

Impact of Depression on Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students of Kebbi University of Science and Technology, Aliero, Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate Impact of Depression on the Academic Performance of Students in Faculty of Education, Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero, Nigeria. Three objectives and hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive Survey design was used and a sample size of 162 undergraduate 2 students from Faculty of Education were used. A close ended questionnaire and a researcher designed academic performance test were used to obtain responses from the students. Data collected for this study were analyzed using inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The findings showed that significant relationship exists between depression and academic performance undergraduate 2 students, ($r = -0.629, p < 0.05$), significant relationship exist between depression and academic performance of undergraduate 2 male students, ($r = -0.627, p < 0.05$) and also significant relationship exist between depression and academic performance of undergraduate 2 female students, ($r = -0.709, p < 0.05$) similarly, on the basis of the result, recommendations were made among which are; Psychologists and school counselors should render psychological interventions to counsel undergraduate students who are depressed and to help them improve their academic performance. Similarly, Psychologist and school counselors should identify male undergraduate students with counseling needs and guide them by counseling to understand themselves and also develop ability to overcome and resolve problems or difficulties they come across.

Keywords: Depression, Academic performance, Undergraduate and Students.

Introduction

The issue of academic performance among undergraduate students has been a matter of great concern to lecturers, parents and government. Even though measures have been taken to improve the situation in our universities, but a large proportion of undergraduate students perform poorly. Undergraduate students in recent times tend to perform below expectation in most of the semester examinations; this may be attributed to the influence of so many factors. For most among them is the influences of depression and host of others (Suleiman, 2017).

Depression as a mood disorder: affects one's ability to perform life activities including academic performance (Cassady, 2019). It is common for people who suffer from depression to engage in self-blame, experience confusion and a feeling of hopelessness.

The major components of depression are loss of interest in activities that were once found pleasurable and a depressed mood (Belter et al, 2015). It has been found that loss of interest aspect of depression is associated with lower grade point averages and students who suffer from both anxiety and depression had poor academic performance (Eisenberg, 2016).

Furthermore, depression is one of the most common disorders that occur among undergraduate students. Depression affects 5 to 8 percent of adolescents (Larson, 2016). Depression is expected to be one of the top three leading causes of disability by the year 2030 (Suleiman, 2017). Anxiety and depressive disorders have consistently been found to be highly co-morbid (Kessler, 2007; Essau, 2007) and are linked the personality trait neuroticism (Essau, 2007; Weinstock & Whisman, 2006). Depression is considered a chronic illness that requires long term management, much like diabetes or high blood pressure. Debilitating symptoms can be relieved quickly with psychological therapies, medications or a combination of both (Stress, 2017).

Adjusting lifestyle can then reduce the quantity and severity of future episodes (Larson, 2016). Major depression affects one in fifty school children. Countless others are affected by milder cases of depression which may also affect school performance (Busari, 2012).

Research indicates that depressed undergraduate students are at risk for increased illness, low academic performance, difficult family and peer relations, substance abuse, and delinquent behavior (Lepp, 2014).

However, while adolescent depression is common, it is difficult to recognize. It is imperative that society, especially parents, educators, and mental health professionals understand what depression is (most especially among undergraduate students), recognize its symptoms and its causes, as well as recognize the effects depression has on undergraduate students (Suleiman, 2017). According to Davison & Neale (2001), undergraduate students may experience more symptoms of somatic complaints, social withdrawal, and irritability rather than a sad mood. Symptoms of depression can also be different for undergraduate students of different ages. Younger undergraduate students may have symptoms of anxiety manifested in clinging behaviors, fearfulness, and physical complaints. Furthermore, research indicates that 89% of depressed students usually show signs of sleep difficulty while 79.5% show appetite and weight disturbances (Poole, 2012).

The following events or situations can cause depression among students: Bullying or harassment at school or somewhere else, Child abuse - both physical and sexual, Lack of social skills, Learning disabilities, Long-term illness, Poor parenting or care giving, Stressful life events, such as the loss of a parent to death or divorce. Many students with depression may also have: Anxiety disorders, Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Bipolar disorder, Eating disorders (Suleiman, 2017). Depression may change the way students see themselves, their lives, and the people around them. Most undergraduate students who are depressed usually see everything more negatively. They can't imagine that any problem or situation can be solved in a positive way. Depressed undergraduate students may be at risk for much co-morbidity, including conduct problems, personality disorders, and substance

abuse, and obesity, interpersonal conflict, failing social relationships, educational and occupational under achievement (Finger, 2006).

Physical signs of depression in undergraduate students include appearance and hygiene neglect, pale and tired appearance, sad or irritable affect, psychomotor retardation or agitation. Impaired concentration, and diminished abstract reasoning ability for their age (Belter et al, (2015). According to Poole (2012) depression affects academic performance of undergraduate students with depression are vulnerable to educational under achievement. Also using the information based on a resource allocation model of the effect of a depressed mood on cognition, students with symptoms of depression are predisposed to focus their attention on interfering, irrelevant thoughts, leaving the little sustained attention available for cognitive tasks which may then leads to academic failure (Cassady, 2019). Frojd (2008) reported that depression impair cognitive functioning blocks cognitive sources and many of the academic performance and also homework depends on the ability to sustain attention and concentration, thus depression which is known to disrupt concentration and attention in school is likely to undermine academic performance. Furthermore, cognitive risk factors for depression in undergraduate students may include elevated level of anxiety, low self-esteem, high self-criticism, cognitive destructions, poor semester performance, and social skills deficient (Owens, 2012).

From the foregoing, this research looks into the issue of depression on academic performance among undergraduate students of Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero, and the role of psychologists and school counselors in checkmating the nuisance in tertiary institutions of Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Depression and other affective disorders continue to be an area primarily ignored by the public universities. Countless number of university students may be affected by depression which may also affect academic performance. Depressed students often result in having other behavioral problems like skipping school which may result in poor academic performance. Also, undergraduate students that are depressed are usually hopeless, have concentration ability difficulty and pay less attention in class and their studies in general and thus may low performance.

Depression has a great effect on students' age and to a large extent students' academic performance, is a well-known fact that there is a certain period in student development that they tend to learn faster and whatever they learnt are permanently stamped in their memories. Similarly, there are certain periods in one's life that the rate of learning tends to decline that is to say the rate of assimilation is slow, and as such students who are young and depressed may tend to have low academic performance and those who are older may even have a worst case scenario. On the influence of depression on gender, it is worth noting that the academic performance of male students may likely be higher than that of their female counterparts in some areas and vice versa.

For the reason highlighted in the background, this study seeks to understand the role depression play in curbing academic performance and creating atmosphere good for social adjustment both in universities and the society.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the impact of depression on the academic performance among undergraduate students of Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero.
2. To examine the impact of depression on the academic performance of male undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero.
3. To find out the impact of depression on the academic performance of female undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study,

Ho₁. There is no statistical significant impact of depression on the academic performance among undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero.

Ho₂. There is no statistical significant impact of depression on the academic performance of male undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero.

Ho₃. There is no statistical significant impact of depression on the academic performance of female undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero.

Methodology

In this study pre-test and post-test quasi-experimental design was used. The population of this study is the entire undergraduate students (UG 2) from faculty of education which are 285, the sample of this study are one hundred sixty-two (162) undergraduate 2 students. The sample was selected in conformity with Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Stratified proportionate random sampling technique was used in the selection of sample from the various departments by gender.

Table 1. Distribution of the UG 2 Populations and Sample across Gender

Gender	Population	Sample
Male	191	109
Female	94	53
Total	285	162

Source: Admission Office, February, 2021.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used to generate the relevant data in this study which were Performance Test and a depression inventory. The researcher–designed instrument titled

Academic Performance Test contains test on English and Mathematics, where each test contains 25 questions each. These questions were carefully formed from the selected university's curriculum and particularly for UG 2 students. Each question carries 2mrks making a total of 100 marks for the academic performance test. The depression inventory was a questionnaire that was adapted and modified from the original author Becks (1983). Depression Inventory II (BDI II). The B.D.I II consists of 21 symptom items described in simple sentences which were modified to 20 symptom items. Each item has 4 different questions (0-3) to which the respondent ticks or circles the one that best describes his or her feelings. The scoring can be done manually and also it is done by adding up the score for each of the twenty questions by counting the number to the right of each question you marked. The highest possible total for the whole test would be sixty-three (63). This would mean you circled number three on all twenty-one questions. Since the lowest possible score for each question is zero (0), the lowest possible score for the test would be zero. This would mean you circles zero on each question. Depression level is considered as; 1-10 these ups and downs are considered normal, 11-16 mild mood disturbance, 17-20 borderline depression, 21-30 moderate depression, 31-40 Severe depression, and over 40 is considered extreme depression (Beck 1983). The questionnaire had three sections which were the bio-data, depression inventory, and Academic Performance Test.

Validity of Instrument

To ascertain the validity of the Beck Depression Inventory and the Performance Test on Mathematics and English Language, the draft questionnaire was vetted by three lecturers in the Faculty of Education Kebbi state University of Science and Technology, Aliero. And, thus the observations and suggestions were used to rewrite and modify the items of the questions and the questionnaires collated and analyzed.

Reliability

The reliability was determined by Cronbach's co-efficient alpha (r) which was used to analyze the scores after the pilot study, which was not part of the study area with a reliability of 0.83 which indicated that, the instruments was statistically reliable.

Procedure for Data Collection

The data collection was done by the researcher with the help of two research assistants who visited each school and administered the questionnaires to the respondents. The questionnaire on Depression Inventory and Academic Performance Test on English and Mathematics was completed taking at least 40 minutes and the completed questionnaire was returned immediately. They were also allowed to have privacy and privilege to ask questions about items they don't understand when completing the questionnaires.

Procedure for Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS), infer-

ential statistics (one sample Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r), Pearson product moment correlation (r) was used to test hypothesis at 0.05 significance level.

Results

Hypotheses Testing

HO₁

There is no significant impact of depression on the academic performance among undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero.

Table 2. Pearson Product Moment Correlation on Relationship between Depression and Academic Performance among Undergraduate Students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	r	P
Depression	162	19.1241	7.12741	160	-0.629*	0.002
Academic Performance		9.0012	3.64459			

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 revealed that the calculated p value of 0.001 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance with correlation index (r) level of -0.629 ($r = -.629, p < .05$) at df 160, this implied that the relationship between the two variables is inversely proportional, that is, the higher the academic performance, the lower the depression level and vice versa. This therefore suggest that significant relationship exist between academic performance and depression among the students, that is depression significantly influences academic performance, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

HO₂

There is no significant impact of depression on academic performance among male undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero.

Table 3. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics on Relationship between Depression and Academic Performance among Male Undergraduate Students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	r	P
Depression (male students)	109	20.2091	7.88375	107	-0.627	0.041
Academic Performance (male students)		11.4667	4.61192			

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 3 above revealed the results of the mean level of depression of 20.2091, SD of 7.88375 and a mean academic performance of 11.4667, SD of 4.61192 at a Df of 107 and as such the result showed that significant relationship exist between the depression and academic performance among the male students, since the calculated p value of 0.041 was found to be lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index level of -0.627. The relationship between the two variables is inversely proportional, that is, the lower the level of depression the higher the academic performance of male students and vice versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

HO₃

There is no significant impact of the depression on academic performance among the female undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero.

Table 4. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics on Relationship between Depression and Academic Performance among the Female Undergraduate Students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	r	P
Depression (female students)	53	23.1250	10.00401	51	-0.709	0.001
Academic Performance (female students)		12.24901	8.13266			

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 4 above showed the mean level of depression of 23.1250, SD of 10.00401 and a mean academic performance of 12.24901, SD of 8.13266 at a Df of 51 and as such the result showed that significant relationship exist between the depression level and academic performance among female students, since the calculated p value of 0.001 was found to be lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index level of -0.709. The relationship between the two variables is inversely proportional, that is, the lower the depression the higher the academic performance of female students and vice versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussions of Findings

The study found that significant relationship exists between depression and academic performance among undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero. The relationship between the two variables was inversely proportional that is, the higher the depression, the lower the academic performance, and vice versa. This finding was consistent with study carried out by Cassady (2019), which found out that depression had significant impact on the academic productivity of university students. In addition, they found that students who reported moderate levels of depressive symptoms

demonstrated lower performance within academic environments when compared to those with normal and minimal levels of depression.

The research revealed that significant relationship exists between depression and academic performance among male undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero. This study disagreed with the findings of Larson (2016), who found that male patients with depression scored significantly higher on irritability, were more prone to overreact to minor annoyances, experienced anger attacks, had lower impulse control, exhibited greater substance use, and experienced more hyperactive behavior compared with depressed female patients.

Also, significant relationship exists between depression and academic performance among female undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero. This is similar to a research which suggested that girls are more likely than boys to continue feeling bad after experiencing difficult situations or events, suggesting they are more prone to depression (Belter, 2015). Another study found that more than 70 percent of depressed girls experienced a difficult or stressful life event prior to a depressive episode, as compared with only 14 percent of boys (Fingers, 2016).

Conclusions

In view of the findings of this study, it was concluded that significant relationship exists between depression and academic performance among undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero; this means that depression affects academic performance of undergraduate students. Similarly, it was also deduced that significant relationship exists between depression and academic performance among male undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero; this means that depression affects academic performance of male undergraduate students. It was also deduced that significant relationship exists between depression and academic performance among female undergraduate students in Kebbi state university of science and technology, Aliero; this means that depression affects academic performance of female undergraduate students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Psychologists and school counselors should render psychological interventions to counsel undergraduate students who are depressed and to help them improve their academic performance.
2. Psychologist and school counselors should identify male undergraduate students with counseling needs and guide them by counseling to understand themselves and also develop ability to overcome and resolve problems or difficulties they come across.
3. Psychologist and school counselors should identify those female students who are at risk for depression by teaching them how to cope with the depression.

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