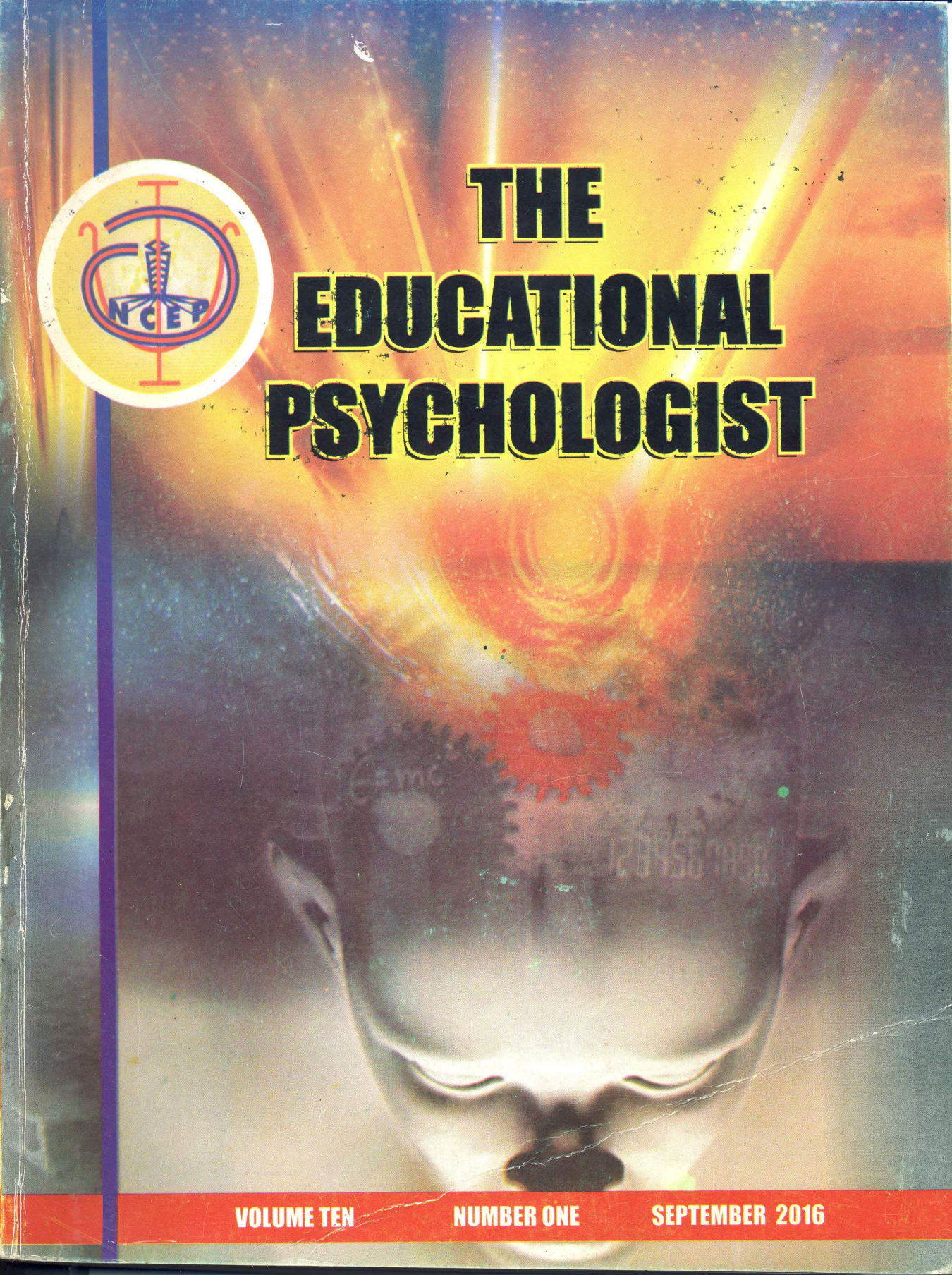


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EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS AND ACADEMIC PERFOMANCE OF ADOLESENCENTS IN ALVAN IKOKU FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION OWERRI

By

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Abstract

This paper examines the contributions of emotional problems to the academic performance of students in Alvan Ikoku University of Education Owerri. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The sample size comprised 200 respondents randomly selected from the six faculties in the university. Structured questionnaire validated by experts in measurement and evaluation was used to elicit information from the respondents. Having tested the reliability of the instrument, a coefficient of 0.82 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using mean ratings. Results shows that Alvan students experiences fear, anxiety and anger especially when home and school environments becomes uncondusive and coping strategies fails. The study also revealed that when students experiences missing scripts, missing results, sexual harassment or send out of examination hall for none payment of school fees, they are, frustrated and depressed. This study reveals that anger, fear and anxiety are strong determinants of academic performance. It was therefore recommended among others that special educational programme for students with emotional problems should be established in schools; this program should include attention developing skill, increasing self awareness, self esteem and self control. Importantly, the programme should be manned by counsellors, psychologists, and medical practitioners.

Introduction

Adolescence as a period of emotional sensitivity have become of great concern to parents, teachers/ lecturers, government and the entire society. Adolescent boys and girls get worried and anxious as a result of the accompanied complexity of developmental and psychological forces and stress accused to the age bracket. Youths' age boundaries vary from one culture to another but there is a global consensus among psychologists, scientists and social workers that ages fifteen (15) to twenty five (25) years could be classified as youth. (Iroegbu 2006).

Reports and reactions of researchers like Stephen and Badoje (2010) and Agulanna (2013) indicates that most adolescents are deviants, disobedient, unruly, aggressive, jealous

and impossible to manage. These observations are not out of place since at adolescence, individuals experience serious emotional trauma which create challenges to teaching and learning (Ajileye, 2011). No wonder adolescence period is regarded as a period of "storm and stress" (Iwuama, 2002).

One of the developmental characteristics of adolescence period is the emotional instability. Emotion plays vital roles in all human endeavour including learning and its activities. Emotion refers to the outward manifestation of an individual's inner feelings when stirred up with pleasant or unpleasant stimulus (Ajileye, 2011). Eke and Onyekuru (2013) defined emotion as strong human feelings expressed in the work of love, anger and joy.

Akinade (2009) noted that human beings are creatures of feelings or emotion which controls their behaviour and it is evident from nail biting, hair twisting, rocking of legs, withdrawal, aggression, tension, and conflict, quarrelling with parents, siblings, classmates and even lecturers.

Emotional Problems according to Nwamuo (2005) are psychological difficulties that are characterised by fear and anxiety. Henricson and Rydell (2004) view it as a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression. It is an inappropriate type of behaviour or feelings under normal circumstance, an inability to learn that cannot be explain by intellectual sensory or health factor; a tendency to develop physical symptoms of fear associated with personal or school problem (Akpan, Ojinnaka and Ekanem, 2010). Emotional problem in students arises when the child is unable to build and maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationship with peers, teachers and his school environment (Nachay, 2013). Njoku and Ikpeazu (2000) reported that emotionally disturbed students tends to drop out of school because of low ambition and poor academic performance and that the society also worsen their situation by violently rejecting and criticizing their individual who is already confused and frustrated. It is against this background that the researchers decided to consider the causes and contributions of emotional problems on the academic performance of students in Alvan Ikoku University of Education Owerri.

Onyemerekeya (2008) stated that emotionally disturbed children are those who have inner tension, anxiety, neurotic or psychotic behaviours. There are many types of emotional problems among students but in this study, the researchers are going to review three of them and they include fear, anxiety and anger. Emotional problem according to Ekebuike (2011) is a disorder or disturbance which is expressed mainly as internal or subjective symptoms like fear, worry, anger and or tension. Emotional problem in the context of this study is a psychological problem which occurs as a result of negative change in the feelings of students which influence their academic performance negatively.

Anxiety is one of the problems experienced by adolescents. It is a type of fear which is anticipatory in nature, and uneasiness which is related to fear. Anxiety disorders during adolescence are strong predictors of the subsequent onset and persistence of other mental health and energy (Orji, 2014). People with anxiety disorders experiences persistent fear, worry and tension which is out of proportion to the circumstances that causes them significant distress and/or interferes with their daily functioning. Anxiety disordered adolescents experience worry, excessive fear, irritability, difficulty in concentrating, paying attention and easily distracted (Akpan, Ojinaka ad Ekanem, 2010). People with anxiety

related issues according to Orji (2014) experiences health related problems like high blood pressure, headache and chest pain and this are serious threats to academic performance.

Fear is a type of emotional problem which is a response to a threatening stimulus. According to Nwamuo (2005) fear is a very complicated emotion for adolescents. Many young people are reluctant to disclose fear when they feel afraid because the adolescent believes fear shows something week or coward, to be ashamed of and so to be secret about. Thus, normal fear are not communicated to parents instead unexpressed and kept in isolation. Fear can feed upon themselves and increase anxiety fear and trouble adolescent growth and achievement. Adolescent has fear of failure for instance adolescents can fear its safer not to make an effort that to try and take the risk of not achieving what feels difficult. Adolescent fears of being rejected, criticised, gossiped, embarrassed, inadequacy, disappointed and intimidated (Chauchan, 2005).

Anger according to (Orji, 2014) is a person's response to a threat or the perception of a threat against an individual or group. The main source of anger in adolescents is frustration. Young people get angry when they experienced physical discomfort, when confronted with unfriendly environment or situation (Darcy, 2012) Exhibition of angry behaviour in school situation challenges teachers competence in classroom instruction and lowers academic performance of students (Akinade, 2009). Anger is experienced when goal is blocked, frustrated, hurt and threatened.

Academic performance according to Ifeiunni (2015) is the learning outcome of the child which includes knowledge, skills and ideas acquired and trained through their course of study within and outside the classroom situations. There are a number of common causes of emotional problems among adolescent students: Ajileye (2011) enumerated social expectations, unfavourable relationship in home, changes of roles in home school and society. Ekebuike (2011) and Henricson & Rydell 2014 outlined parents, divorce/separation, break up of a boy-girl relationship, failure in important examinations, rejection by valued peers.

Other causes of emotional problems according to Njoku, Ikpeazu and Iroegbu (2009) include sexual harassment by lecturers and fellow students, lack of money, broken homes poor family background, lack of parental care, high cost of study material in school, not yet married, failure in examination.

The outcry of the parents, teachers, government stakeholders in the education and employers of labour on the performance of students in the various local and international examinations has confirmed the decline in the education system of the country. To prove it the more, the performance of students in Alvan Ikoku University of Education in the education courses is not out of place. It has come to the notice of these researchers that students in Alvan always have poor performance in most of the general courses offered in the Faculty of Education. For instance Research Methodology ED 341, ED 211 Educational Psychology, the poor performance in these courses has been attributed to emotional problems which could arise as a result of anger, fear and anxiety. Emotional problems have been seriously connected to poor performance in examinations, poor reading habits and lack of concentration in the class. It is also connected to several cases of drop outs in school (Njoku and Ikepeazu 2000).

However, despite all these adverse effects of emotion in academic performance, previous researchers on related issues like Ekeh and Onyekuru (2013). Carthers (2013) concentrated on emotional blackmails and teachers Ekebuike (2011) was on emotional health problems and students. None of them considered adolescents emotional problems as it relates to academic performance of adolescent in Alvan Ikoku University of Education which is the focus of this study .Thus the gap this study tried to fill; to investigate the causes and contributions of emotional problems on the academic performance of Adolescent students in Alvan Ikoku University of Education Owerri.

The main purpose of this study therefore is to investigate the contributions of emotional problems on the academic performance of adolescent in Alvan Ikoku University of Education Owerri. Specifically, the study tried to:

- Investigate the extent to which fear in adolescent influence their academic performance in Alvan Ikoku University of Education Owerri
- Find out the extent to which anger influences adolescents academic performance.
- Investigate the extent to anxiety contributes to the academic performance of adolescent in Alvan Ikoku University of Education Owerri.

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

- To what extent does fear contribute to the academic performance of adolescents in Alvan Ikoku University of Education, Owerri?
- To what extent does anger contribute to the academic performance of adolescents in Alvan Ikoku University of Education, Owerri?
- To what extent does anxiety contribute to the academic performance of adolescents in Alvan Ikoku University of Education, Owerri?

Method

The descriptive survey design was adopted in this study to investigate the contributions of emotional problems on the academic performance of adolescents in Alvan Ikoku University of Education Owerri. All degree students from the Alvan Ikoku University of Education constituted the population for the study: Art (2,300) Agricultural science and Vocational studies (2,789) Education (477) Natural Sciences (2,400) giving total of (11,475) as at the time of the study (From degree Unit of A.I.U.E. Owerri). The respondents were randomly selected from the six Faculties in Alvan. The sample for the study comprised only 200 respondents between the ages of 10-24 randomly selected from the six Faculties in the University. The selection was done using a multistage sampling technique, where the University was stratified into departments and Faculties.

The instrument for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire titled Emotional Problems and Adolescents Performance Questionnaire (EPAPQ). The instrument (EPAPQ) was divided into four sections. Section "A" contains information on students' bio data. Section "B" is of 7 items on fear related issues, section "C" contains 10 items on anger related issues and section "D" is of 8 items on contributions of anxiety on academic performance. The questionnaire was a four point Likert Scale of Agree (A) and Disagree (D) and To a Large Extent (TLE) and To a Small Extent (TSE). The instrument was face and content validated by experts in measurement and evaluation and test .retest method of an interval of three weeks was adopted. The set of data collected were correlated and

statistically analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics and a reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained.

Results

Table1: Mean Ratings on the extent to which fear influence adolescents' academic performance in Alvan Ikoku University of Education.

S/N	Fear Related Problems Experienced by Students in their academic pursuit	No of Response	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Fear of failure	200	125	40	20	15	3.8	Agreed
2	Being anxious about the future	200	98	46	33	23	2.8	Agreed
3	Feeling of inferiority complex in the midst of others	200	106	47	31	17	3.6	Agreed
4	Getting frustrated as a result of repeated failure	200	100	60	35	05	3.2	Agreed
5	Getting worried as a result of examination	200	98	54	30	18	2.9	Agreed
6	Being tensed up when confronted with difficult learning tasks	200	102	40	36	22	3.4	Agreed
7	Feeling of depression which results to drop out of schools	200	85	64	30	21	2.6	Agreed
	Grand mean						**3.25**	

Table I revealed that fear of failure had the mean score of 3.8 followed by inferiority complex 3.6 and lastly depression with the mean score of 2.6. The overall result shows that items on the questionnaire were predominantly fear related problems experienced by the students. This is justified because the grand mean which was 3.25 is above the border line of 2.5.

Table2: Mean rating on the extent to which anger contributes to the adolescents' academic performance in Alvan Ikoku University of Education students.

S/N	Items	No	TLE	TSE	Mean	Decision
1	I feel angered when I am unable to build and maintain satisfactory relationship with peer/ teachers.	200	190	10	4.5	Accept
2	I feel angered confronted with unfriendly learning environment that retard my academic performance	200	187	13	4.3	Accept
3	I feel angered when I am threatened, frustrated, hurt or harassed unjustly by my teachers	200	184	16	4.0	Accept
4	I feel angry when I have missing scripts or missing results	200	192	08	4.7	Accept
5	I feel angry when I fail my test or examinations	200	180	20	3.7	Accept
6	I feel angry when I am gossiped,	200	170	30	3.5	Accept

	intimidated, rejected or criticized by my classmates or teachers					
7	I experience anger when my academic performance is low and my goal seems to have been defeated	200	172	28	3.4	Accept
8	I feel angry when I am sent out of examination hall for school fees	200	181	19	3.9	Accept
9	I feel angry when I perceive that I am not loved or recognized by my classmates/teachers.	200	167	33	3.3	Accept
10	I feel angry when I am not being motivated or reinforced in my study	200	182	18	3.9	Accept
	Grand Mean				**4.20**	

The result in table 2 revealed anger to a large extent as one of the emotional problems experienced by adolescents in Alvan Ikoku University of Education. This is justified with the average mean of 4.2 which is greater than the decision point of 2.5.

Table 3: Mean ratings on the extent to which anxiety contributes to students' academic performance.

S/N	Items	TLE	TSE	Mean	Decision
1	Paying less attention in the class	175	25	3.6	Agree
2	Withdrawal from school and other social activities	155	45	3.4	Agree
3	Failure in tests/ Examinations	180	20	3.8	Agree
4	Sickness/ disease, e.g.: high blood pressure, headache, chest pains as a result of anxiety and worry	135	65	3.3	Agree
5	Unable to meet up with dead lines	120	80	2.7	Agree
6	Absentmindedness in the class	167	33	3.6	Agree
7	Poor study habit leading to poor academic performance	190	10	3.9	Agree
8	Involving in some anti-social behaviours e.g. rapping, examination malpractice, smoking, riots, kidnapping when frustrated and depressed	144	66	3.4	Agree
	Grand Mean			**3.5**	

Result on table 3 shows that anxiety to a large extent contributes to poor academic performance of adolescents with the average mean of 3.5 which is above the decision point of 2.5.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that Alvan University students experience fear in their academic environment. This contributed to their poor performance in the University. This finding is in consonance with that of Nwamuo (2005) who found that tension, anxiety, fear of failure and depression are some emotional problems experienced by students. Onyemerekeya (2008) finding was in corroboration with the present finding that emotionally

disturbed adolescents are those who have inner tension, fear, anxiety, neurotics and psychotic behaviours. The finding of this study also revealed that fear can be a serious threat to students' academic performance, the reason for this result can be as a result of some circumstances faced by students during their first year. For instance first year students worry much about how they will cope in school, many fear about the future, how to cope after school. Students are also disturbed about their overall academic achievement.

The statistical evidence of this study reveals that students of Alvan Ikoku University of Education, Owerri experiences anger which are as a result of some factors like: missing result/scripts, unfriendly home and school environment, homes, missing of tests and examinations, sexual harassment, lack of motivation/reinforcement. This finding is in line with the finding of Nachay (2013) which revealed that anger could arise in students as a result of unsatisfactory interrelationship with parents, teachers and peers. Hericson and Nrydell (2004) outlined some major emotional problems as: lack of parental care, lack of money, failure, in examinations broken homes, and poor family background. In consonance with the finding of this study are the findings of Akinade (2009) and Darcy (2012) who found that anger can lead to lowering of academic performance in students.

From the finding of this study there is no doubt that anxiety is a staring determinant of poor academic performance among students in Alvan Ikoku University of Education. The result shows that anxiety leads to health related problems like headache, high blood pressure, chest pain. This finding is in support with the findings of Orji (2014). Also in consonance with this finding is that of Akpan, Ojimnaka and Ekanem (2010) who found that anxiety disordered students experiences worry, excessive fear, irritability, difficulty in concentrating. All these factors have serious effect on students' academic performance.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study it can be concluded that students of Alvan Ikoku University of Education experiences emotional problems which ranges from fear, anxiety and anger and this contributes greatly to the students' academic performance. This could also account for the number of drop outs and some antisocial behaviours exhibited by students. There is need for parents and teachers of adolescents to protect them from anger, fear and anxiety related issues. Moreover, there is need to love and support them in their academic pursuits.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:
Teachers should be observant to be able to dictate emotionally disturbed children. Find out the causes of his/her emotional problems and refer them to physicians or counsellors where there is need

Lecturers should be sensitized on the various sources of fear, anxiety and anger in adolescents. This will acquaint them on how to assist the emotionally disturbed student's. Counsellor educators should organise regular workshops and seminars for students and lecturers. This will enable them to acquire more knowledge on how to massage stress, anxiety, fear and other emotional problems

School administrators should provide recreational facilities and social welfare for the students. This is to help the students overcome their emotional problems.

Appropriate behaviour modification techniques should be applied by professional counsellors, psychologist, and medical professional other health workers.

There should be an established counselling centre that should be manned by professional counsellors and medical directors who will stand to sensitize, guide and diagnose the referred students on their problems.

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