Psychological Morbidity as Correlate of Academic Self-Efficacy of University Students in Plateau State, Nigeria

La'ah Deborah K. J.
Department of Guidance and Counselling
Federal College of Education, Zaria
deborahlaah6@gmail.com

Abstract
This study examined psychological morbidity and adjustment as correlates of academic self-efficacy of university students in Plateau state, Nigeria. Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Correlation research design was adopted. The sample of this study was 365 students drawn from the entire population of eight thousand eight hundred and fifty-five (8,855) 300level students in the four universities in the state. Questionnaire titled Relationships among Psychological Morbidity and Adjustment as correlates of Academic Self-efficacy of University Students was used to collect information from the respondents. The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation from FCE, Zaria. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC r) was used to test the hypotheses. The findings of this study revealed that anxiety (r = - 0.575, p = 0.001), depression (r = - 0.469, p = 0.003) and distress (r = - 0.623, p = 0.000) exert negative relationship with academic self-efficacy. It was recommended, among others, that psychologists and counsellors should be encouraged to use various counselling techniques in managing students with anxiety, depression and distress issues as it affects their academic self-efficacy.
Keywords: psychological, morbidity, academic, self-efficacy, students

Introduction
Generally, self-efficacy refers to overall belief in ability to succeed. Hence, the belief a student develops in their personal abilities to meet the challenges ahead of them in their field of study and attain academic achievement successfully is known as academic self-efficacy. Academic self-efficacy can be seen as one of the important factors influencing academic performance. Self-efficacy beliefs lead to the individuals' excellent performance through increasing commitment, endeavour, and perseverance. Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's personal belief in his own capacities in order to produce a specific performance. Ackerman (2018) opined that "in order to succeed, people need a sense of self-efficacy, to struggle together with resilience to meet the inevitable obstacles and inequities of life". Academic self-efficacy regulates individual's belief and integrity

in different educational duties as posited by Bandura. Academic related abilities, according to Meerah (2010), includes (1) reading and interpretation (2) research design, analysis, and reporting (3) professional skills such as public speaking and networking (4) technical skills.

According to Hemant and Gunjan (2014), academic self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief (conviction) that they can successfully achieve a designated level on an academic task or attain a specific academic goal. Academic self-efficacy, which reflects student's personal beliefs in his own capacities to achieve educational duties at expected levels, increases student's mental efforts to learning. Students whose academic self-efficacy levels are strong put persistent efforts to overcome the academic duties assigned to them and do not give up easily. The academic self-efficacy which defines individuals' beliefs in the achievement of educational duties, affects learning and motivation, thus, would be helpful in students' mental efforts related to learning. In the improvement of academic self-efficacy, it is clear that different factors play important roles. Seydi and Gurhan (2016) states that in shaping the academic self-efficacy, factors such as family, friends, school, and transitional influences are highly important. Additionally, it is also claimed that teachers' roles would add to shaping of students' academic self-efficacy.

Academic self-efficacy refers to belief in one's capabilities to execute an action which can be academically achieved by effort either high or low. Nevertheless, academic self-efficacy is mainly about the student's perception of what they can or cannot do as opposed to individual resources; it will also depend on students' self-confidence on their academic activities. Academic self-efficacy may differ in strength as a result of task hurdle wherein some individuals may be confident and are most efficacious on difficult assignments, while others only on easier assignments. A student's level of efficacy impacts the amount of effort applied and the degree to which he or she will persevere through a difficult task. Hence, academic self-efficacy is totally a psychological phenomenon.

In quest for academic self-efficacy, students tend to be victims of psychological morbidity with the following symptoms: anxiety, depression, psychological distress, fatigue, uneasiness, mental and cognitive reservation, helplessness, mournful, impairment of concentration, sleep disorders, sexual dysfunction, infertility, and psychiatric disorders. In addition, Krishnamoorthy et al. (2020) noted that the components of psychological morbidity includes stress, depression, anxiety, psychological distress, post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS), poor sleep quality, insomnia and impact of event. Problems that occur in one's psychosocial functioning is referred to as "psychosocial morbidity." Thus, psychosocial morbidity refers to the lack of development or diverse atrophy of the

psychosocial self, often occurring alongside other dysfunctions that may be physical, emotional, or cognitive in nature.

The most common psychological problems of adolescence are depression and anxiety (Bakken, 2018). Depression is a mental state of low mood and aversion to activity. Psychologically, depression is a mood or emotional state that is marked by feelings of low self-worth or guilt and a reduced ability to enjoy life. Depression is less common during childhood, and increases during the onset of adolescence. Dardas et al. (2017) agreed that depression is more common to the adolescence. Some of the symptoms of depression include feeling of loneliness, low self-esteem, self-blame, hopelessness, suicide thoughts, anger, and peevishness. Anxiety on the other hand is emotional feelings characterized by tension, thoughts of worried and physical alteration. In another word, a feeling of uneasiness and worry, usually generalized and unfocused as an overreaction to a situation that is only subjectively seen as menacing, is known as anxiety. This goes to say that anxiety is often accompanied by muscular tension, restlessness, fatigue, inability to catch one's breath, tightness in the abdominal region, nausea and problems in concentration. Again, one can say that anxiety is closely related to fear, which is a response to a real or perceived immediate threat (fight or flight response); anxiety involves the expectation of future threat including dread.

It is worth noting that depression and anxiety may be experienced simultaneously. Despite the fact that entrance to a university or other tertiary education institutions is a joyous time, it can be a stressful life event for some students. First-year students are particularly at-risk as they face a number of new stressors during the transitional period of starting a new life in university or college. Just as all young adults, undergraduate students need to cope not only with psychological and psycho-social changes that are connected to the development of an autonomous personal life but also with the academic and social demands that they encounter in university studies in their preparation for professional careers. Therefore, the period of undergraduate education is a sensitive period in an individual's life span, and this period is regarded by many as important for developing systems and intervention methods that may prevent or reduce mental problems. Evidence that suggests that university students' are vulnerable to mental health problems has generated increased public concern in many societies (Cummings et al., 2014).

Studies suggest high rates of psychological morbidity, especially depression and anxiety, among university students all over the world (Adewuya, 2006; Gjerde, 2013; Karabenick & Brackney, 2015); they found that among college students seeking counselling services, anxiety and depression were ranked first and third as presenting problems, respectively; academic and work-related concerns were ranked second as the presenting problem. They

also noted that high levels of distress, concomitant with limited coping resources, render students less able to meet academic demands. The risk of developing psychological morbidity is increasing worldwide particularly among students.

Academic success and obtaining good grades are among the main goals in all levels of education, including having positive outcomes both for the learners and educational systems. Therefore, identifying the psychological morbidity factors influencing poor students' academic will greatly help students to adjust properly in learning (Mega et al., 2014). When a student is well adjusted to his learning environment, they tend to get motivated to excel in the stressful activities which accompanies academic calendar, and it leads to academic achievement. Academic achievement is greatly based upon adjusting abilities of children. Self-efficacious students recover quickly from setbacks, and ultimately are likely to achieve their academic goals. People with higher self-efficacy and motivation do not easily give up when confronted with difficulties. It is against this background that this research sought to find out if psychological morbidity and adjustment correlates with academic self-efficacy of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria

Research questions

1. What is the relationship between anxiety as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria?

2. What is the relationship between depression as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria?

3. What is the relationship between distress as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between anxiety as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between depression as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between distress as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Methodology

This research adopted correlational design to determine the relationships among psychological morbidity as correlate of academic self-efficacy of university students. The population of this study was made up of eight thousand, eight hundred and fifty-five (8,855) 300-level students in the four universities in the state. The sample of this study was 365 students drawn from the four universities. Purposive sampling technique was used to target 300level students while proportionate sampling technique was used in selecting the sample of students from each university.

Questionnaire titled "Psychological Morbidity and Academic Self-efficacy Questionnaire" (PMASQ) was used to collect information from the respondents. The instrument comprised of 60 items in two sections. Section A had three parts which measured psychological morbidity with each component including anxiety, depression and distress having 10 items each. This section had four points scale ranging from strongly agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD) which represent students' feelings. The scoring guide for the section A was <29 as mild morbidity, 30-59 as moderate morbidity while 60-120 as severe morbidity. Academic self-efficacy was measured in Section B with 30 items, and also having four point scale ranging from strongly agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD). The scoring guide for the academic self-efficacy was > 60 as High Academic self-efficacy while < 60 as low Academic self-efficacy. The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation from FCE, Zaria. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC r) was used to test the hypotheses.

Presentation of results

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between anxiety as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics on relationship between anxiety and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	r	p
Anxiety	365	50.2593	8.92115		
				- 0.575	0.001
Academic self-efficacy	365	64.765	6.770		

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

Table 1 revealed that there is significant negative relationship between anxiety as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria. This is because the calculated p value of 0.001 was found to be lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index value of -0.575. This implies that as anxiety increases, academic self-efficacy decreases and vice versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between anxiety as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria is hereby rejected.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between depression as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics on relationship between depression and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	r	p
Depression	365	55.613	7.215		
				- 0.469	0.003
Academic self-efficacy	365	64.765	6.770		

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

Table 2 revealed that there is significant negative relationship between depression as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria. This is because the calculated p-value of 0.003 was found to be lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index value of -0.575. This implies that as depression increases, academic self-efficacy decreases and vice versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between depression as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria is hereby rejected.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between distress as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics on relationship between distress and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	r	p
Distress	365	60. 593	6.325		
				- 0.623	0.000
Academic self-efficacy	365	64.765	6.770		

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

Table 3 revealed that there is significant negative relationship between distress as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria. This is because the calculated p-value of 0.000 was found to be lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index value of -0.623. This implies that as distress increases, academic self-efficacy decreases and vice versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between distress as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria is hereby rejected.

Discussion of the findings
The finding of this study revealed significant negative relationship between anxiety as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria. This finding agrees with that of Cummings et al. (2014) who found that university students are vulnerable to mental health problems. First-year students are particularly at-risk as they face a number of new stressors during the transitional period of starting a new life in university or college.

The second finding also revealed significant negative relationship between depression as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria. This finding corroborates that of Bakken (2018) who opined that depression is a mental state of low mood and aversion to activity. Psychologically, depression is a mood or emotional state that is marked by feelings of low self-worth or guilt and a reduced ability to enjoy life.

The third finding also revealed significant negative relationship between distress as a component of psychological morbidity and academic self-efficacy among university undergraduate students in Plateau State, Nigeria. This finding is in line with that of Gjerde (2013), and Karabenick and Brackney, 2015), who found that among college students seeking counselling services, anxiety and depression were ranked first and third as presenting problems, respectively; academic and work-related concerns were ranked

second as the presenting problem. They also noted that high levels of distress, concomitant with limited coping resources, render students less able to meet academic demands.

Conclusion

Based on the result of this study, it is concluded that anxiety, depression and distress exert negative relationship with academic self-efficacy among university students in Plateau state, Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

   i.   Psychologists and counsellors should be encouraged to use various counselling techniques in managing students with anxiety issues as it affects their academic self-efficacy.

   ii.   University personnel should provide a functional guidance and counselling centre that will cater for students with depression issues as it affects their academic self-efficacy.

   iii.   University personnel should provide a functional guidance and counselling centre that will cater for students with distress issues as it affects their academic self-efficacy.

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