, 3% were found in the quadrant of poor mental health with an earlier diagnosis/treatment of mental disorders. However, nearly 13% of the participants experienced optimal mental health although some had previously been diagnosed or treated for any mental illness. In comparison, 8% had poor mental health without a previous history of mental disorders. The analysis showed that approach coping style, avoidant coping style, and social support level were significant predictors of positive mental health and psychological distress among international students. Women, Ph.D. students, and those who were married demonstrated better mental health status and lower psychological distress than their counterparts.

G This study found that most students (65%) were moderately mentally healthy.⁶⁵ The specific challenges and problems of living and studying in a foreign country could play an essential role in moving from a state of languishing to flourishing. A concerning proportion (8.3%) of international students do not have a diagnosable mental illness but are languishing. Specific attention should be paid to this group, as they experience poor mental health and may not receive any professional support.

H In line with the previous findings,^{18,24} women were found to use more approach coping strategies when they were in difficult situations and were likely to have a better mental

health status than men. This result might be because women are more likely to seek help, to disclose their mental health problems to their friends or family members, to stay connected with their sources of support than men, and are more resilient.⁶⁹ This finding is in contrast to existing masculine norms, personal stigma, and gender-based expectations in the community and the campus culture in terms of men's mental health. We found that men have a lower perceived social support than women. Men were less likely to express their feelings and mental health problems to their friends or family members, and their social support networks were more limited since seeking support went against their role expectations focusing on maintaining strength and emotional restraint.

I In addition to coping skills, perceived social support was found to be a predictor of mental health and psychological distress among international students in the present study. Previous [investigate] have indicated that social support positively impacted the mental health outcomes of post-secondary students and played an encouraging role in healthy adjustment to the post-secondary environment. This study particularly found that women have a higher perceived support than men. As gender plays a part in perceived social support, women are more likely to receive support from friends and significant others.^{75,76} Women tend to share their feelings more freely with friends and have more social connectedness as compared to men, making the sense of social support more significant to women. Furthermore, married international students report significantly [great] social support overall compared to single students.

J Recommendations

There are several recommendations for universities. First, it's essential to draw attention to male undergraduate international students, as this population has shown lower perceived social support and uses more avoidant coping strategies. We recommend developing integrated support programs **between** international student services and university health centres to **address** men's mental health and well-being needs. Second, facilitating **peer** support in which international students can enter and exit at any time to share their challenges or problems can enhance their sense of social support. In addition, providing opportunities that bring international and domestic students together can be worthwhile. Multicultural interactions would facilitate international students' adjustment process, reduce their acculturative stress, and develop a sense of belongingness in western society. Third, it is recommended for universities to focus on mental health promotion, including education on healthy coping skills and incorporating mental health educational programs into the undergraduate curriculum. Faculties and university counsellors are suggested to raise awareness of student mental health and develop culturally sensitive care for international students. Finally, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, this study demonstrated that most international students struggled with psychological distress. Therefore, universities could work to ensure that the students on the margins or those who exhibit mental health issues get the support they need by providing them multiple opportunities, including online platforms, to express their concerns and access services and support.

K Conclusions

The present study contributes to the current body of literature on international student mental health in Canada. Moreover, this study's results will be useful for international students' centres, university counselling services, and university health offices. It is highly recommended that international students' campus services work collaboratively to enhance international students' positive mental health. Preparing well-organized orientation programs for international students can help them familiarize with the university culture and Canadian culture and build networks with other international students from their home country.

M Conflict of interest disclosure

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest. The authors confirm that the research presented in this article met the ethical guidelines, including adherence to the legal requirements of Canada and received approval from the Research Ethics Board of the University of Alberta.

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READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who wrote this research article? (1)
2. Where did the research take place? (1)
3. List any two types of mental health challenges that students are likely to experience when they proceed to post-secondary institutions. (2)
4. State one consequence experienced by students because of mental health challenges. (1)
5. Why do international students not look for assistance from health professionals when they experience mental health issues? Give two reasons. (2)
6. In one sentence, summarise the main idea expressed in paragraph C in one sentence. (2)
7. Identify the paragraph which gives information on previous research on mental health. (1)
8. Explain how gender differences affect perceived social support among international students. (2)
9. State two recommendations the study makes to improve mental health support for male international students. (2)

10. Apply comprehension context clues to determine the meaning of the following words (in bold) as used in the passage. (2)

- (a) transition (paragraph A)
- (b) double whammy (paragraph D)

11. Identify any two cohesive devices that have been used in paragraph K. (2)

12. What do the following pronouns refer to? (2)

- (a) they (paragraph D)
- (b) their (paragraph D)

QUESTION 2: LANGUAGE USAGE

[15 marks]

The following questions are based on the reading passage in Question 1.

1. The following words (in bold) have been used in the text. Rewrite them in their constituent parts. (2)

- (a) international (paragraph B)
- (b) spirituality (paragraph B)

2. Classify the following words (in bold) according to their morpheme structure. (2)

- (a) post-secondary (paragraph C)
- (b) emotions (paragraph C)

3. Indicate whether the suffixes in the following words (in bold) are derivational or inflectional. (2)

- (a) categorise-d (paragraph C)
- (b) discriminat-ion (paragraph C)

4. What part of speech are the following words (in bold) in paragraph J as used in the text. (3)

(a) between

(b) address

(c) peer

5. Observe the two words in bold in paragraph I. Write each word in its correct form so that the sentence is grammatically correct. (4)

(a) investigate

(b) great

6. Give an example of an abbreviation or acronym from the text. (2)

QUESTION 3: RESEARCH ANALYSIS

[15 Marks]

The following questions are based on the eading passage in Question 1.

1. Where was this research study conducted? (1)

2. Who were the participants in this study? (2)

3. How many participants were involved in this study? (2)

4. State two research questions that guided this study. (4)

5. Would you say this research study is qualitative or quantitative? Support your answer. (2)

6. How was data for this research study collected? (2)

7. Why was it necessary for the researchers to obtain approval from the Research Ethics Board as stated in paragraph M? (2)

QUESTION 4: ACADEMIC WRITING

[20 marks]

1. Read the following article and do the tasks that follow.

1. Plagiarism is a world-wide problem that are being experienced at tertiary institutions. 2. Although plagiarism is no new problem in the academic world. 3. The internet has given rise to a new generation of trespassers. 4. Students who have internet access are able to copy information on almost any subject directly from a web page and present them as their own. 5. Whilst access to much more information could lead to studies of a better quality it also has the consequence that students increasingly submit copied work. 6. it is not always possible for lecturers to trace the original source. 7. Finding the original sources is a time-consuming task it places much pressure on already overworked lecturers.

Each of the 8 sentences above has one of the errors listed below. Write the number of the sentence next to the error it exemplifies. The first one has been presented as an example.

(12)

Error	Sentence in which the error is
(a) Spelling error	3
(b) Missing semi-colon	_____
(c) Lack of subject-verb agreement	_____
(d) Run-on sentence	_____ -
(e) Lack of a capital letter	_____
(f) Pronoun referent disagreement	_____
(g) Sentence fragment	_____

2. Indicate whether the following statements are True or False

(8)

- (a) In formal writing, slang vocabulary is avoided.
- (b) The passive form of speech is preferred to enhance objectivity.
- (c) Clarity of message can be achieved through the use of cliché vocabulary.
- (d) In-text citation is part of the reference list.

QUESTION 5: TEXT STRUCTURE**[15 marks]**

1. Read the paragraph below and answer the questions that follow.

The police force and the army serve different roles in society. They are uniformed services with functions that vary significantly. The police maintain law and order within communities, while the army defends the country from external threats. Police officers interact with civilians on a daily basis whereas soldiers are often stationed at borders or in barracks. Despite their shared discipline and training, their operational environments differ. The police focus on crime prevention. On the other hand, the army prepares for warfare. Lastly, the police are governed by civil law, while the army follows military law. Their recruitment processes and career paths also diverge.

- (a) Identify the text structure used in this article. (1)
- (b) List two text structure specific cohesive devices that enhance the structure of the article. (2)
- (c) Name four elements of a paragraph exemplified in the passage above. (2)
2. Write a paragraph of about 10 to 12 sentences in which you discuss the effects of technology on students' reading and writing skills. Your paragraph should have a clear topic sentence, supporting sentences, at least two text specific cohesive devices and a concluding sentence. Pay attention to grammar and punctuation as well. (10)

QUESTION 6: REFERENCING**[15 marks]**

1. Answer the following questions in brief.

- (a) Why is it important to use in-text citation in academic writing? (2)
- (b) Explain the difference between a quote and a paraphrase. (2)
- (c) What does the abbreviation APA stand for? (1)
- (d) What does the abbreviation 'et al' stand for? (1)

2. Write a reference entry for the following publications. Underline instead of italics (9)

- (a) Printed newspaper article

Title of article: Namibia authorises poultry imports
Writer: Jacque Rollins

Date of publication: 12 August 2025
Page number: 14

(b Academic journal article

Author: Jan Lister
Year of publication: 2022
Article title: The impact of social media on mental health
Journal title: Journal of Social Psychology
Volume of journal and issue number: 10(2)
Page range of article: 112 – 1118

(c Book with one author

Book title: Comparative education in Africa
Author: Deanne Haley
Publisher: Gamsberg Mcmillan
Year of publication: 2014
Edition: Fourth

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