

The Relationship between Depression and Academic Achievement Among High School Students in Kerala

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Objectives:

This study is designed to identify the relationship of depression symptoms on academic achievement in the high school students in Kerala.

Abstract:

Children's success in their educational endeavors and their general socioemotional adjustment are influenced by a variety of personal characteristics and environmental experiences. One of the most powerful determinants of children's developmental course is the social context in which they live. In particular, experiencing a stable and supportive environment during childhood is likely to foster healthy cognitive, social, and emotional development, whereas experiencing a disruptive or stressful environment has been linked to a wide range of adverse mental health outcomes, including depression. Depressive symptoms and the accompanying emotional distress may then interfere with some of the major tasks of childhood, such as academic achievement and fulfillment of educational goals.

Keywords: Depression, Academic achievements, High school students.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Depression is a mental disorder characterized by at least two weeks of low mood that is present across most situations. It is often accompanied by low self-esteem, loss of interest in normally enjoyable activities, low energy, and pain without a clear cause. It is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Fortunately, it is also treatable. Depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease a person's ability to function at work and at home. Following are the symptoms of depression: persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood feelings of hopelessness, or pessimism, irritability, feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness, loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities, decreased energy or fatigue, moving or talking more slowly, feeling restless or having trouble sitting still, difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions, difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping, appetite and/or weight changes, thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts, aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause and/or that do not ease even with treatment

The symptoms of depression in children vary. It is often undiagnosed and untreated because they are passed off as normal emotional and psychological changes that occur during growth. Early medical studies focused on "masked" depression, where a child's depressed mood was evidenced by acting out or angry behavior. While this does occur,

particularly in younger children, many children display sadness or low mood similar to adults who are depressed. The primary symptoms of depression revolve around sadness, a feeling of hopelessness, and mood changes.

Depression can be a hindrance to every aspect of a person's life, especially one's academic performance. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (2012), clinical depression is defined as a mood disorder caused by many factors, including genetic predisposition, personality, stress, and brain chemistry. A few common symptoms of depression are changes in appetite and weight, sleep problems, loss of interest, withdrawal from family and friends, irritability, fatigue, trouble concentrating, and suicidal thoughts.

Students may be particularly vulnerable to depression, with rates at around 14 percent according to one study in Dublin, Ireland. The background rate among the general population is thought to be around eight to 12 percent.

Depression was recorded in 18 percent of students entering the University of Massachusetts Medical School; this rose to 39 percent in year two, and reduced slightly to 31 percent in year four. The increase over time was greater among females and those with more perceived stress. Students in medical, dental, law and nursing education often show particular rises in depression.

Combined anxiety disorder and depression affected about 16 percent of undergraduates at the University of Michigan in 2007, with thoughts of suicide among two percent of students. Students with financial problems were at increased risk.

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In 2008, a team from Columbia University found that psychiatric disorders affect up to half of college students, but fewer than 25 percent of those with a mental disorder sought treatment in the year before the survey.

II. REFERENCES

Academic achievement or (academic) performance is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their short or long-term educational goals. Cumulative GPA and completion of educational benchmarks such as secondary school diplomas and bachelor's degrees represent academic achievement. Academic achievement is commonly measured through examinations or continuous assessments but there is no general agreement on how it is best evaluated or which aspects are most important—procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts. Furthermore, there are inconclusive results over which individual factors successfully predict academic performance, elements such as test anxiety, environment, motivation, and emotions require consideration when developing models of school achievement. Now, schools are receiving money based on its students academic achievements. A school with more academic achievements would receive more money than a school with fewer achievements.

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Individual differences in academic performance have been linked to differences in intelligence and personality. Students with higher mental ability as demonstrated by IQ tests and those who are higher in conscientiousness (linked to effort and achievement motivation) tend to achieve highly in academic settings. A recent meta-analysis suggested that mental curiosity (as measured by typical intellectual engagement) has an important influence on academic achievement in addition to intelligence and conscientiousness.

Children's semi-structured home learning environment transitions into a more structured learning environment when children start first grade. Early academic achievement enhances later academic achievement.

Parent's academic socialization is a term describing the way parents influence students' academic achievement by shaping students' skills, behaviors and attitudes towards school. Parents influence students through the environment and discourse parents have with their children. Academic socialization can be influenced by parents' socio-economic status. Highly educated parents tend to have more stimulating learning environments. Further, recent research indicates that the relationship quality with parents will influence the development of academic self-efficacy among adolescent-aged children, which will in turn affect their academic performance.

Children's first few years of life are crucial to the development of language and social skills. School preparedness in these areas help students adjust to academic expectancies.

Studies have shown that physical activity can increase neural activity in the brain, specifically increasing executive brain functions such as attention span and working memory; and improve academic performance in both elementary school children and college freshmen.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

The samples of this study were 150 adolescent students who live in Kerala, India. The population in this study comprised of both male and female students studying in different high schools situated in Kerala.

The procedure for choosing the total number involved two stages:

- (1) Three high schools, and one pre-university school were selected from among a number of total schools having adolescence students in Kerala by simple random sampling.
- (2) Seventy five female students and seventy five male students served as the sample for the present study.

IV. TOOL

Beck Depression Inventory

The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI, BDI-II), created by Dr. Aaron T. Beck, is a 21-question multiple-choice self-reporting inventory, which is one of the most widely used instruments for measuring the severity of depression. In its current version, the questionnaire is designed for individuals aged 13 and over, and is composed of items relating to symptoms of depression such as hopelessness and irritability, cognitions such as guilt or feelings of being punished, as well as physical symptoms such as fatigue, weight loss, and lack of interest in sex.[20] The BDI is used in Iran for many studies, and it has been proven to have suitable reliability and validity.[3] The BDI was adapted for Iranian culture. According to Modabber-Nia et al. (2007) and Beck et al. (1988), standardized questionnaire scores are defined as follows:

- Symptom-free or normal (0–15)
- Mild depression (16–30)
- Moderate depression (31–46)
- Severe depression (47–63)

V. DATA ANALYSIS

A descriptive statistical analysis (frequency, percentage, means, and standard deviations) was done to characterize the depression, academic achievement, and gender. A Pearson correlation was calculated to evaluate the level of significance of the relationship between the depression score with academic achievement. In addition, a t-test was done to test the relationship between gender and academic achievement, which means that academic achievement was used as an interval variable not a category and also t-test was conducted to test gender with depression; finally. The software used for data analysis was SPSS-21.

VI. RESULTS

Table 1 Demographic details of the study

Variables	Data	N	percentage
Gender	Male	75	50%
	female	75	50%
Age range	14	40	27%
	15	60	40%
	16	50	33%
Total		150	100%

Table 2 shows Academic achievement and level of depressive symptoms Academic Achievement in grades

Depression	A+	A	B+	B	C+	C	D+	D	E	Total
Normal	4	5	7	9	11	12	6	3	2	59
Mild	1	2	3	5	5	5	7	5	3	36
Moderate	1	1	1	4	4	4	5	4	3	27
Severe	0	0	1	3	3	4	4	7	6	28
Total	6	8	12	21	23	25	22	19	14	150

VII. DISCUSSION

The current study showed that depressive symptoms significantly affect academic performance of the students in all areas of their grades. Table 2 shows that normal (asymptomatic) students score more marks in their exams than mild, moderate and severely depressed students. This finding supports the studies conducted by Mohammad Eid Abu Ruz et al in 2018 and Faizan Khalid in 2016. Depressive symptoms affects all areas of their academic performance. It is observed that higher lever of depressive symptoms in students with lower grades. The school performance variables had similar associations with depression among both sexes.

This study showed that depressive symptoms have major effect on students academic achievements. It is highly recommended that administrators identify different sources of anxiety and depression and set strategies to control these negative emotions. Additionally, formal and periodic referral of students with early signs of anxiety and depressions to the psychosocial counselor should be planned for to detect and manage such symptoms.

School counselors could play an important preventative role by considering anxiety symptoms as a potential warning sign for depression. In addition, if students have already begun to experience symptoms of depression, the counselor may want to explore whether extended periods of anxiety might have precipitated the depression. Furthermore, the gender differences reported in previous research could be a result of students' cultural background and the socialization process both genders go through. Therefore, it is important to study international students from different ethnicities to see if gender is related to their experiences of depression.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Anxiety and depression were found to have an impact on academic achievement among teenagers. It decreased

academic achievement. It could also decrease motivation in ability attention, concentration and leads to academic failure. These data have provided evidence of a relationship between anxiety, depression, and academic achievement among high school adolescents in response; it is proposed that selective preventive activities be introduced at high schools for students with academic problems. Mental health can be developed in school settings with the aid of support strategies such as counseling, teach life skill programs, and psychotherapy.

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