

PHYSIOLOGICAL, EMOTIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL STRESS AS CORRELATE OF BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEM AMONG UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

Alade, Folasade Adesola (Ph. D)
Department of Guidance & Counselling,
Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti
Ekiti State, NIGERIA

&

David Olumide Arowolo (Ph. D)
Counselling Unit
Student Affairs Division,
Federal University, Lafia
Nasarawa State, NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

The study examined Physiological, Emotional and Institutional Stress experienced by University Undergraduates in South-West Nigeria. One thousand students were sampled through proportional stratified, purposive and random sample techniques from six Universities in South West Nigeria. Descriptive survey research of the survey type was used for the study. Two self designed instruments were administered to the students, undergraduate stress rating scale and behavior problems inventory. One hypothesis was raised and tested at 0.05 level of significance using multiple regression analysis. Results showed that physiological, emotional and institutional stress are prediction of stress among university undergraduates. Physiological stress is the best predictor of behavior problems. 33% of behavior problems among undergraduates are as a result of stress, hence it was recommended that counseling centres should be established and manned by counselors, who would counsel students on different stress management techniques.

Keywords: Physiological, Emotional, and Institutional Stress, Behavioural Problem.

INTRODUCTION

Stress has been defined in various ways according to different authors. Hans Selye (1907-1982) the age long stress progenitor who first used the term defined stress as the sum of all non-specific effects of factors that can act upon the body, in other words anything, internal or external, that affects the body could be termed as stress. Stress is any stimulus that either raises anxiety or excitement level beyond personal capabilities. Lazarus and Folkmain (1984) described stress as a psycho-physiological state or process that occurs when one faces events perceived as threatening to the psychological well-being of the individual.

The major sources of stress where discrepancies do arise according to Maisamari (2002) are categorized into physical, psychological and environmental stress. Denga and Ekpo (1994) added three other types of stress which are administrative, educational and economic stress while Weitin and Lloyd (2003) identified emotional and psychological response. Life is stressful; we live in a world full of war and uncertainties. However, one thing is certain; stress is here to stay and cannot be ignored. If stress levels become high, all positive stimulation is replaced by exhaustion and we begin to find it difficult to cope. The high level of stress in an academic environment can lead to the manifestation of behaviour problems such as cultism, rioting, examination malpractice, vandalism, alcoholism and a lot of others which are easily manifested by University undergraduates.

Behaviour problems are problems or actions manifested by university undergraduate that are inimical to the smooth running of the university. Such behavior problems are: cultism, sexual harassment, rioting and examination malpractice. Omoniyi (2000) classified stress as: institutional, physiological and emotional. Physiological stress occurs when there is a change in body working system (metabolism) resulting in various psycho-physical diseases. It is said to have been responsible for most psychosomatic diseases like heart rate, pounding heart, elevated blood pressure, sweaty palms, nausea, vomiting, headache, fatigue and stammering; no wonder Akinboye and Adeyemo (2002) posited that physiological stress is responsible for 90% of visit to physicians.

Institutional stress on the other hand occurs as a result of problems encountered in the institution's environment which could lead to condition such as, crowded time table, insufficient seats in the lecture rooms, lack of accommodation in and around the institution, problems from lecturers and incessant disruption of academic calendar. Gerry, Isabella and Ikechi (2004) opined that adolescents in schools are usually faced with so many storms and stressful conditions which affect their behaviours. This could be institutional stress.

Emotional stress is due to changes in behavioural pattern and result in anxiousness, restlessness, fealonsy, aggression, depression, lack of interest, sleeplessness, pessimism, obsessive feedings and impatience. Weiten and Lloyd (2003) also see emotion as powerful, largely uncontrollable feelings and accompanied by psychological changes. They believed that when people are under stress, they often react emotionally. Observation by the researchers and comments from the public has revealed that some university undergraduates manifest behavioural problems such as: thuggery, hooliganism, rioting, truancy, vandalism, examination malpractices, alcoholism and sexual immorality. These behavioral problems may be due to physiological, emotional and institutional stress experienced by the students on the campuses. The main purpose of this study however, is to find out whether physiological, emotional and institutional stress will predict university undergraduates behaviour in the campuses. One research question was raised and one hypothesis was generated to guide the study. This was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HYPOTHESIS

Physiological, emotional and institutional stress will not significantly predict undergraduates' behavioural problems in South-West Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the descriptive research of the survey type. The population consisted of all the full-time undergraduates in South West Universities in Nigeria. The sample consisted of 1000 undergraduates selected by proportional stratified, simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. The population was divided into three strata based on the ownership of the university, that is, Federal, State or Private. Two universities were chosen randomly from each stratum. Five universities were selected in all. 1000 students were selected proportionally from the faculties based on the level of course and sex. The instrument consisted of two types of questionnaire titled: Undergraduate stress rating scale and behaviour problem inventory. These were used to collect data from respondents based on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The instruments were validated for face, content and concurrent. The reliability was ascertained by test-retest method with coefficient of 0.75. The instrument was administered personally by the

researchers to the students in the lecture rooms during their free periods and assisted by research assistants. Data generated were analyzed by frequency counts and percentages for the descriptive statistic and multiple regressions for the hypothesis.

RESULTS

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

RESEARCH QUESTION: What are the behavioural problems manifested by students?

Table 1: Summary of Behavioural Problem Manifested by Students.

Behavioural Problems	No. Agree %		No. Disagree %	
Truancy	373	37.3	627	62.7
Alcoholism	233	23.3	767	76.7
Exam Malpractice	444	44.4	556	55.6
Rioting	320	32.0	680	68.0

Table 1 shows the summary of the behaviour problems manifested. 37.3% of respondents agreed that they practiced truancy. 23.3% of the respondents agreed that they were involved in alcoholism. 44.4% agreed that they practiced examination malpractices. 32.0% of the respondents agreed that they were involved in rioting and vandalism on the campuses. These results showed that undergraduates are involved in behavioural problems; examination malpractice is the most common behaviour problems manifested by students due to stress.

HYPOTHESIS

Physiologically, emotionally and instructionally stress will not significantly predict undergraduates' behavioral problems. In testing this hypothesis, multiple regressions were used.

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis of Stress and Behavioral Problems.

Model	R	R2	Adjusted R2	Std Error of the Estimate
	0.582	0.339	0.337	8.73996

Predictors (constant): physiological stress, emotional stress, instructional stress.

$R = 0.582$

$R^2 = 0.337$

The table shows significant relationship among the predictors.

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	B	Std error	T	Sig-t
(constant)	33.823	1.765	19.164	0.000
Instructional stress	0.392	0.053	7.371	0.000
Emotional stress	0.201	0.057	-3.503	0.000
Physiological stress	0.785	0.053	14.743	0.000

Since the significant value is 0.000 and is less than 0.005 level of significant, this means the hypothesis is rejected.

$B_p = 33.82 + 0.392 \text{ Instr} + 0.201 \text{ Em str} + 0.785 \text{ Ph str}$. Phstr (Bp=behaviour problem, instr=institutional stress, emstr=emotional stress, phstr=physiological stress)

Table 3. shows that institutional stress, emotional, physiological stress made (0.392, 0.0201 and 0.785) respective contributions to behavioral problems, hence physiological stress is the best predictor of behavior problems because of its high contribution, followed by instructional stress and emotional stress respectively.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of data revealed that physiological stress has the greatest influence on behavioural problems followed by institutional stress while emotional has the least influence. Physiological stress has been responsible for most psychosomatic diseases like heart rate, pounding heart, elevated blood pressure, sweaty palms, nausea, vomiting, headache, fatigue and stammering. This agreed with Akinboye 2002 who posited that physiological stress is responsible for 90% of visits to physicians. Table one also showed significant relationship among the predictors, that is, psychological, emotional and institutional stress. This could be due to the fact that most of the nation's universities infrastructural facilities are inadequate for the teeming student population which could induce stress among the students. The finding was in line with that of Weiten and Lloyd (2003) that believed that when people are under stress, they often react emotionally. It also agreed with that of Gerry, Isabella and Ikechi (2004) who opined that adolescents in schools are usually faced with so many storms and stressful conditions which affect their behaviours.

CONCLUSION

The study has confirmed that physiological stress has the greatest influence on behavioural problems, followed by institutional stress while emotional stress has the least influence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it was recommended that basic health infrastructural facilities like drugs and medical personal should be provided to the university health centre so as to reduce physiological stress among undergraduates. Also, counseling centres with professional counselors should be made available to all campuses so as to ensure good rapport with the students, especially on issues bordering on their welfare.

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