

CHAPTER 8

Personal Variables and Prevalence of Depression

PERSONAL VARIABLES AND PREVALENCE OF DEPRESSION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EDO STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the prevalence of depression among secondary school students in Edo State. The descriptive survey design was adopted in the study. The population of this study covered all the parents of the three hundred and twenty seven and two hundred and sixty seven (327,267) Senior Secondary School (SSS) students in all the public secondary schools in Edo State. A sample of three hundred and seventy two (372) senior secondary school students was used for the study. The simple sampling technique was used as the sampling technique. One percent (1%) of the schools and senior secondary school students were drawn from each of the 18 local government areas. Data was collected using the prevalence depression Questionnaire (PDQ). Descriptive statistics such as frequency count and frequency (%) were used to analyse the research questions. Findings revealed that the prevalence of depression among secondary school students in Edo State was high as indicated by: mood changes at the slightest turn of an event, feelings of sadness, state of slight hopelessness, feelings of disappointment when efforts on an activity fails, restless to be point of having panic attacks, provocation over little issues, sleeplessness, feelings of stress on easily on things, anxious when they cannot get something done, and feelings of worries to the point of almost taking one's life. The result further showed that there is a significant difference between the male and female, young and older secondary school students on the prevalence of depression in secondary schools in the study area. It was recommended that balanced combination of social and emotional mind training among undergraduates should be encouraged by university administrator and educator to facilitate the early identification and management of depression among students.

Keywords: Prevalence, Depression, Secondary Schools, Stress.

Introduction

Secondary education is an important instrument that is geared towards the empowerment of individuals for self-sustenance and development of the

society. It (secondary education) is the education received after primary education but before higher education. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) stated in the National Policy of Education that secondary education shall not only help to prepare citizens for useful living in the society but also prepare them for higher education. This implies that secondary education is an aspect of education that is designed to inculcate the right values, norms, cultures and skills needed to equip learners for useful living within the society and prepare every Nigerian child to be self-reliant. However, there are several factors, ranging from institutional, human, socio-political, environmental, and economical, that usually militate against attaining such educational objectives. Among these numerous factors is academic stress. Just like students, students are equally faced with some stress that they must device some means to cope with in order not to burn out, feel depressed or fatigued.

Stress is the resultant effect of the imbalance between personal capacity and environmental demands. This is what occurs when a school for instance places a high demand for academic task on the learner without taking into cognizance the learners' ability and the school environment. Stress is the outcome of pressure on the student to do effectively the academic task expected of them. It is important to note that stress is not all a negative phenomenon. It often pushes the student to work harder; it helps to make them beat deadlines and also lead them to learn faster. However, it makes students to be disinterested in schooling; disinterested in cooperating with the school authorities to realize the educational goals of the institution, and disinterested in contributing to any class activity, leading to nonchalant attitude to school matters. Stress also makes students to be edgy, easily provoked, physically assaulting, excessively abusive, and prone to the use of foul language, fretting unnecessarily, and being anxious over little problems (Alan & Elaine, 2010). All of these can be detrimental and harmful because stress; when not managed properly, could result in depression

Depression is a debilitating and pernicious cluster of symptoms that may persist for a period of weeks, months, or even years. It is affective disorder that presents with depressed mood, loss of interests or pleasure, decreased energy, feelings of guilt of low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite and poor concentration (Ibrahim, Kelly, Adams & Glazebrook, 2021). It is also characterized changes in mood status presenting as feelings of sadness which may fluctuate from slight hopelessness to severe feelings of disappointment. It is a disorder that can be reliably diagnosed and treated in primary health care centres. If untreated in the early age of occurrence, it can

lead to different problems such as school failure, conduct disorder and delinquency, eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia, school phobia, panic attacks, substance abuse or even suicide (Lotfi, Aminian, Ghomizada & Zarea, 2020; Yalemwork, 2020).

In regard to its prevalence, the world mental health survey initiative carried out in Nigeria reported that lifetime prevalence of depression ranges from 10% of 15% (Ibrahim, Kelly, Adams & Glazebrook, 2021). In 2015, the world Health Organization study on global aging and adult health reported a prevalence of 6.7% for mild depression among learners aged 18years and older. Compared to the general population, depression among students is more prevalent among in-school adolescents with conduct disorder and is often associated with poor academic outcomes, poor quality of school life and increase utilization of health-care resources. Among hypertensive patients, depressive symptoms have been associated with poor blood pressure (BP) control. Despite the evidence linking depression to poor Blood pressure (BP) control and increased hypertension-related morbidity and mortality, there is paucity of data on the burden of depression among students with hypertension in sub-Saharan African. In Nigeria, the prevalence of major depression increased marginally from 26.7% in 2017 to 26.9% in 2018 (Marcus, Yasamy, Mark, Dan & Shekhar, 2015).

The causes of students depression as identified by Kaur (2011) include: long school hours, excessive academic engagement, increasing class sizes, pressure from parents, pressure from friends, changes in curriculum, poor class management by students. Where such depression inductive factors are poorly managed they could affect the health, academic performance and achievement of students in schools. Furthermore, Osha (2020) maintained that prevalence, effects and causes of depression among secondary school students could vary with respect to personal variables of students.

Personal variables in this context connote attributes that distinguishes one student from another. These attributes include but are not restricted to sex, age, ethnicity, nationality among others. With respect to the sex, female students and their male colleagues might not have the same capacity for stress-coping. This could interface the prevalence of depression between both sexes. This is because female students might be emotionally weaker than their male folks, so that their ability to cope in confronting emotional challenges might be lower than that of their male counterparts. However, the coping ability of the male students might be lower than the female students in dealing with academic pressures. Hence, depressive disorder may differ with

respect to their sexes (Olaitan, Oyerinde, Obiyemi & Kayode, 2010). The level or prevalence of depression among students could also be interfaced by students' age.

Age refers to the number of years an individual has lived. The older one gets, the better such person is adjudged to be mature and exposed. This is the reason, it is sometimes considered in the recruitment of workers for vacancies and admission process in schools. Since age is often associated with experience and maturity, the expectation is that the older students might have better experience than their younger ones in managing challenges in the school environment, such as beating deadlines to submit projects and assignments than the less experienced ones. The coping effort of the older students might be higher in such circumstances as against the low coping behaviours of younger students. Consequently, this could affect the prevalence of depression.

Several studies have been conducted on personal variables and depression among students in Edo State in recent times. Omomia, Omomia, Chimezie and Akinwale (2020) examined the perceived impact of depression on the academic achievements of Biology students in Education District IV of Lagos state. The research design used is the descriptive survey design method. One hundred Biology students were randomly selected using ballot method from four schools in education District IV. Four research questions guided the study. The research instrument used for collecting data is the Depression Assessment Scale for students (SADS). Simple mean method was used to analyze data collected. Some of the findings are that students experienced high level of at the end of the term and this had adverse effect on their academic achievement.

Nwimo and Onwunaka (2020) determined the level of depression experienced by secondary school teachers and students in Ebonyi State. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design using a sample of 660 (male 259, female 401) teachers randomly drawn from 33 secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The secondary schools were selected from two (Abakaliki and Afikpo) out of three education zones in Ebonyi State. In each school 20 students were randomly selected using systematic random sampling technique. A self-developed instrument titled: Teacher Depression Questionnaire (TDQ) was used to collect data for the study. The results showed that the secondary school students had a high level of and the difference in the level of depression reported by male and female students was significant with male students reporting higher level of depression than female students.

Busari (2021) investigated the level of depression experience among undergraduate students of university of Ado Ekiti, Emmanuel Alayande Campus Oyo, Symptoms of depression and various stressors in Academic work of students were identified. 480 students participated in this study. Results also indicated that undergraduates in their second year were better adjusted to academic depression than their first year counterparts. The result further shows that the level of academic depression experienced among students is high.

In another study Ekundayo and Kolawole (2021) examined the coping strategies of these female students with depression in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The descriptive research design of the survey type was used for the study. The population consisted of all the students in public secondary schools in the State. The sample was however made up of 300 students from 20 secondary schools across the three senatorial districts of the State. The study revealed a significant gender difference in the level of depression and also some sources of depression among secondary school students.

Similarly, Chellamuthu (2017) explored the gender differences and its relationship with academic depression experienced among high school students. 200 high school students from Government and Private schools in and around Salem city, Tamilnadu were selected through stratified random sampling and the data was collected with Educational Depression Scale for Adolescents and Positive Mental Health Scale. The results revealed that students from private school experienced higher academic depression than that of government school students, and private school students have higher mental health status than their counterpart. The result further shows that male students experience more academic depression than their female counter among students of high school students.

Abiodun and Oluwafunto (2018) examined the present prevalence of depression among university students as well as gender dissimilarity in self-reported depression. 550 (male-46; female-306) randomly selected students from three private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria completed Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale. Further analysis showed that self-reported cases of mild depression was more than that of severe depression and difference on gender indicated that overall rate of depression for females (37.30%) was higher than that of males (34.64%). There was no significant difference on gender basis at 0.05 alpha level.

In the study of Aam, Safiyanu and Adamu (2017) examined the relationship between age and academic Depression among secondary school students in Bauchi – Nigeria. Correlational design was used. The population of the study constituted 193 (115 Males and 78 Females) secondary school

students. Proportionate Stratified Random sampling techniques was employed in selecting a sample of 108 students as sample participants in this study based on sample size table by Research Advisors. Findings from the study showed that there is a significant relationship between age and academic depression among secondary students in Bauchi – Nigeria.

In a descriptive study, Shiferaw, Anand, and Namera (2015) examined exploring the perceived depression level and academic depression among students in Jimma Zone, Ethiopia. A cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey design of 193 students, who were selected by a proportionate stratified random sampling, was selected for the study. Results showed that the prevalence of perceived depression level among students of Jimma was 47.7%. Result further shows that academic depression differed by level of study as older students had more academic responsibility than younger students.

Gebre Kirstos (2015) examined level of study depression among secondary school students and their academic performance: The Case of Central Zone of Tigray Region. This study employed a cross-sectional survey method which intended at inspecting the current level of depression, possible contributing factors in central zone secondary school students of Tigray region. The study areas consist of 1139 secondary school students and out of them 321 participants were taken for this study. To analyze the collected data, both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied. Accordingly, the result showed that, all the secondary school students in higher age experienced higher level of academic depression than younger ones.

A study done by Epkins (2016), looked at clinic-referred children. Two main groups of these children emerged, those whose personality tends to be internalized, and those who were externalized. Epkins' was looking for evidence of Beckian thinking in young children. She explains that specificity would emerge on all cognitive measures, with internalizing children reporting more negative cognition than externalizing children (Epkins 2016). This is so because focusing on yourself would logically lead to a greater increase of negative automatic thoughts on average, her findings consistent with Beck's Theory, the findings suggest that the negative cognitive triad, cognitive processing distortions, and depressive and anxious thought content, may be specifically related to internalizing.

When a demand is exerted on any entity that is incapable of delivering the required result, there is bound to be a problem. The problem is stress, strain and ultimately depression. Just like any attempt to swim against the tide ends up in stress and depression, so also secondary school students from whom

much is expected from their parents/guardian. In Edo State many secondary school students study under unpleasant conditions of a noisy environment, poor road network, inadequate school facilities, and recurrent school migration by parents among others. Couple with the foregoing, is the unprecedented increase in students' enrolment in secondary schools is alarming. Ikolo (2011) discovered that there is tremendous increase in the enrolment of students and in the average size of classrooms in secondary schools in Nigeria. He noted that in recent times, the average number of students has grown from 35-40 students to 90-110 and even more. Though, open enrolment in schools is laudable, yet, the deficiency is in the corresponding provision of adequate infrastructures, inadequate classrooms, short supply of students, dilapidated structures and classrooms in most schools. Seats and desks which are basic classroom requirements are insufficient and in some secondary schools, students are sitting on ransacked furniture and some even sit on bare floor (Oyeniran, 2014). These are all risk factors that could constitute stress to students and predispose depressive disorders.

Generally, depression is associated with other health challenges such as anxiety, heart attack, insomnia, migraine, weakness of the body among others. Hence, some students who are victims of one or more of such ailments have had to be absent from schools in their bid to visit their doctors with such life-threatening diseases (Kaur, 2000). Even when present in school with such health challenges, students as victims of depression are easily fatigued, restless and reserved. The negative effects this could have on the students' academic achievement.

In attempt to manage this challenge, several studies on prevalence of depression have been carried out in studies in Nigeria (Alan & Elaine, 2020; Olaitan, Oyerinde, Obiyemi & Kayode, 2010; Ibrahim, Kelly, Adams & Glazebrook, 2021). All the studies focused on prevalence of depression, causes and effects of depression among hospital staff and prison workers among others. No such study to the best of the researcher's knowledge has examined Personal variables and depression among secondary school students in Edo State. This is the gap in knowledge that this study seeks to fill.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- 1) What is the prevalence of depression among secondary school students in Edo State?

- 2) Is there any difference between male and female secondary school students on the prevalence of depression among secondary schools in Edo State?
- 3) Is there any difference between young and older secondary school students on the prevalence of depression in secondary schools in Edo State?

Methods

The study adopted the descriptive survey. The population of this study covered all the three thousand two hundred and seventy two (327,267) Senior Secondary School (SSS) students in public secondary schools in Edo State. This record is based on the Post Primary Education Board (PPEB), Benin City, Edo State (2021). The simple sampling technique was used as the sampling technique. One percent (1%) of the schools and senior secondary school students were drawn from each of the 18 local government areas.

The instrument that was used for this study was a questionnaire titled: Prevalence of Depression Questionnaire (PDQ). The questionnaire was divided into two sections –Section A and B. Section A addressed demographic information of students such as: their sex and age. Section B dwelt on the prevalence of depression among students in the institution. This section contained 10-items statement that border on the various symptoms of depression among students. All the items were rated on a four point likert scale: Always – 4, Sometimes – 3, Rarely – 2 and Never – 1. A mean score of 2.50 was used as the benchmark for determining parents' perception on the item statements. This was obtained by adding up the four point responses (Always – 4, Sometimes – 3, Rarely – 2, Never – 1) and dividing the sum of the scales (10) by the total number of scales (4) to give 2.50. Hence, a score of 2.50 or higher represents agreement while means score of 1 to 2.49 would be taken otherwise. The instrument was subjected to scrutiny by the researcher's supervisor and two experts in School based Psychology and Student Management.

The reliability of the instrument was done using the Cronbach reliability technique. This was done by administering copies of the questionnaire to a trial group of 20 students outside the study area. After the analysis, the reliability alpha on the items yielded a coefficient of 0.75. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to teachers after due permission was taken from the principal. The principal was informed about the purpose of the research exercise and the role of students as the target participants in the study. The researcher gave copies of the questionnaire to the students

who were expected to fill the instrument. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count and percentages were used to analyze the research questions. High prevalence was considered to be any percentage score of 50 percent or higher while any percentage of 49 or below was considered otherwise. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS® version 20) was used to analyse the data collected.

Results

The results of the analysis of research question 1 and 2 are presented below

Research Question 1: What is the prevalence of depression among secondary school students in Edo State?

Table 1: Summary on Prevalence of Depression among Secondary School Students in Edo State

S/n	Items	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
		High occurrence		Low occurrence	
1.	My mood changes at the slightest turn of an event	237		135	
		(63.7%)*		(36.3%)	
2.	I get feelings of sadness	243		129	
		(65.3%)*		(34.7%)	
3.	I get into state of slight hopelessness	141		231	
		(37.9%)		(62.1%)*	
4.	I get feelings of disappointment when my effort on an activity fails	177		195	
		(47.6%)		(52.4%)*	
5.	I feel restless to be point of having panic attacks	160		212	
		(43.0%)		(52.0%)*	
6.	I become easily provoked over little issues	279		93	
		(75.0%)*		(25.0%)	
7.	I suffer sleeplessness	197		175	
		(53.0%)*		(47.0%)	
8.	I get anxious when I cannot get something done	175		197	
		(47.0%)		(53.0%)*	
9.	I feel stressed out so easily on thing I love to do	192		180	
		(51.6%)*		(48.4%)	
10.	I feel so worried to the point of almost taking my life	153		219	
		(41.1%)		(58.9%)*	

* High prevalence (% > 50percent)

Result in Table 1 shows that majority of the students have high prevalence on items 1, 2, 6, 7 and 9 at a percentage score range of 51.6 to 75 percent while there was low prevalence on items 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10 at a percentage score of 37.9% to 48.4% respectively. Hence this implies that the prevalence of depression among secondary school students in Edo State was high as indicated by: mood changes at the slightest turn of an event, feelings of sadness, state of slight hopelessness, feelings of disappointment when efforts on an activity fails, restless to be point of having panic attacks, provocation over little issues, sleeplessness, feelings of stress on easily on things, anxious when they cannot get something done, and feelings of worries to the point of almost taking one's life.

Research Questions 2: Is there any difference between male and female secondary school students on the prevalence of depression among secondary schools Edo State?

Table 2: Summary Analysis on the Prevalence of Depression with respect to their Sex

S/n	Items	Sex			
		Male		Female	
		High occurrence	Low occurrence	High occurrence	Low occurrence
1	My mood changes at the slightest turn of an event	49 30.1%	114 69.9%*	86 41.1%	123 58.9%*
2	I get feelings of sadness	54 33.1%	109 66.9%*	75 35.9%	134 64.1%*
3	I get into state of slight hopelessness	106 65.0%*	57 35.0%	125 59.8%*	84 40.2%
4	I get feelings of disappointment when my effort on an activity fails	89 54.6%*	74 45.4%	106 50.7%*	103 49.3%
5	I feel restless to be point of having panic attacks	103 63.2%*	60 36.8%	109 52.2%*	100 47.8%
6	I become easily provoked over little issues	42 25.8%	121 74.2%*	51 24.4%	158 75.6%*
7	I suffer sleeplessness	88 54.0%*	75 46.0%	87 41.6%	122 58.4%*
8	I get anxious when I cannot get something done	101 62.0%*	62 38.0%	96 45.9%	113 54.1%*
9	I feel stressed out so easily on thing I love to do	85 52.1%*	78 47.9%	95 45.5%	114 54.5%*
10	I feel so worried to the point of almost taking my life	103 63.2%*	60 36.8%	116 55.5%*	93 44.5%

* High prevalence (% >50percent)

Result in Table 2 shows that there is high level of occurrence on items 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 at percentage score of 52.1% to 63.2% among the male students and high occurrence on items 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9 respectively. This implies that there is high prevalence of hopelessness feelings, feelings of disappointment when my effort on an activity fails, restless to be point of having panic attacks, sleeplessness, anxiety when certain things are not done, feelings of being stressed out easily and feeling of worries to the point of almost taking my life among male students. On the other hand, there is high prevalence of mood changes at the slightest turn of an event, feelings of sadness, provoked over little issues, sleeplessness, anxiousness when certain things are not easily done, feelings of being stressed out and worries to the point of almost taking one's life among the male students in the study area. This further indicates that there is a difference between the male and female secondary school students on the occurrence of depression in secondary schools in Edo State.

Research Questions 3: Is there any difference between young and older secondary school students on the prevalence of depression in secondary schools in Edo State?

Table 3: Summary Analysis on the Prevalence of Depression with respect to their Age

S/n	Items	Age			
		Young students		Old students	
		High occurrence	Low occurrence	High occurrence	Low occurrence
1	My mood changes at the slightest turn of an event	91 52.3%*	83 47.7%	44 22.2%	154 77.8%*
2	I get feelings of sadness	80 46.0%	94 54.0%*	49 24.7%	149 75.3%*
3	I get into state of slight hopelessness	113 64.9%*	61 35.1%	118 59.6%*	80 40.4%
4	I get feelings of disappointment when my effort on an activity fails	83 47.7%	91 52.3%*	112 56.6%*	86 43.4%
5	I feel restless to be point of having panic attacks	93 53.4%*	81 46.6%	119 60.1%*	79 39.9%
6	I become easily provoked over little issues	39 22.4%	135 77.6%*	54 27.3%	144 72.7%*
7	I suffer sleeplessness	88 50.6%*	86 49.4%	87 43.9%	111 56.1%*
8	I get anxious when I cannot get something done	92 52.9%*	82 47.1%	105 53.0%*	93 47.0%
9	I feel stressed out so easily on thing I love to do	96 55.2%*	78 44.8%	84 42.4%	114 57.6%*
10	I feel so worried to the point of almost taking my life	133 76.4%*	41 23.6%	86 43.4%	112 56.6%*

* High prevalence (% >50percent)

Result in Table 2 shows that there is high level of occurrence on items 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 at percentage score of 50.6% to 64.9% among young students (students below the age of 15years) and high occurrence on items 1, 2, 6, 7, 9 and 10 respectively. This implies that there is high prevalence of hopelessness feelings, feelings of disappointment when my effort on an activity fails, restless to be point of having panic attacks, sleeplessness, anxiety when certain things are not done, feelings of being stressed out easily and feeling of worries to the point of almost taking my life among young students (students below the age of 15years). On the other hand, there is high prevalence of mood changes at the slightest turn of an event, feelings of sadness, provoked over little issues, sleeplessness, anxiousness when certain things are not easily done, feelings of being stressed out and worries to the point of almost taking one’s life among the older students (students older than 15years) in the study area. This indicates that there is a difference between the young and old secondary school students on the occurrence of depression in secondary schools in Edo State.

Discussion of Findings

The result showed that the prevalence of depression among secondary school students in Edo State was high. The result agrees with that of Omomia, Omomia, Chimezie and Akinwale (2020) who found that students experienced high level of at the end of the term and this had adverse effect on their academic achievement. The result is in line with that of Nwimo and Onwunaka (2020) who stated that the secondary school students had a high level of and the difference in the level of depression reported by male and female students was significant with male students reporting higher level of depression than female students. The result corroborates that of Busari (2021) who revealed that the level of academic depression experienced among students is high.

The result showed that there is a significant difference between the male and female secondary school students on the prevalence of depression in secondary schools in Edo State. The result agrees with that of Ekundayo and Kolawole (2021) who found that a significant gender difference in the level of depression and also some sources of depression among secondary school students. The result is in line with that of Chellamuthu (2017) who stated that male students experience more academic depression than their female counter among students of high school students. The result agrees with that of Abiodun and Oluwafunto (2018) who revealed that self-reported cases of mild depression was more than that of severe depression and difference on gender indicated that overall rate of depression for females (37.30%) was higher than that of males (34.64%).

The result showed that there is a significant difference between the young and older secondary school students on the prevalence of depression in secondary schools in Edo State. The result agrees with that of Aam, Safiyanu and Adamu (2017) who found that there is a significant relationship between age and academic depression among secondary students in Bauchi – Nigeria. The result is in line with that of Akande, Olowonirejuaro and Okwara-Kalu (2020) who noted that gender difference in the level of depression and also some sources of depression among secondary school students.

Conclusion

Depression is a debilitating and worrisome emotional challenge that is common among young and old in recent times. Based on findings, it is concluded that the prevalence of depression among secondary school students in Edo State was high as indicated by: mood changes at the slightest turn of an event, feelings of sadness, state of slight hopelessness, feelings of disappointment when efforts on an activity fails, restless to be

point of having panic attacks, provocation over little issues, sleeplessness, feelings of stress on easily on things, anxious when they cannot get something done, and feelings of worries to the point of almost taking one's life. Furthermore, there is a difference in the prevalence of depression in secondary schools in Edo State with respect to gender and age.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings, are the following recommendations:

- 1) Balanced combination of social and emotional mind training among undergraduates should be encouraged by university administrator and educator to facilitate the early identification and management of depression among students.
- 2) Guidance and counselling unit should be employed in all faculties to afford students the opportunities of receiving information and orientation services about how to boost their stress management skills to enable them manage depressive disorder.
- 3) Gender and age-targeted counselling on depression management should be encouraged in higher institutions of learning in Edo State. This would help to promote the social intelligence of male and young students in higher institutions in Edo State.

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