



Influence of Depression on the Academic Achievement of Undergraduate Students of Federal College of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State: Counselling Implications

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated Influence of Depression on the Academic Achievement of Undergraduate Students of Federal College of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State: Counselling Implications. It raised four objectives and four research questions as well as five hypotheses guided the study. The research design adopted for the study was the Survey Design. The population of the study was the entire undergraduate students in the Department of School of Education, Federal College of Education, Pankshin whose number is while the sample was 196. The instrument used for the study was a structured questioned self-developed by the researcher; validated by experts in counselling psychology and test and measurement and Educational Psychology, University of Jos with a reliability coefficient of 0.80. The findings revealed that students have been having sleep disturbances, including waking up in the night, and not being able to concentrate in academic activities and that they do get tired and lack energy in small academic tasks; most students have faced depression due to stressful experience of trying to balance social life and class work, uncertainty about money, leaving their family, poor sleep habit, alcohol and drug abuse, eating disorder and socialization problems. Counselling through the provisions of options of developing coping skills could go a long way to help depressed individuals; that counsellors during counselling sessions offer options which are therapeutic in nature, such as regular exercise, getting enough sleep and spending quality time with people: friends, family members, to mention a few which could go a long way to help depressed people (students) overcome their depression. Recommendations were drawn and suggestions for further study.

INTRODUCTION

Depression is a common health challenge in our society, especially in the academic environment. It involves unhappy moods or loss of pleasure or interest in activities for long periods of time. It is different from regular mood changes also known as mood swings and feelings about everyday life. It can affect all aspects of life, including relationships with family, friends and community and academic engagements. It can result from or lead to problems at school and at work. Depression can happen to anyone and people who have lived through abuse, severe losses or other stressful events. 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. A person who is depressed usually experiences several of the following symptoms: feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or pessimism; lowered self-esteem and heightened self-depreciation; a decrease or loss of ability to take pleasure in ordinary activities; reduced energy and vitality; slowness of thought or action; loss of appetite; and disturbed sleep.

Depression differs from simple grief or mourning, which are appropriate emotional responses to the loss of loved persons or objects. Where there are clear grounds for a person's unhappiness, depression is considered to be present if the depressed mood is unreasonably long or severe vis-à-vis the triggering event. A consideration of the stresses which students in various institutions in Nigeria are faced with, for instance, leaving home

perhaps for the first time, school fees challenges, transportation costs, food, examinations and the pressure to keep up with active social life while navigating lots of new life experiences can be extremely tough to balance, especially, with the existential issues in Nigeria, economic matters. This is not to mention, for those who have to balance work, school, and family responsibilities, it can be even more overwhelming.

Depression is not limited to students in the higher education system only; it can first start at the basic or primary school, middle school, or high school. Depression is a common occurrence among students of all ages, whether the student is in high school, college, or graduate school. Eisenberg, Ketchen, EdM & Heinze (2020) in a survey found that of almost 33,000 college students in the United States, 50% had depression or anxiety or both. When one considers the stresses that college students face, especially in Plateau and Federal College of Education, Pankshin, it cannot be surprising to understand the magnitude of what students are passing through. For instance, exams and the pressure to keep up an active social life while navigating lots of new life experiences can be quite tough to balance. Not to mention, those who have to balance work, school, and family responsibilities, it can be more overwhelming and devastating. For emphasis Depression is not just limited to college students, but a widespread challenge to all people. Depression can first start in elementary school, middle school, or high school and the average age of depression from onset is the late teens to mid-20s; and 1 out of every 15 adults will experience some type of

depression (PsychCentral, 2021). Even though depression in students is not uncommon, it is important that everyone, especially students, to take it seriously. Depression can impact nearly every area of one's life, from studying and classes to one's social life. In some cases, depression can also cause suicidal thoughts or thoughts of self-harm.

Depression is amongst the most common psychiatric complaint around us and has been described by physicians, since before the time of the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates, as melancholia. The course of the disorder is extremely variable from person to person; it may be mild or severe, acute or chronic. Untreated, depression may last an average of four months or longer. Depression is twice as prevalent in women than in men. The typical age of onset is in the 20s, but it may occur at any age. It is also associated with disordered rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. A region of the brain known as the amygdala contains neurons that project into the brainstem and appear to be involved in modulating REM sleep. The amygdala is also associated with processing negative thoughts and may be enlarged, hyperactive, or otherwise dysfunctional in some depressed persons. Although the significance of these associations is yet to be defined, the link between depression, disordered REM sleep, and abnormalities of the amygdala has led to new avenues of research into the neurobiology and treatment of depression (Depression, 2012).

The resultant outcomes of depression can be devastating or can affect an individual's social, psychological and biological dispositions. People who have gone through adverse life events such as unemployment, bereavement, traumatic events are more likely to develop depression and it can in turn, lead to more stress and dysfunction of their mental wellbeing and it can worsen an affected person's life situation. Depression is closely related to and can affect physical health of individuals especially, school children. Many of the factors that influence depression, such as physical inactivity or harmful use of alcohol are also known risk factors for diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and respiratory diseases. In turn, people with these diseases may also find themselves experiencing depression due to the difficulties associated with managing their condition (UN, 2023).

Omorogbe (2021) quoting United Nation Children Education Fund's State of the World's Children posited that in Nigeria, one in six young people aged 15 to 24 often feel depressed, have little interest in doing things, or are worried, nervous or anxious. Early findings from the international survey conducted by UNICEF and Gallup of approximately 20,000 children and adults in 21 countries, including Nigeria indicated that a median of 1 in 5 young people aged 15 to 24 surveyed said they often feel depressed or have little interest in doing things (Omorogbe, 2021). In the most comprehensive look at the mental health of children, adolescents, and caregivers in the 21st century, the UN body said that more than 1 in 7 adolescents aged 10–19 is estimated to

live with a diagnosed mental health problem globally (Omorogbe, 2021).

Side-by-side the aforementioned, the academic achievement of students is very important to world's political, scientific, and technological growth and development and when the academic achievement of children or learners decreases, it has damning consequences on the generality of the populace. In students, depression may show up in some specific ways that are not quite so obvious at first. For example, a student with depression might suddenly avoid meeting up with friends when previously they were social. This, when displayed, affects the socio-educational disposition of the student, hence, affects educational goal. Hence, this study intends to look at the influence of depression on students' academic achievement at the tertiary level of education, especially at the Federal College of Education, Pankshin and how counselling can serve as a mitigating factor in curbing its impact on the students.

Depression is a very serious and dangerous mental health problem not just to our society but in the academia. Its negative adverse effects on the academic achievement of students cannot be overemphasized. This is because whatever affects the mental state of a student has tremendous negative impact on the general wellbeing of the person. The growing challenges families are faced with alongside the ripple effects on students; one sees feelings of sadness, snapping of people, low self-esteem, feeling of not good enough, low energy concerning school activities difficulty in remembering classwork and the likes seem to permeate the minds of bright students. To determine the influence of depression on the academic achievement of undergraduate students of Federal College of Education, Pankshin;

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions have been raised by the researcher to guide the study. These include:

1. What are the influences of depression on the academic achievement of undergraduate students in Federal College of Education, Pankshin?
2. Which gender of undergraduate students is mostly affected by depression in Federal College of Education, Pankshin?
3. What is the degree of severity of depression on undergraduate students based on gender in Federal College of Education, Pankshin?
4. How can counselling serve as a mitigating intervention for undergraduate students having depression in respect of their academic achievement?

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

The study was hinged on the Cross-Sectional Quantitative Survey Design. The population of the study

comprised of all admitted undergraduate students from 100 level, 200 level, 300 level and 400 level, studying Guidance and Counselling in Federal College of Education, Pankshin. of mention, all the students were from the School of Education, Federal College of Education, Pankshin. The population of the students was Four Hundred and Thirteen (413). It comprised of the two genders, male and female. This sample comprised of One Hundred and Ninety-six (196) students, which is 47.5% of the population. The researcher used the Disproportional Stratified Sampling Technique for selecting undergraduate students is based on the fact that the class levels have different students' population, The researcher used a questionnaires titled: Influence of Depression on Students' Academic Achievement Questionnaire (IDSAAQ). The questionnaire had two sections namely: demographic data (Section A) and Section B focused on the undergraduate students in respect to the research questions. The instrument was verified by experts or professionals in the fields of Counselling Psychology. This was done by examining the statement of problems, research questions and

hypotheses to ascertain the adequacy of the items side-by-side each variable relevant in the study. To determine the degree of consistency of the items, the split-half method of test of internal consistencies was used by the researcher for the instruments. The rationale was to help the researcher gauge a reliable Cronbach coefficient for the study. 0.84 coefficient was obtained. The data collected was analysed using the descriptive and inferential methods. Therefore, any response with mean value from 2.5 above stood accepted whereas an item with a mean score below 2.5 was rejected for the research questions. While the formulated hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t.test of independent samples.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the influences of depression on the academic achievement of undergraduate students in Federal College of Education, Pankshin?

Table 3: The negative impacts of depression on the academic achievement of undergraduate students in Federal College of Education, Pankshin

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Means	Remarks
1.	It can bring feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness and hopelessness on students	129	66	1	0	3.65	Accepted
2.	There can be loss of interest or pleasure in most or all academic activities	104	71	21	0	3.42	Accepted
3.	Students can have sleep disturbances, including waking up in the night, and not being able to concentrate in academic activities	92	102	2	0	3.46	Accepted
4.	Students get tired and lack of energy in small academic tasks	60	134	1	1	3.29	Accepted

Source: Field Study, 2024

Based on Table 3 above which sought for the negative impacts of depression on the academic achievement of undergraduate students in Federal College of Education, Pankshin, item 1 with reactions based on SA, A, D, and SD had scores of 129, 66, 1, and 0 respectively having mean score of 3.65, hence, stands accepted for the study. Meaning that the students affirmed that depression impacts them to the extent that they have feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness and hopelessness. Item 2 based on SA, A, D, and SD had scores of 104, 71, 21 and 0 respectively on a mean coefficient of 3.42, accordingly stands accepted for the study. Implying that the depression has impacted the students where at times have loss of interest or pleasure in most or of all their academic activities. Additionally, item 3 depicting the reactions of the students based on SA, A, D, and SD responded to in the scores of 92, 102, 2, and 0 cumulatively have an average value of 3.46, therefore, stands accepted for the study. Inferring that

the students could have sleep disturbances, including waking up in the night, and not being able to concentrate in academic activities due to the impact depression. Lastly, item 4 had scores of 60, 134, 1, and 1 based on SA, A, D and SD respectively with an average score of 3.29, hence, stands accepted and impliedly means that the students do get tired and lack energy in small academic tasks due to the level of depression. Accordingly, and going by the research question as formulated, it can be said that depression has negatively impacted the academic achievement of undergraduate students in Federal College of Education, Pankshin where the cumulative average score of the four (4) items is 3.45.

Research Question 2: Which gender of undergraduate students is mostly affected by depression in Federal College of Education, Pankshin?

Table 4: the gender of undergraduate students that is mostly affected by depression in Federal College of Education, Pankshin

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Means	Remarks
1.	female students suffer mostly with depression	91	61	43	1	3.23	Accepted
2.	male students suffer mostly with depression	38	60	97	1	2.69	Accepted

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 4 which sought for the gender mostly affected by depression in Federal College of Education, Pankshin, showed that item 1 with reactions based on SA, A, D, and SD had scores of 91, 61, 43, and 1 respectively with mean score of 3.23 stands accepted for the study. Meaning the female gender suffers mostly with depression. On the other hand, item 2 based on SA, A, D, and SD had scores of 38, 60, 97 and 1 respectively on a mean coefficient of 2.69, accordingly stands

accepted for the study. Impliedly meaning that the male gender too suffers from depression. However, based on degree of difference, it can be said that the female gender could suffer more than the male since the difference between the two sexes showed a 0.54 gap.

Research Question 3: What is the degree of severity of depression on undergraduate students based on gender in Federal College of Education, Pankshin?

Table 5: The degree of severity of depression on undergraduate students based on gender in Federal College of Education, Pankshin

S/N	ITEMS	Highly Severe	Severe	Moderately Severe	Not Severe	Means	Remarks
1.	My feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness and hopelessness.	65	62	57	12	2.92	Accepted
2.	My incidences of anger outbursts, irritability, frustration and small matters.	28	111	42	15	2.78	Accepted
3.	Loss of interest or pleasure in most or all normal activities in my life, such as sex, hobbies or sports and other things I like doing.	63	61	59	13	2.89	Accepted
4.	Having sleep disturbances, including waking up in the night or sleeping too much.	66	52	53	25	2.81	Accepted
5.	Being tired and lack of energy in small tasks take me extra effort to finish.	62	70	43	21	2.88	Accepted

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 5 sought to find out the degree of severity of depression on undergraduate students based on gender in Federal College of Education, Pankshin, it showed that item 1 with reactions based on Highly Severe, Severe, Moderately Severe and Not severe had scores of 65, 62, 57, and 12 respectively on a mean score of 2.92, thus, stands accepted for the study. Meaning that the students have a highly severe to moderately severe feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness, and hopelessness. Item 2 based on Highly Severe, Severe, Moderately Severe and Not severe had scores of 28, 111, 42 and 15 respectively on a mean coefficient of 2.78, accordingly stands accepted for the study. Impliedly that they have severe incidences of anger outbursts, irritability, frustration, and small matters. Moreover, item 3 showing the reactions of the students based on Highly Severe, Severe, Moderately Severe and Not severe responded to in the scores of 63, 61, 59, and 13 aggregately have an average value of 2.89, therefore,

stands accepted for the study. Inferring that the students have moderate to severe degree of depression which has caused loss of interest or pleasure in most or all normal activities of their lives, such as sex, hobbies or sports and other things they like doing. Item 4 had scores of 66, 52, 53, and 25 based on Highly Severe, Severe, Moderately Severe and Not severe respectively with an average score of 2.81, hence, stands accepted and impliedly means incidences of sleep disturbances, including waking up in the night or sleeping too much are quite severe amongst the students. Item 5 lastly, had scores of 62, 70, 43 and 21 based on Highly Severe, Severe, Moderately Severe and Not severe respectively with an average score of 2.88 stands accepted and impliedly means due to the degree of depression the students have expressed feelings of being tired and lacking energy in small tasks which ordinarily should take them a few minutes to finish, now take them extra effort to finish. Consequently, it could be said that the students,

largely have from highly severe, to severe as well as moderately severe degree of depression, which has largely impacted their academic achievement in school and to back this, the average score for the research question is 2.86.

Research Question 4: How can counselling serve as a mitigating intervention for undergraduate students having depression in respect of their academic achievement?

Table 6: The counselling mitigating strategies for students

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Means	Remarks
1.	Counselling through the provisions of options of developing coping skills can go a long way to help depressed individuals	149	47	0	0	3.76	Accepted
2.	A counsellor offering options of regular exercise, getting enough sleep and spending quality time with people: friends, family members, etc can go a long way to help depressed people	122	73	1	0	3.62	Accepted
3.	Offering options for referral in more severe and critical symptoms by the counsellor to other professionals could have long-lasting impact for depressed individuals	69	121	6	0	3.32	Accepted
4.	Engaging depressed individuals whether on individual or group basis can go a long way to help them come out of their depressed challenges	104	81	11	0	3.47	Accepted

Source: Field Study, 2024

Conclusively, Table s6 sought for the counselling mitigating strategies for students and revealed that item 1 with reactions based on SA, A, D, and SD had scores of 149, 47, 0, and 0 respectively having mean score of 3.76, therefore, stands accepted for the study. Meaning that the students affirmed Counselling through the provisions of options of developing coping skills could go a long way to help depressed individuals. Item 2 based on SA, A, D, and SD had scores of 122, 73, 1 and 0 respectively on a mean coefficient of 3.62, accordingly stands accepted for the study. Inferring that counsellors during counselling sessions offer options which are therapeutic in nature, such as regular exercise, getting enough sleep and spending quality time with people: friends, family members, to mention a few which could go a long way to help depressed people (students) overcome their depression. Additionally, item 3 depicting the reactions of the students based on SA, A, D, and SD responded to in the scores of 69, 121, 6, and 0 on an average value of 3.32, therefore, stands accepted for the study.

Suggesting that offering options for referral in more severe and critical symptoms by the counsellor to other professionals could have long-lasting impact on depressed individuals or students. Lastly, item 4 had scores of 104, 81, 11, and 0 based on SA, A, D and SD respectively with an average score of 3.47, hence, stands accepted and impliedly means that the students believed that engaging depressed individuals whether on individual or group basis could go a long way to help them come out of their depressed challenges. For the reason as deduced, and going by the research question as raised, it can be said that counselling has almost all it takes to help depressed students find solutions to their challenges, psychologically and emotionally, hence, helping the students attain academic excellence in Federal College of Education, Pankshin.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant mean difference between situational depression and the academic achievement of students across all the levels.

Table 7: Mean difference between situational depression and academic achievement of students

Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p	Decision
Situational Depression	196	3.6531	0.4878	390	-70.9882	1.9721	Significant
Academic Achievement	196	58.7041	10.8460				

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 7 showed the t-test result of the situational depression and academic achievement of the students. The mean score was 3.6531 with a standard deviation of 0.4878 for situational depression while the academic achievement mean score was 58.7041 with a standard deviation of 10.8460. The result also yielded -70.9882 on a degree of freedom 360 and a P value of 1.9721 less than t. calculated, hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. Accordingly, the researcher averred that there

is significant mean difference between situational depression and the academic achievement of students across all the levels.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant mean difference between biological depression and the academic achievement of the students across all the levels.

Table 8: Mean difference between biological depression and academic achievement of students

Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P	Decision
Biological Depression	196	3.4235	0.6788	390	-71.2170	1.9721	Significant
Academic Achievement	196	58.7041	10.8460				

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 8 showed the t-test result of the biological depression and academic achievement of the students. The mean score was 3.4235 with a standard deviation of 0.6788 for biological depression while the academic achievement mean score was 58.7041 with a standard deviation of 10.8460. The result also yielded -71.2170 on a degree of freedom 360 and a P value of 1.9721 less than t. calculated. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. Consequently, the researcher posited that there

is significant mean difference between biological depression and the academic achievement of students across all the levels.

Hypothesis 3: There is significant mean difference between psychological depression and the academic achievement of the students across all levels.

Table 9: Mean difference between psychological depression and academic achievement of students

Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P	Decision
Psychological Depression	196	3.4592	0.5197	390	-71.2285	1.9721	Significant
Academic Achievement	196	58.7041	10.8460				

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 9 revealed the t-test result of the psychological depression and academic achievement of the students. The mean score was 3.4592 with a standard deviation of 0.5197 for psychological depression while the academic achievement mean score was 58.7041 with a standard deviation of 10.8460. The result also yielded -71.2285 on a degree of freedom 360 and a P value of 1.9721 less than t calculated. Thus, the

null hypothesis was rejected. Consequently, the researcher advanced that there is significant mean difference between psychological depression and the academic achievement of students across all the levels.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant mean difference between existential depression and the academic achievement of students across all levels.

Table 10: Mean difference between existential depression and academic achievement of students

Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P	Decision
Existential Depression	196	3.2908	0.4983	390	-71.4522	1.9721	Significant
Academic Achievement	196	58.7041	10.8460				

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 10 revealed the t-test result of the existential depression and academic achievement of the students. The mean score was 3.2908 with a standard deviation of 0.4983 for existential depression while the academic achievement mean score was 58.7041 with a standard deviation of 10.8460. The result also yielded -71.4522 on a degree of freedom 360 and a P value of 1.9721 less than t calculated. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Consequently, the researcher

advanced that there is significant mean difference between existential depression and the academic achievement of students across all the levels.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant mean difference between the academic achievement of undergraduate students across all the levels on how counselling can serve as mitigating factor in handling depression.

Table 11: Mean difference between counselling mitigation and academic achievement of students

Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P	Decision
Counselling Mitigation	196	3.7602	0.4280	390	-70.8665	1.9721	Significant
Academic Achievement	196	58.7041	10.8460				

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 11 revealed the t-test result of the counselling mitigation and academic achievement of the students. The mean score was 3.7602 with a standard deviation of 0.4280 for counselling mitigation while the academic achievement mean score was 58.7041 with a standard deviation of 10.8460. The result also yielded -70.8665 on a degree of freedom 360 and a P value of 1.9721 less than t calculated. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Consequently, the researcher advanced that there is significant mean difference between counselling mitigation strategies and the academic achievement of students across all the levels.

4 DISCUSSION

In view of the outcome of the responses from the students, and in line with research question and hypotheses, which sought for the impacts of depression on the academic achievement of undergraduate students in Federal College of Education, Pankshin, it revealed that the students affirmed that depression impacts them to the extent that they have feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness and hopelessness; that the depression has impacted the students where at times have loss of interest or pleasure in most or of all their academic activities. Additionally, it revealed that the students have been having sleep disturbances, including waking up in the night, and not being able to concentrate in academic activities due to the impact depression. And that the students do get tired and lack energy in small academic tasks due to the level of depression. This result was supported by Kebede (undated) who affirmed that depression interferes with daily life activities the students and it is a common and serious illness. Some of the factors which contribute to depression include lack of social support from family, peers, and neighbors and

financial strain, stress due to studies. The analyzed data indicated that most students have faced depression due to stressful experience of trying to balance social life and class work, uncertainty about money, leaving one's family, poor sleep habit, alcohol drug abuse, eating disorder and socialization problems.

On the gender mostly affected by depression in Federal College of Education, Pankshin, it showed that both female and male students are suffering from it even though, that of the female seems to be a bit severe as compared to that of the male students. This assertion was supported in the study of Karmakar and Behera (2017) who revealed that there is no significant difference existing between gender (Male and Female) in respect of depression. As well, Muhammad, Terna and Saanyol (2018) in their study posited that females were more likely to get depressed than males. Furthermore, on the degree of severity of depression on undergraduate students based on gender in Federal College of Education, Pankshin, it showed that the students have a highly severe to moderately severe feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness, and hopelessness; they have severe incidences of anger outbursts, irritability, frustration, and small matters. Moreover, that the students have moderate to severe degree of depression which has caused loss of interest or pleasure in most or all normal activities of their lives, such as sex, hobbies or sports and other things they like doing and this was supported by the finding of Karmakar and Behera (2017) who posited that the level of depression among college students was quite mild and moderately high. More so, incidences of sleep disturbances, including waking up in the night or sleeping too much are quite severe amongst the students. Lastly, the students have expressed feelings of being tired and lacking energy in small tasks which ordinarily should take

them a few minutes to finish, now take them extra effort to finish.

On counselling mitigating strategies for students, it revealed that the students affirmed that Counselling through the provisions of options of developing coping skills could go a long way to help depressed individuals; that counsellors during counselling sessions offer options which are therapeutic in nature, such as regular exercise, getting enough sleep and spending quality time with people: friends, family members, to mention a few which could go a long way to help depressed people (students) overcome their depression. Additionally, that offering options for referral in more severe and critical symptoms by the counsellor to other professionals could have long-lasting impact on depressed individuals or students; and lastly, that the students believed that engaging depressed individuals whether on individual or group basis could go a long way to help them come out of their depressed challenges. Muhammad, Terna and Saanyol (2018) in their support to this recommended that educators, counsellors, psychologists, and researchers are to develop strategies to reduce psychological problems like depression among students and to develop intervention programs to enhance students' psychological well-being which may help to increase their academic performance.

Conclusively, in regards to situational, biological, psychological, and existential components of depression which the students are faced with, the hypotheses results revealed that there is significant mean difference between situational depression and the academic achievement of students across all the levels; there is significant mean difference between biological depression and the academic achievement of students across all the levels; and there is significant mean difference between psychological depression and the academic achievement of students across all the levels. As well, there is significant mean difference between existential depression and the academic achievement of students across all the levels and there is significant mean difference between counselling mitigation strategies and the academic achievement of students across all the levels. These standpoints were proven by Khan (2020) who averred that the causes of depression in students are due to complicated interactions between social, physiological, developmental, and psychological factors.

CONCLUSION

Depression among students has become phenomenal and its consequential impacts have become increasingly disturbing and physiologically, mentally, emotionally as well as academically challenging. The fact that the economy is excruciatingly difficult as each day passes by, the insecurity, coupled with issues around kidnapping and banditry are more than enough to heighten or cause students to fall into depression. In fact, going by the components as expounded in the study,

which included situational, biological, existential, and psychological depression, in one way or the other, the students might have passed through or are still passing through either or some of them. Thus, in as much as no one cannot escape from either of them, the study has been able to proffer mitigating strategies to help students cope or deal with the challenge. Accordingly, the important roles of counselling in helping students as well as individuals to cope with emotional and psychological issues, vis-à-vis their educational endeavours, which depression is one, cannot be overemphasized. The study therefore, based on the findings has shown that counselling could potentially and greatly help in this regards.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the findings, the researcher is proposing the following as recommendations:

- i. counsellors should organize talks which could help students work at reducing their feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness, and hopelessness, thereby, they are helped to start having interest or pleasure in most or all their academic activities.
- ii. Counsellors should work at organizing and having talks with students on sleep disturbance issues, including the dangers of waking up in the night, and not being able to concentrate in academic activities and which border on tiredness and lack energy in small academic tasks.
- iii. Counsellors should work at therapeutic activities to help students handle stressful experiences about balancing their social life and class work; measures and workshop or seminars about economic activities which could fetch them money.
- iv. A lot of talks on poor sleep habit, alcohol and drug abuse, eating disorder and socialization problems should be organised in the schools to help students passing through depression.
- v. Attention should be focused on females since the findings revealed that the degree of severity of depression revealed that the female students have a highly severe to moderately severe feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness, and hopelessness. Hence their have severe incidences of anger outbursts, irritability, frustration on small matters.

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