

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRRATIONAL BELIEFS AND
ADJUSTMENT OF FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Specially dedicated to
MY
BELOVED FATHER AND MOTHER

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays the quality of students, especially for the female high school students is changing. Female students have irrational beliefs problems. Social adjustment, emotional adjustment and educational adjustment are three main adjustments for the female high school students. The objectives of this study are to identify the relationship between irrational beliefs and social, emotional and educational adjustment of female high school students; and to identify which irrational beliefs has the most positive influence on social, emotional, and educational adjustment of female high school students. Questionnaire has been done by a sample of 208 respondents from Sekolah Tun Fatimah (STF). There are two parts in the survey form where Part A is Irrational Beliefs Test (IBT), and Part B is Adjustment Inventory for School (AISS). Other than that, Pearson Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to analyze data. The study found there is a relationship between irrational beliefs and social, emotional, and educational adjustment of female high school students. It is also found that demand of approval was among ten IBs factors which has influenced the most on social adjustment; dependency was among ten IBs factors which has influenced the most on emotional adjustment; and dependency was among ten IBs factors which has influenced the most on educational adjustment.

ABSTRAK

Kini kualiti pelajar terutamanya bagi pelajar-pelajar sekolah tinggi perempuan telah berubah. Para Pelajar perempuan mempunyai masalah seperti kepercayaan yang tidak rasional. Penyesuaian sosial, penyesuaian emosi dan penyesuaian pendidikan adalah tiga penyelarasan utama kepada pelajar perempuan sekolah tinggi. Objektif kajian ini termasuk untuk mengenalpasti hubungan di antara kepercayaan yang tidak rasional dan penyesuaian social, emosi dan pendidikan pelajar perempuan sekolah tinggi; untuk mengenalpasti kepercayaan yang tidak rasional mempunyai pengaruh yang paling positif ke atas penyesuaian social, emosi dan pendidikan pelajar perempuan sekolah tinggi. Terdapat 208 responden dari Sekolah Tun Fatimah (STF) telah menjawab soal selidik. Terdapat dua bahagian dalam borang soal selidik termasuk Bahagian A adalah Kepercayaan tidak rasional Ujian (IBT) dan Bahagian B ialah Inventori Pelarasan untuk pelajar Sekolah (AISS). Selain daripada itu, Korelasi Pearson Analisis dan Analisis Regresi telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Kajian tersebut didapati mempunyai hubungan antara kepercayaan yang tidak rasional dengan penyesuaian sosial, emosi, dan pendidikan pelajar perempuan sekolah tinggi. Kajian tersebut juga didapati bahawa permintaan kelulusan adalah antara sepuluh faktor kepercayaan yang tidak rasional mempunyai pengaruh yang paling positif ke atas penyesuaian sosial; pergantungan adalah antara sepuluh faktor kepercayaan yang tidak rasional yang mempunyai pengaruh yang paling positif ke atas penyesuaian emosi dan kebergantungan adalah antara sepuluh faktor kepercayaan yang tidak rasional yang mempunyai pengaruh yang paling positif ke atas pelarasan pendidikan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AISS	Adjustment Inventory for School Students
IBs	Irrational Beliefs
IBT	Irrational Beliefs Test
RBs	Rational Beliefs
REBT	Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
STF	Sekolah Tun Fatimah
UTM	University Technology Malaysia

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the scope of this thesis. It divided into twelve sections. Following the introduction, section 1.2 presents issues related to the background of the research, and section 1.3 specifies the statements of the study. Section 1.4 identifies the question of the research, formulated to achieve the objectives of this research. Section 1.5 describes the research's purpose, section 1.6 on the research's hypotheses and section 1.7 on scope of the study. Followed by section 1.8 specifies the significance of study and 1.9 on limitation of research. Then, section 1.10 on conceptual definition and 1.11 on operational definition. At last, conclusion is outlined in section 1.12.

1.2 Background of the study

Beliefs play an important role in human life. Beliefs are able to affect our emotional which lead us to happiness or sadness (Krauss, 2012). Beliefs are divided into two types which are positive or rational; negative or irrational. Rational beliefs (RBs) are at the core of the solutions to problems, irrational beliefs (IBs) are at the core of emotional problems” (Dryden, 2006). According to Lawson (2000), IBs refer to those illogical and rigid views about event which are inconsistent with reality. These beliefs consequently lead to self disturbing behaviors. They are also linked with poor individual function and individual adjustment (Davies, 2006).

In addition, holding IBs, causes emotional problems (Coon and Mitter, 2009), dysfunctional behaviors, and a lack of self-acceptance (Davies, 2008). In fact, the importance in holding IBs is the negative consequences which cause different problems. This means that IBs and maladaptive beliefs are associated with, may lead to psychological and physical malfunctioning (Amutio and Smith, 2007). Thus, “people who suffer from psychological disorders, often carry around faulty or IBs about the world and about themselves” (Nairne, 2009).

In Ellis viewpoint, there are ten IBs which are as follows: demand of approval, high self-expectation, blaming proneness, frustration reactive, emotional irresponsibility, anxious over concern, problem avoidance, dependency, helplessness for change, and perfectionism (Moradi, Bahrami, and Akhgar, 2010).

Demand of approval is the person believes that he ought to be approved by others and his belief causes to trouble for the person. High self-expectation is the person believes that he has to reach to perfection and be competence by considerable amount of efforts and efficiency. The person believes that he has to be successful, reach to his goals and his judgment is based on success in his work. Blaming proneness is the person believes that some people are mean and they should be

punished and he believes that he and others making mistakes should be punished. Frustration reactive is the person believes that the unpleasant conditions lead to unhappiness and misery and these conditions are awful. Emotional irresponsibility is the person believes that his mental problems and distractions are result of problems and difficulties in life. Anxiety, depression, sad and distraction are due to the events and these events are external leading to emotional state not the person account. Anxious over concern is the person believes that in case of happening terrible event, individuals should be sad or anxious and these events cause to anxiety and frustration. Problem avoidance is the person believes that avoidance problems, responsibilities and duties are easier than coping. Dependency is the person believes that he should be depended on the powerful individuals and living without dependency difficult. Helplessness for change is the person believes that I am a product of life experiences of the past and present behavior. Perfectionism is the person believes that there is only one correct solution for every problem and there is a solution that is just perfect and if a man does not achieve it the result would be terrible (Karimi, 2009). If a person is prone to IBs, he would encounter irrational consequences and accordingly he or she would have an abnormal and anxious character (Moetamedin and Ebadi, 2007).

According to Shah (2012), adjustment is a major concern in all developmental stages, but is of great relevance during adolescent. Adapting to the changes within themselves and to the changed expectations of the society is a major development task of the adolescent stage. Mangal (2004) stated that the meaning of the word 'adjustment' is, to fit, make suitable, adapt, arrange, modify, harmonize or make correspondent. Shah (2012) stated that the happiness, aspirations, motivation levels, emotional well-being and subsequent achievements or education of adolescents are linked to their adjustment with the ever changing internal and external environment. Srividhya (2007) found out that good adjustment makes adolescents proud and self-satisfied, motivate them for future success, encourage them to be independent in thinking and build their confidences and in turn improve the mental health. This research study is divided into three types of adjustment. There are including social adjustment, emotional adjustment and educational adjustment among the female adolescents.

Social adjustment is the individual's adjustment with their social surrounding that can be gained by changing the self or the environment (Pourafkari, 2001). In Nyamayaro and Saravanan point (2013), social adjustment is how well a student copes with the interpersonal and societal demands that are inherent in the school environment. Social adjustment is the most difficult development task of adolescents' lives (Tiwari and Ruhela, 2012).

Secondly, emotional adjustment is the realization of one's emotion and feeling and controlling feeling when making relationships with others (Hamidi Farideh and Zeinab Mohamad, 2010). In Nyamayaro and Saravanan (2013) point, emotional adjustment is the extent to which a student experiences psychological distress and somatic problems. Therefore, emotional adjustment includes the physical and psychological well-being of the student.

Then, educational adjustment is influenced by factors such as motivation, mental capabilities, family condition, educational system, personal skills, social and cultural factors, and psychological factors (Hartos and Power, 2000). According to Nyamayaro and Saravanan (2013), educational adjustment is how well a student copes with the various academic demands such as exams and assignments. A strong correlation has been reported between students' adjustment at school, social and personal adjustment (Hartos and Power, 2000).

Lastly, positive adjustment can assist students to face challenges, pressures and overcome it to accomplish their goals (Wolfok, 2001), in contrast to negative adjustment in which it will lead to frustration (Al-Kfaween, 2010). Therefore, these studies support the further investigation on IBs and adjustment.

1.3 Problem of Statement

The young generation is the future leaders that are expected to determine the direction of the country to achieve excellence. Therefore, an investment in human capital of young generation is crucial to prepare this group in order to withstand the current challenges of globalization (Fauziah, Mohamad and Chong, 2012). They are hoped to be useful individuals who are capable of contributing towards our country's well being in general.

IBs are not just for adults (Banks and Zions, 2009). IBs may induce special problems in adolescents (Flett and Hewitt, 2008). IBs are exposed to the danger of chronic depression. For example, a case happened that a Form four female student with good performance in academic from school of Kluang, Johor who have behavior problems and negative thoughts (Nurfadhilah Yahya and Mohammed Sharif Mustaffa, 2012). This female student involved in aggressive problems and biased manner. She bullied other students and fighting with her teachers.

Other than that, Hamidi Farideh and Zeinab Mohamad (2010) stated that adolescents with negative thoughts will make rigid ideas, lack of self-confidences, insecure feelings, and problems avoidances. The creativity of a people, innovation and decision making power is only originate from healthy RBs.

More importantly, adolescent depression is often related to suicide, the third leading cause of death for those aged 15-24 (McCarthy, Downes, and Sherman, 2008) and Charocnsuk (2007). In Malaysia, it has become an urgent concern as the suicide rates among adolescents keep on increasing. It was found that almost 7% of the adolescents experienced suicide ideation and more than half of them turned their thoughts into action (Jin and Lee, 2011). According to the National Statistics Department, the rate of suicide among youths in Malaysia was as low as 1 per 100,000 suicides per year in 2013. However, National Suicide Registry Malaysia

(NSRM) reported there were 1.28 suicides per 100,000 in a population estimated at 27.73 million for 2008 (Lubell *et al*, 2007). The reported figure was not accurate as there are difficulties in identifying a death as suicide due to many factors such as under reporting, insurance claims and family shame etc. Thus, the suicide rate should be in greater number. These problems need to be controlled and settled from early level so that these problems would not become worse until it may cause serious problems in future.

Other than that, students in our secondary schools exhibit various social adjustment problems (Shah, 2012). The problems of social adjustment that is common to all teenagers who are in normal environments become intensified if the teenagers have developed abnormal characteristics and are living in an unhealthy environment (Holmes, 1995). In Gonzales *et al*. (2001) research, adolescents in disadvantage communities or society are at elevated risk for exposed to multiple stressors, indicating high rates of crime and victimization, family conflict, and increased prevalence of deviant peers. Arthur (1998) asserts that the difficulty in adjustment for female students may also be due to the lack of social connections in the environment. Hampel and Petermann (2006) stated that females' adolescents evaluated a higher amount of perceived interpersonal stress and used more social support. The results showed that females adolescents were positively associated with social adjustment problems.

Female adolescence is a period of heightened emotionality which calls for awareness towards personal and emotional adjustment (Sathe, 2012). They are unaware of the storm and stress that they undergo. Their schoolwork suffers, they quarrel with their friends and family when they are emotionally disturbed. Hence emotional adjustment is needed to ease their emotional tension (Sathe, 2012).

The female adolescents are well-aware of the problems connected with their school-work and try to seek the help of teachers and elders (Agabrian, 2006). If proper guidance is given by the teachers and elders it will help the youngsters in

educational adjustment (Agabrian, 2006). School environment includes relationships among and between administration, teachers, parents, students and the community that influences over all development through the academic demands of formal curricular and through exposure to teachers who emphasize academic achievement, motivation to learn and self-improvement (Newman and Newman, 1986).

Adolescents are the energy of today and the bright hope of the future. Thus, adjustment should be a matter of serious concern not only to parents but also to teachers, elders and other adults who look forward to the welfare of the youngsters as well as in the future progress of our society.

Last but not least, researcher hopes that this study will enable educators, parents and society to gain much understanding concerning the side effects of IBs and growing potentialities of maturing adolescence who will heed to their immediate adjustment problems.

1.4 Research Questions

There are myriad of studies which deal with irrational beliefs and other variables such as job burnout, perfectionism, depression, and self-esteem or adjustment with other variables such as gender, communication patterns and mental health. Therefore, this study investigates the relationship between the IBs and adjustment. The study attempts to answer the following questions.

1. Is there a relationship between irrational beliefs and social adjustment of female high school students?

2. Is there a relationship between irrational beliefs and emotional adjustment of female high school students?
3. Is there a relationship between irrational beliefs and educational adjustment of female high school students?
4. Which irrational beliefs has the most positive influence on social adjustment of female high school students?
5. Which irrational beliefs has the most positive influence on emotional adjustment of female high school students?
6. Which irrational beliefs has the most positive influence on educational adjustment of female high school students?

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions of the study, six objectives have been formulated as following:

1. To identify the relationship between irrational beliefs and social adjustment of female high school students.
2. To identify the relationship between irrational beliefs and emotional adjustment of female high school students.
3. To identify the relationship between irrational beliefs and educational adjustment of female high school students.

4. To identify which irrational beliefs has the most positive influence on social adjustment of female high school students.
5. To identify which irrational beliefs has the most positive influence on emotional adjustment of female high school students.
6. To identify which irrational beliefs has the most positive influence on educational adjustment of female high school students.

1.6 Hypotheses

In order to investigate the relationship between irrational beliefs and adjustment, hypotheses will be investigated. Each objective is included ten hypotheses.

Objective 1: There is a significant relationship between irrational beliefs and social adjustment of female high school students.

1. Ho: There is no significant relationship between demand of approval and social adjustment of female high school students.
2. Ho: There is no significant relationship between high self expectation and social adjustment of female high school students.
3. Ho: There is no significant relationship between blaming proneness and social adjustment of female high school students.
4. Ho: There is no significant relationship between frustration reactive and social adjustment of female high school students.

5. Ho: There is no significant relationship between emotional irresponsibility and social adjustment of female high school students.
6. Ho: There is no significant relationship between anxious over concern and social adjustment of female high school students.
7. Ho: There is no significant relationship between problem avoidance and social adjustment of female high school students.
8. Ho: There is no significant relationship between dependency and social adjustment of female high school students.
9. Ho: There is no significant relationship between helplessness for change and social adjustment of female high school students.
10. Ho: There is no significant relationship between perfectionism and social adjustment of female high school students.

Objective 2: There is a significant relationship between irrational beliefs and emotional adjustment of female high school students.

11. Ho: There is no significant relationship between demand of approval and emotional adjustment of female high school students.
12. Ho: There is no significant relationship between high self expectation and emotional adjustment of female high school students.
13. Ho: There is no significant relationship between blaming proneness and emotional adjustment of female high school students.
14. Ho: There is no significant relationship between frustration reactive and emotional adjustment of female high school students.

15. Ho: There is no significant relationship between emotional irresponsibility and emotional adjustment of female high school students.
16. Ho: There is no significant relationship between anxious over concern and emotional adjustment of female high school students.
17. Ho: There is no significant relationship between problem avoidance and emotional adjustment of female high school students.
18. Ho: There is no significant relationship between dependency and emotional adjustment of female high school students.
19. Ho: There is no significant relationship between helplessness for change and emotional adjustment of female high school students.
20. Ho: There is no significant relationship between perfectionism and emotional adjustment of female high school students.

Objective 3: There is a significant relationship between irrational beliefs and educational adjustment of female high school students.

21. Ho: There is no significant relationship between demand of approval and educational adjustment of female high school students.
22. Ho: There is no significant relationship between high self expectation and educational adjustment of female high school students.
23. Ho: There is no significant relationship between blaming proneness and educational adjustment of female high school students.
24. Ho: There is no significant relationship between frustration reactive and educational adjustment of female high school students.

25. Ho: There is no significant relationship between emotional irresponsibility and educational adjustment of female high school students.
26. Ho: There is no significant relationship between anxious over concern and educational adjustment of female high school students.
27. Ho: There is no significant relationship between problem avoidance and educational adjustment of female high school students.
28. Ho: There is no significant relationship between dependency and educational adjustment of female high school students.
29. Ho: There is no significant relationship between helplessness for change and educational adjustment of female high school students.
30. Ho: There is no significant relationship between perfectionism and educational adjustment of female high school students.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The concept of IBs has received extensive study in the west. However, this concept needs to be addressed in studies especially in developing country such as Malaysia. This study focuses on the IBs and adjustment toward social, emotional and educational for female students from one of the high school in State of Johor, Malaysia. In this study, IBs is independent variable, whereas, social adjustment, emotional adjustment and educational adjustment are dependent variables.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study concentrates on the IBs and adjustment for female students from one of the high school in state of Johor, Malaysia. This study will focus on the relationship between IBs and selected adjustment factors. Verification can be done if there is a significant relation exists between two variables (various existing IBs and adjustment factors) of female high school students. This study is of great importance in the following ways:

The study finds out that the relationship between IBs and adjustment of female high school students. The study is also helps researcher to find out the ten factors of IBs have the most positive influence on particularly adjustment such as social adjustment, emotional adjustment and educational adjustment of female high school students. The study is important for school administrators, teachers and parents to identify the irrational beliefs and adjustment of female high school students. School administrators, teachers and parents can be prepared to be positive counselors to female students who with IBs. Counselors can also carry out some prevention program for students who holding with IBs.

1.9 Limitations

One of the limitations of the study is the study only conducted to students who study in Sekolah Tun Fatimah (STF). Hence, the sample size chosen for the current research was small and could not represent a larger population. The data and findings of the current research could not represent other students in different schools. Lastly, the questionnaires were answered reluctantly and hastily by some respondents due to not volunteering but answered the questionnaires which requested by teachers or counselors.

1.10 Definition of Concept

1.10.1 Conceptual Definition

Below is the conceptual definition of independent and dependent variables in this study. The conceptual definition of independent and dependent variables are inclusive of adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment, educational adjustment and IBs.

1.10.1.1 Adjustment

Adjustment helps the organism to cope with the demands and pressures of the outside world as well as the needs, desire and conflicts experiences from within (Dickens, 2006). Halonen and Santrok (1997) defined adjustment as a psychological process of adapting to cope with, managing their problems, challenges, tasks and requirement of daily life. Mishra (2005) defined adjustment is a process that helps a person to lead a happy and contended life while maintaining a balance between needs and capacity to fulfill them. It enables to change the way of life according to the demands of the situation and give the strength or ability to bring about the necessary in the conditions of environment. We can clearly see that researchers have their own or different views toward adjustment. In conclusion, Mishra (2005) definition is most suitable for this research study. Adjustment is a process that unfolds through time; it is being completed when female students indicated that they felt comfortable and confident.

1.10.1.2 Social Adjustment

Social adjustment ensuring learning social behavior is in harmony with social and personal needs. It would be through socialization process and by social interactions (Ryan and Shin, 2005). Social adjustment can be defined as the adaptation of the individual to the social environment or the change of the environment by the individual to suit the self (Campell, 2009). Both of the researchers above have the similarity views which defined social adjustment ensure a person adapts with social environment with personal needs. Whereas, (Rao, 2010) pointed out social adjustment required the development of psychic qualities and virtues in an individual. In conclusion, the definition from (Ryan and Shin, 2005) and (Campell, 2009) are suitable for this research.

1.10.1.3 Emotional Adjustment

Emotional adjustment is the realization of one's emotions and feelings and controlling feelings when making relationships with others (Farideh Hamidi and Zeinab Mohamad Hosseini, 2010). Besides, emotional adjustment refers to the psychological problems in life (Sharma, 2006). Rao (2010) also defined that emotional adjustment refers to an individual is said to be emotionally adjusted if she is able to express her emotions in a proper way at a proper time. We can clearly see that researchers' views toward emotional adjustment is different. In conclusion, the view from Farideh Hamidi and Zeinab Mohamad Hosseini (2010) is most suitable for this research.

1.10.1.4 Educational Adjustment

There are some different views about Educational adjustment. Firstly, educational adjustment inspires activities that increase achievement and efficacy such as concentration in the class, doing homework and assignment, planning, etc (Hamidi, Farideh Hosseini and Zeinab Mohamad, 2010). Secondly, educational adjustment defined as the adjustment of the students as measured through scholastic success, that is, a well-adjusted student is thought to be who obtains high scholastic grades (Rao, 2010). Lastly, (Rao, 2002) pointed out educational adjustment as the adjustment of student to the demands of academic life situation which includes adjustment to a variety environmental factors, adjustment to inner needs, desires and goals. Rao (2002) definition of educational adjustment is the most suitable for this research.

1.10.1.5 Irrational Beliefs

IBs refer to beliefs that are illogical, and/or do not have empirical support, and/or are non-pragmatic, it also lead to maladaptive and unhealthy consequences (David, Steven, and Ellis, 2009). Besides that, IBs refer to any thoughts that are inconsistent with reality (Knaus, 2006). Ellis (1997) also defined irrational thought as illogical, inflexible, and lacking in evidence. Based on the different views of IBs from three researchers above, they provided suitable definition concept for this research by pointing out the precise symptoms of IBs of female students

1.10.2 Operational Definition

Below is the operational definition of independent and dependent variables in this study. The operational definition of independent and dependent variables are inclusive of adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment, educational adjustment and IBs.

1.10.2.1 Adjustment

There are three types of adjustment of female high school students which including social adjustment, educational adjustment, and emotional adjustment in this research.

1.10.2.2 Social Adjustment

It refers to the ability to cope in social situations. It is the achievement of harmony between an individual and environment. It is measured by the Adjustment Inventory for High School Students (AISS) to assess the level of compatibility of high school students on social basis. AISS was developed by Sinha (1993). There are thirteen questions in this section. The five-point scale is used to measure this section such as 1= Not at all, 2= Very few, 3= Sometimes, 4= Low frequently and 5= Frequently.

1.10.2.3 Emotional Adjustment

A term referring to a girl to adjust their emotion to meet with satisfactions and tends to enjoy life to the fullest. It is measured by the Adjustment Inventory for

High School Students (AISS) to assess the level of compatibility of high school students on emotion basis. AISS was developed by Sinha (1993). There are thirteen questions in this section. The five-point scale is used to measure this section such as 1= Not at all, 2= Very few, 3= Sometimes, 4= Low frequently and 5= Frequently.

1.10.2.4 Educational Adjustment

Educational adjustment refers as how well the students adjust to the curriculum as evidenced by her interests and steadiness of purposes. It is measured by the Adjustment Inventory for High School Students (AISS) to assess the level of compatibility of high school students on education basis. AISS was developed by Sinha (1993). There are fourteen questions in this section. The five-point scale is used to measure this section such as 1= Not at all, 2= Very few, 3= Sometimes, 4= Low frequently and 5= Frequently.

1.10.2.5 Irrational Beliefs

IBs may lead to annoying consequences such as guilty and useless feeling, anxiety, hostility and affective disorders (Prochaska and Norcross, 2006). Thus, IBs can influence bodily health of human being. Irrational Beliefs Test (IBT) is made by Jones (1999) to assess the level of irrational beliefs of female high school students. The test has ten sections and each section has five questions. The ten sections included demand of approval, high self-expectation, blaming proneness, frustration reactive, emotional irresponsibility, anxious over concern, problem avoidance, dependency, helplessness for change, and perfectionism. The five-point scale is used to measure the each item such as 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neither agree nor disagree, 4= Agree, and 5= Strongly Disagree.

1.11 Conclusion

From what have been mentioned above, it can be concluded that female student's social, emotional and educational problems are related to their beliefs. These students come from unhealthy families or from cultures in which belief systems are developed in an unhealthy manner. The combination of school experiences and unhealthy society would lead students towards bad life styles as well.

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