



THESIS

**Understanding Mental Health through Patient Perceptions;
Qualitative Case Study of a Mental Health Facility**

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents. I owe everything that I have achieved in this life until now, to them. They have always stood by me through thick and thin during my academic endeavours, being my constant support. Thank you for giving me the strength to dream big and chase those dreams of mine, Mom and Dad. I love you. Always and Forever.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of mental health patients regarding their mental illness, the respective causative agents and the subsequent socio-economic consequences and challenges of mental illness. The study also aimed to investigate the process of acknowledging and accepting the mental illness, and the factors that influence decision-making vis-à-vis reaching out to a mental health facility. The present research study is designed as a qualitative case study. A private mental health facility was chosen as the primary locale for the research fieldwork and data collection. This research creates recognition regarding the importance of patient perceptions and stresses upon the significance of integration of patient perceptions within mental health policies and frameworks, as this research highlights the actual needs of the patients and the socio-economic barriers that they have to endure while living with their mental illness. The findings illustrate that this study made a contribution to the existing knowledge and literature that is relevant in creating a better understanding of mental illness from the patients' end, along with the identification of potential social and economic factors which affect the existing mental health system and service provision.

Keywords: *Mental health, mental illness, mental health facility, patient perceptions, self-stigma, social consequences, financial barriers, follow-up*