MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS: Exploring its impact on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Kano state

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to explore the relationship between students' mental health and their academic performances in Kano state public senior secondary schools. The study adopted descriptive survey research design where 46 schools were selected using cluster sampling technique at the initial stage where we have 23clusters considering the 23 zonal education directorate has grouped the schools in to clusters, and then systematic random sampling technique was adopted to obtain the number of school selected.The total population of the students in the schools selected is 41,458 where the researcher used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) population and sample table to draw the sample size of the students which translated to 380 students. The instrument for data collection is a self developed close ended question naire designed by the researcher titled students' mental health scale (SMHS) with YES or NO options. The data collected was analyzed using simple percentage and correlation coefficient with the aid of SPSS. The result shows that the majority of the students have moderate mental health problems, and there is a very weak positive correlation between students' mental health and their academic performances in public senior secondary schools in Kano state.

Keywords: Mental health, academic performance, senior secondary school, students.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGOUND

WHO, 2014 cited in Currid, 2017 defines mental health as a state of well-being in whichan individualrealizes hisor her ownabilities, cancope withthe normalstressesoflife, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his/her community. Mentalhealth is the ability to develop psychologically, emotionally, creatively, intellectually, and spiritually; initiate, develop, and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationship; use and enjoy solitude; become aware of others and empathize with them; play and learn; develop a sense of right and wrong; and resolve problems and setbacks and learn from them (Leighton and Dogra, 2009). From this statement, mental health is a backbone for well-being and effective functioning for an individual, and for a community, and iscreatedandcompromised in everyday life, in families and schools, on streets and in workplaces (Herrman and Jané-Llopis, 2005). Mental health is better understood as a state of balance between physical, mental, cultural, spiritual and other personal factors, and between the self, others and the environment. Broadly speaking, mental health refers to the efficient, satisfactory and sustainable state of mind. In this state, people can make a good response, have vitality and fully demonstrate inner potentials. In a narrow sense, mental health is a basic human psychological process of content integrity and coherence. That is to say, the cognition, feelings, will, personality and behavior can integrate and coordinate one another to agree with the society, (Hu (2005) cited in Nami, Saleh and Eishani (2014)).

WebMD Editorial contributors, medically reviewed by Poonam Sachdev (2023) outline the causes of mental health conditions as a combination of biological, psychological, environmental and socioeconomic factors.

Biological factors may include; genetic predisposition, infection, brain defect or injury, prenatal damage, etc.

The psychological factors involved severe psychological trauma suffered as a child such as emotional, physical or social abuse, neglect, poor ability to relate to others, bereavement (losing someone close to), experiencing discrimination and stigma including racism, social isolationor loneliness, severe long termstress and/or physical healthcondition etc.

Environmental factors can also trigger a mental health illness. These stressors includes; a dysfunctional family life (family conflicts or familydisorganization), changing of school, social or cultural expectation, etc.

Socioeconomic factors that may contribute to mental health problems includes; unemployment, low income, poverty, debt, poor or unstable living condition, education etc. Socioeconomic factors are often associated with environmental factors.

The promotion of mental health consists of many taken to create living conditionsand environment that support mental wellness and allow individuals, families, groups or communitiesto adopt and maintain healthylifestyles fostering optimalemotional functioning and social inclusion (Cavioni, Grazzani and Ornaghi, 2020).

Academic performance

Academic performance of students is the centre around which the whole education system

revolves. The success and failure of any educational institution is measured in termsof academic performance of students. Not only the schools, but parents also have very high expectations from students with respect to their academic performance, as they believe that better academic results may lead to better career options and future security, Narad and Abdullah(2016). Academic performance refers tohow wella student is accomplishing his or her tasks and studies, Scort (2012). According to him, it reflects the outcome of education,the extent to which the student, teacher or institution have achieved their educational goals. AremuandSokan(2003)describedacademicperformanceasaperformancethat is judged by the examiner and some significant others as falling below an expected standard. They observed that the academic performance of secondary school students have been poor in recent times and this could be attributed to a variety of factors such as students' inability to manage their time, peer influence, family factor factorsand the likes. Academic performance referstotheknowledgeattained and designated by marks, assigned byteacher. Ineducational context, academic performance is the educationalgoalto be achieved bya student, teacher or institution over a certain period and is measured either by examinations or continuous assessments and the goal may differ from one individual or institution to another. Academic performance is the outcome of education, the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals, Narad and Abdullah (2016). Adediwura and Tayo (2007) opine that academic performance is generally referred to how well a student is accomplishing his or her tasks and studies. However, there are quite a number of factors that determine the level and quality of students" academic performance. Pruett (2010) revealed that academic performance is how students deal with their studies and responsibilities givento them by their teachers. Louis (2012) stated that academic performance is the ability of students to obtain high grades and standard test scores in school courses, especially courses that are part of the core academic curriculum. The Academic Performance of students is immensely significant as the economic as well as the social development of any country are bothattributabletotheacademicperformanceofthestudents. The betterthestudentsperform academically, the better are the prospects of the development of a fine manpower, who will contribute to the economic and social development of the nation, Ali et.al (2009).

This research is concern with the relationship between mental health among students and their academic performance.

Causes of academic failure

There are many reasons for the academic failure. Al-Zoubi and Bani (2015)enumerate the following as causes of academic failure with reference to medical and psychological reasons such as:

a. Major Depression Disorder: It is common that depression as a disease caused by failing in exams but it is more frequent that depression often precedes the examinationperiod. Depression can cause inability and weakness in concentration of the patient. Theresult of the equation become inverted, any depression can lead to failure.

b. Generalized anxiety disorder that can cause a situation of forgetting and weakness in concentration.

c. ExamPhobia: It isacaseofasever fear oftheexamandtheexpectationoffailure, which weakens the educational achievement and preparation and is accompanied with less attentive and not fully prepared for the exam.

d. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: It is the frequent predominant ideas in mind of the students that prevent them from thinking of anything else. However, they can't overcome them and cause severe distress and affect their academic performance.

e. AttentionDisorder: It isthe lack ofthe abilityto focusattentiononononething fora suitable time. It may be associated with hyperactivity disorder.

f. Learning Disabilities and Slow Learning: It is a functional deficit in the brain leading to a lack of capacity to acquire new knowledge, as cases in low IQ or difficulty in reading (Dyslexia) or difficulty in writing (Dysgraphia) or difficulty in mathematics (Dyscalculia) and they are investigated by special psychological measurements.

Statement of the Research Problem

Mental health is a crucial aspect of one's overall health and wellness. It includes our emotional, social and psychological well being. It affect how we think, act and how we interact with one another and it has no exception for students in secondary schools.Secondary school students are mostly adolescence which faces the hurdles of growing up. They often encounter challenges to mental health such as anxiety and depression which may be originated either fromhome or society, and these resulted to difficulties inabilityto learn, abilityto build positive relationship, academic achievement, physicaland stress management. The mental health of the students is significant as it has direct impact on the academic success. The aim of this research is however, to determine the current status of students' mental health, and to find out the relationship between this mental health and their academic performances.

Research Questions

The study was guided by thefollowing research questions;

I. Whatisthecurrentstatusofstudents' mentalhealth?

II. Is there any relationship between mental health and academic performances of the students?

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was adopted

Population and Sample Size

The target population of this study includes all students in public senior secondary schools in Kano state during 2023/2024 academic session.

Sample of 46 schools was selected bothmale and female, and ruraland urban from23 zonal education directorates translating to 41,458 students. Krejcie and Morgan table was used to obtain the sample of the participants which resulted to 380 respondents.

Sampling Techniques

Two sampling techniqueswere adopted; cluster sampling technique at the initialstage resulted in23 zones. Thentwo schools were chosen fromeachzone using systematic random sampling technique to obtain the 46 schools. The equation below expresses how sampleswere selected from each senior secondary school:

Samplesizeofschool=   TotalpopulationofSelected school

$$X sample size required \ Grand \ population \ of \ sampled \ schools$$

Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection in this research is questionnaire for the students. The questionnaire is a self developed close-ended questionnaire designed by the researcher to obtain information from respondents. The students' questionnaire titled 'students mental health scale (SMHC)' consisting two parts was administered to the respondents. The first section dealt with the personal data of respondents such as age, sex, class of the student. The second section had twenty five close-ended items which the respondents should tick the appropriate alternatives of Yes or No with 1 and 2 points respectively.

Data Analysis

Data collected was analyzed using percentage and correlation coefficient with the aid of SPSS.

RESULTS

Table1: Number and Percentage of Current State of Students Mental Health

	State of Mental Health		Percentage	Decision
18)	Poor Mental Health(14-	58	41	Moderate
(10-13)	Moderate Mental Health	70	45	
	Good Mental Health(5-9)	2	14	
	Total		**100**	

Table 1 contains statistics of the current state of students' mental health in Kano State public senior secondary schools. The statistics show that 52 students which correspond to 14% have good mental health. 170 students which tally with 45% have moderate mental health. Moreover, 158 students which correspond to 41% have poor mental health.

Table 2 Pearson Product Moment Correlation Results on Students Mental Health and Academic Achievement

	N	r-value (English Achievement)	r-value (Math Achievement)	Decision
Mental Health	380	0.075	0.159	Very Week Positive Correlation for all

Table2 shows results of Pearson Product Moment Correlation where r=0.075 and 0.159 indicate very week positive correlation relationship between students mental health and their academic achievement in English and Mathematics receptively.

Discussion of findings

The result of research question one reveals that students have moderate mental health condition. These indicated that most of the students' population is experiencing some level of mental health difficulties. It can be predicted that factors such as home-based problems, lack

of coping skills and inadequate access to mental health counselling may contribute to the prevalence of moderateand poor mentalhealthamongthe students. This finding is intandem with Karim (2016) who found that the status of mental health among students at secondary level in Aligarh is not in good condition. Another study done by Elhassan (2015) amongbasic school pupils reported that the level of mental health amongbasic school pupils islower and the reason of lower mental health is related to the condition ofsample community.

The second research questionson if there is any relationship between students' mental health and their academic performances hows a weak positive relationship. The weak positive relationship may indicate that students are developing coping process to manage mental healthconcernsand maintainacademicperformance. However,this findingshowedthatthere is relationship between students' mental health and their academic achievement. The finding of this study is closely related to the finding of Efretuei et al., (2022) who found that mental health has a significant influence on secondary school students' English language academic achievement, and the finding of Bakre and Alao (2023) that showed there is a relationship between students' mental health and achievementin mathematics. Furthermore, the findingof this study is corroborated with Ali (2024); Yusoff et al., (2023); Golan (2021); Talawarand Das (2014) who showed that there is positive relationship between Academic Achievement and Mental Health among secondary level students.

Conclusion

The study sought to investigate the current status of students' mental health, and the relationship between this mental health and their academic performance. It can however be concluded that majority of the students have moderate mental health problems in Kano State public senior secondaryschools. Also, the relationship between mentalhealthofstudents and their academic performance can be concluded from the result of the study that there is very little or minor positive relationship between students' mental health and their academic achievement in English and Mathematics

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;
1. Although the relationship is weak, it indicates that mental health still plays a role in academic performance. Schools should increase access to mental health resources such as mental health awareness campaign, counseling services and peer support programs.
2. Programs that encourages parental and community involvement in addressing mental healthissuescanbe beneficialand should beprovided. Parentsandcommunitycanbe engaged in mental health education to create a supportive environment for students both at school and home.

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