EMPOWERING THE PUBLIC THROUGH HEALTH LITERACY: LITERATURE STUDIES

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Abstract

This research aims to understand the effectiveness of health literacy programmes in empowering the public. Emphasizing the importance of health literacy and its implications for health outcomes, the study also explores potential obstacles to the implementation of this kind of program and what strategies can be used to expand health literature. The research method used is literature review, which involves searching, evaluating, and synthesizing existing research related to health literature. This research found that health literacy plays an important role in improving health outcomes and empowering communities, by enabling individuals to make more intelligent health decisions. However, the implementation of health literacy programmes has obstacles to both resource constraints, access to information, technological problems, cultural and linguistic barriers, and society's resistance to change. Nevertheless, the survey also found various effective strategies to overcome such barriers, such as sustainable education, relatable media use, and peer-to-peer programmes, as well as the important role of governments and related institutions in providing policy support and resources.

Keyword: Empowerment, Society, Health Literacy, Literature Studies.

Introduction

Technological advances in human life have brought significant impact and transformation in many aspects. Nowadays, human life cannot be freed from technological advances that continue to evolve following the changes of the times

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(Peláez, A. L., & Kyriakou, D. 2008). Technology plays an important role in helping to improve the economy and create a variety of facilities in everyday activities. In the context of social and interaction, advances in information and communication technology have changed the way humans interact, strengthening unlimited social networks by distance and time (Markard, J. 2020). One area that has undergone revolutionary changes as a result of technological development is communication and transportation (Moni et al., 2020). On the other hand, in the field of transportation, technology has revolutionized the way humans and objects move from one place to another, increasing efficiency and reducing travel time. (Thonemann et al., 2020). The development and transformation of digital technology also greatly affects the way we work and meet economic, social, and environmental needs effectively, including in the field of health. (Mbunge et al., 2021).

Health technology is an innovation that uses devices, medicines, vaccines, procedures, and systems designed to improve the quality of health care and improve public health. According to its nature, health technology can be divided into three categories: software, hardware, and operational procedures. (Mbunge et al., 2021).

Technology facilities in healthcare today are available such as Telemedicine and Online Consulting, Electronic Health Records (EHR), Wearable Technology, Robotics and AI in Health, Genetic Testing and Personalised Medicine, and Virtual Reality in Health (Cicirelli et al., 2021). Technological approaches to public health include the use of information and communication technology in health disclosure, use of mobile applications in surveillance data collection, and use of social media in health promotion and advocacy of public health issues. Basically, technology opens up a huge opportunity to improve access to and quality of healthcare, although it also brings challenges related to data security and ethical considerations. (Coccia et al., 2021).

Therefore, in the current era of globalization, health is one of the important aspects that supports the quality of life of individuals and societies. (Coccia et al., 2021). In response, the importance of health literacy has become increasingly recognized as a key foundation for understanding and managing health information effectively. Health literacy is not only limited to the ability to read and understand health information, but also includes the capacity to access, process, and use such information in health-related decision-making. (Kickbusch, I. 2002).

Health literacy involves the ability of an individual to acquire, process, and understand health information and services necessary to make sound health decisions. There are two important aspects of health literature: personal health literacy, which relates to the ability of an individual to find, understand, and use the necessary health information and services, and the ability to apply such information in everyday life. (Kickbusch, I. S. 2001).

This concept of health literacy is very relevant, especially in the midst of a pandemic, where individuals need to access, understand, and use health information to protect themselves and others. Developing health literacy can help people to better understand the information, recommendations, and warnings delivered by health authorities and the media. (Quaglio et al., 2017).

Therefore, raising public health literacy is an important strategy in empowering people. (Quaglio et al., 2017). Community empowerment is a process in which individuals and communities gain control over their own affairs and control over the factors and decisions that shape their lives. It involves strengthening the capacity of individuals, groups, and communities to plan, decide, and take action to improve their well-being and their goals. (Melo et al., 2020).

There are several actions that can be taken to empower people, including: Education and Training, Participation and Participation in Decision-making, Access to Information, and Increasing Economic Capacity (Saleh, A., & Mujahiddin, M. 2020; Revell, P., & Dinnie, E. 2020).

Empowering a community through health literacy can pave the way for increasing the awareness, knowledge, and skills of an individual in managing health, both for himself and the community in which he or she lives. (Kurniawati et al., 2021).

First, for policymakers, the results of this research can be a guide in designing effective health literacy programmes for empowerment of the community. Second, for the academic community, it is expected to add a body of knowledge related to the relationship between health literature and empowering the public. Third, for health practitioners and activists, it can provide insight into strategies and methods that can be adopted in the implementation of health literation programmes in the society.

Research Method

The research method used in this study is literature. Literature research method is a series of activities related to the collection of data from library sources,

reading and recording, and managing such research materials. As a researcher, Literary Studies searches for research references from various reliable sources. (Bazeley, 2013; Linos & Carlson, 2017).

Techniques used in these research methods include: 1) Keyword search: Researchers search for relevant keywords in various sources, such as catalogues, indexes, search engines, etc. 2) Data collection: Data found, collected, and identified from various library sources. 3) Reading and recording: The researchers read the source thoroughly and recorded the relevant information. 4) Data analysis: After the data is gathered, the researchers then analyze the information. 5) Presentation of information: The results of the analysis are then presented in the appropriate format. (Damgaard et al., 2001; Pathak et al., 2013; Doz, 2011).

Result and Discussion

Health Literacy and Dimensions

Health literacy involves the information people need to make good decisions about their health. There are two important aspects of health literature: personal health literacy and public health literation. (Van Den Broucke et al., 2020). Personal health literacy about how well a person can find and understand the information and health services they need. It is also related to the ability to use the information and services effectively. Health literacy refers not only to the ability to read and understand health information, but also to the capacity to acquire, process, and use health information to make sound health decisions. (Okyay et al., 2015).

This ability is crucial, especially in pandemic times, where health literacy can influence in shaping everyday life behavior that supports full health. (Okyay et al., 2015). A high level of health literacy in the community can make it easier for individuals to understand information about how to prevent disease, access health services, and follow health instructions or procedures given by a medical professional. Thus, health literacy is one of the keys to improving the quality of health of individuals and communities as a whole. (Mei et al., 2023).

Health literacy is the extent to which an individual is able to acquire, process, and understand the basic health information and services needed to make the right health decisions. This definition emphasizes the importance of the ability of individuals to use health information received, whether from health care facilities, mass media, the Internet, or other sources, to improve their own quality of life and the surrounding communities. (Rowlands et al., 2017).

The health literacy dimension refers to the various aspects or capacities required to effective understanding and application of health information. Health

literacy is not only about reading and writing skills in the health field but also covers a wider range of other skills. (Rowlands et al., 2017).

The main dimensions of health literacy include: 1) Functional literacy: basic reading and writing skills, enabling a person to understand written health information, such as brochures or medical instructions. 2) Numeracy or Quantitative Literacy: The ability to understand and use information in numerical form, including medication doses, recovery times, or health risk statistics. 3) Information literacy (Information Literacy): the ability to find, find, evaluate, and use health information from various sources, including the Internet and social media. 4) Media literacy : Relates to the evaluative ability of media content (including social media) that informs about health, like distinguishing between true health information and false or misleading information. 5) Cultural Literacy: Ability to understand and apply cultural and social norms in the context of health, as well as to understand how culture and personal beliefs can influence health-related understanding and decisions. 6) Science literacy: The ability to understand basic concepts of science that are relevant to health and can analyze and evaluate research or scientific findings in a health context. 7) Critical literacy (Critical Literacy): the ability to critically assimilate and analyze health information, consider its sources and purposes, and use such information to make informed and critical health decisions. (Ploomipuu et al., 2020; Frisch et al., 2012; Okyay et al., 2015).

Collectively, these health literacy dimensions enable one to navigate complex health systems, understand the risks and benefits of health interventions, and make good health decisions based on available information. Health literacy is an essential skill to promote the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

Empowering the community

Empowerment is the process by which individuals and communities gain control over the factors that affect their lives. Through empowerment, communities can enhance their ability to set goals, make choices, and change social, economic, and political conditions for the common good. Community empowerment covers several key aspects, including capacity-raising, access to resources, participation and leadership, as well as wider social change (Muhamad Khair et al., 2020). The Aspects of Community Empowerment, include; 1) Capacity and Skill Development: Enhancing the ability and skills of individuals and communities to solve their own problems. This includes education, training, and skills development. 2) Access to

Resources: Ensure individuals and communities have better access to the necessary resources, such as education, health, and economics. 3) Participation: Engage communities actively in decision-making processes that affect their lives. This includes participation in program planning, implementation, and evaluation. 4) Leadership: Encourage and support leadership development within communities, including building capacity to lead initiatives and advocate for change. 5) Advocacy and Policy Change: Supporting communities in demanding policy change and more fair practices from authority institutions. 6) Networking: Building andining a strong support network among community members and across sectors to enhance collective power in advocacy and action. 7) Economic independence: Assisting individuals and community in creating independence through economic development, micro-enterprise development, access to employment, enhanced economic skills and skills. (Muhamad Khair et al., 2020; Kruahong et al., 2023; Coy et al., 2021).

The purpose of empowerment is to social justice, improve the quality of life, and enable all members of society to reach their full potential. It is done by reducing inequality, strengthening social solidarity, and advancing the rights of communities. (Coy et al., 2021).

Through empowerment, communities can transform the dynamics of power so that they become not only objects of social policy but also active subjects in the development and formulation of policies that affect their lives. This leads to increased participation, responsibility, and collaboration in collective efforts to create more inclusive, fair, and sustainable societies. (Herdiansyah, H. 2023).

One perspective identifies at least two important theories in community empowerment, emphasizing the importance of this understanding in social practice and community development. (Herdiansyah, H. 2023).

Empowerment of the community as a concept, centred on the idea of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to enable them to make changes in their society or their environment. This can include economic, social, political, or educational empowerment, depending on the context and needs of the community concerned. In practice, empowerment often consists of programmes or interventions aimed at improving access to resources, providing skills training, raising socio-political awareness, or supporting the formation of stronger community networks. (Agustang et al., 2021).

Indicators of empowerment may vary depending on the specific context and focus area of intervention. However, there are some common elements that are

often considered as indicators of empowerment. Here are some general empowerment indicators: 1) Participation in Decision-making: Empowered individuals or groups will participate in the decision-making process that is relevant to their lives. 2) Access and Control of Resources: Empowering is often associated with increased access and control over vital resources, such as income, education, and health services. 3) Improvement in Conditions of Life: Improvements in living conditions, like health status, education or economic conditions usually indicate higher levels of empowering. 5) Skills and Knowledge: New skills and knowledge acquired are also indicators of empowerment. Examples include knowledge of rights, decision-making skills, or vocational skills. 6) Social Recognition and Influence: Public recognition and increased influence are also indicators of empowerment. 7) Able to face and overcome obstacles: Ability to identify, face, and overcoming obstacles in achieving goals is also an important indicator of empowerment. 8) Having and enforcing own rights: Knowing their own rights and feeling able to enforce and enforce them. 9) Participation in social and political life: empowered individuals tend to be more active in political and social participation. 10) Participating in economic activities: Active participation in economic activity, whether as a producer or as a consumer, is another important indicator of empowerment. (Mehrolhasani et al., 2021; Herdiansyah, H. 2023).

Thus, empowerment assessment typically requires a comprehensive and participatory approach to ensure that all relevant aspects are taken into account and that the process indeed promotes empowering and not merely a symbolic or cosmetic action.

Health Literacy and Empowerment Relations

Health literacy, which refers to an individual's ability to understand and use health information, has a significant influence on the empowerment of individuals and societies. (Andrus, M. R., & Roth, M. T. 2002).

Here are some ways in which health literacy can contribute to empowerment: 1) Expertise in Health Decision Making: Health literature can empower individuals and communities to make decisions related to their own health. With a good understanding of health and disease, individuals and societies can choose the best treatment options, understand the importance of preventive measures, and understand how health systems work. 2) Discrimination Reduction: Health literacy can help reduce discrimination and gaps in access and outcomes to health services. Individuals and communities with a high level of health literacy

will be able to better results in often complex and frustrating health systems. 3) Improving Welfare and Quality of Life: With health literacy, individuals and communities can better cope with health challenges, manage chronic diseases, prevent disease, and improve well-being and quality of life in general. 4) Healthy Community Development: Good health literacy can help promote and build healthy communities by encouraging positive behaviour such as healthy lifestyles, proper use of health services, and participation in public health programmes. 5) Confidence in Health Services Navigation: Good health literacy can also empower individuals and communities by giving them confidence in navigating healthcare systems and making informed decisions about their health (Lin et al., 2019; Sykes et al., 2018; Nutbeam et al., 2018).

Overall, health literacy plays an important role in empowering individuals and communities and is an important component in improving public health.

Empowerment strategy through improved health literacy

Empowerment strategies are a series of approaches aimed at enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups so that they can increase control over their own lives. It is often related to increased access to resources, opportunities, human rights, and social justice. (Nutbeam, D. 2000).

The effectiveness of empowerment strategies often depends on how well the strategy is adapted to the local context and the specific needs of the target community. It involves continuous evaluation and adjustment of strategies based on feedback and results obtained. The key to successful empowerment is empowering individuals and communities to take the initiative and become agents of change in their own lives (Nutbeam, D. 2000).

Implementing empowerment strategies effectively requires cross-sectoral cooperation, including involvement of governments, the private sector, non-profit institutions, and above all the society itself. Inclusive and participatory methodologies are more likely to succeed in achieving the goal of sustainable empowerment. (Lin et al., 2019).

Through health literacy, individuals and communities can empower themselves to make informed and effective health decisions. Here are some strategies that can be used to improve health literacy and empowerment: 1) Health education includes; a) Health education classes: Conducting classes or workshops on specific topics, such as nutrition, sports, mental health, disease prevention, stress management, etc. b) Cultural context: Health education materials should take into

account the cultural context of the target community in order to be more acceptable and effective. 2) Access to information includes; (a) Health information that is easy to understand: Health information should be presented in a language that is easily understood by the general public; (b) Use the right media: Identify and use the most effective media to reach the target community. (misalnya, brosur, poster, video, media sosial, dsb.). 3) Partnerships with Third Parties include; (a) Collaboration with Health Professionals: Collaborating with doctors, nurses, and other health professionals to provide accurate and reliable information and resources; (b) Engaging Local Communities: Working with local community leaders and organizations can help increase public confidence and participation. 4) Capacity-building, including; (a) Community Health Workers Training: Training of individuals from the community to provide education and health support to other members of the community. (5) Public Policy and Advocacy includes; (a) Policy Reform: Working with governments or authorities to reform policies and laws that affect access and quality of health information (Lin et al., 2019; Náfrádi et al. 2018) Empowerment strategies through improved health literacy may require adjustments based on the needs and preferences of the target community. It is essential to carry out initial needs assessments and ongoing evaluations to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the programmes implemented.

Challenges and obstacles in implementing health literacy programmes

Implementing a health literacy program brings challenges and obstacles that need to be overcome in order for the program to succeed. Here are some of the frequently emerging challenges: 1) Resource constraints, consisting of; (a) Limited funding: Health literacy programmes often require financial resources for training, materials, and other activities. Financing limitations can limit the scope and effectiveness of the programmes, (b) Health and Educator Energy is limited: In many regions, there is a shortage of health personnel and trained professionals who can provide health education. 2) Access to Information includes; (a) Connectivity and Internet Access: In some areas, especially in rural or remote areas, access to the Internet and sources of information may be very limited; (b) Language and Culture: Health information that is not adapted to the local language and cultural context may reduce the effectiveness of message delivery; (c) Digital literacy and Technology includes; and (a): Digital Skills: Understanding and skills regarding the use of information technology can be an obstacle, especially among older people and in regions with low access to technology education. 4) Stigma and Tabu. Some

health topics may be seen as taboo, or there is stigma associated with certain diseases. This can hinder literacy efforts because people may be reluctant to seek or receive information. People may be skeptical about health information because of their belief in traditional practices or because of contradictory information from various sources, including social media. Many individuals may not feel the need to seek information or change their behavior until they face a health problem (Schaeffer et al., 2020; Hamidzadeh et al., 2019).

1) Multisectoral cooperation: Collaborations between governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and communities can provide broader resources and more sustainable initiatives. 2) Inclusive use of technology: Adapting technology to include solutions that are easily accessible to those with digital constraints. 3) Community-based education: Activating and training community members as educators can help overcome the constraints of expertise. 4) Creating Culture-Face Materials: Developing material that is understandable, culturally and linguistically relevant, can enhance acceptance. 5) Advocacy and Awareness: Run a campaign to raise awareness of the importance of health literacy and eliminate stigma or taboo (Hamidzadeh et al., 2019; Hedelund et al., 2018).

Efforts to address these challenges require a comprehensive and adaptive approach, along with ongoing evaluation to ensure the program remains relevant and effective for the community it serves.

Conclusion

Public Empowerment Through Health Literacy can be concluded, among others; 1) The importance of health literacy: Health literacy is recognized as a crucial aspect in empowerment of society as it enables individuals to make better decisions around their own health and their communities. 2) Relationship with Better Health Outcomes: Literature studies likely show a positive relationship between high health literacy and better health outcomes, including reduced morbidity and mortality rates, as well as improved quality of life. 3) Implementation barriers: The study will highlight barriers to improving health literacy, such as resource constraints, access to information, technological problems, cultural and linguistic barriers, and the resistance of society itself to change. 4) Effective Strategies: Discussion of strategies that have proven effective in improving health literacy, which can include sustainable education, relatable media use, and peer-to-peer programmes.

Empowering the public through health literacy often drives practical steps for effective implementation and urgently requires changes at various levels of health and education systems to optimal health outcomes.

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