

Relationship between Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and Social Adjustment of Secondary School Students Living in Conflict Area of Southern Kaduna, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the Relationship between Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Social Adjustment of Senior Secondary School Students Living in Conflict Areas of Southern Kaduna, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study were nine hundred and eighty-seven (987) secondary school students with posttraumatic symptoms in Godo-Godo and Kafanchan Zonal Educational Inspectorate Divisions, Kaduna, Nigeria. The sample of the study was 272 participants drawn from twenty (20) Senior Secondary Schools Two (SSSII) Students with symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder. Data was collected using posttraumatic stress disorder inventory (PTSDI) and Social Adjustment Inventory (SAI). The PTSDI was faced and content validated and had reliability of .856; also SAI has a reliability of .898 after pilot testing. Pearson product moment correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The findings show that relationship exists between anxiety and social adjustment, aggression and social adjustment, depression and social adjustment. From the results of the findings, it was recommended, among others, that since there is relationship between aggression and social adjustment, psychologists and counsellors should be encouraged to attend to students with aggression problems in Godo-Godo and Kafanchan zonal educational inspectorate divisions.

Keyword: posttraumatic, stress, disorder, social, adjustment, students

Introduction

Post-traumatic Stress disorder occurs when students lose their loved ones, maybe in motor accident, plane crash, exposure to violence, bomb explosion etc; it may also

occur when students experience abuse either in form of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse; and when they are victims of natural disaster like flooding. Students are subjected to various devastating experiences which may be traumatic such as communal violence, political violence, death of loved ones which may go unnoticed thereby leading to psychological problems among the students. There are other major acts of violence such as political crisis, farmers/herdsmen clash, religious crises, bullying and public coercion; these are traumatic events confronting students today, especially at the secondary school level, which may easily influence their social adjustment (Shalev, 2012). Post-traumatic stress among students may be as a result of violent environment, gun shooting, political issues which brought about the behaviour of anxiety, aggression, depression which may go unnoticed thereby leading to psychological problem among the students. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) includes fear, anger, helplessness, and so on and the victims may need help from counsellors, teachers and the psychologists.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (2013), trauma can be defined as a serious or critical bodily injury, wound or shock. Psychologically, trauma can be defined as an experience that is emotionally painful, distressful or shocking, which often results in lasting mental, social and physical effects to individuals. Thus in the aftermath of any communal violence or disaster, the affected victims are always left with social, emotional problems and shock occasioned by large damage and loss of lives.

Davidson and Smith (2010), in their study, provided a relationship data between several early trauma and broad range of later disorders. The study showed that 22% of adult psychiatric out-patients received a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), with vulnerability to trauma being greatest during early studentshood and adolescence. In a related study, Brooks (2008) found that veterans with combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder were more likely to have a history of student's physical, social and emotional abuse than those without post-traumatic stress disorder.

Moroz (2013) viewed post-traumatic stress as something that persists after a traumatic incident has ended and continues to affect the student's ability to self-regulate, both physically, socially and emotionally, and the general wellbeing of students. Post traumatic symptoms in students and adolescent students may encompass one or more of a broad range of behaviours, including terrified responses to sights, sounds or other sensory input that remind the students of the traumatic experience(s), difficulty in sleeping and concentrating, aggression, anxiety and depression are all triggered by post-traumatic stress.

Aggression refers to a quality of anger and determination that makes one ready to attack other people. It is applicable to male and female. This attacking behaviour may cause feeling of being misunderstood, unlovable, feeling of discomfort with individual classmates who are always attacked; such aggressive boys and girls become angry with every individual around them and may refuse to conform to school authority. The emotional difficulties can incapacitate the student and prevent him or her from normal participation in class work. School students who exhibit aggressiveness are easily distracted by irrelevant sights and sounds, they are quick to anger, they shift from one activity to another without necessarily finishing the first one, and seem to get bored easily, they may appear forgetful and confused (Center for Diseases and Control, 2015). Hutchinson and Renfrew (2012) defined aggressive behaviour as those actions carried out by an individual with the intention to cause injury or anxiety to others or even to oneself. This means that aggressive behaviour sometimes takes the form of overreaction; the person may shout or become very agitated over minor incidents. Kowalski (2012), described anxiety as a highly unpleasant feeling of fear and apprehension. In the school, students are usually found having unnecessary worries when they are faced with school work or other life challenges. Depression is a lowering of mood beyond the range of ups and downs encountered in normal life, and sustained over time and to such a degree that the quality of life of such a person is significantly impaired (Nwankwo, 2010). Depression is an illness that affects the body, mood and thoughts. The risk of developing depression is increasing worldwide particularly among students and adolescent (Barlow & Durand, 2015).

Adjustment refers to an individual's general adaptation to his environment and the demands of life such as the way he relates to other people, handles his responsibility, deals with stress and meets his own needs and life satisfaction. The society is dynamic and change is the only constant thing, so the individual's ability to review his attitude and behaviour is an essential ingredient of adjustment. Social adjustment is an effort by an individual to cope with standards, values and needs of the society in order to be acceptable. It involves coping with new standards and values; getting along with members of the society as best as one can be, is regarded as social adjustment.

Social adjustment refers to the individual's development of social cognitive understanding that contributes to social competence, interpersonal relationship or sensitivity and social awareness of how the self relates to other individuals and groups in a complete social world (Thompson, 2015). According to Nwoke (2014), social adjustment is an innate psychological disposition to cope with standard, values and needs of a society in order to be acceptable. It involves coping with social challenges confronting one in any given situation or environment, and the innate strength to accommodate any possible outcome or change.

Maina (2018) examined the psychological influence of book haram insurgency on academic motivation and performance of senior secondary school in Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria. Six hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and the population of the study was 3,885 male and female SS2 students; a sample of 136 students who were victim of Boko haram and 164 who were non-victim students, making a total of 300 students used as sample size for the study. The study employed Ex-post facto research design, Pearson product moment correction was used to test hypothesis. It was revealed that there was significant negative relationship between anxiety and senior secondary school students who are victim of Boko haram insurgency with p value of 0.003, as well a significant negative relationship between anxiety and academic performance of senior secondary school students who are non victims of Boko haram insurgency with p value of 0.001. There is also significant negative relationship between traumatic stress and academic motivation of secondary school who are also victim of boko haram insurgency with p value of 0.001.

Brooks (2008) conducted a study on relationship of posttraumatic condition and emotional adjustment among secondary school students who are victim of traumatic stress. Some suffer worries, and bad memories of the experience; others were more affected and experiencing long term difficulties, some of these difficulties may include emotional depression, outburst of anger, irritability or continuous episode call "flashback" which includes fearful feelings of experiencing the traumatic experience again. Such students often tend to be emotionally withdrawn from friends, family and teachers; such negative behaviour affects the students' academic adjustment. The sample was three hundred and thirty (330) former Ugandan student soldiers. The student soldiers here referred to students under 18 years of age associated with an armed capacity. During their time as soldiers, these youths were brutalized and cruelly abused by armed groups. This is relevant to the present study. The findings of the above study ironically showed posttraumatic resilience as indicated by the absence of posttraumatic stress disorder, depression and clinically significant behavioural and emotional problems.

Buba (2016) examined the influence of posttraumatic Stress Reaction on School Adjustment among Primary School pupils living in Conflict Areas of Wukari, Taraba State Nigeria. The sample size was 381, out of which 211 were males (55.4%) and 170 females (44.6%), randomly drawn from final year primary school pupils. The study was guided by two major hypotheses. The instruments used to collect data were bio-data form, Child Reaction to Traumatic Events Scale CRTES-R and Child Adjustment Scale CAS. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) was used to test the hypotheses. Results showed that Pupils' posttraumatic stress reaction negatively correlated with school adjustment ($r = -0.875$, $p = 0.000$). Similarly, significant negative relationship exists between Conventional school pupils' posttraumatic stress reaction and their

school adjustment ($r=-0.874$, $p=0.000$), and there is also a negative correlation between Nomadic school pupils' posttraumatic stress reaction and their school adjustment ($r=-0.881$ $p=0.000$).

Statement of the Problem

Students who experience community violence, political crises, religious crisis, farmers and herdsmen crisis, kidnapping, and shooting may develop feelings of depression, anxiety and aggressive behaviour. As a result of which students may resort to unwanted behaviour which may be contrary to societal norms and values. Individual students may exhibit different behavioural patterns due to personal experiences, and this may influence the social adjustment of students.

Some secondary School Students, particularly in Godo-Godo and Kanfanchan zonal inspectorate divisions in southern Kaduna, are victims of communal violence, political crises, religious crises, kidnapping, which pose insecurity to lives, causing students to live in perpetual fear and apprehension. The traumatic experience may bring about poor social adjustment, lack of concentration and anxiety among secondary school students. Some secondary school students may become aggressive due to the rate of community violence, kidnapping, shooting; they become anxious as they cannot cope with the violence in the environment they find themselves. There are cases of students who lost their parents, loved ones and relatives which is another traumatic experience in the secondary school students' life; they may go to school but keep re-experiencing the event even when lessons may be going on, thereby having depressed mood, aggression and anxiety; also students were transferred from one school to another to write their examination as a result of fear and frequent violent attacks in the area.

The decline of social adjustment among secondary school student could be attributed to anxiety, aggression and depression among other factors. This is because anxiety in students causes lack of reflective thinking ability that is required for cognitive task, and which may also affect the social wellbeing in the school environment. Due to the detrimental effect of anxiety, aggression and depression on the lives of secondary school students, it has become a matter of concern to psychologists, counsellors, school administrators, parents and teachers. Therefore, the problem of the study is to find out if there is any relationship between post-traumatic stress disorder and social adjustment of secondary school students living in conflict areas of southern Kaduna Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the relationship between anxiety as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and social adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of southern Kaduna.

2. To determine the relationship between aggression as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and social adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of southern Kaduna.

3. To examine the relationship between depression as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and social adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of southern Kaduna.

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between anxiety as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and social adjustment among secondary schools' students living in conflict area of southern Kaduna.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between aggression as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and social adjustment among secondary schools' students living in conflict area of southern Kaduna.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between depression as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and social adjustment among secondary schools' students living in conflict area of southern Kaduna.

Methodology

This research employed correlational design. According to Mitchell and Jolley (2007), when researchers want to find out the relationship between two or more variables, then correlation design should be used. The population of this study was made up of Nine Hundred and Eighty-Seven (987) Secondary school students with posttraumatic symptoms in two educational zones, Kafanchan and Godo-Godo. The process was carried out through the use of checklist to identify the participants with posttraumatic problem. Simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of 20 secondary schools out of 64 secondary schools in the two zones. According to Abdullahi (2015), simple random sampling is a method of selecting a portion of population such that each member of the population has equal chance of being selected. The researchers made use of ballot method in selecting the schools. In this method, the elements in the population are assigned numbers used directly which are then written on pieces of paper, folded so that the number on each paper is hidden. The pieces of paper are put in a bag and shaken thoroughly, and the required number of participants is picked from the bag. The sample size of this study is 274 secondary school students with symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder from two Educational Zones, Godo-Godo and Kafanchan. However, there was mortality of two (2) out of two hundred and seventy (274). Therefore, two hundred and seventy two (272) was used for data analysis. This sample is drawn from an entire population of SSII students with posttraumatic symptom which is 987. The selection conforms to Research Advisor's (2006) table of specification. The researchers purposively target SSII students with posttraumatic symptom in Kafanchan and Godo Godo Educational Zone. The reason for targeting

these students is that they have stayed long enough in the school and they have the experience to be measured. Their level of aggression, anxiety and depression was determined and correlated with their Social Adjustment.

Two main instruments were used for this study. The instruments are posttraumatic stress condition which was adapted from Educational Media Solutions (2011) and Harvard Program in refuge posttraumatic (Educational Media Solution), and Social Adjustment Inventory. The Posttraumatic stress condition comprises of five (5) Likert scale instrument and subdivided into three categories; Anxiety items consist of ten (10), Aggression items consist of ten (10) and depression ten (10). Social Adjustment Inventory (SAI) was adapted from Bell (2012); the instrument consists of nineteen (19) items. The scoring guide for SAI is as follows: 0-30 - Mild adjusted individual; 30-60 - Average adjusted individual while 60 and above highly adjusted. Pearson Product Moment Correlation PPMC (r) was used for data analysis.

Presentation of results

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between Anxiety as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and Social Adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of Kaduna state.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics on the relationship between Anxiety as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and Social Adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of Southern Kaduna

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | df | r | P |
|-------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Anxiety | | 34.411 | 8.8763 | | | |
| Social Adjustment | 272 | 66.437 | 17.1282 | 270 | -0.722 | 0.012 |

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 indicated that Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics showed that significant relationship exists between Anxiety as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and Social Adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of Southern Kaduna. This is because the calculated p value of 0.012 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The computed r-value of -0.722 shows that there is negative relationship between Anxiety and social adjustment. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Anxiety as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and Social Adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of Southern Kaduna is therefore rejected.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between Aggression as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and Social Adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of Kaduna state.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics on the relationship between Aggression as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and Social Adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of Kaduna state

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | df | r | P |
|-------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Aggression | 272 | 32.349 | 8.5752 | 270 | -0.741 | 0.004 |
| Social Adjustment | | 66.437 | 17.1282 | | | |

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 indicated that Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics showed that significant relationship exists between Aggression as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and Social Adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of Southern Kaduna. This is because the calculated p-value of 0.004 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The computed correlation index (r-value) of -0.741 shows that there is negative relationship between Aggression and social adjustment. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Aggression and Social Adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of Southern Kaduna is hereby rejected.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between Depression as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and Social Adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of Southern Kaduna.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics on the relationship between Depression as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and Social Adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of Southern Kaduna

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | df | r | P |
|-------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Depression | 272 | 34.356 | 6.7289 | 270 | -0.879 | 0.003 |
| Social Adjustment | | 66.437 | 17.1282 | | | |

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 indicated that Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics showed that significant relationship exists between Depression as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and Social Adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of Southern Kaduna. This is as the calculated p value of 0.003 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The computed correlation index (r-value) of -0.879 shows that there is negative relationship between Depression and social adjustment. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Depression as a component of post-traumatic stress disorder and Social Adjustment among secondary school students living in conflict area of Southern Kaduna is hereby rejected.

Discussion of the findings

The findings of this research indicated that significant relationship exists between anxiety and social adjustment of secondary schools' students. The findings agree with that of Maina (2018), who examined the psychological influence of book haram insurgency on academic motivation and performance of senior secondary school in Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria. The finding revealed that there was significant negative relationship between anxiety and social adjustment of senior secondary school students who are victim of Boko haram insurgency with p-value of 0.003.

The study also revealed that there is significant relationship between aggression and social adjustment of secondary school students. This finding is in line with that of Buba (2016) who examined the influence of posttraumatic Stress Reaction on School Adjustment among Primary School pupils living in Conflict Areas of Wukari, Taraba State Nigeria, and reported that pupils' posttraumatic stress reaction negatively correlated with school adjustment.

The third finding of the study indicated that there is significant relationship between depression and social adjustment of secondary school students. The finding agrees with that of Brooks (2008), who conducted a study on relationship of posttraumatic condition and emotional adjustment among secondary school students who are victim of traumatic stress. The findings of the above study ironically showed posttraumatic resilience as indicated by the absence of posttraumatic stress disorder, depression and clinically significant behavioural and emotional problems.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions can be deduced: students with anxiety disorder have poor social adjustment in secondary schools in the study area; aggressive problems affect students' social adjustment in secondary schools in the study area; high depressions affect students' social adjustment in secondary schools in the study area.

Recommendations

1. Since there is relationship between anxiety and social adjustment, psychologists and counsellors should be encouraged to address students with anxiety problem by providing functional psychological testing and counselling centres for proper social adjustment.

2. Since there is relationship between aggression and social adjustment, psychologists and counsellors should be encouraged to address students with aggression problems in Godo-godo and Kafanchan zonal educational inspectorate divisions.

3. Conference/workshop should be organized for Teachers and school administrators in order to pay more attention to secondary school students with depression issues and refer them to psychological testing and counselling centres, so as to improve social adjustment of students.

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