Letter to the Editor

Promoting Mental Health Related to Self-Esteem During COVID-19: Insights From an Indonesian Teacher

Zalik Nuryana, MPdI[1,2] iD

This letter to the editor will discuss the importance of developing a curriculum to increase students' self-esteem, especially during the COVID-19 period. This school curriculum design incorporates the role of parents in creating a comfortable learning environment for students so that students' self-esteem increases in an emergency. As a result, increasing students' self-esteem can reduce psychological pressure and stress levels. To date, distance education has impacted the cognitive abilities of students,[1,2] but the problems of self-esteem have not been addressed. During the COVID-19 era, the home environment allows for interactions that foster self-esteem but cannot fully encourage self-esteem growth.

The author believes that COVID-19 has had a psychological impact on student development. The problem of self-esteem that should have developed under normal conditions before COVID-19 is currently almost unusable. The Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic Indonesia (Kemendikbud) issued the Decree of the Kemendikbud concerning guidelines for curriculum implementation in education units in special conditions. The curriculum in the academic unit in special conditions provides flexibility for schools to choose a curriculum following the learning needs of students. Education units under special conditions in the implementation of learning can (1) still refer to the national curriculum, (2) use the emergency curriculum, or (3) simplify the curriculum independently. All special conditions education levels can choose from three curriculum options.

The author agrees with the Letter to the Editor by Jafari et al[3] that the education system must be revised immediately so that mental health problems do not drag on. The right strategy will determine the success of the online education system. So, the author gives a viewpoint, campaigning for a pleasant learning environment so that self-esteem is formed. When children start school, their self-concept is already formed. This influence is quickly acquired through the family environment. The importance of the school environment cannot be overstated. It combines factors from school, family, and innate intelligence, which appear to be important elements in increasing students' self-esteem during academic years,[4] but are not the case during COVID-19, so it is important to build that environment. Second is campaigning for mental health through integrated media. School closures and the closure of other public facilities once again impact student psychology. Teachers should strive to create a friendly learning environment. Parents also work hard so that their children feel at home while studying with the limitations and fears caused by COVID-19. Students' self-esteem suffers from this condition. Schools can create simple guides on how to grow self-esteem during online learning. Teachers and parents are the intended audiences. Next, conduct face-to-face online sessions with students to explain self-esteem so that they can begin to recognize and engage in activities that can increase self-esteem, and finally, plan distance learning activities to increase students' self-esteem. The right policies and planning, which will support online learning for continuing education during COVID-19 without stunting the development of self-esteem, will help promote mental health during the pandemic.

[1]School of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, China
[2]Department of Islamic Education, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Corresponding Author:
Zalik Nuryana, School of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University, 122 Ninghai Road, Nanjing 210097, China.
Email: zalik.nuryana@pai.uad.ac.id

ORCID iD

Zalik Nuryana https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8701-0487

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