

Mental Health, Home Background and Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper employed correlational design to assess the relationship of mental health, home background and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state. The population of the study consists of SSS II students in public Senior Secondary Schools in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state with a population of six thousand and seventy eight (6,078) students. The sample size for this study was 361 SSSII students. Three main instruments were used for this study. The instruments were mental health inventory (MHI), Home Background Questionnaire and academic performance tests. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study revealed, among others, that significant positive relationship exists between mental health, home background and academic performance of senior secondary school students. It was recommended, among others, that school authorities should establish functional counselling and psychological testing centres to attend to students with mental health problems in order to attain better academic performance.

Keywords: Mental, health, home, background, academic

Introduction

Mental health is an integral and essential component of the entirety of human health, understood as a wholeness of physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely as the absence of disease or weakness. It enables individuals to realize their potentials, possible contribution to the community they live in, and to adequately cope with everyday stressful situations. Various factors affect mental health, and there are periods of life when the risk of mental health issues is increased (Maglica et al., 2021).

Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It refers to an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Mental health affects how an individual thinks, feels, and acts. It also helps to determine how individuals handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014), mental health is "a state of well-being in

which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”.

Keyes (2014) identifies three components of mental health: emotional well-being, psychological well-being and social well-being. Emotional well-being includes happiness, interest in life, and satisfaction; psychological well-being includes liking most parts of one's own personality, being good at managing the responsibilities of daily life, having good relationships with others, and being satisfied with one's own life; social well-being refers to positive functioning and involves having something to contribute to society (social contribution), feeling part of a community (social integration), believing that society is becoming a better place for all people (social actualization), and that the way society works makes sense to them (social coherence).

Mental health problems can affect a student's energy level, concentration, dependability, mental ability, and optimism, thus hindering performance. Research suggests that depression is associated with lower grade point average, and that co-occurring depression and anxiety can increase this association (Eisenberg et al., 2009). According to Bas (2020), mental health problems make adolescents face with a decline in academic achievement, which in turn results in school absence, poor grades, and even repeating a class in school. Thus, it suffices to say that home background stress is associated with mental health issues.

Home is the first socializing agent of a child. It comprises the father, mother, brothers, sisters and others living with them. The home is one of the agents that creates the first impression which lasts throughout a child's life; it is also seen as a place that shapes the child's attitude and behaviour towards career development (Amadi&Ani, 2017). Students come from different home backgrounds and therefore have different upbringing. The term “home background” refers to the collective set of circumstances, experiences, and influences that shape an individual's upbringing within their family and immediate environment. It encompasses various factors that contribute to a person's socialization, identity, and overall development. Home background plays a fundamental role in shaping a person's values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, and perspectives.

Home interactions of family members at home are frequent. Head of the family communicates messages to family members to perform home related activities at home and outside of it. The tune, words and approach in communication reflects the attitude of the head of the family and the reply of family members to the head of the family has the same ingredients which also constitutes their attitude towards the head of the family and his/her communication. Besides, family decisions are a major factor that involves

in-depth interactions of the family members. It is the stage at which the importance of family member's say/opinion can be judged. Families that involve children in their decision making process enable their children to have self-confidence, develop their self-esteem and thus contribute towards social development of students (Khan et al., 2019).

Family background of students determines how the child views himself and the way he views others. The society is a function of these two factors. In other words, the environment of the child at home determines his behaviour as well as how he relates with others. However, the essential factors inherent in a home or family are the socio-economic, cultural and psychological factors. Family background refers to all the conditions and circumstances in the family which influence the child physically, intellectually and emotionally (Muola, 2010). Children coming from different family backgrounds are affected differently by such family conditions; which is why some children have good family background while some have poor background.

According to Jeynes (2002), the socio-economic status (SES) of a child is most commonly determined by combining parents' educational level, occupational status, and income level. Social class and economic status of the parents determine the type of school and the standard of training they desire for their children. The occupation or profession of the parents, the educational level and whether the mothers are working or non-working mothers place them at an advantage or disadvantage to evaluate their children's academic work and monitor their progress. Status is often determined by the individuals' economic attainment, though it is sometimes ascribed on the individual. Okunniyi (2004) identified three distinct socio economic groups or statuses which are common in many countries. They are: upper class- which is made up of rich business men and top government officials among others; middle class - which consists of skilled workers, professionals and middle ranked government workers, and the lower class- which is made up of manual workers, petty traders and low income government officials.

Francis (2007) opined that a family that can scarcely provide for the basic needs of the family which include food, shelters and clothing will hardly motivate the academic excellence of their children; instead they will pressurize their children to seek for job opportunities with the little education they acquire so far, to support the family. Thus, the family has the potential to influence academic performance. This is because, it is the first environment of the child, and the initial experience. Okesina (2018) affirmed that academic performance of the child could be traced to the home he comes from. On one end, Synder (2000) claimed that the family environment is the most powerful influence in determining the child's academic performance. It is obvious that it has substantial influence on a child's academic performance. Moreover, Abiribiin (2010) lamented that education is seen as an instrument per excellence for development and as

such it is the engine that promotes development. Aside from the intellectual capacity of the child, the academic performance of the child is also largely determined by the family background.

Academic performance really means three things; the ability to study and remember facts, being able to study effectively and see how facts fit together and form larger patterns of knowledge and being able to think for yourself in relation to facts and to be able to communicate (Laddunuri, 2012). According to Pruett (2010), academic performance is the level of achievement attained via the combination of inputs from student's motivation and conduct. In the views of Adediwura and Tayo (2007), academic performance is generally referred to how well a student is accomplishing his or her tasks and studies; but there are quite a number of factors that determine the level and quality of students' academic performance. This no doubt supports the view of Nicholas (2004) that the most current information on improving academic performance shows that there are three environmental influences linked to levels of academic performance among school students. These influences, according to the information, include high quality parenting (the degree to which a youngster is provided with an enriched, warm and responsive learning environment which includes appropriate control and discipline over children, and are closely associated with both higher grade reading and mathematics skills); high quality child-care environments (stimulating activity and nurturing as reflected in high quality parenting) and high quality first grade classrooms (with a focus on literacy instruction, evaluative feedback, instructional conversation, and encouraging child responsibilities).

The performance of students in their academic endeavours holds a central position within the realm of education. It stands as a crucial element in any educational framework, serving as the nucleus around which the entire system revolves. It serves as a pivotal yardstick for evaluating students' achievements in their educational endeavours. More so, it mirrors individuals' intellectual ability as they venture into the realms of employment, professional roles, and higher education. Academic performance embodies the outcomes that signify the degree to which students have successfully attained specific objectives that formed the core of their learning experiences.

As a result, evaluating academic performance should be viewed as a multi-dimensional concept that encompasses various areas of interest. These areas of interest can be generally classified into three categories: cognitive, emotional, and physical skills (Nne & Ekene, 2020). Each of these categories includes various levels of learning, progressing from fundamental and surface-level understanding to more intricate and profound comprehension. Consequently, assessing academic performance involves gauging how effectively the spectrum of learning domains – cognitive, emotional, and

physical – is conveyed to students, playing a crucial role in their knowledge acquisition and learning processes. Students' academic performance has been an issue to many educators, parents, guardians, curriculum planners and researchers. This concern stems from the prevailing poor performance recorded by students almost every year at the end of their school programme.

Academic performance of secondary school students is influenced by so many factors such as student related, school related, teacher related and environment related. Students engage in learning context and achieve academically when they are sufficiently motivated. Education through the four walls of the school enlightens the child and makes him/her to actualize the potentials that will enable the learner to cope more adaptively with daily stressors, challenges and setbacks in the school system. This is because underachievement and disengagement have serious consequences, both at individual and societal levels (Nne & Ekene, 2020).

Statement of the problem

The fallen standard of education is a big problem that is hindering the development of the Nigerian nation in terms of quality manpower resources. Most students in secondary school experience academic problem that manifests itself in various forms. Many researchers have sought to find out the reasons for the downward trend in the academic performance of secondary school students. Some of the reasons cited include poor methods of teaching, parents' negligence to provide the needed study materials for their wards, home environment, and inadequate use of instructional materials, among others. With these cited problems, many students in Nigerian secondary schools are at greater risk of poor academic performance in both internal and external examinations. Another problem, where attention has not been paid, pertains to the mental health of the students. Thus, this paper intends to fill this gap.

From the researcher's observation, the available records of WAEC result analysis from 2005-2018 shows a continuous decline in students' overall performance in school certificate examinations (WAEC). The researcher suspect these poor performances to be as a result of the state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being of the students. Government, parents, teachers and students blame one another for students' poor performance in schools; parents blame teachers for lack of dedication to duties; the teachers blame government for poor salaries hence they are poorly motivated; parents also accuse government for not equipping the schools with learning materials; government blames parents for not doing home works; and the students are blamed for lack of discipline and dedication to their studies; and the cycle continues.

It is generally believed that one cannot successfully divorce the influence of home background from the performance of students in the school. The reason for this cannot be far-fetched. Out of twenty four hours in a day, and seven days in a week, it is crystal

clear that students stay in school for an average of eight hours per day and five days a week. It then follows that students spend more time at home than they do in school. Thus, what transpires at home, to a reasonable extent, may make or mar students' performance. Also, the peaceful ambience of an environment can, to a greater extent, exert influence on students' academic performance. Therefore, this study seeks to determine the relationship among mental health, home background and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The following are the study objectives:

- i. To determine the relationship between mental health and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state.
- ii. To determine the relationship between home background and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state.

Research questions

The following research questions were answered:

- i. What is the relationship between mental health and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state?
- ii. What is the relationship between home background and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between mental health and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between home background and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state.

Methodology

This research employed correlational design. The population of the study consists of SSS II students in public Senior Secondary Schools in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state with a population of six thousand and seventy eight (6,078) students. The sample size for this study was 361 SSSII students proportionately selected from the population under study. The sample of the study was determined through the use of Krejcie and Morgan table of determining a sample size. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a population of 6,078 will require a sample of 361.

Three main instruments were used for this study. The instruments were Mental Health Inventory (MHI), Home Background Questionnaire and Academic Performance Tests. The MHI is a shortened version of the original 36-item scale which was developed for use in general populations to assess psychological distress and wellbeing in general populations. It contains items assessing anxiety, depression, behavioural control, and positive affect. Psychological well-being is comprised of positive affect and emotional ties. Psychological distress consists of depression, anxiety, and loss of behavioural/emotional control. Respondents are asked to indicate how often they have experienced various emotions during the four weeks prior to the study. Choices are given along a 6-point scale, ranging from 1 (all of the time) to 6 (none of the time). Home Background Questionnaire is a shortened version of the original 32-item scale which was developed for use in general populations to assess the characteristics of early years of Home Learning Environment (HLE). The academic performance of the students was measured using 20 questions for both English and Mathematics test.

In order to make sure that the final copies of the instruments are valid for the study, the researcher submitted the copies to experts for validation. Based on their advice, some modifications were made. The areas of modification include language interpretation where necessary, clarification of sentences and the likes. All the three instruments were validated to determine the content validity, their relevance and appropriateness for the study. The reliability of the instrument was 0.89 which was established through the split half reliability test method. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of results

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between mental health and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics on relationship between mental health and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Df	Correlation index r	P
Mental Health	361	30.75	3.51	359	0.60	0.001
Academic Performance	361	67.02	8.98			

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Results of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics revealed that significant positive relationship exists between mental health and academic performance of senior secondary school students; reason being that the calculated p-value of 0.001 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance; with the computed correlation index r value of 0.60 at df of 359. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between mental health and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kuru Local Government Area of Kaduna state, is rejected.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between home background and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kuru Local Government Area of Kaduna state.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics on relationship between home background and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kuru Local Government Area of Kaduna state

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Df	Correlation index r	P
Home background	361	37.68	3.15	359	0.78	0.000
Academic Performance	361	67.02	8.98			

Results of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics revealed that significant positive relationship exists between home background and academic performance of senior secondary school students; reason being that the calculated p-value of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance; with the computed correlation index r value of 0.78 and df of 359. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between home background and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Kuru Local Government Area of Kaduna state is rejected.

Discussion of the findings

The finding of this study revealed that significant positive relationship exists between mental health and academic performance of senior secondary school students. The finding proved that mental health relates with academic performance. The finding of this study is in line with that of Bas (2020), who indicated that mental health problems make adolescents face with a decline in academic achievement, which in turn results in school absence, poor grades, and even repeating a class in school.

Another finding of this study revealed that significant positive relationship exists between home background and academic performance of senior secondary school students. This finding agrees with that of Okesina (2018) who affirmed that academic performance of the child could be traced to the home he comes from. The finding also corroborates Synder (2000) who claimed that the family environment is the most powerful influence in determining the child's academic performance. Moreover, the finding tallies with that of Abiribiin (2010), who averred that aside from the intellectual capacity of the child, the academic performance of the child is also largely determined by the family background.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of this study, it is concluded that mental health predicts students' academic performance. It is also established that home background has a significant relationship with students' academic performance. Students coming from different family backgrounds are affected differently by such family conditions, which is why some children have good academic performance while some, on the other hand, have poor academic performance.

Recommendations

The following are recommended based on the findings of the study:

1. School authorities should have functional counselling and psychological testing centres for attending to students with mental health problems in order to attain better academic performance.
2. Parents, as a matter of importance, should diversify their sources of income so that they can be able to provide the needed resources for their children in schools so as to enhance their academic performance.

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