Re-thinking Mental Health Literacy Programmes for Enhanced Help-Seeking Behaviour among Young Male Adults

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Abstract: *Educating and sensitisation through mental health literacy (MHL) programmes is germane to raising awareness, reducing stigma towards help-seeking, and ultimately improving help-seeking behaviours in young male adults. This theoretical paper problematises various trajectories and approaches engaged in providing mental health literacy to enhance young male adults' help-seeking behaviour. It further advances the critical pedagogical (CP) approach as an alternative trajectory for this task. This was achieved by positioning mental health literacy as a critical engagement that relies on transformative education to enhance help-seeking behaviour. This article discusses the relevance of some prominent themes in critical pedagogy to the design of mental health literacy programmes for enhanced help-seeking behaviour. It, therefore, submits that for any meaningful improvement and change to take place in the ideologies, beliefs, and attitudes of young male adults towards help-seeking, a critical pedagogical approach should be engaged, with believed that this approach would facilitate critical dialogues, reflexive thinking, and participatory learning processes. It is anticipated that embedding the CP principles into the design of MHL programmes would assist practitioners and health educators in producing a transformational change in the behaviour of young male adults towards help-seeking.*

Keywords: Critical pedagogy, Help-seeking, Mental health literacy, Transformative education, young male adults.

1. Introduction

The burden of mental health problems among young male adults has escalated within the last decade. Globally, it is estimated that more than one-third of the young adult population is burdened with mental illness (Juma, Wekesah, Kabiru, & Izugbara, 2020). Researchers have linked the poor mental well-being observed among young adults, especially males; to their unwillingness to seek appropriate professional help for their mental health concerns, among other factors (Salaheddin & Mason, 2016; Maseko, Maunganidze, Mambende, & Maphosa, 2017; Ratnayake & Hyde, 2019). Furthermore, mental health caregivers and researchers have also shown interest in understanding why young male adults are reluctant to seek help (Velasco et al., 2020; Eigenhuis et al., 2021). Various studies have shown that cultural norms, ethos and ideologies about masculinities in relation to help-seeking are critical factors deterring young male adults from seeking help (Lin et al., 2015; Keohane & Richardson, 2018; Shine, 2019).

In response to this challenge, several scholars have prescribed mental health literacy in the form of education and sensitisation as an ameliorative measure for enlightening young male adults towards seeking professional help (Gulliver et al., 2012; Davies et al., 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2019). Studies on the effectiveness of mental health literacy have shown an increase in knowledge about mental health issues, change in attitude towards help-seeking, and decreased stigmatisation (Yoshii et al., 2011; Kutcher, Wei et al., 2013; Milin et al., 2016).

Conversely, Wei et al. (2013), found an overall insignificant impact in the role of mental health literacy on change in attitude and behaviour towards help-seeking. Also, Yamaguchi et al. (2020), investigating the effectiveness of mental literacy programmes, found out that more quality evidence is still required to establish the efficacy and helpfulness of mental health literacy programmes in improving the help-seeking capacities of individuals. Therefore, this incongruence between the expectation for change and the observable reality calls for re-thinking and re-strategising mental health literacy programmes that are targeted at fostering help-seeking

behaviour in young male adults. Against this backdrop, this study proposes the critical pedagogical approach as an alternative approach to providing mental health literacy through transformational education for young male adults.

1.1 Research Question

One key research question is raised to guide the theoretical exposition of critical pedagogy for mental health literacy and education programmes.

- How can the critical pedagogical approach be engaged to foster help-seeking behaviours in young male adults?

1.2 Research Objectives

In response to this question, this study sets out to:

- De-construct the term mental health literacy as a critical engagement.
- Position transformative education as a viable tool for change in the help-seeking behaviour of young male adults.
- Logically present the relevance of the critical pedagogy in mental health literacy programs for enhancing help-seeking behaviour.

2. Methodology

In addressing the aim of the study, an internet search was carried out on databases (Scopus and Ebcohost) to identify journal articles and theses using keyword searches such as critical pedagogy, critical health literacy, mental health education, transformative education and help-seeking. These databases were selected because they house quality journals in mental health studies. A theoretical analysis procedure that deals with the use of abstractions within a school thought or concept rather than the use of its practical elements in interpreting and meaning-making was used to make sense of these materials. As defined by Dix (2007) and Omodan et al. (2020), theoretical analysis is a research engagement that entails sense-making and interpretation of concepts through reflective arguments, experiences, and beliefs of the researcher. In doing this, the researcher's theoretical sense-making of extant literature and personal experience while working with young male adults on enhancing help-seeking behaviour informed the proposition of a critical pedagogical approach for enhancing help-seeking behaviour.

3. De-constructing the Term 'Mental Health Literacy' as a Critical Engagement

The term mental health literacy is a relatively new concept believed to be an offshoot of the health literacy term (Jorm, 1997). An Australian Psychologist, Anthony Jorm, coined this concept in 1997. According to Jorm (1997), this term is defined as the knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders which aid their recognition, management or prevention. This definition has been adjudged as incomplete and inadequate as it fails to capture all the nuances that compass the term 'mental health literacy'. For instance, the Canadian Alliance for Mental Illness and Mental Health [CAMIMH] (2007) in the integrated framework for mental health literacy document argued that the definition posited by Jorm in 1997 failed to delineate what type of knowledge and belief is defined to be 'good' to be described as literate in terms of mental health. This definition projects the idea that mental health professionals' knowledge and beliefs are superior to the localised forms of knowledge and beliefs that individuals hold within a community. It communicates an assumption that someone possesses mental health literacy if his/her knowledge aligns with euro-centric or medical knowledge about mental health. This connotation is labelled as cynical, disempowering, and stigmatising (Kabusch, 2002; Ganasen, 2008). It also seems to denigrate and disregard individuals' dominant cultural knowledge and belief systems over the privileged professional or medical ideologies about mental health (Mbanga, 2002).

Based on these criticisms, scholars have continued in their effort to provide a more holistic and integrative working definition for the term mental health literacy. It is contested that mental health literacy should go beyond merely supplying people with mental health information but rather, it should involve support for skill development and empowerment. This new proposition will assist people in understanding information and making informed decisions about how to apply the received mental health education to promote their mental health (CAMIMH, 2007). Embracing Kickbusch (2002) view towards health literacy is a more encompassing understanding of what

mental health literacy can be arrived at. The study conceived health literacy as the conglomeration of approaches and stratagems geared towards improving individuals' capabilities and capacities for critical thinking to make an informed decision regarding their health, which would ultimately lead to collective empowerment.

In recent years, Jorm (2015) re-worded the definition of mental health literacy as the possession of knowledge and information regarding mental illnesses that facilitates one's ability to recognise, deal with, and prevent the occurrence of mental health problems as well as the capacity to be agentic in seeking out and obtaining mental health information, to discern the best treatment resources and options accessible and to access the service. In the same vein, Jorm (2015) submitted that a viable mental literacy programme should be such that facilitate critical consciousness towards mental health information and beliefs. By such, individuals become empowered to analyse various information provided to them, and they can decide what is best for them and, after that, engage with health resources available, either informational or infrastructural. In consonance, Nutbeam (2000) opined that providing mental health literacy in this manner engenders socio-economic development and ultimately transpiring into improved mental health well-being for individuals and the whole community at large.

Critically looking at the 'more encompassing' explanations of mental health literacy provided by scholars, one would observe that attention has not been giving to integrating elements of the teaching and learning process into the definition of the concept. Therefore, I unequivocally state that there is a need to provide a clear explanation that explicitly indicates how the teaching and learning process involved in mental literacy should occur. Consequently, this paper, therefore, posits that *mental health literacy is a systematic process of engaging with individuals or members of a community in a critical but collaborative and participatory teaching and learning manner to arrive at a compendium of transformative knowledge and beliefs towards mental health; such that they become equipped with capacities to make informed decisions when they or others are confronted with mental health concerns.*

With the critical elements introduced in the working definition of mental health literacy, one then wonders if this element is entrenched in the design and delivery of mental literacy programmes. A scoping literature review into intervention programmes designed to facilitate mental literacy for help-seeking unveils an array of programmes that have not engaged with the critical elements provided in the definitions. In the past, scholars have primarily paid attention to the theoretical underpinning of their intervention programmes while there is scant evidence of attention on the pedagogical approach. Therefore, it is argued that, just like other forms of literacy programmes with their pedagogical approaches (language literacy, mathematical literacy, etc.), mental health literacy programmes must have a clear cut approach guiding the teaching and learning process. Hence, the call for a critical pedagogical approach to be engaged within implementing mental literacy programmes.

3.1 Transformative Education for change in the Help-seeking behaviour of young male adults

In the world over, there is a consensus among broad categories of professionals, ranging from philosophers to teachers as well as political actors, that education is a critical tool in bringing about any desired change within the society. This understanding has led to an increase in researchers and practitioners' call to provide mental literacy to abate the scourge of mental illness and problems ravaging the young male adults' population. Kutcher, Bagnell, and Wei (2015) categorically argued that all individuals' overall health and well-being are intricately associated with the level of education and literacy that individuals possess throughout their lifetime, including education around health and mental health.

However, studies have shown that subscription to cultural ideologies that ascribes hegemony, power and strength to males (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Reznicek-Parrado, 2014; Levant & Wong, 2017), fear of been stigmatised (Karaffa & Koch, 2016; Kearns, Muldoon, Msetfi, & Surgenor, 2015), lack of knowledge and awareness about the signs and symptoms of mental illness as well as poor mental literacy (Rickwood, Deane, Wilson, & Ciarrochi, 2005Man & Kangas, 2019) are the primary reasons why young male adults do not seek help, asides from other contextual and individual factors. These core reasons can only be addressed through appropriately designed educative

intervention programmes to provide enlightenment for the observed 'marked ignorance' that young adults have towards help-seeking and mental illness (Hamblen et al., 2019; Clough, Nazareth, Day, & Casey, 2019).

Studies conducted have shown high and positive correlations between mental health literacy, help-seeking, and well-being (Kutcher, Wei & Morgan 2016; Milin et al., 2016; Ratnayake & Hyde, 2019). Help-seeking is defined as a problem-focused, planned, and adaptive behaviour involving interaction with a given professional to resolve an identified problem (Cornally & McCarthy, 2011). That is, it involves a search outside of oneself to other people in order to resolve a given problem beyond one's capacity. Arguably, the search for help outside of oneself is initiated by the realisation of help. However, when young male adults do not have the education or literacy to discern the onset of mental illness and risk factors associated with mental illness or do not know when or where to source for help, they are likely to dawdle at help-seeking, this act results into cascades of adverse outcomes, such as suicides and generally poor mental well-being (McNamara, 2013). Therefore, having appropriate knowledge is paramount to engaging in appropriate help-seeking.

Generally, strategies such as education and sensitisation of community members, social protest, policy advocacy, and resistance have often been used in addressing social issues. Meanwhile, in most cases, education for social change has been spared headed by adult educators who believe that this is the most potent approach to developing critical consciousness and action for change (Curry-Stevens, 2007). Curry-Stevens (2007) argued for new forms of transformative education as the appropriate pedagogy for the privileged. In this paper, the young male adults are positioned as the privileged and oppressed. Here, 'privilege' relates to the history of dominance and power that the society has ascribed to the male gender and oppressed in the sense that society's ideological beliefs and norms have impeded young male adults from engaging with mental health resources. This, in turn, hinders them from living their lives to the fullest by subscribing to these limiting beliefs, thus hampering their capacities to be agentic to engage in appropriate help-seeking. This resonates with the assertion of Dill and Zambrana (2009) that there is the need to critically explore our multiple social identities to see how they interact in the context of social inequalities.

Geuss (1981) argued that ideologies are the primary impediment to human liberation and freedom. Hence, the call for a form of transformative education. To buttress this, Mathews (2014) argued that providing health education should transcend provision and transmission of health information to passive recipients but rather argued should encompass a teaching and learning process that embeds co-sharing of power, learning content negotiation as well as discursive processes that integrate multiple voices, perspectives and knowledge forms. Seyi-Oderinde (2020) found out that the use of the coercive approach in bringing about change, especially with issues dealing with transforming masculinity, is often counterproductive. Nevertheless, participants in the study suggested the use of participatory dialogues and education as the approach that facilitates transformative change in males. These mentioned practices are what the critical pedagogy is all about.

Engaging, therefore, in Transformational Education (TE) provides leverage for working with individuals and communities to address complex social issues in such a way that would bring about profound and enduring change in the life of individuals and a community as a whole (Blewitt et al., 2008). This approach to education is premised on the development of trusting relationships with individuals, co-creation of knowledge between educators and the concerned, and the development of the capacities and agencies in individuals to implement creative and positive changes in themselves and their communities. This study, therefore, proposes critical pedagogy as an approach for providing transformative education to enhance mental health literacy and, ultimately, help-seeking abilities in young male adults.

3.2 Explicating the Critical Pedagogy Approach

A critical pedagogical approach is an alternative approach to the conventional teaching and education approach birthed within the Frankfurt critical theory school of thought. This approach to education and learning was posited by Paul Freire, which was popularised by his book the "*pedagogy of the oppressed*" in the year 1968 (Freire, 1997). The core assumption underpinning Freire's educational philosophy is his antagonism against the draconian form of education, which

views learners as ignorant and empty vessels that require to be educated and poured into. Instead, he contested for an interactive and participatory approach to education. According to his philosophy, education should be preoccupied with raising the critical consciousness of learners, promoting their reflexivity, awareness about the content of the education they are receiving and how it has been passed across (Rajesh, 2014).

Critical pedagogy is defined as an approach to literacy and education as one that enhances the critiquing abilities of learners towards challenging dominant beliefs and conventions that control and govern their lives. This approach ultimately leads to the development of 'critical consciousness'. More elaborately, critical pedagogy is defined as:

> *"Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organisation, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse"*. Shor, 1992 p. 129).

Wallerstein and Bernstein (1988) describe critical pedagogy as people coming together in "group efforts to identify their problems, to critically assess social and historical roots of problems, to envision a healthier society, and to develop strategies to overcome obstacles" (p. 380). Thus, providing education through the critical pedagogical approach enables learners to become aware and cognizant of their lives and events occurring within it and the larger society, it furthers equips learners with requisite skills and capacities to make the necessary changes in their own lives. This pedagogical approach, as explained by Freire (1997), advances in learners the capacities to analytically and warily diagnose the way they exist, and it also changes their perception of the world as static but instead to a dynamic and continually changing in which they have the abilities to influence and transform it. While with the banking model of teaching and learning, the teacher is adjudged the knowledgeable, expert and the final authority of the learning content while the learners are the ones 'who do not know', empty vessels and void of consciousness, the 'recipients' who are taught to comply with acting in the direction of what they are being taught (Freire, 2005; Isaacs, 2016). This form of relationship was described as a form of condescending 'assistencialism' where partnership and collaboration, and co-creation of knowledge is not possible.

3.3 Critical Pedagogical approach for Transformative Education towards Enhanced Help-Seeking

Essential elements of critical pedagogy are found to be very instrumental in the design of programmes and actual operations of teaching and learning for enhanced help-seeking behaviour. Villanueva and O'Sullivan (2019) conducted a systematic review identified three core themes central to critical pedagogy in over 100 articles analysed. They are transformation aim, the democratisation of the classroom, conscientisation, and praxis while some other elements such as problem-posing. These critical elements are discussed in terms of their relevance to designing mental health literacy programmes for improved help-seeking behaviour.

3.3.1 Transformation Aim

Embedding the transformative aim of the critical pedagogy (CP) is crucial in the design of a viable program that could birth sustainable change in the help-seeking behaviour of male students. Central to the CP is the transformation of unequal social relations through education (Villanueva & O'Sullivan, 2019). This transformation is targeted towards the liberation and emancipation of the oppressed due to class, race, gender, ethnicity, or classroom roles (Widdersheim, 2013). Therefore, this makes any form of literacy within this approach responsive to contextual issues affecting the lives of the learners. It transcends education programmes from the mere provision of the necessary information about appropriate mental behaviour to more engaging critical discourse sessions. Ultimately, creating active participants in the social transformation process. Consequently, within the purview of mental health literacy for enhanced help-seeking behaviour infusing the transformation aim of the CP creates an enabling learning environment that facilitates purposive discourses around socio-political issues that influence and undermine their help-seeking capacities. Specifically, a critically oriented literacy programme for young male adults facilitates

awareness about socio-political issues of power, dominance, inequalities, myths, and norms. This awareness is therefore believed to be capable of triggering deep reflections in learners, which could, in turn, result in transformation.

3.3.2 Problem Posing

Shor (1980) argues that a problem-posing type of education facilitates critical learning among learners. Shor further describes critical learning as a type of education that allows learners to identify beliefs, ideologies, practices, and structures that impede or hold them back from living the wholesome lives they so desire. Also, enabling learners to imaginatively conjure the kind of society or "a social order which supports their full humanity p48". Expatiating on problem posing, Freire (1985), asserted that problem-posing education implies teachers intentionally "problematising" situations, ideologies, and notions that students are familiar to challenge them to think about them creatively. Shor explains this as "extraordinarily re-experiencing the ordinary" where learners are encouraged to "re-perceive" the reality they know (1980, p 93). Therefore, problem-posing education in mental health literacy allows educators to present existing and prevalent debilitating ideologies, knowledge, and information about mental health to young male adults in a way that allows them to critique those previous notions, thus allowing them to create new ways of thinking.

For instance, a popular notion among young male adults is the idea that help-seeking is a sign of weakness (Addis & Mahalik, 2019; Seyi-Oderinde, 2020). With problem-posing, the educator presents this ideology to young male adults, by encouraging them to problematise this notion, thereby leading to a new way of thinking about help-seeking. This approach is argued to create a more self-driven change rather than convincing or encouraging them to perceive help-seeking otherwise. This submission aligns with the thoughts of Freire (1970), who opined that a problem-posing education could engender critical consciousness, that is, the creation of new knowledge by the student themselves. Therefore, it becomes imperative to infuse the problem-posing teaching strategy into programmes such that students can uncover their realities and strive for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention. This awakening allows students to take the necessary actions to improve their living conditions and choices.

3.3.3 The democratisation of Classroom and Knowledge

The democratisation of the classroom involves critiquing various narratives and instructional practices with the intention of bringing to the fore the ideologies that have impeded democratic participation within the classroom (Morales & Monzo, 2016). The critical pedagogy studies clamour for literacy programmes that emphasise democratic values such as co-creation of knowledge, discussion of differences, participatory decision-making in terms of knowledge content, structure and activities, and concern about societal issues (Villanueva & O'Sullivan, 2019). Besides, giving student voices power, horizontal teacher-student relationship, dialogism and problematisation of issues are the core principles guiding critical pedagogical classrooms (Lee & Givens, 2012; Widdersheim, 2013). Freire (1998), submitted that dialogism is the foundation of critical education, that is, one that allows learners to participate in their own education actively.

The democratisation of the classroom in enhancing help-seeking literacy programmes assists health educators in incorporating learners' lived experiences into the classroom and value students' worldview as valid in terms of reconstructing knowledge. At the same time, fundamental attention is given to students' culture and beliefs. This facilitates critiquing both the educator and the young male adults' immersion into the economic, political, and ideological background (Abednia & Izadinia, 2013). Scholars within the CP school of thought have reached a consensus that this principle engenders self-reflection, which exposes how individuals have contributed to oppression and social justice (Villanueva & O'Sullivan, 2019; Nelsen & Seaman, 2011). This self-reflection is particularly critical in the literacy programme for young male adults as Motta (2013) argued that the CP increases in the capacity of privileged students (in this case, young male adults- in terms of their gender and historical dominance) to critically engage with their dominant ideologies, ways of acting and seeing the world.

3.3.4 Conscientisation

Earlier conceptions of conscientisation promulgated by Freire (1973) focused on helping the oppressed and the marginalised become awakened to the world around them so that they can

change it. However, scholars within the CP pedagogy have expanded the concept to denote raising critical consciousness in all individuals and learners who are not essentially marginalised but rather those that might be considered privileged (Motta, 2013; Villanueva & O'Sullivan, 2019). Villanueva and O'Sullivan (2019) argued that conscientisation is critical in pedagogies, that is, forms of literacy programmes, especially in those spaces where the learners are not essentially marginalised or oppressed, as it is in the case of this study. Freire (1973) identified three levels of conscientisation: intransitive, semi transitive, and critical consciousness. At the highest level of consciousness, individuals at this level can interpret their problems from structural and contextual vista. Also, they can identify practices, ideologies and structures that inhibit their optimum functioning within their society. Heaney (1995) opined that for learners to acquire this level of consciousness, their capacities for rejecting passivity must be enhanced while practising dialogism to gain this sort of consciousness. As Heaney (1995) argued, learners must reject passivity and practice dialogue. Fostering critical consciousness is argued by scholars as the most fundamental venture in ensuring the transformation of learners and then the entire society (Rajesh, 2014; Morley, Christine Dunstan, 2013).

3.3.5 Praxis

Central to the Critical Pedagogy is the transformation of critical reflections to actions of change. These include a commitment to human well-being and the search for truth, and respect for others. It may also refer to the act of engaging, applying, exercising, realising, or practising ideas. It requires that a person 'makes a wise and prudent practical judgment about how to act in this situation (Carr and Kemmis 1986). Therefore, praxis within the context of help-seeking literacy programmes goes beyond mere providing health information, motivation, or encouragement towards help-seeking but rather entails transferring the critical awareness into action that brings about change in the individual life and the entire community (Braa & Callero, 2006).

4. The Relevance of Critical Pedagogical Approach to Mental Health Literacy for Enhanced Help-Seeking Behaviour

Given the presented conceptualisations of the critical pedagogy, one will realise the importance of engaging with this approach for mental health literacy programmes and education. Essentially, given the history of male dominance, power privileges, oppression of the female gender, and the hegemonic masculinity that have characterised the male population. This makes the provision of education and mental health literacy through the usual teaching approach described as the 'banking model' by Paul Freire (Freire 2005), might not produce the desired transformation and long term change in the young male adults' behaviour. Despite this, an examination of previous studies shows that most educational intervention programmes designed to facilitate help-seeking and promote mental well-being are designed based on the banking model of teaching. Hence, while this paper argues for a transformational sort of education, that is provided through the critical pedagogical approach. The need for this approach is imperative, and as such, a strategic and intentional approach in providing education and re-orientation for males towards adopting transformative and adaptive behaviour of help-seeking.

The help-seeking behaviour of young male adults is characterised by layers of complexity ranging from cultural, religious, gender, and power issues (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). This understanding demands a pedagogue to interrogate the issues of privilege, notions of masculinity, and dominant myths, norms and beliefs that encompass help-seeking challenges in males. Therefore, engaging with the critical pedagogy approach in the teaching and learning of mental health literacy facilitates exploration of these complicated issues between the young male adults and the educators in a collaborative approach. Such that young male adults become enlightened or critically conscious of the ways dominant ideas of masculinity and their power privileges have debilitated and undermined their agentic help-seeking capacities. Also, this pedagogy provides a safe space for the marginalised body of knowledge, that is, the indigenous knowledge systems on mental health to come to voice, it challenges the euro-centric and elitist ways of seeing, teaching, and diagnosing mental illness while embracing cultural understandings as well. It is argued that embedding this approach into the mental health literacy education programmes will engender individually motivated transformation, which could foster a more sustainable and impactful change in the help-seeking behaviour of young male adults.

Furthermore, the critical pedagogical theorist believes that dominant forms of knowledge are held in place by certain powers; hence, those powers need to be challenged to create new ways of knowledge (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006). Therefore, a critical pedagogical approach allows for the incorporation of manifold and diverse sources of information. It is believed that this approach increases emphasis on group processes and dialogue and reflections on the lived experiences which encourage student-generated questions to guide inquiry and ultimately in search of their transformative role in the society (Rajesh, 2014). Such an environment helps these young male adults learn to view issues and dynamics of help-seeking from different angles and identify multiple perspectives, as well as develop their viewpoints and possible solutions to improving their agencies and capacities for help-seeking for various mental health problems that they encountered in their lives and other members of the society. In this way, the application of critical pedagogical perspectives to mental health literacy for help-seeking would develop deepened understandings of problems, limiting beliefs and ambiguities hampering help-seeking in young male adults.

Advancing the relevance of critical pedagogy in designing health literacy programmes, Mathews (2014) argued that this approach equips its audience with the understanding of their influence and control over their health and the diverse elements that impact it. She further argued that critical literacy programmes awaken individual consciousness to "unethical structures of power and oppression and the social, economic, educational, cultural and environmental determinants of health" (Mathews, 2014 p. 601). This consequently facilitates social justice because individuals and the entire group members are motivated to take actions that would change and positively influence those determinants that undermine their collective health and well-being. Thus, within the context of mental health for enhanced help-seeking behaviour, embedding principles of the critical pedagogy into programmes awaken young male adults to unethical powers, norms and ideals. Through this knowledge, they can change their conditions, liberate themselves and do the needful towards their health. Empirical studies have shown that health education programmes designed to deliver or transmit professional health information knowledge or accepted facts about health from the teachers to the students are ineffective and hardly bring about behaviour change (Burrows, 2011). However, health programmes that have embedded participation, content negotiation, dialogism, and reflexivity have shown better results in behaviour change.

Empirical studies have shown the viability of the critical pedagogical approach in engendering behavioural change as compared to the traditional teaching and learning approaches. For instance, in a study conducted by Inoue, Takahashi and Kai (2013) on the impact of communicative and critical health literacy on understanding diabetes care and self-efficacy revealed that a critical literacy approach is an impactful approach for improving diabetes management and self-efficacy among patients. Another study conducted by Macdonald (2002) earlier on the promotion of physically active lifestyles of some community members using the critical pedagogical approach has shown more impact in improving active physical lifestyle. As against the information transmission pattern in other health programmes, where other people's idea of healthy living was communicated. Participants in the Macdonald (2002) study actively contributed to identifying the ideal lifestyle they desire to have and the barriers that could hinder them from living it. This approach allowed the critical thinking about their own lived experiences, raise critical questions about what factors have inhibited their active lifestyles. It also enabled participants in the study to emerge from being mere recipients of health information to more agentic individuals who are willing to act about their lives, thus, highlighting the efficacy of critical pedagogy in health literacy programmes.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, a call for a transition from the traditional teaching of mental health literacy to the critical pedagogical approach was made. In view of the explication, it will help the young male adults become co-constructors of knowledge and agentic in terms of their help-seeking needs. In addressing this, a critical pedagogical approach in designing and providing mental health literacy to young adults is argued for. This approach is adjudged to be essential in empowering, enlightening, and improving young adults' capacities to be agentic about their mental health concerns and therefore seek help. This paper, therefore, submits that there is a need for critical

pedagogical for any meaningful improvement and change to take place in the ideologies, beliefs, and attitudes of young male adults towards help-seeking. That is, a critical pedagogical approach that facilitates critical dialogues, reflexive thinking, and participatory learning processes has to be embedded in the design and implementation of mental health literacy programmes. Furthermore, since the tools of oppression for the oppressed have an adverse effect on the oppressor. Often the oppressors are oppressed in themselves without their knowledge by living up to the ethos and norms that are held as the norm and truth, which are debilitating to their well-being because the oppressor has not taken any time to challenge or question the oppressive ideals. Therefore, critical pedagogy is an equally suitable approach useful in designing education and literacy programmes for young male adults. This approach is argued for because it encourages young male adults to challenge their privileged positions as well as ideologies that characterised their thinking towards help-seeking. It braces them to question and confront structural and cultural creeds, ethos, and conventions that debilitate their agency in engaging with appropriate mental health facilities to seek help.

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