

Mental Health, Socio-Economic Background and Academic Achievement among Students of Federal College of Education Zaria, Kaduna State

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Abstract

This paper investigated the relationship of Mental Health, Socio-Economic Background and Academic Achievement among Students of Federal College of Education Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Research questions and hypotheses were formulated in line with the study objectives. The design adopted was correlational design. The population of this study was made up of eight hundred and eighty-seven (887) students. The sample of this study is 270 NCE II students. Three instruments were used for this study. The instruments are Mental Health Inventory (MHI), Socioeconomic Background Inventory and students' academic achievement result. Pearson Product Moment Correlation PPMC was used to test the hypotheses. The finding of the study revealed that significant relationships exist between mental health, socio-economic background and academic achievement. It was recommended, among others, that college psychologists should address students with mental health problems for better academic achievement.

Keywords: mental, health, socio-economic, academic, achievement

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 potential, productivity, 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 one handles stress, relates to others, and makes 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.

Mental health is an important component of the total health of person because it is both the cause and effect of other types of health (Singh & Devi, 2018). A mentally healthy person shows a homogenous organization of desirable attitudes, healthy values and righteous self-concept and the scientific perception of the world as a whole. It also presents a humanistic approach towards the understanding and assessment of the self, positive feeling and attitudes towards self and others. Mental health can be best defined as a state of continuous wellbeing, as the union of zest and peace. Mental health thus appears as an attribute of a mature human personality and as a social value to be guarded and maintained through purposeful living. Mental health may be defined as the adjustment of individual to themselves and to the world at large with a maximum of effectiveness, satisfaction, cheerfulness and socially acceptable behaviour and the ability of facing and accepting the realities of life.

Marmot (2002) found that Socio Economic Status (SES) affects health through social gradient, income, social exclusion, education, psychological status and other factors. People with lower SES have lower autonomy to work, corresponding to more pressure and negative emotions. Socio-economic background relates to a combination of an individual's income, occupation and social background. Socio-economic background is a key determinant of success and future life chances. According to Richman et al. (2006), parent's education is one of the strongest predictor of cognitive performance and academic attainment of students, among other aspects of socio- economic status. Mukherjee (1999) states that socio economic status is used as a measure of an individual's or group's social position in the community. He also reported that mothers' education is the strong predictor of students' academic achievement. Socioeconomic status is a term used by sociologists, economists, and other social scientists to describe the class standing of an individual or group. It is measured by a number of factors, including income, occupation, and education, and it can have either positive or negative impact on a student's life (Ashley, 2019). Oakes and Rossi (2002) assert that it is a fact

that in families where the parents are privileged educationally, socially and economically, they promote a higher level of achievement in their offspring.

According to Jeynes (2002), the socio-economic status of a child is usually determined by parental occupational status and income level, and the environment in which the child is brought up. It is also affected by parents' involvement in learning activities and effective parent-teacher relationship. It is understood that low socio-economic status negatively and depressingly affects students' academic motivation and leads to test anxiety due to high additional stress and tension at home, thereby affecting students' academic achievement in the long run. Studies by Eamon (2005) and Jeynes (2002) have established that socioeconomic status affects students' outcome. According to McNeal (2001), socioeconomic status has also been shown to override other educational influences such as parental involvement in their children's schooling. Munir et al. (2023) lamented that socio economic status predicted academic outcomes, and higher socio-economic students fare better academically.

Academic achievement is the attainment obtained by a child in the lesson taught, which may include experience, knowledge, skill and the likes. The knowledge and skill are measured in student's Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA); the child's good or poor performance does not depend solely on attribute the child is born with, but his family background, social contacts, teachers, overall climate in his school, and assessment procedure. Academic performance may be defined as excellence in all academic disciplines, in class as well as co-curricular activities. Cohen and Garcia (2006) define academic achievement as "knowledge attaining ability or degree of competence in school task usually measured by standardized test and expressed in a grade or unit based on students' performance/achievement". Cohen and Apfel (2009) refer to academic performance as "the knowledge obtained or skill developed in the school subjects usually assess by the test scores or marks assigned by the teacher".

Achievement of students in the classroom takes a central role in the academic development of the students. Parents, teachers and school administrators take cognizance of the academic well-being of the students. Yardsticks are set by school authorities to measure performance; the standard set by the university will determine whether a student is performing well or not. In the assessment of performance, Pekrun and Elliot (2006) argued that achievement is the behaviour of an individual that can be directly observed by another individual. Therefore, academic achievement has been seen as a term used for student based on how well they are doing in studies and classes. Academic achievement for university student is also seen as the extent to which a student has achieved his educational goals. This means that the student's academic performance is measured by the extent to which he/she has reached the educational goal he has set for himself. The university measures academic achievement in several ways which include Continuous Assessment Test (C.A.T) and a number of standardized test and examinations (Pekrun & Perry, 2007).

Statement of the problem

In the educational landscape of Nigeria, specifically within Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State, there is a growing concern about the intricate interplay between mental health, socio-economic background, and academic achievement among students. This complex nexus warrants an in-depth exploration as it holds significant implications for both individual student success and the broader educational system. Mental health concerns have garnered increasing attention in recent years due to their pervasive impact on students' overall well-being and academic performance. The college environment can be stressful, demanding, and unfamiliar, posing challenges to students' mental health. Furthermore, the stigma associated with mental health issues in Nigerian society often discourages students from seeking necessary support and may hinder their academic progress.

Socio-economic background is a multifaceted factor that encompasses financial resources, family support systems, and access to educational opportunities. In a region characterized by varying degrees of economic disparities, understanding how socio-economic factors influence students' academic pursuits is crucial. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may face additional barriers, including inadequate access to educational materials, limited access to extracurricular activities, and higher work-family responsibilities, which could affect their academic performance and overall well-being.

Academic achievement is a central concern of any educational institution, as it reflects the effectiveness of the educational process. To ensure that students reach their full potential, it is essential to examine how mental health and socio-economic factors influence their academic outcomes. Poor mental health can lead to decreased motivation, impaired concentration, and diminished overall cognitive functioning, while socio-economic disadvantages may limit access to resources that promote academic success. Therefore, this research aims to comprehensively investigate the relationship between mental health, socio-economic background, and academic achievement among students at Federal College of Education, Zaria in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- i. To ascertain the relationship between mental health and academic achievement among students of Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.
- ii. To ascertain the relationship between socio-economic background and academic achievement among students of Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

Research questions

The study answered the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between mental health and academic achievement among students of Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State?
- ii. What is the relationship between socio-economic background and academic achievement among students of Federal College of Education, Zaria, 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 achievement among students of Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic background and academic achievement among students of Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

Methodology

The design adopted in conducting this study is correlational design. The population of this study was made up of NCE II students of Federal College of Education (FCE), Zaria. Their number stands at eight hundred and eighty-seven (887) students. This is the population of NCE II students of the Federal College of Education, Zaria across the five (5) schools. The sample of this study is 270 NCE II students of FCE, Zaria. This sample is drawn from the entire population of NCE II students which is 887. The selection conforms with the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) prescription.

The proportionate sampling technique was used in the allocation of samples to the five schools in the College. This is because the schools differ in their population; to ensure equitable distribution of the sample, a proportionate sampling technique was appropriate. However, the research purposefully targeted NCE II students of Federal College of Education, Zaria. These students at NCE II have stayed enough in the college to understand and respond to the variables of the study. Three instruments were used for this study. The instruments are Mental Health Inventory (MHI), Socioeconomic Background Inventory and students' academic achievement. The student academic achievement was measured using their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) obtained from Undergraduate Office, Federal College of Education, Zaria. The MHI-18 is a shortened version of the original 36-item scale which was developed for use in general populations by Veit and Ware (1983). Choices are given along a 5-point scale of strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). To ascertain the validity of the instrument, the researchers submitted the copies to experts for validation. The instrument was validated to determine the face and content validity, their relevance and appropriateness for the study. The instrument was reliable as it had an appreciable internal consistency of 0.83. The data collected were analyzed using inferential statistics. Pearson Product Moment Correlation PPMC(r) was used to

test the study hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 alpha level of significance. SPSS version 25.0 was used for the analysis.

Presentation of results

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between mental health and academic achievement among students of Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

Table 1: Pearson product-moment correlation (PPMC) statistics on the relationship between mental health and academic achievement

Variables	N	Mean	Std.dev	Df	Correlation matrix	P
Mental health	270	30.38	12.35	268	0.7612**	0.001
Academic achievement	270	3.02	0.59			

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

Results of the Pearson product-moment correlation (PPMC) statistics showed that a significant relationship exists between mental health and academic achievement. This is because the computed p-value of 0.001 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance with a correlation index (r) level of 0.7612. The relationship between the two variables is directly proportional. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between mental health and academic achievement among students of Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State is hereby rejected.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic background and academic achievement among students of Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

Table 2: Pearson product-moment correlation (PPMC) statistics on the relationship between socio-economic background and academic achievement

Variables	N	Mean	Std. dev	Df	Correlation matrix	P
Socio economic background	270	50.26	8.92	268	0.7113**	0.000
Academic achievement	270	3.02	0.59			

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

Results of the Pearson product-moment correlation (PPMC) statistics showed that a significant relationship exists between socio-economic background and academic achievement. This is because the computed p-value of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05

alpha level of significance at a correlation index (r) level of 0.7113. The relationship between the two variables is directly proportional. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between socio-economic background and academic achievement among students of Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State is hereby rejected.

Discussion of the findings

A finding of this study revealed that a significant relationship exists between mental health and academic achievement. The relationship between the variables is directly proportional. This finding agrees with that of Singh and Devi (2018) who declared that a mentally healthy person shows a homogenous organization of desirable attitudes towards learning, healthy values and righteous self-concept and the scientific perception of the world as a whole. It also presents a humanistic approach towards the understanding and assessment of the self, positive feeling and attitudes towards self and others.

Another finding of this study revealed that a significant relationship exists between socio-economic background and academic achievement. This finding is in line with that of Munir et al. (2023) who averred that socio economic status predicted academic outcomes and higher socio-economic students fare better academically. The finding also agrees with that of Jeynes (2002) who posited that the socio-economic status of a child is usually determined by parental occupational status and income level, and the environment in which the child is brought up. It is also affected by parents' involvement in learning activities and effective parent-teacher relationship. It is understood that low socio-economic status negatively and depressingly affects students' academic motivation and leads to test anxiety due to high additional stress and tension at home, thereby affecting students' academic achievement in the long run.

Conclusion

From the result of this study, it is concluded that mental health and socio-economic background have significant relationship with academic achievement. Thus, mentally healthy students will show a positive attitude toward learning while students from low socio-economic background will have poor academic achievement and vice versa.

Recommendations

1. College psychologists should address students with mental health problems for better academic achievement.
2. Parents should give their children the adequate support needed, so as to enhance their academic achievement.

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