

## **INFLUENCE OF DEPRESSION ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENUGU STATE NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*This study sought to investigate the Influence of Depression on Academic performance among secondary school students in Enugu state. Five questions and hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey design with a sample size of 750 secondary school students who were randomly selected from the six educational zones of the state was used. The main instrument for the study which was made up of Beck's inventory on depression and researcher designed academic performance test was used to obtain responses from the students. The instrument was face validated by three experts from the department of Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation of Enugu state university of Science and Technology respectively. Internal consistency was determined with Cronbach alpha statistics and a co-efficient of 0.89 obtained. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that significant relationship exist between depression and academic performance among secondary school students irrespective of gender in Enugu state. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that professional school Psychologists and Counsellors should render psychological interventions using cognitive behavioral techniques on students who are depressed in order to improve their academic performance. Coping strategies should also be taught in secondary schools in order to help teachers and students recognize both onset and morbidity of depression.*

**Keywords: Depression, Secondary school students, Academic performance, Mental health, Adolescents.**

### **Introduction**

Depression is more than feeling unhappy or fed up for few days. Sometimes it is being misunderstood as trivial or something imagined and fake. However, this is a wrong assertion because depression is real with real symptoms. It is neither a sign of weakness as people wrongly assume nor something one can easily snap out of on their own by putting themselves

together. The good news is that it is treatable with adequate cure and coping mechanism once the individual is engaged in the right cognitive behavioral mechanism, treatment and supports. The onset of depression is the leading cause of morbidity in adolescents taking a massive toll on the quality of life in young adults' populations especially those of schooling age (Bianca Palmissano, 2018). It occurs frequently among the age group of 10 and 18 giving rise to the onset of chronic and more persistent depression in adulthood. Yet depression is significantly under diagnosed in young people partially because clinicians are taught to look out for symptoms of adult depression which may present differently in young students (Neavin DR, Joyce, J et al, 2018). Moreover, a student experiencing persistent boredom or disinterest in daily activities because of depression can become agitated and difficult to manage behaviorally. Unfortunately, because these adolescents do not always seem sad; they are more likely to be labelled as troublesome by teachers and parents and rarely get treatment for the underlying cause of their behaviors. Furthermore, the effect of social stress on the depressed student often correlate with bullying and suicide with the latter becoming the third leading cause of death in the world (WHO, 2007). Depression is a common mental illness worldwide with more than 264 million people of all ages affected. It is the leading cause of disability worldwide and a major contributor to the overall global burden of mental disorder (WHO, 2020). It is different from usual mood fluctuations and short-lived emotional responses to everyday life challenges but has a long lasting with moderate or severe intensity to disrupt normal life; thereby affecting an individual's ability to function at work, school, and society. Depression is also known as the leading cause of suicide with close to 800,000 people dying yearly (GBD, 2018).

Depression is classified as a mood disorder. It is described as feelings of sadness, loss or anger that interferes with a person's everyday activities (APA, 2013). It is an ongoing problem which consists of episodes during which the symptoms lasts for at least two weeks (APA, 2018). According to American Psychiatric Association (2013), depression is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how an individual feel, think and act. It leads to a variety of emotional and physical problems thereby decreasing individual's interest in activities once enjoyed. The death of a loved one, failure in a subject or ending of a relationship are different experiences to endure with a normal feeling of sadness or grief in response however it is not the same as having depression. This is because in grief, painful feelings comes in waves often mixed with positive memories of the situation while in depression, mood and interest are decreased for up to two weeks with a feeling of worthlessness and self-loathing (APA, 2013). The word depression comes is a latin word "depressio" which means sinking. It is a mood disorder that varies from normal transient low mood in daily life to clinical syndrome with severe and significant duration with associated signs and symptoms marked differently from normalcy (APA, 2013). Depression is also known as a disease characterized by decayed mood as its main symptomology. Others symptoms include, painful experience, bad humor, anguish, panic attacks, performance delay of various psychic and cognitive functions, tendency to isolation, demotivation, apathy, hopelessness, negative thoughts, delusions, state of dejection and unhappiness. As estimated by World health organization, depression is the second largest illness in terms of morbidity with 2% of school children and 5% of adolescents suffering the disorder (WHO, 2013).

Depression can affect anyone regardless of social status, age, ethnic group, socio-economic status, parental upbringing among others. Everyone at some point has experienced a sad mood. This short period of sadness is not uncommon as humans struggle with the pressures of everyday life such as financial pressure, marital pressure, raising kids, occupational difficulties amongst others. However, when this sadness goes beyond two weeks; it becomes of great concern because of its significant health consequences. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental disorder volume five (DSM-V TR, 2013) requires that five out of nine symptoms must be present for at least two weeks for a diagnosis of depression to become accurate. The nine symptoms includes; a sad depressed mood, loss of interest and pleasure in regular activities, loss or increase in weight and appetite, loss of energy, negative self-concept and feelings, worthlessness and guilt, difficulty concentrating and recurrent thoughts of death (Davidson & Neale, 2001). In secondary schools, the symptoms are more of somatic like social withdrawal and irritability manifesting in behaviors like fearlessness, physical complaint and clinging behaviors (McCarthy, Downess & Sherman, 2008).

Depression and other affective disorders are areas primarily ignored in education especially by the public schools. A large number of secondary school students are affected by depression which invariably affects their academic performances. This is seen in the way they skip school and academic activities, feel hopeless, difficulty in concentration, attention deficient, despondency, decrease in class activity, pessimism and sadness which severely disrupt and adversely affect their life sometimes to such extent that suicide is attempted (Lyer, K & Khan Z.A, 2012). As an emotional problem with feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, depression is a prevalent problem among secondary school students across the world with a devastating effect on students, though it is treatable. Untreated depression also interferes in day to day activities of students with students ignoring their own successes and traits while exaggerating their faults and failures. Research has shown that students who believe that others are better than them are more likely to develop depression. Thus if teachers and peers view and treat a student as someone not academically and socially capable and competent, there may be a greater risk of depression. Depression is also associated with other conditions seen in children and adolescents. For example, approximately 50% of children with depression also have problems with anxiety, attention deficient hyperactivity disorder, conduct disorder, oppositional deficient disorder and substance abuse.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death in adolescents with depression as its leading cause. Students with suicidal feelings are always overwhelmed by painful emotions and see death as the only way out. Although the majority of people who have depression do not die by suicide, having major depression does increase suicide risk compared to people without depression. The risk of death may be partly related to the severity of depression (Koplewicz, 2002). New data on depression has showed that 2% of people treated for depression in an outpatient setting will die by suicide and those treated as in-patients by 6%. (NIMH, 2014). There are also dramatic gender differences in lifetime risk of suicide in depression with 7% of men and 1% of women prevalence in certain mental health problems. For example, females are more likely to present with internalizing disorders such as depression and anxiety while men have a higher prevalence of several externalizing disorder and substance abuse (Marlena & Hopko, 2012). Furthermore, studies have shown over the years that depression is more common among females (21%) than males (13%) with these factors accounting for its

biological influences such as genetic, hormonal changes, adrenal functioning, neurotransmitters as well as psychosocial variables like social roles, cultural orientations among others.

Depression as a mood disorder affects a person's ability to perform life activities including academic performance (Hysenbegasi et al, 2005). It is common for people who suffer from depression to engage in self-blame, experience confusion and a feeling of hopelessness. It has been found that loss of interest aspect of depression is associated with lower grade point, anxiety and poor academic performance (Eisenberg, 2009). Thus time and efforts are needed to help students achieve better feat in their academics. This is because the desire of success is dependent on an individual's concept of himself and the different interpretation given to situations thus a student who sees himself as a top ranking scholar may set as his goal the attainment of the highest grade in the class while those who see themselves as hopeless and helpless with low self-esteem may see themselves as failures thus performing poorly in school (Suleiman, 2012).

Education at secondary school level is the bedrock and foundation for higher knowledge in tertiary institutions. It is an investment as well as instruments for achieving technological, scientific, cultural, social and political developments. This is why the Federal ministry of Education (2007) stipulated national policies for secondary school as an agent of national development that fosters individual development for further societal worth and development with equal opportunities for all. However, no nation can function academically when her students are depressed hence there is need for depression to be taken seriously as it has the capacity to destroy the country's younger generation and future workforce. Furthermore, academic performance among secondary school students has always been a matter of great concern to educational stakeholder comprising parents, educators, students and government. Though a lot of measures has been taken over the years in order to improve on the situation nevertheless, a large number of secondary school students still perform poorly. Secondary school students in recent times performed below expectations in internal and external examinations giving rise to a lot of unanswered questions as a result of this abnormally; since some students especially those studying in the urban areas do so in better conducive and stimulating environment. This has led to serious investigation by researchers on the reasons for the poor performance including attributions to depression among others.

Academic performance or academic achievement is the extent to which a student has attained a short or long term educational goals (Mohammed, A. 2010). Academic performance is important because it is strongly linked to the positive outcomes we value. Students who are academically successful with high level of socio-emotional intelligence are more likely to be employed, have stable employment than those with less education (Janelle Regier, 2011). Academically, successful students have high self-esteem, lower level of depression and anxiety, less likely to abuse alcohol and engage in substance abuse. Academic performance is also very important for the successful physical, social, psychological, mental and medical development of students and better integration into the society. In Nigeria, academic excellence, qualifications and high performance attainment have been regarded as the parameters for recruitment, placement and advancement in both public and private sector. Most important, these parameters are highly adopted in selection of candidates for admission

into tertiary institutions and colleges. This is because grades serve as medium of communication to students, teachers and parents about a student's mastery of the object and criteria for graduation because it gives adequate information on a student for admission. Due to the high premium placed on academic performance, individuals do everything to obtain excellent results (Suleiman, 2017). Because of the importance attached to tests and grades as predictive factors; anxiety has been raised in the minds of the students concerned. Based on this expectations and the society's demand for excellence; the students on their part thrive to compete and excel while schools are expected to influence their learning, socialization and vocational preparedness. Academic instruction is arguably the primary business of education and measurement of academic performance occurring at multiple levels for different purposes. For example, classroom teachers often conduct formative and summative test in order to evaluate student's mastery while some are designed primarily to measure progress at a school level. Each of these kinds of assessment engenders significant questions related to test design, types of decision supported by the results, alternative assessment and accommodations (Bielinski & Scott, 2001).

With reference to this study, depression has the ability to influence the prevalence of academic failure in a student. For example, a students with a high neuroticism has a sensitive inclination already to react to unpleasant situations negatively. Anxiety and hostility is heightened whenever the same student is reacting to a negative stimuli with little or no self-control over his reaction making him more prone to depression thereby disrupting his normal routine functioning including academic. This student will lack the ability to concentrate while teaching and learning is going on cause his thought process and mind are clouded with negativity. Subsequent activities also serve as triggers to his emotions and reactions even as low as a loud voice of a teacher implying that depression affects students far more than it is being credited hence the need to identify the various coping strategies of helping students with depression in order to navigate optimally in their daily functioning. Observation and interaction of the researcher revealed that most senior secondary school students who are already adolescents have the ability to process their feelings and thought process better than children so are in a better position to identify accurately what they are feeling however being adolescents also makes them prone to immature articulation of situations which they see and react to from their immature minds (Animba, 2018). Though depression has a debilitating effects on adults, however it is often worse on adolescents who lacks the social and emotional experience of handling such situations. For example, rape is prevalent in the society now and not always reported by students. The reasons being due to the culture of silence practiced especially in undeveloped countries, blames on victims, social and cultural bullying for speaking out among others. These experiences are quite traumatic to the individual with no way of escape thereby leading to chronic depression. Sadly, the only way of detecting the level of depression among them is through behavioral manifestation and daily disruption of daily functioning of the student including academic performance and achievement. This is evident in the lack of concentration in the class, being absent minded, lack of enthusiasm and motivation for learning, distrust of the school and society at large, violent outburst, erratic and negative behavior, numbness among others. This also made learning low and unproductive.

Senior secondary school students in this study are youths who are still at the prime of their lives with the intention of taking over from the ageing adults (Animba, 2018). However, when these students suffer acute and chronic stress which invariably triggers depression due to lack of identification of depressive stressors, adequate therapy and coping mechanism; they graduate from secondary school into the society as maladjusted and dysfunctional individuals who cannot contribute to the social, economic, emotional and physical functioning of the society. They also resort to suicide in order to escape their confused emotional state; not because they enjoy doing it but due to overwhelming chronic state there by posing a serious obstacle to their academic progress. Furthermore, there is need for proper investigation of depression in order to facilitate teaching and learning for the good of the students, school and society. It is worthy to note here that poor performance of students is not linked to teacher-teacher variable alone; however teaching and learning process has other contributory variable apart from teachers to contend with.

The stress experienced by most senior secondary school students not only makes them uncomfortable but causes toxic stress response if adequate support system is lacking in their lives to help them navigate the process (Animba, 2018). Neglect, abuse and household crisis are all types of depression triggers that can cause overdrive of bodily stress management therefore it is very important for educators to be aware of this risk because students suffering from depression are not only at health risk but are prone to lower grade point, decreased reading and learning and increased school dropout. As educators, knowing the signs and having strategies to help students to be successful can make a difference. Certain behaviors in a classroom setting may signify that a student is suffering from depression. For example, students being overly aggressive with other students, students being withdrawn, sad, or distracted in class, student engaging in self destructive behaviors among others (Katooka, S, Langley, A, et al, 2012).

The causes of depression are complex with most experts suggesting a link to genetics. According to American Medical Association (2019), there are many possible causes of depression including faulty mood regulation by the brain, genetic vulnerability, stressful life events, medications and medical problems interacting together to bring on depression.. Researchers believe that nerve cell connections, nerve cell growth and functioning of nerve circuits have a major impact on depression. Areas that play a significant role in depression are the amygdala, thalamus, and hippocampus. This is in support of FMRI study published in the journal of Neuroscience (2018). This suggests that children, siblings and parents of people with severe depression are more likely to suffer from depression than others. This is as a result of interaction between genes with each contributing smaller effects towards depression while interacting with the environment. Genes also affect mood and depression. This is because every part of the body including the brain is controlled by genes. Since genes produce proteins involved in biological processes, throughout life; they turn on and off. The genes has the ability to make the right protein at the right time however if the genes gets it wrong, it alters the body biology resulting in unstable mood. Stressful life events like death of a loved one play important role in depression though not everyone becomes depressed in the face of stressful situations however one's genetic makeup, biological influences, level of sensitivity can contribute to depression (APA, 2019). Researchers have also found out that early loss and emotional trauma may make individuals more vulnerable to depression later in life. Profound

early loss such as the death of a parent, withdrawal of a loved one's affection may resonate throughout life eventually manifesting as depression. Furthermore, certain medical problems are linked to lasting significant mood disturbances with medications resulting to 10-15% of all depression (APA, 2019). Among these illnesses are thyroid hormones imbalances, heart diseases, Parkinson, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer, stroke, HIV, cancer, among others.

Environmental causes of depression includes events such as stress, traumatic events, childhood difficulties, synthetic chemicals, noise pollution, and natural disaster among others. These are events that can happen to anyone and considered factors that are outside of an individual. Some researchers referred to these events as sociological or psychological factors that happen in society and the function and workings of the human mind (Iyer & Chan, 2012). These unfavorable life events can increase a person's vulnerability to depression or trigger a depressive episode. Negative thoughts about oneself and the world are also important in producing and maintaining depressive symptoms. There are different categories of depression like:

A: Major depression: This is also called major depressive disorder, classic depression or unipolar depression. People with this depression experience symptoms everyday regardless of what is happening around them positively or negatively. While some lasts for weeks or months, others experience it for a long time.

B: Persistent depression: This is also called chronic or dysthymia depression. It is not as intense as major depression however it still strains relationship and make daily tasks difficult.

C: Manic depression: It is also called bipolar disorder with periods of mania or hypomania where a person feels very good with alternate episodes of depression. In severe cases, episodes can include hallucinations and delusions.

D: Depressive psychosis: This occurs when a person with major depression loses touch with reality. It also includes hallucinations and delusions.

E: Prenatal/ Post-natal depression: Prenatal depression occurs during pregnancy or within weeks of giving birth. It is characterized by hormonal changes that happen during pregnancy triggering changes in the brain that leads to mood swings. It is called post-natal depression when it occurs within four weeks of childbirth. Women who lack adequate support or have had depression before are at increased risk of developing prenatal or post-natal depression though it's worthy to note that it can happen to anybody.

F: Premenstrual dysphoric disorder: This is a severe form of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) with physical and psychological symptoms leading to feeling of more emotion by some women prior to onset of ovulation and menstruation. This results to experiencing of some levels of depression and sadness that gets in the way of day to day functioning.

G: Seasonal depression: This is also called seasonal affective disorder. Symptoms often begin in the winter and may get worse as the season progresses leading to suicidal thoughts. Once the seasons changes, symptoms tend to improve.

H: Situational depression: This is clinically known as adjustment disorder with depressed mood brought on by specific events or situations leading to sadness, anxiety and social withdrawal.

I: Atypical depression: This refers to depression that temporarily goes away in response to positive events. Having atypical depression despite its name can be particularly challenging because the individual may not always seem depressed to himself or to others however it can occur with persistent depression as well.

### **Purpose of study**

The major purpose of the study was to investigate and determine the extent depression influences and affects academic performance among secondary school students in Enugu. Specifically, the study sought to determine different depression stressors and how to manage the illness in order to prevent its destructive effects on students.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study

- 1: To what extent is the influence of depression on academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu state?
- 2: To what extent is the influence of depression on academic performance of male secondary school students in Enugu state?
- 3: To what extent is the influence of depression on the academic performance of female secondary school students in Enugu state?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses guided the study:

H01: There is no significant relationship between depression and its influence on academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu state.

H02: There is no significant relationship between depression and its influence on academic performance of male secondary school students in Enugu state.

H03: There is no significant relationship between depression and its influence on academic performance of female secondary school students in Enugu state.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. A survey design is that in which generalizations are made over the entire population from a sample population (Uzoagulu, 2013). The design was used because descriptive survey research allow for the description of condition and situation as they exist in their natural setting. The study was conducted in Enugu state Nigeria. Enugu state is made up of six educational zones comprising of Agbani, Awgu, Enugu, Nsukka, Obollo-Afor and Udi. A sample of seven hundred and fifty senior secondary school II (SSII) students was used for the study. The sample was composed of boys and girls purposively selected from the six educational zone with two schools each; one from urban and the other rural area making it a total of 12 schools. In each school selected, 50-69 students were purposively selected depending on the number of students available per class in each strata. Two instruments were used to generate the relevant data in the study. They



were researcher-designed instrument titled Academic performance test containing test on English and Mathematics containing 25 questions each and Becks Depression Inventory II (BD II) consisting of 21 symptoms 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 the one that best described his feelings. The highest possible total for the whole test would be sixty-three since the lowest possible score for each question is zero. Depression level is considered as; 1-10 (normal), 11-16 (mild mood), 17-20 (borderline depression), 21-30 (moderate depression), 31-40 (severe depression) and over 40 (extreme depression). The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts; two from the department of Psychology and one from Measurement and Evaluation all from Enugu state University of Science and Technology. The reliability co-efficiency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha and a reliability co-efficient of 0.89 was obtained. A total of 770 questionnaires were administered to the respondent with the help of two research assistants. These assistants were trained by the researcher to assist in administering the instruments to the respondents. A total of 750 copies properly filled and returned were used for analysis. Mean and correlation were used to answer the research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significance level. The decision was made using real limits of the scale on a point scale as follows: 10.00-14.99 very low extent (VLE), 15.00-19.99 low extent (LE), 20.00-24.99 high extent (HE), and 25.00-29.99 very high extent (VHE). If the cal (r) is greater than the Crit (r), reject the hypothesis but if otherwise do not.

**Research question 1**

To what extent is the influence of depression on academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu state?

Table 1a: Correlation (r) between Academic performance and the level of depression experienced by secondary school students in Enugu state

| Variables               | Respondent<br>N=750<br>X | Decision | SD   | Df  | Correlation<br>(r) |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------|------|-----|--------------------|
| Depression              | 23.02                    | HE       | 9.24 |     | -0.723             |
| Academic<br>Performance | 13.34                    | VLE      | 4.87 | 748 |                    |

Data on Table 1a showed that depression influences the academic performance of secondary school students with a correlation index of -0.723. This implies that the relationship between the two variables was inversely proportional signifying that the higher the academic performance, the lower the depression level.

Hypothesis 1: *There is no significant relationship between depression and its influence on the academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu state.*

Table 1b: Pearson Product Moment (Correlation (r)) on the relationship between student's level of depression and its influence on academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu state

| Variables            | Respondent N | Mean  | SD   | Df  | Correlation (r) | P     |
|----------------------|--------------|-------|------|-----|-----------------|-------|
| Depression           | 750          | 23.02 | 9.24 |     | -0.723          | 0.001 |
| Academic Performance | 750          | 13.34 | 4.87 | 748 |                 |       |

This table indicates the calculated p value of 0.001 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance with correlation index level of -0.723 at df of 775 implying that there is a significant relationship between depression and academic performance among secondary school students therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

### Research question 2

To what extent is the influence of depression on academic performance of male secondary school students in Enugu state?

Table 2a: Correlation (r) between Academic performance and the level of depression experienced by male secondary school students in Enugu state

| Variables            | Respondent N=520<br>X | Decision | SD   | Df  | Correlation (r) |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------|------|-----|-----------------|
| Depression           | 22.41                 | HE       | 8.58 |     | -0.738          |
| Academic Performance | 12.77                 | VLE      | 4.72 | 748 |                 |

Data on Table 2a showed that depression influences the academic performance of male secondary school students with a correlation index of -0.738. This implies that the relationship between the two variables was inversely proportional signifying that the higher the academic performance, the lower the depression level of male students.

Hypothesis 2: *There is no significant relationship between depression and its influence on the academic performance of male secondary school students in Enugu State.*

Table 1b: Pearson Product Moment (Correlation (r) on the relationship between student’s level of depression and its influence on academic performance of male secondary school students in Enugu state

| Variables            | Respondent N | Mean  | SD   | Df  | Correlation (r) | P     |
|----------------------|--------------|-------|------|-----|-----------------|-------|
| Depression           | 520          | 22.41 | 8.58 |     | -0.738          | 0.001 |
| Academic Performance | 520          | 12.77 | 4.72 | 748 |                 |       |

Table 2b indicates that significant relationship exists between depression and academic performance among male students since the cal p value of 0.038 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index level of -0.738; therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Research question 3**

To what extent is the influence of depression on the academic performance of female secondary school students in Enugu state?

Table 3a: Correlation (r) between Academic performance and the level of depression experienced by female secondary school students in Enugu state

| Variables            | Respondent N=230 X | Decision | SD   | Df  | Correlation (r) |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------|------|-----|-----------------|
| Depression           | 22.25              | HE       | 9.33 |     | -0.827          |
| Academic Performance | 12.49              | VLE      | 3.92 | 748 |                 |

Data on Table 2a showed that depression influences the academic performance of female secondary school students with a correlation index of -0.827. This implies that the relationship between the two variables was inversely proportional signifying that the higher the academic performance, the lower the depression level of male students.

Hypothesis 3: *There is no significant relationship between depression and its influence on the academic performance of female secondary school students in Enugu State.*

Table 3b: Pearson Product Moment (Correlation (r) on the relationship between student’s level of depression and its influence on academic performance of female secondary school students in Enugu state

| Variables            | Respondent N | Mean   | SD   | Df  | Correlation (r) | P     |
|----------------------|--------------|--------|------|-----|-----------------|-------|
| Depression           | 230          | 22.25  | 9.33 |     |                 | 0.000 |
| Academic Performance | 230          | 12.49. | 3.92 | 748 | -0.827          |       |

Table 3b indicates that significant relationship exists between depression and academic performance among female students since the cal p value of 0.827 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index level of -0.000; therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

### **Discussion of findings**

The finding of the study in table 1 showed that there is a significant relationship between academic performance and depression among secondary school students in Enugu state. The relationship between the two variables was inversely proportional implying that the higher the academic performance, the lower the depression level and vice versa. The finding was consistent with the study carried out by Hysenbegasi, Hass and Rowland (2005) which found out that depression had significant impact on the academic productivity of secondary school students. Similarly, De Roma Leach & Leverett (2009), examined the association between self-reported depressive symptomology and college academic performance and also found inversely significant relationship between depression and academic performance which is consistent with the findings of this hypothesis that significant relationship exists between depression and academic performance among secondary school students in Enugu state.

Also, data in Table 2 revealed that significant relationship exists between depression academic performances among male secondary school students in Enugu state. The findings conforms with the study of Winkler, Pjrek & Kasper (2005) who found that male patient with depression scored significantly higher on irritability , prone to overact over minor annoyances, anger attacks, anger spells and hyperactive behavior when compared with depressed female patients.

Data in table 3 revealed a significant relationship between depression and academic performance among female secondary school students in Enugu state. This is similar to a research which suggested that girls are more likely than boys to continue feeling bad after experiencing different situation or events suggesting that they are prone to depression (Hankin & Abramson, 2001). Another study by Calvete & Cardenoso, 2005, found that girls doubt themselves their problem-solving abilities and view their problem as unsolvable more than boys. They also need a higher degree of approval and success to feel secure than boys.

## **Conclusion**

Over the years especially in the last two decades, a lot of research, investigation and inquiry have been undergone in order to find the reasons for massive drop out, failure and low academic performances of student. Stakeholders in education has tried a lot to find out why students fail even when teachers do their best in impacting knowledge under stimulating environment. It has shown that one of these factors, depression plays an important role in teaching and learning. Symptoms resulting from depression can directly impact a student's ability to learn. Often these students do not have the necessary coping skills to manage the impact of stress, anxiety and depression. Some might be distracted by intrusive thought about events that prevents them from paying attention in class studying or doing well on a test. Exposure to violence and other traumatic event can disrupts a student's ability to relate with others and successful manage their emotions. In the classroom setting, depression can lead to lower grade point, delinquency and school dropout. Students with depression also have problem remembering, difficulty concentrating, easily distracted which makes it hard for them to concentrate.

## **Recommendations**

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1: Professional school Psychologist and Counsellor should render Psychological intervention using cognitive behavioral techniques to counsel secondary school students who are depressed so as to improve their academic performance.
- 2: Teaching of coping strategies and life skills should be included in school curriculum so that early mindset transformation can help the students in situational reactions.
- 3: Teaching and learning should be made fun with less on test and examination as the true test of knowledge in order to minimize the effect of anxiety and depression on students.
- 4: School principals, teachers, parents, professional counsellors and Psychologists should give more attention to students with difficult home background so as to recognize the signs of depression early before it interferes with the students daily functioning.
- 5: Psychosocial and emotional intelligence should be encouraged so that students can cope with the onset and morbidity of depression.
- 6: Families should help students with adequate social support in order to cope with traumatic situations
- 7: Teachers should develop good working and collaborative relationship with students using positive reinforcement and motivational measures
- 8: Educators should make adjustments in assignments or test, break assignments into smaller pieces, offer extra help in setting up schedules, be more flexible and use variety of teaching method in order to reduce anxiety attached to school work.
- 9: Psychomotor activities like sports should be strictly followed in order to help boost emotion s of students, reduce stress and reduce negative energy.

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